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Release Date: August, 2002 [Etext #3400]
[Yes, we are about one year ahead of schedule]
[The actual date this file first posted = 04/17/01]
[Last modified date = 11/21/01]

Edition: 12

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STUDIES

HENRY JAMES, JR.

by William Dean Howells

This etext was created by Anthony J. Adam of Houston, Texas.

The events of Mr. James's life--as we agree to understand events--may be told in a very few words. His race is Irish on his father's side and Scotch on his mother's, to which mingled strains the generalizer may attribute, if he likes, that union of vivid expression and dispassionate analysis which has characterized his work from the first. There are none of those early struggles with poverty, which render the lives of so many distinguished Americans monotonous reading, to record in his case: the cabin hearth-fire did not light him to the youthful pursuit of literature; he had from the start all those advantages which, when they go too far, become limitations.

He was born in New York city in the year 1843, and his first lessons in life and letters were the best which the metropolis--so small in the perspective diminishing to that date--could afford. In his twelfth year his family went abroad, and after some stay in England made a long sojourn in France and Switzerland. They returned to America in 1860, placing themselves at Newport, and for a year or two Mr. James was at the Harvard Law School, where, perhaps, he did not study a great deal of law. His father removed from Newport to Cambridge in 1866, and there Mr. James remained till he went abroad, three years later, for the residence in England and Italy which, with infrequent visits home, has continued ever since.

It was during these three years of his Cambridge life that I became acquainted with his work. He had already printed a tale--"The Story of a Year"--in the "Atlantic Monthly," when I was asked to be Mr. Fields's assistant in the management, and it was my fortune to read Mr. James's second contribution in manuscript. "Would you take it?" asked my chief. "Yes, and all the stories you can get from the writer." One is much securer of one's judgment at twenty-nine than, say, at forty-five; but if this was a mistake of mine I am not yet old enough to regret it. The story was called "Poor Richard," and it dealt with the conscience of a man very much in love with a woman who loved his rival. He told this rival a lie, which sent him away to his death on the field,--in that day nearly every fictitious personage had something to do with the war,--but Poor Richard's lie did not win him his love. It still seems to me that the situation was strongly and finely felt. One's pity went, as it should, with the liar; but the whole story had a pathos which lingers in my mind equally with a sense of the new literary qualities which gave me such delight in it. I admired, as we must in all that Mr. James has written, the finished workmanship

in which there is no loss of vigor; the luminous and uncommon use of words, the originality of phrase, the whole clear and beautiful style, which I confess I weakly liked the better for the occasional gallicisms remaining from an inveterate habit of French. Those who know the writings of Mr. Henry James will recognize the inherited felicity of diction which is so striking in the writings of Mr. Henry James, Jr. The son's diction is not so racy as the father's; it lacks its daring, but it is as fortunate and graphic; and I cannot give it greater praise than this, though it has, when he will, a splendor and state which is wholly its own.

Mr. James is now so universally recognized that I shall seem to be making an unwarrantable claim when I express my belief that the popularity of his stories was once largely confined to Mr. Field's assistant. They had characteristics which forbade any editor to refuse them; and there are no anecdotes of thrice-rejected manuscripts finally printed to tell of him; his work was at once successful with all the magazines. But with the readers of "The Atlantic," of "Harper's," of "Lippincott's," of "The Galaxy," of "The Century," it was another affair. The flavor was so strange, that, with rare exceptions, they had to "learn to like" it. Probably few writers have in the same degree compelled the liking of their readers. He was reluctantly accepted, partly through a mistake as to his attitude--through the confusion of his point of view with his private opinion--in the reader's mind. This confusion caused the tears of rage which bedewed our continent in behalf of the "average American girl" supposed to be satirized in Daisy Miller, and prevented the perception of the fact that, so far as the average American girl was studied at all in Daisy Miller, her indestructible innocence, her invulnerable new-worldliness, had never been so delicately appreciated. It was so plain that Mr. James disliked her vulgar conditions, that the very people to whom he revealed her essential sweetness and light were furious that he should have seemed not to see what existed through him. In other words, they would have liked him better if he had been a worse artist--if he had been a little more confidential.

But that artistic impartiality which puzzled so many in the treatment of Daisy Miller is one of the qualities most valuable in the eyes of those who care how things are done, and I am not sure that it is not Mr. James's most characteristic quality. As "frost performs the effect of fire," this impartiality comes at last to the same result as sympathy. We may be quite sure that Mr. James does not like the peculiar phase of our civilization typified in Henrietta Stackpole; but he treats her with such exquisite justice that he lets US like her. It is an extreme case, but I confidently allege it in proof.

His impartiality is part of the reserve with which he works in most respects, and which at first glance makes us say that he is wanting in humor. But I feel pretty certain that Mr. James has

not been able to disinherit himself to this degree. We Americans are terribly in earnest about making ourselves, individually and collectively; but I fancy that our prevailing mood in the face of all problems is that of an abiding faith which can afford to be funny. He has himself indicated that we have, as a nation, as a people, our joke, and every one of us is in the joke more or less. We may, some of us, dislike it extremely, disapprove it wholly, and even abhor it, but we are in the joke all the same, and no one of us is safe from becoming the great American humorist at any given moment. The danger is not apparent in Mr. James's case, and I confess that I read him with a relief in the comparative immunity that he affords from the national facetiousness. Many of his people are humorously imagined, or rather humorously SEEN, like Daisy Miller's mother, but these do not give a dominant color; the business in hand is commonly serious, and the droll people are subordinated. They abound, nevertheless, and many of them are perfectly new finds, like Mr. Tristram in "The American," the bill-paying father in the "Pension Beaurepas," the anxiously Europeanizing mother in the same story, the amusing little Madame de Belgarde, Henrietta Stackpole, and even Newman himself. But though Mr. James portrays the humorous in character, he is decidedly not on humorous terms with his reader; he ignores rather than recognizes the fact that they are both in the joke.

If we take him at all we must take him on his own ground, for clearly he will not come to ours. We must make concessions to him, not in this respect only, but in several others, chief among which is the motive for reading fiction. By example, at least, he teaches that it is the pursuit and not the end which should give us pleasure; for he often prefers to leave us to our own conjectures in regard to the fate of the people in whom he has interested us. There is no question, of course, but he could tell the story of Isabel in "The Portrait of a Lady" to the end, yet he does not tell it. We must agree, then, to take what seems a fragment instead of a whole, and to find, when we can, a name for this new kind in fiction. Evidently it is the character, not the fate, of his people which occupies him; when he has fully developed their character he leaves them to what destiny the reader pleases.

The analytic tendency seems to have increased with him as his work has gone on. Some of the earlier tales were very dramatic: "A Passionate Pilgrim," which I should rank above all his other short stories, and for certain rich poetical qualities, above everything else that he has done, is eminently dramatic. But I do not find much that I should call dramatic in "The Portrait of a Lady," while I do find in it an amount of analysis which I should call superabundance if it were not all such good literature. The novelist's main business is to possess his reader with a due conception of his characters and the situations in which they find themselves. If he does more or less than this he equally fails. I have sometimes thought that Mr. James's

danger was to do more, but when I have been ready to declare this excess an error of his method I have hesitated. Could anything be superfluous that had given me so much pleasure as I read? Certainly from only one point of view, and this a rather narrow, technical one. It seems to me that an enlightened criticism will recognize in Mr. James's fiction a metaphysical genius working to aesthetic results, and will not be disposed to deny it any method it chooses to employ. No other novelist, except George Eliot, has dealt so largely in analysis of motive, has so fully explained and commented upon the springs of action in the persons of the drama, both before and after the facts. These novelists are more alike than any others in their processes, but with George Eliot an ethical purpose is dominant, and with Mr. James an artistic purpose. I do not know just how it should be stated of two such noble and generous types of character as Dorothea and Isabel Archer, but I think that we sympathize with the former in grand aims that chiefly concern others, and with the latter in beautiful dreams that primarily concern herself. Both are unselfish and devoted women, sublimely true to a mistaken ideal in their marriages; but, though they come to this common martyrdom, the original difference in them remains. Isabel has her great weaknesses, as Dorothea had, but these seem to me, on the whole, the most nobly imagined and the most nobly intentioned women in modern fiction; and I think Isabel is the more subtly divined of the two. If we speak of mere characterization, we must not fail to acknowledge the perfection of Gilbert Osmond. It was a profound stroke to make him an American by birth. No European could realize so fully in his own life the ideal of a European dilettante in all the meaning of that cheapened word; as no European could so deeply and tenderly feel the sweetness and loveliness of the English past as the sick American, Searle, in "The Passionate Pilgrim."

What is called the international novel is popularly dated from the publication of "Daisy Miller," though "Roderick Hudson" and "The American" had gone before; but it really began in the beautiful story which I have just named. Mr. James, who invented this species in fiction, first contrasted in the "Passionate Pilgrim" the New World and Old World moods, ideals, and prejudices, and he did it there with a richness of poetic effect which he has since never equalled. I own that I regret the loss of the poetry, but you cannot ask a man to keep on being a poet for you; it is hardly for him to choose; yet I compare rather discontentedly in my own mind such impassioned creations as Searle and the painter in "The Madonna of the Future" with "Daisy Miller," of whose slight, thin personality I also feel the indefinable charm, and of the tragedy of whose innocence I recognize the delicate pathos. Looking back to those early stories, where Mr. James stood at the dividing ways of the novel and the romance, I am sometimes sorry that he declared even superficially for the former. His best efforts seem to me those of romance; his best types have an ideal development, like Isabel and Claire Belgarde and Bessy Alden and poor Daisy and even

Newman. But, doubtless, he has chosen wisely; perhaps the romance is an outworn form, and would not lend itself to the reproduction of even the ideality of modern life. I myself waver somewhat in my preference--if it is a preference--when I think of such people as Lord Warburton and the Touchetts, whom I take to be all decidedly of this world. The first of these especially interested me as a probable type of the English nobleman, who amiably accepts the existing situation with all its possibilities of political and social change, and insists not at all upon the surviving feudalities, but means to be a manly and simple gentleman in any event. An American is not able to pronounce as to the verity of the type; I only know that it seems probable and that it is charming. It makes one wish that it were in Mr. James's way to paint in some story the present phase of change in England. A titled personage is still mainly an inconceivable being to us; he is like a goblin or a fairy in a storybook. How does he comport himself in the face of all the changes and modifications that have taken place and that still impend? We can hardly imagine a lord taking his nobility seriously; it is some hint of the conditional frame of Lord Warburton's mind that makes him imaginable and delightful to us.

It is not my purpose here to review any of Mr. James's books; I like better to speak of his people than of the conduct of his novels, and I wish to recognize the fineness with which he has touched-in the pretty primness of Osmond's daughter and the mild devotedness of Mr. Rosier. A masterly hand is as often manifest in the treatment of such subordinate figures as in that of the principal persons, and Mr. James does them unerringly. This is felt in the more important character of Valentin Belgarde, a fascinating character in spite of its defects,--perhaps on account of them--and a sort of French Lord Warburton, but wittier, and not so good. "These are my ideas," says his sister-in-law, at the end of a number of inanities. "Ah, you call them ideas!" he returns, which is delicious and makes you love him. He, too, has his moments of misgiving, apparently in regard to his nobility, and his acceptance of Newman on the basis of something like "manhood suffrage" is very charming. It is of course difficult for a remote plebeian to verify the pictures of legitimist society in "The American," but there is the probable suggestion in them of conditions and principles, and want of principles, of which we get glimpses in our travels abroad; at any rate, they reveal another and not impossible world, and it is fine to have Newman discover that the opinions and criticisms of our world are so absolutely valueless in that sphere that his knowledge of the infamous crime of the mother and brother of his betrothed will have no effect whatever upon them in their own circle if he explodes it there. This seems like aristocracy indeed! and one admires, almost respects, its survival in our day. But I always regretted that Newman's discovery seemed the precursor of his magnanimous resolution not to avenge himself; it weakened the effect of this, with which it had really nothing to do. Upon the whole, however, Newman is an adequate and

satisfying representative of Americanism, with his generous matrimonial ambition, his vast good-nature, and his thorough good sense and right feeling. We must be very hard to please if we are not pleased with him. He is not the "cultivated American" who redeems us from time to time in the eyes of Europe; but he is unquestionably more national, and it is observable that his unaffected fellow-countrymen and women fare very well at Mr. James's hand always; it is the Europeanizing sort like the critical little Bostonian in the "Bundle of Letters," the ladies shocked at Daisy Miller, the mother in the "Pension Beaurepas" who goes about trying to be of the "native" world everywhere, Madame Merle and Gilbert Osmond, Miss Light and her mother, who have reason to complain, if any one has. Doubtless Mr. James does not mean to satirize such Americans, but it is interesting to note how they strike such a keen observer. We are certainly not allowed to like them, and the other sort find somehow a place in our affections along with his good Europeans. It is a little odd, by the way, that in all the printed talk about Mr. James--and there has been no end of it--his power of engaging your preference for certain of his people has been so little commented on. Perhaps it is because he makes no obvious appeal for them; but one likes such men as Lord Warburton, Newman, Valentin, the artistic brother in "The Europeans," and Ralph Touchett, and such women as Isabel, Claire Belgarde, Mrs. Tristram, and certain others, with a thoroughness that is one of the best testimonies to their vitality. This comes about through their own qualities, and is not affected by insinuation or by downright petting, such as we find in Dickens nearly always and in Thackeray too often.

The art of fiction has, in fact, become a finer art in our day than it was with Dickens and Thackeray. We could not suffer the confidential attitude of the latter now, nor the mannerism of the former, any more than we could endure the prolixity of Richardson or the coarseness of Fielding. These great men are of the past--they and their methods and interests; even Trollope and Reade are not of the present. The new school derives from Hawthorne and George Eliot rather than any others; but it studies human nature much more in its wonted aspects, and finds its ethical and dramatic examples in the operation of lighter but not really less vital motives. The moving accident is certainly not its trade; and it prefers to avoid all manner of dire catastrophes. It is largely influenced by French fiction in form; but it is the realism of Daudet rather than the realism of Zola that prevails with it, and it has a soul of its own which is above the business of recording the rather brutish pursuit of a woman by a man, which seems to be the chief end of the French novelist. This school, which is so largely of the future as well as the present, finds its chief exemplar in Mr. James; it is he who is shaping and directing American fiction, at least. It is the ambition of the younger contributors to write like him; he has his following more distinctly recognizable than that of any other English-writing novelist. Whether he will so far control

this following as to decide the nature of the novel with us remains to be seen. Will the reader be content to accept a novel which is an analytic study rather than a story, which is apt to leave him arbiter of the destiny of the author's creations? Will he find his account in the unflagging interest of their development? Mr. James's growing popularity seems to suggest that this may be the case; but the work of Mr. James's imitators will have much to do with the final result.

In the meantime it is not surprising that he has his imitators. Whatever exceptions we take to his methods or his results, we cannot deny him a very great literary genius. To me there is a perpetual delight in his way of saying things, and I cannot wonder that younger men try to catch the trick of it. The disappointing thing for them is that it is not a trick, but an inherent virtue. His style is, upon the whole, better than that of any other novelist I know; it is always easy, without being trivial, and it is often stately, without being stiff; it gives a charm to everything he writes; and he has written so much and in such various directions, that we should be judging him very incompletely if we considered him only as a novelist. His book of European sketches must rank him with the most enlightened and agreeable travelers; and it might be fitly supplemented from his uncollected papers with a volume of American sketches. In his essays on modern French writers he indicates his critical range and grasp; but he scarcely does more, as his criticisms in "The Atlantic" and "The Nation" and elsewhere could abundantly testify.

There are indeed those who insist that criticism is his true vocation, and are impatient of his devotion to fiction; but I suspect that these admirers are mistaken. A novelist he is not, after the old fashion, or after any fashion but his own; yet since he has finally made his public in his own way of story-telling--or call it character-painting if you prefer,--it must be conceded that he has chosen best for himself and his readers in choosing the form of fiction for what he has to say. It is, after all, what a writer has to say rather than what he has to tell that we care for nowadays. In one manner or other the stories were all told long ago; and now we want merely to know what the novelist thinks about persons and situations. Mr. James gratifies this philosophic desire. If he sometimes forbears to tell us what he thinks of the last state of his people, it is perhaps because that does not interest him, and a large-minded criticism might well insist that it was childish to demand that it must interest him.

I am not sure that any criticism is sufficiently large-minded for this. I own that I like a finished story; but then also I like those which Mr. James seems not to finish. This is probably the position of most of his readers, who cannot very logically account for either preference. We can only make sure that we have here an annalist, or analyst, as we choose, who fascinates

us from his first page to his last, whose narrative or whose comment may enter into any minuteness of detail without fatiguing us, and can only truly grieve us when it ceases.

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THE MAN OF LETTERS AS A MAN OF BUSINESS

by William Dean Howells

This etext was created by Anthony J. Adam of Houston, Texas.

[NOTE: This study is duplicated later in the collection as part of the series Literature and Life where bookmarks are appended. D.W.]

I think that every man ought to work for his living, without exception, and that when he has once avouched his willingness to work, society should provide him with work and warrant him a living. I do not think any man ought to live by an art. A man's art should be his privilege, when he has proven his fitness to exercise it, and has otherwise earned his daily bread; and its results should be free to all. There is an instinctive sense of this, even in the midst of the grotesque confusion of our economic being; people feel that there is something profane, something impious, in taking money for a picture, or a poem, or a statue. Most of all, the artist himself feels this. He puts on a bold front with the world, to be sure, and brazens it out as Business; but he knows very well that there is something false and vulgar in it; and that the work which cannot be truly priced in money cannot be truly paid in money. He can, of course, say that the priest takes money for reading the marriage service, for christening the new-born babe, and for saying the last office for the dead; that the physician sells healing; that justice itself is paid for; and that he is merely a party to the thing that is and must be. He can say that, as the thing is, unless he sells his art he cannot live, that society will leave him to starve if he does not hit its fancy in a picture, or a poem, or a statue; and all this is bitterly true. He is, and he must be, only too glad if there is a market for his wares. Without a market for his wares he must perish, or turn to making something that will sell better than pictures, or poems, or statues. All the same, the sin and the shame remain, and the averted eye sees them still, with its inward vision. Many will make believe otherwise, but I would rather not make believe otherwise; and in trying to write of Literature as Business I am tempted to begin by saying that Business is the opprobrium of Literature.

II.

Literature is at once the most intimate and the most articulate of the arts. It cannot impart its effect through the senses or the nerves as the other arts can; it is beautiful only through the intelligence; it is the mind speaking to the mind; until it has been put into absolute terms, of an invariable significance, it does not exist at all. It cannot awaken this emotion in one, and that in another; if it fails to express precisely the meaning of the author, if it does not say HIM, it says nothing, and is nothing. So that when a poet has put his heart, much or little, into a poem, and sold it to a magazine, the scandal is greater than when a painter has sold a picture to a patron, or a sculptor has modelled a statue to order. These are artists less articulate and less intimate than the poet; they are more exterior to their work; they are less personally in it; they part with less of themselves in the dicker. It does not change the nature of the case to say that Tennyson and Longfellow and Emerson sold the poems in which they couched the most mystical messages their genius was charged to bear mankind. They submitted to the conditions which none can escape; but that does not justify the conditions, which are none the less the conditions of hucksters because they are imposed upon poets. If it will serve to make my meaning a little clearer we will suppose that a poet has been crossed in love, or has suffered some real sorrow, like the loss of a wife or child. He pours out his broken heart in verse that shall bring tears of sacred sympathy from his readers, and an editor pays him a hundred dollars for the right of bringing his verse to their notice. It is perfectly true that the poem was not written for these dollars, but it is perfectly true that it was sold for them. The poet must use his emotions to pay his provision bills; he has no other means; society does not propose to pay his bills for him. Yet, and at the end of the ends, the unsophisticated witness finds the transaction ridiculous, finds it repulsive, finds it shabby. Somehow he knows that if our huckstering civilization did not at every moment violate the eternal fitness of things, the poet's song would have been given to the world, and the poet would have been cared for by the whole human brotherhood, as any man should be who does the duty that every man owes it.

The instinctive sense of the dishonor which money-purchase does to art is so strong that sometimes a man of letters who can pay his way otherwise refuses pay for his work, as Lord Byron did, for a while, from a noble pride, and as Count Tolstoy has tried to do, from a noble conscience. But Byron's publisher profited by a generosity which did not reach his readers; and the Countess Tolstoy collects the copyright which her husband foregoes; so that these two eminent instances of protest against business in literature may be said not to have shaken its money basis. I know of no others; but there may be many that I am culpably

ignorant of. Still, I doubt if there are enough to affect the fact that Literature is Business as well as Art, and almost as soon. At present business is the only human solidarity; we are all bound together with that chain, whatever interests and tastes and principles separate us, and I feel quite sure that in writing of the Man of Letters as a Man of Business, I shall attract far more readers than I should in writing of him as an Artist. Besides, as an artist he has been done a great deal already; and a commercial state like ours has really more concern in him as a business man. Perhaps it may sometimes be different; I do not believe it will till the conditions are different, and that is a long way off.

III.

In the meantime I confidently appeal to the reader's imagination with the fact that there are several men of letters among us who are such good men of business that they can command a hundred dollars a thousand words for all they write; and at least one woman of letters who gets a hundred and fifty dollars a thousand words. It is easy to write a thousand words a day, and supposing one of these authors to work steadily, it can be seen that his net earnings during the year would come to some such sum as the President of the United States gets for doing far less work of a much more perishable sort. If the man of letters were wholly a business man this is what would happen; he would make his forty or fifty thousand dollars a year, and be able to consort with bank presidents, and railroad officials, and rich tradesmen, and other flowers of our plutocracy on equal terms. But, unfortunately, from a business point of view, he is also an artist, and the very qualities that enable him to delight the public disable him from delighting it uninterruptedly. "No rose blooms right along," as the English boys at Oxford made an American collegian say in a theme which they imagined for him in his national parlance; and the man of letters, as an artist, is apt to have times and seasons when he cannot blossom. Very often it shall happen that his mind will lie fallow between novels or stories for weeks and months at a stretch; when the suggestions of the friendly editor shall fail to fruit in the essays or articles desired; when the muse shall altogether withhold herself, or shall respond only in a feeble dribble of verse which he might sell indeed, but which it would not be good business for him to put on the market. But supposing him to be a very diligent and continuous worker, and so happy as to have fallen on a theme that delights him and bears him along, he may please himself so ill with the result of his labors that he can do nothing less in artistic conscience than destroy a day's work, a week's work, a month's work. I know one man of letters who wrote to-day, and tore up tomorrow for nearly a whole summer. But even if part of the mistaken work may be saved, because it is good work out of place, and not intrinsically bad, the task of reconstruction wants almost as much time as the production; and

then, when all seems done, comes the anxious and endless process of revision. These drawbacks reduce the earning capacity of what I may call the high-cost man of letters in such measure that an author whose name is known everywhere, and whose reputation is commensurate with the boundaries of his country, if it does not transcend them, shall have the income, say, of a rising young physician, known to a few people in a subordinate city.

In view of this fact, so humiliating to an author in the presence of a nation of business men like ours, I do not know that I can establish the man of letters in the popular esteem as very much of a business man after all. He must still have a low rank among practical people; and he will be regarded by the great mass of Americans as perhaps a little off, a little funny, a little soft!

Perhaps not; and yet I would rather not have a consensus of public opinion on the question; I think I am more comfortable without it.

IV.

There is this to be said in defence of men of letters on the business side, that literature is still an infant industry with us, and so far from having been protected by our laws it was exposed for ninety years after the foundation of the republic to the vicious competition of stolen goods. It is true that we now have the international copyright law at last, and we can at least begin to forget our shame; but literary property has only forty-two years of life under our unjust statutes, and if it is attacked by robbers the law does not seek out the aggressors and punish them, as it would seek out and punish the trespassers upon any other kind of property; but it leaves the aggrieved owner to bring suit against them, and recover damages, if he can. This may be right enough in itself; but I think, then, that all property should be defended by civil suit, and should become public after forty-two years of private tenure. The Constitution guarantees us all equality before the law, but the law-makers seem to have forgotten this in the case of our infant literary industry. So long as this remains the case, we cannot expect the best business talent to go into literature, and the man of letters must keep his present low grade among business men.

As I have hinted, it is but a little while that he has had any standing at all. I may say that it is only since the was that literature has become a business with us. Before that time we had authors, and very good ones; it is astonishing how good they were; but I do not remember any of them who lived by literature except Edgar A. Poe, perhaps; and we all know how he lived; it was largely upon loans. They were either men of fortune, or they were editors, or professors, with salaries or incomes apart from the small gains of their pens; or they were helped out with public offices; one need not go over their names, or classify

them. Some of them must have made money by their books, but I question whether any one could have lived, even very simply, upon the money his books brought him. No one could do that now, unless he wrote a book that we could not recognize as a work of literature. But many authors live now, and live prettily enough, by the sale of the serial publication of their writings to the magazines. They do not live so nicely as successful tradespeople, of course, or as men in the other professions when they begin to make themselves names; the high state of brokers, bankers, railroad operators, and the like is, in the nature of the case, beyond their fondest dreams of pecuniary affluence and social splendor. Perhaps they do not want the chief seats in the synagogue; it is certain they do not get them. Still, they do very fairly well, as things go; and several have incomes that would seem riches to the great mass of worthy Americans who work with their hands for a living--when they can get the work. Their incomes are mainly from serial publication in the different magazines; and the prosperity of the magazines has given a whole class existence which, as a class, was wholly unknown among us before the war. It is not only the famous or fully recognized authors who live in this way, but the much larger number of clever people who are as yet known chiefly to the editors, and who may never make themselves a public, but who do well a kind of acceptable work. These are the sort who do not get reprinted from the periodicals; but the better recognized authors do get reprinted, and then their serial work in its completed form appeals to the readers who say they do not read serials. The multitude of these is not great, and if an author rested his hopes upon their favor he would be a much more embittered man than he now generally is. But he understands perfectly well that his reward is in the serial and not in the book; the return from that he may count as so much money found in the road--a few hundreds, a very few thousands, at the most.

V.

I doubt, indeed, whether the earnings of literary men are absolutely as great as they were earlier in the century, in any of the English-speaking countries; relatively they are nothing like as great. Scott had forty thousand dollars for "Woodstock," which was not a very large novel, and was by no means one of his best; and forty thousand dollars had at least the purchasing powers of sixty thousand then. Moore had three thousand guineas for "Lalla Rookh," but what publisher would be rash enough to pay twenty-five thousand dollars for the masterpiece of a minor poet now? The book, except in very rare instances, makes nothing like the return to the author that the magazine makes, and there are but two or three authors who find their account in that form of publication. Those who do, those who sell the most widely in book form, are often not at all desired by editors; with difficulty they get a serial accepted by any principal magazine. On the other hand, there are authors whose books, compared with

those of the popular favorites, do not sell, and yet they are eagerly sought for by editors; they are paid the highest prices, and nothing that they offer is refused. These are literary artists; and it ought to be plain from what I am saying that in belles-lettres, at least, most of the best literature now first sees the light in the magazines, and most of the second best appears first in book form. The old-fashioned people who flatter themselves upon their distinction in not reading magazine fiction, or magazine poetry, make a great mistake, and simply class themselves with the public whose taste is so crude that they cannot enjoy the best. Of course this is true mainly, if not merely, of belles-lettres; history, science, politics, metaphysics, in spite of the many excellent articles and papers in these sorts upon what used to be called various emergent occasions, are still to be found at their best in books. The most monumental example of literature, at once light and good, which has first reached the public in book form is in the different publications of Mark Twain; but Mr. Clemens has of late turned to the magazines too, and now takes their mint mark before he passes into general circulation. All this may change again, but at present the magazines--we have no longer any reviews--form the most direct approach to that part of our reading public which likes the highest things in literary art. Their readers, if we may judge from the quality of the literature they get, are more refined than the book readers in our community; and their taste has no doubt been cultivated by that of the disciplined and experienced editors. So far as I have known these they are men of aesthetic conscience, and of generous sympathy. They have their preferences in the different kinds, and they have their theory of what kind will be most acceptable to their readers; but they exercise their selective function with the wish to give them the best things they can. I do not know one of them--and it has been my good fortune to know them nearly all--who would print a wholly inferior thing for the sake of an inferior class of readers, though they may sometimes decline a good thing because for one reason or another they believe it would not be liked. Still, even this does not often happen; they would rather chance the good thing they doubted of than underrate their readers' judgment.

New writers often suppose themselves rejected because they are unknown; but the unknown man of force and quality is of all others the man whom the editor welcomes to his page. He knows that there is always a danger that the reigning favorite may fail to please; that at any rate, in the order of things, he is passing away, and that if the magazine is not to pass away with the men who have made it, there must be a constant infusion of fresh life. Few editors are such fools and knaves as to let their personal feeling disable their judgment; and the young writer who gets his manuscript back may be sure that it is not because the editor dislikes him, for some reason or no reason. Above all, he can trust me that his contribution has not been passed unread, or has failed of the examination it merits.

Editors are not men of infallible judgment, but they do use their judgment, and it is usually good.

The young author who wins recognition in a first-class magazine has achieved a double success, first, with the editor, and then with the best reading public. Many factitious and fallacious literary reputations have been made through books, but very few have been made through the magazines, which are not only the best means of living, but of outliving, with the author; they are both bread and fame to him. If I insist a little upon the high office which this modern form of publication fulfils in the literary world, it is because I am impatient of the antiquated and ignorant prejudice which classes the magazines as ephemeral. They are ephemeral in form, but in substance they are not ephemeral, and what is best in them awaits its resurrection in the book, which, as the first form, is so often a lasting death. An interesting proof of the value of the magazine to literature is the fact that a good novel will have wider acceptance as a book from having been a magazine serial.

I am not sure that the decay of the book is not owing somewhat to the decay of reviewing. This does not now seem to me so thorough, or even so general as it was some years ago, and I think the book oftener comes to the buyer without the warrant of a critical estimate than it once did. That is never the case with material printed in a magazine of high class. A well-trained critic, who is bound by the strongest ties of honor and interest not to betray either his employer or his public, has judged it, and his practical approval is a warrant of quality.

VI.

Under the regime of the great literary periodicals the prosperity of literary men would be much greater than it actually is, if the magazines were altogether literary. But they are not, and this is one reason why literature is still the hungriest of the professions. Two-thirds of the magazines are made up of material which, however excellent, is without literary quality. Very probably this is because even the highest class of readers, who are the magazine readers, have small love of pure literature, which seems to have been growing less and less in all classes. I say seems, because there are really no means of ascertaining the fact, and it may be that the editors are mistaken in making their periodicals two-thirds popular science, politics, economics, and the timely topics which I will call contemporaries; I have sometimes thought they were. But however that may be, their efforts in this direction have narrowed the field of literary industry, and darkened the hope of literary prosperity kindled by the unexampled prosperity of their periodicals. They pay very well indeed for literature; they pay from five or six dollars a thousand words for the work of the unknown writer, to a hundred and fifty dollars a thousand words for that of the most famous,

or the most popular, if there is a difference between fame and popularity; but they do not, altogether, want enough literature to justify the best business talent in devoting itself to belles-lettres, to fiction, or poetry, or humorous sketches of travel, or light essays; business talent can do far better in drygoods, groceries, drugs, stocks, real estate, railroads, and the like. I do not think there is any danger of a ruinous competition from it in the field which, though narrow, seems so rich to us poor fellows, whose business talent is small, at the best.

The most of the material contributed to the magazines is the subject of agreement between the editor and the author; it is either suggested by the author, or is the fruit of some suggestion from the editor; in any case the price is stipulated beforehand, and it is no longer the custom for a well-known contributor to leave the payment to the justice or the generosity of the publisher; that was never a fair thing to either, nor ever a wise thing. Usually, the price is so much a thousand words, a truly odious method of computing literary value, and one well calculated to make the author feel keenly the hatefulness of selling his art at all. It is as if a painter sold his picture at so much a square inch, or a sculptor bargained away a group of statuary by the pound. But it is a custom that you cannot always successfully quarrel with, and most writers gladly consent to it, if only the price a thousand words is large enough. The sale to the editor means the sale of the serial rights only, but if the publisher of the magazine is also a publisher of books, the republication of the material is supposed to be his right, unless there is an understanding to the contrary; the terms for this are another affair. Formerly something more could be got for the author by the simultaneous appearance of his work in an English magazine, but now the great American magazines, which pay far higher prices than any others in the world, have a circulation in England so much exceeding that of any English periodical, that the simultaneous publication can no longer be arranged for from this side, though I believe it is still done here from the other side.

VII.

I think this is the case of authorship as it now stands with regard to the magazines. I am not sure that the case is in every way improved for young authors. The magazines all maintain a staff for the careful examination of manuscripts, but as most of the material they print has been engaged, the number of volunteer contributions that they can use is very small; one of the greatest of them, I know, does not use fifty in the course of a year. The new writer, then, must be very good to be accepted, and when accepted he may wait long before he is printed. The pressure is so great in these avenues to the public favor that one, two, three years, are no uncommon periods of delay. If the writer has not the patience for this, or has a soul above cooling

his heels in the courts of fame, or must do his best to earn something at once, the book is his immediate hope. How slight a hope the book is I have tried to hint already, but if a book is vulgar enough in sentiment, and crude enough in taste, and flashy enough in incident, or, better or worse still, if it is a bit hot in the mouth, and promises impropriety if not indecency, there is a very fair chance of its success; I do not mean success with a self-respecting publisher, but with the public, which does not personally put its name to it, and is not openly smirched by it. I will not talk of that kind of book, however, but of the book which the young author has written out of an unspoiled heart and an untainted mind, such as most young men and women write; and I will suppose that it has found a publisher. It is human nature, as competition has deformed human nature, for the publisher to wish the author to take all the risks, and he possibly proposes that the author shall publish it at his own expense, and let him have a percentage of the retail price for managing it. If not that, he proposes that the author shall pay for the stereotype plates, and take fifteen per cent. of the price of the book; or if this will not go, if the author cannot, rather than will not do it (he is commonly only too glad to do anything he can), then the publisher offers him ten per cent. of the retail price after the first thousand copies have been sold. But if he fully believes in the book, he will give ten per cent. from the first copy sold, and pay all the costs of publication himself. The book is to be retailed for a dollar and a half, and the publisher is very well pleased with a new book that sells fifteen hundred copies. Whether the author has as much reason to be so is a question, but if the book does not sell more he has only himself to blame, and had better pocket in silence the two hundred and twenty-five dollars he gets for it, and bless his publisher, and try to find work somewhere at five dollars a week. The publisher has not made any more, if quite as much as the author, and until a book has sold two thousand copies the division is fair enough. After that, the heavier expenses of manufacturing have been defrayed, and the book goes on advertising itself; there is merely the cost of paper, printing, binding, and marketing to be met, and the arrangement becomes fairer and fairer for the publisher. The author has no right to complain of this, in the case of his first book, which he is only too grateful to get accepted at all. If it succeeds, he has himself to blame for making the same arrangement for his second or third; it is his fault, or else it is his necessity, which is practically the same thing. It will be business for the publisher to take advantage of his necessity quite the same as if it were his fault; but I do not say that he will always do so; I believe he will very often not do so.

At one time there seemed a probability of the enlargement of the author's gains by subscription publication, and one very well-known American author prospered fabulously in that way. The percentage offered by the subscription houses was only about half as much as that paid by the trade, but the sales were so much

greater that the author could very well afford to take it. Where the book-dealer sold ten, the book-agent sold a hundred; or at least he did so in the case of Mark Twain's books; and we all thought it reasonable he could do so with ours. Such of us as made experiment of him, however, found the facts illogical. No book of literary quality was made to go by subscription except Mr. Clemens's books, and I think these went because the subscription public never knew what good literature they were. This sort of readers, or buyers, were so used to getting something worthless for their money, that they would not spend it for artistic fiction, or indeed for any fiction all, except Mr. Clemens's, which they probably supposed bad. Some good books of travel had a measurable success through the book agents, but not at all the success that had been hoped for; and I believe now the subscription trade again publishes only compilations, or such works as owe more to the skill of the editor than the art of the writer. Mr. Clemens himself no longer offers his books to the public in that way.

It is not common, I think, in this country, to publish on the half-profits system, but it is very common in England, where, owing probably to the moisture in the air, which lends a fairy outline to every prospect, it seems to be peculiarly alluring. One of my own early books was published there on these terms, which I accepted with the insensate joy of the young author in getting any terms from a publisher. The book sold, sold every copy of the small first edition, and in due time the publisher's statement came. I did not think my half of the profits was very great, but it seemed a fair division after every imaginable cost had been charged up against my poor book, and that frail venture had been made to pay the expenses of composition, corrections, paper, printing, binding, advertising, and editorial copies. The wonder ought to have been that there was anything at all coming to me, but I was young and greedy then, and I really thought there ought to have been more. I was disappointed, but I made the best of it, of course, and took the account to the junior partner of the house which employed me, and said that I should like to draw on him for the sum due me from the London publishers. He said, Certainly; but after a glance at the account he smiled and said he supposed I knew how much the sum was? I answered, Yes; it was eleven pounds nine shillings, was not it? But I owned at the same time that I never was good at figures, and that I found English money peculiarly baffling. He laughed now, and said, It was eleven shillings and nine pence. In fact, after all those charges for composition, corrections, paper, printing, binding, advertising, and editorial copies, there was a most ingenious and wholly surprising charge of ten per cent. commission on sales, which reduced my half from pounds to shillings, and handsomely increased the publisher's half in proportion. I do not now dispute the justice of the charge. It was not the fault of the half-profits system, it was the fault of the glad young author who did not distinctly inform himself of its mysterious nature in agreeing to it, and had only to reproach

himself if he was finally disappointed.

But there is always something disappointing in the accounts of publishers, which I fancy is because authors are strangely constituted, rather than because publishers are so. I will confess that I have such inordinate expectations of the sale of my books which I hope I think modestly of, that the sales reported to me never seem great enough. The copyright due me, no matter how handsome it is, appears deplorably mean, and I feel impoverished for several days after I get it. But then, I ought to add that my balance in the bank is always much less than I have supposed it to be, and my own checks, when they come back to me, have the air of having been in a conspiracy to betray me.

No, we literary men must learn, no matter how we boast ourselves in business, that the distress we feel from our publisher's accounts is simply idiopathic; and I for one wish to bear my witness to the constant good faith and uprightness of publishers.

It is supposed that because they have the affair altogether in their hands they are apt to take advantage in it; but this does not follow, and as a matter of fact they have the affair no more in their own hands than any other business man you have an open account with. There is nothing to prevent you from looking at their books, except your own innermost belief and fear that their books are correct, and that your literature has brought you so little because it has sold so little.

The author is not to blame for his superficial delusion to the contrary, especially if he has written a book that has set everyone talking, because it is of a vital interest. It may be of a vital interest, without being at all the kind of book people want to buy; it may be the kind of book that they are content to know at second hand; there are such fatal books; but hearing so much, and reading so much about it, the author cannot help hoping that it has sold much more than the publisher says. The publisher is undoubtedly honest, however, and the author had better put away the comforting question of his integrity.

The English writers seem largely to suspect their publishers (I cannot say with how much reason, for my English publisher is Scotch, and I should be glad to be so true a man as I think him); but I believe that American authors, when not flown with flattering reviews, as largely trust theirs. Of course there are rogues in every walk of life. I will not say that I ever personally met them in the flowery paths of literature, but I have heard of other people meeting them there, just as I have heard of people seeing ghosts, and I have to believe in both the rogues and the ghosts, without the witness of my own senses. I suppose, upon such grounds mainly, that there are wicked publishers, but in the case of our books that do not sell, I am afraid that it is the graceless and inappreciative public which is far more to blame than the wickedest of the publishers. It is

true that publishers will drive a hard bargain when they can, or when they must; but there is nothing to hinder an author from driving a hard bargain, too, when he can, or when he must; and it is to be said of the publisher that he is always more willing to abide by the bargain when it is made than the author is; perhaps because he has the best of it. But he has not always the best of it; I have known publishers too generous to take advantage of the innocence of authors; and I fancy that if publishers had to do with any race less diffident than authors, they would have won a repute for unselfishness that they do not now enjoy. It is certain that in the long period when we flew the black flag of piracy there were many among our corsairs on the high seas of literature who paid a fair price for the stranger craft they seized; still oftener they removed the cargo, and released their capture with several weeks' provision; and although there was undoubtedly a good deal of actual throat-cutting and scuttling, still I feel sure that there was less of it than there would have been in any other line of business released to the unrestricted plunder of the neighbor. There was for a long time even a comity among these amiable buccaneers, who agreed not to interfere with each other, and so were enabled to pay over to their victims some portion of the profit from their stolen goods. Of all business men publishers are probably the most faithful and honorable, and are only surpassed in virtue when men of letters turn business men.

Publishers have their little theories, their little superstitions, and their blind faith in the great god Chance, which we all worship. These things lead them into temptation and adversity, but they seem to do fairly well as business men, even in their own behalf. They do not make above the usual ninety-five per cent. of failures, and more publishers than authors get rich. I have known several publishers who kept their carriages, but I have never known even one author to keep his carriage on the profits of his literature, unless it was in some modest country place where one could take care of one's own horse. But this is simply because the authors are so many, and the publishers are so few. If we wish to reverse their positions, we must study how to reduce the number of authors and increase the number of publishers; then prosperity will smile our way.

VIII.

Some theories or superstitions publishers and authors share together. One of these is that it is best to keep your books all in the hands of one publisher if you can, because then he can give them more attention and sell more of them. But my own experience is that when my books were in the hands of three publishers they sold quite as well as when one had them; and a fellow author whom I approached in question of this venerable belief, laughed at it. This bold heretic held that it was best

to give each new book to a new publisher, for then the fresh man put all his energies into pushing it; but if you had them all together, the publisher rested in a vain security that one book would sell another, and that the fresh venture would revive the public interest in the stale ones. I never knew this to happen, and I must class it with the superstitions of the trade. It may be so in other and more constant countries, but in our fickle republic, each last book has to fight its own way to public favor, much as if it had no sort of literary lineage. Of course this is stating it rather largely, and the truth will be found inside rather than outside of my statement; but there is at least truth enough in it to give the young author pause. While one is preparing to sell his basket of glass, he may as well ask himself whether it is better to part with all to one dealer or not; and if he kicks it over, in spurning the imaginary customer who asks the favor of taking entire stock, that will be his fault, and not the fault of the question.

However, the most important question of all with the man of letters as a man of business, is what kind of book will sell the best of itself, because, at the end of the ends, a book sells itself or does not sell at all; kissing, after long ages of reasoning and a great deal of culture, still goes by favor, and though innumerable generations of horses have been led to water, not one horse has yet been made to drink. With the best, or the worst, will in the world, no publisher can force a book into acceptance. Advertising will not avail, and reviewing is notoriously futile. If the book does not strike the popular fancy, or deal with some universal interest, which need by no means be a profound or important one, the drums and the cymbals shall be beaten in vain. The book may be one of the best and wisest books in the world, but if it has not this sort of appeal in it, the readers of it, and worse yet, the purchasers, will remain few, though fit. The secret of this, like most other secrets of a rather ridiculous world, is in the awful keeping of fate, and we can only hope to surprise it by some lucky chance. To plan a surprise of it, to aim a book at the public favor, is the most hopeless of all endeavors, as it is one of the unworthiest; and I can, neither as a man of letters nor as a man of business, counsel the young author to do it. The best that you can do is to write the book that it gives you the most pleasure to write, to put as much heart and soul as you have about you into it, and then hope as hard as you can to reach the heart and soul of the great multitude of your fellow-men. That, and that alone, is good business for a man of letters.

The failures in literature are no less mystifying than the successes, though they are upon the whole not so mortifying. I have seen a good many of these failures, and I know of one case so signal that I must speak of it, even to the discredit of the public. It is the case of a novelist whose work seems to me of the best that we have done in that sort, whose books represent our life with singular force and singular insight, and whose

equipment for his art, through study, travel, and the world, is of the rarest. He has a strong, robust, manly style; his stories are well knit, and his characters are of the flesh and blood complexion which we know in our daily experience; and yet he has failed to achieve one of the first places in our literature; if I named his name here, I am afraid that it would be quite unknown to the greatest part of my readers. I have never been able to account for his want of success, except through the fact that his stories did not please women, though why they did not, I cannot guess. They did not like them for the same reason that they did not like Dr. Fell; and that reason was quite enough for them. It must be enough for him, I am afraid; but I believe that if this author had been writing in a country where men decided the fate of books, the fate of his books would have been different.

The man of letters must make up his mind that in the United States the fate of a book is in the hands of the women. It is the women with us who have the most leisure, and they read the most books. They are far better educated, for the most part, than our men, and their tastes, if not their minds, are more cultivated. Our men read the newspapers, but our women read the books; the more refined among them read the magazines. If they do not always know what is good, they do know what pleases them, and it is useless to quarrel with their decisions, for there is no appeal from them. To go from them to the men would be going from a higher to a lower court, which would be honestly surprised and bewildered, if the thing were possible. As I say, the author of light literature, and often the author of solid literature, must resign himself to obscurity unless the ladies choose to recognize him. Yet it would be impossible to forecast their favor for this kind or that. Who could prophesy it for another, who guess it for himself? We must strive blindly for it, and hope somehow that our best will also be our prettiest; but we must remember at the same time that it is not the ladies' man who is the favorite of the ladies.

There are of course a few, a very few, of our greatest authors, who have striven forward to the first place in our Valhalla without the help of the largest reading-class among us; but I should say that these were chiefly the humorists, for whom women are said nowhere to have any warm liking, and who have generally with us come up through the newspapers, and have never lost the favor of the newspaper readers. They have become literary men, as it were, without the newspapers' readers knowing it; but those who have approached literature from another direction, have won fame in it chiefly by grace of the women, who first read them, and then made their husbands and fathers read them. Perhaps, then, and as a matter of business, it would be well for a serious author, when he finds that he is not pleasing the women, and probably never will please them, to turn humorous author, and aim at the countenance of the men. Except as a humorist he certainly never will get it, for your American, when he is not making money, or trying to do it, is making a joke, or trying to do it.

IX.

I hope that I have not been hinting that the author who approaches literature through journalism is not as fine and high a literary man as the author who comes directly to it, or through some other avenue; I have not the least notion of condemning myself by any such judgment. But I think it is pretty certain that fewer and fewer authors are turning from journalism to literature, though the entente cordiale between the two professions seems as great as ever. I fancy, though I may be as mistaken in this as I am in a good many other things, that most journalists would have been literary men if they could, at the beginning, and that the kindness they almost always show to young authors is an effect of the self-pity they feel for their own thwarted wish to be authors. When an author is once warm in the saddle, and is riding his winged horse to glory, the case is different: they have then often no sentiment about him; he is no longer the image of their own young aspiration, and they would willingly see Pegasus buck under him, or have him otherwise brought to grief and shame. They are apt to gird at him for his unhallowed gains, and they would be quite right in this if they proposed any way for him to live without them; as I have allowed at the outset, the gains ARE unhallowed. Apparently it is unseemly for an author or two to be making half as much by their pens as popular ministers often receive in salary; the public is used to the pecuniary prosperity of some of the clergy, and at least sees nothing droll in it; but the paragrapher can always get a smile out of his readers at the gross disparity between the ten thousand dollars Jones gets for his novel, and the five pounds Milton got for his epic. I have always thought Milton was paid too little, but I will own that he ought not to have been paid at all, if it comes to that. Again, I say that no man ought to live by any art; it is a shame to the art if not to the artist; but as yet there is no means of the artist's living otherwise, and continuing an artist.

The literary man has certainly no complaint to make of the newspaper man, generally speaking. I have often thought with amazement of the kindness shown by the press to our whole unworthy craft, and of the help so lavishly and freely given to rising and even risen authors. To put it coarsely, brutally, I do not suppose that any other business receives so much gratuitous advertising, except the theatre. It is enormous, the space given in the newspapers to literary notes, literary announcements, reviews, interviews, personal paragraphs, biographies, and all the rest, not to mention the vigorous and incisive attacks made from time to time upon different authors for their opinions of romanticism, realism, capitalism, socialism, Catholicism, and Sandemanianism. I have sometimes doubted whether the public cared for so much of it all as the editors gave them, but I have always said this under my breath,

and I have thankfully taken my share of the common bounty. A curious fact, however, is that this vast newspaper publicity seems to have very little to do with an author's popularity, though ever so much with his notoriety. Those strange subterranean fellows who never come to the surface in the newspapers, except for a contemptuous paragraph at long intervals, outsell the famous of the celebrities, and secretly have their horses and yachts and country seats, while immodest merit is left to get about on foot and look up summer board at the cheaper hotels. That is probably right, or it would not happen; it seems to be in the general scheme, like millionairism and pauperism; but it becomes a question, then, whether the newspapers, with all their friendship for literature, and their actual generosity to literary men, can really help one much to fortune, however much they help one to fame. Such a question is almost too dreadful, and though I have asked it, I will not attempt to answer it. I would much rather consider the question whether if the newspapers can make an author they can also unmake him, and I feel pretty safe in saying that I do not think they can. The Afreet once out of the bottle can never be coaxed back or cudgelled back; and the author whom the newspapers have made cannot be unmade by the newspapers. They consign him to oblivion with a rumor that fills the land, and they keep visiting him there with an uproar which attracts more and more notice to him. An author who has long enjoyed their favor, suddenly and rather mysteriously loses it, through his opinions on certain matters of literary taste, say. For the space of five or six years he is denounced with a unanimity and an incisive vigor that ought to convince him there is something wrong. If he thinks it is his censors, he clings to his opinions with an abiding constance, while ridicule, obloquy, caricature, burlesque, critical refutation and personal detraction follow unsparingly upon every expression, for instance, of his belief that romantic fiction is the highest form of fiction, and that the base, sordid, photographic, commonplace school of Tolstoy, Tourguenief, Zola, Hardy, and James, are unworthy a moment's comparison with the school of Rider Haggard. All this ought certainly to unmake the author in question, and strew his disjecta membra wide over the realm of oblivion. But this is not really the effect. Slowly but surely the clamor dies away, and the author, without relinquishing one of his wicked opinions, or in anywise showing himself repentant, remains apparently whole; and he even returns in a measure to the old kindness: not indeed to the earlier day of perfectly smooth things, but certainly to as much of it as he merits.

I would not have the young author, from this imaginary case, believe that it is well either to court or to defy the good opinion of the press. In fact, it will not only be better taste, but it will be better business for him to keep it altogether out of his mind. There is only one whom he can safely try to please, and that is himself. If he does this he will very probably please other people; but if he does not please himself he may be

sure that he will not please them; the book which he has not enjoyed writing, no one will enjoy reading. Still, I would not have him attach too little consequence to the influence of the press. I should say, let him take the celebrity it gives him gratefully but not too seriously; let him reflect that he is often the necessity rather than the ideal of the paragrapher, and that the notoriety the journalists bestow upon him is not the measure of their acquaintance with his work, far less his meaning. They are good fellows, those poor, hard-pushed fellows of the press, but the very conditions of their censure, friendly or unfriendly, forbid it thoroughness, and it must often have more zeal than knowledge in it.

X.

Whether the newspapers will become the rivals of the magazines as the vehicle of literature is a matter that still remains in doubt with the careful observer, after a decade of the newspaper syndicate. Our daily papers never had the habit of the feuilleton as those of the European continent have it; they followed the English tradition in this, though they departed from it in so many other things; and it was not till the Sunday editions of the great dailies arose that there was any real hope for the serial in the papers. I suspect that it was the vast demand for material in their pages--twelve, eighteen, twenty-four, thirty-six--that created the syndicate, for it was the necessity of the Sunday edition not only to have material in abundance, but, with all possible regard for quality, to have it cheap; and the syndicate, when it came into being, imagined a means of meeting this want. It sold the same material to as many newspapers as it could for simultaneous publication in their Sunday editions, which had each its special field, and did not compete with another.

I do not think the syndicate began with serials, and I do not think it is likely to end with them. It has rather worked the vein of interviews, personal adventure, popular science, useful information, travel, sketches, and short stories. Still it has placed a good many serial stories, and at pretty good prices, but not generally so good as those the magazines pay the better sort of writers; for the worse sort it has offered perhaps the best market they have had out of book form. By the newspapers, the syndicate conceives, and perhaps justly, that something sensational is desired; yet all the serial stories it has placed cannot be called sensational. It has enlarged the field of belles-lettres, certainly, but not permanently, I think, in the case of the artistic novel. As yet the women, who form the largest, if not the only cultivated class among us, have not taken very cordially to the Sunday edition, except for its social gossip; they certainly do not go to it for their fiction, and its fiction is mainly of the inferior sort with which boys and men beguile their leisure.

In fact the newspapers prefer to remain newspapers, at least in quality if not in form; and I heard a story the other day from a charming young writer of his experience with them, which may have some instruction for the magazines that less wisely aim to become newspapers. He said that when he carried his work to the editors they struck out what he thought the best of it, because it was what they called magaziny; not contemptuously, but with an instinctive sense of what their readers wanted of them, and did not want. It was apparent that they did not want literary art, or even the appearance of it; they wanted their effects primary; they wanted their emotions raw, or at least saignantes from the joint of fact, and not prepared by the fancy or the taste.

The syndicate has no doubt advanced the prosperity of the short story by increasing the demand for it. We Americans had already done pretty well in that kind, for there was already a great demand for the short story in the magazines; but the syndicate of Sunday editions particularly cultivated it, and made it very paying. I have heard that some short-story writers made the syndicate pay more for their wares than they got from the magazines for them, considering that the magazine publication could enhance their reputation, but the Sunday edition could do nothing for it. They may have been right or not in this; I will not undertake to say, but that was the business view of the case with them.

In spite of the fact that short stories when gathered into a volume and republished would not sell so well as a novel, the short story flourished, and its success in the periodicals began to be felt in the book trade: volumes of short stories suddenly began to sell. But now again, it is said the bottom has dropped out, and they do not sell, and their adversity in book form threatens to affect them in the magazines; an editor told me the other day that he had more short stories than he knew what to do with; and I was not offering him a short story of my own, either.

A permanent decline in the market for a kind of literary art which we have excelled in, or if we have not excelled, have done some of our most exquisite work, would be a pity.

There are other sorts of light literature once greatly in demand, but now apparently no longer desired by editors, who ought to know what their readers desire. Among these is the travel sketch, to me a very agreeable kind, and really to be regretted in its decline. There are some reasons for its decline besides a change of taste in readers, and a possible surfeit. Travel itself has become so universal that everybody, in a manner, has been everywhere, and the foreign scene has no longer the charm of strangeness. We do not think the Old World either so romantic or so ridiculous as we used; and perhaps from an instinctive perception of this altered mood writers no longer appeal to our sentiment or our humor with sketches of outlandish people and

places. Of course this can hold true only in a general way; the thing is still done, but not nearly so much done as formerly. When one thinks of the long line of American writers who have greatly pleased in this sort, and who even got their first fame in it, one must grieve to see it obsolescent. Irving, Curtis, Bayard Taylor, Herman Melville, Ross Browne, Ik Marvell, Longfellow, Lowell, Story, Mr. James, Mr. Aldrich, Colonel Hay, Mr. Warner, Mrs. Hunt, Mr. C.W. Stoddard, Mark Twain, and many others whose names will not come to me at the moment, have in their several ways richly contributed to our pleasure in it; but I cannot now fancy a young author finding favor with an editor in a sketch of travel, or a study of foreign manners and customs; his work would have to be of the most signal importance and brilliancy to overcome the editor's feeling that the thing had been done already; and I believe that a publisher if offered a book of such things, would look at it askance, and plead the well-known quiet of the trade. Still, I may be mistaken.

I am rather more confident about the decline of another literary species, namely, the light essay. We have essays enough and to spare, of certain soberer and severer sorts, such as grapple with problems and deal with conditions; but the kind I mean, the slightly humorous, gentle, refined, and humane kind, seems no longer to abound as it once did. I do not know whether the editor discourages them, knowing his readers' frame, or whether they do not offer themselves, but I seldom find them in the magazines. I certainly do not believe that if anyone were now to write essays such as Mr. Warner's "Backlog Studies," an editor would refuse them; and perhaps nobody really writes them. Nobody seems to write the sort that Colonel Higginson formerly contributed to the periodicals, or such as Emerson wrote. Without a great name behind it, I am afraid that a volume of essays would find few buyers, even after the essays had made a public in the magazines. There are, of course, instances to the contrary, but they are not so many or so striking as to make me think that the essay could not be offered as a good opening for business talent.

I suspect that good poetry by well-known hands was never better paid in the magazines than it is now. I must say, too, that I think the quality of the minor poetry of our day is better than that of twenty-five or thirty years ago. I could name half a score of young poets whose work from time to time gives me great pleasure, by the reality of its feeling, and the delicate perfection of its art, but I will not name them, for fear of passing over half a score of others equally meritorious. We have certainly no reason to be discouraged, whatever reason the poets themselves have to be so, and I do not think that even in the short story our younger writers are doing better work than they are doing in the slighter forms of verse. Yet the notion of inviting business talent into this field would be as preposterous as that of asking it to devote itself to the essay. What book of verse by a recent poet, if we except some such peculiarly gifted

poet as Mr. Whitcomb Riley, has paid its expenses, not to speak of any profit to the author? Of course, it would be rather more offensive and ridiculous that it should do so than that any other form of literary art should do so; and yet there is no more provision in our economic system for the support of the poet apart from his poems, than there is for the support of the novelist apart from his novel. One could not make any more money by writing poetry than by writing history, but it is a curious fact that while the historians have usually been rich men, and able to afford the luxury of writing history, the poets have usually been poor men, with no pecuniary justification in their devotion to a calling which is so seldom an election.

To be sure, it can be said for them that it costs far less to set up poet than to set up historian. There is no outlay for copying documents, or visiting libraries, or buying books. In fact, except as historian, the man of letters, in whatever walk, has not only none of the expenses of other men of business, but none of the expenses of other artists. He has no such outlay to make for materials, or models, or studio rent as the painter or the sculptor has, and his income, such as it is, is immediate. If he strikes the fancy of the editor with the first thing he offers, as he very well may, it is as well with him as with other men after long years of apprenticeship. Although he will always be the better for an apprenticeship, and the longer apprenticeship the better, he may practically need none at all. Such are the strange conditions of his acceptance with the public, that he may please better without it than with it. An author's first book is too often not only his luckiest, but really his best; it has a brightness that dies out under the school he puts himself to, but a painter or sculptor is only the gainer by all the school he can give himself.

XI.

In view of this fact it become again very hard to establish the author's status in the business world, and at moments I have grave question whether he belongs there at all, except as a novelist. There is, of course, no outlay for him in this sort, any more than in any other sort of literature, but it at least supposes and exacts some measure of preparation. A young writer may produce a brilliant and very perfect romance, just as he may produce a brilliant and very perfect poem, but in the field of realistic fiction, or in what we used to call the novel of manners, a writer can only produce an inferior book at the outset. For this work he needs experience and observation, not so much of others as of himself, for ultimately his characters will all come out of himself, and he will need to know motive and character with such thoroughness and accuracy as he can acquire only through his own heart. A man remains in a measure strange to himself as long as he lives, and the very sources of novelty in his work will be within himself; he can continue to give it

freshness in no other way than by knowing himself better and better. But a young writer and an untrained writer has not yet begun to be acquainted even with the lives of other men. The world around him remains a secret as well as the world within him, and both unfold themselves simultaneously to that experience of joy and sorrow that can come only with the lapse of time. Until he is well on toward forty, he will hardly have assimilated the materials of a great novel, although he may have accumulated them. The novelist, then, is a man of letters who is like a man of business in the necessity of preparation for his calling, though he does not pay store-rent, and may carry all his affairs under his hat, as the phrase is. He alone among men of letters may look forward to that sort of continuous prosperity which follows from capacity and diligence in other vocations; for story-telling is now a fairly recognized trade, and the story-teller has a money-standing in the economic world. It is not a very high standing, I think, and I have expressed the belief that it does not bring him the respect felt for men in other lines of business. Still our people cannot deny some consideration to a man who gets a hundred dollars a thousand words. That is a fact appreciable to business, and the man of letters in the line of fiction may reasonably feel that his place in our civilization, though he may owe it to the women who form the great mass of his readers, has something of the character of a vested interest in the eyes of men. There is, indeed, as yet no conspiracy law which will avenge the attempt to injure him in his business. A critic, or a dark conjuration of critics, may damage him at will and to the extent of their power, and he has no recourse but to write better books, or worse. The law will do nothing for him, and a boycott of his books might be preached with immunity by any class of men not liking his opinions on the question of industrial slavery or antipaedobaptism. Still the market for his wares is steadier than the market for any other kind of literary wares, and the prices are better. The historian, who is a kind of inferior realist, has something like the same steadiness in the market, but the prices he can command are much lower, and the two branches of the novelist's trade are not to be compared in a business way. As for the essayist, the poet, the traveller, the popular scientist, they are nowhere in the competition for the favor of readers. The reviewer, indeed, has a pretty steady call for his work, but I fancy the reviewers who get a hundred dollars a thousand words could all stand upon the point of a needle without crowding one another; I should rather like to see them doing it. Another gratifying fact of the situation is that the best writers of fiction who are most in demand with the magazines, probably get nearly as much money for their work as the inferior novelists who outsell them by tens of thousands, and who make their appeal to the innumerable multitude of the less educated and less cultivated buyers of fiction in book-form. I think they earn their money, but if I did not think all of the higher class of novelists earned so much money as they get, I should not be so invidious as to single out for reproach those who did not.

The difficulty about payment, as I have hinted, is that literature has no objective value really, but only a subjective value, if I may so express it. A poem, an essay, a novel, even a paper on political economy, may be worth gold untold to one reader, and worth nothing whatever to another. It may be precious to one mood of the reader, and worthless to another mood of the same reader. How, then, is it to be priced, and how is it to be fairly marketed? All people must be fed, and all people must be clothed, and all people must be housed; and so meat, raiment, and shelter are things of positive and obvious necessity, which may fitly have a market price put upon them. But there is no such positive and obvious necessity, I am sorry to say, for fiction, or not for the higher sort of fiction. The sort of fiction which corresponds to the circus and the variety theatre in the show-business seems essential to the spiritual health of the masses, but the most cultivated of the classes can get on, from time to time, without an artistic novel. This is a great pity, and I should be very willing that readers might feel something like the pangs of hunger and cold, when deprived of their finer fiction; but apparently they never do. Their dumb and passive need is apt only to manifest itself negatively, or in the form of weariness of this author or that. The publisher of books can ascertain the fact through the declining sales of a writer; but the editor of a magazine, who is the best customer of the best writers, must feel the market with a much more delicate touch. Sometimes it may be years before he can satisfy himself that his readers are sick of Smith, and are pining for Jones; even then he cannot know how long their mood will last, and he is by no means safe in cutting down Smith's price and putting up Jones's. With the best will in the world to pay justly, he cannot. Smith, who has been boring his readers to death for a year, may write to-morrow a thing that will please them so much that he will at once be a prime favorite again; and Jones, whom they have been asking for, may do something so uncharacteristic and alien that it will be a flat failure in the magazine. The only thing that gives either writer positive value is his acceptance with the reader; but the acceptance is from month to month wholly uncertain. Authors are largely matters of fashion, like this style of bonnet, or that shape of gown. Last spring the dresses were all made with lace berthas, and Smith was read; this year the butterfly capes are worn, and Jones is the favorite author. Who shall forecast the fall and winter modes?

XII.

In this inquiry it is always the author rather than the publisher, always the contributor rather than the editor, whom I am concerned for. I study the difficulties of the publisher and editor only because they involve the author and the contributor; if they did not, I will not say with how hard a heart I should turn from them; my only pang now in scrutinizing the business

conditions of literature is for the makers of literature, not the purveyors of it.

After all, and in spite of my vaunting title, is the man of letters ever a business man? I suppose that, strictly speaking, he never is, except in those rare instances where, through need or choice, he is the publisher as well as the author of his books. Then he puts something on the market and tries to sell it there, and is a man of business. But otherwise he is an artist merely, and is allied to the great mass of wage-workers who are paid for the labor they have put into the thing done or the thing made; who live by doing or making a thing, and not by marketing a thing after some other man has done it or made it. The quality of the thing has nothing to do with the economic nature of the case; the author is, in the last analysis, merely a workingman, and is under the rule that governs the workingman's life. If he is sick or sad, and cannot work, if he is lazy or tipsy and will not, then he earns nothing. He cannot delegate his business to a clerk or a manager; it will not go on while he is sleeping. The wage he can command depends strictly upon his skill and diligence.

I myself am neither sorry nor ashamed for this; I am glad and proud to be of those who eat their bread in the sweat of their own brows, and not the sweat of other men's brows; I think my bread is the sweeter for it. In the meantime I have no blame for business men; they are no more of the condition of things than we workingmen are; they did no more to cause it or create it; but I would rather be in my place than in theirs, and I wish that I could make all my fellow-artists realize that economically they are the same as mechanics, farmers, day-laborers. It ought to be our glory that we produce something, that we bring into the world something that was not choately there before; that at least we fashion or shape something anew; and we ought to feel the tie that binds us to all the toilers of the shop and field, not as a galling chain, but as a mystic bond also uniting us to Him who works hitherto and evermore.

I know very well that to the vast multitude of our fellow-workingmen we artists are the shadows of names, or not even the shadows. I like to look the facts in the face, for though their lineaments are often terrible, yet there is light nowhere else; and I will not pretend, in this light, that the masses care any more for us than we care for the masses, or so much. Nevertheless, and most distinctly, we are not of the classes. Except in our work, they have no use for us; if now and then they fancy qualifying their material splendor or their spiritual dulness with some artistic presence, the attempt is always a failure that bruises and abashes. In so far as the artist is a man of the world, he is the less an artist, and if he fashions himself upon fashion, he deforms his art. We all know that ghastly type; it is more absurd even than the figure which is really of the world, which was born and bred in it, and

conceives of nothing outside of it, or above it. In the social world, as well as in the business world, the artist is anomalous, in the actual conditions, and he is perhaps a little ridiculous.

Yet he has to be somewhere, poor fellow, and I think that he will do well to regard himself as in a transition state. He is really of the masses, but they do not know it, and what is worse, they do not know him; as yet the common people do not hear him gladly or hear him at all. He is apparently of the classes; they know him, and they listen to him; he often amuses them very much; but he is not quite at ease among them; whether they know it or not, he knows that he is not of their kind. Perhaps he will never be at home anywhere in the world as long as there are masses whom he ought to consort with, and classes whom he cannot consort with. The prospect is not brilliant for any artist now living, but perhaps the artist of the future will see in the flesh the accomplishment of that human equality of which the instinct has been divinely planted in the human soul.

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A PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNTER-CURRENT IN RECENT FICTION.

by William Dean Howells

This etext was created by Anthony J. Adam of Houston, Texas.

It is consoling as often as dismaying to find in what seems a cataclysmal tide of a certain direction a strong drift to the opposite quarter. It is so divinal, if not so perceptible, that its presence may usually be recognized as a beginning of the turn in every tide which is sure, sooner or later, to come. In reform, it is the menace of reaction; in reaction, it is the promise of reform; we may take heart as we must lose heart from it. A few years ago, when a movement which carried fiction to the highest place in literature was apparently of such onward and upward sweep that there could be no return or descent, there was a counter-current in it which stayed it at last, and pulled it back to that lamentable level where fiction is now sunk, and the word "novel" is again the synonym of all that is morally false and mentally despicable. Yet that this, too, is partly apparent, I think can be shown from some phases of actual fiction which happen to be its very latest phases, and which are of a significance as hopeful as it is interesting. Quite as surely as romanticism lurked at the heart of realism, something that we may call "psychologism" has been present in the

romanticism of the last four or five years, and has now begun to evolve itself in examples which it is the pleasure as well as the duty of criticism to deal with.

I.

No one in his day has done more to popularize the romanticism, now decadent, than Mr. Gilbert Parker; and he made way for it at its worst just because he was so much better than it was at its worst, because he was a poet of undeniable quality, and because he could bring to its intellectual squalor the graces and the powers which charm, though they could not avail to save it from final contempt. He saves himself in his latest novel, because, though still so largely romanticistic, its prevalent effect is psychologistic, which is the finer analogue of realistic, and which gave realism whatever was vital in it, as now it gives romanticism whatever will survive it. In "The Right of Way" Mr. Parker is not in a world where mere determinism rules, where there is nothing but the happening of things, and where this one or that one is important or unimportant according as things are happening to him or not, but has in himself no claim upon the reader's attention. Once more the novel begins to rise to its higher function, and to teach that men are somehow masters of their fate. His Charley Steele is, indeed, as unpromising material for the experiment, in certain ways, as could well be chosen. One of the few memorable things that Bulwer said, who said so many quotable things, was that pure intellectuality is the devil, and on his plane Charley Steele comes near being pure intellectual. He apprehends all things from the mind, and does the effects even of goodness from the pride of mental strength. Add to these conditions of his personality that pathologically he is from time to time a drunkard, with always the danger of remaining a drunkard, and you have a figure of which so much may be despaired that it might almost be called hopeless. I confess that in the beginning this brilliant, pitiless lawyer, this consciencelessly powerful advocate, at once mocker and poseur, all but failed to interest me. A little of him and his monocle went such a great way with me that I thought I had enough of him by the end of the trial, where he gets off a man charged with murder, and then cruelly snubs the homicide in his gratitude; and I do not quite know how I kept on to the point where Steele in his drunkenness first dazzles and then insults the gang of drunken lumbermen, and begins his second life in the river where they have thrown him, and where his former client finds him. From that point I could not forsake him to the end, though I found myself more than once in the world where things happen of themselves and do not happen from the temperaments of its inhabitants. In a better and wiser world, the homicide would not perhaps be at hand so opportunely to save the life of the advocate who had saved his; but one consents to this, as one consents to a great deal besides in the story, which is imaginably the survival of a former method. The artist's affair

is to report the appearance, the effect; and in the real world, the appearance, the effect, is that of law and not of miracle. Nature employs the miracle so very sparingly that most of us go through life without seeing one, and some of us contract such a prejudice against miracles that when they are performed for us we suspect a trick. When I suffered from this suspicion in "The Right of Way" I was the more vexed because I felt that I was in the hands of a connoisseur of character who had no need of miracles.

I have liked Mr. Parker's treatment of French-Canadian life, as far as I have known it; and in this novel it is one of the principal pleasures for me. He may not have his habitant, his seigneur or his cure down cold, but he makes me believe that he has, and I can ask no more than that of him. In like manner, he makes the ambient, physical as well as social, sensible around me: the cold rivers, the hard, clear skies, the snowy woods and fields, the little frozen villages of Canada. In this book, which is historical of the present rather than the past, he gives one a realizing sense of the Canadians, not only in the country but in the city, at least so far as they affect each other psychologically in society, and makes one feel their interesting temperamental difference from Americans. His Montrealers are still Englishmen in their strenuous individuality; but in the frank expression of character, of eccentricity, Charley Steele is like a type of lawyer in our West, of an epoch when people were not yet content to witness ideals of themselves, but when they wished to be their poetry rather than to read it. In his second life he has the charm for the imagination that a disembodied spirit might have, if it could be made known to us in the circumstances of another world. He has, indeed, made almost as clean a break with his past as if he had really been drowned in the river. When, after the term of oblivion, in which he knows nothing of his past self, he is restored to his identity by a famous surgeon too opportunely out of Paris, on a visit to his brother, the cure, the problem is how he shall expiate the errors of his past, work out his redemption in his new life; and the author solves it for him by appointing him to a life of unselfish labor, illumined by actions of positive beneficence. It is something like the solution which Goethe imagines for Faust, and perhaps no other is imaginable. In contriving it, Mr. Parker indulges the weaker brethren with an abundance of accident and a luxury of catastrophe, which the reader interested in the psychology of the story may take as little account of as he likes. Without so much of them he might have made a sculpturesque romance as clearly and nobly definite as "The Scarlet Letter"; with them he has made a most picturesque romantic novel. His work, as I began by saying, or hinting, is the work of a poet, in conception, and I wish that in some details of diction it were as elect as the author's verse is. But one must not expect everything; and in what it is, "The Right of Way" satisfies a reasonable demand on the side of literature, while it more than meets a reasonable expectation on the side of

psychological interest. Distinctly it marks an epoch in contemporary noveling, and mounts far above the average best toward the day of better things which I hope it is not rash to image dawning.

II.

I am sure I do not merely fancy the auroral light in a group of stories by another poet. "The Ruling Passion," Dr. Henry Van Dyke calls his book, which relates itself by a double tie to Mr. Parker's novel through kinship of Canadian landscape and character, and through the prevalence of psychologism over determinism in it. In the situations and incidents studied with sentiment that saves itself from sentimentality sometimes with greater and sometimes with less ease, but saves itself, the appeal is from the soul in the character to the soul in the reader, and not from brute event to his sensation. I believe that I like best among these charming things the two sketches--they are hardly stories--"A Year of Nobility" and "The Keeper of the Dight," though if I were asked to say why, I should be puzzled. Perhaps it is because I find in the two pieces named a greater detachment than I find in some others of Dr. Van Dyke's delightful volume, and greater evidence that he has himself so thoroughly and finally mastered his material that he is no longer in danger of being unduly affected by it. That is a danger which in his very quality of lyrical poet he is most liable to, for he is above all a lyrical poet, and such drama as the chorus usually comments is the drama next his heart. The pieces, in fact, are so many idyls, and their realism is an effect which he has felt rather than reasoned his way to. It is implicational rather than intentional. It is none the worse but all the better on that account, and I cannot say that the psychologism is the worse for being frankly, however uninsistently, moralized. A humor, delicate and genuine as the poetry of the stories, plays through them, and the milde macht of sympathy with everything human transfers to the pleasant pages the foresters and fishermen from their native woods and waters. Canada seems the home of primitive character; the seventeenth century survives there among the habitants, with their steadfast faith, their picturesque superstitions, their old world traditions and their new world customs. It is the land not only of the habitant, but of his oversoul, the good cure, and his overlord the seigneur, now faded economically, but still lingering socially in the scene of his large possessions. Their personality imparts a charm to the many books about them which at present there seems to be no end to the making of; and such a fine touch as Dr. Van Dyke's gives us a likeness of them, which if it is idealized is idealized by reservation, not by attribution.

III.

Mr. William Allen White's method is the reverse of Dr. Van

Dyke's. If he has held his hand anywhere the reader does not suspect it, for it seems, with its relentless power of realization, to be laid upon the whole political life of Kansas, which it keeps in a clutch so penetrating, so comprehensive, that the reader does not quite feel his own vitals free from it. Very likely, it does not grasp the whole situation; after all, it is a picture, not a map, that Mr. White has been making, and the photograph itself, though it may include, does not represent everything. Some years ago there was a silly attempt to reproach the true painters of manners by calling them photographic, but I doubt if even then Mr. White would have minded any such censure of his conscientious work, and I am sure that now he would count it honor. He cannot be the admirable artist he is without knowing that it is the inwardness as well as the outwardness of men that he photographs, and if the reader does not know it, the worse for the reader. He is not the sort of reader who will rise from this book humiliated and fortified, as any reader worthy of it will.

The author has put his best foot forward in the opening story, "The Man on Horseback," which, when I read it a few years ago in the magazine where it first appeared, seemed to me so perfect in its way that I should not have known how to better it. Of course, this is a good deal for a critic to say; it is something like abdicating his office; but I repeat it. It takes rather more courage for a man to be honest in fiction than out of it, for people do not much expect it of him, or altogether like it in him; but in "The Man on Horseback" Mr. White is at every moment honest. He is honest, if not so impressively honest, in the other stories, "A Victory for the People," "A Triumph's Evidence," "The Mercy of Death," and "A Most Lamentable Comedy;" and where he fails of perfect justice to his material, I think it is because of his unconscious political bias, rather than anything wilfuller. In the story last named this betrays itself in his treatment of a type of man who could not be faithful to any sort of movement, and whose unfaithfulness does not necessarily censure the movement Mr. White dislikes. Wonderfully good as the portrait of Dan Gregg is, it wants the final touch which could have come only from a little kindness. His story might have been called "The Man on Foot," by the sort of antithesis which I should not blame Mr. White for scorning, and I should not say anything of it worse than that it is pitilessly hard, which the story of "The Man on Horseback" is not, or any of the other stories. Sentimentality of any kind is alien to the author's nature, but not tenderness, especially that sparing sort which gives his life to the man who is down.

Most of the men whom Mr. White deals with are down, as most men in the struggle of life are. Few of us can be on top morally, almost as few as can be on top materially; and probably nothing will more surprise the saints at the judgment day than to find themselves in such a small minority. But probably not the saints alone will be saved, and it is some such hope that Mr. White has

constantly in mind when making his constant appeal to conscience. It is, of course, a dramatic, not a didactic appeal. He preaches so little and is so effectively reticent that I could almost wish he had left out the preface of his book, good as it is. Yes, just because it is so good I could wish he had left it out. It is a perfect justification of his purpose and methods, but they are their own justification with all who can think about them, and the others are themselves not worth thinking about. The stories are so bravely faithful to human nature in that political aspect which is but one phase of our whole average life that they are magnificently above all need of excusing or defending. They form a substantial body of political fiction, such as we have so long sighed for, and such as some of us will still go on sighing for quite as if it had not been supplied. Some others will be aware that it has been supplied in a form as artistically fine as the material itself is coarse and common, if indeed any sort of humanity is coarse and common except to those who themselves are so.

The meaning that animates the stories is that our political opportunity is trammelled only so far as we have trammelled it by our greed and falsehood; and in this aspect the psychology of Mr. White offers the strongest contrast to that of the latest Russian master in fiction. Maxim Gorky's wholly hopeless study of degeneracy in the life of "Foma Gordyeeff" accuses conditions which we can only imagine with difficulty. As one advances through the moral waste of that strange book one slowly perceives that he is in a land of No Use, in an ambient of such iron fixity and inexorable bounds that perhaps Foma's willingness to rot through vice into imbecility is as wise as anything else there. It is a book that saturates the soul with despair, and blights it with the negation which seems the only possible truth in the circumstances; so that one questions whether the Russian in which Turgenieff and Tolstoy, and even Dostoyevsky, could animate the volition and the expectation of better things has not sunk to depths beyond any counsel of amelioration. To come up out of that Bottomless Pit into the measureless air of Mr. White's Kansas plains is like waking from death to life. We are still among dreadfully fallible human beings, but we are no longer among the damned; with the worst there is a purgatorial possibility of Paradise. Even the perdition of Dan Gregg then seems not the worst that could befall him; he might again have been governor.

IV.

If the human beings in Dr. Weir Mitchell's very interesting novel of "Circumstance" do not seem so human as those Russians of Gorky and those Kansans of Mr. White, it is because people in society are always human with difficulty, and his Philadelphians are mostly in society. They are almost reproachfully exemplary, in some instances; and it is when they give way to the natural man,

and especially the natural woman, that they are consoling and edifying. When Mary Fairthorne begins to scold her cousin, Kitty Morrow, at the party where she finds Kitty wearing her dead mother's pearls, and even takes hold of her in a way that makes the reader hope she is going to shake her, she is delightful; and when Kitty complains that Mary has "pinched" her, she is adorable. One is really in love with her for the moment; and in that moment of nature the thick air of good society seems to blow away and let one breathe freely. The bad people in the book are better than the good people, and the good people are best in their worst tempers. They are so exclusively well born and well bred that the fitness of the medical student, Blount, for their society can be ascertained only by his reference to a New England ancestry of the high antiquity that can excuse even dubious cuffs and finger-nails in a descendant of good principles and generous instincts.

The psychological problem studied in the book with such artistic fineness and scientific thoroughness is personally a certain Mrs. Hunter, who manages through the weak-minded and selfish Kitty Morrow to work her way to authority in the household of Kitty's uncle, where she displaces Mary Fairthorne, and makes the place odious to all the kith and kin of Kitty. Intellectually, she is a clever woman, or rather, she is a woman of great cunning that rises at times to sagacity; but she is limited by a bad heart and an absence of conscience. She is bold up to a point, and then she is timid; she will go to lengths, but not to all lengths; and when it comes to poisoning Fairthorne to keep him from changing his mind about the bequest he has made her, she has not quite the courage of her convictions. She hesitates and does not do it, and it is in this point she becomes so aesthetically successful. The guilt of the uncommitted crimes is more important than the guilt of those which have been committed; and the author does a good thing morally as well as artistically in leaving Mrs. Hunter still something of a problem to his reader. In most things she is almost too plain a case; she is sly, and vulgar, and depraved and cruel; she is all that a murderess should be; but, in hesitating at murder, she becomes and remains a mystery, and the reader does not get rid of her as he would if she had really done the deed. In the inferior exigencies she strikes fearlessly; and when the man who has divorced her looms up in her horizon with doom in his presence, she goes and makes love to him. She is not the less successful because she disgusts him; he agrees to let her alone so long as she does no mischief; she has, at least, made him unwilling to feel himself her persecutor, and that is enough for her.

Mrs. Hunter is a study of extreme interest in degeneracy, but I am not sure that Kitty Morrow is not a rarer contribution to knowledge. Of course, that sort of selfish girl has always been known, but she has not met the open recognition which constitutes knowledge, and so she has the preciousness of a find. She is at once tiresome and vivacious; she is cold-hearted but not

cold-blooded, and when she lets herself go in an outburst of passion for the celibate young ritualist, Knellwood, she becomes fascinating. She does not let herself go without having assured herself that he loves her, and somehow one is not shocked at her making love to him; one even wishes that she had won him. I am not sure but the case would have been a little truer if she had won him, but as it is I am richly content with it. Perhaps I am the more content because in the case of Kitty Morrow I find a concession to reality more entire than the case of Mrs. Hunter. She is of the heredity from which you would expect her depravity; but Kitty Morrow, who lets herself go so recklessly, is, for all one knows, as well born and as well bred as those other Philadelphians. In my admiration of her, as a work of art, however, I must not fail of justice to the higher beauty of Mary Fairthorne's character. She is really a good girl, and saved from the unreality which always threatens goodness in fiction by those limitations of temper which I have already hinted.

V.

It is far from the ambient of any of these imaginary lives to that of the half-caste heroine of "A Japanese Nightingale" and the young American whom she marries in one of those marriages which neither the Oriental nor the Occidental expects to last till death parts them. It is far, and all is very strange under that remote sky; but what is true to humanity anywhere is true everywhere; and the story of Yuki and Bigelow, as the Japanese author tells it in very choice English, is of as palpitant actuality as any which should treat of lovers next door. If I have ever read any record of young married love that was so frank, so sweet, so pure, I do not remember it. Yet, Yuki, though she loves Bigelow, does not marry him because she loves him, but because she wishes with the money he gives her to help her brother through college in America. When this brother comes back to Japan--he is the touch of melodrama in the pretty idyl--he is maddened by an acquired Occidental sense of his sister's disgrace in her marriage, and falls into a fever and dies out of the story, which closes with the lasting happiness of the young wife and husband. There is enough incident, but of the kind that is characterized and does not characterize. The charm, the delight, the supreme interest is in the personality of Yuki. Her father was an Englishman who had married her mother in the same sort of marriage she makes herself; but he is true to his wife till he dies, and possibly something of the English constancy which is not always so evident as in his case qualifies the daughter's nature. Her mother was, of course, constant, and Yuki, though an outcast from her own people--the conventions seen to be as imperative in Tokyo as in Philadelphia--because of her half-caste origin, is justly Japanese in what makes her loveliest. There is a quite indescribable freshness in the art of this pretty novelette--it is hardly of the dimensions of a novel--which is like no other art except in the simplicity which

is native to the best art everywhere. Yuki herself is of a surpassing loveliness. Nothing but the irresistible charm of the American girl could, I should think keep the young men who read Mrs. Watana's book from going out and marrying Japanese girls. They are safe from this, however, for the reason suggested, and therefore it can be safely commended at least to young men intending fiction, as such a lesson in the art of imitating nature as has not come under my hand for a long while. It has its little defects, but its directness, and sincerity, and its felicity through the sparing touch make me unwilling to note them. In fact, I have forgotten them.

VI.

I wish that I could at all times praise as much the literature of an author who speaks for another colored race, not so far from us as the Japanese, but of as much claim upon our conscience, if not our interest. Mr. Chesnutt, it seems to me, has lost literary quality in acquiring literary quantity, and though his book, "The Marrow of Tradition," is of the same strong material as his earlier books, it is less simple throughout, and therefore less excellent in manner. At his worst, he is no worse than the higher average of the ordinary novelist, but he ought always to be very much better, for he began better, and he is of that race which has, first of all, to get rid of the cakewalk, if it will not suffer from a smile far more blighting than any frown. He is fighting a battle, and it is not for him to pick up the cheap graces and poses of the joust. He does, indeed, cast them all from him when he gets down to his work, and in the dramatic climaxes and closes of his story he shortens his weapons and deals his blows so absolutely without flourish that I have nothing but admiration for him. "The Marrow of Tradition," like everything else he has written, has to do with the relations of the blacks and whites, and in that republic of letters where all men are free and equal he stands up for his own people with a courage which has more justice than mercy in it. The book is, in fact, bitter, bitter. There is no reason in history why it should not be so, if wrong is to be repaid with hate, and yet it would be better if it was not so bitter. I am not saying that he is so inartistic as to play the advocate; whatever his minor foibles may be, he is an artist whom his stepbrother Americans may well be proud of; but while he recognizes pretty well all the facts in the case, he is too clearly of a judgment that is made up. One cannot blame him for that; what would one be one's self? If the tables could once be turned, and it could be that it was the black race which violently and lastingly triumphed in the bloody revolution at Wilmington, North Carolina, a few years ago, what would not we excuse to the white man who made the atrocity the argument of his fiction?

Mr. Chesnutt goes far back of the historic event in his novel, and shows us the sources of the cataclysm which swept away a

legal government and perpetuated an insurrection, but he does not paint the blacks all good, or the whites all bad. He paints them as slavery made them on both sides, and if in the very end he gives the moral victory to the blacks--if he suffers the daughter of the black wife to have pity on her father's daughter by his white wife, and while her own child lies dead from a shot fired in the revolt, gives her husband's skill to save the life of her sister's child--it cannot be said that either his aesthetics or ethics are false. Those who would question either must allow, at least, that the negroes have had the greater practice in forgiveness, and that there are many probabilities to favor his interpretation of the fact. No one who reads the book can deny that the case is presented with great power, or fail to recognize in the writer a portent of the sort of negro equality against which no series of hangings and burnings will finally avail.

VII.

In Mr. Chesnutt's novel the psychologism is of that universal implication which will distinguish itself to the observer from the psychologism of that more personal sort--the words are not as apt as I should like--evident in some of the interesting books under notice here. I have tried to say that it is none the less a work of art for that reason, and I can praise the art of another novel, in which the same sort of psychologism prevails, though I must confess it a fiction of the rankest tendentiousness. "Lay Down Your Arms" is the name of the English version of the Baroness von Suttner's story, "Die Waffen Nieder," which has become a watchword with the peacemakers on the continent of Europe. Its success there has been very great, and I wish its success on the continent of America could be so great that it might replace in the hands of our millions the baleful books which have lately been glorifying bloodshed in the private and public wars of the past, if not present. The wars which "Lay Down Your Arms" deals with are not quite immediate, and yet they are not so far off historically, either. They are the Franco-Austrian war of 1859, the Austro-Prussian war of 1866, and the Franco-German war of 1870; and the heroine whose personal relation makes them live so cruelly again is a young Austrian lady of high birth. She is the daughter and the sister of soldiers, and when the handsome young officer, of equal rank with her own, whom she first marries, makes love to her just before the outbreak of the war first named, she is as much in love with his soldiership as with himself. But when the call to arms comes, it strikes to her heart such a sense of war as she has never known before. He is killed in one of the battles of Italy, and after a time she marries another soldier, not such a beau sabreur as the first, but a mature and thoughtful man, who fights through that second war from a sense of duty rather than from love of fighting, and comes out of it with such abhorrence that he quits the army and goes with his family to live in Paris. There the third war overtakes him, and in the siege, this

Austrian, who has fought the Prussians to the death, is arrested by the communards as a Prussian spy and shot.

The bare outline of the story gives, of course, no just notion of the intense passion of grief which fills it. Neither does it convey a due impression of the character in the different persons which, amidst the heartbreak, is ascertained with some such truth and impartiality as pervade the effects of "War and Peace." I do not rank it with that work, but in its sincerity and veracity it easily ranks above any other novel treating of war which I know, and it ought to do for the German peoples what the novels of Erckmann-Chatrion did for the French, in at least one generation. Will it do anything for the Anglo-Saxon peoples? Probably not till we have pacified the Philippines and South Africa. We Americans are still apparently in love with fighting, though the English are apparently not so much so; and as it is always well to face the facts, I will transfer to my page some facts of fighting from this graphic book, which the read may apply to the actualities in the Philippines, with a little imagination. They are taken from a letter written to the heroine by her second husband after one of the Austrian defeats. "The people poured boiling water and oil on the Prussians from the windows of the houses at ----.... The village is ours--no, it is the enemy's, now ours again--and yet once more the enemy's; but it is no longer a village, but a smoking mass of ruins of houses....One family has remained behind...an old married couple and their daughter, the latter in childbed. The husband is serving in our regiment.... Poor devil! he got there just in time to see the mother and child die; a shell had exploded under their bed.... I saw a breastwork there which was formed of corpses. The defenders had heaped all the slain who were lying near, in order, from that rampart, to fire over at their assailants. I shall surely never forget that wall in my life. A man who formed one of its bricks was still alive, and was waving his arm.... What is happening there? The execution party is drawn out. Has a spy been caught? Seventeen this time. There they come, in four ranks, each one of four men, surrounded by a square of soldiers. The condemned men step out, with their heads down. Behind comes a cart with a corpse in it, and bound to the corpse the dead man's son, a boy of twelve, also condemned.... Steep, rocky heights; Jaegers, nimble as cats, climbing up them.... Some of them, who are hit by the enemy's shot, suddenly stretch out both their arms, let their muskets fall, and, with their heads falling backwards, drop off the height, step by step, from one rocky point to another, smashing their limbs to pieces. I saw a horseman at some distance, obliquely behind me, at whose side a shell burst. His horse swerved aside and came against the tail of mind, then shot past me. The man sat still in the saddle, but a fragment of the shell had ripped his belly open and torn out all the intestines. The upper part of his body was held to the lower only by the spine. From the ribs to the thighs nothing but one great, bleeding cavity. A short distance farther he fell to the ground, one foot still clinging in the stirrup, and the

galloping horse dragging him on over the stony soil.... Another street fight in the little town of Saar.... In the middle of the square stands a high pillar of the Virgin. The mother of God holds her child in one arm, and stretches the other out in blessing.... Here the fight was prolonged, man to man. They were hacking at me, I laying about me on all sides.... A Prussian dragoon, strong as Goliath, tore one of our officers (a pretty, dandified lieutenant--how many girls are, perhaps, mad after him?) out of his saddle and split his skull at the feet of the Virgin's pillar. The gentle saint looked on unmoved. Another of the enemy's dragoons--a Goliath, too--seized, just before me almost, my right-hand man, and bent him backwards in his saddle so powerfully that he broke his back--I myself heard it crack. To this the Madonna gave her blessing also."

VIII.

It can be said that these incidents of battle are imagined, like the facts of Vereschagin's pictures, but like these they are imagined rather below than above the real horror of war, and represent them inadequately. The incidents of another book, the last on my list, are of the warfare which goes on in times of peace, and which will go on as long as there are human passions, and mankind are divided into men and women, and saints and sinners. Of all the books on my list, "Let Not Man Put Asunder" is, narrowing the word to the recognition of the author's intellectual alertness and vividness, the cleverest. The story is of people who constantly talk so wonderfully well beyond the wont even of society people that the utmost skill of the author, who cannot subdue their brilliancy, is needed to make us feel their reality. But he does make us feel this in most cases, the important cases, and in the other cases his power of interesting us is so great that we do not stop to examine the grounds of our sensation, or to question the validity of our emotions. The action, which is positively of to-day, or yesterday at the furthest, passes in Boston and England, among people of such great fortune and high rank and transcendent fashion that the proudest reader cannot complain of their social quality. As to their moral quality, one might have thought the less said the better, if the author had not said so much that is pertinent and impressive. It is from first to last a book with a conscience in it, and its highest appeal is to the conscience. It is so very nearly a great book, so very nearly a true book, that it is with a kind of grief one recognizes its limitations, a kind of surprise at its shortcomings, which, nevertheless, are not shortcomings that impair its supreme effect. This, I take it, is the intimation of a mystical authority in marriage against which divorce sins in vain, which no recreancy can subvert, and by virtue of which it claims eternally its own the lovers united in it; though they seem to become haters, it cannot release them to happiness in a new union through any human law.

If the author had done dramatically (and his doing is mainly dramatic) no more than this, he would have established his right to be taken seriously, but he has done very much more, and has made us acquainted with types and characters which we do not readily forget, and with characters much more real than their ambient. For instance, the Old Cambridge in which the Vassalls live is not the Old Cambridge of fact, but the Vassalls are the Vassalls of fact, though the ancestral halls in which they dwell are of a baroniality difficult of verification. Their honor, their righteousness, their purity are veracious, though their social state is magnified beyond any post-revolutionary experience. The social Boston of the novel is more like; its difference from an older Boston is sensitively felt, and finely suggested, especially on the side of that greater lawlessness in which it is not the greater Boston. Petrina Faneuil, the heroine, is derivatively of the older Boston which has passed away, and actually of the newer Boston which will not be so much regretted when it passes, the fast Boston, the almost rowdy Boston, the decadent Boston. It is, of course, a Boston much worse in the report than in the fact, but it is not unimaginably bad to the student who notes that the lapse from any high ideals is to a level lower than that of people who have never had them. As for Petrina herself, who was in Boston more than of it, she is so admirably analyzed in the chapter devoted to the task that I am tempted to instance it as the best piece of work in the book, though it does not make one hold one's breath like some of the dramatic episodes: "Whatever religious instinct had been in the family had spent itself at least two generations before her time. She was a pagan--a tolerant, indifferent, slightly scornful pagan.... But she was none the less a Puritan. Certain of her ways of thought and habits of life, had survived the beliefs which had given them birth, as an effect will often outlive its cause. If she was a pagan, she was a serious one, a pagan with a New England conscience."

This is mightily well said, and the like things that are said of Petrina's sister-in-law, who has married an English title, are mightily well, too. "She had inherited a countenance whose expression was like the light which lingers in the sky long after sunset--the light of some ancestral fire gone out. If in her face there were prayers, they had been said by Pepperells and Vassalls now sleeping in Massachusetts churchyards. If in her voice there were tears, they had been shed by those who would weep no more. She mirrored the emotions she had never felt; and all that was left of joys and sorrows and spiritual aspirations which had once thrilled human hearts was in that plaintive echo they had given to this woman's tone, and the light of petition they had left burning in her eyes."

No one who reads such passages can deny that the author of "Let Not Man Put Asunder" can think subtly as well as say clearly, and the book abounds in proofs of his ability to portray human nature in its lighter aspects. Lady de Bohun, with her pathetic face,

is a most amusing creature, with all her tragedy, and she is on the whole the most perfectly characterized personality in the story. The author gives you a real sense of her beauty, her grace, her being always charmingly in a hurry and always late. The greatest scene is hers: the scene in which she meets her divorced husband with his second wife. One may suspect some of the other scenes, but one must accept that scene as one of genuine dramatic worth. Too much of the drama in the book is theatre rather than drama, and yet the author's gift is essentially dramatic. He knows how to tell a story on his stage that holds you to the fall of the curtain, and makes you almost patient of the muted violins and the limelight of the closing scene. Such things, you say, do not happen in Brookline, Mass., whatever happens in London or in English country houses; and yet the people have at one time or other convinced you of their verity. Of the things that are not natural, you feel like saying that they are supernatural rather than unnatural, and you own that at its worst the book is worth while in a time when most novels are not worth while.

Footnotes

"The Right of Way." A Novel. By Gilbert Parker. Harper & Brothers.

"The Ruling Passion. Tales of nature and human nature." By Henry Van Dyke. Charles Scribner's Sons.

"Spoils and Stratagems Stories of love and politics." By Wm. Allen White. Charles Scribner's Sons.

"Foma Gordyeff." By Maxim Gorky. Translated from the Russian by Isabel F. Hapgood. Charles Scribner's Sons.

"Circumstances." By S. Weir Mitchell, M.D. The Century Company.

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"The Marrow of Tradition." By Charles W. Chesnutt. Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

"Lay Down Your Arms. The autobiography of Martha von Tilling." By Bertha von Suttner. Authorized Translation. By T. Holmes. Longmans, Green & Co.

"Let Not Man Put Asunder." By Basil King. Harper & Brothers.

****End of The Project Gutenberg Etext of A Psychological Counter-Current in Recent Fiction by William Dean Howells

EMILE ZOLA

by William Dean Howells

This etext was created by Anthony J. Adam of Houston, Texas.

In these times of electrical movement, the sort of construction in the moral world for which ages were once needed, takes place almost simultaneously with the event to be adjusted in history, and as true a perspective forms itself as any in the past. A few weeks after the death of a poet of such great epical imagination, such great ethical force, as Emile Zola, we may see him as clearly and judge him as fairly as posterity alone was formerly supposed able to see and to judge the heroes that antedated it. The present is always holding in solution the elements of the future and the past, in fact; and whilst Zola still lived, in the moments of his highest activity, the love and hate, the intelligence and ignorance, of his motives and his work were as evident, and were as accurately the measure of progressive and retrogressive criticism, as they will be hereafter in any of the literary periods to come. There will never be criticism to appreciate him more justly, to depreciate him more unjustly, than that of his immediate contemporaries. There will never be a day when criticism will be of one mind about him, when he will no longer be a question, and will have become a conclusion. A conclusion is an accomplished fact, something finally ended, something dead; and the extraordinary vitality of Zola, when he was doing the things most characteristic of him, forbids the notion of this in his case. Like every man who embodies an ideal, his individuality partook of what was imperishable in that ideal. Because he believed with his whole soul that fiction should be the representation, and in no measure the misrepresentation, of life, he will live as long as any history of literature survives. He will live as a question, a dispute, an affair of inextinguishable debate; for the two principles of the human mind, the love of the natural and the love of the unnatural, the real and the unreal, the truthful and the fanciful, are inalienable and indestructible.

I

Zola embodied his ideal inadequately, as every man who embodies an ideal must. His realism was his creed, which he tried to make his deed; but, before his fight was ended, and almost before he began to forebode it a losing fight, he began to feel and to say (for to feel, with that most virtuous and voracious spirit, implied saying) that he was too much a romanticist by birth and

tradition, to exemplify realism in his work. He could not be all to the cause he honored that other men were--men like Flaubert and Maupassant, and Tourguenieff and Tolstoy, and Galdos and Valdes--because his intellectual youth had been nurtured on the milk of romanticism at the breast of his mother-time. He grew up in the day when the great novelists and poets were romanticists, and what he came to abhor he had first adored. He was that pathetic paradox, a prophet who cannot practise what he preaches, who cannot build his doctrine into the edifice of a living faith. Zola was none the less, but all the more, a poet in this. He conceived of reality poetically and always saw his human documents, as he began early to call them, ranged in the form of an epic poem. He fell below the greatest of the Russians, to whom alone he was inferior, in imagining that the affairs of men group themselves strongly about a central interest to which they constantly refer, and after whatever excursions definitely or definitively return. He was not willingly an epic poet, perhaps, but he was an epic poet, nevertheless; and the imperfection of his realism began with the perfection of his form. Nature is sometimes dramatic, though never on the hard and fast terms of the theatre, but she is almost never epic; and Zola was always epic. One need only think over his books and his subjects to be convinced of this: "L'Assommoir" and drunkenness; "Nana" and harlotry; "Germinal" and strikes; "L'Argent" and money getting and losing in all its branches; "Pot-Bouille" and the cruel squalor of poverty; "La Terre" and the life of the peasant; "Le Debacle" and the decay of imperialism. The largest of these schemes does not extend beyond the periphery described by the centrifugal whirl of its central motive, and the least of the Rougon-Macquart series is of the same epicity as the grandest. Each is bound to a thesis, but reality is bound to no thesis. You cannot say where it begins or where it leaves off; and it will not allow you to say precisely what its meaning or argument is. For this reason, there are no such perfect pieces of realism as the plays of Ibsen, which have all or each a thesis, but do not hold themselves bound to prove it, or even fully to state it; after these, for reality, come the novels of Tolstoy, which are of a direction so profound because so patient of aberration and exception.

We think of beauty as implicated in symmetry, but there are distinctly two kinds of beauty: the symmetrical and the unsymmetrical, the beauty of the temple and the beauty of the tree. Life is not more symmetrical than a tree, and the effort of art to give it balance and proportion is to make it as false in effect as a tree clipped and trained to a certain shape. The Russians and the Scandinavians alone seem to have risen to a consciousness of this in their imaginative literature, though the English have always unconsciously obeyed the law of our being in their generally crude and involuntary formulations of it. In the northern masters there is no appearance of what M. Ernest Dupuy calls the joiner-work of the French fictionalists; and there is, in the process, no joiner-work in Zola, but the final effect is

joiner-work. It is a temple he builds, and not a tree he plants and lets grow after he has planted the seed, and here he betrays not only his French school but his Italian instinct.

In his form, Zola is classic, that is regular, symmetrical, seeking the beauty of the temple rather than the beauty of the tree. If the fight in his day had been the earlier fight between classicism and romanticism, instead of romanticism and realism, his nature and tradition would have ranged him on the side of classicism, though, as in the later event, his feeling might have been romantic. I think it has been the error of criticism not to take due account of his Italian origin, or to recognize that he was only half French, and that this half was his superficial half. At the bottom of his soul, though not perhaps at the bottom of his heart, he was Italian, and of the great race which in every science and every art seems to win the primacy when it will. The French, through the rhetoric of Napoleon III., imposed themselves on the imagination of the world as the representatives of the Latin race, but they are the least and the last of the Latins, and the Italians are the first. To his Italian origin Zola owed not only the moralistic scope of his literary ambition, but the depth and strength of his personal conscience, capable of the austere puritanism which underlies the so-called immoralities of his books, and incapable of the peculiar lubricity which we call French, possibly to distinguish it from the lubricity of other people rather than to declare it a thing solely French. In the face of all public and private corruptions, his soul is as Piagnone as Savonarola's, and the vices of Arrabbiati, small and great, are always his text, upon which he preaches virtue.

II

Zola is to me so vast a theme that I can only hope here to touch his work at a point or two, leaving the proof of my sayings mostly to the honesty of the reader. It will not require so great an effort of his honesty now, as it once would, to own that Zola's books, though often indecent, are never immoral, but always most terribly, most pitilessly moral. I am not saying now that they ought to be in every family library, or that they could be edifyingly committed to the hands of boys and girls; one of our first publishing houses is about to issue an edition even of the Bible "with those passages omitted which are usually skipped in reading aloud"; and it is always a question how much young people can be profitably allowed to know; how much they do know, they alone can tell. But as to the intention of Zola in his books, I have no doubt of its righteousness. His books may be, and I suppose they often are, indecent, but they are not immoral; they may disgust, but they will not deprave; only those already rotten can scent corruption in them, and these, I think, may be deceived by effluvia from within themselves.

It is to the glory of the French realists that they broke, one

and all, with the tradition of the French romanticists that vice was or might be something graceful, something poetic, something gay, brilliant, something superior almost, and at once boldly presented it in its true figure, its spiritual and social and physical squalor. Beginning with Flaubert in his "Madame Bovary," and passing through the whole line of their studies in morbid anatomy, as the "Germinie Lacerteux" of the Goncourts, as the "Bel-Ami" of Maupassant, and as all the books of Zola, you have portraits as veracious as those of the Russians, or those of Defoe, whom, indeed, more than any other master, Zola has made me think of in his frankness. Through his epicality he is Defoe's inferior, though much more than his equal in the range and implication of his work.

A whole world seems to stir in each of his books; and, though it is a world altogether bent for the time being upon one thing, as the actual world never is, every individual in it seems alive and true to the fact. M. Brunetiere says Zola's characters are not true to the French fact; that his peasants, working-men, citizens, soldiers are not French, whatever else they may be; but this is merely M. Brunetiere's word against Zola's word, and Zola had as good opportunities of knowing French life as Mr. Brunetiere, whose aesthetics, as he betrays them in his instances, are of a flabbiness which does not impart conviction. Word for word, I should take Zola's word as to the fact, not because I have the means of affirming him more reliable, but because I have rarely known the observant instinct of poets to fail, and because I believe that every reader will find in himself sufficient witness to the veracity of Zola's characterizations. These, if they are not true to the French fact, are true to the human fact; and I should say that in these the reality of Zola, unreal or ideal in his larger form, his epicality, vitally resided. His people live in the memory as entirely as any people who have ever lived; and, however devastating one's experience of them may be, it leaves no doubt of their having been.

III

It is not much to say of a work of literary art that it will survive as a record of the times it treats of, and I would not claim high value for Zola's fiction because it is such a true picture of the Second Empire in its decline; yet, beyond any other books have the quality that alone makes novels historical. That they include everything, that they do justice to all sides and phases of the period, it would be fatuous to expect, and ridiculous to demand. It is not their epical character alone that forbids this; it is the condition of every work of art, which must choose its point of view, and include only the things that fall within a certain scope. One of Zola's polemical delusions was to suppose that a fiction ought not to be selective, and that his own fictions were not selective, but

portrayed the fact without choice and without limitation. The fact was that he was always choosing, and always limiting. Even a map chooses and limits, far more a picture. Yet this delusion of Zola's and its affirmation resulted in no end of misunderstanding. People said the noises of the streets, which he supposed himself to have given with graphophonic fulness and variety, were not music; and they were quite right. Zola, as far as his effects were voluntary, was not giving them music; he openly loathed the sort of music they meant just as he openly loathed art, and asked to be regarded as a man of science rather than an artist. Yet, at the end of the ends, he was an artist and not a man of science. His hand was perpetually selecting his facts, and shaping them to one epical result, with an orchestral accompaniment, which, though reporting the rudest noises of the street, the vulgarest, the most offensive, was, in spite of him, so reporting them that the result was harmony.

Zola was an artist, and one of the very greatest, but even before and beyond that he was intensely a moralist, as only the moralists of our true and noble time have been. Not Tolstoy, not Ibsen himself, has more profoundly and indignantly felt the injustice of civilization, or more insistently shown the falsity of its fundamental pretensions. He did not make his books a polemic for one cause or another; he was far too wise and sane for that; but when he began to write them they became alive with his sense of what was wrong and false and bad. His tolerance is less than Tolstoy's, because his resignation is not so great; it is for the weak sinners and not for the strong, while Tolstoy's, with that transcendent vision of his race, pierces the bounds where the shows of strength and weakness cease and become of a solidarity of error in which they are one. But the ethics of his work, like Tolstoy's, were always carrying over into his life. He did not try to live poverty and privation and hard labor, as Tolstoy does; he surrounded himself with the graces and the luxuries which his honestly earned money enabled him to buy; but when an act of public and official atrocity disturbed the working of his mind and revolted his nature, he could not rest again till he had done his best to right it.

IV

The other day Zola died (by a casualty which one fancies he would have liked to employ in a novel, if he had thought of it), and the man whom he had befriended at the risk of all he had in the world, his property, his liberty, his life itself, came to his funeral in disguise, risking again all that Zola had risked, to pay the last honors to his incomparable benefactor.

It was not the first time that a French literary man had devoted himself to the cause of the oppressed, and made it his personal affair, his charge, his inalienable trust. But Voltaire's championship of the persecuted Protestant had not the measure of

Zola's championship of the persecuted Jew, though in both instances the courage and the persistence of the vindicator forced the reopening of the case and resulted in final justice. It takes nothing from the heroism of Voltaire to recognize that it was not so great as the heroism of Zola, and it takes nothing from the heroism of Zola to recognize that it was effective in the only country of Europe where such a case as that of Dreyfus would have been reopened; where there was a public imagination generous enough to conceive of undoing an act of immense public cruelty. At first this imagination was dormant, and the French people conceived only of punishing the vindicator along with victim, for daring to accuse their processes of injustice. Outrage, violence, and the peril of death greeted Zola from his fellow-citizens, and from the authorities ignominy, fine, and prison. But nothing silenced or deterred him, and, in the swift course of moral adjustment characteristic of our time, an innumerable multitude of those who were ready a few years ago to rend him in pieces joined in paying tribute to the greatness of his soul, at the grave which received his body already buried under an avalanche of flowers. The government has not been so prompt as the mob, but with the history of France in mind, remembering how official action has always responded to the national impulses in behalf of humanity and justice, one cannot believe that the representatives of the French people will long remain behind the French people in offering reparation to the memory of one of the greatest and most heroic of French citizens.

It is a pity for the government that it did not take part in the obsequies of Zola; it would have been well for the army, which he was falsely supposed to have defamed, to have been present to testify of the real service and honor he had done it. But, in good time enough, the reparation will be official as well as popular, and when the monument to Zola, which has already risen in the hearts of his countrymen, shall embody itself in enduring marble or perennial bronze, the army will be there to join in its consecration.

V

There is no reason why criticism should affect an equal hesitation. Criticism no longer assumes to ascertain an author's place in literature. It is very well satisfied if it can say something suggestive concerning the nature and quality of his work, and it tries to say this with as little of the old air of finality as it can manage to hide its poverty in.

After the words of M. Chaumie at the funeral, "Zola's life work was dominated by anxiety for sincerity and truth, an anxiety inspired by his great feelings of pity and justice," there seems nothing left to do but to apply them to the examination of his literary work. They unlock the secret of his performance, if it is any longer a secret, and they afford its justification in all

those respects where without them it could not be justified. The question of immorality has been set aside, and the indecency has been admitted, but it remains for us to realize that anxiety for sincerity and truth, springing from the sense of pity and justice, makes indecency a condition of portraying human nature so that it may look upon its image and be ashamed.

The moralist working imaginatively has always had to ask himself how far he might go in illustration of his thesis, and he has not hesitated, or if he has hesitated, he has not failed to go far very far. Defoe went far, Richardson went far, Ibsen has gone far, Tolstoy has gone far, and if Zola went farther than any of these, still he did not go so far as the immoralists have gone in the portrayal of vicious things to allure where he wished to repel. There is really such a thing as high motive and such a thing as low motive, though the processes are often so bewilderingly alike in both cases. The processes may confound us, but there is no reason why we should be mistaken as to motive, and as to Zola's motive I do not think M. Chaumie was mistaken. As to his methods, they by no means always reflected his intentions. He fancied himself working like a scientist who has collected a vast number of specimens, and is deducing principles from them. But the fact is, he was always working like an artist, seizing every suggestion of experience and observation, turning it to the utmost account, piecing it out by his invention, building it up into a structure of fiction where its origin was lost to all but himself, and often even to himself. He supposed that he was recording and classifying, but he was creating and vivifying. Within the bounds of his epical scheme, which was always factitious, every person was so natural that his characters seemed like the characters of biography rather than of fiction. One does not remember them as one remembers the characters of most novelists. They had their being in a design which was meant to represent a state of things, to enforce an opinion of certain conditions; but they themselves were free agencies, bound by no allegiance to the general frame, and not apparently acting in behalf of the author, but only from their own individuality. At the moment of reading, they make the impression of an intense reality, and they remain real, but one recalls them as one recalls the people read of in last week's or last year's newspaper. What Zola did was less to import science and its methods into the region of fiction, than journalism and its methods; but in this he had his will only so far as his nature of artist would allow. He was no more a journalist than he was a scientist by nature; and, in spite of his intentions and in spite of his methods, he was essentially imaginative and involuntarily creative.

VI

To me his literary history is very pathetic. He was bred if not born in the worship of the romantic, but his native faith was not

proof against his reason, as again his reason was not proof against his native faith. He preached a crusade against romanticism, and fought a long fight with it, only to realize at last that he was himself too romanticistic to succeed against it, and heroically to own his defeat. The hosts of romanticism swarmed back over him and his followers, and prevailed, as we see them still prevailing. It was the error of the realists whom Zola led, to suppose that people like truth in fiction better than falsehood; they do not; they like falsehood best; and if Zola had not been at heart a romanticist, he never would have cherished his long delusion, he never could have deceived with his vain hopes those whom he persuaded to be realistic, as he himself did not succeed in being.

He wished to be a sort of historiographer writing the annals of a family, and painting a period; but he was a poet, doing far more than this, and contributing to creative literature as great works of fiction as have been written in the epic form. He was a paradox on every side but one, and that was the human side, which he would himself have held far worthier than the literary side. On the human side, the civic side, he was what he wished to be, and not what any perversity of his elements made him. He heard one of those calls to supreme duty, which from time to time select one man and not another for the response which they require; and he rose to that duty with a grandeur which had all the simplicity possible to a man of French civilization. We may think that there was something a little too dramatic in the manner of his heroism, his martyrdom, and we may smile at certain turns of rhetoric in the immortal letter accusing the French nation of intolerable wrong, just as, in our smug Anglo-Saxon conceit, we laughed at the procedure of the emotional courts which he compelled to take cognizance of the immense misdeed other courts had as emotionally committed. But the event, however indirectly and involuntarily, was justice which no other people in Europe would have done, and perhaps not any people of this more enlightened continent.

The success of Zola as a literary man has its imperfections, its phases of defeat, but his success as a humanist is without flaw. He triumphed as wholly and as finally as it has ever been given a man to triumph, and he made France triumph with him. By his hand, she added to the laurels she had won in the war of American Independence, in the wars of the Revolution for liberty and equality, in the campaigns for Italian Unity, the imperishable leaf of a national acknowledgement of national error.

"OF LITERATURE"

The Project Gutenberg Anthology of the Literary Essays of Howells

Literary Friends And Acquaintance
Literature And Life [Studies]
My Literary Passions/Criticism & Fiction

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LITERARY FRIENDS AND ACQUAINTANCES

by William Dean Howells

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LITERARY FRIENDS AND ACQUAINTANCES--First Visit to New England

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL

Long before I began the papers which make up this volume, I had meant to write of literary history in New England as I had known it in the lives of its great exemplars during the twenty-five years I lived near them. In fact, I had meant to do this from the time I came among them; but I let the days in which I almost constantly saw them go by without record save such as I carried in a memory retentive, indeed, beyond the common, but not so full as I could have wished when I began to invoke it for my work. Still, upon insistent appeal, it responded in sufficient abundance; and, though I now wish I could have remembered more instances, I think my impressions were accurate enough. I am sure of having tried honestly to impart them in the ten years or more when I was desultorily endeavoring to share them with the reader.

The papers were written pretty much in the order they have here, beginning with My First Visit to New England, which dates from the earliest eighteen-nineties, if I may trust my recollection of reading it from the manuscript to the editor of Harper's Magazine, where we lay under the willows of Magnolia one pleasant summer morning in the first years of that decade. It was printed no great while after in that periodical; but I was so long in finishing the study of Lowell that it had been anticipated in Harper's by other reminiscences of him, and it was therefore first printed in Scribner's Magazine. It was the paper with which I took the most pains, and when it was completed I still felt it so incomplete that I referred it to his closest and my best friend, the late Charles Eliot Norton, for his criticism. He thought it wanting in unity; it was a group of studies instead of one study, he said; I must do something to draw the different sketches together in a single effect of portraiture; and this I did my best to do.

It was the latest written of the three articles which give the volume

substance, and it represents more finally and fully than the others my sense of the literary importance of the men whose like we shall not look upon again. Longfellow was easily the greatest poet of the three, Holmes often the most brilliant and felicitous, but Lowell, in spite of his forays in politics, was the finest scholar and the most profoundly literary, as he was above the others most deeply and thoroughly New England in quality.

While I was doing these sketches, sometimes slighter and sometimes less slight, of all those poets and essayists and novelists I had known in Cambridge and Boston and Concord and New York, I was doing many other things: half a dozen novels, as many more novelettes and shorter stories, with essays and criticisms and verses; so that in January, 1900, I had not yet done the paper on Lowell, which, with another, was to complete my reminiscences of American literary life as I had witnessed it. When they were all done at last they were republished in a volume which found instant favor beyond my deserts if not its own.

There was a good deal of trouble with the name, but *Literary Friends and Acquaintance* was an endeavor for modest accuracy with which I remained satisfied until I thought, long too late, of *Literary Friends and Neighbors*. Then I perceived that this would have been still more accurate and quite as modest, and I gladly give any reader leave to call the book by that name who likes.

Since the collection was first made, I have written little else quite of the kind, except the paper on Bret Harte, which was first printed shortly after his death; and the study of Mark Twain, which I had been preparing to make for forty years and more, and wrote in two weeks of the spring of 1910. Others of my time and place have now passed whither there is neither time nor place, and there are moments when I feel that I must try to call them back and pay them such honor as my sense of their worth may give; but the impulse has as yet failed to effect itself, and I do not know how long I shall spare myself the supreme pleasure-pain, the "hochst angenehmer Schmerz," of seeking to live here with those who live here no more.

W. D. H.

LITERARY FRIENDS AND ACQUAINTANCE--My First Visit to New England

MY FIRST VISIT TO NEW ENGLAND

If there was any one in the world who had his being more wholly in literature than I had in 1860, I am sure I should not have known where to

find him, and I doubt if he could have been found nearer the centres of literary activity than I then was, or among those more purely devoted to literature than myself. I had been for three years a writer of news paragraphs, book notices, and political leaders on a daily paper in an inland city, and I do not know that my life differed outwardly from that of any other young journalist, who had begun as I had in a country printing-office, and might be supposed to be looking forward to advancement in his profession or in public affairs. But inwardly it was altogether different with me. Inwardly I was a poet, with no wish to be anything else, unless in a moment of careless affluence I might so far forget myself as to be a novelist. I was, with my friend J. J. Piatt, the half-author of a little volume of very unknown verse, and Mr. Lowell had lately accepted and had begun to print in the Atlantic Monthly five or six poems of mine. Besides this I had written poems, and sketches, and criticisms for the Saturday Press of New York, a long-forgotten but once very lively expression of literary intention in an extinct bohemia of that city; and I was always writing poems, and sketches, and criticisms in our own paper. These, as well as my feats in the renowned periodicals of the East, met with kindness, if not honor, in my own city which ought to have given me grave doubts whether I was any real prophet. But it only intensified my literary ambition, already so strong that my veins might well have run ink rather than blood, and gave me a higher opinion of my fellow-citizens, if such a thing could be. They were indeed very charming people, and such of them as I mostly saw were readers and lovers of books. Society in Columbus at that day had a pleasant refinement which I think I do not exaggerate in the fond retrospect. It had the finality which it seems to have had nowhere since the war; it had certain fixed ideals, which were none the less graceful and becoming because they were the simple old American ideals, now vanished, or fast vanishing, before the knowledge of good and evil as they have it in Europe, and as it has imparted itself to American travel and sojourn. There was a mixture of many strains in the capital of Ohio, as there was throughout the State. Virginia, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, New York, and New England all joined to characterize the manners and customs. I suppose it was the South which gave the social tone; the intellectual taste among the elders was the Southern taste for the classic and the standard in literature; but we who were younger preferred the modern authors: we read Thackeray, and George Eliot, and Hawthorne, and Charles Reade, and De Quincey, and Tennyson, and Browning, and Emerson, and Longfellow, and I--I read Heine, and evermore Heine, when there was not some new thing from the others. Now and then an immediate French book penetrated to us: we read Michelet and About, I remember. We looked to England and the East largely for our literary opinions; we accepted the Saturday Review as law if we could not quite receive it as gospel. One of us took the Cornhill Magazine, because Thackeray was the editor; the Atlantic Monthly counted many readers among us; and a visiting young lady from New England, who screamed at sight of the periodical in one of our houses, "Why, have you got the Atlantic Monthly out here?" could be answered, with cold superiority, "There are several contributors to the Atlantic in Columbus." There were in fact two: my room-mate, who wrote Browning for it, while I wrote Heine and Longfellow. But I suppose two are as rightfully several as twenty are.

II.

That was the heyday of lecturing, and now and then a literary light from the East swam into our skies. I heard and saw Emerson, and I once met Bayard Taylor socially, at the hospitable house where he was a guest after his lecture. Heaven knows how I got through the evening. I do not think I opened my mouth to address him a word; it was as much as I could do to sit and look at him, while he tranquilly smoked, and chatted with our host, and quaffed the beer which we had very good in the Nest. All the while I did him homage as the first author by calling whom I had met. I longed to tell him how much I liked his poems, which we used to get by heart in those days, and I longed (how much more I longed!) to have him know that:

"Auch ich war in Arkadien geboren,"

that I had printed poems in the Atlantic Monthly and the Saturday Press, and was the potential author of things destined to eclipse all literature hitherto attempted. But I could not tell him; and there was no one else who thought to tell him. Perhaps it was as well so; I might have perished of his recognition, for my modesty was equal to my merit.

In fact I think we were all rather modest young fellows, we who formed the group went to spend some part of every evening at that house, where there was always music, or whist, or gay talk, or all three. We had our opinions of literary matters, but (perhaps because we had mostly accepted them from England or New England, as I have said) we were not vain of them; and we would by no means have urged them before a living literary man like that. I believe none of us ventured to speak, except the poet, my roommate, who said, He believed so and so was the original of so and so; and was promptly told, He had no right to say such a thing. Naturally, we came away rather critical of our host's guest, whom I afterwards knew as the kindest heart in the world. But we had not shone in his presence, and that galled us; and we chose to think that he had not shone in ours.

III

At that time he was filling a large space in the thoughts of the young people who had any thoughts about literature. He had come to his full repute as an agreeable and intelligent traveller, and he still wore the halo of his early adventures afoot in foreign lands when they were yet really foreign. He had not written his novels of American life, once so welcomed, and now so forgotten; it was very long before he had achieved that incomparable translation of Faust which must always remain the finest and best, and which would keep his name alive with Goethe's, if he had done nothing else worthy of remembrance. But what then most

commended him to the regard of us star-eyed youth (now blinking sadly toward our seventies) was the poetry which he printed in the magazines from time to time: in the first Putnam's (where there was a dashing picture of him in an Arab burnoose and, a turban), and in Harper's, and in the Atlantic. It was often very lovely poetry, I thought, and I still think so; and it was rightfully his, though it paid the inevitable allegiance to the manner of the great masters of the day. It was graced for us by the pathetic romance of his early love, which some of its sweetest and saddest numbers confessed, for the young girl he married almost in her death hour; and we who were hoping to have our hearts broken, or already had them so, would have been glad of something more of the obvious poet in the popular lecturer we had seen refreshing himself after his hour on the platform.

He remained for nearly a year the only author I had seen, and I met him once again before I saw any other. Our second meeting was far from Columbus, as far as remote Quebec, when I was on my way to New England by way of Niagara and the Canadian rivers and cities. I stopped in Toronto, and realized myself abroad without any signal adventures; but at Montreal something very pretty happened to me. I came into the hotel office, the evening of a first day's lonely sight-seeing, and vainly explored the register for the name of some acquaintance; as I turned from it two smartly dressed young fellows embraced it, and I heard one of them say, to my great amaze and happiness, "Hello, here's Howells!"

"Oh," I broke out upon him, "I was just looking for some one I knew. I hope you are some one who knows me!"

"Only through your contributions to the Saturday Press," said the young fellow, and with these golden words, the precious first personal recognition of my authorship I had ever received from a stranger, and the rich reward of all my literary endeavor, he introduced himself and his friend. I do not know what be came of this friend, or where or how he eliminated himself; but we two others were inseparable from that moment. He was a young lawyer from New York, and when I came back from Italy, four or five years later, I used to see his sign in Wall Street, with a never-fulfilled intention of going in to see him. In whatever world he happens now to be, I should like to send him my greetings, and confess to him that my art has never since brought me so sweet a recompense, and nothing a thousandth part so much like Fame, as that outcry of his over the hotel register in Montreal. We were comrades for four or five rich days, and shared our pleasures and expenses in viewing the monuments of those ancient Canadian capitals, which I think we valued at all their picturesque worth. We made jokes to mask our emotions; we giggled and made giggle, in the right way; we fell in and out of love with all the pretty faces and dresses we saw; and we talked evermore about literature and literary people. He had more acquaintance with the one, and more passion for the other, but he could tell me of Pfaff's lager-beer cellar on Broadway, where the Saturday Press fellows and the other Bohemians met; and this, for the time, was enough: I resolved to visit it as soon as I reached New York, in spite of the tobacco and beer (which I was given to understand were de rigueur), though they both, so far as I had known them, were apt to make me sick.

I was very desolate after I parted from this good fellow, who returned to Montreal on his way to New York, while I remained in Quebec to continue later on mine to New England. When I came in from seeing him off in a calash for the boat, I discovered Bayard Taylor in the readingroom, where he sat sunken in what seemed a somewhat weary muse. He did not know me, or even notice me, though I made several errands in and out of the reading-room in the vain hope that he might do so: doubly vain, for I am aware now that I was still flown with the pride of that pretty experience in Montreal, and trusted in a repetition of something like it. At last, as no chance volunteered to help me, I mustered courage to go up to him and name myself, and say I had once had the pleasure of meeting him at Doctor -----'s in Columbus. The poet gave no sign of consciousness at the sound of a name which I had fondly begun to think might not be so all unknown. He looked up with an unkindling eye, and asked, Ah, how was the Doctor? and when I had reported favorably of the Doctor, our conversation ended.

He was probably as tired as he looked, and he must have classed me with that multitude all over the country who had shared the pleasure I professed in meeting him before; it was surely my fault that I did not speak my name loud enough to be recognized, if I spoke it at all; but the courage I had mustered did not quite suffice for that. In after years he assured me, first by letter and then by word, of his grief for an incident which I can only recall now as the untoward beginning of a cordial friendship. It was often my privilege, in those days, as reviewer and editor, to testify my sense of the beautiful things he did in so many kinds of literature, but I never liked any of them better than I liked him. He had a fervent devotion to his art, and he was always going to do the greatest things in it, with an expectation of effect that never failed him. The things he actually did were none of them mean, or wanting in quality, and some of them are of a lasting charm that any one may feel who will turn to his poems; but no doubt many of them fell short of his hopes of them with the reader. It was fine to meet him when he was full of a new scheme; he talked of it with a single-hearted joy, and tried to make you see it of the same colors and proportions it wore to his eyes. He spared no toil to make it the perfect thing he dreamed it, and he was not discouraged by any disappointment he suffered with the critic or the public.

He was a tireless worker, and at last his health failed under his labors at the newspaper desk, beneath the midnight gas, when he should long have rested from such labors. I believe he was obliged to do them through one of those business fortuities which deform and embitter all our lives; but he was not the man to spare himself in any case. He was always attempting new things, and he never ceased endeavoring to make his scholarship reparation for the want of earlier opportunity and training. I remember that I met him once in a Cambridge street with a book in his hand which he let me take in mine. It was a Greek author, and he said he was just beginning to read the language at fifty: a patriarchal age to me of the early thirties!

I suppose I intimated the surprise I felt at his taking it up so late in

the day, for he said, with charming seriousness, "Oh, but you know, I expect to use it in the other world." Yea, that made it worth while, I consented; but was he sure of the other world? "As sure as I am of this," he said; and I have always kept the impression of the young faith which spoke in his voice and was more than his words.

I saw him last in the hour of those tremendous adieux which were paid him in New York before he sailed to be minister in Germany. It was one of the most graceful things done by President Hayes, who, most of all our Presidents after Lincoln, honored himself in honoring literature by his appointments, to give that place to Bayard Taylor. There was no one more fit for it, and it was peculiarly fit that he should be so distinguished to a people who knew and valued his scholarship and the service he had done German letters. He was as happy in it, apparently, as a man could be in anything here below, and he enjoyed to the last drop the many cups of kindness pressed to his lips in parting; though I believe these farewells, at a time when he was already fagged with work and excitement, were notably harmful to him, and helped to hasten his end. Some of us who were near of friendship went down to see him off when he sailed, as the dismal and futile wont of friends is; and I recall the kind, great fellow standing in the cabin, amid those sad flowers that heaped the tables, saying good-by to one after another, and smiling fondly, smiling wearily, upon all. There was champagne, of course, and an odious hilarity, without meaning and without remission, till the warning bell chased us ashore, and our brave poet escaped with what was left of his life.

IV

I have followed him far from the moment of our first meeting; but even on my way to venerate those New England luminaries, which chiefly drew my eyes, I could not pay a less devoir to an author who, if Curtis was not, was chief of the New York group of authors in that day. I distinguished between the New-Englanders and the New-Yorkers, and I suppose there is no question but our literary centre was then in Boston, wherever it is, or is not, at present. But I thought Taylor then, and I think him now, one of the first in our whole American province of the republic of letters, in a day when it was in a recognizably flourishing state, whether we regard quantity or quality in the names that gave it lustre. Lowell was then in perfect command of those varied forces which will long, if not lastingly, keep him in memory as first among our literary men, and master in more kinds than any other American. Longfellow was in the fulness of his world-wide fame, and in the ripeness of the beautiful genius which was not to know decay while life endured. Emerson had emerged from the popular darkness which had so long held him a hopeless mystic, and was shining a lambent star of poesy and prophecy at the zenith. Hawthorne, the exquisite artist, the unrivalled dreamer, whom we still always liken this one and that one to, whenever this one or that one promises greatly to please us, and still leave without a rival, without a companion, had lately returned from his long sojourn abroad, and had given us the last

of the incomparable romances which the world was to have perfect from his hand. Doctor Holmes had surpassed all expectations in those who most admired his brilliant humor and charming poetry by the invention of a new attitude if not a new sort in literature. The turn that civic affairs had taken was favorable to the widest recognition of Whittier's splendid lyrical gift; and that heart of fire, doubly snow-bound by Quaker tradition and Puritan environment; was penetrating every generous breast with its flamy impulses, and fusing all wills in its noble purpose. Mrs. Stowe, who far outfamed the rest as the author of the most renowned novel ever written, was proving it no accident or miracle by the fiction she was still writing.

This great New England group might be enlarged perhaps without loss of quality by the inclusion of Thoreau, who came somewhat before his time, and whose drastic criticism of our expedient and mainly futile civilization would find more intelligent acceptance now than it did then, when all resentment of its defects was specialized in enmity to Southern slavery. Doctor Edward Everett Hale belonged in this group too, by virtue of that humor, the most inventive and the most fantastic, the sanest, the sweetest, the truest, which had begun to find expression in the *Atlantic Monthly*; and there a wonderful young girl had written a series of vivid sketches and taken the heart of youth everywhere with amaze and joy, so that I thought it would be no less an event to meet Harriet Prescott than to meet any of those I have named.

I expected somehow to meet them all, and I imagined them all easily accessible in the office of the *Atlantic Monthly*, which had lately adventured in the fine air of high literature where so many other periodicals had gasped and died before it. The best of these, hitherto, and better even than the *Atlantic* for some reasons, the lamented *Putnam's Magazine*, had perished of inanition at New York, and the claim of the commercial capital to the literary primacy had passed with that brilliant venture. New York had nothing distinctive to show for American literature but the decrepit and doting *Knickerbocker Magazine*. Harper's *New Monthly*, though Curtis had already come to it from the wreck of *Putnam's*, and it had long ceased to be eclectic in material, and had begun to stand for native work in the allied arts which it has since so magnificently advanced, was not distinctively literary, and the *Weekly* had just begun to make itself known. The *Century*, *Scribner's*, the *Cosmopolitan*, *McClure's*, and I know not what others, were still unimagined by five, and ten, and twenty years, and the *Galaxy* was to flash and fade before any of them should kindle its more effectual fires. The *Nation*, which was destined to chastise rather than nurture our young literature, had still six years of dreamless potentiality before it; and the *Nation* was always more Bostonian than New-Yorkish by nature, whatever it was by nativity.

Philadelphia had long counted for nothing in the literary field. *Graham's Magazine* at one time showed a certain critical force, but it seemed to perish of this expression of vitality; and there remained *Godey's Lady's Book* and *Peterson's Magazine*, publications really incredible in their insipidity. In the South there was nothing but a mistaken social ideal, with the moral principles all standing on their

heads in defence of slavery; and in the West there was a feeble and foolish notion that Western talent was repressed by Eastern jealousy. At Boston chiefly, if not at Boston alone, was there a vigorous intellectual life among such authors as I have named. Every young writer was ambitious to join his name with theirs in the Atlantic Monthly, and in the lists of Ticknor & Fields, who were literary publishers in a sense such as the business world has known nowhere else before or since. Their imprint was a warrant of quality to the reader and of immortality to the author, so that if I could have had a book issued by them at that day I should now be in the full enjoyment of an undying fame.

V.

Such was the literary situation as the passionate pilgrim from the West approached his holy land at Boston, by way of the Grand Trunk Railway from Quebec to Portland. I have no recollection of a sleeping-car, and I suppose I waked and watched during the whole of that long, rough journey; but I should hardly have slept if there had been a car for the purpose. I was too eager to see what New England was like, and too anxious not to lose the least glimpse of it, to close my eyes after I crossed the border at Island Pond. I found that in the elm-dotted levels of Maine it was very like the Western Reserve in northern Ohio, which is, indeed, a portion of New England transferred with all its characteristic features, and flattened out along the lake shore. It was not till I began to run southward into the older regions of the country that it lost this look, and became gratefully strange to me. It never had the effect of hoary antiquity which I had expected of a country settled more than two centuries; with its wood-built farms and villages it looked newer than the coal-smoked brick of southern Ohio. I had prefigured the New England landscape bare of forests, relieved here and there with the tees of orchards or plantations; but I found apparently as much woodland as at home.

At Portland I first saw the ocean, and this was a sort of disappointment. Tides and salt water I had already had at Quebec, so that I was no longer on the alert for them; but the color and the vastness of the sea I was still to try upon my vision. When I stood on the Promenade at Portland with the kind young Unitarian minister whom I had brought a letter to, and who led me there for a most impressive first view of the ocean, I could not make more of it than there was of Lake Erie; and I have never thought the color of the sea comparable to the tender blue of the lake. I did not hint my disappointment to my friend; I had too much regard for the feelings of an Eastern man to decry his ocean to his face, and I felt besides that it would be vulgar and provincial to make comparisons. I am glad now that I held my tongue, for that kind soul is no longer in this world, and I should not like to think he knew how far short of my expectations the sea he was so proud of had fallen. I went up with him into a tower or belvedere there was at hand; and when he pointed to the eastern horizon and said, Now there was nothing but sea between us and Africa, I pretended to expand with the thought, and began to sound myself

for the emotions which I ought to have felt at such a sight. But in my heart I was empty, and Heaven knows whether I saw the steamer which the ancient mariner in charge of that tower invited me to look at through his telescope. I never could see anything but a vitreous glare through a telescope, which has a vicious habit of dodging about through space, and failing to bring down anything of less than planetary magnitude.

But there was something at Portland vastly more to me than seas or continents, and that was the house where Longfellow was born. I believe, now, I did not get the right house, but only the house he went to live in later; but it served, and I rejoiced in it with a rapture that could not have been more genuine if it had been the real birthplace of the poet. I got my friend to show me

"---the breezy dome of groves,
The shadows of Deering's woods,"

because they were in one of Longfellow's loveliest and tenderest poems; and I made an errand to the docks, for the sake of the

"---black wharves and the slips,
And the sea-tides tossing free,
And Spanish sailors with bearded lips,
And the beauty and mystery of the ships,
And the magic of the sea,"

mainly for the reason that these were colors and shapes of the fond vision of the poet's past. I am in doubt whether it was at this time or a later time that I went to revere

"--the dead captains as they lay
In their graves o'erlooking the tranquil bay,
where they in battle died,"

but I am quite sure it was now that I wandered under

"--the trees which shadow each well-known street,
As they balance up and down,"

for when I was next in Portland the great fire had swept the city avenues bare of most of those beautiful elms, whose Gothic arches and traceries I well remember.

The fact is that in those days I was bursting with the most romantic expectations of life in every way, and I looked at the whole world as material that might be turned into literature, or that might be associated with it somehow. I do not know how I managed to keep these preposterous hopes within me, but perhaps the trick of satirizing them, which I had early learnt, helped me to do it. I was at that particular moment resolved above all things to see things as Heinrich Heine saw them, or at least to report them as he did, no matter how I saw them; and I went about framing phrases to this end, and trying to match the objects of interest to them whenever there was the least chance of

getting them together.

VI.

I do not know how I first arrived in Boston, or whether it was before or after I had passed a day or two in Salem. As Salem is on the way from Portland, I will suppose that I stopped there first, and explored the quaint old town (quainter then than now, but still quaint enough) for the memorials of Hawthorne and of the witches which united to form the Salem I cared for. I went and looked up the House of Seven Gables, and suffered an unreasonable disappointment that it had not a great many more of them; but there was no loss in the death-warrant of Bridget Bishop, with the sheriff's return of execution upon it, which I found at the Court-house; if anything, the pathos of that witness of one of the cruelest delusions in the world was rather in excess of my needs; I could have got on with less. I saw the pins which the witches were sworn to have thrust into the afflicted children, and I saw Gallows Hill, where the hapless victims of the perjury were hanged. But that death-warrant remained the most vivid color of my experience of the tragedy; I had no need to invite myself to a sense of it, and it is still like a stain of red in my memory.

The kind old ship's captain whose guest I was, and who was transfigured to poetry in my sense by the fact that he used to voyage to the African coast for palm-oil in former days, led me all about the town, and showed me the Custom-house, which I desired to see because it was in the preface to the Scarlet Letter. But I perceived that he did not share my enthusiasm for the author, and I became more and more sensible that in Salem air there was a cool undercurrent of feeling about him. No doubt the place was not altogether grateful for the celebrity his romance had given it, and would have valued more the uninterrupted quiet of its own flattering thoughts of itself; but when it came to hearing a young lady say she knew a girl who said she would like to poison Hawthorne, it seemed to the devout young pilgrim from the West that something more of love for the great romancer would not have been too much for him. Hawthorne had already had his say, however, and he had not used his native town with any great tenderness. Indeed, the advantages to any place of having a great genius born and reared in its midst are so doubtful that it might be well for localities designing to become the birthplaces of distinguished authors to think twice about it. Perhaps only the largest capitals, like London and Paris, and New York and Chicago, ought to risk it. But the authors have an unaccountable perversity, and will seldom come into the world in the large cities, which are alone without the sense of neighborhood, and the personal susceptibilities so unfavorable to the practice of the literary art. I dare say that it was owing to the local indifference to her greatest name, or her reluctance from it, that I got a clearer impression of Salem in some other respects than I should have had if I had been invited there to devote myself solely to the associations of Hawthorne. For the first time I saw an old New England town, I do not know, but the most

characteristic, and took into my young Western consciousness the fact of a more complex civilization than I had yet known. My whole life had been passed in a region where men were just beginning ancestors, and the conception of family was very imperfect. Literature, of course, was full of it, and it was not for a devotee of Thackeray to be theoretically ignorant of its manifestations; but I had hitherto carelessly supposed that family was nowhere regarded seriously in America except in Virginia, where it furnished a joke for the rest of the nation. But now I found myself confronted with it in its ancient houses, and heard its names pronounced with a certain consideration, which I dare say was as much their due in Salem as it could be anywhere. The names were all strange, and all indifferent to me, but those fine square wooden mansions, of a tasteful architecture, and a pale buff-color, withdrawing themselves in quiet reserve from the quiet street, gave me an impression of family as an actuality and a force which I had never had before, but which no Westerner can yet understand the East without taking into account. I do not suppose that I conceived of family as a fact of vital import then; I think I rather regarded it as a color to be used in any aesthetic study of the local conditions. I am not sure that I valued it more even for literary purposes, than the steeple which the captain pointed out as the first and last thing he saw when he came and went on his long voyages, or than the great palm-oil casks, which he showed me, and which I related to the tree that stood

"Auf brennender Felsenwand."

Whether that was the kind of palm that gives the oil, or was a sort only suitable to be the dream of a lonely fir-tree in the North on a cold height, I am in doubt to this day.

I heard, not without concern, that the neighboring industry of Lynn was penetrating Salem, and that the ancient haunt of the witches and the birthplace of our subtlest and somberest wizard was becoming a great shoe-town; but my concern was less for its memories and sensibilities than for an odious duty which I owed that industry, together with all the others in New England. Before I left home I had promised my earliest publisher that I would undertake to edit, or compile, or do something literary to, a work on the operation of the more distinctive mechanical inventions of our country, which he had conceived the notion of publishing by subscription. He had furnished me, the most immechanical of humankind, with a letter addressed generally to the great mills and factories of the East, entreating their managers to unfold their mysteries to me for the purposes of this volume. His letter had the effect of shutting up some of them like clams, and others it put upon their guard against my researches, lest I should seize the secret of their special inventions and publish it to the world. I could not tell the managers that I was both morally and mentally incapable of this; that they might have explained and demonstrated the properties and functions of their most recondite machinery, and upon examination afterwards found me guiltless of having anything but a few verses of Heine or Tennyson or Longfellow in my head. So I had to suffer in several places from their unjust anxieties, and from my own weariness of their ingenious engines, or else endure the pangs of a bad conscience

from ignoring them. As long as I was in Canada I was happy, for there was no industry in Canada that I saw, except that of the peasant girls, in their Evangeline hats and kirtles, tossing the hay in the way-side fields; but when I reached Portland my troubles began. I went with that young minister of whom I have spoken to a large foundry, where they were casting some sort of ironmongery, and inspected the process from a distance beyond any chance spurt of the molten metal, and came away sadly uncertain of putting the rather fine spectacle to any practical use. A manufactory where they did something with coal-oil (which I now heard for the first time called kerosene) refused itself to me, and I said to myself that probably all the other industries of Portland were as reserved, and I would not seek to explore them; but when I got to Salem, my conscience stirred again. If I knew that there were shoe-shops in Salem, ought not I to go and inspect their processes? This was a question which would not answer itself to my satisfaction, and I had no peace till I learned that I could see shoemaking much better at Lynn, and that Lynn was such a little way from Boston that I could readily run up there, if I did not wish to examine the shoe machinery at once. I promised myself that I would run up from Boston, but in order to do this I must first go to Boston.

VII.

I am supposing still that I saw Salem before I saw Boston, but however the fact may be, I am sure that I decided it would be better to see shoemaking in Lynn, where I really did see it, thirty years later. For the purposes of the present visit, I contented myself with looking at a machine in Haverhill, which chewed a shoe sole full of pegs, and dropped it out of its iron jaws with an indifference as great as my own, and probably as little sense of how it had done its work. I may be unjust to that machine; Heaven knows I would not wrong it; and I must confess that my head had no room in it for the conception of any machinery but the mythological, which also I despised, in my revulsion from the eighteenth-century poets to those of my own day.

I cannot quite make out after the lapse of so many years just how or when I got to Haverhill, or whether it was before or after I had been in Salem. There is an apparitional quality in my presences, at this point or that, in the dim past; but I hope that, for the credit of their order, ghosts are not commonly taken with such trivial things as I was. For instance, in Haverhill I was much interested by the sight of a young man, coming gayly down the steps of the hotel where I lodged, in peg-top trousers so much more peg top than my own that I seemed to be wearing mere spring-bottoms in comparison; and in a day when every one who respected himself had a necktie as narrow as he could get, this youth had one no wider than a shoestring, and red at that, while mine measured almost an inch, and was black. To be sure, he was one of a band of negro minstrels, who were to give a concert that night, and he had a light to excel in fashion.

I will suppose, for convenience' sake, that I visited Haverhill, too, before I reached Boston: somehow that shoe-pegging machine must come in, and it may as well come in here. When I actually found myself in Boston, there were perhaps industries which it would have been well for me to celebrate, but I either made believe there were none, or else I honestly forgot all about them. In either case I released myself altogether to the literary and historical associations of the place. I need not say that I gave myself first to the first, and it rather surprised me to find that the literary associations of Boston referred so largely to Cambridge. I did not know much about Cambridge, except that it was the seat of the university where Lowell was, and Longfellow had been, professor; and somehow I had not realized it as the home of these poets. That was rather stupid of me, but it is best to own the truth, and afterward I came to know the place so well that I may safely confess my earlier ignorance.

I had stopped in Boston at the Tremont House, which was still one of the first hostelries of the country, and I must have inquired my way to Cambridge there; but I was sceptical of the direction the Cambridge horse-car took when I found it, and I hinted to the driver my anxieties as to why he should be starting east when I had been told that Cambridge was west of Boston. He reassured me in the laconic and sarcastic manner of his kind, and we really reached Cambridge by the route he had taken.

The beautiful elms that shaded great part of the way massed themselves in the "groves of academe" at the Square, and showed pleasant glimpses of "Old Harvard's scholar factories red," then far fewer than now. It must have been in vacation, for I met no one as I wandered through the college yard, trying to make up my mind as to how I should learn where Lowell lived; for it was he whom I had come to find. He had not only taken the poems I sent him, but he had printed two of them in a single number of the Atlantic, and had even written me a little note about them, which I wore next my heart in my breast pocket till I almost wore it out; and so I thought I might fitly report myself to him. But I have always been helpless in finding my way, and I was still depressed by my failure to convince the horse-car driver that he had taken the wrong road. I let several people go by without questioning them, and those I did ask abashed me farther by not knowing what I wanted to know. When I had remitted my search for the moment, an ancient man, with an open mouth and an inquiring eye, whom I never afterwards made out in Cambridge, addressed me with a hospitable offer to show me the Washington Elm. I thought this would give me time to embolden myself for the meeting with the editor of the Atlantic if I should ever find him, and I went with that kind old man, who when he had shown me the tree, and the spot where Washington stood when he took command of the Continental forces, said that he had a branch of it, and that if I would come to his house with him he would give me a piece. In the end, I meant merely to flatter him into telling me where I could find Lowell, but I dissembled my purpose and pretended a passion for a piece of the historic elm, and the old man led me not only to his house but his wood-house, where he sawed me off a block so generous that I could not get it into my pocket. I feigned the gratitude which I could see that he expected, and then I took courage to put my question to him. Perhaps that patriarch lived only in the past,

and cared for history and not literature. He confessed that he could not tell me where to find Lowell; but he did not forsake me; he set forth with me upon the street again, and let no man pass without asking him. In the end we met one who was able to say where Mr. Lowell was, and I found him at last in a little study at the rear of a pleasant, old-fashioned house near the Delta.

Lowell was not then at the height of his fame; he had just reached this thirty years after, when he died; but I doubt if he was ever after a greater power in his own country, or more completely embodied the literary aspiration which would not and could not part itself from the love of freedom and the hope of justice. For the sake of these he had been willing to suffer the reproach which followed their friends in the earlier days of the anti-slavery struggle: He had outlived the reproach long before; but the fear of his strength remained with those who had felt it, and he had not made himself more generally loved by the 'Fable for Critics' than by the 'Biglow Papers', probably. But in the 'Vision of Sir Launfal' and the 'Legend of Brittany' he had won a liking if not a listening far wider than his humor and his wit had got him; and in his lectures on the English poets, given not many years before he came to the charge of the Atlantic, he had proved himself easily the wisest and finest critic in our language. He was already, more than any American poet,

"Dowered with the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn,
The love of love,"

and he held a place in the public sense which no other author among us has held. I had myself never been a great reader of his poetry, when I met him, though when I was a boy of ten years I had heard my father repeat passages from the Biglow Papers against war and slavery and the war for slavery upon Mexico, and later I had read those criticisms of English poetry, and I knew Sir Launfal must be Lowell in some sort; but my love for him as a poet was chiefly centred in my love for his tender rhyme, 'Auf Wiedersehen', which I can not yet read without something of the young pathos it first stirred in me. I knew and felt his greatness some how apart from the literary proofs of it; he ruled my fancy and held my allegiance as a character, as a man; and I am neither sorry nor ashamed that I was abashed when I first came into his presence; and that in spite of his words of welcome I sat inwardly quaking before him. He was then forty-one years old, and nineteen my senior, and if there had been nothing else to awe me, I might well have been quelled by the disparity of our ages. But I have always been willing and even eager to do homage to men who have done something, and notably to men who have done something. in the sort I wished to do something in, myself. I could never recognize any other sort of superiority; but that I am proud to recognize; and I had before Lowell some such feeling as an obscure subaltern might have before his general. He was by nature a bit of a disciplinarian, and the effect was from him as well as in me; I dare say he let me feel whatever difference there was as helplessly as I felt it. At the first encounter with people he always was apt to have a certain frosty shyness, a smiling cold, as from the long, high-sunned winters of his Puritan race; he was not quite himself till he had made you aware of

his quality: then no one could be sweeter, tenderer, warmer than he; then he made you free of his whole heart; but you must be his captive before he could do that. His whole personality had now an instant charm for me; I could not keep my eyes from those beautiful eyes of his, which had a certain starry serenity, and looked out so purely from under his white forehead, shadowed with auburn hair untouched by age; or from the smile that shaped the auburn beard, and gave the face in its form and color the Christ-look which Page's portrait has flattered in it.

His voice had as great a fascination for me as his face. The vibrant tenderness and the crisp clearness of the tones, the perfect modulation, the clear enunciation, the exquisite accent, the elect diction--I did not know enough then to know that these were the gifts, these were the graces, of one from whose tongue our rough English came music such as I should never hear from any other. In this speech there was nothing of our slipshod American slovenliness, but a truly Italian conscience and an artistic sense of beauty in the instrument.

I saw, before he sat down across his writing-table from me, that he was not far from the medium height; but his erect carriage made the most of his five feet and odd inches. He had been smoking the pipe he loved, and he put it back in his mouth, presently, as if he found himself at greater ease with it, when he began to chat, or rather to let me show what manner of young man I was by giving me the first word. I told him of the trouble I had in finding him, and I could not help dragging in something about Heine's search for Borne, when he went to see him in Frankfort; but I felt at once this was a false start, for Lowell was such an impassioned lover of Cambridge, which was truly his patria, in the Italian sense, that it must have hurt him to be unknown to any one in it; he said, a little dryly, that he should not have thought I would have so much difficulty; but he added, forgivingly, that this was not his own house, which he was out of for the time. Then he spoke to me of Heine, and when I showed my ardor for him, he sought to temper it with some judicious criticisms, and told me that he had kept the first poem I sent him, for the long time it had been unacknowledged, to make sure that it was not a translation. He asked me about myself, and my name, and its Welsh origin, and seemed to find the vanity I had in this harmless enough. When I said I had tried hard to believe that I was at least the literary descendant of Sir James Howels, he corrected me gently with "James Howel," and took down a volume of the 'Familiar Letters' from the shelves behind him to prove me wrong. This was always his habit, as I found afterwards when he quoted anything from a book he liked to get it and read the passage over, as if he tasted a kind of hoarded sweetness in the words. It visibly vexed him if they showed him in the least mistaken; but

"The love he bore to learning was at fault"

for this foible, and that other of setting people right if he thought them wrong. I could not assert myself against his version of Howels's name, for my edition of his letters was far away in Ohio, and I was obliged to own that the name was spelt in several different ways in it. He perceived, no doubt, why I had chosen the form liked my own, with the

title which the pleasant old turncoat ought to have had from the many masters he served according to their many minds, but never had except from that erring edition. He did not afflict me for it, though; probably it amused him too much; he asked me about the West, and when he found that I was as proud of the West as I was of Wales, he seemed even better pleased, and said he had always fancied that human nature was laid out on rather a larger scale there than in the East, but he had seen very little of the West. In my heart I did not think this then, and I do not think it now; human nature has had more ground to spread over in the West; that is all; but "it was not for me to bandy words with my sovereign." He said he liked to hear of the differences between the different sections, for what we had most to fear in our country was a wearisome sameness of type.

He did not say now, or at any other time during the many years I knew him, any of those slighting things of the West which I had so often to suffer from Eastern people, but suffered me to praise it all I would. He asked me what way I had taken in coming to New England, and when I told him, and began to rave of the beauty and quaintness of French Canada, and to pour out my joy in Quebec, he said, with a smile that had now lost all its frost, Yes, Quebec was a bit of the seventeenth century; it was in many ways more French than France, and its people spoke the language of Voltaire, with the accent of Voltaire's time.

I do not remember what else he talked of, though once I remembered it with what I believed an ineffaceable distinctness. I set nothing of it down at the time; I was too busy with the letters I was writing for a Cincinnati paper; and I was severely bent upon keeping all personalities out of them. This was very well, but I could wish now that I had transgressed at least so far as to report some of the things that Lowell said; for the paper did not print my letters, and it would have been perfectly safe, and very useful for the present purpose. But perhaps he did not say anything very memorable; to do that you must have something positive in your listener; and I was the mere response, the hollow echo, that youth must be in like circumstances. I was all the time afraid of wearing my welcome out, and I hurried to go when I would so gladly have staid. I do not remember where I meant to go, or why he should have undertaken to show me the way across-lots, but this was what he did; and when we came to a fence, which I clambered gracelessly over, he put his hands on the top, and tried to take it at a bound. He tried twice, and then laughed at his failure, but not with any great pleasure, and he was not content till a third trial carried him across. Then he said, "I commonly do that the first time," as if it were a frequent habit with him, while I remained discreetly silent, and for that moment at least felt myself the elder of the man who had so much of the boy in him. He had, indeed, much of the boy in him to the last, and he parted with each hour of his youth reluctantly, pathetically.

We walked across what must have been Jarvis Field to what must have been North Avenue, and there he left me. But before he let me go he held my hand while he could say that he wished me to dine with him; only, he was not in his own house, and he would ask me to dine with him at the Parker House in Boston, and would send me word of the time later.

I suppose I may have spent part of the intervening time in viewing the wonders of Boston, and visiting the historic scenes and places in it and about it. I certainly went over to Charleston, and ascended Bunker Hill monument, and explored the navy-yard, where the immemorial man-of-war begun in Jackson's time was then silently stretching itself under its long shed in a poetic arrest, as if the failure of the appropriation for its completion had been some kind of enchantment. In Boston, I early presented my letter of credit to the publisher it was drawn upon, not that I needed money at the moment, but from a young eagerness to see if it would be honored; and a literary attache of the house kindly went about with me, and showed me the life of the city. A great city it seemed to me then, and a seething vortex of business as well as a whirl of gaiety, as I saw it in Washington Street, and in a promenade concert at Copeland's restaurant in Tremont Row. Probably I brought some idealizing force to bear upon it, for I was not all so strange to the world as I must seem; perhaps I accounted for quality as well as quantity in my impressions of the New England metropolis, and aggrandized it in the ratio of its literary importance. It seemed to me old, even after Quebec, and very likely I credited the actual town with all the dead and gone Bostonians in my sentimental census. If I did not, it was no fault of my cicerone, who thought even more of the city he showed me than I did. I do not know now who he was, and I never saw him after I came to live there, with any certainty that it was he, though I was often tormented with the vision of a spectacled face like his, but not like enough to warrant me in addressing him.

He became part of that ghostly Boston of my first visit, which would sometimes return and possess again the city I came to know so familiarly in later years, and to be so passionately interested in. Some color of my prime impressions has tinged the fictitious experiences of people in my books, but I find very little of it in my memory. This is like a web of frayed old lace, which I have to take carefully into my hold for fear of its fragility, and make out as best I can the figure once so distinct in it. There are the narrow streets, stretching saltworks to the docks, which I haunted for their quaintness, and there is Faunal Hall, which I cared to see so much more because Wendell Phillips had spoken in it than because Otis and Adams had. There is the old Colonial House, and there is the State House, which I dare say I explored, with the Common sloping before it. There is Beacon Street, with the Hancock House where it is incredibly no more, and there are the beginnings of Commonwealth Avenue, and the other streets of the Back Bay, laid out with their basements left hollowed in the made land, which the gravel trains were yet making out of the westward hills. There is the Public Garden, newly planned and planted, but without the massive bridge destined to make so ungratefully little of the lake that occasioned it. But it is all very vague, and I could easily believe now that it was some one else who saw it then in my place.

I think that I did not try to see Cambridge the same day that I saw Lowell, but wisely came back to my hotel in Boston, and tried to realize the fact. I went out another day, with an acquaintance from Ohio; whom I ran upon in the street. We went to Mount Auburn together, and I viewed its monuments with a reverence which I dare say their artistic quality did not merit. But I am, not sorry for this, for perhaps they are not quite so bad as some people pretend. The Gothic chapel of the cemetery, unsorted as it was, gave me, with its half-dozen statues standing or sitting about, an emotion such as I am afraid I could not receive now from the Acropolis, Westminster Abbey, and Santa Croce in one. I tried hard for some aesthetic sense of it, and I made believe that I thought this thing and that thing in the place moved me with its fitness or beauty; but the truth is that I had no taste in anything but literature, and did not feel the effect I would so willingly have experienced.

I did genuinely love the elmy quiet of the dear old Cambridge streets, though, and I had a real and instant pleasure in the yellow colonial houses, with their white corners and casements and their green blinds, that lurked behind the shrubbery of the avenue I passed through to Mount Auburn. The most beautiful among them was the most interesting for me, for it was the house of Longfellow; my companion, who had seen it before, pointed it out to me with an air of custom, and I would not let him see that I valued the first sight of it as I did. I had hoped that somehow I might be so favored as to see Longfellow himself, but when I asked about him of those who knew, they said, "Oh, he is at Nahant," and I thought that Nahant must be a great way off, and at any rate I did not feel authorized to go to him there. Neither did I go to see the author of 'The Amber Gods' who lived at Newburyport, I was told, as if I should know where Newburyport was; I did not know, and I hated to ask. Besides, it did not seem so simple as it had seemed in Ohio, to go and see a young lady simply because I was infatuated with her literature; even as the envoy of all the infatuated young people of Columbus, I could not quite do this; and when I got home, I had to account for my failure as best I could. Another failure of mine was the sight of Whittier, which I then very much longed to have. They said, "Oh, Whittier lives at Amesbury," but that put him at an indefinite distance, and without the introduction I never would ask for, I found it impossible to set out in quest of him. In the end, I saw no one in New England whom I was not presented to in the regular way, except Lowell, whom I thought I had a right to call upon in my quality of contributor, and from the acquaintance I had with him by letter. I neither praise nor blame myself for this; it was my shyness that withheld me rather than my merit. There is really no harm in seeking the presence of a famous man, and I doubt if the famous man resents the wish of people to look upon him without some measure, great or little, of affectation. There are bores everywhere, but he is likelier to find them in the wonted figures of society than in those young people, or old people, who come to him in the love of what he has done. I am well aware how furiously Tennyson sometimes met his worshippers, and how insolently Carlyle, but I think these facts are little specks in their sincerity. Our own gentler and honester celebrities did not forbid approach, and I have known some of them caress adorers who seemed hardly worthy of their kindness; but that was better

than to have hurt any sensitive spirit who had ventured too far, by the rules that govern us with common men.

IX.

My business relations were with the house that so promptly honored my letter of credit. This house had published in the East the campaign life of Lincoln which I had lately written, and I dare say would have published the volume of poems I had written earlier with my friend Piatt, if there had been any public for it; at least, I saw large numbers of the book on the counters. But all my literary affiliations were with Ticknor & Fields, and it was the Old Corner Book-Store on Washington Street that drew my heart as soon as I had replenished my pocket in Cornhill. After verifying the editor of the Atlantic Monthly I wised to verify its publishers, and it very fitly happened that when I was shown into Mr. Fields's little room at the back of the store, with its window looking upon School Street, and its scholarly keeping in books and prints, he had just got the magazine sheets of a poem of mine from the Cambridge printers. He was then lately from abroad, and he had the zest for American things which a foreign sojourn is apt to renew in us, though I did not know this then, and could not account for it in the kindness he expressed for my poem. He introduced me to Mr. Ticknor, who I fancied had not read my poem; but he seemed to know what it was from the junior partner, and he asked me whether I had been paid for it. I confessed that I had not, and then he got out a chamois-leather bag, and took from it five half-eagles in gold and laid them on the green cloth top of the desk, in much the shape and of much the size of the Great Bear. I have never since felt myself paid so lavishly for any literary work, though I have had more for a single piece than the twenty-five dollars that dazzled me in this constellation. The publisher seemed aware of the poetic character of the transaction; he let the pieces lie a moment, before he gathered them up and put them into my hand, and said, "I always think it is pleasant to have it in gold."

But a terrible experience with the poem awaited me, and quenched for the moment all my pleasure and pride. It was 'The Pilot's Story,' which I suppose has had as much acceptance as anything of mine in verse (I do not boast of a vast acceptance for it), and I had attempted to treat in it a phase of the national tragedy of slavery, as I had imagined it on a Mississippi steamboat. A young planter has gambled away the slave-girl who is the mother of his child, and when he tells her, she breaks out upon him with the demand:

"What will you say to our boy when he cries for me, there in Saint Louis?"

I had thought this very well, and natural and simple, but a fatal proof-reader had not thought it well enough, or simple and natural enough, and he had made the line read:

"What will you say to our boy when he cries for 'Ma,' there in Saint Louis?"

He had even had the inspiration to quote the word he preferred to the one I had written, so that there was no merciful possibility of mistaking it for a misprint, and my blood froze in my veins at sight of it. Mr. Fields had given me the sheets to read while he looked over some letters, and he either felt the chill of my horror, or I made some sign or sound of dismay that caught his notice, for he looked round at me. I could only show him the passage with a gasp. I dare say he might have liked to laugh, for it was cruelly funny, but he did not; he was concerned for the magazine as well as for me. He declared that when he first read the line he had thought I could not have written it so, and he agreed with me that it would kill the poem if it came out in that shape. He instantly set about repairing the mischief, so far as could be. He found that the whole edition of that sheet had been printed, and the air blackened round me again, lighted up here and there with baleful flashes of the newspaper wit at my cost, which I provisioned in my misery; I knew what I should have said of such a thing myself, if it had been another's. But the publisher at once decided that the sheet must be reprinted, and I went away weak as if in the escape from some deadly peril. Afterwards it appeared that the line had passed the first proof-reader as I wrote it, but that the final reader had entered so sympathetically into the realistic intention of my poem as to contribute the modification which had nearly been my end.

X.

As it fell out, I lived without farther difficulty to the day and hour of the dinner Lowell made for me; and I really think, looking at myself impersonally, and remembering the sort of young fellow I was, that it would have been a great pity if I had not. The dinner was at the old-fashioned Boston hour of two, and the table was laid for four people in some little upper room at Parker's, which I was never afterwards able to make sure of. Lowell was already, there when I came, and he presented me, to my inexpressible delight and surprise, to Dr. Holmes, who was there with him.

Holmes was in the most brilliant hour of that wonderful second youth which his fame flowered into long after the world thought he had completed the cycle of his literary life. He had already received full recognition as a poet of delicate wit, nimble humor, airy imagination, and exquisite grace, when the Autocrat papers advanced his name indefinitely beyond the bounds which most immortals would have found range enough. The marvel of his invention was still fresh in the minds of men, and time had not dulled in any measure the sense of its novelty. His readers all fondly identified him with his work; and I fully expected to find myself in the Autocrat's presence when I met Dr. Holmes. But the fascination was none the less for that reason; and the winning smile, the wise and humorous glance, the whole genial manner was as important to

me as if I had foreboded something altogether different. I found him physically of the Napoleonic height which spiritually overtops the Alps, and I could look into his face without that unpleasant effort which giants of inferior mind so often cost the man of five feet four.

A little while after, Fields came in, and then our number and my pleasure were complete.

Nothing else so richly satisfactory, indeed, as the whole affair could have happened to a like youth at such a point in his career; and when I sat down with Doctor Holmes and Mr. Fields, on Lowell's right, I felt through and through the dramatic perfection of the event. The kindly Autocrat recognized some such quality of it in terms which were not the less precious and gracious for their humorous excess. I have no reason to think that he had yet read any of my poor verses, or had me otherwise than wholly on trust from Lowell; but he leaned over towards his host, and said, with a laughing look at me, "Well, James, this is something like the apostolic succession; this is the laying on of hands." I took his sweet and caressing irony as he meant it; but the charm of it went to my head long before any drop of wine, together with the charm of hearing him and Lowell calling each other James and Wendell, and of finding them still cordially boys together.

I would gladly have glimmered before those great lights in the talk that followed, if I could have thought of anything brilliant to say, but I could not, and so I let them shine without a ray of reflected splendor from me. It was such talk as I had, of course, never heard before, and it is not saying enough to say that I have never heard such talk since except from these two men. It was as light and kind as it was deep and true, and it ranged over a hundred things, with a perpetual sparkle of Doctor Holmes's wit, and the constant glow of Lowell's incandescent sense. From time to time Fields came in with one of his delightful stories (sketches of character they were, which he sometimes did not mind caricaturing), or with some criticism of the literary situation from his stand-point of both lover and publisher of books. I heard fames that I had accepted as proofs of power treated as factitious, and witnessed a frankness concerning authorship, far and near, that I had not dreamed of authors using. When Doctor Holmes understood that I wrote for the 'Saturday Press', which was running amuck among some Bostonian immortalities of the day, he seemed willing that I should know they were not thought so very undying in Boston, and that I should not take the notion of a Mutual Admiration Society too seriously, or accept the New York Bohemian view of Boston as true. For the most part the talk did not address itself to me, but became an exchange of thoughts and fancies between himself and Lowell. They touched, I remember, on certain matters of technique, and the doctor confessed that he had a prejudice against some words that he could not overcome; for instance, he said, nothing could induce him to use 'neath for beneath, no exigency of versification or stress of rhyme. Lowell contended that he would use any word that carried his meaning; and I think he did this to the hurt of some of his earlier things. He was then probably in the revolt against too much literature in literature, which every one is destined sooner or later to share; there was a certain roughness, very like crudeness, which he

indulged before his thought and phrase mellowed to one music in his later work. I tacitly agreed rather with the doctor, though I did not swerve from my allegiance to Lowell, and if I had spoken I should have sided with him: I would have given that or any other proof of my devotion. Fields casually mentioned that he thought "The Dandelion" was the most popularly liked of Lowell's briefer poems, and I made haste to say that I thought so too, though I did not really think anything about it; and then I was sorry, for I could see that the poet did not like it, quite; and I felt that I was duly punished for my dishonesty.

Hawthorne was named among other authors, probably by Fields, whose house had just published his "Marble Faun," and who had recently come home on the same steamer with him. Doctor Holmes asked if I had met Hawthorne yet, and when I confessed that I had hardly yet even hoped for such a thing, he smiled his winning smile, and said: "Ah, well! I don't know that you will ever feel you have really met him. He is like a dim room with a little taper of personality burning on the corner of the mantel."

They all spoke of Hawthorne, and with the same affection, but the same sense of something mystical and remote in him; and every word was priceless to me. But these masters of the craft I was 'prentice to probably could not have said anything that I should not have found wise and well, and I am sure now I should have been the loser if the talk had shunned any of the phases of human nature which it touched. It is best to find that all men are of the same make, and that there are certain universal things which interest them as much as the supernal things, and amuse them even more. There was a saying of Lowell's which he was fond of repeating at the menace of any form of the transcendental, and he liked to warn himself and others with his homely, "Remember the dinner-bell." What I recall of the whole effect of a time so happy for me is that in all that was said, however high, however fine, we were never out of hearing of the dinner-bell; and perhaps this is the best effect I can leave with the reader. It was the first dinner served in courses that I had sat down to, and I felt that this service gave it a romantic importance which the older fashion of the West still wanted. Even at Governor Chase's table in Columbus the Governor carved; I knew of the dinner 'a la Russe', as it was then called, only from books; and it was a sort of literary flavor that I tasted in the successive dishes. When it came to the black coffee, and then to the 'petits verres' of cognac, with lumps of sugar set fire to atop, it was something that so far transcended my home-kept experience that it began to seem altogether visionary.

Neither Fields nor Doctor Holmes smoked, and I had to confess that I did not; but Lowell smoked enough for all three, and the spark of his cigar began to show in the waning light before we rose from the table. The time that never had, nor can ever have, its fellow for me, had to come to an end, as all times must, and when I shook hands with Lowell in parting, he overwhelmed me by saying that if I thought of going to Concord he would send me a letter to Hawthorne. I was not to see Lowell again during my stay in Boston; but Doctor Holmes asked me to tea for the next evening, and Fields said I must come to breakfast with him in the morning.

XI.

I recall with the affection due to his friendly nature, and to the kindness afterwards to pass between us for many years, the whole aspect of the publisher when I first saw him. His abundant hair, and his full "beard as broad as any spade," that flowed from his throat in Homeric curls, were touched with the first frost. He had a fine color, and his eyes, as keen as they were kind, twinkled restlessly above the wholesome russet-red of his cheeks. His portly frame was clad in those Scotch tweeds which had not yet displaced the traditional broadcloth with us in the West, though I had sent to New York for a rough suit, and so felt myself not quite unworthy to meet a man fresh from the hands of the London tailor.

Otherwise I stood as much in awe of him as his jovial soul would let me; and if I might I should like to suggest to the literary youth of this day some notion of the importance of his name to the literary youth of my day. He gave aesthetic character to the house of Ticknor & Fields, but he was by no means a silent partner on the economic side. No one can forecast the fortune of a new book, but he knew as well as any publisher can know not only whether a book was good, but whether the reader would think so; and I suppose that his house made as few bad guesses, along with their good ones, as any house that ever tried the uncertain temper of the public with its ventures. In the minds of all who loved the plain brown cloth and tasteful print of its issues he was more or less intimately associated with their literature; and those who were not mistaken in thinking De Quincey one of the delightfulest authors in the world, were especially grateful to the man who first edited his writings in book form, and proud that this edition was the effect of American sympathy with them. At that day, I believed authorship the noblest calling in the world, and I should still be at a loss to name any nobler. The great authors I had met were to me the sum of greatness, and if I could not rank their publisher with them by virtue of equal achievement, I handsomely brevetted him worthy of their friendship, and honored him in the visible measure of it.

In his house beside the Charles, and in the close neighborhood of Doctor Holmes, I found an odor and an air of books such as I fancied might belong to the famous literary houses of London. It is still there, that friendly home of lettered refinement, and the gracious spirit which knew how to welcome me, and make the least of my shyness and strangeness, and the most of the little else there was in me, illumines it still, though my host of that rapturous moment has many years been of those who are only with us unseen and unheard. I remember his burlesque pretence that morning of an inextinguishable grief when I owned that I had never eaten blueberry cake before, and how he kept returning to the pathos of the fact that there should be a region of the earth where blueberry cake was unknown. We breakfasted in the pretty room whose windows look out through leaves and flowers upon the river's coming and going tides, and

whose walls were covered with the faces and the autographs of all the contemporary poets and novelists. The Fieldses had spent some days with Tennyson in their recent English sojourn, and Mrs. Fields had much to tell of him, how he looked, how he smoked, how he read aloud, and how he said, when he asked her to go with him to the tower of his house, "Come up and see the sad English sunset!" which had an instant value to me such as some rich verse of his might have had. I was very new to it all, how new I could not very well say, but I flattered myself that I breathed in that atmosphere as if in the return from life-long exile. Still I patriotically bragged of the West a little, and I told them proudly that in Columbus no book since Uncle Tom's Cabin had sold so well as 'The Marble Faun'. This made the effect that I wished, but whether it was true or not, Heaven knows; I only know that I heard it from our leading bookseller, and I made no question of it myself.

After breakfast, Fields went away to the office, and I lingered, while Mrs. Fields showed me from shelf to shelf in the library, and dazzled me with the sight of authors' copies, and volumes invaluable with the autographs and the pencilled notes of the men whose names were dear to me from my love of their work. Everywhere was some souvenir of the living celebrities my hosts had met; and whom had they not met in that English sojourn in days before England embittered herself to us during our civil war? Not Tennyson only, but Thackeray, but Dickens, but Charles Reade, but Carlyle, but many a minor fame was in my ears from converse so recent with them that it was as if I heard their voices in their echoed words.

I do not remember how long I stayed; I remember I was afraid of staying too long, and so I am sure I did not stay as long as I should have liked. But I have not the least notion how I got away, and I am not certain where I spent the rest of a day that began in the clouds, but had to be ended on the common earth. I suppose I gave it mostly to wandering about the city, and partly to recording my impressions of it for that newspaper which never published them. The summer weather in Boston, with its sunny heat struck through and through with the coolness of the sea, and its clear air untainted with a breath of smoke, I have always loved, but it had then a zest unknown before; and I should have thought it enough simply to be alive in it. But everywhere I came upon something that fed my famine for the old, the quaint, the picturesque, and however the day passed it was a banquet, a festival. I can only recall my breathless first sight of the Public Library and of the Athenaeum Gallery: great sights then, which the Vatican and the Pitti hardly afterwards eclipsed for mere emotion. In fact I did not see these elder treasuries of literature and art between breakfasting with the Autocrat's publisher in the morning, and taking tea with the Autocrat himself in the evening, and that made a whole world's difference.

XII.

The tea of that simpler time is wholly inconceivable to this generation, which knows the thing only as a mild form of afternoon reception; but I

suppose that in 1860 very few dined late in our whole pastoral republic. Tea was the meal people asked people to when they wished to sit at long leisure and large ease; it came at the end of the day, at six o'clock, or seven; and one went to it in morning dress. It had an unceremonied domesticity in the abundance of its light dishes, and I fancy these did not vary much from East to West, except that we had a Southern touch in our fried chicken and corn bread; but at the Autocrat's tea table the cheering cup had a flavor unknown to me before that day. He asked me if I knew it, and I said it was English breakfast tea; for I had drunk it at the publisher's in the morning, and was willing not to seem strange to it. "Ah, yes," he said; "but this is the flower of the souchong; it is the blossom, the poetry of tea," and then he told me how it had been given him by a friend, a merchant in the China trade, which used to flourish in Boston, and was the poetry of commerce, as this delicate beverage was of tea. That commerce is long past, and I fancy that the plant ceased to bloom when the traffic fell into decay.

The Autocrat's windows had the same outlook upon the Charles as the publisher's, and after tea we went up into a back parlor of the same orientation, and saw the sunset die over the water, and the westering flats and hills. Nowhere else in the world has the day a lovelier close, and our talk took something of the mystic coloring that the heavens gave those mantling expanses. It was chiefly his talk, but I have always found the best talkers are willing that you should talk if you like, and a quick sympathy and a subtle sense met all that I had to say from him and from the unbroken circle of kindred intelligences about him. I saw him then in the midst of his family, and perhaps never afterwards to better advantage, or in a finer mood. We spoke of the things that people perhaps once liked to deal with more than they do now; of the intimations of immortality, of the experiences of morbid youth, and of all those messages from the tremulous nerves which we take for prophecies. I was not ashamed, before his tolerant wisdom, to acknowledge the effects that had lingered so long with me in fancy and even in conduct, from a time of broken health and troubled spirit; and I remember the exquisite tact in him which recognized them as things common to all, however peculiar in each, which left them mine for whatever obscure vanity I might have in them, and yet gave me the companionship of the whole race in their experience. We spoke of forebodings and presentiments; we approached the mystic confines of the world from which no traveller has yet returned with a passport 'en regle' and properly 'vise'; and he held his light course through these filmy impalpabilities with a charming sincerity, with the scientific conscience that refuses either to deny the substance of things unseen, or to affirm it. In the gathering dusk, so weird did my fortune of being there and listening to him seem, that I might well have been a blessed ghost, for all the reality I felt in myself.

I tried to tell him how much I had read him from my boyhood, and with what joy and gain; and he was patient of these futilities, and I have no doubt imagined the love that inspired them, and accepted that instead of the poor praise. When the sunset passed, and the lamps were lighted, and we all came back to our dear little firm-set earth, he began to question me about my native region of it. From many forgotten inquiries I recall his asking me what was the fashionable religion in Columbus, or the

Church that socially corresponded to the Unitarian Church in Boston. He had first to clarify my intelligence as to what Unitarianism was; we had Universalists but not Unitarians; but when I understood, I answered from such vantage as my own wholly outside Swedenborgianism gave me, that I thought most of the most respectable people with us were of the Presbyterian Church; some were certainly Episcopalians, but upon the whole the largest number were Presbyterians. He found that very strange indeed; and said that he did not believe there was a Presbyterian Church in Boston; that the New England Calvinists were all of the Orthodox Church. He had to explain Othodoxy to me, and then I could confess to one Congregational Church in Columbus.

Probably I failed to give the Autocrat any very clear image of our social frame in the West, but the fault was altogether mine, if I did. Such lecturing tours as he had made had not taken him among us, as those of Emerson and other New-Englanders had, and my report was positive rather than comparative. I was full of pride in journalism at that day, and I dare say that I vaunted the brilliancy and power of our newspapers more than they merited; I should not have been likely to wrong them otherwise. It is strange that in all the talk I had with him and Lowell, or rather heard from them, I can recall nothing said of political affairs, though Lincoln had then been nominated by the Republicans, and the Civil War had practically begun. But we did not imagine such a thing in the North; we rested secure in the belief that if Lincoln were elected the South would eat all its fiery words, perhaps from the mere love and inveterate habit of fireeating.

I rent myself away from the Autocrat's presence as early as I could, and as my evening had been too full of happiness to sleep upon at once, I spent the rest of the night till two in the morning wandering about the streets and in the Common with a Harvard Senior whom I had met. He was a youth of like literary passions with myself, but of such different traditions in every possible way that his deeply schooled and definitely regulated life seemed as anomalous to me as my own desultory and self-found way must have seemed to him. We passed the time in the delight of trying to make ourselves known to each other, and in a promise to continue by letter the effort, which duly lapsed into silent patience with the necessarily insoluble problem.

XIII.

I must have lingered in Boston for the introduction to Hawthorne which Lowell had offered me, for when it came, with a little note of kindness and counsel for myself such as only Lowell had the gift of writing, it was already so near Sunday that I stayed over till Monday before I started. I do not recall what I did with the time, except keep myself from making it a burden to the people I knew, and wandering about the city alone. Nothing of it remains to me except the fortune that favored me that Sunday night with a view of the old Granary Burying-ground on Tremont Street. I found the gates open, and I explored every path in the

place, wreaking myself in such meagre emotion as I could get from the tomb of the Franklin family, and rejoicing with the whole soul of my Western modernity in the evidence of a remote antiquity which so many of the dim inscriptions afforded. I do not think that I have ever known anything practically older than these monuments, though I have since supped so full of classic and mediaeval ruin. I am sure that I was more deeply touched by the epitaph of a poor little Puritan maiden who died at sixteen in the early sixteen-thirties than afterwards by the tomb of Caecilia Metella, and that the heartache which I tried to put into verse when I got back to my room in the hotel was none the less genuine because it would not lend itself to my literary purpose, and remains nothing but pathos to this day.

I am not able to say how I reached the town of Lowell, where I went before going to Concord, that I might ease the unhappy conscience I had about those factories which I hated so much to see, and have it clean for the pleasure of meeting the fabricator of visions whom I was authorized to molest in any air-castle where I might find him. I only know that I went to Lowell, and visited one of the great mills, which with their whirring spools, the ceaseless flight of their shuttles, and the bewildering sight and sound of all their mechanism have since seemed to me the death of the joy that ought to come from work, if not the captivity of those who tended them. But then I thought it right and well for me to be standing by,

"With sick and scornful looks averse,"

while these others toiled; I did not see the tragedy in it, and I got my pitiful literary antipathy away as soon as I could, no wiser for the sight of the ingenious contrivances I inspected, and I am sorry to say no sadder. In the cool of the evening I sat at the door of my hotel, and watched the long files of the work-worn factory-girls stream by, with no concern for them but to see which was pretty and which was plain, and with no dream of a truer order than that which gave them ten hours' work a day in those hideous mills and lodged them in the barracks where they rested from their toil.

I wonder if there is a stage that still runs between Lowell and Concord, past meadow walls, and under the caressing boughs of way-side elms, and through the bird-haunted gloom of woodland roads, in the freshness of the summer morning? By a blessed chance I found that there was such a stage in 1860, and I took it from my hotel, instead of going back to Boston and up to Concord as I must have had to do by train. The journey gave me the intimacy of the New England country as I could have had it in no other fashion, and for the first time I saw it in all the summer sweetness which I have often steeped my soul in since. The meadows were newly mown, and the air was fragrant with the grass, stretching in long winrows among the brown boulders, or capped with canvas in the little haystacks it had been gathered into the day before. I was fresh from the affluent farms of the Western Reserve, and this care of the grass touched me with a rude pity, which I also bestowed on the meagre fields of corn and wheat; but still the land was lovelier than any I had ever seen, with its old farmhouses, and brambled gray stone walls, its stony hillsides, its

staggering orchards, its wooded tops, and its thick-bracken valleys. From West to East the difference was as great as I afterwards found it from America to Europe, and my impression of something quaint and strange was no keener when I saw Old England the next year than when I saw New England now. I had imagined the landscape bare of trees, and I was astonished to find it almost as full of them as at home, though they all looked very little, as they well might to eyes used to the primeval forests of Ohio. The road ran through them from time to time, and took their coolness on its smooth hard reaches, and then issued again in the glister of the open fields.

I made phrases to myself about the scenery as we drove along; and yes, I suppose I made phrases about the young girl who was one of the inside passengers, and who, when the common strangeness had somewhat worn off, began to sing, and sang most of the way to Concord. Perhaps she was not very sage, and I am sure she was not of the caste of Vere de Vere, but she was pretty enough, and she had a voice of a bird-like tunableness, so that I would not have her out of the memory of that pleasant journey if I could. She was long ago an elderly woman, if she lives, and I suppose she would not now point out her fellow-passenger if he strolled in the evening by the house where she had dismounted, upon her arrival in Concord, and laugh and pull another girl away from the window, in the high excitement of the prodigious adventure.

XV.

Her fellow-passenger was in far other excitement; he was to see Hawthorne, and in a manner to meet Priscilla and Zenobia, and Hester Prynne and little Pearl, and Miriam and Hilda, and Hollingsworth and Coverdale, and Chillingworth and Dimmesdale, and Donatello and Kenyon; and he had no heart for any such poor little reality as that, who could not have been got into any story that one could respect, and must have been difficult even in a Heinesque poem.

I wasted that whole evening and the next morning in fond delaying, and it was not until after the indifferent dinner I got at the tavern where I stopped, that I found courage to go and present Lowell's letter to Hawthorne. I would almost have foregone meeting the weird genius only to have kept that letter, for it said certain infinitely precious things of me with such a sweetness, such a grace, as Lowell alone could give his praise. Years afterwards, when Hawthorne was dead, I met Mrs. Hawthorne, and told her of the pang I had in parting with it, and she sent it me, doubly enriched by Hawthorne's keeping. But now if I were to see him at all I must give up my letter, and I carried it in my hand to the door of the cottage he called The Wayside. It was never otherwise than a very modest place, but the modesty was greater than to-day, and there was already some preliminary carpentry at one end of the cottage, which I saw was to result in an addition to it. I recall pleasant fields across the road before it; behind rose a hill wooded with low pines, such as is made in Septimius Felton the scene of the involuntary duel between Septimius

and the young British officer. I have a sense of the woods coming quite down to the house, but if this was so I do not know what to do with a grassy slope which seems to have stretched part way up the hill. As I approached, I looked for the tower which the author was fabled to climb into at sight of the coming guest, and pull the ladder up after him; and I wondered whether he would fly before me in that sort, or imagine some easier means of escaping me.

The door was opened to my ring by a tall handsome boy whom I suppose to have been Mr. Julian Hawthorne; and the next moment I found myself in the presence of the romancer, who entered from some room beyond. He advanced carrying his head with a heavy forward droop, and with a pace for which I decided that the word would be pondering. It was the pace of a bulky man of fifty, and his head was that beautiful head we all know from the many pictures of it. But Hawthorne's look was different from that of any picture of him that I have seen. It was sombre and brooding, as the look of such a poet should have been; it was the look of a man who had dealt faithfully and therefore sorrowfully with that problem of evil which forever attracted, forever evaded Hawthorne. It was by no means troubled; it was full of a dark repose. Others who knew him better and saw him oftener were familiar with other aspects, and I remember that one night at Longfellow's table, when one of the guests happened to speak of the photograph of Hawthorne which hung in a corner of the room, Lowell said, after a glance at it, "Yes, it's good; but it hasn't his fine 'accipital' [pertaining to the look of a bird of prey; hawklike. D.W.] look."

In the face that confronted me, however, there was nothing of keen alertness; but only a sort of quiet, patient intelligence, for which I seek the right word in vain. It was a very regular face, with beautiful eyes; the mustache, still entirely dark, was dense over the fine mouth. Hawthorne was dressed in black, and he had a certain effect which I remember, of seeming to have on a black cravat with no visible collar. He was such a man that if I had ignorantly met him anywhere I should have instantly felt him to be a personage.

I must have given him the letter myself, for I have no recollection of parting with it before, but I only remember his offering me his hand, and making me shyly and tentatively welcome. After a few moments of the demoralization which followed his hospitable attempts in me, he asked if I would not like to go up on his hill with him and sit there, where he smoked in the afternoon. He offered me a cigar, and when I said that I did not smoke, he lighted it for himself, and we climbed the hill together. At the top, where there was an outlook in the pines over the Concord meadows, we found a log, and he invited me to a place on it beside him, and at intervals of a minute or so he talked while he smoked. Heaven preserved me from the folly of trying to tell him how much his books had been to me, and though we got on rapidly at no time, I think we got on better for this interposition. He asked me about Lowell, I dare say, for I told him of my joy in meeting him and Doctor Holmes, and this seemed greatly to interest him. Perhaps because he was so lately from Europe, where our great men are always seen through the wrong end of the telescope, he appeared surprised at my devotion, and asked me whether I

cared as much for meeting them as I should care for meeting the famous English authors. I professed that I cared much more, though whether this was true, I now have my doubts, and I think Hawthorne doubted it at the time. But he said nothing in comment, and went on to speak generally of Europe and America. He was curious about the West, which he seemed to fancy much more purely American, and said he would like to see some part of the country on which the shadow (or, if I must be precise, the damned shadow) of Europe had not fallen. I told him I thought the West must finally be characterized by the Germans, whom we had in great numbers, and, purely from my zeal for German poetry, I tried to allege some proofs of their present influence, though I could think of none outside of politics, which I thought they affected wholesomely. I knew Hawthorne was a Democrat, and I felt it well to touch politics lightly, but he had no more to say about the fateful election then pending than Holmes or Lowell had.

With the abrupt transition of his talk throughout, he began somehow to speak of women, and said he had never seen a woman whom he thought quite beautiful. In the same way he spoke of the New England temperament, and suggested that the apparent coldness in it was also real, and that the suppression of emotion for generations would extinguish it at last. Then he questioned me as to my knowledge of Concord, and whether I had seen any of the notable people. I answered that I had met no one but himself, as yet, but I very much wished to see Emerson and Thoreau. I did not think it needful to say that I wished to see Thoreau quite as much because he had suffered in the cause of John Brown as because he had written the books which had taken me; and when he said that Thoreau prided himself on coming nearer the heart of a pine-tree than any other human being, I could say honestly enough that I would rather come near the heart of a man. This visibly pleased him, and I saw that it did not displease him, when he asked whether I was not going to see his next neighbor, Mr. Alcott, and I confessed that I had never heard of him. That surprised as well as pleased him; he remarked, with whatever intention, that there was nothing like recognition to make a man modest; and he entered into some account of the philosopher, whom I suppose I need not be much ashamed of not knowing then, since his influence was of the immediate sort that makes a man important to his townsmen while he is still strange to his countrymen.

Hawthorne descanted a little upon the landscape, and said certain of the pleasant fields below us he longed to him; but he preferred his hill-top, and if he could have his way those arable fields should be grown up to pines too. He smoked fitfully, and slowly, and in the hour that we spent together, his whiffs were of the desultory and unfinal character of his words. When we went down, he asked me into his house again, and would have me stay to tea, for which we found the table laid. But there was a great deal of silence in it all, and at times, in spite of his shadowy kindness, I felt my spirits sink. After tea, he showed me a book case, where there were a few books toppling about on the half-filled shelves, and said, coldly, "This is my library." I knew that men were his books, and though I myself cared for books so much, I found it fit and fine that he should care so little, or seem to care so little. Some of his own romances were among the volumes on these shelves, and when I put my

finger on the 'Blithedale Romance' and said that I preferred that to the others, his face lighted up, and he said that he believed the Germans liked that best too.

Upon the whole we parted such good friends that when I offered to take leave he asked me how long I was to be in Concord, and not only bade me come to see him again, but said he would give me a card to Emerson, if I liked. I answered, of course, that I should like it beyond all things; and he wrote on the back of his card something which I found, when I got away, to be, "I find this young man worthy." The quaintness, the little stiffness of it, if one pleases to call it so, was amusing to one who was not without his sense of humor, but the kindness filled me to the throat with joy. In fact, I entirely liked Hawthorne. He had been as cordial as so shy a man could show himself; and I perceived, with the repose that nothing else can give, the entire sincerity of his soul.

Nothing could have been further from the behavior of this very great man than any sort of posing, apparently, or a wish to affect me with a sense of his greatness. I saw that he was as much abashed by our encounter as I was; he was visibly shy to the point of discomfort, but in no ignoble sense was he conscious, and as nearly as he could with one so much his younger he made an absolute equality between us. My memory of him is without alloy one of the finest pleasures of my life: In my heart I paid him the same glad homage that I paid Lowell and Holmes, and he did nothing to make me think that I had overpaid him. This seems perhaps very little to say in his praise, but to my mind it is saying everything, for I have known but few great men, especially of those I met in early life, when I wished to lavish my admiration upon them, whom I have not the impression of having left in my debt. Then, a defect of the Puritan quality, which I have found in many New-Englanders, is that, wittingly or unwittingly, they propose themselves to you as an example, or if not quite this, that they surround themselves with a subtle ether of potential disapprobation, in which, at the first sign of unworthiness in you, they helplessly suffer you to gasp and perish; they have good hearts, and they would probably come to your succor out of humanity, if they knew how, but they do not know how. Hawthorne had nothing of this about him; he was no more tacitly than he was explicitly didactic.

I thought him as thoroughly in keeping with his romances as Doctor Holmes had seemed with his essays and poems, and I met him as I had met the Autocrat in the supreme hour of his fame. He had just given the world the last of those incomparable works which it was to have finished from his hand; the 'Marble Faun' had worthily followed, at a somewhat longer interval than usual, the 'Blithedale Romance', and the 'House of Seven Gables', and the 'Scarlet Letter', and had, perhaps carried his name higher than all the rest, and certainly farther. Everybody was reading it, and more or less bewailing its indefinite close, but yielding him that full honor and praise which a writer can hope for but once in his life. Nobody dreamed that thereafter only precious fragments, sketches more or less faltering, though all with the divine touch in them, were further to enrich a legacy which in its kind is the finest the race has received from any mind. As I have said, we are always finding new Hawthornes, but the illusion soon wears away, and then we perceive that they were not Hawthornes at all; that he had some peculiar difference

from them, which, by and-by, we shall no doubt consent must be his difference from all men evermore.

I am painfully aware that I have not summoned before the reader the image of the man as it has always stood in my memory, and I feel a sort of shame for my failure. He was so altogether simple that it seems as if it would be easy to do so; but perhaps a spirit from the other world would be simple too, and yet would no more stand at parole, or consent to be sketched, than Hawthorne. In fact, he was always more or less merging into the shadow, which was in a few years wholly to close over him; there was nothing uncanny in his presence, there was nothing even unwilling, but he had that apparitional quality of some great minds which kept Shakespeare largely unknown to those who thought themselves his intimates, and has at last left him a sort of doubt. There was nothing teasing or wilfully elusive in Hawthorne's impalpability, such as I afterwards felt in Thoreau; if he was not there to your touch, it was no fault of his; it was because your touch was dull, and wanted the use of contact with such natures. The hand passes through the veridical phantom without a sense of its presence, but the phantom is none the less veridical for all that.

XVI.

I kept the evening of the day I met Hawthorne wholly for the thoughts of him, or rather for that reverberation which continues in the young sensibilities after some important encounter. It must have been the next morning that I went to find Thoreau, and I am dimly aware of making one or two failures to find him, if I ever really found him at all.

He is an author who has fallen into that abeyance, awaiting all authors, great or small, at some time or another; but I think that with him, at least in regard to his most important book, it can be only transitory. I have not read the story of his hermitage beside Walden Pond since the year 1858, but I have a fancy that if I should take it up now, I should think it a wiser and truer conception of the world than I thought it then. It is no solution of the problem; men are not going to answer the riddle of the painful earth by building themselves shanties and living upon beans and watching ant-fights; but I do not believe Tolstoy himself has more clearly shown the hollowness, the hopelessness, the unworthiness of the life of the world than Thoreau did in that book. If it were newly written it could not fail of a far vaster acceptance than it had then, when to those who thought and felt seriously it seemed that if slavery could only be controlled, all things else would come right of themselves with us. Slavery has not only been controlled, but it has been destroyed, and yet things have not begun to come right with us; but it was in the order of Providence that chattel slavery should cease before industrial slavery, and the infinitely crueller and stupider vanity and luxury bred of it, should be attacked. If there was then any prevision of the struggle now at hand, the seers averted their eyes, and strove only to cope with the less evil. Thoreau himself, who had so clear a

vision of the falsity and folly of society as we still have it, threw himself into the tide that was already, in Kansas and Virginia, reddened with war; he aided and abetted the John Brown raid, I do not recall how much or in what sort; and he had suffered in prison for his opinions and actions. It was this inevitable heroism of his that, more than his literature even, made me wish to see him and revere him; and I do not believe that I should have found the veneration difficult, when at last I met him in his insufficient person, if he had otherwise been present to my glowing expectation. He came into the room a quaint, stump figure of a man, whose effect of long trunk and short limbs was heightened by his fashionless trousers being let down too low. He had a noble face, with tossed hair, a distraught eye, and a fine aquilinity of profile, which made me think at once of Don Quixote and of Cervantes; but his nose failed to add that foot to his stature which Lamb says a nose of that shape will always give a man. He tried to place me geographically after he had given me a chair not quite so far off as Ohio, though still across the whole room, for he sat against one wall, and I against the other; but apparently he failed to pull himself out of his reverie by the effort, for he remained in a dreamy muse, which all my attempts to say something fit about John Brown and Walden Pond seemed only to deepen upon him. I have not the least doubt that I was needless and valueless about both, and that what I said could not well have prompted an important response; but I did my poor best, and I was terribly disappointed in the result. The truth is that in those days I was a helplessly concrete young person, and all forms of the abstract, the air-drawn, afflicted me like physical discomforts. I do not remember that Thoreau spoke of his books or of himself at all, and when he began to speak of John Brown, it was not the warm, palpable, loving, fearful old man of my conception, but a sort of John Brown type, a John Brown ideal, a John Brown principle, which we were somehow (with long pauses between the vague, orphic phrases) to cherish, and to nourish ourselves upon.

It was not merely a defeat of my hopes, it was a rout, and I felt myself so scattered over the field of thought that I could hardly bring my forces together for retreat. I must have made some effort, vain and foolish enough, to rematerialize my old demigod, but when I came away it was with the feeling that there was very little more left of John Brown than there was of me. His body was not mouldering in the grave, neither was his soul marching on; his ideal, his type, his principle alone existed, and I did not know what to do with it. I am not blaming Thoreau; his words were addressed to a far other understanding than mine, and it was my misfortune if I could not profit by them. I think, or I venture to hope, that I could profit better by them now; but in this record I am trying honestly to report their effect with the sort of youth I was then.

XVII.

Such as I was, I rather wonder that I had the courage, after this experiment of Thoreau, to present the card Hawthorne had given me to

Emerson. I must have gone to him at once, however, for I cannot make out any interval of time between my visit to the disciple and my visit to the master. I think it was Emerson himself who opened his door to me, for I have a vision of the fine old man standing tall on his threshold, with the card in his hand, and looking from it to me with a vague serenity, while I waited a moment on the door-step below him. He must then have been about sixty, but I remember nothing of age in his aspect, though I have called him an old man. His hair, I am sure, was still entirely dark, and his face had a kind of marble youthfulness, chiselled to a delicate intelligence by the highest and noblest thinking that any man has done. There was a strange charm in Emerson's eyes, which I felt then and always, something like that I saw in Lincoln's, but shyer, but sweeter and less sad. His smile was the very sweetest I have ever beheld, and the contour of the mask and the line of the profile were in keeping with this incomparable sweetness of the mouth, at once grave and quaint, though quaint is not quite the word for it either, but subtly, not unkindly arch, which again is not the word.

It was his great fortune to have been mostly misunderstood, and to have reached the dense intelligence of his fellow-men after a whole lifetime of perfectly simple and lucid appeal, and his countenance expressed the patience and forbearance of a wise man content to bide his time. It would be hard to persuade people now that Emerson once represented to the popular mind all that was most hopelessly impossible, and that in a certain sort he was a national joke, the type of the incomprehensible, the byword of the poor paragrapher. He had perhaps disabused the community somewhat by presenting himself here and there as a lecturer, and talking face to face with men in terms which they could not refuse to find as clear as they were wise; he was more and more read, by certain persons, here and there; but we are still so far behind him in the reach of his far-thinking that it need not be matter of wonder that twenty years before his death he was the most misunderstood man in America. Yet in that twilight where he dwelt he loomed large upon the imagination; the minds that could not conceive him were still aware of his greatness. I myself had not read much of him, but I knew the essays he was printing in the Atlantic, and I knew certain of his poems, though by no means many; yet I had this sense of him, that he was somehow, beyond and above my ken, a presence of force and beauty and wisdom, unaccompanied in our literature. He had lately stooped from his ethereal heights to take part in the battle of humanity, and I suppose that if the truth were told he was more to my young fervor because he had said that John Brown had made the gallows glorious like the cross, than because he had uttered all those truer and wiser things which will still a hundred years hence be leading the thought of the world.

I do not know in just what sort he made me welcome, but I am aware of sitting with him in his study or library, and of his presently speaking of Hawthorne, whom I probably celebrated as I best could, and whom he praised for his personal excellence, and for his fine qualities as a neighbor. "But his last book," he added, reflectively, "is a mere mush," and I perceived that this great man was no better equipped to judge an artistic fiction than the groundlings who were then crying out upon the indefinite close of the Marble Faun. Apparently he had read it, as they

had, for the story, but it seems to me now, if it did not seem to me then, that as far as the problem of evil was involved, the book must leave it where it found it. That is forever insoluble, and it was rather with that than with his more or less shadowy people that the romancer was concerned. Emerson had, in fact, a defective sense as to specific pieces of literature; he praised extravagantly, and in the wrong place, especially among the new things, and he failed to see the worth of much that was fine and precious beside the line of his fancy.

He began to ask me about the West, and about some unknown man in Michigan; who had been sending him poems, and whom he seemed to think very promising, though he has not apparently kept his word to do great things. I did not find what Emerson had to say of my section very accurate or important, though it was kindly enough, and just enough as to what the West ought to do in literature. He thought it a pity that a literary periodical which had lately been started in Cincinnati should be appealing to the East for contributions, instead of relying upon the writers nearer home; and he listened with what patience he could to my modest opinion that we had not the writers nearer home. I never was of those Westerners who believed that the West was kept out of literature by the jealousy of the East, and I tried to explain why we had not the men to write that magazine full in Ohio. He alleged the man in Michigan as one who alone could do much to fill it worthily, and again I had to say that I had never heard of him.

I felt rather guilty in my ignorance, and I had a notion that it did not commend me, but happily at this moment Mr. Emerson was called to dinner, and he asked me to come with him. After dinner we walked about in his "pleached garden" a little, and then we came again into his library, where I meant to linger only till I could fitly get away. He questioned me about what I had seen of Concord, and whom besides Hawthorne I had met, and when I told him only Thoreau, he asked me if I knew the poems of Mr. William Ellery Channing. I have known them since, and felt their quality, which I have gladly owned a genuine and original poetry; but I answered then truly that I knew them only from Poe's criticisms: cruel and spiteful things which I should be ashamed of enjoying as I once did.

"Whose criticisms?" asked Emerson.

"Poe's," I said again.

"Oh," he cried out, after a moment, as if he had returned from a far search for my meaning, "you mean the jingle-man!"

I do not know why this should have put me to such confusion, but if I had written the criticisms myself I do not think I could have been more abashed. Perhaps I felt an edge of reproof, of admonition, in a characterization of Poe which the world will hardly agree with; though I do not agree with the world about him, myself, in its admiration. At any rate, it made an end of me for the time, and I remained as if already absent, while Emerson questioned me as to what I had written in the Atlantic Monthly. He had evidently read none of my contributions, for he looked at them, in the bound volume of the magazine which he got down,

with the effect of being wholly strange to them, and then gravely affixed my initials to each. He followed me to the door, still speaking of poetry, and as he took a kindly enough leave of me, he said one might very well give a pleasant hour to it now and then.

A pleasant hour to poetry! I was meaning to give all time and all eternity to poetry, and I should by no means have wished to find pleasure in it; I should have thought that a proof of inferior quality in the work; I should have preferred anxiety, anguish even, to pleasure. But if Emerson thought from the glance he gave my verses that I had better not lavish myself upon that kind of thing, unless there was a great deal more of me than I could have made apparent in our meeting, no doubt he was right. I was only too painfully aware of my shortcoming, but I felt that it was shorter-coming than it need have been. I had somehow not prospered in my visit to Emerson as I had with Hawthorne, and I came away wondering in what sort I had gone wrong. I was not a forth-putting youth, and I could not blame myself for anything in my approaches that merited withholding; indeed, I made no approaches; but as I must needs blame myself for something, I fell upon the fact that in my confused retreat from Emerson's presence I had failed in a certain slight point of ceremony, and I magnified this into an offence of capital importance. I went home to my hotel, and passed the afternoon in pure misery. I had moments of wild question when I debated whether it would be better to go back and own my error, or whether it would be better to write him a note, and try to set myself right in that way. But in the end I did neither, and I have since survived my mortal shame some forty years or more. But at the time it did not seem possible that I should live through the day with it, and I thought that I ought at least to go and confess it to Hawthorne, and let him disown the wretch who had so poorly repaid the kindness of his introduction by such misbehavior. I did indeed walk down by the Wayside, in the cool of the evening, and there I saw Hawthorne for the last time. He was sitting on one of the timbers beside his cottage, and smoking with an air of friendly calm. I had got on very well with him, and I longed to go in, and tell him how ill I had got on with Emerson; I believed that though he cast me off, he would understand me, and would perhaps see some hope for me in another world, though there could be none in this.

But I had not the courage to speak of the affair to any one but Fields, to whom I unpacked my heart when I got back to Boston, and he asked me about my adventures in Concord. By this time I could see it in a humorous light, and I did not much mind his lying back in his chair and laughing and laughing, till I thought he would roll out of it. He perfectly conceived the situation, and got an amusement from it that I could get only through sympathy with him. But I thought it a favorable moment to propose myself as the assistant editor of the Atlantic Monthly, which I had the belief I could very well become, with advantage to myself if not to the magazine. He seemed to think so too; he said that if the place had not just been filled, I should certainly have had it; and it was to his recollection of this prompt ambition of mine that I suppose I may have owed my succession to a like vacancy some four years later. He was charmingly kind; he entered with the sweetest interest into the story of my economic life, which had been full of changes and chances

already. But when I said very seriously that now I was tired of these fortuities, and would like to be settled in something, he asked, with dancing eyes,

"Why, how old are you?"

"I am twenty-three," I answered, and then the laughing fit took him again.

"Well," he said, "you begin young, out there!"

In my heart I did not think that twenty-three was so very young, but perhaps it was; and if any one were to say that I had been portraying here a youth whose aims were certainly beyond his achievements, who was morbidly sensitive, and if not conceited was intolerably conscious, who had met with incredible kindness, and had suffered no more than was good for him, though he might not have merited his pain any more than his joy, I do not know that I should gainsay him, for I am not at all sure that I was not just that kind of youth when I paid my first visit to New England.

LITERARY FRIENDS AND ACQUAINTANCES--First Impressions of Literary New York

by William Dean Howells

FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF LITERARY NEW YORK

It was by boat that I arrived from Boston, on an August morning of 1860, which was probably of the same quality as an August morning of 1900. I used not to mind the weather much in those days; it was hot or it was cold, it was wet or it was dry, but it was not my affair; and I suppose that I sweltered about the strange city, with no sense of anything very personal in the temperature, until nightfall. What I remember is being high up in a hotel long since laid low, listening in the summer dark, after the long day was done, to the Niagara roar of the omnibuses whose tide then swept Broadway from curb to curb, for all the miles of its length. At that hour the other city noises were stilled, or lost in this vaster volume of sound, which seemed to fill the whole night. It had a solemnity which the modern comer to New York will hardly imagine, for that tide of omnibuses has long since ebbed away, and has left the air to the strident discords of the elevated trains and the irregular alarum of the grip-car gongs, which blend to no such harmonious thunder as rose from the procession of those ponderous and innumerable vans. There was a sort of inner quiet in the sound, and when I chose I slept off to it, and woke to it in the morning refreshed and strengthened to explore the literary situation in the metropolis.

I.

Not that I think I left this to the second day. Very probably I lost no time in going to the office of the Saturday Press, as soon as I had my breakfast after arriving, and I have a dim impression of anticipating the earliest of the Bohemians, whose gay theory of life obliged them to a good many hardships in lying down early in the morning, and rising up late in the day. If it was the office-boy who bore me company during the first hour of my visit, by-and-by the editors and contributors actually began to come in. I would not be very specific about them if I could, for since that Bohemia has faded from the map of the republic of letters, it has grown more and more difficult to trace its citizenship to any certain writer. There are some living who knew the Bohemians and even loved them, but there are increasingly few who were of them, even in the fond retrospect of youthful follies and errors. It was in fact but a sickly colony, transplanted from the mother asphalt of Paris, and never really striking root in the pavements of New York; it was a colony of ideas, of theories, which had perhaps never had any deep root anywhere. What these ideas, these theories, were in art and in life, it would not be very easy to say; but in the Saturday Press they came to violent expression, not to say explosion, against all existing forms of respectability. If respectability was your 'bete noire', then you were a Bohemian; and if you were in the habit of rendering yourself in prose, then you necessarily shredded your prose into very fine paragraphs of a sentence each, or of a very few words, or even of one word. I believe this fashion prevailed till very lately with some of the dramatic critics, who thought that it gave a quality of epigram to the style; and I suppose it was borrowed from the more spasmodic moments of Victor Hugo by the editor of the Press. He brought it back with him when he came home from one of those sojourns in Paris which possess one of the French accent rather than the French language; I long desired to write in that fashion myself, but I had not the courage.

This editor was a man of such open and avowed cynicism that he may have been, for all I know, a kindly optimist at heart; some say, however, that he had really talked himself into being what he seemed. I only know that his talk, the first day I saw him, was of such a sort that if he was half as bad, he would have been too bad to be. He walked up and down his room saying what lurid things he would directly do if any one accused him of respectability, so that he might disabuse the minds of all witnesses. There were four or five of his assistants and contributors listening to the dreadful threats, which did not deceive even so great innocence as mine, but I do not know whether they found it the sorry farce that I did. They probably felt the fascination for him which I could not disown, in spite of my inner disgust; and were watchful at the same time for the effect of his words with one who was confessedly fresh from Boston, and was full of delight in the people he had seen there. It appeared, with him, to be proof of the inferiority of Boston that if you passed down Washington Street, half a dozen men in the crowd would know you were

Holmes, or Lowell, or Longfellow, or Wendell Phillips; but in Broadway no one would know who you were, or care to the measure of his smallest blasphemy. I have since heard this more than once urged as a signal advantage of New York for the aesthetic inhabitant, but I am not sure, yet, that it is so. The unrecognized celebrity probably has his mind quite as much upon himself as if some one pointed him out, and otherwise I cannot think that the sense of neighborhood is such a bad thing for the artist in any sort. It involves the sense of responsibility, which cannot be too constant or too keen. If it narrows, it deepens; and this may be the secret of Boston.

II.

It would not be easy to say just why the Bohemian group represented New York literature to my imagination; for I certainly associated other names with its best work, but perhaps it was because I had written for the Saturday Press myself, and had my pride in it, and perhaps it was because that paper really embodied the new literary life of the city. It was clever, and full of the wit that tries its teeth upon everything. It attacked all literary shams but its own, and it made itself felt and feared. The young writers throughout the country were ambitious to be seen in it, and they gave their best to it; they gave literally, for the Saturday Press never paid in anything but hopes of paying, vaguer even than promises. It is not too much to say that it was very nearly as well for one to be accepted by the Press as to be accepted by the Atlantic, and for the time there was no other literary comparison. To be in it was to be in the company of Fitz James O'Brien, Fitzhugh Ludlow, Mr. Aldrich, Mr. Stedman, and whoever else was liveliest in prose or loveliest in verse at that day in New York. It was a power, and although it is true that, as Henry Giles said of it, "Man cannot live by snapping-turtle alone," the Press was very good snapping-turtle. Or, it seemed so then; I should be almost afraid to test it now, for I do not like snapping-turtle so much as I once did, and I have grown nicer in my taste, and want my snapping-turtle of the very best. What is certain is that I went to the office of the Saturday Press in New York with much the same sort of feeling I had in going to the office of the Atlantic Monthly in Boston, but I came away with a very different feeling. I had found there a bitterness against Boston as great as the bitterness against respectability, and as Boston was then rapidly becoming my second country, I could not join in the scorn thought of her and said of her by the Bohemians. I fancied a conspiracy among them to shock the literary pilgrim, and to minify the precious emotions he had experienced in visiting other shrines; but I found no harm in that, for I knew just how much to be shocked, and I thought I knew better how to value certain things of the soul than they. Yet when their chief asked me how I got on with Hawthorne, and I began to say that he was very shy and I was rather shy, and the king of Bohemia took his pipe out to break in upon me with "Oh, a couple of shysters!" and the rest laughed, I was abashed all they could have wished, and was not restored to myself till one of them said that the thought of Boston made him as ugly as sin; then I began to hope

again that men who took themselves so seriously as that need not be taken very seriously by me.

In fact I had heard things almost as desperately cynical in other newspaper offices before that, and I could not see what was so distinctively Bohemian in these 'anime prave', these souls so baleful by their own showing. But apparently Bohemia was not a state that you could well imagine from one encounter, and since my stay in New York was to be very short, I lost no time in acquainting myself further with it. That very night I went to the beer-cellar, once very far up Broadway, where I was given to know that the Bohemian nights were smoked and quaffed away. It was said, so far West as Ohio, that the queen of Bohemia sometimes came to Pfaff's: a young girl of a sprightly gift in letters, whose name or pseudonym had made itself pretty well known at that day, and whose fate, pathetic at all times, out-tragedies almost any other in the history of letters. She was seized with hydrophobia from the bite of her dog, on a railroad train; and made a long journey home in the paroxysms of that agonizing disease, which ended in her death after she reached New York. But this was after her reign had ended, and no such black shadow was cast forward upon Pfaff's, whose name often figured in the verse and the epigrammatically paragraphed prose of the 'Saturday Press'. I felt that as a contributor and at least a brevet Bohemian I ought not to go home without visiting the famous place, and witnessing if I could not share the revels of my comrades. As I neither drank beer nor smoked, my part in the carousal was limited to a German pancake, which I found they had very good at Pfaff's, and to listening to the whirling words of my commensals, at the long board spread for the Bohemians in a cavernous space under the pavement. There were writers for the 'Saturday Press' and for Vanity Fair (a hopefully comic paper of that day), and some of the artists who drew for the illustrated periodicals. Nothing of their talk remains with me, but the impression remains that it was not so good talk as I had heard in Boston. At one moment of the orgy, which went but slowly for an orgy, we were joined by some belated Bohemians whom the others made a great clamor over; I was given to understand they were just recovered from a fearful debauch; their locks were still damp from the wet towels used to restore them, and their eyes were very frenzied. I was presented to these types, who neither said nor did anything worthy of their awful appearance, but dropped into seats at the table, and ate of the supper with an appetite that seemed poor. I stayed hoping vainly for worse things till eleven o'clock, and then I rose and took my leave of a literary condition that had distinctly disappointed me. I do not say that it may not have been wickeder and wittier than I found it; I only report what I saw and heard in Bohemia on my first visit to New York, and I know that my acquaintance with it was not exhaustive. When I came the next year the Saturday Press was no more, and the editor and his contributors had no longer a common centre. The best of the young fellows whom I met there confessed, in a pleasant exchange of letters which we had afterwards, that he thought the pose a vain and unprofitable one; and when the Press was revived, after the war, it was without any of the old Bohemian characteristics except that of not paying for material. It could not last long upon these terms, and again it passed away, and still waits its second palingenesis.

The editor passed away too, not long after, and the thing that he had inspired altogether ceased to be. He was a man of a certain sardonic power, and used it rather fiercely and freely, with a joy probably more apparent than real in the pain it gave. In my last knowledge of him he was much milder than when I first knew him, and I have the feeling that he too came to own before he died that man cannot live by snapping-turtle alone. He was kind to some neglected talents, and befriended them with a vigor and a zeal which he would have been the last to let you call generous. The chief of these was Walt Whitman, who, when the Saturday Press took it up, had as hopeless a cause with the critics on either side of the ocean as any man could have. It was not till long afterwards that his English admirers began to discover him, and to make his countrymen some noisy reproaches for ignoring him; they were wholly in the dark concerning him when the Saturday Press, which first stood his friend, and the young men whom the Press gathered about it, made him their cult. No doubt he was more valued because he was so offensive in some ways than he would have been if he had been in no way offensive, but it remains a fact that they celebrated him quite as much as was good for them. He was often at Pfaff's with them, and the night of my visit he was the chief fact of my experience. I did not know he was there till I was on my way out, for he did not sit at the table under the pavement, but at the head of one farther into the room. There, as I passed, some friendly fellow stopped me and named me to him, and I remember how he leaned back in his chair, and reached out his great hand to me, as if he were going to give it me for good and all. He had a fine head, with a cloud of Jovian hair upon it, and a branching beard and mustache, and gentle eyes that looked most kindly into mine, and seemed to wish the liking which I instantly gave him, though we hardly passed a word, and our acquaintance was summed up in that glance and the grasp of his mighty fist upon my hand. I doubt if he had any notion who or what I was beyond the fact that I was a young poet of some sort, but he may possibly have remembered seeing my name printed after some very Heinesque verses in the Press. I did not meet him again for twenty years, and then I had only a moment with him when he was reading the proofs of his poems in Boston. Some years later I saw him for the last time, one day after his lecture on Lincoln, in that city, when he came down from the platform to speak with some handshaking friends who gathered about him. Then and always he gave me the sense of a sweet and true soul, and I felt in him a spiritual dignity which I will not try to reconcile with his printing in the forefront of his book a passage from a private letter of Emerson's, though I believe he would not have seen such a thing as most other men would, or thought ill of it in another. The spiritual purity which I felt in him no less than the dignity is something that I will no more try to reconcile with what denies it in his page; but such things we may well leave to the adjustment of finer balances than we have at hand. I will make sure only of the greatest benignity in the presence of the man. The apostle of the rough, the uncouth, was the gentlest person; his barbaric yawp, translated into the terms of social encounter, was an address of singular quiet, delivered in a voice of winning and endearing friendliness.

As to his work itself, I suppose that I do not think it so valuable in effect as in intention. He was a liberating force, a very "imperial anarch" in literature; but liberty is never anything but a means, and

what Whitman achieved was a means and not an end, in what must be called his verse. I like his prose, if there is a difference, much better; there he is of a genial and comforting quality, very rich and cordial, such as I felt him to be when I met him in person. His verse seems to me not poetry, but the materials of poetry, like one's emotions; yet I would not misprize it, and I am glad to own that I have had moments of great pleasure in it. Some French critic quoted in the Saturday Press (I cannot think of his name) said the best thing of him when he said that he made you a partner of the enterprise, for that is precisely what he does, and that is what alienates and what endears in him, as you like or dislike the partnership. It is still something neighborly, brotherly, fatherly, and so I felt him to be when the benign old man looked on me and spoke to me.

III.

That night at Pfaff's must have been the last of the Bohemians for me, and it was the last of New York authorship too, for the time. I do not know why I should not have imagined trying to see Curtis, whom I knew so much by heart, and whom I adored, but I may not have had the courage, or I may have heard that he was out of town; Bryant, I believe, was then out of the country; but at any rate I did not attempt him either. The Bohemians were the beginning and the end of the story for me, and to tell the truth I did not like the story.. I remember that as I sat at that table. under the pavement, in Pfaff's beer-cellar, and listened to the wit that did not seem very funny, I thought of the dinner with Lowell, the breakfast with Fields, the supper at the Autocrat's, and felt that I had fallen very far. In fact it can do no harm at this distance of time to confess that it seemed to me then, and for a good while afterwards, that a person who had seen the men and had the things said before him that I had in Boston, could not keep himself too carefully in cotton; and this was what I did all the following winter, though of course it was a secret between me and me. I dare say it was not the worst thing I could have done, in some respects.

My sojourn in New York could not have been very long, and the rest of it was mainly given to viewing the monuments of the city from the windows of omnibuses and the platforms of horse-cars. The world was so simple then that there were perhaps only a half-dozen cities that had horse-cars in them, and I travelled in those conveyances at New York with an unfaded zest, even after my journeys back and forth between Boston and Cambridge. I have not the least notion where I went or what I saw, but I suppose that it was up and down the ugly east and west avenues, then lying open to the eye in all the hideousness now partly concealed by the elevated roads, and that I found them very stately and handsome. Indeed, New York was really handsomer then than it is now, when it has so many more pieces of beautiful architecture, for at that day the skyscrapers were not yet, and there was a fine regularity in the streets that these brute bulks have robbed of all shapeliness. Dirt and squalor there were a plenty, but there was infinitely more comfort. The long succession of cross

streets was yet mostly secure from business, after you passed Clinton Place; commerce was just beginning to show itself in Union Square, and Madison Square was still the home of the McFlimsies, whose kin and kind dwelt unmolested in the brownstone stretches of Fifth Avenue. I tried hard to imagine them from the acquaintance Mr. Butler's poem had given me, and from the knowledge the gentle satire of The 'Potiphar Papers' had spread broadcast through a community shocked by the excesses of our best society; it was not half so bad then as the best now, probably. But I do not think I made very much of it, perhaps because most of the people who ought to have been in those fine mansions were away at the seaside and the mountains.

The mountains I had seen on my way down from Canada, but the sea-side not, and it would never do to go home without visiting some famous summer resort. I must have fixed upon Long Branch because I must have heard of it as then the most fashionable; and one afternoon I took the boat for that place. By this means I not only saw sea-bathing for the first time, but I saw a storm at sea: a squall struck us so suddenly that it blew away all the camp-stools of the forward promenade; it was very exciting, and I long meant to use in literature the black wall of cloud that settled on the water before us like a sort of portable midnight; I now throw it away upon the reader, as it were; it never would come in anywhere. I stayed all night at Long Branch, and I had a bath the next morning before breakfast: an extremely cold one, with a life-line to keep me against the undertow. In this rite I had the company of a young New-Yorker, whom I had met on the boat coming down, and who was of the light, hopeful, adventurous business type which seems peculiar to the city, and which has always attracted me. He told me much about his life, and how he lived, and what it cost him to live. He had a large room at a fashionable boardinghouse, and he paid fourteen dollars a week. In Columbus I had such a room at such a house, and paid three and a half, and I thought it a good deal. But those were the days before the war, when America was the cheapest country in the world, and the West was incredibly inexpensive.

After a day of lonely splendor at this scene of fashion and gaiety, I went back to New York, and took the boat for Albany on my way home. I noted that I had no longer the vivid interest in nature and human nature which I had felt in setting out upon my travels, and I said to myself that this was from having a mind so crowded with experiences and impressions that it could receive no more; and I really suppose that if the happiest phrase had offered itself to me at some moments, I should scarcely have looked about me for a landscape or a figure to fit it to. I was very glad to get back to my dear little city in the West (I found it seething in an August sun that was hot enough to have calcined the limestone State House), and to all the friends I was so fond of.

IV.

I did what I could to prove myself unworthy of them by refusing their

invitations, and giving myself wholly to literature, during the early part of the winter that followed; and I did not realize my error till the invitations ceased to come, and I found myself in an unbroken intellectual solitude. The worst of it was that an ungrateful Muse did little in return for the sacrifices I made her, and the things I now wrote were not liked by the editors I sent them to. The editorial taste is not always the test of merit, but it is the only one we have, and I am not saying the editors were wrong in my case. There were then such a very few places where you could market your work: the Atlantic in Boston and Harper's in New York were the magazines that paid, though the Independent newspaper bought literary material; the Saturday Press printed it without buying, and so did the old Knickerbocker Magazine, though there was pecuniary good-will in both these cases. I toiled much that winter over a story I had long been writing, and at last sent it to the Atlantic, which had published five poems for me the year before. After some weeks, or it may have been months, I got it back with a note saying that the editors had the less regret in returning it because they saw that in the May number of the Knickerbocker the first chapter of the story had appeared. Then I remembered that, years before, I had sent this chapter to that magazine, as a sketch to be printed by itself, and afterwards had continued the story from it. I had never heard of its acceptance, and supposed of course that it was rejected; but on my second visit to New York I called at the Knickerbocker office, and a new editor, of those that the magazine was always having in the days of its failing fortunes, told me that he had found my sketch in rummaging about in a barrel of his predecessors' manuscripts, and had liked it, and printed it. He said that there were fifteen dollars coming to me for that sketch, and might he send the money to me? I said that he might, though I do not see, to this day, why he did not give it me on the spot; and he made a very small minute in a very large sheet of paper (really like Dick Swiveller), and promised I should have it that night; but I sailed the next day for Liverpool without it. I sailed without the money for some verses that Vanity Fair bought of me, but I hardly expected that, for the editor, who was then Artemus Ward, had frankly told me in taking my address that ducats were few at that moment with Vanity Fair.

I was then on my way to be consul at Venice, where I spent the next four years in a vigilance for Confederate privateers which none of them ever surprised. I had asked for the consulate at Munich, where I hoped to steep myself yet longer in German poetry, but when my appointment came, I found it was for Rome. I was very glad to get Rome even; but the income of the office was in fees, and I thought I had better go on to Washington and find out how much the fees amounted to. People in Columbus who had been abroad said that on five hundred dollars you could live in Rome like a prince, but I doubted this; and when I learned at the State Department that the fees of the Roman consulate came to only three hundred, I perceived that I could not live better than a baron, probably, and I despaired. The kindly chief of the consular bureau said that the President's secretaries, Mr. John Nicolay and Mr. John Hay, were interested in my appointment, and he advised my going over to the White House and seeing them. I lost no time in doing that, and I learned that as young Western men they were interested in me because I was a young Western man who had done something in literature, and they were willing to help me for that reason, and for no other that I ever knew. They

proposed my going to Venice; the salary was then seven hundred and fifty, but they thought they could get it put up to a thousand. In the end they got it put up to fifteen hundred, and so I went to Venice, where if I did not live like a prince on that income, I lived a good deal more like a prince than I could have done at Rome on a fifth of it.

If the appointment was not present fortune, it was the beginning of the best luck I have had in the world, and I am glad to owe it all to those friends of my verse, who could have been no otherwise friends of me. They were then beginning very early careers of distinction which have not been wholly divided. Mr. Nicolay could have been about twenty-five, and Mr. Hay nineteen or twenty. No one dreamed as yet of the opportunity opening to them in being so constantly near the man whose life they have written, and with whose fame they have imperishably interwrought their names. I remember the sobered dignity of the one, and the humorous gaiety of the other, and how we had some young men's joking and laughing together, in the anteroom where they received me, with the great soul entering upon its travail beyond the closed door. They asked me if I had ever seen the President, and I said that I had seen him at Columbus, the year before; but I could not say how much I should like to see him again, and thank him for the favor which I had no claim to at his hands, except such as the slight campaign biography I had written could be thought to have given me. That day or another, as I left my friends, I met him in the corridor without, and he looked at the space I was part of with his ineffably melancholy eyes, without knowing that I was the indistinguishable person in whose "integrity and abilities he had reposed such special confidence" as to have appointed him consul for Venice and the ports of the Lombardo-Venetian Kingdom, though he might have recognized the terms of my commission if I had reminded him of them. I faltered a moment in my longing to address him, and then I decided that every one who forebore to speak needlessly to him, or to shake his hand, did him a kindness; and I wish I could be as sure of the wisdom of all my past behavior as I am of that piece of it. He walked up to the watercooler that stood in the corner, and drew himself a full goblet from it, which he poured down his throat with a backward tilt of his head, and then went wearily within doors. The whole affair, so simple, has always remained one of a certain pathos in my memory, and I would rather have seen Lincoln in that unconscious moment than on some statelier occasion.

V.

I went home to Ohio; and sent on the bond I was to file in the Treasury Department; but it was mislaid there, and to prevent another chance of that kind I carried on the duplicate myself. It was on my second visit that I met the generous young Irishman William D. O'Connor, at the house of my friend Piatt, and heard his ardent talk. He was one of the promising men of that day, and he had written an anti-slavery novel in the heroic mood of Victor Hugo, which greatly took my fancy; and I believe he wrote poems too. He had not yet risen to be the chief of Walt Whitman's champions outside of the Saturday Press, but he had already

espoused the theory of Bacon's authorship of Shakespeare, then newly exploited by the poor lady of Bacon's name, who died constant to it in an insane asylum. He used to speak of the reputed dramatist as "the fat peasant of Stratford," and he was otherwise picturesque of speech in a measure that consoled, if it did not convince. The great war was then full upon us, and when in the silences of our literary talk its awful breath was heard, and its shadow fell upon the hearth where we gathered round the first fires of autumn, O'Connor would lift his beautiful head with a fine effect of prophecy, and say, "Friends, I feel a sense of victory in the air." He was not wrong; only the victory was for the other aide.

Who beside O'Connor shared in these saddened symposiums I cannot tell now; but probably other young journalists and office-holders, intending litterateurs, since more or less extinct. I make certain only of the young Boston publisher who issued a very handsome edition of 'Leaves of Grass', and then failed promptly if not consequently. But I had already met, in my first sojourn at the capital, a young journalist who had given hostages to poetry, and whom I was very glad to see and proud to know. Mr. Stedman and I were talking over that meeting the other day, and I can be surer than I might have been without his memory, that I found him at a friend's house, where he was nursing himself for some slight sickness, and that I sat by his bed while our souls launched together into the joyful realms of hope and praise. In him I found the quality of Boston, the honor and passion of literature, and not a mere pose of the literary life; and the world knows without my telling how true he has been to his ideal of it. His earthly mission then was to write letters from Washington for the New York World, which started in life as a good young evening paper, with a decided religious tone, so that the Saturday Press could call it the Night-blooming Serious. I think Mr. Stedman wrote for its editorial page at times, and his relation to it as a Washington correspondent had an authority which is wanting to the function in these days of perfected telegraphing. He had not yet achieved that seat in the Stock Exchange whose possession has justified his recourse to business, and has helped him to mean something more single in literature than many more singly devoted to it. I used sometimes to speak about that with another eager young author in certain middle years when we were chafing in editorial harness, and we always decided that Stedman had the best of it in being able to earn his living in a sort so alien to literature that he could come to it unjaded, and with a gust unspoiled by kindred savors. But no man shapes his own life, and I dare say that Stedman may have been all the time envying us our tripods from his high place in the Stock Exchange. What is certain is that he has come to stand for literature and to embody New York in it as no one else does. In a community which seems never to have had a conscious relation to letters, he has kept the faith with dignity and fought the fight with constant courage. Scholar and poet at once, he has spoken to his generation with authority which we can forget only in the charm which makes us forget everything else.

But his fame was still before him when we met, and I could bring to him an admiration for work which had not yet made itself known to so many; but any admirer was welcome. We talked of what we had done, and each said how much he liked certain thing of the other's; I even seized my

advantage of his helplessness to read him a poem of mine which I had in my pocket; he advised me where to place it; and if the reader will not think it an unfair digression, I will tell here what became of that poem, for I think its varied fortunes were amusing, and I hope my own sufferings and final triumph with it will not be without encouragement to the young literary endeavorer. It was a poem called, with no prophetic sense of fitness, "Forlorn," and I tried it first with the 'Atlantic Monthly', which would not have it. Then I offered it in person to a former editor of 'Harper's Monthly', but he could not see his advantage in it, and I carried it overseas to Venice with me. From that point I sent it to all the English magazines as steadily as the post could carry it away and bring it back. On my way home, four years later, I took it to London with me, where a friend who knew Lewes, then just beginning with the 'Fortnightly Review', sent it to him for me. It was promptly returned, with a letter wholly reserved as to its quality, but full of a poetic gratitude for my wish to contribute to the Fortnightly. Then I heard that a certain Mr. Lucas was about to start a magazine, and I offered the poem to him. The kindest letter of acceptance followed me to America, and I counted upon fame and fortune as usual, when the news of Mr. Lucas's death came. I will not poorly joke an effect from my poem in the fact; but the fact remains. By this time I was a writer in the office of the 'Nation' newspaper, and after I left this place to be Mr. Fields's assistant on the Atlantic, I sent my poem to the Nation, where it was printed at last. In such scant measure as my verses have pleased it has found rather unusual favor, and I need not say that its misfortunes endeared it to its author.

But all this is rather far away from my first meeting with Stedman in Washington. Of course I liked him, and I thought him very handsome and fine, with a full beard cut in the fashion he has always worn it, and with poet's eyes lighting an aquiline profile. Afterwards, when I saw him afoot, I found him of a worldly splendor in dress, and envied him, as much as I could envy him anything, the New York tailor whose art had clothed him: I had a New York tailor too, but with a difference. He had a worldly dash along with his supermundane gifts, which took me almost as much, and all the more because I could see that he valued himself nothing upon it. He was all for literature, and for literary men as the superiors of every one. I must have opened my heart to him a good deal, for when I told him how the newspaper I had written for from Canada and New England had ceased to print my letters, he said, "Think of a man like sitting in judgment on a man like you!" I thought of it, and was avenged if not comforted; and at any rate I liked Stedman's standing up so stiffly for the honor of a craft that is rather too limp in some of its votaries.

I suppose it was he who introduced me to the Stoddards, whom I met in New York just before I sailed, and who were then in the glow of their early fame as poets. They knew about my poor beginnings, and they were very, very good to me. Stoddard went with me to Franklin Square, and gave the sanction of his presence to the ineffectual offer of my poem there. But what I relished most was the long talks I had with them both about authorship in all its phases, and the exchange of delight in this poem and that, this novel and that, with gay, wilful runs away to make some

wholly irrelevant joke, or fire puns into the air at no mark whatever. Stoddard had then a fame, with the sweetness of personal affection in it, from the lyrics and the odes that will perhaps best keep him known, and Mrs. Stoddard was beginning to make her distinct and special quality felt in the magazines, in verse and fiction. In both it seems to me that she has failed of the recognition which her work merits. Her tales and novels have in them a foretaste of realism, which was too strange for the palate of their day, and is now too familiar, perhaps. It is a peculiar fate, and would form the scheme of a pretty study in the history of literature. But in whatever she did she left the stamp of a talent like no other, and of a personality disdainful of literary environment. In a time when most of us had to write like Tennyson, or Longfellow, or Browning, she never would write like any one but herself.

I remember very well the lodging over a corner of Fourth Avenue and some downtown street where I visited these winning and gifted people, and tasted the pleasure of their racy talk, and the hospitality of their good-will toward all literature, which certainly did not leave me out. We sat before their grate in the chill of the last October days, and they set each other on to one wild flight of wit after another, and again I bathed my delighted spirit in the atmosphere of a realm where for the time at least no

"----rumor of oppression or defeat,
Of unsuccessful or successful war,"

could penetrate. I liked the Stoddards because they were frankly not of that Bohemia which I disliked so much, and thought it of no promise or validity; and because I was fond of their poetry and found them in it. I liked the absolutely literary keeping of their lives. He had then, and for long after, a place in the Custom house, but he was no more of that than Lamb was of India House. He belonged to that better world where there is no interest but letters, and which was as much like heaven for me as anything I could think of.

The meetings with the Stoddards repeated themselves when I came back to sail from New York, early in November. Mixed up with the cordial pleasure of them in my memory is a sense of the cold and wet outdoors, and the misery of being in those infamous New York streets, then as for long afterwards the squalidest in the world. The last night I saw my friends they told me of the tragedy which had just happened at the camp in the City Hall Park. Fitz James O'Brien, the brilliant young Irishman who had dazzled us with his story of "The Diamond Lens," and frozen our blood with his ingenious tale of a ghost--"What was It"--a ghost that could be felt and heard, but not seen--had enlisted for the war, and risen to be an officer with the swift process of the first days of it. In that camp he had just then shot and killed a man for some infraction of discipline, and it was uncertain what the end would be. He was acquitted, however, and it is known how he afterwards died of lockjaw from a wound received in battle.

VI.

Before this last visit in New York there was a second visit to Boston, which I need not dwell upon, because it was chiefly a revival of the impressions of the first. Again I saw the Fieldses in their home; again the Autocrat in his, and Lowell now beneath his own roof, beside the study fire where I was so often to sit with him in coming years. At dinner (which we had at two o'clock) the talk turned upon my appointment, and he said of me to his wife: "Think of his having got Stillman's place! We ought to put poison in his wine," and he told me of the wish the painter had to go to Venice and follow up Ruskin's work there in a book of his own. But he would not let me feel very guilty, and I will not pretend that I had any personal regret for my good fortune.

The place was given me perhaps because I had not nearly so many other gifts as he who lost it, and who was at once artist, critic, journalist, traveller, and eminently each. I met him afterwards in Rome, which the powers bestowed upon him instead of Venice, and he forgave me, though I do not know whether he forgave the powers. We walked far and long over the Campagna, and I felt the charm of a most uncommon mind in talk which came out richest and fullest in the presence of the wild nature which he loved and knew so much better than most other men. I think that the book he would have written about Venice is forever to be regretted, and I do not at all console myself for its loss with the book I have written myself.

At Lowell's table that day they spoke of what sort of winter I should find in Venice, and he inclined to the belief that I should want a fire there. On his study hearth a very brisk one burned when we went back to it, and kept out the chill of a cold easterly storm. We looked through one of the windows at the rain, and he said he could remember standing and looking out of that window at such a storm when he was a child; for he was born in that house, and his life had kept coming back to it. He died in it, at last.

In a lifting of the rain he walked with me down to the village, as he always called the denser part of the town about Harvard Square, and saw me aboard a horse-car for Boston. Before we parted he gave me two charges: to open my mouth when I began to speak Italian, and to think well of women. He said that our race spoke its own tongue with its teeth shut, and so failed to master the languages that wanted freer utterance. As to women, he said there were unworthy ones, but a good woman was the best thing in the world, and a man was always the better for honoring women.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Abstract, the air-drawn, afflicted me like physical discomforts
Bayard Taylor: incomparable translation of Faust

Became gratefully strange
Best talkers are willing that you should talk if you like
Charles Reade
Could easily believe now that it was some one else who saw it
Death of the joy that ought to come from work
Did not feel the effect I would so willingly have experienced
Dinner was at the old-fashioned Boston hour of two
Edward Everett Hale
Either to deny the substance of things unseen, or to affirm it
Emerson
Espoused the theory of Bacon's authorship of Shakespeare
Feigned the gratitude which I could see that he expected
First dinner served in courses that I had sat down to
Forbearance of a wise man content to bide his time
Forebore to speak needlessly to him, or to shake his hand
Hate of hate, the scorn of scorn, The love of love
Heine
Hollowness, the hopelessness, the unworthiness of life
I did not know, and I hated to ask
I find this young man worthy
If he was half as bad, he would have been too bad to be
If he was not there to your touch, it was no fault of his
In the South there was nothing but a mistaken social ideal
Incredible in their insipidity
Industrial slavery
Lincoln
Love of freedom and the hope of justice
Lowell
Man who had so much of the boy in him
Men who took themselves so seriously as that need
Met with kindness, if not honor
Might so far forget myself as to be a novelist
Napoleonic height which spiritually overtops the Alps
Never paid in anything but hopes of paying
Not quite himself till he had made you aware of his quality
Odious hilarity, without meaning and without remission
Praised extravagantly, and in the wrong place
Quebec was a bit of the seventeenth century
Remember the dinner-bell
Seen through the wrong end of the telescope
Stoddard
Things common to all, however peculiar in each
Thoreau
Visited one of the great mills
Welcome me, and make the least of my shyness and strangeness
Wit that tries its teeth upon everything

End of this Project Gutenberg Etext of First Visit to New England
by William Dean Howells

LITERARY FRIENDS AND ACQUAINTANCES--Roundabout to Boston

by William Dean Howells

ROUNDBABOUT TO BOSTON

During the four years of my life in Venice the literary intention was present with me at all times and in all places. I wrote many things in verse, which I sent to the magazines in every part of the English-speaking world, but they came unerringly back to me, except in three instances only, when they were kept by the editors who finally printed them. One of these pieces was published in the Atlantic Monthly; another in Harpers Magazine; the third was got into the New York Ledger through the kindness of Doctor Edward Everett Hale, who used I know not what mighty magic to that end. I had not yet met him; but he interested himself in my ballad as if it had been his own. His brother, Charles Hale, later Consul-General for Egypt, whom I saw almost every moment of the two visits he paid Venice in my time, had sent it to him, after copying it in his own large, fair hand, so that it could be read. He was not quite of that literary Boston which I so fondly remembered my glimpses of; he was rather of a journalistic and literary Boston which I had never known; but he was of Boston, after all. He had been in Lowell's classes at Harvard; he had often met Longfellow in Cambridge; he knew Doctor Holmes, of course; and he let me talk of my idols to my heart's content. I think he must have been amused by my raptures; most people would have been; but he was kind and patient, and he listened to me with a sweet intelligence which I shall always gratefully remember. He died too young, with his life's possibilities mainly unfulfilled; but none who knew him could fail to imagine them, or to love him for what he was.

I.

Besides those few pitiful successes, I had nothing but defeats in the sort of literature which I supposed was to be my calling, and the defeats threw me upon prose; for some sort of literary thing, if not one, then another, I must do if I lived; and I began to write those studies of Venetian life which afterwards became a book, and which I contributed as letters to the 'Boston Advertiser', after vainly offering them to more aesthetic periodicals. However, I do not imagine that it was a very smiling time for any literary endeavorer at home in the life-and-death civil war then waging. Some few young men arose who made themselves heard amid the din of arms even as far as Venice, but most of these were

hushed long ago. I fancy Theodore Winthrop, who began to speak, as it were, from his soldier's grave, so soon did his death follow the earliest recognition by the public, and so many were his posthumous works, was chief of these; but there were others whom the present readers must make greater effort to remember. Forceythe Willson, who wrote *The Old Sergeant*, became known for the rare quality of his poetry; and now and then there came a poem from Aldrich, or Stedman, or Stoddard. The great new series of the 'Biglow Papers' gathered volume with the force they had from the beginning. The *Autocrat* was often in the pages of the *Atlantic*, where one often found Whittier and Emerson, with many a fresh name now faded. In Washington the Piatts were writing some of the most beautiful verse of the war, and Brownell was sounding his battle lyrics like so many trumpet blasts. The fiction which followed the war was yet all to come. Whatever was done in any kind had some hint of the war in it, inevitably; though in the very heart of it Longfellow was setting about his great version of Dante peacefully, prayerfully, as he has told in the noble sonnets which register the mood of his undertaking.

At Venice, if I was beyond the range of literary recognition I was in direct relations with one of our greatest literary men, who was again of that literary Boston which mainly represented American literature to me. The official chief of the consul at Venice was the United States Minister at Vienna, and in my time this minister was John Lothrop Motley, the historian. He was removed, later, by that Johnson administration which followed Lincoln's so forgottenly that I name it with a sense of something almost prehistoric. Among its worst errors was the attempted discredit of a man who had given lustre to our name by his work, and who was an ardent patriot as well as accomplished scholar. He visited Venice during my first year, which was the darkest period of the civil war, and I remember with what instant security, not to say severity, he rebuked my scarcely whispered misgivings of the end, when I ventured to ask him what he thought it would be. Austria had never recognized the Secessionists as belligerents, and in the complications with France and England there was little for our minister but to share the home indignation at the sympathy of those powers with the South. In Motley this was heightened by that feeling of astonishment, of wounded faith, which all Americans with English friendships experienced in those days, and which he, whose English friendships were many, experienced in peculiar degree.

I drifted about with him in his gondola, and refreshed myself, long a-hungred for such talk, with his talk of literary life in London. Through some acquaintance I had made in Venice I was able to be of use to him in getting documents copied for him in the Venetian Archives, especially the Relations of the Venetian Ambassadors at different courts during the period and events he was studying. All such papers passed through my hands in transmission to the historian, though now I do not quite know why they need have done so; but perhaps he was willing to give me the pleasure of being a partner, however humble, in the enterprise. My recollection of him is of courtesy to a far younger man unqualified by patronage, and of a presence of singular dignity and grace. He was one of the handsomest men I ever saw, with beautiful eyes, a fine blond beard of modish cut, and a sensitive nose, straight and fine. He was altogether a figure of worldly splendor; and I had reason to know that he

did not let the credit of our nation suffer at the most aristocratic court in Europe for want of a fit diplomatic costume, when some of our ministers were trying to make their office do its full effect upon all occasions in "the dress of an American gentleman." The morning after his arrival Mr. Motley came to me with a handful of newspapers which, according to the Austrian custom at that day, had been opened in the Venetian post-office. He wished me to protest against this on his behalf as an infringement of his diplomatic extra-territoriality, and I proposed to go at once to the director of the post: I had myself suffered in the same way, and though I knew that a mere consul was helpless, I was willing to see the double-headed eagle trodden under foot by a Minister Plenipotentiary. Mr. Motley said that he would go with me, and we put off in his gondola to the post-office. The director received us with the utmost deference. He admitted the irregularity which the minister complained of, and declared that he had no choice but to open every foreign newspaper, to whomsoever addressed. He suggested, however, that if the minister made his appeal to the Lieutenant-Governor of Venice, Count Toggenburg would no doubt instantly order the exemption of his newspapers from the general rule.

Mr. Motley said he would give himself the pleasure of calling upon the Lieutenant-Governor, and "How fortunate," he added, when we were got back into the gondola, "that I should have happened to bring my court dress with me!" I did not see the encounter of the high contending powers, but I know that it ended in a complete victory for our minister.

I had no further active relations of an official kind with Mr. Motley, except in the case of a naturalized American citizen, whose property was slowly but surely wasting away in the keeping of the Venetian courts. An order had at last been given for the surrender of the remnant to the owner; but the Lombardo-Venetian authorities insisted that this should be done through the United States Minister at Vienna, and Mr. Motley held as firmly that it must be done through the United States Consul at Venice. I could only report to him from time to time the unyielding attitude of the Civil Tribunal, and at last he consented, as he wrote, "to act officiously, not officially, in the matter," and the hapless claimant got what was left of his estate.

I had a glimpse of the historian afterwards in Boston, but it was only for a moment, just before his appointment to England, where he was made to suffer for Sumner in his quarrel with Grant. That injustice crowned the injuries his country had done a most faithful patriot and high-spirited gentleman, whose fame as an historian once filled the ear of the English-speaking world. His books seemed to have been written in a spirit already no longer modern; and I did not find the greatest of them so moving as I expected when I came to it with all the ardor of my admiration for the historian. William the Silent seemed to me, by his worshipper's own showing, scarcely level with the popular movement which he did not so much direct as follow; but it is a good deal for a prince to be able even to follow his people; and it cannot be said that Motley does not fully recognize the greatness of the Dutch people, though he may see the Prince of Orange too large. The study of their character made at least a theoretical democrat of a scholar whose instincts were not

perhaps democratic, and his sympathy with that brave little republic between the dikes strengthened him in his fealty to the great commonwealth between the oceans. I believe that so far as he was of any political tradition, he was of the old Boston Whig tradition; but when I met him at Venice he was in the glow of a generous pride in our war as a war against slavery. He spoke of the negroes and their simple-hearted, single-minded devotion to the Union cause in terms that an original abolitionist might have used, at a time when original abolitionists were not so many as they have since become.

For the rest, I fancy it was very well for us to be represented at Vienna in those days by an ideal democrat who was also a real swell, and who was not likely to discredit us socially when we so much needed to be well thought of in every way.

At a court where the family of Count Schmerling, the Prime Minister, could not be received for want of the requisite descents, it was well to have a minister who would not commit the mistake of inviting the First Society to meet the Second Society, as a former Envoy Extraordinary had done, with the effect of finding himself left entirely to the Second Society during the rest of his stay in Vienna.

II.

One of my consular colleagues under Motley was another historian, of no such popularity, indeed, nor even of such success, but perhaps not of inferior powers. This was Richard Hildreth, at Trieste, the author of one of the sincerest if not the truest histories of the United States, according to the testimony both of his liking and his misliking critics. I have never read his history, and I speak of it only at second hand; but I had read, before I met him, his novel of 'Archy Moore, or The White Slave', which left an indelible impression of his imaginative verity upon me. The impression is still so deep that after the lapse of nearly forty years since I saw the book, I have no misgiving in speaking of it as a powerful piece of realism. It treated passionately, intensely, though with a superficial coldness, of wrongs now so remote from us in the abolition of slavery that it is useless to hope it will ever be generally read hereafter, but it can safely be praised to any one who wishes to study that bygone condition, and the literature which grew out of it. I fancy it did not lack recognition in its time, altogether, for I used to see it in Italian and French translations on the bookstalls. I believe neither his history nor his novel brought the author more gain than fame. He had worn himself out on a newspaper when he got his appointment at Trieste, and I saw him in the shadow of the cloud that was wholly to darken him before he died. He was a tall thin man, absent, silent: already a phantom of himself, but with a scholarly serenity and dignity amidst the ruin, when the worst came.

I first saw him at the pretty villa where he lived in the suburbs of

Trieste, and where I passed several days, and I remember him always reading, reading, reading. He could with difficulty be roused from his book by some strenuous appeal from his family to his conscience as a host. The last night he sat with *Paradise Lost* in his hand, and nothing could win him from it till he had finished it. Then he rose to go to bed. Would not he bid his parting guest good-bye? The idea of farewell perhaps dimly penetrated to him. He responded without looking round,

"They, hand in hand, with wandering steps and slow,
Through Eden took their solitary way,"

and so left the room.

I had earlier had some dealings with him as a fellow-consul concerning a deserter from an American ship whom I inherited from my predecessor at Venice. The man had already been four or five months in prison, and he was in a fair way to end his life there; for it is our law that a deserting sailor must be kept in the consul's custody till some vessel of our flag arrives, when the consul can oblige the master to take the deserter and let him work his passage home. Such a vessel rarely came to Venice even in times of peace, and in times of war there was no hope of any. So I got leave of the consul at Trieste to transfer my captive to that port, where now and then an American ship did touch. The flag determines the nationality of the sailor, and this unhappy wretch was theoretically our fellow-citizen; but when he got to Trieste he made a clean breast of it to the consul. He confessed that when he shipped under our flag he was a deserter from a British regiment at Malta; and he begged piteously not to be sent home to America, where he had never been in his life, nor ever wished to be. He wished to be sent back to his regiment at Malta, and to whatever fate awaited him there. The case certainly had its embarrassments; but the American consul contrived to let our presumptive compatriot slip into the keeping of the British consul, who promptly shipped him to Malta. In view of the strained relations between England and America at that time this was a piece of masterly diplomacy.

Besides my old Ohio-time friend Moncure D. Conway, who paid us a visit, and in his immediate relations with literary Boston seemed to bring the mountain to Mahomet, I saw no one else more literary than Henry Ward Beecher. He was passing through Venice on his way to those efforts in England in behalf of the Union which had a certain great effect at the time; and in the tiny parlor of our apartment on the Grand Canal, I can still see him sitting athletic, almost pugilistic, of presence, with his strong face, but kind, framed in long hair that swept above his massive forehead, and fell to the level of his humorously smiling mouth. His eyes quaintly gleamed at the things we told him of our life in the strange place; but he only partly relaxed from his strenuous pose, and the hands that lay upon his knees were clinched. Afterwards, as he passed our balcony in a gondola, he lifted the brave red fez he was wearing (many people wore the fez for one caprice or another) and saluted our eagle and us: we were often on the balcony behind the shield to attest the authenticity of the American eagle.

III.

Before I left Venice, however, there came a turn in my literary luck, and from the hand I could most have wished to reverse the adverse wheel of fortune. I had labored out with great pains a paper on recent Italian comedy, which I sent to Lowell, then with his friend Professor Norton jointly editor of the North American Review; and he took it and wrote me one of his loveliest letters about it, consoling me in an instant for all the defeat I had undergone, and making it sweet and worthy to have lived through that misery. It is one of the hard conditions of this state that while we can mostly make out to let people taste the last drop of bitterness and ill-will that is in us, our love and gratitude are only semi-articulate at the best, and usually altogether tongue-tied. As often as I tried afterwards to tell Lowell of the benediction, the salvation, his letter was to me, I failed. But perhaps he would not have understood, if I had spoken out all that was in me with the fulness I could have given a resentment. His message came after years of thwarted endeavor, and reinstated me in the belief that I could still do something in literature. To be sure, the letters in the Advertiser had begun to make their impression; among the first great pleasures they brought me was a recognition from my diplomatic chief at Vienna; but I valued my admission to the North American peculiarly because it was Lowell let me in, and because I felt that in his charge it must be the place of highest honor. He spoke of the pay for my article, in his letter, and asked me where he should send it, and I answered, to my father-in-law, who put it in his savings-bank, where he lived, in Brattleboro, Vermont. There it remained, and I forgot all about it, so that when his affairs were settled some years later and I was notified that there was a sum to my credit in the bank, I said, with the confidence I have nearly always felt when wrong, that I had no money there. The proof of my error was sent me in a check, and then I bethought me of the pay for "Recent Italian Comedy."

It was not a day when I could really afford to forget money due me, but then it was not a great deal of money. The Review was as poor as it was proud, and I had two dollars a printed page for my paper. But this was more than I got from the Advertiser, which gave me five dollars a column for my letters, printed in a type so fine that the money, when translated from greenbacks into gold at a discount of \$2.80, must have been about a dollar a thousand words. However, I was richly content with that, and would gladly have let them have the letters for nothing.

Before I left Venice I had made my sketches into a book, which I sent on to Messrs. Trubner & Co., in London. They had consented to look at it to oblige my friend Conway, who during his sojourn with us in Venice, before his settlement in London, had been forced to listen to some of it. They answered me in due time that they would publish an edition of a thousand, at half profits, if I could get some American house to take five hundred copies. When I stopped in London I had so little hope of being able to do this that I asked the Trubners if I might, without losing their offer,

try to get some other London house to publish my book. They said Yes, almost joyously; and I began to take my manuscript about. At most places they would not look at me or it, and they nowhere consented to read it. The house promptest in refusing to consider it afterwards pirated one of my novels, and with some expressions of good intention in that direction, never paid me anything for it; though I believe the English still think that this sort of behavior was peculiar to the American publisher in the old buccaneering times. I was glad to go back to the Trubners with my book, and on my way across the Atlantic I met a publisher who finally agreed to take those five hundred copies. This was Mr. M. M. Hurd, of Hurd & Houghton, a house then newly established in New York and Cambridge. We played ring-toss and shuffleboard together, and became of a friendship which lasts to this day. But it was not till some months later, when I saw him in New York, that he consented to publish my book. I remember how he said, with an air of vague misgiving, and an effect of trying to justify himself in an imprudence, that it was not a great matter anyway. I perceived that he had no faith in it, and to tell the truth I had not much myself. But the book had an instant success, and it has gone on from edition to edition ever since. There was just then the interest of a not wholly generous surprise at American things among the English. Our success in putting down the great Confederate rebellion had caught the fancy of our cousins, and I think it was to this mood of theirs that I owed largely the kindness they showed my book. There were long and cordial reviews in all the great London journals, which I used to carry about with me like love-letters; when I tried to show them to other people, I could not understand their coldness concerning them.

At Boston, where we landed on our return home, there was a moment when it seemed as if my small destiny might be linked at once with that of the city which later became my home. I ran into the office of the Advertiser to ask what had become of some sketches of Italian travel I had sent the paper, and the managing editor made me promise not to take a place anywhere before I had heard from him. I gladly promised, but I did not hear from him, and when I returned to Boston a fortnight later, I found that a fatal partner had refused to agree with him in engaging me upon the paper. They even gave me back half a dozen unprinted letters of mine, and I published them in the Nation, of New York, and afterwards in the book called Italian Journeys.

But after I had encountered fortune in this frowning disguise, I had a most joyful little visit with Lowell, which made me forget there was anything in the world but the delight and glory of sitting with him in his study at Elmwood and hearing him talk. It must have been my freshness from Italy which made him talk chiefly of his own happy days in the land which so sympathetically greets all its lovers fellow-citizens. At any rate he would talk of hardly anything else, and he talked late into the night, and early into the morning. About two o'clock, when all the house was still, he lighted a candle, and went down into the cellar, and came back with certain bottles under his arms. I had not a very learned palate in those days (or in these, for that matter), but I knew enough of wine to understand that these bottles had been chosen upon that principle which Longfellow put in verse, and used to repeat with a humorous lifting of the eyebrows and hollowing of the voice:

"If you have a friend to dine,
Give him your best wine;
If you have two,
The second-best will do."

As we sat in their mellow afterglow, Lowell spoke to me of my own life and prospects, wisely and truly, as he always spoke. He said that it was enough for a man who had stuff in him to be known to two or three people, for they would not suffer him to be forgotten, and it would rest with himself to get on. I told him that though I had not given up my place at Venice, I was not going back, if I could find anything to do at home, and I was now on my way to Ohio, where I should try my best to find something; at the worst, I could turn to my trade of printer. He did not think it need ever come to that; and he said that he believed I should have an advantage with readers, if not with editors, in hailing from the West; I should be more of a novelty. I knew very well that even in my own West I should not have this advantage unless I appeared there with an Eastern imprint, but I could not wish to urge my misgiving against his faith. Was I not already richly successful? What better thing personally could befall me, if I lived forever after on milk and honey, than to be sitting there with my hero, my master, and having him talk to me as if we were equal in deed and in fame?

The cat-bird called in the syringa thicket at his door, before we said the good-night which was good morning, using the sweet Italian words, and bidding each other the 'Dorma bene' which has the quality of a benediction. He held my hand, and looked into my eyes with the sunny kindness which never failed me, worthy or unworthy; and I went away to bed. But not to sleep; only to dream such dreams as fill the heart of youth when the recognition of its endeavor has come from the achievement it holds highest and best.

IV.

I found nothing to do in Ohio; some places that I heard of proved impossible one way or another, in Columbus and Cleveland, and Cincinnati; there was always the fatal partner; and after three weeks I was again in the East. I came to New York, resolved to fight my way in, somewhere, and I did not rest a moment before I began the fight.

My notion was that which afterwards became Bartley Hubbard's. "Get a basis," said the softening cynic of the Saturday Press, when I advised with him, among other acquaintances. "Get a salaried place, something regular on some paper, and then you can easily make up the rest." But it was a month before I achieved this vantage, and then I got it in a quarter where I had not looked for it. I wrote editorials on European and literary topics for different papers, but mostly for the Times, and they paid me well and more than well; but I was nowhere offered a basis, though once I got so far towards it as to secure a personal interview

with the editor-in-chief, who made me feel that I had seldom met so busy a man. He praised some work of mine that he had read in his paper, but I was never recalled to his presence; and now I think he judged rightly that I should not be a lastingly good journalist. My point of view was artistic; I wanted time to prepare my effects.

There was another and clearer prospect opened to me on a literary paper, then newly come to the light, but long since gone out in the dark. Here again my work was taken, and liked so much that I was offered the basis (at twenty dollars a week) that I desired; I was even assigned to a desk where I should write in the office; and the next morning I came joyfully down to Spruce Street to occupy it. But I was met at the door by one of the editors, who said lightly, as if it were a trifling affair, "Well, we've concluded to waive the idea of an engagement," and once more my bright hopes of a basis dispersed themselves. I said, with what calm I could, that they must do what they thought best, and I went on skirmishing baselessly about for this and the other papers which had been buying my material.

I had begun printing in the 'Nation' those letters about my Italian journeys left over from the Boston Advertiser; they had been liked in the office, and one day the editor astonished and delighted me by asking how I would fancy giving up outside work to come there and write only for the 'Nation'. We averaged my gains from all sources at forty dollars a week, and I had my basis as unexpectedly as if I had dropped upon it from the skies.

This must have been some time in November, and the next three or four months were as happy a time for me as I have ever known. I kept on printing my Italian material in the Nation; I wrote criticisms for it (not very good criticisms, I think now), and I amused myself very much with the treatment of social phases and events in a department which grew up under my hand. My associations personally were of the most agreeable kind. I worked with joy, with ardor, and I liked so much to be there, in that place and in that company, that I hated to have each day come to an end.

I believed that my lines were cast in New York for good and all; and I renewed my relations with the literary friends I had made before going abroad. I often stopped, on my way up town, at an apartment the Stoddards had in Lafayette Place, or near it; I saw Stedman, and reasoned high, to my heart's content, of literary things with them and him.

With the winter Bayard Taylor came on from his home in Kennett and took an apartment in East Twelfth Street, and once a week Mrs. Taylor and he received all their friends there, with a simple and charming hospitality. There was another house which we much resorted to--the house of James Lorimer Graham, afterwards Consul-General at Florence, where he died. I had made his acquaintance at Venice three years before, and I came in for my share of that love for literary men which all their perversities could not extinguish in him. It was a veritable passion, which I used to think he could not have felt so deeply if he had been a literary man himself. There were delightful dinners at his house, where the wit of

the Stoddards shone, and Taylor beamed with joyous good-fellowship and overflowed with invention; and Huntington, long Paris correspondent of the Tribune, humorously tried to talk himself into the resolution of spending the rest of his life in his own country. There was one evening when C. P. Cranch, always of a most pensive presence and aspect, sang the most killingly comic songs; and there was another evening when, after we all went into the library, something tragical happened. Edwin Booth was of our number, a gentle, rather silent person in company, or with at least little social initiative, who, as his fate would, went up to the cast of a huge hand that lay upon one of the shelves. "Whose hand is this, Lorry?" he asked our host, as he took it up and turned it over in both his own hands. Graham feigned not to hear, and Booth asked again, "whose hand is this?" Then there was nothing for Graham but to say, "It's Lincoln's hand," and the man for whom it meant such unspeakable things put it softly down without a word.

V.

It was one of the disappointments of a time which was nearly all joy that I did not then meet a man who meant hardly less than Lowell himself for me. George William Curtis was during my first winter in New York away on one of the long lecturing rounds to which he gave so many of his winters, and I did not see him till seven years afterwards, at Mr. Norton's in Cambridge. He then characteristically spent most of the evening in discussing an obscure point in Browning's poem of 'My Last Duchess'. I have long forgotten what the point was, but not the charm of Curtis's personality, his fine presence, his benign politeness, his almost deferential tolerance of difference in opinion. Afterwards I saw him again and again in Boston and New York, but always with a sense of something elusive in his graciousness, for which something in me must have been to blame. Cold, he was not, even to the youth that in those days was apt to shiver in any but the higher temperatures, and yet I felt that I made no advance in his kindness towards anything like the friendship I knew in the Cambridge men. Perhaps I was so thoroughly attuned to their mood that I could not be put in unison with another; and perhaps in Curtis there was really not the material of much intimacy.

He had the potentiality of publicity in the sort of welcome he gave equally to all men; and if I asked more I was not reasonable. Yet he was never far from any man of good-will, and he was the intimate of multitudes whose several existence he never dreamt of. In this sort he had become my friend when he made his first great speech on the Kansas question in 1855, which will seem as remote to the young men of this day as the Thermopylae question to which he likened it. I was his admirer, his lover, his worshipper before that for the things he had done in literature, for the 'Howadji' books, and for the lovely fantasies of 'Prue and I', and for the sound-hearted satire of the 'Potiphar Papers', and now suddenly I learnt that this brilliant and graceful talent, this travelled and accomplished gentleman, this star of society who had dazzled me with his splendor far off in my Western village obscurity, was

a man with the heart to feel the wrongs of men so little friended then as to be denied all the rights of men. I do not remember any passage of the speech, or any word of it, but I remember the joy, the pride with which the soul of youth recognizes in the greatness it has honored the goodness it may love. Mere politicians might be pro-slavery or anti-slavery without touching me very much, but here was the citizen of a world far greater than theirs, a light of the universal republic of letters, who was willing and eager to stand or fall with the just cause, and that was all in all to me. His country was my country, and his kindred my kindred, and nothing could have kept me from following after him.

His whole life taught the lesson that the world is well lost whenever the world is wrong; but never, I think, did any life teach this so sweetly, so winningly. The wrong world itself might have been entreated by him to be right, for he was one of the few reformers who have not in some measure mixed their love of man with hate of men; his quarrel was with error, and not with the persons who were in it. He was so gently steadfast in his opinions that no one ever thought of him as a fanatic, though many who held his opinions were assailed as fanatics, and suffered the shame if they did not win the palm of martyrdom. In early life he was a communist, and then when he came out of Brook Farm into the world which he was so well fitted to adorn, and which would so gladly have kept him all its own, he became an abolitionist in the very teeth of the world which abhorred abolitionists. He was a believer in the cause of women's rights, which has no picturesqueness, and which chiefly appeals to the sense of humor in the men who never dreamt of laughing at him. The man who was in the last degree amiable was to the last degree unyielding where conscience was concerned; the soul which was so tender had no weakness in it; his lenity was the divination of a finer justice. His honesty made all men trust him when they doubted his opinions; his good sense made them doubt their own opinions, when they had as little question of their own honesty.

I should not find it easy to speak of him as a man of letters only, for humanity was above the humanities with him, and we all know how he turned from the fairest career in literature to tread the thorny path of politics because he believed that duty led the way, and that good citizens were needed more than good romancers. No doubt they are, and yet it must always be a keen regret with the men of my generation who witnessed with such rapture the early proofs of his talent, that he could not have devoted it wholly to the beautiful, and let others look after the true. Now that I have said this I am half ashamed of it, for I know well enough that what he did was best; but if my regret is mean, I will let it remain, for it is faithful to the mood which many have been in concerning him.

There can be no dispute, I am sure, as to the value of some of the results he achieved in that other path. He did indeed create anew for us the type of good-citizenship, well-nigh effaced in a sordid and selfish time, and of an honest politician and a pure-minded journalist. He never really forsook literature, and the world of actual interests and experiences afforded him outlooks and perspectives, without which aesthetic endeavor is self-limited and purblind. He was a great man of

letters, he was a great orator, he was a great political journalist, he was a great citizen, he was a great philanthropist. But that last word with its conventional application scarcely describes the brave and gentle friend of men that he was. He was one that helped others by all that he did, and said, and was, and the circle of his use was as wide as his fame. There are other great men, plenty of them, common great men, whom we know as names and powers, and whom we willingly let the ages have when they die, for, living or dead, they are alike remote from us. They have never been with us where we live; but this great man was the neighbor, the contemporary, and the friend of all who read him or heard him; and even in the swift forgetting of this electrical age the stamp of his personality will not be effaced from their minds or hearts.

VI.

Of those evenings at the Taylors' in New York, I can recall best the one which was most significant for me, and even fatefully significant. Mr. and Mrs. Fields were there, from Boston, and I renewed all the pleasure of my earlier meetings with them. At the end Fields said, mockingly, "Don't despise Boston!" and I answered, as we shook hands, "Few are worthy to live in Boston." It was New-Year's eve, and that night it came on to snow so heavily that my horse-car could hardly plough its way up to Forty-seventh Street through the drifts. The next day, and the next, I wrote at home, because it was so hard to get down-town. The third day I reached the office and found a letter on my desk from Fields, asking how I should like to come to Boston and be his assistant on the 'Atlantic Monthly'. I submitted the matter at once to my chief on the 'Nation', and with his frank goodwill I talked it over with Mr. Osgood, of Ticknor & Fields, who was to see me further about it if I wished, when he came to New York; and then I went to Boston to see Mr. Fields concerning details. I was to sift all the manuscripts and correspond with contributors; I was to do the literary proof-reading of the magazine; and I was to write the four or five pages of book-notices, which were then printed at the end of the periodical in finer type; and I was to have forty dollars a week. I said that I was getting that already for less work, and then Mr. Fields offered me ten dollars more. Upon these terms we closed, and on the 1st of March, which was my twenty-ninth birthday, I went to Boston and began my work. I had not decided to accept the place without advising with Lowell; he counselled the step, and gave me some shrewd and useful suggestions. The whole affair was conducted by Fields with his unflinching tact and kindness, but it could not be kept from me that the qualification I had as practical printer for the work was most valued, if not the most valued, and that as proof-reader I was expected to make it avail on the side of economy. Somewhere in life's feast the course of humble-pie must always come in; and if I did not wholly relish this, bit of it, I dare say it was good for me, and I digested it perfectly.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Act officiously, not officially

Confidence I have nearly always felt when wrong

George William Curtis

Give him your best wine

Longfellow

Love and gratitude are only semi-articulate at the best

Made all men trust him when they doubted his opinions

Motley

Quarrel was with error, and not with the persons who were in it

The world is well lost whenever the world is wrong

Women's rights

End of this Project Gutenberg Etext of Roundabout to Boston

by William Dean Howells

LITERARY FRIENDS AND ACQUAINTANCES--Literary Boston As I Knew It

by William Dean Howells

LITERARY BOSTON AS I KNEW IT

Among my fellow-passengers on the train from New York to Boston, when I went to begin my work there in 1866, as the assistant editor of the Atlantic Monthly, was the late Samuel Bowles, of the Springfield Republican, who created in a subordinate city a journal of metropolitan importance. I had met him in Venice several years earlier, when he was suffering from the cruel insomnia which had followed his overwork on that newspaper, and when he told me that he was sleeping scarcely more than one hour out of the twenty-four. His worn face attested the misery which this must have been, and which lasted in some measure while he lived, though I believe that rest and travel relieved him in his later years. He was always a man of cordial friendliness, and he now expressed a most gratifying interest when I told him what I was going to do in Boston. He gave himself the pleasure of descanting upon the dramatic quality of the fact that a young newspaper man from Ohio was about to share in the destinies of the great literary periodical of New England.

I.

I do not think that such a fact would now move the fancy of the liveliest newspaper man, so much has the West since returned upon the East in a reflux wave of authorship. But then the West was almost an unknown quality in our literary problem; and in fact there was scarcely any literature outside of New England. Even this was of New England origin, for it was almost wholly the work of New England men and women in the "splendid exile" of New York. The Atlantic Monthly, which was distinctively literary, was distinctively a New England magazine, though from the first it had been characterized by what was more national, what was more universal, in the New England temperament. Its chief contributors for nearly twenty years were Longfellow, Lowell, Holmes, Whittier, Emerson, Doctor Hale, Colonel Higginson, Mrs. Stowe, Whipple, Rose Terry Cooke, Mrs. Julia Ward Howe, Mrs. Prescott Spofford, Mrs. Phelps Ward, and other New England writers who still lived in New England, and largely in the region of Boston. Occasionally there came a poem from Bryant, at New York, from Mr. Stedman, from Mr. Stoddard and Mrs. Stoddard, from Mr. Aldrich, and from Bayard Taylor. But all these, except the last, were not only of New England race, but of New England birth. I think there was no contributor from the South but Mr. M. D. Conway, and as yet the West scarcely counted, though four young poets from Ohio, who were not immediately or remotely of Puritan origin, had appeared in early numbers; Alice Cary, living with her sister in New York, had written now and then from the beginning. Mr. John Hay solely represented Illinois by a single paper, and he was of Rhode Island stock. It was after my settlement at Boston that Mark Twain, of Missouri, became a figure of world-wide fame at Hartford; and longer after, that Mr. Bret Harte made that progress Eastward from California which was telegraphed almost from hour to hour, as if it were the progress of a prince. Miss Constance F. Woolson had not yet begun to write. Mr. James Whitcomb Riley, Mr. Maurice Thompson, Miss Edith Thomas, Octave Thanet, Mr. Charles Warren Stoddard, Mr. H. B. Fuller, Mrs. Catherwood, Mr. Hamlin Garland, all whom I name at random among other Western writers, were then as unknown as Mr. Cable, Miss Murfree, Mrs. Rives Chanler, Miss Grace King, Mr. Joel Chandler Harris, Mr. Thomas Nelson Page, in the South, which they by no means fully represent.

The editors of the Atlantic had been eager from the beginning to discover any outlying literature; but, as I have said, there was in those days very little good writing done beyond the borders of New England. If the case is now different, and the best known among living American writers are no longer New-Englanders, still I do not think the South and West have yet trimmed the balance; and though perhaps the news writers now more commonly appear in those quarters, I should not be so very sure that they are not still characterized by New England ideals and examples. On the other hand, I am very sure that in my early day we were characterized by them, and wished to be so; we even felt that we failed in so far as we expressed something native quite in our own way. The literary theories we accepted were New England theories, the criticism we valued was New England criticism, or, more strictly speaking, Boston theories, Boston criticism.

Of those more constant contributors to the Atlantic whom I have mentioned, it is of course known that Longfellow and Lowell lived in Cambridge, Emerson at Concord, and Whittier at Amesbury. Colonel Higginson was still and for many years afterwards at Newport; Mrs. Stowe was then at Andover; Miss Prescott of Newburyport had become Mrs. Spofford, and was presently in Boston, where her husband was a member of the General Court; Mrs. Phelps Ward, as Miss Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, dwelt in her father's house at Andover. The chief of the Bostonians were Mrs. Julia Ward Howe, Doctor Holmes, and Doctor Hale. Yet Boston stood for the whole Massachusetts group, and Massachusetts, in the literary impulse, meant New England. I suppose we must all allow, whether we like to do so or not, that the impulse seems now to have pretty well spent itself. Certainly the city of Boston has distinctly waned in literature, though it has waxed in wealth and population. I do not think there are in Boston to-day even so many talents with a literary coloring in law, science, theology, and journalism as there were formerly; though I have no belief that the Boston talents are fewer or feebler than before. I arrived in Boston, however, when all talents had more or less a literary coloring, and when the greatest talents were literary. These expressed with ripened fulness a civilization conceived in faith and brought forth in good works; but that moment of maturity was the beginning of a decadence which could only show itself much later. New England has ceased to be a nation in itself, and it will perhaps never again have anything like a national literature; but that was something like a national literature; and it will probably be centuries yet before the life of the whole country, the American life as distinguished from the New England life, shall have anything so like a national literature. It will be long before our larger life interprets itself in such imagination as Hawthorne's, such wisdom as Emerson's, such poetry as Longfellow's, such prophecy as Whittier's, such wit and grace as Holmes's, such humor and humanity as Lowell's.

The literature of those great men was, if I may suffer myself the figure, the Socinian graft of a Calvinist stock. Their faith, in its varied shades, was Unitarian, but their art was Puritan. So far as it was imperfect--and great and beautiful as it was, I think it had its imperfections--it was marred by the intense ethicism that pervaded the New England mind for two hundred years, and that still characterizes it. They or their fathers had broken away from orthodoxy in the great schism at the beginning of the century, but, as if their heterodoxy were conscience-stricken, they still helplessly pointed the moral in all they did; some pointed it more directly, some less directly; but they all pointed it. I should be far from blaming them for their ethical intention, though I think they felt their vocation as prophets too much for their good as poets. Sometimes they sacrificed the song to the sermon, though not always, nor nearly always. It was in poetry and in romance that they excelled; in the novel, so far as they attempted it, they failed. I say this with the names of all the Bostonian group, and those they influenced, in mind, and with a full sense of their greatness. It may be ungracious to say that they have left no heirs to their peculiar greatness; but it would be foolish to say that they left an estate where they had none to bequeath. One cannot take account of such a fantasy as Judd's Margaret. The only New-Englander who has attempted

the novel on a scale proportioned to the work of the New-Englanders in philosophy, in poetry, in romance, is Mr. De Forest, who is of New Haven, and not of Boston. I do not forget the fictions of Doctor Holmes, or the vivid inventions of Doctor Hale, but I do not call them novels; and I do not forget the exquisitely realistic art of Miss Jewett or Miss Wilkins, which is free from the ethicism of the great New England group, but which has hardly the novelists's scope. New England, in Hawthorne's work, achieved supremacy in romance; but the romance is always an allegory, and the novel is a picture in which the truth to life is suffered to do its unsermonized office for conduct; and New England yet lacks her novelist, because it was her instinct and her conscience in fiction to be true to an ideal of life rather than to life itself.

Even when we come to the exception that proves the rule, even to such a signal exception as 'Uncle Tom's Cabin', I think that what I say holds true. That is almost the greatest work of imagination that we have produced in prose, and it is the work of a New England woman, writing from all the inspirations and traditions of New England. It is like begging the question to say that I do not call it a novel, however; but really, is it a novel, in the sense that 'War and Peace' is a novel, or 'Madame Flaubert', or 'L'Assommoir', or 'Phineas Finn', or 'Dona Perfecta', or 'Esther Waters', or 'Marta y Maria', or 'The Return of the Native', or 'Virgin Soil', or 'David Grieve'? In a certain way it is greater than any of these except the first; but its chief virtue, or its prime virtue, is in its address to the conscience, and not its address to the taste; to the ethical sense, not the aesthetical sense.

This does not quite say the thing, but it suggests it, and I should be sorry if it conveyed to any reader a sense of slight; for I believe no one has felt more deeply than myself the value of New England in literature. The comparison of the literary situation at Boston to the literary situation at Edinburgh in the times of the reviewers has never seemed to me accurate or adequate, and it holds chiefly in the fact that both seem to be of the past. Certainly New York is yet no London in literature, and I think Boston was once vastly more than Edinburgh ever was, at least in quality. The Scotch literature of the palmy days was not wholly Scotch, and even when it was rooted in Scotch soil it flowered in the air of an alien speech. But the New England literature of the great day was the blossom of a New England root; and the language which the Bostonians wrote was the native English of scholars fitly the heirs of those who had brought the learning of the universities to Massachusetts Bay two hundred years before, and was of as pure a lineage as the English of the mother-country.

III.

The literary situation which confronted me when I came to Boston was, then, as native as could well be; and whatever value I may be able to give a personal study of it will be from the effect it made upon me as one strange in everything but sympathy. I will not pretend that I saw it

in its entirety, and I have no hope of presenting anything like a kinetoscopic impression of it. What I can do is to give here and there a glimpse of it; and I shall wish the reader to keep in mind the fact that it was in a "state of transition," as everything is always and everywhere. It was no sooner recognizably native than it ceased to be fully so; and I became a witness of it after the change had begun. The publishing house which so long embodied New England literature was already attempting enterprises out of the line of its traditions, and one of these had brought Mr. T. B. Aldrich from New York, a few weeks before I arrived upon the scene in that dramatic quality which I think never impressed any one but Mr. Bowles. Mr. Aldrich was the editor of 'Every Saturday' when I came to be assistant editor of the Atlantic Monthly. We were of nearly the same age, but he had a distinct and distinguished priority of reputation, insomuch that in my Western remoteness I had always ranged him with such elders and betters of mine as Holmes and Lowell, and never imagined him the blond, slight youth I found him, with every imaginable charm of contemporaneity. It is no part of the office which I have intended for these slight and sufficiently wandering glimpses of the past to show any writer in his final place; and above all I do not presume to assign any living man his rank or station. But I should be false to my own grateful sense of beauty in the work of this poet if I did not at all times recognize his constancy to an ideal which his name stands for. He is known in several kinds, but to my thinking he is best in a certain nobler kind of poetry; a serious sort in which the thought holds him above the scrupulosities of the art he loves and honors so much. Sometimes the file slips in his hold, as the file must and will; it is but an instrument at the best; but there is no mistouch in the hand that lays itself upon the reader's heart with the pulse of the poet's heart quick and true in it. There are sonnets of his, grave, and simple, and lofty, which I think of with the glow and thrill possible only from very beautiful poetry, and which impart such an emotion as we can feel only

"When a great thought strikes along the brain
And flushes all the cheek."

When I had the fortune to meet him first, I suppose that in the employ of the kindly house we were both so eager to serve, our dignities were about the same; for if the 'Atlantic Monthly' was a somewhat prouder affair than an eclectic weekly like 'Every Saturday', he was supreme in his place, and I was subordinate in mine. The house was careful, in the attitude of its senior partner, not to distinguish between us, and we were not slow to perceive the tact used in managing us; we had our own joke of it; we compared notes to find whether we were equally used in this thing or that; and we promptly shared the fun of our discovery with Fields himself.

We had another impartial friend (no less a friend of joy in the life which seems to have been pretty nearly all joy, as I look back upon it) in the partner who became afterwards the head of the house, and who forecast in his bold enterprises the change from a New England to an American literary situation. In the end James R. Osgood failed, though all his enterprises succeeded. The anomaly is sad, but it is not

infrequent. They were greater than his powers and his means, and before they could reach their full fruition, they had to be enlarged to men of longer purse and longer patience. He was singularly fitted both by instinct and by education to become a great publisher; and he early perceived that if a leading American house were to continue at Boston, it must be hospitable to the talents of the whole country. He founded his future upon those generous lines; but he wanted the qualities as well as the resources for rearing the superstructure. Changes began to follow each other rapidly after he came into control of the house. Misfortune reduced the size and number of its periodicals. 'The Young Folks' was sold outright, and the 'North American Review' (long before Mr. Rice bought it and carried it to New York) was cut down one-half, so that Aldrich said, it looked as if Destiny had sat upon it. His own periodical, 'Every Saturday', was first enlarged to a stately quarto and illustrated; and then, under stress of the calamities following the great Boston fire, it collapsed to its former size. Then both the 'Atlantic Monthly' and 'Every Saturday' were sold away from their old ownership, and 'Every Saturday' was suppressed altogether, and we two ceased to be of the same employ. There was some sort of evening rite (more funereal than festive) the day after they were sold, and we followed Osgood away from it, under the lamps. We all knew that it was his necessity that had caused him to part with the periodicals; but he professed that it was his pleasure, and he said he had not felt so light-hearted since he was a boy. We asked him, How could he feel gay when he was no longer paying us our salaries, and how could he justify it to his conscience? He liked our mocking, and limped away from us with a rheumatic easing of his weight from one foot to another: a figure pathetic now that it has gone the way to dusty death, and dear to memory through benefactions unalloyed by one unkindness.

IV.

But when I came to Boston early in 1866, the 'Atlantic Monthly' and 'Harper's' then divided our magazine world between them; the 'North American Review', in the control of Lowell and Professor Norton, had entered upon a new life; 'Every Saturday' was an instant success in the charge of Mr. Aldrich, who was by taste and training one of the best editors; and 'Our Young Folks' had the field of juvenile periodical literature to itself.

It was under the direction of Miss Lucy Larcom and of Mr. J. T. Trowbridge, who had come from western New York, where he was born, and must be noted as one of the first returners from the setting to the rising sun. He naturalized himself in Boston in his later boyhood, and he still breathes Boston air, where he dwells in the street called Pleasant, on the shore of Spy Pond, at Arlington, and still weaves the magic web of his satisfying stories for boys. He merges in their popularity the fame of a poet which I do not think will always suffer that eclipse, for his poems show him to have looked deeply into the heart of common humanity, with a true and tender sense of it.

Miss Larcom scarcely seemed to change from date to date in the generation that elapsed between the time I first saw her and the time I saw her last, a year or two before her death. A goodness looked out of her comely face, which made me think of the Madonna's in Titian's "Assumption," and her whole aspect expressed a mild and friendly spirit which I find it hard to put in words. She was never of the fine world of literature; she dwelt where she was born, in that unfashionable Beverly which is not Beverly Farms, and was of a simple, sea-faring, God-fearing race, as she has told in one of the loveliest autobiographies I know, "A New England Girlhood." She was the author of many poems, whose number she constantly enlarged, but she was chiefly, and will be most lastingly, famed for the one poem, 'Hannah Binding Shoes', which years before my days in Boston had made her so widely known. She never again struck so deep or so true a note; but if one has lodged such a note in the ear of time, it is enough; and if we are to speak of eternity, one might very well hold up one's head in the fields of asphodel, if one could say to the great others there, "I wrote Hannah Binding Shoes." Her poem is very, very sad, as all who have read it will remember; but Miss Larcom herself was above everything cheerful, and she had a laugh of mellow richness which willingly made itself heard. She was not only of true New England stock, and a Boston author by right of race, but she came up to that city every winter from her native town.

By the same right and on the same terms, another New England poetess, whom I met those first days in Boston, was a Boston author. When I saw Celia Thaxter she was just beginning to make her effect with those poems and sketches which the sea sings and flashes through as it sings and flashes around the Isles of Shoals, her summer home, where her girlhood had been passed in a freedom as wild as the curlew's. She was a most beautiful creature, still very young, with a slender figure, and an exquisite perfection of feature; she was in presence what her work was: fine, frank, finished. I do not know whether other witnesses of our literary history feel that the public has failed to keep her as fully in mind as her work merited; but I do not think there can be any doubt but our literature would be sensibly the poorer without her work. It is interesting to remember how closely she kept to her native field, and it is wonderful to consider how richly she made those sea-beaten rocks to blossom. Something strangely full and bright came to her verse from the mystical environment of the ocean, like the luxury of leaf and tint that it gave the narrower flower-plots of her native isles. Her gift, indeed, could not satisfy itself with the terms of one art alone, however varied, and she learned to express in color the thoughts and feelings impatient of the pallor of words.

She remains in my memories of that far Boston a distinct and vivid personality; as the authoress of 'Amber Gods', and 'In a Cellar', and 'Circumstance', and those other wild romantic tales, remains the gentle and somewhat evanescent presence I found her. Miss Prescott was now Mrs. Spofford, and her husband was a rising young politician of the day. It was his duties as member of the General Court that had brought them up from Newburyport to Boston for that first winter; and I remember that the evening when we met he was talking of their some time going to Italy that

she might study for imaginative literature certain Italian cities he named. I have long since ceased to own those cities, but at the moment I felt a pang of expropriation which I concealed as well as I could; and now I heartily wish she could have fulfilled that purpose if it was a purpose, or realized that dream if it was only a dream. Perhaps, however, that sumptuous and glowing fancy of hers, which had taken the fancy of the young readers of that day, needed the cold New England background to bring out all its intensities of tint, all its splendors of light. Its effects were such as could not last, or could not be farther evolved; they were the expression of youth musing away from its environment and smitten with the glories of a world afar and beyond, the great world, the fine world, the impurpled world of romantic motives and passions. But for what they were, I can never think them other than what they appeared: the emanations of a rarely gifted and singularly poetic mind. I feel better than I can say how necessarily they were the emanations of a New England mind, and how to the subtler sense they must impart the pathos of revolt from the colorless rigidities which are the long result of puritanism in the physiognomy of New England life.

Their author afterwards gave herself to the stricter study of this life in many tales and sketches which showed an increasing mastery; but they could not have the flush, the surprise, the delight of a young talent trying itself in a kind native and, so far as I know, peculiar to it. From time to time I still come upon a poem of hers which recalls that earlier strain of music, of color, and I am content to trust it for my abiding faith in the charm of things I have not read for thirty years.

V.

I speak of this one and that, as it happens, and with no thought of giving a complete prospect of literary Boston thirty years ago. I am aware that it will seem sparsely peopled in the effect I impart, and I would have the reader always keep in mind the great fames at Cambridge and at Concord, which formed so large a part of the celebrity of Boston. I would also like him to think of it as still a great town, merely, where every one knew every one else, and whose metropolitan liberation from neighborhood was just begun.

Most distinctly of that yet uncitified Boston was the critic Edwin P. Whipple, whose sympathies were indefinitely wider than his traditions. He was a most generous lover of all that was excellent in literature; and though I suppose we should call him an old-fashioned critic now, I suspect it would be with no distinct sense of what is newer fashioned. He was certainly as friendly to what promised well in the younger men as he was to what was done well in their elders; and there was no one writing in his day whose virtues failed of his recognition, though it might happen that his foibles would escape Whipple's censure. He wrote strenuously and of course conscientiously; his point of view was solely and always that which enabled him best to discern qualities. I doubt if he had any theory of criticism except to find out what was good in an

author and praise it; and he rather blamed what was ethically bad than what was aesthetically bad. In this he was strictly of New England, and he was of New England in a certain general intelligence, which constantly grew with an interrogative habit of mind.

He liked to talk to you of what he had found characteristic in your work, to analyze you to yourself; and the very modesty of the man, which made such a study impersonal as far as he was concerned, sometimes rendered him insensible to the sufferings of his subject. He had a keen perception of humor in others, but he had very little humor; he had a love of the beautiful in literature which was perhaps sometimes greater than his sense of it.

I write from a cursory acquaintance with his work, not recently renewed. Of the presence of the man I have a vivider remembrance: a slight, short, ecclesiasticized figure in black; with a white neckcloth and a silk hat of strict decorum, and between the two a square face with square features, intensified in their regard by a pair of very large glasses, and the prominent, myopic eyes staring through them. He was a type of out-dated New England scholarship in these aspects, but in the hospitable qualities of his mind and heart, the sort of man to be kept fondly in the memory of all who ever knew him.

Out of the vague of that far-off time another face and figure, as essentially New England as this, and yet so different, relieve themselves. Charles F. Browne, whose drollery wafted his pseudonym as far as the English speech could carry laughter, was a Westernized Yankee. He added an Ohio way of talking to the Maine way of thinking, and he so became a literary product of a rarer and stranger sort than our literature had otherwise known. He had gone from Cleveland to London, with intervals of New York and the lecture platform, four or five years before I saw him in Boston, shortly after I went there. We had met in Ohio, and he had personally explained to me the ducutless well-meaning of Vanity Fair in New York; but many men had since shaken the weary hand of Artemus Ward when I grasped it one day in front of the Tremont Temple. He did not recognize me, but he gave me at once a greeting of great impersonal cordiality, with "How do you do? When did you come?" and other questions that had no concern in them, till I began to dawn upon him through a cloud of other half remembered faces. Then he seized my hand and wrung it all over again, and repeated his friendly demands with an intonation that was now "Why, how are you; how are you?" for me alone. It was a bit of comedy, which had the fit pathetic relief of his impending doom: this was already stamped upon his wasted face, and his gay eyes had the death-look. His large, loose mouth was drawn, for all its laughter at the fact which he owned; his profile, which burlesqued an eagle's, was the profile of a drooping eagle; his lank length of limb trembled away with him when we parted. I did not see him again; I scarcely heard of him till I heard of his death, and this sad image remains with me of the humorist who first gave the world a taste of the humor which characterizes the whole American people.

I was meeting all kinds of distinguished persons, in my relation to the magazine, and early that winter I met one who remains in my mind above

all others a person of distinction. He was scarcely a celebrity, but he embodied certain social traits which were so characteristic of literary Boston that it could not be approached without their recognition. The Muses have often been acknowledged to be very nice young persons, but in Boston they were really ladies; in Boston literature was of good family and good society in a measure it has never been elsewhere. It might be said even that reform was of good family in Boston; and literature and reform equally shared the regard of Edmund Quincy, whose race was one of the most aristocratic in New England. I had known him by his novel of 'Wensley' (it came so near being a first-rate novel), and by his Life of Josiah Quincy, then a new book, but still better by his Boston letters to the New York Tribune. These dealt frankly, in the old anti-slavery days between 1850 and 1860, with other persons of distinction in Boston, who did not see the right so clearly as Quincy did, or who at least let their interests darken them to the ugliness of slavery. Their fault was all the more comical because it was the error of men otherwise so correct, of characters so stainless, of natures so upright; and the Quincy letters got out of it all the fun there was in it. Quincy himself affected me as the finest patrician type I had ever met. He was charmingly handsome, with a nose of most fit aquilinity, smooth-shaven lips, "educated whiskers," and perfect glasses; his manner was beautiful, his voice delightful, when at our first meeting he made me his reproaches in terms of lovely kindness for having used in my 'Venetian Life' the Briticism 'directly' for 'as soon as.'

Lowell once told me that Quincy had never had any calling or profession, because when he found himself in the enjoyment of a moderate income on leaving college, he decided to be simply a gentleman. He was too much of a man to be merely that, and he was an abolitionist, a journalist, and for conscience' sake a satirist. Of that political mood of society which he satirized was an eminent man whom it was also my good fortune to meet in my early days in Boston; and if his great sweetness and kindness had not instantly won my liking, I should still have been glad of the glimpse of the older and stater Boston which my slight acquaintance with George Ticknor gave me. The historian of Spanish literature, the friend and biographer of Prescott, and a leading figure of the intellectual society of an epoch already closed, dwelt in the fine old square brick mansion which yet stands at the corner of Park Street and Beacon, though sunk now to a variety of business uses, and lamentably changed in aspect. The interior was noble, and there was an air of scholarly quiet and of lettered elegance in the library, where the host received his guests, which seemed to pervade the whole house, and which made its appeal to the imagination of one of them most potently. It seemed to me that to be master of such circumstance and keeping would be enough of life in a certain way; and it all lingers in my memory yet, as if it were one with the gentle courtesy which welcomed me.

Among my fellow-guests one night was George S. Hillard, now a faded reputation, and even then a life defeated of the high expectation of its youth. I do not know whether his 'Six Months in Italy' still keeps itself in print; but it was a book once very well known; and he was perhaps the more gracious to me, as our host was, because of our common Italian background. He was of the old Silver-gray Whig society too, and

I suppose that order of things imparted its tone to what I felt and saw in that place. The civil war had come and gone, and that order accepted the result if not with faith, then with patience. There were two young English noblemen there that night, who had been travelling in the South, and whose stories of the wretched conditions they had seen moved our host to some open misgiving. But the Englishmen had no question; in spite of all, they defended the accomplished fact, and when I ventured to say that now at least there could be a hope of better things, while the old order was only the perpetuation of despair, he mildly assented, with a gesture of the hand that waived the point, and a deeply sighed, "Perhaps; perhaps."

He was a presence of great dignity, which seemed to recall the past with a steadfast allegiance, and yet to relax itself towards the present in the wisdom of the accumulated years. His whole life had been passed in devotion to polite literature and in the society of the polite world; and he was a type of scholar such as only the circumstances of Boston could form. Those circumstances could alone form such another type as Quincy; and I wish I could have felt then as I do now the advantage of meeting them so contemporaneously.

VII.

The historian of Spanish literature was an old man nearer eighty than seventy when I saw him, and I recall of him personally his dark tint, and the scholarly refinement of his clean-shaven face, which seemed to me rather English than American in character. He was quite exterior to the Atlantic group of writers, and had no interest in me as one of it. Literary Boston of that day was not a solidarity, as I soon perceived; and I understood that it was only in my quality of stranger that I saw the different phases of it. I should not be just to a vivid phase if I failed to speak of Mrs. Julia Ward Howe and the impulse of reform which she personified. I did not sympathize with this then so much as I do now, but I could appreciate it on the intellectual side. Once, many years later, I heard Mrs. Howe speak in public, and it seemed to me that she made one of the best speeches I had ever heard. It gave me for the first time a notion of what women might do in that sort if they entered public life; but when we met in those earlier days I was interested in her as perhaps our chief poetess. I believe she did not care much to speak of literature; she was alert for other meanings in life, and I remember how she once brought to book a youthful matron who had perhaps unduly lamented the hardships of housekeeping, with the sharp demand, "Child, where is your religion?" After the many years of an acquaintance which had not nearly so many meetings as years, it was pleasant to find her, at the latest, as strenuous as ever for the faith of works, and as eager to aid Stepniak as John Brown. In her beautiful old age she survives a certain literary impulse of Boston, but a still higher impulse of Boston she will not survive, for that will last while the city endures.

VIII.

The Cambridge men were curiously apart from others that formed the great New England group, and with whom in my earlier ignorance I had always fancied them mingling. Now and then I met Doctor Holmes at Longfellow's table, but not oftener than now and then, and I never saw Emerson in Cambridge at all except at Longfellow's funeral. In my first years on the Atlantic I sometimes saw him, when he would address me some grave, rather retrorsive civilities, after I had been newly introduced to him, as I had always to be on these occasions. I formed the belief that he did not care for me, either in my being or doing, and I am far from blaming him for that: on such points there might easily be two opinions, and I was myself often of the mind I imagined in him.

If Emerson forgot me, it was perhaps because I was not of those qualities of things which even then, it was said, he could remember so much better than things themselves. In his later years I sometimes saw him in the Boston streets with his beautiful face dreamily set, as he moved like one to whose vision

"Heaven opens inward, chasms yawn,
Vast images in glimmering dawn,
Half shown, are broken and withdrawn."

It is known how before the end the eclipse became total and from moment to moment the record inscribed upon his mind was erased. Some years before he died I sat between him and Mrs. Rose Terry Cooke, at an 'Atlantic Breakfast' where it was part of my editorial function to preside. When he was not asking me who she was, I could hear him asking her who I was. His great soul worked so independently of memory as we conceive it, and so powerfully and essentially, that one could not help wondering if; after all, our personal continuity, our identity hereafter, was necessarily trammled up with our enduring knowledge of what happens here. His remembrance absolutely ceased with an event, and yet his character, his personality, his identity fully persisted.

I do not know, whether the things that we printed for Emerson after his memory began to fail so utterly were the work of earlier years or not, but I know that they were of his best. There were certain poems which could not have been more electly, more exquisitely his, or fashioned with a keener and juster self-criticism. His vision transcended his time so far that some who have tired themselves out in trying to catch up with him have now begun to say that he was no seer at all; but I doubt if these form the last court of appeal in his case. In manner, he was very gentle, like all those great New England men, but he was cold, like many of them, to the new-comer, or to the old-comer who came newly. As I have elsewhere recorded, I once heard him speak critically of Hawthorne, and once he expressed his surprise at the late flowering brilliancy of Holmes's gift in the Autocrat papers after all his friends supposed it had borne its best fruit. But I recall no mention of Longfellow, or

Lowell, or Whittier from him. At a dinner where the talk glanced upon Walt Whitman he turned to me as perhaps representing the interest posterity might take in the matter, and referred to Whitman's public use of his privately written praise as something altogether unexpected. He did not disown it or withdraw it, but seemed to feel (not indignantly) that there had been an abuse of it.

IX.

The first time I saw Whittier was in Fields's room at the publishing office, where I had come upon some editorial errand to my chief. He introduced me to the poet: a tall, spare figure in black of Quaker cut, with a keen, clean-shaven face, black hair, and vivid black eyes. It was just after his poem, 'Snow Bound', had made its great success, in the modest fashion of those days, and had sold not two hundred thousand but twenty thousand, and I tried to make him my compliment. I contrived to say that I could not tell him how much I liked it; and he received the inadequate expression of my feeling with doubtless as much effusion as he would have met something more explicit and abundant. If he had judged fit to take my contract off my hands in any way, I think he would have been less able to do so than any of his New England contemporaries. In him, as I have suggested, the Quaker calm was bound by the frosty Puritanic air, and he was doubly cold to the touch of the stranger, though he would thaw out to old friends, and sparkle in laugh and joke. I myself never got so far with him as to experience this geniality, though afterwards we became such friends as an old man and a young man could be who rarely met. Our better acquaintance began with some talk, at a second meeting, about Bayard Taylor's 'Story of Kennett', which had then lately appeared, and which he praised for its fidelity to Quaker character in its less amiable aspects. No doubt I had made much of my own Quaker descent (which I felt was one of the few things I had to be proud of), and he therefore spoke the more frankly of those traits of brutality into which the primitive sincerity of the sect sometimes degenerated. He thought the habit of plain-speaking had to be jealously guarded to keep it from becoming rude-speaking, and he matched with stories of his own some things I had heard my father tell of Friends in the backwoods who were Foes to good manners.

Whittier was one of the most generous of men towards the work of others, especially the work of a new man, and if I did anything that he liked, I could count upon him for cordial recognition. In the quiet of his country home at Danvers he apparently read all the magazines, and kept himself fully abreast of the literary movement, but I doubt if he so fully appreciated the importance of the social movement. Like some others of the great anti-slavery men, he seemed to imagine that mankind had won itself a clear field by destroying chattel slavery, and he had no sympathy with those who think that the man who may any moment be out of work is industrially a slave. This is not strange; so few men last over from one reform to another that the wonder is that any should, not that one should not. Whittier was prophet for one great need of the

divine to man, and he spoke his message with a fervor that at times was like the trembling of a flame, or the quivering of midsummer sunshine. It was hard to associate with the man as one saw him, still, shy, stiff, the passion of his verse. This imbued not only his antislavery utterances, but equally his ballads of the old witch and Quaker persecution, and flashed a far light into the dimness where his interrogations of Mystery pierced. Whatever doubt there can be of the fate of other New England poets in the great and final account, it seems to me that certain of these pieces make his place secure.

There is great inequality in his work, and I felt this so strongly that when I came to have full charge of the Magazine, I ventured once to distinguish. He sent me a poem, and I had the temerity to return it, and beg him for something else. He magnanimously refrained from all show of offence, and after a while, when he had printed the poem elsewhere, he gave me another. By this time, I perceived that I had been wrong, not as to the poem returned, but as to my function regarding him and such as he. I had made my reflections, and never again did I venture to pass upon what contributors of his quality sent me. I took it and printed it, and praised the gods; and even now I think that with such men it was not my duty to play the censor in the periodical which they had made what it was. They had set it in authority over American literature, and it was not for me to put myself in authority over them. Their fame was in their own keeping, and it was not my part to guard it against them.

After that experience I not only practised an eager acquiescence in their wish to reach the public through the Atlantic, but I used all the delicacy I was master of in bowing the way to them. Sometimes my utmost did not avail, or more strictly speaking it did not avail in one instance with Emerson. He had given me upon much entreaty a poem which was one of his greatest and best, but the proof-reader found a nominative at odds with its verb. We had some trouble in reconciling them, and some other delays, and meanwhile Doctor Holmes offered me a poem for the same number. I now doubted whether I should get Emerson's poem back in time for it, but unluckily the proof did come back in time, and then I had to choose between my poets, or acquaint them with the state of the case, and let them choose what I should do. I really felt that Doctor Holmes had the right to precedence, since Emerson had withheld his proof so long that I could not count upon it; but I wrote to Emerson, and asked (as nearly as I can remember) whether he would consent to let me put his poem over to the next number, or would prefer to have it appear in the same number with Doctor Holmes's; the subjects were cognate, and I had my misgivings. He wrote me back to "return the proofs and break up the forms." I could not go to this iconoclastic extreme with the electrotypes of the magazine, but I could return the proofs. I did so, feeling that I had done my possible, and silently grieving that there could be such ire in heavenly minds.

Emerson, as I say, I had once met in Cambridge, but Whittier never; and I have a feeling that poet as Cambridge felt him to be, she had her reservations concerning him. I cannot put these into words which would not oversay them, but they were akin to those she might have refined upon in regard to Mrs. Stowe. Neither of these great writers would have appeared to Cambridge of the last literary quality; their fame was with a world too vast to be the test that her own

"One entire and perfect crysolite"

would have formed. Whittier in fact had not arrived at the clear splendor of his later work without some earlier turbidity; he was still from time to time capable of a false rhyme, like morn and dawn. As for the author of 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' her syntax was such a snare to her that it sometimes needed the combined skill of all the proof-readers and the assistant editor to extricate her. Of course, nothing was ever written into her work, but in changes of diction, in correction of solecisms, in transposition of phrases, the text was largely rewritten on the margin of her proofs. The soul of her art was present, but the form was so often absent, that when it was clothed on anew, it would have been hard to say whose cut the garment was of in many places. In fact, the proof-reading of the 'Atlantic Monthly' was something almost fearfully scrupulous and perfect. The proofs were first read by the under proof-reader in the printing-office; then the head reader passed them to me perfectly clean as to typography, with his own abundant and most intelligent comments on the literature; and then I read them, making what changes I chose, and verifying every quotation, every date, every geographical and biographical name, every foreign word to the last accent, every technical and scientific term. Where it was possible or at all desirable the proof was next submitted to the author. When it came back to me, I revised it, accepting or rejecting the author's judgment according as he was entitled by his ability and knowledge or not to have them. The proof now went to the printers for correction; they sent it again to the head reader, who carefully revised it and returned it again to me. I read it a second time, and it was again corrected. After this it was revised in the office and sent to the stereotyper, from whom it came to the head reader for a last revision in the plates.

It would not do to say how many of the first American writers owed their correctness in print to the zeal of our proof-reading, but I may say that there were very few who did not owe something. The wisest and ablest were the most patient and grateful, like Mrs. Stowe, under correction; it was only the beginners and the more ignorant who were angry; and almost always the proof-reading editor had his way on disputed points. I look back now, with respectful amazement at my proficiency in detecting the errors of the great as well as the little. I was able to discover mistakes even in the classical quotations of the deeply lettered Sumner, and I remember, in the earliest years of my service on the Atlantic, waiting in this statesman's study amidst the prints and engravings that attested his personal resemblance to Edmund Burke, with his proofs in my hand and my heart in my mouth, to submit my doubts of his Latinity. I forget how he received them; but he was not a very gracious person.

Mrs. Stowe was a gracious person, and carried into age the inalienable charm of a woman who must have been very, charming earlier. I met her only at the Fieldses' in Boston, where one night I witnessed a controversy between her and Doctor Holmes concerning homoeopathy and allopathy which lasted well through dinner. After this lapse of time, I cannot tell how the affair ended, but I feel sure of the liking with which Mrs. Stowe inspired me. There was something very simple, very motherly in her, and something divinely sincere. She was quite the person to take 'au grand serieux' the monstrous imaginations of Lady Byron's jealousy and to feel it on her conscience to make public report of them when she conceived that the time had come to do so.

In Francis Parkman I knew much later than in some others a differentiation of the New England type which was not less characteristic. He, like so many other Boston men of letters, was of patrician family, and of those easy fortunes which Clio prefers her sons to be of; but he paid for these advantages by the suffering in which he wrought at what is, I suppose, our greatest history. He wrought at it piecemeal, and sometimes only by moments, when the terrible head aches which tormented him, and the disorder of the heart which threatened his life, allowed him a brief respite for the task which was dear to him. He must have been more than a quarter of a century in completing it, and in this time, as he once told me, it had given him a day-laborer's wages; but of course money was the least return he wished from it. I read the regularly successive volumes of 'The Jesuits in North America, The Old Regime in Canada', the 'Wolfe and Montcalm', and the others that went to make up the whole history with a sufficiently noisy enthusiasm, and our acquaintance began by his expressing his gratification with the praises of them that I had put in print. We entered into relations as contributor and editor, and I know that he was pleased with my eagerness to get as many detachable chapters from the book in hand as he could give me for the magazine, but he was of too fine a politeness to make this the occasion of his first coming to see me. He had walked out to Cambridge, where I then lived, in pursuance of a regimen which, I believe, finally built up his health; that it was unsparing, I can testify from my own share in one of his constitucionals in Boston, many years later.

His experience in laying the groundwork for his history, and his researches in making it thorough, were such as to have liberated him to the knowledge of other manners and ideals, but he remained strictly a Bostonian, and as immutably of the Boston social and literary faith as any I knew in that capital of accomplished facts. He had lived like an Indian among the wild Western tribes; he consorted with the Canadian archaeologists in their mousings among the colonial archives of their fallen state; every year he went to Quebec or Paris to study the history of New France in the original documents; European society was open to him everywhere; but he had those limitations which I nearly always found in the Boston men, I remember his talking to me of 'The Rise of Silas Lapham', in a somewhat troubled and uncertain strain, and interpreting his rise as the achievement of social recognition, without much or at all liking it or me for it. I did not think it my part to point out that I had supposed the rise to be a moral one; and later I fell under his condemnation for certain high crimes and misdemeanors I had been guilty

of against a well-known ideal in fiction. These in fact constituted lese-majesty of romanticism, which seemed to be disproportionately dear to a man who was in his own way trying to tell the truth of human nature as I was in mine. His displeasures passed, however, and my last meeting with our greatest historian, as I think him, was of unalloyed friendliness. He came to me during my final year in Boston for nothing apparently but to tell me of his liking for a book of mine describing boy-life in Southern Ohio a half-century ago. He wished to talk about many points of this, which he found the same as his own boylife in the neighborhood of Boston; and we could agree that the life of the Anglo-Saxon boy was pretty much the same everywhere. He had helped himself into my apartment with a crutch, but I do not remember how he had fallen lame. It was the end of his long walks, I believe, and not long afterwards I had the grief to read of his death. I noticed that perhaps through his enforced quiet, he had put on weight; his fine face was full; whereas when I first knew him he was almost delicately thin of figure and feature. He was always of a distinguished presence, and his face had a great distinction.

It had not the appealing charm I found in the face of James Parton, another historian I knew earlier in my Boston days. I cannot say how much his books, once so worthily popular, are now known but I have an abiding sense of their excellence. I have not read the 'Life of Voltaire', which was the last, but all the rest, from the first, I have read, and if there are better American biographies than those of Franklin or of Jefferson, I could not say where to find them. The Greeley and the Burr were younger books, and so was the Jackson, and they were not nearly so good; but to all the author had imparted the valuable humanity in which he abounded. He was never of the fine world of literature, the world that sniffs and sneers, and abashes the simpler-hearted reader. But he was a true artist, and English born as he was, he divined American character as few Americans have done. He was a man of eminent courage, and in the days when to be an agnostic was to be almost an outcast, he had the heart to say of the Mysteries, that he did not know. He outlived the condemnation that this brought, and I think that no man ever came near him without in some measure loving him. To me he was of a most winning personality, which his strong, gentle face expressed, and a cast in the eye which he could not bring to bear directly upon his vis-a-vis, endeared. I never met him without wishing more of his company, for he seldom failed to say something to whatever was most humane and most modern in me. Our last meeting was at Newburyport, whither he had long before removed from New York, and where in the serene atmosphere of the ancient Puritan town he found leisure and inspiration for his work. He was not then engaged upon any considerable task, and he had aged and broken somewhat. But the old geniality, the old warmth glowed in him, and made a summer amidst the storm of snow that blinded the wintry air without. A new light had then lately come into my life, by which I saw all things that did not somehow tell for human brotherhood dwarfish and ugly, and he listened, as I imagined, to what I had to say with the tolerant sympathy of a man who has been a long time thinking those things, and views with a certain amusement the zeal of the fresh discoverer.

There was yet another historian in Boston, whose acquaintance I made later than either Parkman's or Parton's, and whose very recent death leaves me with the grief of a friend. No one indeed, could meet John Codman Ropes without wishing to be his friend, or without finding a friend in him. He had his likes and his dislikes, but he could have had no enmities except for evil and meanness. I never knew a man of higher soul, of sweeter nature, and his whole life was a monument of character. It cannot wound him now to speak of the cruel deformity which came upon him in his boyhood, and haunted all his after days with suffering. His gentle face showed the pain which is always the part of the hunchback, but nothing else in him confessed a sense of his affliction, and the resolute activity of his mind denied it in every way. He was, as is well known, a very able lawyer, in full practice, while he was making his studies of military history, and winning recognition for almost unique insight and thoroughness in that direction, though I believe that when he came to embody the results in those extraordinary volumes recording the battles of our civil war, he retired from the law in some measure. He knew these battles more accurately than the generals who fought them, and he was of a like proficiency in the European wars from the time of Napoleon down to our own time. I have heard a story, which I cannot vouch for, that when foreknowledge of his affliction, at the outbreak of our civil war, forbade him to be a soldier, he became a student of soldiery, and wreaked in that sort the passion of his most gallant spirit. But whether this was true or not, it is certain that he pursued the study with a devotion which never blinded him to the atrocity of war. Some wars he could excuse and even justify, but for any war that seemed wanton or aggressive, he had only abhorrence.

The last summer of a score that I had known him, we sat on the veranda of his cottage at York Harbor, and looked out over the moonlit sea, and he talked of the high and true things, with the inextinguishable zest for the inquiry which I always found in him, though he was then feeling the approaches of the malady which was so soon to end all groping in these shadows for him. He must have faced the fact with the same courage and the same trust with which he faced all facts. From the first I found him a deeply religious man, not only in the ecclesiastical sense, but in the more mystical meanings of the word, and he kept his faith as he kept his youth to the last. Every one who knew him, knows how young he was in heart, and how he liked to have those that were young in years about him. He wished to have his house in Boston, as well as his cottage at York, full of young men and young girls, whose joy of life he made his own, and whose society he preferred to his contemporaries'. One could not blame him for that, or for seeking the sun, wherever he could, but it would be a false notion of him to suppose that his sympathies were solely or chiefly with the happy. In every sort, as I knew him, he was fine and good. The word is not worthy of him, after some of its uses and associations, but if it were unsmutched by these, and whitened to its primitive significance, I should say he was one of the most perfect gentlemen I ever knew.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Celia Thaxter
Charles F. Browne
Dawn upon him through a cloud of other half remembered faces
Edmund Quincy
Ethical sense, not the aesthetical sense
Few men last over from one reform to another
Francis Parkman
Generous lover of all that was excellent in literature
Got out of it all the fun there was in it
Greeting of great impersonal cordiality
Grieving that there could be such ire in heavenly minds
His remembrance absolutely ceased with an event
Julia Ward Howe
Looked as if Destiny had sat upon it
Man who may any moment be out of work is industrially a slave
Pathos of revolt from the colorless rigidities
Plain-speaking or Rude Speaking
Pointed the moral in all they did
Sometimes they sacrificed the song to the sermon
Tired themselves out in trying to catch up with him
True to an ideal of life rather than to life itself
Wasted face, and his gay eyes had the death-look
When to be an agnostic was to be almost an outcast
Whitman's public use of his privately written praise

End of this Project Gutenberg Etext of Literary Boston
by William Dean Howells

LITERARY FRIENDS AND ACQUAINTANCES--Oliver Wendell Holmes

by William Dean Howells

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

Elsewhere we literary folk are apt to be such a common lot, with tendencies here and there to be a shabby lot; we arrive from all sorts of unexpected holes and corners of the earth, remote, obscure; and at the best we do so often come up out of the ground; but at Boston we were of ascertained and noted origin, and good part of us dropped from the skies. Instead of holding horses before the doors of theatres; or capping verses

at the plough-tail; or tramping over Europe with nothing but a flute in the pocket; or walking up to the metropolis with no luggage but the MS. of a tragedy; or sleeping in doorways or under the arches of bridges; or serving as apothecaries' 'prentices--we were good society from the beginning. I think this was none the worse for us, and it was vastly the better for good society.

Literature in Boston, indeed, was so respectable, and often of so high a lineage, that to be a poet was not only to be good society, but almost to be good family. If one names over the men who gave Boston her supremacy in literature during that Unitarian harvest-time of the old Puritanic seed-time which was her Augustan age, one names the people who were and who had been socially first in the city ever since the self-exile of the Tories at the time of the Revolution. To say Prescott, Motley, Parkman, Lowell, Norton, Higginson, Dana, Emerson, Channing, was to say patrician, in the truest and often the best sense, if not the largest. Boston was small, but these were of her first citizens, and their primacy, in its way, was of the same quality as that, say, of the chief families of Venice. But these names can never have the effect for the stranger that they had for one to the manner born. I say had, for I doubt whether in Boston they still mean all that they once meant, and that their equivalents meant in science, in law, in politics. The most famous, if not the greatest of all the literary men of Boston, I have not mentioned with them, for Longfellow was not of the place, though by his sympathies and relations he became of it; and I have not mentioned Oliver Wendell Holmes, because I think his name would come first into the reader's thought with the suggestion of social quality in the humanities.

Holmes was of the Brahminical caste which his humorous recognition invited from its subjectivity in the New England consciousness into the light where all could know it and own it, and like Longfellow he was allied to the patriciate of Boston by the most intimate ties of life. For a long time, for the whole first period of his work, he stood for that alone, its tastes, its prejudices, its foibles even, and when he came to stand in his 'second period, for vastly, for infinitely more, and to make friends with the whole race, as few men have ever done, it was always, I think, with a secret shiver of doubt, a backward look of longing, and an eye askance. He was himself perfectly aware of this at times, and would mark his several misgivings with a humorous sense of the situation. He was essentially too kind to be of a narrow world, too human to be finally of less than humanity, too gentle to be of the finest gentility. But such limitations as he had were in the direction I have hinted, or perhaps more than hinted; and I am by no means ready to make a mock of them, as it would be so easy to do for some reasons that he has himself suggested. To value aright the affection which the old Bostonian had for Boston one must conceive of something like the patriotism of men in the times when a man's city was a man's country, something Athenian, something Florentine. The war that nationalized us liberated this love to the whole country, but its first tenderness remained still for Boston, and I suppose a Bostonian still thinks of himself first as a Bostonian and then as an American, in a way that no New-Yorker could deal with himself. The rich historical background dignifies and ennobles the intense public spirit of the place, and gives it a kind of personality.

II.

In literature Doctor Holmes survived all the Bostonians who had given the city her primacy in letters, but when I first knew him there was no apparent ground for questioning it. I do not mean now the time when I visited New England, but when I came to live near Boston, and to begin the many happy years which I spent in her fine, intellectual air. I found time to run in upon him, while I was there arranging to take my place on the Atlantic Monthly, and I remember that in this brief moment with him he brought me to book about some vaunting paragraph in the 'Nation' claiming the literary primacy for New York. He asked me if I knew who wrote it, and I was obliged to own that I had written it myself, when with the kindness he always showed me he protested against my position. To tell the truth, I do not think now I had any very good reasons for it, and I certainly could urge none that would stand against his. I could only fall back upon the saving clause that this primacy was claimed mainly if not wholly for New York in the future. He was willing to leave me the connotations of prophecy, but I think he did even this out of politeness rather than conviction, and I believe he had always a sensitiveness where Boston was concerned, which could not seem ungenerous to any generous mind. Whatever lingering doubt of me he may have had, with reference to Boston, seemed to satisfy itself when several years afterwards he happened to speak of a certain character in an early novel of mine, who was not quite the kind of Bostonian one could wish to be. The thing came up in talk with another person, who had referred to my Bostonian, and the doctor had apparently made his acquaintance in the book, and not liked him. "I understood, of course," he said, "that he was a Bostonian, not the Bostonian," and I could truthfully answer that this was by all means my own understanding too.

His fondness for his city, which no one could appreciate better than myself, I hope, often found expression in a burlesque excess in his writings, and in his talk perhaps oftener still. Hard upon my return from Venice I had a half-hour with him in his old study on Charles Street, where he still lived in 1865, and while I was there a young man came in for the doctor's help as a physician, though he looked so very well, and was so lively and cheerful, that I have since had my doubts whether he had not made a pretext for a glimpse of him as the Autocrat. The doctor took him upon his word, however, and said he had been so long out of practice that he could not do anything for him, but he gave him the address of another physician, somewhere near Washington Street. "And if you don't know where Washington Street is," he said, with a gay burst at a certain vagueness which had come into the young man's face, "you don't know anything."

We had been talking of Venice, and what life was like there, and he made me tell him in some detail. He was especially interested in what I had to say of the minute subdivision and distribution of the necessaries, the small coins, and the small values adapted to their purchase,

the intensely retail character, in fact, of household provisioning; and I could see how he pleased himself in formulating the theory that the higher a civilization the finer the apportionment of the demands and supplies. The ideal, he said, was a civilization in which you could buy two cents' worth of beef, and a divergence from this standard was towards barbarism.

The secret of the man who is universally interesting is that he is universally interested, and this was, above all, the secret of the charm that Doctor Holmes had for every one. No doubt he knew it, for what that most alert intelligence did not know of itself was scarcely worth knowing. This knowledge was one of his chief pleasures, I fancy; he rejoiced in the consciousness which is one of the highest attributes of the highly organized man, and he did not care for the consequences in your mind, if you were so stupid as not to take him aright. I remember the delight Henry James, the father of the novelist, had in reporting to me the frankness of the doctor, when he had said to him, "Holmes, you are intellectually the most alive man I ever knew." "I am, I am," said the doctor. "From the crown of my head to the sole of my foot, I'm alive, I'm alive!" Any one who ever saw him will imagine the vivid relish he had in recognizing the fact. He could not be with you a moment without shedding upon you the light of his flashing wit, his radiant humor, and he shone equally upon the rich and poor in mind. His gaiety of heart could not withhold itself from any chance of response, but he did wish always to be fully understood, and to be liked by those he liked. He gave his liking cautiously, though, for the affluence of his sympathies left him without the reserves of colder natures, and he had to make up for these with careful circumspection. He wished to know the character of the person who made overtures to his acquaintance, for he was aware that his friendship lay close to it; he wanted to be sure that he was a nice person, and though I think he preferred social quality in his fellow-man, he did not refuse himself to those who had merely a sweet and wholesome humanity. He did not like anything that tasted or smelt of Bohemianism in the personnel of literature, but he did not mind the scent of the new-ploughed earth, or even of the barn-yard. I recall his telling me once that after two younger brothers-in-letters had called upon him in the odor of an habitual beeriness and smokiness, he opened the window; and the very last time I saw him he remembered at eighty-five the offence he had found on his first visit to New York, when a metropolitan poet had asked him to lunch in a basement restaurant.

III.

He seemed not to mind, however, climbing to the little apartment we had in Boston when we came there in 1866, and he made this call upon us in due form, bringing Mrs. Holmes with him as if to accent the recognition socially. We were then incredibly young, much younger than I find people ever are nowadays, and in the consciousness of our youth we felt, to the last exquisite value of the fact, what it was to have the Autocrat come to see us; and I believe he was not displeased to perceive this; he liked

to know that you felt his quality in every way. That first winter, however, I did not see him often, and in the spring we went to live in Cambridge, and thereafter I met him chiefly at Longfellow's, or when I came in to dine at the Fieldses', in Boston. It was at certain meetings of the Dante Club, when Longfellow read aloud his translation for criticism, and there was supper later, that one saw the doctor; and his voice was heard at the supper rather than at the criticism, for he was no Italianate. He always seemed to like a certain turn of the talk toward the mystical, but with space for the feet on a firm ground of fact this side of the shadows; when it came to going over among them, and laying hold of them with the band of faith, as if they were substance, he was not of the excursion. It is well known how fervent, I cannot say devout, a spiritualist Longfellow's brother-in-law, Appleton, was; and when he was at the table too, it took all the poet's delicate skill to keep him and the Autocrat from involving themselves in a cataclysmal controversy upon the matter of manifestations. With Doctor Holmes the inquiry was inquiry, to the last, I believe, and the burden of proof was left to the ghosts and their friends. His attitude was strictly scientific; he denied nothing, but he expected the supernatural to be at least as convincing as the natural.

There was a time in his history when the popular ignorance classed him with those who were once rudely called infidels; but the world has since gone so fast and so far that the mind he was of concerning religious belief would now be thought religious by a good half of the religious world. It is true that he had and always kept a grudge against the ancestral Calvinism which afflicted his youth; and he was through all rises and lapses of opinion essentially Unitarian; but of the honest belief of any one, I am sure he never felt or spoke otherwise than most tolerantly, most tenderly. As often as he spoke of religion, and his talk tended to it very often, I never heard an irreligious word from him, far less a scoff or sneer at religion; and I am certain that this was not merely because he would have thought it bad taste, though undoubtedly he would have thought it bad taste; I think it annoyed, it hurt him, to be counted among the iconoclasts, and he would have been profoundly grieved if he could have known how widely this false notion of him once prevailed. It can do no harm at this late day to impart from the secrets of the publishing house the fact that a supposed infidelity in the tone of his story *The Guardian Angel* cost the *Atlantic Monthly* many subscribers. Now the tone of that story would not be thought even mildly agnostic, I fancy; and long before his death the author had outlived the error concerning him.

It was not the best of his stories, by any means, and it would not be too harsh to say that it was the poorest. His novels all belonged to an order of romance which was as distinctly his own as the form of dramatized essay which he invented in the *Autocrat*. If he did not think poorly of them, he certainly did not think too proudly, and I heard him quote with relish the phrase of a lady who had spoken of them to him as his "medicated novels." That, indeed, was perhaps what they were; a faint, faint odor of the pharmacopoeia clung to their pages; their magic was scientific. He knew this better than any one else, of course, and if any one had said it in his turn he would hardly have minded it. But what

he did mind was the persistent misinterpretation of his intention in certain quarters where he thought he had the right to respectful criticism in stead of the succession of sneers that greeted the successive numbers of his story; and it was no secret that he felt the persecution keenly. Perhaps he thought that he had already reached that time in his literary life when he was a fact rather than a question, and when reasons and not feelings must have to do with his acceptance or rejection. But he had to live many years yet before he reached this state. When he did reach it, happily a good while before his death, I do not believe any man ever enjoyed the like condition more. He loved to feel himself out of the fight, with much work before him still, but with nothing that could provoke ill-will in his activities. He loved at all times to take himself objectively, if I may so express my sense of a mental attitude that misled many. As I have said before, he was universally interested, and he studied the universe from himself. I do not know how one is to study it otherwise; the impersonal has really no existence; but with all his subtlety and depth he was of a make so simple, of a spirit so naive, that he could not practise the feints some use to conceal that interest in self which, after all, every one knows is only concealed. He frankly and joyously made himself the starting-point in all his inquest of the hearts and minds of other men, but so far from singling himself out in this, and standing apart in it, there never was any one who was more eagerly and gladly your fellow-being in the things of the soul.

IV.

In the things of the world, he had fences, and looked at some people through palings and even over the broken bottles on the tops of walls; and I think he was the loser by this, as well as they. But then I think all fences are bad, and that God has made enough differences between men; we need not trouble ourselves to multiply them. Even behind his fences, however, Holmes had a heart kind for the outsiders, and I do not believe any one came into personal relations with him who did not experience this kindness. In that long and delightful talk I had with him on my return from Venice (I can praise the talk because it was mainly his), we spoke of the status of domestics in the Old World, and how fraternal the relation of high and low was in Italy, while in England, between master and man, it seemed without acknowledgment of their common humanity. "Yes," he said, "I always felt as if English servants expected to be trampled on; but I can't do that. If they want to be trampled on, they must get some one else." He thought that our American way was infinitely better; and I believe that in spite of the fences there was always an instinctive impulse with him to get upon common ground with his fellow-man. I used to notice in the neighborhood cabman who served our block on Beacon Street a sort of affectionate reverence for the Autocrat, which could have come from nothing but the kindly terms between them; if you went to him when he was engaged to Doctor Holmes, he told you so with a sort of implication in his manner that the thought of anything else for the time was profanation. The good fellow who took him his drives about

the Beverly and Manchester shores seemed to be quite in the joke of the doctor's humor, and within the bounds of his personal modesty and his functional dignity permitted himself a smile at the doctor's sallies, when you stood talking with him, or listening to him at the carriage-side.

The civic and social circumstance that a man values himself on is commonly no part of his value, and certainly no part of his greatness. Rather, it is the very thing that limits him, and I think that Doctor Holmes appeared in the full measure of his generous personality to those who did not and could not appreciate his circumstance, and not to those who formed it, and who from life-long association were so dear and comfortable to him. Those who best knew how great a man he was were those who came from far to pay him their duty, or to thank him for some help they had got from his books, or to ask his counsel or seek his sympathy. With all such he was most winningly tender, most intelligently patient. I suppose no great author was ever more visited by letter and in person than he, or kept a faithfuler conscience for his guests. With those who appeared to him in the flesh he used a miraculous tact, and I fancy in his treatment of all the physician native in him bore a characteristic part. No one seemed to be denied access to him, but it was after a moment of preparation that one was admitted, and any one who was at all sensitive must have felt from the first moment in his presence that there could be no trespassing in point of time. If now and then some insensitive began to trespass, there was a sliding-scale of dismissal that never failed of its work, and that really saved the author from the effect of intrusion. He was not bored because he would not be.

I transfer at random the impressions of many years to my page, and I shall not try to observe a chronological order in these memories. Vivid among them is that of a visit which I paid him with Osgood the publisher, then newly the owner of the Atlantic Monthly, when I had newly become the sole editor. We wished to signalize our accession to the control of the magazine by a stroke that should tell most in the public eye, and we thought of asking Doctor Holmes to do something again in the manner of the Autocrat and the Professor at the Breakfast Table. Some letters had passed between him and the management concerning our wish, and then Osgood thought that it would be right and fit for us to go to him in person. He proposed the visit, and Doctor Holmes received us with a mind in which he had evidently formulated all his thoughts upon the matter. His main question was whether at his age of sixty years a man was justified in seeking to recall a public of the past, or to create a new public in the present. He seemed to have looked the ground over not only with a personal interest in the question, but with a keen scientific zest for it as something which it was delightful to consider in its generic relations; and I fancy that the pleasure of this inquiry more than consoled him for such pangs of misgiving as he must have had in the personal question. As commonly happens in the solution of such problems, it was not solved; he was very willing to take our minds upon it, and to incur the risk, if we thought it well and were willing to share it.

We came away rejoicing, and the new series began with the new year following. It was by no means the popular success that we had hoped;

not because the author had not a thousand new things to say, or failed to say them with the gust and freshness of his immortal youth, but because it was not well to disturb a form associated in the public mind with an achievement which had become classic. It is of the Autocrat of the Breakfast Table that people think, when they think of the peculiar species of dramatic essay which the author invented, and they think also of the Professor at the Breakfast Table, because he followed so soon; but the Poet at the Breakfast Table came so long after that his advent alienated rather than conciliated liking. Very likely, if the Poet had come first he would have had no second place in the affections of his readers, for his talk was full of delightful matter; and at least one of the poems which graced each instalment was one of the finest and greatest that Doctor Holmes ever wrote. I mean "Homesick in Heaven," which seems to me not only what I have said, but one of the most important, the most profoundly pathetic in the language. Indeed, I do not know any other that in the same direction goes so far with suggestion so penetrating. The other poems were mainly of a cast which did not win; the metaphysics in them were too much for the human interest, and again there rose a foolish clamor of the creeds against him on account of them. The great talent, the beautiful and graceful fancy, the eager imagination of the Autocrat could not avail in this third attempt, and I suppose the Poet at the Breakfast Table must be confessed as near a failure as Doctor Holmes could come. It certainly was so in the magazine which the brilliant success of the first had availed to establish in the high place the periodical must always hold in the history of American literature. Lowell was never tired of saying, when he recurred to the first days of his editorship, that the magazine could never have gone at all without the Autocrat papers. He was proud of having insisted upon Holmes's doing something for the new venture, and he was fond of recalling the author's misgivings concerning his contributions, which later repeated themselves with too much reason, though not with the reason that was in his own mind.

V.

He lived twenty-five years after that self-question at sixty, and after eighty he continued to prove that threescore was not the limit of a man's intellectual activity or literary charm. During all that time the work he did in mere quantity was the work that a man in the prime of life might well have been vain of doing, and it was of a quality not less surprising. If I asked him with any sort of fair notice I could rely upon him always for something for the January number, and throughout the year I could count upon him for those occasional pieces in which he so easily excelled all former writers of occasional verse, and which he liked to keep from the newspapers for the magazine. He had a pride in his promptness with copy, and you could always trust his promise. The printer's toe never galled the author's kibe in his case; he wished to have an early proof, which he corrected fastidiously, but not overmuch, and he did not keep it long. He had really done all his work in the manuscript, which came print-perfect and beautifully clear from his pen,

in that flowing, graceful hand which to the last kept a suggestion of the pleasure he must have had in it. Like all wise contributors, he was not only patient, but very glad of all the queries and challenges that proof-reader and editor could accumulate on the margin of his proofs, and when they were both altogether wrong he was still grateful. In one of his poems there was some Latin-Quarter French, which our collective purism questioned, and I remember how tender of us he was in maintaining that in his Parisian time, at least, some ladies beyond the Seine said "Eh, b'en," instead of "Eh, bien." He knew that we must be always on the lookout for such little matters, and he would not wound our ignorance. I do not think any one enjoyed praise more than he. Of course he would not provoke it, but if it came of itself, he would not deny himself the pleasure, as long as a relish of it remained. He used humorously to recognize his delight in it, and to say of the lecture audiences which in earlier times hesitated applause, "Why don't they give me three times three? I can stand it!" He himself gave in the generous fulness he desired. He did not praise foolishly or dishonestly, though he would spare an open dislike; but when a thing pleased him he knew how to say so cordially and skilfully, so that it might help as well as delight. I suppose no great author has tried more sincerely and faithfully to befriend the beginner than he; and from time to time he would commend something to me that he thought worth looking at, but never insistently. In certain cases, where he had simply to ease a burden, from his own to the editorial shoulders, he would ask that the aspirant might be delicately treated. There might be personal reasons for this, but usually his kindness of heart moved him. His tastes had their geographical limit, but his sympathies were boundless, and the hopeless creature for whom he interceded was oftener remote from Boston and New England than otherwise.

It seems to me that he had a nature singularly affectionate, and that it was this which was at fault if he gave somewhat too much of himself to the celebration of the Class of '29, and all the multitude of Boston occasions, large and little, embalmed in the clear amber of his verse, somewhat to the disadvantage of the amber. If he were asked he could not deny the many friendships and fellowships which united in the asking; the immediate reclame from these things was sweet to him; but he loved to comply as much as he loved to be praised. In the pleasure he got he could feel himself a prophet in his own country, but the country which owned him prophet began perhaps to feel rather too much as if it owned him, and did not prize his vaticinations at all their worth. Some polite Bostonians knew him chiefly on this side, and judged him to their own detriment from it.

VI.

After we went to live in Cambridge, my life and the delight in it were so wholly there that in ten years I had hardly been in as many Boston houses. As I have said, I met Doctor Holmes at the Fieldses', and at Longfellow's, when he came out to a Dante supper, which was not often,

and somewhat later at the Saturday Club dinners. One parlous time at the publisher's I have already recalled, when Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe and the Autocrat clashed upon homeopathy, and it required all the tact of the host to lure them away from the dangerous theme. As it was, a battle waged in the courteous forms of Fontenoy, went on pretty well through the dinner, and it was only over the coffee that a truce was called. I need not say which was heterodox, or that each had a deep and strenuous conscience in the matter. I have always felt it a proof of his extreme leniency to me, unworthy, that the doctor was able to tolerate my own defection from the elder faith in medicine; and I could not feel his kindness less caressing because I knew it a concession to an infirmity. He said something like, After all a good physician was the great matter; and I eagerly turned his clemency to praise of our family doctor.

He was very constant at the Saturday Club, as long as his strength permitted, and few of its members missed fewer of its meetings. He continued to sit at its table until the ghosts of Hawthorne, of Agassiz, of Emerson, of Longfellow, of Lowell, out of others less famous, bore him company there among the younger men in the flesh. It must have been very melancholy, but nothing could deeply cloud his most cheerful spirit. His strenuous interest in life kept him alive to all the things of it, after so many of his friends were dead. The questions which he was wont to deal with so fondly, so wisely, the great problems of the soul, were all the more vital, perhaps, because the personal concern in them was increased by the translation to some other being of the men who had so often tried with him to fathom them here. The last time I was at that table he sat alone there among those great memories; but he was as gay as ever I saw him; his wit sparkled, his humor gleamed; the poetic touch was deft and firm as of old; the serious curiosity, the instant sympathy remained. To the witness he was pathetic, but to himself he could only have been interesting, as the figure of a man surviving, in an alien but not unfriendly present, the past which held so vast a part of all that had constituted him. If he had thought of himself in this way, it would have been without one emotion of self-pity, such as more maudlin souls indulge, but with a love of knowledge and wisdom as keenly alert as in his prime.

For three privileged years I lived all but next-door neighbor of Doctor Holmes in that part of Beacon Street whither he removed after he left his old home in Charles Street, and during these years I saw him rather often. We were both on the water side, which means so much more than the words say, and our library windows commanded the same general view of the Charles rippling out into the Cambridge marshes and the sunsets, and curving eastward under Long Bridge, through shipping that increased onward to the sea. He said that you could count fourteen towns and villages in the compass of that view, with the three conspicuous monuments accenting the different attractions of it: the tower of Memorial Hall at Harvard; the obelisk on Bunker Hill; and in the centre of the picture that bulk of Tufts College which he said he expected to greet his eyes the first thing when he opened them in the other world. But the prospect, though generally the same, had certain precious differences for each of us, which I have no doubt he valued himself as much upon as I did. I have a notion that he fancied these were to be

enjoyed best in his library through two oval panes let into the bay there apart from the windows, for he was apt to make you come and look out of them if you got to talking of the view before you left. In this pleasant study he lived among the books, which seemed to multiply from case to case and shelf to shelf, and climb from floor to ceiling. Everything was in exquisite order, and the desk where he wrote was as scrupulously neat as if the sloven disarray of most authors' desks were impossible to him. He had a number of ingenious little contrivances for helping his work, which he liked to show you; for a time a revolving book-case at the corner of his desk seemed to be his pet; and after that came his fountain-pen, which he used with due observance of its fountain principle, though he was tolerant of me when I said I always dipped mine in the inkstand; it was a merit in his eyes to use a fountain pen in anywise. After you had gone over these objects with him, and perhaps taken a peep at something he was examining through his microscope, he sat down at one corner of his hearth, and invited you to an easy chair at the other. His talk was always considerate of your wish to be heard, but the person who wished to talk when he could listen to Doctor Holmes was his own victim, and always the loser. If you were well advised you kept yourself to the question and response which manifested your interest in what he was saying, and let him talk on, with his sweet smile, and that husky laugh he broke softly into at times. Perhaps he was not very well when you came in upon him; then he would name his trouble, with a scientific zest and accuracy, and pass quickly to other matters. As I have noted, he was interested in himself only on the universal side; and he liked to find his peculiarity in you better than to keep it his own; he suffered a visible disappointment if he could not make you think or say you were so and so too. The querulous note was not in his most cheerful register; he would not dwell upon a specialized grief; though sometimes I have known him touch very lightly and currently upon a slight annoyance, or disrelish for this or that. As he grew older, he must have had, of course, an old man's disposition to speak of his infirmities; but it was fine to see him catch himself up in this, when he became conscious of it, and stop short with an abrupt turn to something else. With a real interest, which he gave humorous excess, he would celebrate some little ingenious thing that had fallen in his way, and I have heard him expatiate with childlike delight upon the merits of a new razor he had got: a sort of mower, which he could sweep recklessly over cheek and chin without the least danger of cutting himself. The last time I saw him he asked me if he had ever shown me that miraculous razor; and I doubt if he quite liked my saying I had seen one of the same kind.

It seemed to me that he enjoyed sitting at his chimney-corner rather as the type of a person having a good time than as such a person; he would rather be up and about something, taking down a book, making a note, going again to his little windows, and asking you if you had seen the crows yet that sometimes alighted on the shoals left bare by the ebb-tide behind the house. The reader will recall his lovely poem, "My Aviary," which deals with the winged life of that pleasant prospect. I shared with him in the flock of wild-ducks which used to come into our neighbor waters in spring, when the ice broke up, and stayed as long as the smallest space of brine remained unfrozen in the fall. He was graciously willing I should share in them, and in the cloud of gulls which drifted

about in the currents of the sea and sky there, almost the whole year round. I did not pretend an original right to them, coming so late as I did to the place, and I think my deference pleased him.

VII.

As I have said, he liked his fences, or at least liked you to respect them, or to be sensible of them. As often as I went to see him I was made to wait in the little reception-room below, and never shown at once to his study. My name would be carried up, and I would hear him verifying my presence from the maid through the opened door; then there came a cheery cry of welcome: "Is that you? Come up, come up!" and I found him sometimes half-way down the stairs to meet me. He would make an excuse for having kept me below a moment, and say something about the rule he had to observe in all cases, as if he would not have me feel his fence a personal thing. I was aware how thoroughly his gentle spirit pervaded the whole house; the Irish maid who opened the door had the effect of being a neighbor too, and of being in the joke of the little formality; she apologized in her turn for the reception-room; there was certainly nothing trampled upon in her manner, but affection and reverence for him whose gate she guarded, with something like the sentiment she would have cherished for a dignitary of the Church, but nicely differenced and adjusted to the Autocrat's peculiar merits.

The last time I was in that place, a visitant who had lately knocked at my own door was about to enter. I met the master of the house on the landing of the stairs outside his study, and he led me in for the few moments we could spend together. He spoke of the shadow so near, and said he supposed there could be no hope, but he did not refuse the cheer I offered him from my ignorance against his knowledge, and at something that was thought or said he smiled, with even a breath of laughter, so potent is the wont of a lifetime, though his eyes were full of tears, and his voice broke with his words. Those who have sorrowed deepest will understand this best.

It was during the few years of our Beacon Street neighborhood that he spent those hundred days abroad in his last visit to England and France. He was full of their delight when he came back, and my propinquity gave me the advantage of hearing him speak of them at first hand. He whimsically pleased himself most with his Derby-day experiences, and enjoyed contrasting the crowd and occasion with that of forty or fifty years earlier, when he had seen some famous race of the Derby won; nothing else in England seemed to have moved him so much, though all that royalties, dignities, and celebrities could well do for him had been done. Of certain things that happened to him, characteristic of the English, and interesting to him in their relation to himself through his character of universally interested man, he spoke freely; but he has said what he chose to the public about them, and I have no right to say more. The thing that most vexed him during his sojourn apparently was to have been described in one of the London papers as quite deaf; and I could

truly say to him that I had never imagined him at all deaf, or heard him accused of it before. "Oh, yes," he said, "I am a little hard of hearing on one side. But it isn't deafness."

He had, indeed, few or none of the infirmities of age that make themselves painfully or inconveniently evident. He carried his slight figure erect, and until his latest years his step was quick and sure. Once he spoke of the lessened height of old people, apropos of something that was said, and "They will shrink, you know," he added, as if he were not at all concerned in the fact himself. If you met him in the street, you encountered a spare, carefully dressed old gentleman, with a clean-shaven face and a friendly smile, qualified by the involuntary frown of his thick, senile brows; well coated, lustrously shod, well gloved, in a silk hat, latterly wound with a mourning-weed. Sometimes he did not know you when he knew you quite well, and at such times I think it was kind to spare his years the fatigue of recalling your identity; at any rate, I am glad of the times when I did so. In society he had the same vagueness, the same dimness; but after the moment he needed to make sure of you, he was as vivid as ever in his life. He made me think of a bed of embers on which the ashes have thinly gathered, and which, when these are breathed away, sparkles and tinkles keenly up with all the freshness of a newly kindled fire. He did not mind talking about his age, and I fancied rather enjoyed doing so. Its approaches interested him; if he was going, he liked to know just how and when he was going. Once he spoke of his lasting strength in terms of imaginative humor: he was still so intensely interested in nature, the universe, that it seemed to him he was not like an old man so much as a lusty infant which struggles against having the breast snatched from it. He laughed at the notion of this, with that impersonal relish which seemed to me singularly characteristic of the self-consciousness so marked in him. I never heard one lugubrious word from him in regard to his years. He liked your sympathy on all grounds where he could have it self-respectfully, but he was a most manly spirit, and he would not have had it even as a type of the universal decay. Possibly he would have been interested to have you share in that analysis of himself which he was always making, if such a thing could have been.

He had not much patience with the unmanly craving for sympathy in others, and chiefly in our literary craft, which is somewhat ignobly given to it, though he was patient, after all. He used to say, and I believe he has said it in print,--[Holmes said it in print many times, in his three novels and scattered through the "Breakfast Table" series. D.W.]--that unless a man could show a good reason for writing verse, it was rather against him, and a proof of weakness. I suppose this severe conclusion was something he had reached after dealing with innumerable small poets who sought the light in him with verses that no editor would admit to print. Yet of morbidness he was often very tender; he knew it to be disease, something that must be scientifically rather than ethically treated. He was in the same degree kind to any sensitiveness, for he was himself as sensitive as he was manly, and he was most delicately sensitive to any rightful social claim upon him. I was once at a dinner with him, where he was in some sort my host, in a company of people whom he had not seen me with before, and he made a point of acquainting me with each of them. It did not matter that I knew most of them already;

the proof of his thoughtfulness was precious, and I was sorry when I had to disappoint it by confessing a previous knowledge.

VIII.

I had three memorable meetings with him not very long before he died: one a year before, and the other two within a few months of the end. The first of these was at luncheon in the summer-house of a friend whose hospitality made it summer the year round, and we all went out to meet him, when he drove up in his open carriage, with the little sunshade in his hand, which he took with him for protection against the heat, and also, a little, I think, for the whim of it. He sat a moment after he arrived, as if to orient himself in respect to each of us. Beside the gifted hostess, there was the most charming of all the American essayists, and the Autocrat seemed at once to find himself singularly at home with the people who greeted him. There was no interval needed for fanning away the ashes; he tinkled up before he entered the house, and at the table he was as vivid and scintillant as I ever saw him, if indeed I ever saw him as much so. The talk began at once, and we had made him believe that there was nothing egotistic in his taking the word, or turning it in illustration from himself upon universal matters. I spoke among other things of some humble ruins on the road to Gloucester, which gave the way-side a very aged look; the tumbled foundation-stones of poor bits of houses, and "Ah," he said, "the cellar and the well?" He added, to the company generally, "Do you know what I think are the two lines of mine that go as deep as any others, in a certain direction?" and he began to repeat stragglingly certain verses from one of his earlier poems, until he came to the closing couplet. But I will give them in full, because in going to look them up I have found them so lovely, and because I can hear his voice again in every fondly accented syllable:

"Who sees unmoved, a ruin at his feet,
The lowliest home where human hearts have beat?
Its hearth-stone, shaded with the bistre stain,
A century's showery torrents wash in vain;
Its starving orchard where the thistle blows,
And mossy trunks still mark the broken rows;
Its chimney-loving poplar, oftenest seen
Next an old roof, or where a roof has been;
Its knot-grass, plantain,--all the social weeds,
Man's mute companions following where he leads;
Its dwarfed pale flowers, that show their straggling heads,
Sown by the wind from grass-choked garden-beds;
Its woodbine creeping where it used to climb;
Its roses breathing of the olden time;
All the poor shows the curious idler sees,
As life's thin shadows waste by slow degrees,
Till naught remains, the saddening tale to tell,
Save home's last wrecks--the CELLAR AND THE WELL!"

The poet's chanting voice rose with a triumphant swell in the climax, and "There," he said, "isn't it so? The cellar and the well--they can't be thrown down or burnt up; they are the human monuments that last longest and defy decay." He rejoiced openly in the sympathy that recognized with him the divination of a most pathetic, most signal fact, and he repeated the last couplet again at our entreaty, glad to be entreated for it. I do not know whether all will agree with him concerning the relative importance of the lines, but I think all must feel the exquisite beauty of the picture to which they give the final touch.

He said a thousand witty and brilliant things that day, but his pleasure in this gave me the most pleasure, and I recall the passage distinctly out of the dimness that covers the rest. He chose to figure us younger men, in touching upon the literary circumstance of the past and present, as representative of modern feeling and thinking, and himself as no longer contemporary. We knew he did this to be contradicted, and we protested, affectionately, fervently, with all our hearts and minds; and indeed there were none of his generation who had lived more widely into ours. He was not a prophet like Emerson, nor ever a voice crying in the wilderness like Whittier or Lowell. His note was heard rather amid the sweet security of streets, but it was always for a finer and gentler civility. He imagined no new rule of life, and no philosophy or theory of life will be known by his name. He was not constructive; he was essentially observant, and in this he showed the scientific nature. He made his reader known to himself, first in the little, and then in the larger things. From first to last he was a censor, but a most winning and delightful censor, who could make us feel that our faults were other people's, and who was not wont

"To bait his homilies with his brother worms."

At one period he sat in the seat of the scorner, as far as Reform was concerned, or perhaps reformers, who are so often tedious and ridiculous; but he seemed to get a new heart with the new mind which came to him when he began to write the Autocrat papers, and the light mocker of former days became the serious and compassionate thinker, to whom most truly nothing that was human was alien. His readers trusted and loved him; few men have ever written so intimately with so much dignity, and perhaps none has so endeared himself by saying just the thing for his reader that his reader could not say for himself. He sought the universal through himself in others, and he found to his delight and theirs that the most universal thing was often, if not always, the most personal thing.

In my later meetings with him I was struck more and more by his gentleness. I believe that men are apt to grow gentler as they grow older, unless they are of the curmudgeon type, which rusts and crusts with age, but with Doctor Holmes the gentleness was peculiarly marked. He seemed to shrink from all things that could provoke controversy, or even difference; he waived what might be a matter of dispute, and rather sought the things that he could agree with you upon. In the last talk I had with him he appeared to have no grudge left, except for the puritanic orthodoxy in which he had been bred as a child. This he was not able to forgive, though its tradition was interwoven with what was tenderest and

dearest in his recollections of childhood. We spoke of puritanism, and I said I sometimes wondered what could be the mind of a man towards life who had not been reared in its awful shadow, say an English Churchman, or a Continental Catholic; and he said he could not imagine, and that he did not believe such a man could at all enter into our feelings; puritanism, he seemed to think, made an essential and ineradicable difference. I do not believe he had any of that false sentiment which attributes virtue of character to severity of creed, while it owns the creed to be wrong.

He differed from Longfellow in often speaking of his contemporaries. He spoke of them frankly, but with an appreciative rather than a censorious criticism. Of Longfellow himself he said that day, when I told him I had been writing about him, and he seemed to me a man without error, that he could think of but one error in him, and that was an error of taste, of almost merely literary taste. It was at an earlier time that he talked of Lowell, after his death, and told me that Lowell once in the fever of his anti-slavery apostolate had written him, urging him strongly, as a matter of duty, to come out for the cause he had himself so much at heart. Afterwards Lowell wrote again, owning himself wrong in his appeal, which he had come to recognize as invasive. "He was ten years younger than I," said the doctor.

I found him that day I speak of in his house at Beverly Farms, where he had a pleasant study in a corner by the porch, and he met me with all the cheeriness of old. But he confessed that he had been greatly broken up by the labor of preparing something that might be read at some commemorative meeting, and had suffered from finding first that he could not write something specially for it. Even the copying and adapting an old poem had overtaxed him, and in this he showed the failing powers of age. But otherwise he was still young, intellectually; that is, there was no failure of interest in intellectual things, especially literary things. Some new book lay on the table at his elbow, and he asked me if I had seen it, and made some joke about his having had the good luck to read it, and have it lying by him a few days before when the author called. I do not know whether he schooled himself against an old man's tendency to revert to the past or not, but I know that he seldom did so. That morning, however, he made several excursions into it, and told me that his youthful satire of the 'Spectre Pig' had been provoked by a poem of the elder Dana's, where a phantom horse had been seriously employed, with an effect of anticlimax which he had found irresistible. Another foray was to recall the oppression and depression of his early religious associations, and to speak with moving tenderness of his father, whose hard doctrine as a minister was without effect upon his own kindly nature.

In a letter written to me a few weeks after this time, upon an occasion when he divined that some word from him would be more than commonly dear, he recurred to the feeling he then expressed: "Fifty-six years ago--more than half a century--I lost my own father, his age being seventy-three years. As I have reached that period of life, passed it, and now left it far behind, my recollections seem to brighten and bring back my boyhood and early manhood in a clearer and fairer light than it came to me in my middle decades. I have often wished of late years that I could tell him

how I cherished his memory; perhaps I may have the happiness of saying all I long to tell him on the other side of that thin partition which I love to think is all that divides us."

Men are never long together without speaking of women, and I said how inevitably men's lives ended where they began, in the keeping of women, and their strength failed at last and surrendered itself to their care. I had not finished before I was made to feel that I was poaching, and "Yes," said the owner of the preserve, "I have spoken of that," and he went on to tell me just where. He was not going to have me suppose I had invented those notions, and I could not do less than own that I must have found them in his book, and forgotten it.

He spoke of his pleasant summer life in the air, at once soft and fresh, of that lovely coast, and of his drives up and down the country roads. Sometimes this lady and sometimes that came for him, and one or two habitually, but he always had his own carriage ordered, if they failed, that he might not fail of his drive in any fair weather. His cottage was not immediately on the sea, but in full sight of it, and there was a sense of the sea about it, as there is in all that incomparable region, and I do not think he could have been at home anywhere beyond the reach of its salt breath.

I was anxious not to outstay his strength, and I kept my eye on the clock in frequent glances. I saw that he followed me in one of these, and I said that I knew what his hours were, and I was watching so that I might go away in time, and then he sweetly protested. Did I like that chair I was sitting in? It was a gift to him, and he said who gave it, with a pleasure in the fact that was very charming, as if he liked the association of the thing with his friend. He was disposed to excuse the formal look of his bookcases, which were filled with sets, and presented some phalanxes of fiction in rather severe array.

When I rose to go, he was concerned about my being able to find my way readily to the station, and he told me how to go, and what turns to take, as if he liked realizing the way to himself. I believe he did not walk much of late years, and I fancy he found much the same pleasure in letting his imagination make this excursion to the station with me that he would have found in actually going.

I saw him once more, but only once, when a day or two later he drove up by our hotel in Magnolia toward the cottage where his secretary was lodging. He saw us from his carriage, and called us gayly to him, to make us rejoice with him at having finally got that commemorative poem off his mind. He made a jest of the trouble it had cost him, even some sleeplessness, and said he felt now like a convalescent. He was all brightness, and friendliness, and eagerness to make us feel his mood, through what was common to us all; and I am glad that this last impression of him is so one with the first I ever had, and with that which every reader receives from his work.

That is bright, and friendly and eager too, for it is throughout the very expression of himself. I think it is a pity if an author disappoints

even the unreasonable expectation of the reader, whom his art has invited to love him; but I do not believe that Doctor Holmes could inflict this disappointment. Certainly he could disappoint no reasonable expectation, no intelligent expectation. What he wrote, that he was, and every one felt this who met him. He has therefore not died, as some men die, the remote impersonal sort, but he is yet thrillingly alive in every page of his books. The quantity of his literature is not great, but the quality is very surprising, and surprising first of all as equality. From the beginning to the end he wrote one man, of course in his successive consciousnesses. Perhaps every one does this, but his work gives the impression of an uncommon continuity, in spite of its being the effect of a later and an earlier impulse so very marked as to have made the later an astonishing revelation to those who thought they knew him.

IX.

It is not for me in such a paper as this to attempt any judgment of his work. I have loved it, as I loved him, with a sense of its limitations which is by no means a censure of its excellences. He was not a man who cared to transcend; he liked bounds, he liked horizons, the constancy of shores. If he put to sea, he kept in sight of land, like the ancient navigators. He did not discover new continents; and I will own that I, for my part, should not have liked to sail with Columbus. I think one can safely affirm that as great and as useful men stayed behind, and found an America of the mind without stirring from their thresholds.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Appeal, which he had come to recognize as invasive
Appeared to have no grudge left
Could make us feel that our faults were other people's
Hard of hearing on one side. But it isn't deafness
Harriet Beecher Stowe and the Autocrat clashed upon homeopathy
He was not bored because he would not be
He was not constructive; he was essentially observant
His readers trusted and loved him
Men's lives ended where they began, in the keeping of women
Not a man who cared to transcend; he liked bounds
Not much patience with the unmanly craving for sympathy
Old man's disposition to speak of his infirmities
Old man's tendency to revert to the past
Person who wished to talk when he could listen
Reformers, who are so often tedious and ridiculous
Secret of the man who is universally interesting
Sought the things that he could agree with you upon
Spare his years the fatigue of recalling your identity
Study in a corner by the porch

Those who have sorrowed deepest will understand this best
Times when a man's city was a man's country
Turn of the talk toward the mystical
Work gives the impression of an uncommon continuity

End of this Project Gutenberg Etext of Oliver Wendell Holmes
by William Dean Howells

LITERARY FRIENDS AND ACQUAINTANCES--The White Mr. Longfellow

by William Dean Howells

THE WHITE MR. LONGFELLOW

We had expected to stay in Boston only until we could find a house in Old Cambridge. This was not so simple a matter as it might seem; for the ancient town had not yet quickened its scholarly pace to the modern step. Indeed, in the spring of 1866 the impulse of expansion was not yet visibly felt anywhere; the enormous material growth that followed the civil war had not yet begun. In Cambridge the houses to be let were few, and such as there were fell either below our pride or rose above our purse. I wish I might tell how at last we bought a house; we had no money, but we were rich in friends, who are still alive to shrink from the story of their constant faith in a financial future which we sometimes doubted, and who backed their credulity with their credit. It is sufficient for the present record, which professes to be strictly literary, to notify the fact that on the first day of May, 1866, we went out to Cambridge and began to live in a house which we owned in fee if not in deed, and which was none the less valuable for being covered with mortgages. Physically, it was a carpenter's box, of a sort which is readily imagined by the Anglo-American genius for ugliness, but which it is not so easy to impart a just conception of. A trim hedge of arbor-vita; tried to hide it from the world in front, and a tall board fence behind; the little lot was well planted (perhaps too well planted) with pears, grapes, and currants, and there was a small open space which I lost no time in digging up for a kitchen-garden. On one side of us were the open fields; on the other a brief line of neighbor-houses; across the street before us was a grove of stately oaks, which I never could persuade Aldrich had painted leaves on them in the fall. We were really in a poor suburb of a suburb; but such is the fascination of ownership, even the ownership of a fully mortgaged property, that we calculated the latitude and longitude of the whole earth from the spot we called ours. In our walks about Cambridge we saw other places where we might have been

willing to live; only, we said, they were too far off: We even prized the architecture of our little box, though we had but so lately lived in a Gothic palace on the Grand Canal in Venice, and were not uncritical of beauty in the possessions of others. Positive beauty we could not have honestly said we thought our cottage had as a whole, though we might have held out for something of the kind in the brackets of turned wood under its eaves. But we were richly content with it; and with life in Cambridge, as it began to open itself to us, we were infinitely more than content. This life, so refined, so intelligent, so gracefully simple, I do not suppose has anywhere else had its parallel.

I.

It was the moment before the old American customs had been changed by European influences among people of easier circumstances; and in Cambridge society kept what was best of its village traditions, and chose to keep them in the full knowledge of different things. Nearly every one had been abroad; and nearly every one had acquired the taste for olives without losing a relish for native sauces; through the intellectual life there was an entire democracy, and I do not believe that since the capitalistic era began there was ever a community in which money counted for less. There was little show of what money could buy; I remember but one private carriage (naturally, a publisher's); and there was not one livery, except a livery in the larger sense kept by the stableman Pike, who made us pay now a quarter and now a half dollar for a seat in his carriages, according as he lost or gathered courage for the charge. We thought him extortionate, and we mostly walked through snow and mud of amazing depth and thickness.

The reader will imagine how acceptable this circumstance was to a young literary man beginning life with a fully mortgaged house and a salary of untried elasticity. If there were distinctions made in Cambridge they were not against literature, and we found ourselves in the midst of a charming society, indifferent, apparently, to all questions but those of the higher education which comes so largely by nature. That is to say, in the Cambridge of that day (and, I dare say, of this) a mind cultivated in some sort was essential, and after that came civil manners, and the willingness and ability to be agreeable and interesting; but the question of riches or poverty did not enter. Even the question of family, which is of so great concern in New England, was in abeyance. Perhaps it was taken for granted that every one in Old Cambridge society must be of good family, or he could not be there; perhaps his mere residence tacitly ennobled him; certainly his acceptance was an informal patent of gentility. To my mind, the structure of society was almost ideal, and until we have a perfectly socialized condition of things I do not believe we shall ever have a more perfect society. The instincts which governed it were not such as can arise from the sordid competition of interests; they flowed from a devotion to letters, and from a self-sacrifice in material things which I can give no better notion of than by saying that the outlay of the richest college magnate seemed to be graduated to the

income of the poorest.

In those days, the men whose names have given splendor to Cambridge were still living there. I shall forget some of them in the alphabetical enumeration of Louis Agassiz, Francis J. Child, Richard Henry Dana, Jun., John Fiske, Dr. Asa Gray, the family of the Jameses, father and sons, Lowell, Longfellow, Charles Eliot Norton, Dr. John G. Palfrey, James Pierce, Dr. Peabody, Professor Parsons, Professor Sophocles. The variety of talents and of achievements was indeed so great that Mr. Bret Harte, when fresh from his Pacific slope, justly said, after listening to a partial rehearsal of them, "Why, you couldn't fire a revolver from your front porch anywhere without bringing down a two-volumer!" Everybody had written a book, or an article, or a poem; or was in the process or expectation of doing it, and doubtless those whose names escape me will have greater difficulty in eluding fame. These kindly, these gifted folk each came to see us and to make us at home among them; and my home is still among them, on this side and on that side of the line between the living and the dead which invisibly passes through all the streets of the cities of men.

II.

We had the whole summer for the exploration of Cambridge before society returned from the mountains and the sea-shore, and it was not till October that I saw Longfellow. I heard again, as I heard when I first came to Boston, that he was at Nahant, and though Nahant was no longer so far away, now, as it was then, I did not think of seeking him out even when we went for a day to explore that coast during the summer. It seems strange that I cannot recall just when and where I saw him, but early after his return to Cambridge I had a message from him asking me to come to a meeting of the Dante Club at Craigie House.

Longfellow was that winter (1866-7) revising his translation of the 'Paradiso', and the Dante Club was the circle of Italianate friends and scholars whom he invited to follow him and criticise his work from the original, while he read his version aloud. Those who were most constantly present were Lowell and Professor Norton, but from time to time others came in, and we seldom sat down at the nine-o'clock supper that followed the reading of the canto in less number than ten or twelve.

The criticism, especially from the accomplished Danteists I have named, was frank and frequent. I believe they neither of them quite agreed with Longfellow as to the form of version he had chosen, but, waiving that, the question was how perfectly he had done his work upon the given lines: I myself, with whatever right, great or little, I may have to an opinion, believe thoroughly in Longfellow's plan. When I read his version my sense aches for the rhyme which he rejected, but my admiration for his fidelity to Dante otherwise is immeasurable. I remember with equal admiration the subtle and sympathetic scholarship of his critics, who scrutinized every shade of meaning in a word or phrase that gave them

pause, and did not let it pass till all the reasons and facts had been considered. Sometimes, and even often, Longfellow yielded to their censure, but for the most part, when he was of another mind, he held to his mind, and the passage had to go as he said. I make a little haste to say that in all the meetings of the Club, during a whole winter of Wednesday evenings, I myself, though I faithfully followed in an Italian Dante with the rest, ventured upon one suggestion only. This was kindly, even seriously, considered by the poet, and gently rejected. He could not do anything otherwise than gently, and I was not suffered to feel that I had done a presumptuous thing. I can see him now, as he looked up from the proof-sheets on the round table before him, and over at me, growing consciously smaller and smaller, like something through a reversed opera-glass. He had a shaded drop-light in front of him, and in its glow his beautiful and benignly noble head had a dignity peculiar to him.

All the portraits of Longfellow are likenesses more or less bad and good, for there was something as simple in the physiognomy as in the nature of the man. His head, after he allowed his beard to grow and wore his hair long in the manner of elderly men, was leonine, but mildly leonine, as the old painters conceived the lion of St. Mark. Once Sophocles, the ex-monk of Mount Athos, so long a Greek professor at Harvard, came in for supper, after the reading was over, and he was leonine too, but of a fierceness that contrasted finely with Longfellow's mildness. I remember the poet's asking him something about the punishment of impaling, in Turkey, and his answering, with an ironical gleam of his fiery eyes, "Unhappily, it is obsolete." I dare say he was not so leonine, either, as he looked.

When Longfellow read verse, it was with a hollow, with a mellow resonant murmur, like the note of some deep-throated horn. His voice was very lulling in quality, and at the Dante Club it used to have early effect with an old scholar who sat in a cavernous armchair at the corner of the fire, and who drowsed audibly in the soft tone and the gentle heat. The poet had a fat terrier who wished always to be present at the meetings of the Club, and he commonly fell asleep at the same moment with that dear old scholar, so that when they began to make themselves heard in concert, one could not tell which it was that most took our thoughts from the text of the *Paradiso*. When the duet opened, Longfellow would look up with an arch recognition of the fact, and then go gravely on to the end of the canto. At the close he would speak to his friend and lead him out to supper as if he had not seen or heard anything amiss.

III.

In that elect company I was silent, partly because I was conscious of my youthful inadequacy, and partly because I preferred to listen. But Longfellow always behaved as if I were saying a succession of edifying and delightful things, and from time to time he addressed himself to me, so that I should not feel left out. He did not talk much himself, and I

recall nothing that he said. But he always spoke both wisely and simply, without the least touch of pose, and with no intention of effect, but with something that I must call quality for want of a better word; so that at a table where Holmes sparkled, and Lowell glowed, and Agassiz beamed, he cast the light of a gentle gaiety, which seemed to dim all these vivider luminaries. While he spoke you did not miss Fields's story or Tom Appleton's wit, or even the gracious amity of Mr. Norton, with his unequalled intuitions.

The supper was very plain: a cold turkey, which the host carved, or a haunch of venison, or some braces of grouse, or a platter of quails, with a deep bowl of salad, and the sympathetic companionship of those elect vintages which Longfellow loved, and which he chose with the inspiration of affection. We usually began with oysters, and when some one who was expected did not come promptly, Longfellow invited us to raid his plate, as a just punishment of his delay. One evening Lowell remarked, with the cayenne poised above his bluepoints, "It's astonishing how fond these fellows are of pepper."

The old friend of the cavernous arm-chair was perhaps not wide enough awake to repress an "Ah?" of deep interest in this fact of natural history, and Lowell was provoked to go on. "Yes, I've dropped a red pepper pod into a barrel of them, before now, and then taken them out in a solid mass, clinging to it like a swarm of bees to their queen."

"Is it possible?" cried the old friend; and then Longfellow intervened to save him from worse, and turned the talk.

I reproach myself that I made no record of the talk, for I find that only a few fragments of it have caught in my memory, and that the sieve which should have kept the gold has let it wash away with the gravel.

I remember once Doctor Holmes's talking of the physician as the true seer, whose awful gift it was to behold with the fatal second sight of science the shroud gathering to the throat of many a doomed man apparently in perfect health, and happy in the promise of unnumbered days. The thought may have been suggested by some of the toys of superstition which intellectual people like to play with.

I never could be quite sure at first that Longfellow's brother-in-law, Appleton, was seriously a spiritualist, even when he disputed the most strenuously with the unbelieving Autocrat. But he really was in earnest about it, though he relished a joke at the expense of his doctrine, like some clerics when they are in the safe company of other clerics. He told me once of having recounted to Agassiz the facts of a very remarkable seance, where the souls of the departed outdid themselves in the athletics and acrobatics they seem so fond of over there, throwing large stones across the room, moving pianos, and lifting dinner-tables and setting them a-twirl under the chandelier. "And now," he demanded, "what do you say to that?" "Well, Mr. Appleton," Agassiz answered, to Appleton's infinite delight, "I say that it did not happen."

One night they began to speak at the Dante supper of the unhappy man whose crime is a red stain in the Cambridge annals, and one and another

recalled their impressions of Professor Webster. It was possibly with a retroactive sense that they had all felt something uncanny in him, but, apropos of the deep salad-bowl in the centre of the table, Longfellow remembered a supper Webster was at, where he lighted some chemical in such a dish and held his head over it, with a handkerchief noosed about his throat and lifted above it with one hand, while his face, in the pale light, took on the livid ghastliness of that of a man hanged by the neck.

Another night the talk wandered to the visit which an English author (now with God) paid America at the height of a popularity long since toppled to the ground, with many another. He was in very good humor with our whole continent, and at Longfellow's table he found the champagne even surprisingly fine. "But," he said to his host, who now told the story, "it cawn't be genuine, you know!"

Many years afterwards this author revisited our shores, and I dined with him at Longfellow's, where he was anxious to constitute himself a guest during his sojourn in our neighborhood. Longfellow was equally anxious that he should not do so, and he took a harmless pleasure in out-manoeuving him. He seized a chance to speak with me alone, and plotted to deliver him over to me without apparent unkindness, when the latest horse-car should be going in to Boston, and begged me to walk him to Harvard Square and put him aboard. "Put him aboard, and don't leave him till the car starts, and then watch that he doesn't get off."

These instructions he accompanied with a lifting of the eyebrows, and a pursing of the mouth, in an anxiety not altogether burlesque. He knew himself the prey of any one who chose to batten on him, and his hospitality was subject to frightful abuse. Perhaps Mr. Norton has somewhere told how, when he asked if a certain person who had been outstaying his time was not a dreadful bore, Longfellow answered, with angelic patience, "Yes; but then you know I have been bored so often!"

There was one fatal Englishman whom I shared with him during the great part of a season: a poor soul, not without gifts, but always ready for more, especially if they took the form of meat and drink. He had brought letters from one of the best English men alive, who withdrew them too late to save his American friends from the sad consequences of welcoming him. So he established himself impregnably in a Boston club, and came out every day to dine with Longfellow in Cambridge, beginning with his return from Nahant in October and continuing far into December. That was the year of the great horse-distemper, when the plague disabled the transportation in Boston, and cut off all intercourse between the suburb and the city on the street railways. "I did think," Longfellow pathetically lamented, "that when the horse-cars stopped running, I should have a little respite from L., but he walks out."

In the midst of his own suffering he was willing to advise with me concerning some poems L. had offered to the Atlantic Monthly, and after we had desperately read them together he said, with inspiration, "I think these things are more adapted to music than the magazine," and this seemed so good a notion that when L. came to know their fate from me, I answered, confidently, "I think they are rather more adapted to music."

He calmly asked, "Why?" and as this was an exigency which Longfellow had not forecast for me, I was caught in it without hope of escape. I really do not know what I said, but I know that I did not take the poems, such was my literary conscience in those days; I am afraid I should be weaker now.

IV.

The suppers of the Dante Club were a relaxation from the severity of their toils on criticism, and I will not pretend that their table-talk was of that seriousness which duller wits might have given themselves up to. The passing stranger, especially if a light or jovial person, was always welcome, and I never knew of the enforcement of the rule I heard of, that if you came in without question on the Club nights, you were a guest; but if you rang or knocked, you could not get in.

Any sort of diversion was hailed, and once Appleton proposed that Longfellow should show us his wine-cellar. He took up the candle burning on the table for the cigars, and led the way into the basement of the beautiful old Colonial mansion, doubly memorable as Washington's headquarters while he was in Cambridge, and as the home of Longfellow for so many years. The taper cast just the right gleams on the darkness, bringing into relief the massive piers of brick, and the solid walls of stone, which gave the cellar the effect of a casemate in some fortress, and leaving the corners and distances to a romantic gloom. This basement was a work of the days when men built more heavily if not more substantially than now, but I forget, if I ever knew, what date the wine-cellar was of. It was well stored with precious vintages, aptly cobwebbed and dusty; but I could not find that it had any more charm than the shelves of a library: it is the inside of bottles and of books that makes its appeal. The whole place witnessed a bygone state and luxury, which otherwise lingered in a dim legend or two. Longfellow once spoke of certain old love-letters which dropped down on the basement stairs from some place overhead; and there was the fable or the fact of a subterranean passage under the street from Craigie House to the old Batchelder House, which I relate to these letters with no authority I can allege. But in Craigie House dwelt the proud fair lady who was buried in the Cambridge church-yard with a slave at her head and a slave at her feet.

"Dust is in her beautiful eyes,"

and whether it was they that smiled or wept in their time over those love-letters, I will leave the reader to say. The fortunes of her Tory family fell with those of their party, and the last Vassal ended his days a prisoner from his creditors in his own house, with a weekly enlargement on Sundays, when the law could not reach him. It is known how the place took Longfellow's fancy when he first came to be professor in Harvard, and how he was a lodger of the last Mistress Craigie there, long before he became its owner. The house is square, with Longfellow's study where

he read and wrote on the right of the door, and a stater library behind it; on the left is the drawing-room, with the dining-room in its rear; from its square hall climbs a beautiful stairway with twisted banisters, and a tall clock in their angle.

The study where the Dante Club met, and where I mostly saw Longfellow, was a plain, pleasant room, with broad panelling in white painted pine; in the centre before the fireplace stood his round table, laden with books, papers, and proofs; in the farthest corner by the window was a high desk which he sometimes stood at to write. In this room Washington held his councils and transacted his business with all comers; in the chamber overhead he slept. I do not think Longfellow associated the place much with him, and I never heard him speak of Washington in relation to it except once, when he told me with peculiar relish what he called the true version of a pious story concerning the aide-de-camp who blundered in upon him while he knelt in prayer. The father of his country rose and rebuked the young man severely, and then resumed his devotions. "He rebuked him," said Longfellow, lifting his brows and making rings round the pupils of his eyes, "by throwing his scabbard at his head."

All the front windows of Craigie House look, out over the open fields across the Charles, which is now the Longfellow Memorial Garden. The poet used to be amused with the popular superstition that he was holding this vacant ground with a view to a rise in the price of lots, while all he wanted was to keep a feature of his beloved landscape unchanged. Lofty elms drooped at the corners of the house; on the lawn billowed clumps of the lilac, which formed a thick hedge along the fence. There was a terrace part way down this lawn, and when a white-painted balustrade was set some fifteen years ago upon its brink, it seemed always to have been there. Long verandas stretched on either side of the mansion; and behind was an old-fashioned garden with beds primly edged with box after a design of the poet's own. Longfellow had a ghost story of this quaint plaisance, which he used to tell with an artful reserve of the catastrophe. He was coming home one winter night, and as he crossed the garden he was startled by a white figure swaying before him. But he knew that the only way was to advance upon it. He pushed boldly forward, and was suddenly caught under the throat-by the clothes-line with a long night-gown on it.

Perhaps it was at the end of a long night of the Dante Club that I heard him tell this story. The evenings were sometimes mornings before the reluctant break-up came, but they were never half long enough for me. I have given no idea of the high reasoning of vital things which I must often have heard at that table, and that I have forgotten it is no proof that I did not hear it. The memory will not be ruled as to what it shall bind and what it shall loose, and I should entreat mine in vain for record of those meetings other than what I have given. Perhaps it would be well, in the interest of some popular conceptions of what the social intercourse of great wits must be, for me to invent some ennobling and elevating passages of conversation at Longfellow's; perhaps I ought to do it for the sake of my own repute as a serious and adequate witness. But I am rather helpless in the matter; I must set down what I remember, and

surely if I can remember no phrase from Holmes that a reader could live or die by, it is something to recall how, when a certain potent cheese was passing, he leaned over to gaze at it, and asked: "Does it kick? Does it kick?" No strain of high poetic thinking remains to me from Lowell, but he made me laugh unforgettably with his passive adventure one night going home late, when a man suddenly leaped from the top of a high fence upon the sidewalk at his feet, and after giving him the worst fright of his life, disappeared peaceably into the darkness. To be sure, there was one most memorable supper, when he read the "Bigelow Paper" he had finished that day, and enriched the meaning of his verse with the beauty of his voice. There lingers yet in my sense his very tone in giving the last line of the passage lamenting the waste of the heroic lives which in those dark hours of Johnson's time seemed to have been

"Butchered to make a blind man's holiday."

The hush that followed upon his ceasing was of that finest quality which spoken praise always lacks; and I suppose that I could not give a just notion of these Dante Club evenings without imparting the effect of such silences. This I could not hopefully undertake to do; but I am tempted to some effort of the kind by my remembrance of Longfellow's old friend George Washington Greene, who often came up from his home in Rhode Island, to be at those sessions, and who was a most interesting and amiable fact of those delicate silences. A full half of his earlier life had been passed in Italy, where he and Longfellow met and loved each other in their youth with an affection which the poet was constant to in his age, after many vicissitudes, with the beautiful fidelity of his nature. Greene was like an old Italian house-priest in manner, gentle, suave, very suave, smooth as creamy curds, cultivated in the elegancies of literary taste, and with a certain meek abeyance. I think I never heard him speak, in all those evenings, except when Longfellow addressed him, though he must have had the Dante scholarship for an occasional criticism. It was at more recent dinners, where I met him with the Longfellow family alone, that he broke now and then into a quotation from some of the modern Italian poets he knew by heart (preferably Giusti), and syllabled their verse with an exquisite Roman accent and a bewitching Florentine rhythm. Now and then at these times he brought out a faded Italian anecdote, faintly smelling of civet, and threadbare in its ancient texture. He liked to speak of Goldoni and of Nota, of Niccolini and Manzoni, of Monti and Leopardi; and if you came to America, of the Revolution and his grandfather, the Quaker General Nathaniel Greene, whose life he wrote (and I read) in three volumes: He worshipped Longfellow, and their friendship continued while they lived, but towards the last of his visits at Craigie House it had a pathos for the witness which I should grieve to wrong. Greene was then a quivering paralytic, and he clung tremulously to Longfellow's arm in going out to dinner, where even the modern Italian poets were silent upon his lips. When we rose from table, Longfellow lifted him out of his chair, and took him upon his arm again for their return to the study.

He was of lighter metal than most other members of the Dante Club, and he was not of their immediate intimacy, living away from Cambridge, as he did, and I shared his silence in their presence with full sympathy.

I was by far the youngest of their number, and I cannot yet quite make out why I was of it at all. But at every moment I was as sensible of my good fortune as of my ill desert. They were the men whom of all men living I most honored, and it seemed to be impossible that I at my age should be so perfectly fulfilling the dream of my life in their company. Often, the nights were very cold, and as I returned home from Craigie House to the carpenter's box on Sacramento Street, a mile or two away, I was as if soul-borne through the air by my pride and joy, while the frozen blocks of snow clinked and tinkled before my feet stumbling along the middle of the road. I still think that was the richest moment of my life, and I look back at it as the moment, in a life not unblessed by chance, which I would most like to live over again--if I must live any. The next winter the sessions of the Dante Club were transferred to the house of Mr. Norton, who was then completing his version of the 'Vita Nuova'. This has always seemed to me a work of not less graceful art than Longfellow's translation of the 'Commedia'. In fact, it joins the effect of a sympathy almost mounting to divination with a patient scholarship and a delicate skill unknown to me elsewhere in such work. I do not know whether Mr. Norton has satisfied himself better in his prose version of the 'Commedia' than in this of the 'Vita Nuova', but I do not believe he could have satisfied Dante better, unless he had rhymed his sonnets and canzonets. I am sure he might have done this if he had chosen. He has always pretended that it was impossible, but miracles are never impossible in the right hands.

V.

After three or four years we sold the carpenter's box on Sacramento Street, and removed to a larger house near Harvard Square, and in the immediate neighborhood of Longfellow. He gave me an easement across that old garden behind his house, through an opening in the high board fence which enclosed it, and I saw him oftener than ever, though the meetings of the Dante Club had come to an end. At the last of them, Lowell had asked him, with fond regret in his jest, "Longfellow, why don't you do that Indian poem in forty thousand verses?" The demand but feebly expressed the reluctance in us all, though I suspect the Indian poem existed only by the challenger's invention. Before I leave my faint and unworthy record of these great times I am tempted to mention an incident poignant with tragical associations. The first night after Christmas the holly and the pine wreathed about the chandelier above the supper-table took fire from the gas, just as we came out from the reading, and Longfellow ran forward and caught the burning garlands down and bore them out. No one could speak for thinking what he must be thinking of when the ineffable calamity of his home befell it. Curtis once told me that a little while before Mrs. Longfellow's death he was driving by Craigie House with Holmes, who said he trembled to look at it, for those who lived there had their happiness so perfect that no change, of all the changes which must come to them, could fail to be for the worse. I did not know Longfellow before that fatal time, and I shall not say that his presence bore record of it except in my fancy. He may always

have had that look of one who had experienced the utmost harm that fate can do, and henceforth could possess himself of what was left of life in peace. He could never have been a man of the flowing ease that makes all comers at home; some people complained of a certain 'gene' in him; and he had a reserve with strangers, which never quite lost itself in the abandon of friendship, as Lowell's did. He was the most perfectly modest man I ever saw, ever imagined, but he had a gentle dignity which I do not believe any one, the coarsest, the obtusest, could trespass upon. In the years when I began to know him, his long hair and the beautiful beard which mixed with it were of one iron-gray, which I saw blanch to a perfect silver, while that pearly tone of his complexion, which Appleton so admired, lost itself in the wanness of age and pain. When he walked, he had a kind of spring in his gait, as if now and again a buoyant thought lifted him from the ground. It was fine to meet him coming down a Cambridge street; you felt that the encounter made you a part of literary history, and set you apart with him for the moment from the poor and mean. When he appeared in Harvard Square, he beatified if not beautified the ugliest and vulgarest looking spot on the planet outside of New York. You could meet him sometimes at the market, if you were of the same provision-man as he; and Longfellow remained as constant to his tradespeople as to any other friends. He rather liked to bring his proofs back to the printer's himself, and we often found ourselves together at the University Press, where the Atlantic Monthly used to be printed. But outside of his own house Longfellow seemed to want a fit atmosphere, and I love best to think of him in his study, where he wrought at his lovely art with a serenity expressed in his smooth, regular, and scrupulously perfect handwriting. It was quite vertical, and rounded, with a slope neither to the right nor left, and at the time I knew him first, he was fond of using a soft pencil on printing paper, though commonly he wrote with a quill. Each letter was distinct in shape, and between the verses was always the exact space of half an inch. I have a good many of his poems written in this fashion, but whether they were the first drafts or not I cannot say; very likely not. Towards the last he no longer sent his poems to the magazines in his own hand; but they were always signed in autograph.

I once asked him if he were not a great deal interrupted, and he said, with a faint sigh, Not more than was good for him, he fancied; if it were not for the interruptions, he might overwork. He was not a friend to stated exercise, I believe, nor fond of walking, as Lowell was; he had not, indeed, the childish associations of the younger poet with the Cambridge neighborhoods; and I never saw him walking for pleasure except on the east veranda of his house, though I was told he loved walking in his youth. In this and in some other things Longfellow was more European than American, more Latin than Saxon. He once said quaintly that one got a great deal of exercise in putting on and off one's overcoat and overshoes.

I suppose no one who asked decently at his door was denied access to him, and there must have been times when he was overrun with volunteer visitors; but I never heard him complain of them. He was very charitable in the immediate sort which Christ seems to have meant; but he had his preferences; humorously owned, among beggars. He liked the German

beggars least, and the Italian beggars most, as having most savair-faire; in fact, we all loved the Italians in Cambridge. He was pleased with the accounts I could give him of the love and honor I had known for him in Italy, and one day there came a letter from an Italian admirer, addressed to "Mr. Greatest Poet Longfellow," which he said was the very most amusing superscription he had ever seen.

It is known that the King of Italy offered Longfellow the cross of San Lazzaro, which is the Italian literary decoration. It came through the good offices of my old acquaintance Professor Messadaglia, then a deputy in the Italian Parliament, whom, for some reason I cannot remember, I had put in correspondence with Longfellow. The honor was wholly unexpected, and it brought Longfellow a distress which was chiefly for the gentleman who had procured him the impossible distinction. He showed me the pretty collar and cross, not, I think, without a natural pleasure in it. No man was ever less a bigot in things civil or religious than he, but he said, firmly, "Of course, as a republican and a Protestant, I can't accept a decoration from a Catholic prince." His decision was from his conscience, and I think that all Americans who think duly about it will approve his decision.

VI.

Such honors as he could fitly permit himself he did not refuse, and I recall what zest he had in his election to the Arcadian Academy, which had made him a shepherd of its Roman Fold, with the title, as he said, of "Olimipico something." But I fancy his sweetest pleasure in his vast renown came from his popular recognition everywhere. Few were the lands, few the languages he was unknown to: he showed me a version of the "Psalm of Life" in Chinese. Apparently even the poor lost autograph-seeker was not denied by his universal kindness; I know that he kept a store of autographs ready written on small squares of paper for all who applied by letter or in person; he said it was no trouble; but perhaps he was to be excused for refusing the request of a lady for fifty autographs, which she wished to offer as a novel attraction to her guests at a lunch party.

Foreigners of all kinds thronged upon him at their pleasure, apparently, and with perfect impunity. Sometimes he got a little fun, very, very kindly, out of their excuses and reasons; and the Englishman who came to see him because there were no ruins to visit in America was no fable, as I can testify from the poet himself. But he had no prejudice against Englishmen, and even at a certain time when the coarse-handed British criticism began to blame his delicate art for the universal acceptance of his verse, and to try to sneer him into the rank of inferior poets, he was without rancor for the clumsy misliking that he felt. He could not understand rudeness; he was too finely framed for that; he could know it only as Swedenborg's most celestial angels perceived evil, as something distressful, angular. The ill-will that seemed nearly always to go with adverse criticism made him distrust criticism, and the discomfort which mistaken or blundering praise gives probably made him shy of all

criticism. He said that in his early life as an author he used to seek out and save all the notices of his poems, but in his latter days he read only those that happened to fall in his way; these he cut out and amused his leisure by putting together in scrapbooks. He was reluctant to make any criticism of other poets; I do not remember ever to have heard him make one; and his writings show no trace of the literary dislikes or contempts which we so often mistake in ourselves for righteous judgments. No doubt he had his resentments, but he hushed them in his heart, which he did not suffer them to embitter. While Poe was writing of "Longfellow and other Plagiarists," Longfellow was helping to keep Poe alive by the loans which always made themselves gifts in Poe's case. He very, very rarely spoke of himself at all, and almost never of the grievances which he did not fail to share with all who live.

He was patient, as I said, of all things, and gentle beyond all mere gentlemanliness. But it would have been a great mistake to mistake his mildness for softness. It was most manly and firm; and of course it was braced with the New England conscience he was born to. If he did not find it well to assert himself, he was prompt in behalf of his friends, and one of the fine things told of him was his resenting some censures of Sumner at a dinner in Boston during the old pro-slavery times: he said to the gentlemen present that Sumner was his friend, and he must leave their company if they continued to assail him.

But he spoke almost as rarely of his friends as of himself. He liked the large, impersonal topics which could be dealt with on their human side, and involved characters rather than individuals. This was rather strange in Cambridge, where we were apt to take our instances from the environment. It was not the only thing he was strange in there; he was not to that manner born; he lacked the final intimacies which can come only of birth and lifelong association, and which make the men of the Boston breed seem exclusive when they least feel so; he was Longfellow to the friends who were James, and Charles, and Wendell to one another. He and Hawthorne were classmates at college, but I never heard him mention Hawthorne; I never heard him mention Whittier or Emerson. I think his reticence about his contemporaries was largely due to his reluctance from criticism: he was the finest artist of them all, and if he praised he must have praised with the reservations of an honest man. Of younger writers he was willing enough to speak. No new contributor made his mark in the magazine unnoted by him, and sometimes I showed him verse in manuscript which gave me peculiar pleasure. I remember his liking for the first piece that Mr. Maurice Thompson sent me, and how he tasted the fresh flavor of it, and inhaled its wild new fragrance. He admired the skill of some of the young story-tellers; he praised the subtlety of one in working out an intricate character, and said modestly that he could never have done that sort of thing himself. It was entirely safe to invite his judgment when in doubt, for he never suffered it to become aggressive, or used it to urge upon me the manuscripts that must often have been urged upon him.

Longfellow had a house at Nahant where he went every summer for more than a quarter of a century. He found the slight transition change enough from Cambridge, and liked it perhaps because it did not take him beyond

the range of the friends and strangers whose company he liked. Agassiz was there, and Appleton; Sumner came to sojourn with him; and the tourists of all nations found him there in half an hour after they reached Boston. His cottage was very plain and simple, but was rich in the sight of the illimitable, sea, and it had a luxury of rocks at the foot of its garden, draped with sea-weed, and washed with the indefatigable tides. As he grew older and feebler he ceased to go to Nahant; he remained the whole year round at Cambridge; he professed to like the summer which he said warmed him through there, better than the cold spectacle of summer which had no such effect at Nahant.

The hospitality which was constant at either house was not merely of the worldly sort. Longfellow loved good cheer; he tasted history and poetry in a precious wine; and he liked people who were acquainted with manners and men, and brought the air of capitals with them. But often the man who dined with Longfellow was the man who needed a dinner; and from what I have seen of the sweet courtesy that governed at that board, I am sure that such a man could never have felt himself the least honored guest. The poet's heart was open to all the homelessness of the world; and I remember how once when we sat at his table and I spoke of his poem of "The Challenge," then a new poem, and said how I had been touched by the fancy of

"The poverty-stricken millions
Who challenge our wine and bread,
And impeach us all as traitors,
Both the living and the dead,"

his voice sank in grave humility as he answered, "Yes, I often think of those things." He had thought of them in the days of the slave, when he had taken his place with the friends of the hopeless and hapless, and as long as he lived he continued of the party which had freed the slave. He did not often speak of politics, but when the movement of some of the best Republicans away from their party began, he said that he could not see the wisdom of their course. But this was said without censure or criticism of them, and so far as I know he never permitted himself anything like denunciation of those who in any wise differed from him. On a matter of yet deeper interest, I do not feel authorized to speak for him, but I think that as he grew older, his hold upon anything like a creed weakened, though he remained of the Unitarian philosophy concerning Christ. He did not latterly go to church, I believe; but then, very few of his circle were church-goers. Once he said something very vague and uncertain concerning the doctrine of another life when I affirmed my hope of it, to the effect that he wished he could be sure, with the sigh that so often clothed the expression of a misgiving with him.

VII.

When my acquaintance with Longfellow began he had written the things that made his fame, and that it will probably rest upon: "Evangeline,"

"Hiawatha," and the "Courtship of Miles Standish" were by that time old stories. But during the eighteen years that I knew him he produced the best of his minor poems, the greatest of his sonnets, the sweetest of his lyrics. His art ripened to the last, it grew richer and finer, and it never knew decay. He rarely read anything of his own aloud, but in three or four cases he read to me poems he had just finished, as if to give himself the pleasure of hearing them with the sympathetic sense of another. The hexameter piece, "Elizabeth," in the third part of "Tales of a Wayside Inn," was one of these, and he liked my liking its rhythmical form, which I believed one of the measures best adapted to the English speech, and which he had used himself with so much pleasure and success.

About this time he was greatly interested in the slight experiments I was beginning to make in dramatic form, and he said that if he were himself a young man he should write altogether for the stage; he thought the drama had a greater future with us. He was pleased when a popular singer wished to produce his "Masque of Pandora," with music, and he was patient when it failed of the effect hoped for it as an opera. When the late Lawrence Barrett, in the enthusiasm which was one of the fine traits of his generous character, had taken my play of "A Counterfeit Presentment," and came to the Boston Museum with it, Longfellow could not apparently have been more zealous for its popular acceptance if it had been his own work. He invited himself to one of the rehearsals with me, and he sat with me on the stage through the four acts with a fortitude which I still wonder at, and with the keenest zest for all the details of the performance. No finer testimony to the love and honor which all kinds of people had for him could have been given than that shown by the actors and employees of the theatre, high and low. They thronged the scenery, those who were not upon the stage, and at the edge of every wing were faces peering round at the poet, who sat unconscious of their adoration, intent upon the play. He was intercepted at every step in going out, and made to put his name to the photographs of himself which his worshippers produced from their persons.

He came to the first night of the piece, and when it seemed to be finding favor with the public, he leaned forward out of his line to nod and smile at the author; when they had the author up, it was the sweetest flattery of the applause which abused his fondness that Longfellow clapped first and loudest.

Where once he had given his kindness he could not again withhold it, and he was anxious no fact should be interpreted as withdrawal. When the Emperor Dom Pedro of Brazil, who was so great a lover of Longfellow, came to Boston, he asked himself out to dine with the poet, who had expected to offer him some such hospitality. Soon after, Longfellow met me, and as if eager to forestall a possible feeling in me, said, "I wanted to ask you to dinner with the Emperor, but he not only sent word he was coming, he named his fellow-guests!" I answered that though I should probably never come so near dining with an emperor again, I prized his wish to ask me much more than the chance I had missed; and with this my great and good friend seemed a little consoled. I believe that I do not speak too confidently of our relation. He was truly the

friend of all men, but I had certainly the advantage of my propinquity. We were near neighbors, as the pleonasm has it, both when I lived on Berkeley Street and after I had built my own house on Concord Avenue; and I suppose he found my youthful informality convenient. He always asked me to dinner when his old friend Greene came to visit him, and then we had an Italian time together, with more or less repetition in our talk, of what we had said before of Italian poetry and Italian character. One day there came a note from him saying, in effect, "Salvini is coming out to dine with me tomorrow night, and I want you to come too. There will be no one else but Greene and myself, and we will have an Italian dinner."

Unhappily I had accepted a dinner in Boston for that night, and this invitation put me in great misery. I must keep my engagement, but how could I bear to miss meeting Salvini at Longfellow's table on terms like these? We consulted at home together and questioned whether I might not rush into Boston, seek out my host there, possess him of the facts, and frankly throw myself on his mercy. Then a sudden thought struck us: Go to Longfellow, and submit the case to him! I went, and he entered with delicate sympathy into the affair. But he decided that, taking the large view of it, I must keep my engagement, lest I should run even a remote risk of wounding my friend's susceptibilities. I obeyed, and I had a very good time, but I still feel that I missed the best time of my life, and that I ought to be rewarded for my sacrifice, somewhere.

Longfellow so rarely spoke of himself in any way that one heard from him few of those experiences of the distinguished man in contact with the undistinguished, which he must have had so abundantly. But he told, while it was fresh in his mind, an incident that happened to him one day in Boston at a tobacconist's, where a certain brand of cigars was recommended to him as the kind Longfellow smoked. "Ah, then I must have some of them; and I will ask you to send me a box," said Longfellow, and he wrote down his name and address. The cigar-dealer read it with the smile of a worsted champion, and said, "Well, I guess you had me, that time." At a funeral a mourner wished to open conversation, and by way of suggesting a theme of common interest, began, "You've buried, I believe?"

Sometimes people were shown by the poet through Craigie House who had no knowledge of it except that it had been Washington's headquarters. Of course Longfellow was known by sight to every one in Cambridge. He was daily in the streets, while his health endured, and as he kept no carriage, he was often to be met in the horse-cars, which were such common ground in Cambridge that they were often like small invited parties of friends when they left Harvard Square, so that you expected the gentlemen to jump up and ask the ladies whether they would have chicken salad. In civic and political matters he mingled so far as to vote regularly, and he voted with his party, trusting it for a general regard to the public welfare.

I fancy he was somewhat shy of his fellow-men, as the scholar seems always to be, from the sequestered habit of his life; but I think Longfellow was incapable of marking any difference between himself and them. I never heard from him anything that was 'de haut en bas', when he

spoke of people, and in Cambridge, where there was a good deal of contempt for the less lettered, and we liked to smile though we did not like to sneer, and to analyze if we did not censure, Longfellow and Longfellow's house were free of all that. Whatever his feeling may have been towards other sorts and conditions of men, his effect was of an entire democracy. He was always the most unassuming person in any company, and at some large public dinners where I saw him I found him patient of the greater attention that more public men paid themselves and one another. He was not a speaker, and I never saw him on his feet at dinner, except once, when he read a poem for Whittier, who was absent. He disliked after-dinner speaking, and made conditions for his own exemption from it.

VIII.

Once your friend, Longfellow was always your friend; he would not think evil of you, and if he knew evil of you, he would be the last of all that knew it to judge you for it. This may have been from the impersonal habit of his mind, but I believe it was also the effect of principle, for he would do what he could to arrest the delivery of judgment from others, and would soften the sentences passed in his presence. Naturally this brought him under some condemnation with those of a severer cast; and I have heard him criticised for his benevolence towards all, and his constancy to some who were not quite so true to themselves, perhaps. But this leniency of Longfellow's was what constituted him great as well as good, for it is not our wisdom that censures others. As for his goodness, I never saw a fault in him. I do not mean to say that he had no faults, or that there were no better men, but only to give the witness of my knowledge concerning him. I claim in no wise to have been his intimate; such a thing was not possible in my case for quite apparent reasons; and I doubt if Longfellow was capable of intimacy in the sense we mostly attach to the word. Something more of egotism than I ever found in him must go to the making of any intimacy which did not come from the tenderest affections of his heart. But as a man shows himself to those often with him, and in his noted relations with other men, he showed himself without blame. All men that I have known, besides, have had some foible (it often endeared them the more), or some meanness, or pettiness, or bitterness; but Longfellow had none, nor the suggestion of any. No breath of evil ever touched his name; he went in and out among his fellow-men without the reproach that follows wrong; the worst thing I ever heard said of him was that he had 'gene', and this was said by one of those difficult Cambridge men who would have found 'gene' in a celestial angel. Something that Bjornstjerne Bjornson wrote to me when he was leaving America after a winter in Cambridge, comes nearer suggesting Longfellow than all my talk. The Norsemen, in the days of their stormy and reluctant conversion, used always to speak of Christ as the White Christ, and Bjornson said in his letter, "Give my love to the White Mr. Longfellow."

A good many, years before Longfellow's death he began to be sleepless,

and he suffered greatly. He said to me once that he felt as if he were going about with his heart in a kind of mist. The whole night through he would not be aware of having slept. "But," he would add, with his heavenly patience, "I always get a good deal of rest from lying down so long." I cannot say whether these conditions persisted, or how much his insomnia had to do with his breaking health; three or four years before the end came, we left Cambridge for a house farther in the country, and I saw him less frequently than before. He did not allow our meetings to cease; he asked me to dinner from time to time, as if to keep them up, but it could not be with the old frequency. Once he made a point of coming to see us in our cottage on the hill west of Cambridge, but it was with an effort not visible in the days when he could end one of his brief walks at our house on Concord Avenue; he never came but he left our house more luminous for his having been there. Once he came to supper there to meet Garfield (an old family friend of mine in Ohio), and though he was suffering from a heavy cold, he would not scant us in his stay. I had some very bad sherry which he drank with the serenity of a martyr, and I shudder to this day to think what his kindness must have cost him. He told his story of the clothes-line ghost, and Garfield matched it with the story of an umbrella ghost who sheltered a friend of his through a midnight storm, but was not cheerful company to his beneficiary, who passed his hand through him at one point in the effort to take his arm.

After the end of four years I came to Cambridge to be treated for a long sickness, which had nearly been my last, and when I could get about I returned the visit Longfellow had not failed to pay me. But I did not find him, and I never saw him again in life. I went into Boston to finish the winter of 1881-2, and from time to time I heard that the poet was failing in health. As soon as I felt able to bear the horse-car journey I went out to Cambridge to see him. I had knocked once at his door, the friendly door that had so often opened to his welcome, and stood with the knocker in my hand when the door was suddenly set ajar, and a maid showed her face wet with tears. "How is Mr. Longfellow?" I palpitated, and with a burst of grief she answered, "Oh, the poor gentleman has just departed!" I turned away as if from a helpless intrusion at a death-bed.

At the services held in the house before the obsequies at the cemetery, I saw the poet for the last time, where

"Dead he lay among his books,"

in the library behind his study. Death seldom fails to bring serenity to all, and I will not pretend that there was a peculiar peacefulness in Longfellow's noble mask, as I saw it then. It was calm and benign as it had been in life; he could not have worn a gentler aspect in going out of the world than he had always worn in it; he had not to wait for death to dignify it with "the peace of God." All who were left of his old Cambridge were present, and among those who had come farther was Emerson. He went up to the bier, and with his arms crossed on his breast, and his elbows held in either hand, stood with his head pathetically fallen forward, looking down at the dead face. Those who knew how his memory was a mere blank, with faint gleams of recognition capriciously coming

and going in it, must have felt that he was struggling to remember who it was lay there before him; and for me the electly simple words confessing his failure will always be pathetic with his remembered aspect: "The gentleman we have just been burying," he said, to the friend who had come with him, "was a sweet and beautiful soul; but I forget his name."

I had the privilege and honor of looking over the unprinted poems Longfellow left behind him, and of helping to decide which of them should be published.

There were not many of them, and some of these few were quite fragmentary. I gave my voice for the publication of all that had any sort of completeness, for in every one there was a touch of his exquisite art, the grace of his most lovely spirit. We have so far had two men only who felt the claim of their gift to the very best that the most patient skill could give its utterance: one was Hawthorne and the other was Longfellow. I shall not undertake to say which was the greater artist of these two; but I am sure that every one who has studied it must feel with me that the art of Longfellow held out to the end with no touch of decay in it, and that it equalled the art of any other poet of his time. It knew when to give itself, and more and more it knew when to withhold itself.

What Longfellow's place in literature will be, I shall not offer to say; that is Time's affair, not mine; but I am sure that with Tennyson and Browning he fully shared in the expression of an age which more completely than any former age got itself said by its poets.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Anglo-American genius for ugliness
Backed their credulity with their credit
Candle burning on the table for the cigars
Discomfort which mistaken or blundering praise
Fell either below our pride or rose above our purse
Literary dislikes or contempts
Memory will not be ruled
Shy of his fellow-men, as the scholar seems always to be

End of this Project Gutenberg Etext of The White Mr. Longfellow
by William Dean Howells

LITERARY FRIENDS AND ACQUAINTANCES--Studies of Lowell

by William Dean Howells

STUDIES OF LOWELL

I have already spoken of my earliest meetings with Lowell at Cambridge when I came to New England on a literary pilgrimage from the West in 1860. I saw him more and more after I went to live in Cambridge in 1866; and I now wish to record what I knew of him during the years that passed between this date and that of his death. If the portrait I shall try to paint does not seem a faithful likeness to others who knew him, I shall only claim that so he looked to me, at this moment and at that. If I do not keep myself quite out of the picture, what painter ever did?

I.

It was in the summer of 1865 that I came home from my consular post at Venice; and two weeks after I landed in Boston, I went out to see Lowell at Elmwood, and give him an inkstand that I had brought him from Italy. The bronze lobster whose back opened and disclosed an inkpot and a sand-box was quite ugly; but I thought it beautiful then, and if Lowell thought otherwise he never did anything to let me know it. He put the thing in the middle of his writing-table (he nearly always wrote on a pasteboard pad resting upon his knees), and there it remained as long as I knew the place--a matter of twenty-five years; but in all that time I suppose the inkpot continued as dry as the sand-box.

My visit was in the heat of August, which is as fervid in Cambridge as it can well be anywhere, and I still have a sense of his study windows lifted to the summer night, and the crickets and grasshoppers crying in at them from the lawns and the gardens outside. Other people went away from Cambridge in the summer to the sea and to the mountains, but Lowell always stayed at Elmwood, in an impassioned love for his home and for his town. I must have found him there in the afternoon, and he must have made me sup with him (dinner was at two o'clock) and then go with him for a long night of talk in his study. He liked to have some one help him idle the time away, and keep him as long as possible from his work; and no doubt I was impersonally serving his turn in this way, aside from any pleasure he might have had in my company as some one he had always been kind to, and as a fresh arrival from the Italy dear to us both.

He lighted his pipe, and from the depths of his easychair, invited my shy youth to all the ease it was capable of in his presence. It was not much; I loved him, and he gave me reason to think that he was fond of me, but in Lowell I was always conscious of an older and closer and stricter civilization than my own, an unbroken tradition, a more authoritative status. His democracy was more of the head and mine more of the heart,

and his denied the equality which mine affirmed. But his nature was so noble and his reason so tolerant that whenever in our long acquaintance I found it well to come to open rebellion, as I more than once did, he admitted my right of insurrection, and never resented the outbreak. I disliked to differ with him, and perhaps he subtly felt this so much that he would not dislike me for doing it. He even suffered being taxed with inconsistency, and where he saw that he had not been quite just, he would take punishment for his error, with a contrition that was sometimes humorous and always touching.

Just then it was the dark hour before the dawn with Italy, and he was interested but not much encouraged by what I could tell him of the feeling in Venice against the Austrians. He seemed to reserve a like scepticism concerning the fine things I was hoping for the Italians in literature, and he confessed an interest in the facts treated which in the retrospect, I am aware, was more tolerant than participant of my enthusiasm. That was always Lowell's attitude towards the opinions of people he liked, when he could not go their lengths with them, and nothing was more characteristic of his affectionate nature and his just intelligence. He was a man of the most strenuous convictions, but he loved many sorts of people whose convictions he disagreed with, and he suffered even prejudices counter to his own if they were not ignoble. In the whimsicalities of others he delighted as much as in his own.

II.

Our associations with Italy held over until the next day, when after breakfast he went with me towards Boston as far as "the village": for so he liked to speak of Cambridge in the custom of his younger days when wide tracts of meadow separated Harvard Square from his life-long home at Elmwood. We stood on the platform of the horsecar together, and when I objected to his paying my fare in the American fashion, he allowed that the Italian usage of each paying for himself was the politer way. He would not commit himself about my returning to Venice (for I had not given up my place, yet, and was away on leave), but he intimated his distrust of the flattering conditions of life abroad. He said it was charming to be treated 'da signore', but he seemed to doubt whether it was well; and in this as in all other things he showed his final fealty to the American ideal.

It was that serious and great moment after the successful close of the civil war when the republican consciousness was more robust in us than ever before or since; but I cannot recall any reference to the historical interest of the time in Lowell's talk. It had been all about literature and about travel; and now with the suggestion of the word village it began to be a little about his youth. I have said before how reluctant he was to let his youth go from him; and perhaps the touch with my juniority had made him realize how near he was to fifty, and set him thinking of the past which had sorrows in it to age him beyond his years. He would never speak of these, though he often spoke of the past. He

told once of having been on a brief journey when he was six years old, with his father, and of driving up to the gate of Elmwood in the evening, and his father saying, "Ah, this is a pleasant place! I wonder who lives here--what little boy?" At another time he pointed out a certain window in his study, and said he could see himself standing by it when he could only get his chin on the window-sill. His memories of the house, and of everything belonging to it, were very tender; but he could laugh over an escapade of his youth when he helped his fellow-students pull down his father's fences, in the pure zeal of good-comradeship.

III.

My fortunes took me to New York, and I spent most of the winter of 1865-6 writing in the office of 'The Nation'. I contributed several sketches of Italian travel to that paper; and one of these brought me a precious letter from Lowell. He praised my sketch, which he said he had read without the least notion who had written it, and he wanted me to feel the full value of such an impersonal pleasure in it. At the same time he did not fail to tell me that he disliked some pseudo-cynical verses of mine which he had read in another place; and I believe it was then that he bade me "sweat the Heine out of" me, "as men sweat the mercury out of their bones."

When I was asked to be assistant editor of the Atlantic Monthly, and came on to Boston to talk the matter over with the publishers, I went out to Cambridge and consulted Lowell. He strongly urged me to take the position (I thought myself hopefully placed in New York on The Nation); and at the same time he seemed to have it on his heart to say that he had recommended some one else for it, never, he owned, having thought of me.

He was most cordial, but after I came to live in Cambridge (where the magazine was printed, and I could more conveniently look over the proofs), he did not call on me for more than a month, and seemed quite to have forgotten me. We met one night at Mr. Norton's, for one of the Dante readings, and he took no special notice of me till I happened to say something that offered him a chance to give me a little humorous snub. I was speaking of a paper in the Magazine on the "Claudian Emissary," and I demanded (no doubt a little too airily) something like "Who in the world ever heard of the Claudian Emissary?" "You are in Cambridge, Mr. Howells," Lowell answered, and laughed at my confusion. Having put me down, he seemed to soften towards me, and at parting he said, with a light of half-mocking tenderness in his beautiful eyes, "Goodnight, fellow-townsmen." "I hardly knew we were fellow-townsmen," I returned. He liked that, apparently, and said he had been meaning to call upon me; and that he was coming very soon.

He was as good as his word, and after that hardly a week of any kind of weather passed but he mounted the steps to the door of the ugly little house in which I lived, two miles away from him, and asked me to walk. These walks continued, I suppose, until Lowell went abroad for a winter

in the early seventies. They took us all over Cambridge, which he knew and loved every inch of, and led us afield through the straggling, unhandsome outskirts, bedrabbled with squalid Irish neighborhoods, and fraying off into marshes and salt meadows. He liked to indulge an excess of admiration for the local landscape, and though I never heard him profess a preference for the Charles River flats to the finest Alpine scenery, I could well believe he would do so under provocation of a fit listener's surprise. He had always so much of the boy in him that he liked to tease the over-serious or over-sincere. He liked to tease and he liked to mock, especially his juniors, if any touch of affectation, or any little exuberance of manner gave him the chance; when he once came to fetch me, and the young mistress of the house entered with a certain excessive elasticity, he sprang from his seat, and minced towards her, with a burlesque of her buoyant carriage which made her laugh. When he had given us his heart in trust of ours, he used us like a younger brother and sister; or like his own children. He included our children in his affection, and he enjoyed our fondness for them as if it were something that had come back to him from his own youth. I think he had also a sort of artistic, a sort of ethical pleasure in it, as being of the good tradition, of the old honest, simple material, from which pleasing effects in literature and civilization were wrought. He liked giving the children books, and writing tricky fancies in these, where he masked as a fairy prince; and as long as he lived he remembered his early kindness for them.

IV.

In those walks of ours I believe he did most of the talking, and from his talk then and at other times there remains to me an impression of his growing conservatism. I had in fact come into his life when it had spent its impulse towards positive reform, and I was to be witness of its increasing tendency towards the negative sort. He was quite past the storm and stress of his anti-slavery age; with the close of the war which had broken for him all his ideals of inviolable peace, he had reached the age of misgiving. I do not mean that I ever heard him express doubt of what he had helped to do, or regret for what he had done; but I know that he viewed with critical anxiety what other men were doing with the accomplished facts. His anxiety gave a cast of what one may call reluctance from the political situation, and turned him back towards those civic and social defences which he had once seemed willing to abandon. I do not mean that he lost faith in democracy; this faith he constantly then and signally afterwards affirmed; but he certainly had no longer any faith in insubordination as a means of grace. He preached a quite Socratic reverence for law, as law, and I remember that once when I had got back from Canada in the usual disgust for the American custom-house, and spoke lightly of smuggling as not an evil in itself, and perhaps even a right under our vexatious tariff, he would not have it, but held that the illegality of the act made it a moral of fence. This was not the logic that would have justified the attitude of the anti-slavery men towards the fugitive slave act; but it was in accord with

Lowell's feeling about John Brown, whom he honored while always condemning his violation of law; and it was in the line of all his later thinking. In this, he wished you to agree with him, or at least he wished to make you; but he did not wish you to be more of his mind than he was himself. In one of those squalid Irish neighborhoods I confessed a grudge (a mean and cruel grudge, I now think it) for the increasing presence of that race among us, but this did not please him; and I am sure that whatever misgiving he had as to the future of America, he would not have had it less than it had been the refuge and opportunity of the poor of any race or color. Yet he would not have had it this alone. There was a line in his poem on Agassiz which he left out of the printed version, at the fervent entreaty of his friends, as saying too bitterly his disappointment with his country. Writing at the distance of Europe, and with America in the perspective which the alien environment clouded, he spoke of her as "The Land of Broken Promise." It was a splendid reproach, but perhaps too dramatic to bear the full test of analysis, and yet it had the truth in it, and might, I think, have usefully stood, to the end of making people think. Undoubtedly it expressed his sense of the case, and in the same measure it would now express that of many who love their country most among us. It is well to hold one's country to her promises, and if there are any who think she is forgetting them it is their duty to say so, even to the point of bitter accusation. I do not suppose it was the "common man" of Lincoln's dream that Lowell thought America was unfaithful to, though as I have suggested he could be tender of the common man's hopes in her; but he was impeaching in that blotted line her sincerity with the uncommon man: the man who had expected of her a constancy to the ideals of her youth end to the high martyr-moods of the war which had given an unguarded and bewildering freedom to a race of slaves. He was thinking of the shame of our municipal corruptions, the debased quality of our national statesmanship, the decadence of our whole civic tone, rather than of the increasing disabilities of the hard-working poor, though his heart when he thought of them was with them, too, as it was in "the time when the slave would not let him sleep."

He spoke very rarely of those times, perhaps because their political and social associations were so knit up with the saddest and tenderest personal memories, which it was still anguish to touch. Not only was he

"--not of the race

That hawk, their sorrows in the market place,"

but so far as my witness went he shrank from mention of them. I do not remember hearing him speak of the young wife who influenced him so potently at the most vital moment, and turned him from his whole scholarly and aristocratic tradition to an impassioned championship of the oppressed; and he never spoke of the children he had lost. I recall but one allusion to the days when he was fighting the anti-slavery battle along the whole line, and this was with a humorous relish of his Irish servant's disgust in having to wait upon a negro whom he had asked to his table.

He was rather severe in his notions of the subordination his domestics owed him. They were "to do as they were bid," and yet he had a

tenderness for such as had been any time with him, which was wounded when once a hired man long in his employ greedily overreached him in a certain transaction. He complained of that with a simple grief for the man's indelicacy after so many favors from him, rather than with any resentment. His hauteur towards his dependents was theoretic; his actual behavior was of the gentle consideration common among Americans of good breeding, and that recreant hired man had no doubt never been suffered to exceed him in shows of mutual politeness. Often when the maid was about weightier matters, he came and opened his door to me himself, welcoming me with the smile that was like no other. Sometimes he said, "Siete il benvenuto," or used some other Italian phrase, which put me at ease with him in the region where we were most at home together.

Looking back I must confess that I do not see what it was he found to make him wish for my company, which he presently insisted upon having once a week at dinner. After the meal we turned into his study where we sat before a wood fire in winter, and he smoked and talked. He smoked a pipe which was always needing tobacco, or going out, so that I have the figure of him before my eyes constantly getting out of his deep chair to rekindle it from the fire with a paper lighter. He was often out of his chair to get a book from the shelves that lined the walls, either for a passage which he wished to read, or for some disputed point which he wished to settle. If I had caused the dispute, he enjoyed putting me in the wrong; if he could not, he sometimes whimsically persisted in his error, in defiance of all authority; but mostly he had such reverence for the truth that he would not question it even in jest.

If I dropped in upon him in the afternoon I was apt to find him reading the old French poets, or the plays of Calderon, or the 'Divina Commedia', which he magnanimously supposed me much better acquainted with than I was because I knew some passages of it by heart. One day I came in quoting

"Io son, cantava, io son dolce Sirena,
Che i marinai in mezzo al mar dismago."

He stared at me in a rapture with the matchless music, and then uttered all his adoration and despair in one word. "Damn!" he said, and no more. I believe he instantly proposed a walk that day, as if his study walls with all their vistas into the great literatures cramped his soul liberated to a sense of ineffable beauty of the verse of the 'somma poeta'. But commonly he preferred to have me sit down with him there among the mute witnesses of the larger part of his life. As I have suggested in my own case, it did not matter much whether you brought anything to the feast or not. If he liked you he liked being with you, not for what he got, but for what he gave. He was fond of one man whom I recall as the most silent man I ever met. I never heard him say anything, not even a dull thing, but Lowell delighted in him, and would have you believe that he was full of quaint humor.

While Lowell lived there was a superstition, which has perhaps survived him, that he was an indolent man, wasting himself in barren studies and minor efforts instead of devoting his great powers to some monumental work worthy of them. If the robust body of literature, both poetry and prose, which lives after him does not yet correct this vain delusion, the time will come when it must; and in the meantime the delusion cannot vex him now. I think it did vex him, then, and that he even shared it, and tried at times to meet such shadowy claim as it had. One of the things that people urged upon him was to write some sort of story, and it is known how he attempted this in verse. It is less known that he attempted it in prose, and that he went so far as to write the first chapter of a novel. He read this to me, and though I praised it then, I have a feeling now that if he had finished the novel it would have been a failure. "But I shall never finish it," he sighed, as if he felt irremediable defects in it, and laid the manuscript away, to turn and light his pipe. It was a rather old-fashioned study of a whimsical character, and it did not arrive anywhere, so far as it went; but I believe that it might have been different with a Yankee story in verse such as we have fragmentarily in 'The Noonning' and 'FitzAdam's Story'. Still, his gift was essentially lyrical and meditative, with the universal New England tendency to allegory. He was wholly undramatic in the actuation of the characters which he imagined so dramatically. He liked to deal with his subject at first hand, to indulge through himself all the whim and fancy which the more dramatic talent indulges through its personages.

He enjoyed writing such a poem as "The Cathedral," which is not of his best, but which is more immediately himself, in all his moods, than some better poems. He read it to me soon after it was written, and in the long walk which we went hard upon the reading (our way led us through the Port far towards East Cambridge, where he wished to show me a tupelo-tree of his acquaintance, because I said I had never seen one), his talk was still of the poem which he was greatly in conceit of. Later his satisfaction with it received a check from the reserves of other friends concerning some whimsical lines which seemed to them too great a drop from the higher moods of the piece. Their reluctance nettled him; perhaps he agreed with them; but he would not change the lines, and they stand as he first wrote them. In fact, most of his lines stand as he first wrote them; he would often change them in revision, and then, in a second revision go back to the first version.

He was very sensitive to criticism, especially from those he valued through his head or heart. He would try to hide his hurt, and he would not let you speak of it, as though your sympathy unmanned him, but you could see that he suffered. This notably happened in my remembrance from a review in a journal which he greatly esteemed; and once when in a notice of my own I had put one little thorny point among the flowers, he confessed a puncture from it. He praised the criticism hardily, but I knew that he winced under my recognition of the didactic quality which he had not quite guarded himself against in the poetry otherwise praised. He liked your liking, and he openly rejoiced in it; and I suppose he made himself believe that in trying his verse with his friends he was testing

it; but I do not believe that he was, and I do not think he ever corrected his judgment by theirs, however he suffered from it.

In any matter that concerned literary morals he was more than eager to profit by another eye. One summer he sent me for the Magazine a poem which, when I read it, I trembled to find in motive almost exactly like one we had lately printed by another contributor. There was nothing for it but to call his attention to the resemblance, and I went over to Elmwood with the two poems. He was not at home, and I was obliged to leave the poems, I suppose with some sort of note, for the next morning's post brought me a delicious letter from him, all one cry of confession, the most complete, the most ample. He did not trouble himself to say that his poem was an unconscious reproduction of the other; that was for every reason unnecessary, but he had at once rewritten it upon wholly different lines; and I do not think any reader was reminded of Mrs. Akers's "Among the Laurels" by Lowell's "Foot-path." He was not only much more sensitive of others' rights than his own, but in spite of a certain severity in him, he was most tenderly regardful of their sensibilities when he had imagined them: he did not always imagine them.

VI.

At this period, between the years 1866 and 1874, when he unwillingly went abroad for a twelvemonth, Lowell was seen in very few Cambridge houses, and in still fewer Boston houses. He was not an unsocial man, but he was most distinctly not a society man. He loved chiefly the companionship of books, and of men who loved books; but of women generally he had an amusing diffidence; he revered them and honored them, but he would rather not have had them about. This is over-saying it, of course, but the truth is in what I say. There was never a more devoted husband, and he was content to let his devotion to the sex end with that. He especially could not abide difference of opinion in women; he valued their taste, their wit, their humor, but he would have none of their reason. I was by one day when he was arguing a point with one of his nieces, and after it had gone on for some time, and the impartial witness must have owned that she was getting the better of him he closed the controversy by giving her a great kiss, with the words, "You are a very good girl, my dear," and practically putting her out of the room. As to women of the flirtatious type, he did not dislike them; no man, perhaps, does; but he feared them, and he said that with them there was but one way, and that was to run.

I have a notion that at this period Lowell was more freely and fully himself than at any other. The passions and impulses of his younger manhood had mellowed, the sorrows of that time had softened; he could blamelessly live to himself in his affections and his sobered ideals. His was always a duteous life; but he had pretty well given up making man over in his own image, as we all wish some time to do, and then no longer wish it. He fulfilled his obligations to his fellow-men as these sought him out, but he had ceased to seek them. He loved his friends and their love, but he had apparently no desire to enlarge their circle. It was

that hour of civic suspense, in which public men seemed still actuated by unselfish aims, and one not essentially a politician might contentedly wait to see what would come of their doing their best. At any rate, without occasionally withholding open criticism or acclaim Lowell waited among his books for the wounds of the war to heal themselves, and the nation to begin her healthfuller and nobler life. With slavery gone, what might not one expect of American democracy!

His life at Elmwood was of an entire simplicity. In the old colonial mansion in which he was born, he dwelt in the embowering leafage, amid the quiet of lawns and garden-plots broken by few noises ruder than those from the elms and the syringas where

"The oriole clattered and the cat-bird sang."

From the tracks on Brattle Street, came the drowsy tinkle of horse-car bells; and sometimes a funeral trailed its black length past the corner of his grounds, and lost itself from sight under the shadows of the willows that hid Mount Auburn from his study windows. In the winter the deep New England snows kept their purity in the stretch of meadow behind the house, which a double row of pines guarded in a domestic privacy. All was of a modest dignity within and without the house, which Lowell loved but did not imagine of a manorial presence; and he could not conceal his annoyance with an over-enthusiastic account of his home in which the simple chiselling of some panels was vaunted as rich wood-carving. There was a graceful staircase, and a good wide hall, from which the dining-room and drawing-room opened by opposite doors; behind the last, in the southwest corner of the house, was his study.

There, literally, he lived during the six or seven years in which I knew him after my coming to Cambridge. Summer and winter he sat there among his books, seldom stirring abroad by day except for a walk, and by night yet more rarely. He went to the monthly mid-day dinner of the Saturday Club in Boston; he was very constant at the fortnightly meetings of his whist-club, because he loved the old friends who formed it; he came always to the Dante suppers at Longfellow's, and he was familiarly in and out at Mr. Norton's, of course. But, otherwise, he kept to his study, except for some rare and almost unwilling absences upon university lecturing at Johns Hopkins or at Cornell.

For four years I did not take any summer outing from Cambridge myself, and my associations with Elmwood and with Lowell are more of summer than of winter weather meetings. But often we went our walks through the snows, trudging along between the horsecar tracks which enclosed the only well-broken-out paths in that simple old Cambridge. I date one memorable expression of his from such a walk, when, as we were passing Longfellow's house, in mid-street, he came as near the declaration of his religious faith as he ever did in my presence. He was speaking of the New Testament, and he said, The truth was in it; but they had covered it up with their hagiology. Though he had been bred a Unitarian, and had more and more liberated himself from all creeds, he humorously affected an abiding belief in hell, and similarly contended for the eternal punishment of the wicked. He was of a religious nature, and he was very

reverent of other people's religious feelings. He expressed a special tolerance for my own inherited faith, no doubt because Mrs. Lowell was also a Swedenborgian; but I do not think he was interested in it, and I suspect that all religious formulations bored him. In his earlier poems are many intimations and affirmations of belief in an overruling providence, and especially in the God who declares vengeance His and will repay men for their evil deeds, and will right the weak against the strong. I think he never quite lost this, though when, in the last years of his life, I asked him if he believed there was a moral government of the universe, he answered gravely and with a sort of pain, The scale was so vast, and we saw such a little part of it.

As to the notion of a life after death, I never had any direct or indirect expression from him; but I incline to the opinion that his hold upon this weakened with his years, as it is sadly apt to do with men who have read much and thought much: they have apparently exhausted their potentialities of psychological life. Mystical Lowell was, as every poet must be, but I do not think he liked mystery. One morning he told me that when he came home the night before he had seen the Doppelganger of one of his household: though, as he joked, he was not in a state to see double.

He then said he used often to see people's Doppelganger; at another time, as to ghosts, he said, He was like Coleridge: he had seen too many of 'em. Lest any weaker brethren should be caused to offend by the restricted oath which I have reported him using in a moment of transport it may be best to note here that I never heard him use any other imprecation, and this one seldom.

Any grossness of speech was inconceivable of him; now and then, but only very rarely, the human nature of some story "unmeet for ladies" was too much for his sense of humor, and overcame him with amusement which he was willing to impart, and did impart, but so that mainly the human nature of it reached you. In this he was like the other great Cambridge men, though he was opener than the others to contact with the commoner life. He keenly delighted in every native and novel turn of phrase, and he would not undervalue a vital word or a notion picked up out of the road even if it had some dirt sticking to it.

He kept as close to the common life as a man of his patrician instincts and cloistered habits could. I could go to him with any new find about it and be sure of delighting him; after I began making my involuntary and all but unconscious studies of Yankee character, especially in the country, he was always glad to talk them over with me. Still, when I had discovered a new accent or turn of speech in the fields he had cultivated, I was aware of a subtle grudge mingling with his pleasure; but this was after all less envy than a fine regret.

At the time I speak of there was certainly nothing in Lowell's dress or bearing that would have kept the common life aloof from him, if that life were not always too proud to make advances to any one. In this retrospect, I see him in the sack coat and rough suit which he wore upon all out-door occasions, with heavy shoes, and a round hat. I never saw

him with a high hat on till he came home after his diplomatic stay in London; then he had become rather rigorously correct in his costume, and as conventional as he had formerly been indifferent. In both epochs he was apt to be gloved, and the strong, broad hands, which left the sensation of their vigor for some time after they had clasped yours, were notably white. At the earlier period, he still wore his auburn hair somewhat long; it was darker than his beard, which was branching and full, and more straw-colored than auburn, as were his thick eyebrows; neither hair nor beard was then touched with gray, as I now remember. When he uncovered, his straight, wide, white forehead showed itself one of the most beautiful that could be; his eyes were gay with humor, and alert with all intelligence. He had an enchanting smile, a laugh that was full of friendly joyousness, and a voice that was exquisite music. Everything about him expressed his strenuous physical condition: he would not wear an overcoat in the coldest Cambridge weather; at all times he moved vigorously, and walked with a quick step, lifting his feet well from the ground.

VII.

It gives me a pleasure which I am afraid I cannot impart, to linger in this effort to materialize his presence from the fading memories of the past. I am afraid I can as little impart a due sense of what he spiritually was to my knowledge. It avails nothing for me to say that I think no man of my years and desert had ever so true and constant a friend. He was both younger and older than I by insomuch as he was a poet through and through, and had been out of college before I was born. But he had already come to the age of self-distrust when a man likes to take counsel with his juniors as with his elders, and fancies he can correct his perspective by the test of their fresher vision. Besides, Lowell was most simply and pathetically reluctant to part with youth, and was willing to cling to it wherever he found it. He could not in any wise bear to be left-out. When Mr. Bret Harte came to Cambridge, and the talk was all of the brilliant character-poems with which he had then first dazzled the world, Lowell casually said, with a most touching, however ungrounded sense of obsolescence, He could remember when the 'Biglow Papers' were all the talk. I need not declare that there was nothing ungenerous in that. He was only too ready to hand down his laurels to a younger man; but he wished to do it himself. Through the modesty that is always a quality of such a nature, he was magnanimously sensitive to the appearance of fading interest; he could not take it otherwise than as a proof of his fading power. I had a curious hint of this when one year in making up the prospectus of the Magazine for the next, I omitted his name because I had nothing special to promise from him, and because I was half ashamed to be always flourishing it in the eyes of the public. "I see that you have dropped me this year," he wrote, and I could see that it had hurt, and I knew that he was glad to believe the truth when I told him.

He did not care so much for popularity as for the praise of his friends.

If he liked you he wished you not only to like what he wrote, but to say so. He was himself most cordial in his recognition of the things that pleased him. What happened to me from him, happened to others, and I am only describing his common habit when I say that nothing I did to his liking failed to bring me a spoken or oftener a written acknowledgment. This continued to the latest years of his life when the effort even to give such pleasure must have cost him a physical pang.

He was of a very catholic taste; and he was apt to be carried away by a little touch of life or humor, and to overvalue the piece in which he found it; but, mainly his judgments of letters and men were just. One of the dangers of scholarship was a peculiar danger in the Cambridge keeping, but Lowell was almost as averse as Longfellow from contempt. He could snub, and pitilessly, where he thought there was presumption and apparently sometimes merely because he was in the mood; but I cannot remember ever to have heard him sneer. He was often wonderfully patient of tiresome people, and sometimes celestially insensible to vulgarity. In spite of his reserve, he really wished people to like him; he was keenly alive to neighborly good-will or ill-will; and when there was a question of widening Elmwood avenue by taking part of his grounds, he was keenly hurt by hearing that some one who lived near him had said he hoped the city would cut down Lowell's elms: his English elms, which his father had planted, and with which he was himself almost one blood!

VIII.

In the period of which I am speaking, Lowell was constantly writing and pretty constantly printing, though still the superstition held that he was an idle man. To this time belongs the publication of some of his finest poems, if not their inception: there were cases in which their inception dated far back, even to ten or twenty years. He wrote his poems at a heat, and the manuscript which came to me for the magazine was usually the first draft, very little corrected. But if the cold fit took him quickly it might hold him so fast that he would leave the poem in abeyance till he could slowly live back to a liking for it.

The most of his best prose belongs to the time between 1866 and 1874, and to this time we owe the several volumes of essays and criticisms called 'Among My Books' and 'My Study Windows'. He wished to name these more soberly, but at the urgency of his publishers he gave them titles which they thought would be attractive to the public, though he felt that they took from the dignity of his work. He was not a good business man in a literary way, he submitted to others' judgment in all such matters. I doubt if he ever put a price upon anything he sold, and I dare say he was usually surprised at the largeness of the price paid him; but sometimes if his need was for a larger sum, he thought it too little, without reference to former payments. This happened with a long poem in the Atlantic, which I had urged the counting-room authorities to deal handsomely with him for. I did not know how many hundred they gave him, and when I met him I ventured to express the hope that the publishers had

done their part. He held up four fingers, "Quattro," he said in Italian, and then added with a disappointment which he tried to smile away, "I thought they might have made it cinque."

Between me and me I thought quattro very well, but probably Lowell had in mind some end which cinque would have fitted better. It was pretty sure to be an unselfish end, a pleasure to some one dear to him, a gift that he had wished to make. Long afterwards when I had been the means of getting him cinque for a poem one-tenth the length, he spoke of the payment to me. "It came very handily; I had been wanting to give a watch."

I do not believe at any time Lowell was able to deal with money

"Like wealthy men, not knowing what they give."

more probably he felt a sacredness in the money got by literature, which the literary man never quite rids him self of, even when he is not a poet, and which made him wish to dedicate it to something finer than the every day uses. He lived very quietly, but he had by no means more than he needed to live upon, and at that time he had pecuniary losses. He was writing hard, and was doing full work in his Harvard professorship, and he was so far dependent upon his salary, that he felt its absence for the year he went abroad. I do not know quite how to express my sense of something unworldly, of something almost womanlike in his relation to money.

He was not only generous of money, but he was generous of himself, when he thought he could be of use, or merely of encouragement. He came all the way into Boston to hear certain lectures of mine on the Italian poets, which he could not have found either edifying or amusing, that he might testify his interest in me, and show other people that they were worth coming to. He would go carefully over a poem with me, word by word, and criticise every turn of phrase, and after all be magnanimously tolerant of my sticking to phrasings that he disliked. In a certain line

"The silvern chords of the piano trembled,"

he objected to silvern. Why not silver? I alleged leathern, golden, and like adjectives in defence of my word; but still he found an affectation in it, and suffered it to stand with extreme reluctance. Another line of another piece:

"And what she would, would rather that she would not"

he would by no means suffer. He said that the stress falling on the last word made it "public-school English," and he mocked it with the answer a maid had lately given him when he asked if the master of the house was at home. She said, "No, sir, he is not," when she ought to have said "No, sir, he isn't." He was appeased when I came back the next day with the stanza amended so that the verse could read:

"And what she would, would rather she would not so"

but I fancy he never quite forgave my word *silvern*. Yet, he professed not to have prejudices in such matters, but to use any word that would serve his turn, without wincing; and he certainly did use and defend words, as undisprivacied and disnaturated, that made others wince.

He was otherwise such a stickler for the best diction that he would not have had me use slovenly vernacular even in the dialogue in my stories: my characters must not say they wanted to do so and so, but wished, and the like. In a copy of one of my books which I found him reading, I saw he had corrected my erring Western *woulds* and *shoulds*; as he grew old he was less and less able to restrain himself from setting people right to their faces. Once, in the vast area of my ignorance, he specified my small acquaintance with a certain period of English poetry, saying, "You're rather shady, there, old fellow." But he would not have had me too learned, holding that he had himself been hurt for literature by his scholarship.

His patience in analyzing my work with me might have been the easy effort of his habit of teaching; and his willingness to give himself and his own was no doubt more signally attested in his asking a brother man of letters who wished to work up a subject in the college library, to stay a fortnight in his house, and to share his study, his beloved study, with him. This must truly have cost him dear, as any author of fixed habits will understand. Happily the man of letters was a good fellow, and knew how to prize the favor-done him, but if he had been otherwise, it would have been the same to Lowell. He not only endured, but did many things for the weaker brethren, which were amusing enough to one in the secret of his inward revolt. Yet in these things he was considerate also of the editor whom he might have made the sharer of his self-sacrifice, and he seldom offered me manuscripts for others. The only real burden of the kind that he put upon me was the diary of a Virginian who had travelled in New England during the early thirties, and had set down his impressions of men and manners there. It began charmingly, and went on very well under Lowell's discreet pruning, but after a while he seemed to fall in love with the character of the diarist so much that he could not bear to cut anything.

IX.

He had a great tenderness for the broken and ruined South, whose sins he felt that he had had his share in visiting upon her, and he was willing to do what he could to ease her sorrows in the case of any particular Southerner. He could not help looking askance upon the dramatic shows of retribution which some of the Northern politicians were working, but with all his misgivings he continued to act with the Republican party until after the election of Hayes; he was away from the country during the Garfield campaign. He was in fact one of the Massachusetts electors chosen by the Republican majority in 1816, and in that most painful hour when there was question of the policy and justice of counting Hayes in for the presidency, it was suggested by some of Lowell's friends that he

should use the original right of the electors under the constitution, and vote for Tilden, whom one vote would have chosen president over Hayes. After he had cast his vote for Hayes, he quietly referred to the matter one day, in the moment of lighting his pipe, with perhaps the faintest trace of indignation in his tone. He said that whatever the first intent of the constitution was, usage had made the presidential electors strictly the instruments of the party which chose them, and that for him to have voted for Tilden when he had been chosen to vote for Hayes would have been an act of bad faith.

He would have resumed for me all the old kindness of our relations before the recent year of his absence, but this had inevitably worked a little estrangement. He had at least lost the habit of me, and that says much in such matters. He was not so perfectly at rest in the Cambridge environment; in certain indefinable ways it did not so entirely suffice him, though he would have been then and always the last to allow this. I imagine his friends realized more than he, that certain delicate but vital filaments of attachment had frayed and parted in alien air, and left him heart-loose as he had not been before.

I do not know whether it crossed his mind after the election of Hayes that he might be offered some place abroad, but it certainly crossed the minds of some of his friends, and I could not feel that I was acting for myself alone when I used a family connection with the President, very early in his term, to let him know that I believed Lowell would accept a diplomatic mission. I could assure him that I was writing wholly without Lowell's privity or authority, and I got back such a letter as I could wish in its delicate sense of the situation. The President said that he had already thought of offering Lowell something, and he gave me the pleasure, a pleasure beyond any other I could imagine, of asking Lowell whether he would accept the mission to Austria. I lost no time carrying his letter to Elmwood, where I found Lowell over his coffee at dinner. He saw me at the threshold, and called to me through the open door to come in, and I handed him the letter, and sat down at table while he ran it through. When he had read it, he gave a quick "Ah!" and threw it over the length of the table to Mrs. Lowell. She read it in a smiling and loyal reticence, as if she would not say one word of all she might wish to say in urging his acceptance, though I could see that she was intensely eager for it. The whole situation was of a perfect New England character in its tacit significance; after Lowell had taken his coffee we turned into his study without further allusion to the matter.

A day or two later he came to my house to say that he could not accept the Austrian mission, and to ask me to tell the President so for him, and make his acknowledgments, which he would also write himself. He remained talking a little while of other things, and when he rose to go, he said with a sigh of vague reluctance, "I should like to see a play of Calderon," as if it had nothing to do with any wish of his that could still be fulfilled. "Upon this hint I acted," and in due time it was found in Washington, that the gentleman who had been offered the Spanish mission would as lief go to Austria, and Lowell was sent to Madrid.

X.

When we met in London, some years later, he came almost every afternoon to my lodging, and the story of our old-time Cambridge walks began again in London phrases. There were not the vacant lots and outlying fields of his native place, but we made shift with the vast, simple parks, and we walked on the grass as we could not have done in an American park, and were glad to feel the earth under our feet. I said how much it was like those earlier tramps; and that pleased him, for he wished, whenever a thing delighted him, to find a Cambridge quality in it.

But he was in love with everything English, and was determined I should be so too, beginning with the English weather, which in summer cannot be overpraised. He carried, of course, an umbrella, but he would not put it up in the light showers that caught us at times, saying that the English rain never wetted you. The thick short turf delighted him; he would scarcely allow that the trees were the worse for foliage blighted by a vile easterly storm in the spring of that year. The tender air, the delicate veils that the moisture in it cast about all objects at the least remove, the soft colors of the flowers, the dull blue of the low sky showing through the rifts of the dirty white clouds, the hovering pall of London smoke, were all dear to him, and he was anxious that I should not lose anything of their charm.

He was anxious that I should not miss the value of anything in England, and while he volunteered that the aristocracy had the corruptions of aristocracies everywhere, he insisted upon my respectful interest in it because it was so historical. Perhaps there was a touch of irony in this demand, but it is certain that he was very happy in England. He had come of the age when a man likes smooth, warm keeping, in which he need make no struggle for his comfort; disciplined and obsequious service; society, perfectly ascertained within the larger society which we call civilization; and in an alien environment, for which he was in no wise responsible, he could have these without a pang of the self-reproach which at home makes a man unhappy amidst his luxuries, when he considers their cost to others. He had a position which forbade thought of unfairness in the conditions; he must not wake because of the slave, it was his duty to sleep. Besides, at that time Lowell needed all the rest he could get, for he had lately passed through trials such as break the strength of men, and how them with premature age. He was living alone in his little house in Lowndes Square, and Mrs. Lowell was in the country, slowly recovering from the effects of the terrible typhus which she had barely survived in Madrid. He was yet so near the anguish of that experience that he told me he had still in his nerves the expectation of a certain agonized cry from her which used to rend them. But he said he had adjusted himself to this, and he went on to speak with a patience which was more affecting in him than in men of more phlegmatic temperament, of how we were able to adjust ourselves to all our trials and to the constant presence of pain. He said he was never free of a certain distress, which was often a sharp pang, in one of his shoulders, but his physique had established such relations with it that, though he

was never unconscious of it, he was able to endure it without a recognition of it as suffering.

He seemed to me, however, very well, and at his age of sixty-three, I could not see that he was less alert and vigorous than he was when I first knew him in Cambridge. He had the same brisk, light step, and though his beard was well whitened and his auburn hair had grown ashen through the red, his face had the freshness and his eyes the clearness of a young man's. I suppose the novelty of his life kept him from thinking about his years; or perhaps in contact with those great, insenescent Englishmen, he could not feel himself old. At any rate he did not once speak of age, as he used to do ten years earlier, and I, then half through my forties, was still "You young dog" to him. It was a bright and cheerful renewal of the early kindness between us, on which indeed there had never been a shadow, except such as distance throws. He wished apparently to do everything he could to assure us of his personal interest; and we were amused to find him nervously apprehensive of any purpose, such as was far from us, to profit by him officially. He betrayed a distinct relief when he found we were not going to come upon him even for admissions to the houses of parliament, which we were to see by means of an English acquaintance. He had not perhaps found some other fellow-citizens so considerate; he dreaded the half-duties of his place, like presentations to the queen, and complained of the cheap ambitions he had to gratify in that way.

He was so eager to have me like England in every way, and seemed so fond of the English, that I thought it best to ask him whether he minded my quoting, in a paper about Lexington, which I was just then going to print in a London magazine, some humorous lines of his expressing the mounting satisfaction of an imaginary Yankee story-teller who has the old fight terminate in Lord Percy's coming

"To hammer stone for life in Concord jail."

It had occurred to me that it might possibly embarrass him to have this patriotic picture presented to a public which could not take our Fourth of July pleasure in it, and I offered to suppress it, as I did afterwards quite for literary reasons. He said, No, let it stand, and let them make the worst of it; and I fancy that much of his success with a people who are not gingerly with other people's sensibilities came from the frankness with which he trampled on their prejudice when he chose. He said he always told them, when there was question of such things, that the best society he had ever known was in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He contended that the best English was spoken there; and so it was, when he spoke it.

We were in London out of the season, and he was sorry that he could not have me meet some titles who he declared had found pleasure in my books; when we returned from Italy in the following June, he was prompt to do me this honor. I dare say he wished me to feel it to its last implication, and I did my best, but there was nothing in the evening I enjoyed so much as his coming up to Mrs. Lowell, at the close, when there was only a title or two left, and saying to her as he would have said to her at

Elmwood, where she would have personally planned it, "Fanny, that was a fine dinner you gave us." Of course, this was in a tender burlesque; but it remains the supreme impression of what seemed to me a cloudlessly happy period for Lowell. His wife was quite recovered of her long suffering, and was again at the head of his house, sharing in his pleasures, and enjoying his successes for his sake; successes so great that people spoke of him seriously, as "an addition to society" in London, where one man more or less seemed like a drop in the sea. She was a woman perfectly of the New England type and tradition: almost repellantly shy at first, and almost glacially cold with new acquaintance, but afterwards very sweet and cordial. She was of a dark beauty with a regular face of the Spanish outline; Lowell was of an ideal manner towards her, and of an admiration which delicately travestied itself and which she knew how to receive with smiling irony. After her death, which occurred while he was still in England, he never spoke of her to me, though before that he used to be always bringing her name in, with a young lover-like fondness.

XI.

In the hurry of the London season I did not see so much of Lowell on our second sojourn as on our first, but once when we were alone in his study there was a return to the terms of the old meetings in Cambridge. He smoked his pipe, and sat by his fire and philosophized; and but for the great London sea swirling outside and bursting through our shelter, and dashing him with notes that must be instantly answered, it was a very fair image of the past. He wanted to tell me about his coachman whom he had got at on his human side with great liking and amusement, and there was a patient gentleness in his manner with the footman who had to keep coming in upon him with those notes which was like the echo of his young faith in the equality of men. But he always distinguished between the simple unconscious equality of the ordinary American and its assumption by a foreigner. He said he did not mind such an American's coming into his house with his hat on; but if a German or Englishman did it, he wanted to knock it off. He was apt to be rather punctilious in his shows of deference towards others, and at one time he practised removing his own hat when he went into shops in Cambridge. It must have mystified the Cambridge salesmen, and I doubt if he kept it up.

With reference to the doctrine of his young poetry, the fierce and the tender humanity of his storm and stress period, I fancy a kind of baffle in Lowell, which I should not perhaps find it easy to prove. I never knew him by word or hint to renounce this doctrine, but he could not come to seventy years without having seen many high hopes fade, and known many inspired prophecies fail. When we have done our best to make the world over, we are apt to be dismayed by finding it in much the old shape. As he said of the moral government of the universe, the scale is so vast, and a little difference, a little change for the better, is scarcely perceptible to the eager consciousness of the wholesale reformer. But with whatever sense of disappointment, of doubt as to his own deeds

for truer freedom and for better conditions I believe his sympathy was still with those who had some heart for hoping and striving. I am sure that though he did not agree with me in some of my own later notions for the redemption of the race, he did not like me the less but rather the more because (to my own great surprise I confess) I had now and then the courage of my convictions, both literary and social.

He was probably most at odds with me in regard to my theories of fiction, though he persisted in declaring his pleasure in my own fiction. He was in fact, by nature and tradition, thoroughly romantic, and he could not or would not suffer realism in any but a friend. He steadfastly refused even to read the Russian masters, to his immense loss, as I tried to persuade him, and even among the modern Spaniards, for whom he might have had a sort of personal kindness from his love of Cervantes, he chose one for his praise the least worthy, of it, and bore me down with his heavier metal in argument when I opposed to Alarcon's factitiousness the delightful genuineness of Valdes. Ibsen, with all the Norwegians, he put far from him; he would no more know them than the Russians; the French naturalists he abhorred. I thought him all wrong, but you do not try improving your elders when they have come to three score and ten years, and I would rather have had his affection unbroken by our difference of opinion than a perfect agreement. Where he even imagined that this difference could work me harm, he was anxious to have me know that he meant me none; and he was at the trouble to write me a letter when a Boston paper had perverted its report of what he said in a public lecture to my disadvantage, and to assure me that he had not me in mind. When once he had given his liking, he could not bear that any shadow of change should seem to have come upon him. He had a most beautiful and endearing ideal of friendship; he desired to affirm it and to reaffirm it as often as occasion offered, and if occasion did not offer, he made occasion. It did not matter what you said or did that contraried him; if he thought he had essentially divined you, you were still the same: and on his part he was by no means exacting of equal demonstration, but seemed not even to wish it.

XII.

After he was replaced at London by a minister more immediately representative of the Democratic administration, he came home. He made a brave show of not caring to have remained away, but in truth he had become very fond of England, where he had made so many friends, and where the distinction he had, in that comfortably padded environment, was so agreeable to him.

It would have been like him to have secretly hoped that the new President might keep him in London, but he never betrayed any ignoble disappointment, and he would not join in any blame of him. At our first meeting after he came home he spoke of the movement which had made Mr. Cleveland president, and said he supposed that if he had been here, he should have been in it. All his friends were, he added, a little

helplessly; but he seemed not to dislike my saying I knew one of his friends who was not: in fact, as I have told, he never disliked a plump difference--unless he disliked the differer.

For several years he went back to England every summer, and it was not until he took up his abode at Elmwood again that he spent a whole year at home. One winter he passed at his sister's home in Boston, but mostly he lived with his daughter at Southborough. I have heard a story of his going to Elmwood soon after his return in 1885, and sitting down in his old study, where he declared with tears that the place was full of ghosts. But four or five years later it was well for family reasons that he should live there; and about the same time it happened that I had taken a house for the summer in his neighborhood. He came to see me, and to assure me, in all tacit forms of his sympathy in a sorrow for which there could be no help; but it was not possible that the old intimate relations should be resumed. The affection was there, as much on his side as on mine, I believe; but he was now an old man and I was an elderly man, and we could not, without insincerity, approach each other in the things that had drawn us together in earlier and happier years. His course was run; my own, in which he had taken such a generous pleasure, could scarcely move his jaded interest. His life, so far as it remained to him, had renewed itself in other air; the later friendships beyond seas sufficed him, and were without the pang, without the effort that must attend the knitting up of frayed ties here.

He could never have been anything but American, if he had tried, and he certainly never tried; but he certainly did not return to the outward simplicities of his life as I first knew it. There was no more round-hat-and-sack-coat business for him; he wore a frock and a high hat, and whatever else was rather like London than Cambridge; I do not know but drab gaiters sometimes added to the effect of a gentleman of the old school which he now produced upon the witness. Some fastidiousnesses showed themselves in him, which were not so surprising. He complained of the American lower class manner; the conductor and cabman would be kind to you but they would not be respectful, and he could not see the fun of this in the old way. Early in our acquaintance he rather stupified me by saying, "I like you because you don't put your hands on me," and I heard of his consenting to some sort of reception in those last years, "Yes, if they won't shake hands."

Ever since his visit to Rome in 1875 he had let his heavy mustache grow long till it dropped below the corners of his beard, which was now almost white; his face had lost the ruddy hue so characteristic of him. I fancy he was then ailing with premonitions of the disorder which a few years later proved mortal, but he still bore himself with sufficient vigor, and he walked the distance between his house and mine, though once when I missed his visit the family reported that after he came in he sat a long time with scarcely a word, as if too weary to talk. That winter, I went into Boston to live, and I saw him only at infrequent intervals, when I could go out to Elmwood. At such times I found him sitting in the room which was formerly the drawing-room, but which had been joined with his study by taking away the partitions beside the heavy mass of the old colonial chimney. He told me that when he was a newborn babe, the nurse

had carried him round this chimney, for luck, and now in front of the same hearth, the white old man stretched himself in an easy-chair, with his writing-pad on his knees and his books on the table at his elbow, and was willing to be entreated not to rise. I remember the sun used to come in at the eastern windows full pour, and bathe the air in its warmth.

He always hailed me gayly, and if I found him with letters newly come from England, as I sometimes did, he glowed and sparkled with fresh life. He wanted to read passages from those letters, he wanted to talk about their writers, and to make me feel their worth and charm as he did. He still dreamed of going back to England the next summer, but that was not to be. One day he received me not less gayly than usual, but with a certain excitement, and began to tell me about an odd experience he had had, not at all painful, but which had very much mystified him. He had since seen the doctor, and the doctor had assured him that there was nothing alarming in what had happened, and in recalling this assurance, he began to look at the humorous aspects of the case, and to make some jokes about it. He wished to talk of it, as men do of their maladies, and very fully, and I gave him such proof of my interest as even inviting him to talk of it would convey. In spite of the doctor's assurance, and his joyful acceptance of it, I doubt if at the bottom of his heart there was not the stir of an uneasy misgiving; but he had not for a long time shown himself so cheerful.

It was the beginning of the end. He recovered and relapsed, and recovered again; but never for long. Late in the spring I came out, and he had me stay to dinner, which was somehow as it used to be at two o'clock; and after dinner we went out on his lawn. He got a long-handled spud, and tried to grub up some dandelions which he found in his turf, but after a moment or two he threw it down, and put his hand upon his back with a groan. I did not see him again till I came out to take leave of him before going away for the summer, and then I found him sitting on the little porch in a western corner of his house, with a volume of Scott closed upon his finger. There were some other people, and our meeting was with the constraint of their presence. It was natural in nothing so much as his saying very significantly to me, as if he knew of my heresies concerning Scott, and would have me know he did not approve of them, that there was nothing he now found so much pleasure in as Scott's novels. Another friend, equally heretical, was by, but neither of us attempted to gainsay him. Lowell talked very little, but he told of having been a walk to Beaver Brook, and of having wished to jump from one stone to another in the stream, and of having had to give it up. He said, without completing the sentence, If it had come to that with him! Then he fell silent again; and with some vain talk of seeing him when I came back in the fall, I went away sick at heart. I was not to see him again, and I shall not look upon his like.

I am aware that I have here shown him from this point and from that in a series of sketches which perhaps collectively impart, but do not assemble his personality in one impression. He did not, indeed, make one impression upon me, but a thousand impressions, which I should seek in vain to embody in a single presentment. What I have cloudily before me is the vision of a very lofty and simple soul, perplexed, and as it were

surprised and even dismayed at the complexity of the effects from motives so single in it, but escaping always to a clear expression of what was noblest and loveliest in itself at the supreme moments, in the divine exigencies. I believe neither in heroes nor in saints; but I believe in great and good men, for I have known them, and among such men Lowell was of the richest nature I have known. His nature was not always serene or pellucid; it was sometimes roiled by the currents that counter and cross in all of us; but it was without the least alloy of insincerity, and it was never darkened by the shadow of a selfish fear. His genius was an instrument that responded in affluent harmony to the power that made him a humorist and that made him a poet, and appointed him rarely to be quite either alone.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

I believe neither in heroes nor in saints
It is well to hold one's country to her promises
Liked being with you, not for what he got, but for what he gave

End of this Project Gutenberg Etext of Studies of Lowell
by William Dean Howells

LITERARY FRIENDS AND ACQUAINTANCES--Cambridge Neighbors

by William Dean Howells

CAMBRIDGE NEIGHBORS

Being the wholly literary spirit I was when I went to make my home in Cambridge, I do not see how I could well have been more content if I had found myself in the Elysian Fields with an agreeable eternity before me. At twenty-nine, indeed, one is practically immortal, and at that age, time had for me the effect of an eternity in which I had nothing to do but to read books and dream of writing them, in the overflow of endless hours from my work with the manuscripts, critical notices, and proofs of the Atlantic Monthly. As for the social environment I should have been puzzled if given my choice among the elect of all the ages, to find poets and scholars more to my mind than those still in the flesh at Cambridge in the early afternoon of the nineteenth century. They are now nearly all dead, and I can speak of them in the freedom which is death's doubtful favor to the survivor; but if they were still alive I could say little to their offence, unless their modesty was hurt with my praise.

I.

One of the first and truest of our Cambridge friends was that exquisite intelligence, who, in a world where so many people are grotesquely miscalled, was most fitly named; for no man ever kept here more perfectly and purely the heart of such as the kingdom of heaven is of than Francis J. Child. He was then in his prime, and I like to recall the outward image which expressed the inner man as happily as his name. He was of low stature and of an inclination which never became stoutness; but what you most saw when you saw him was his face of consummate refinement: very regular, with eyes always glassed by gold-rimmed spectacles, a straight, short, most sensitive nose, and a beautiful mouth with the sweetest smile mouth ever wore, and that was as wise and shrewd as it was sweet. In a time when every other man was more or less bearded he was clean shaven, and of a delightful freshness of coloring which his thick sunny hair, clustering upon his head in close rings, admirably set off. I believe he never became gray, and the last time I saw him, though he was broken then with years and pain, his face had still the brightness of his inextinguishable youth.

It is well known how great was Professor Child's scholarship in the branches of his Harvard work; and how especially, how uniquely, effective it was in the study of English and Scottish balladry to which he gave so many years of his life. He was a poet in his nature, and he wrought with passion as well as knowledge in the achievement of as monumental a task as any American has performed. But he might have been indefinitely less than he was in any intellectual wise, and yet been precious to those who knew him for the gentleness and the goodness which in him were protected from misconception by a final dignity as delicate and as inviolable as that of Longfellow himself.

We were still much less than a year from our life in Venice, when he came to see us in Cambridge, and in the Italian interest which then commended us to so many fine spirits among our neighbors we found ourselves at the beginning of a life-long friendship with him. I was known to him only by my letters from Venice, which afterwards became Venetian Life, and by a bit of devotional verse which he had asked to include in a collection he was making, but he immediately gave us the freedom of his heart, which after wards was never withdrawn. In due time he imagined a home-school, to which our little one was asked, and she had her first lessons with his own daughter under his roof. These things drew us closer together, and he was willing to be still nearer to me in any time of trouble. At one such time when the shadow which must some time darken every door, hovered at ours, he had the strength to make me face it and try to realize, while it was still there, that it was not cruel and not evil. It passed, for that time, but the sense of his help remained; and in my own case I can testify of the potent tenderness which all who knew him must have known in him. But in bearing my witness I feel accused, almost as if he were present; by his fastidious reluctance from any recognition of his

helpfulness. When this came in the form of gratitude taking credit to itself in a pose which reflected honor upon him as the architect of greatness, he was delightfully impatient of it, and he was most amusingly dramatic in reproducing the consciousness of certain ineffectual alumni who used to overwhelm him at Commencement solemnities with some such pompous acknowledgment as, "Professor Child, all that I have become, sir, I owe to your influence in my college career." He did, with delicious mockery, the old-fashioned intellectual poseurs among the students, who used to walk the groves of Harvard with bent head, and the left arm crossing the back, while the other lodged its hand in the breast of the high buttoned frock-coat; and I could fancy that his classes in college did not form the sunniest exposure for young folly and vanity. I know that he was intolerant of any manner of insincerity, and no flattery could take him off his guard. I have seen him meet this with a cutting phrase of rejection, and no man was more apt at snubbing the patronage that offers itself at times to all men. But mostly he wished to do people pleasure, and he seemed always to be studying how to do it; as for need, I am sure that worthy and unworthy want had alike the way to his heart.

Children were always his friends, and they repaid with adoration the affection which he divided with them and with his flowers. I recall him in no moments so characteristic as those he spent in making the little ones laugh out of their hearts at his drolling, some festive evening in his house, and those he gave to sharing with you his joy in his gardening. This, I believe, began with violets, and it went on to roses, which he grew in a splendor and profusion impossible to any but a true lover with a genuine gift for them. Like Lowell, he spent his summers in Cambridge, and in the afternoon, you could find him digging or pruning among his roses with an ardor which few caprices of the weather could interrupt. He would lift himself from their ranks, which he scarcely overtopped, as you came up the footway to his door, and peer purblindly across at you. If he knew you at once, he traversed the nodding and swaying bushes, to give you the hand free of the trowel or knife; or if you got indoors unseen by him he would come in holding towards you some exquisite blossom that weighed down the tip of its long stem with a succession of hospitable obeisances.

He graced with unaffected poetry a life of as hard study, of as hard work, and as varied achievement as any I have known or read of; and he played with gifts and acquirements such as in no great measure have made reputations. He had a rare and lovely humor which could amuse itself both in English and Italian with such an airy burletta as "Il Pesceballo" (he wrote it in Metastasian Italian, and Lowell put it in libretto English); he had a critical sense as sound as it was subtle in all literature; and whatever he wrote he imbued with the charm of a style finely personal to himself. His learning in the line of his Harvard teaching included an early English scholarship unrivalled in his time, and his researches in ballad literature left no corner of it untouched. I fancy this part of his study was peculiarly pleasant to him; for he loved simple and natural things, and the beauty which he found nearest life. At least he scorned the pedantic affectations of literary superiority; and he used to quote with joyous laughter the swelling

exclamation of an Italian critic who proposed to leave the summits of polite learning for a moment, with the cry, "Scendiamo fra il popolo!" (Let us go down among the people.)

II.

Of course it was only so hard worked a man who could take thought and trouble for another. He once took thought for me at a time when it was very important to me, and when he took the trouble to secure for me an engagement to deliver that course of Lowell lectures in Boston, which I have said Lowell had the courage to go in town to hear. I do not remember whether Professor Child was equal to so much, but he would have been if it were necessary; and I rather rejoice now in the belief that he did not seek quite that martyrdom.

He had done more than enough for me, but he had done only what he was always willing to do for others. In the form of a favor to himself he brought into my life the great happiness of intimately knowing Hjalmar Hjorth Boyesen, whom he had found one summer day among the shelves in the Harvard library, and found to be a poet and an intending novelist. I do not remember now just how this fact imparted itself to the professor, but literature is of easily cultivated confidence in youth, and possibly the revelation was spontaneous. At any rate, as a susceptible young editor, I was asked to meet my potential contributor at the professor's two o'clock dinner, and when we came to coffee in the study, Boyesen took from the pocket nearest his heart a chapter of 'Gunnar', and read it to us.

Perhaps the good professor who brought us together had plotted to have both novel and novelist make their impression at once upon the youthful sub-editor; but at any rate they did not fail of an effect. I believe it was that chapter where Gunnar and Ragnhild dance and sing a 'stev' together, for I associate with that far happy time the rich mellow tones of the poet's voice in the poet's verse. These were most characteristic of him, and it is as if I might put my ear against the ethereal wall beyond which he is rapt and hear them yet.

Our meeting was on a lovely afternoon of summer, and the odor of the professor's roses stole in at the open windows, and became part of the gentle event. Boyesen walked home with me, and for a fortnight after I think we parted only to dream of the literature which we poured out upon each other in every waking moment. I had just learned to know Bjornson's stories, and Boyesen told me of his poetry and of his drama, which in even measure embodied the great Norse literary movement, and filled me with the wonder and delight of that noble revolt against convention, that brave return to nature and the springs of poetry in the heart and the speech of the common people. Literature was Boyesen's religion more than the Swedenborgian philosophy in which we had both been spiritually nurtured, and at every step of our mounting friendship we found ourselves on common ground in our worship of it. I was a decade his senior, but at

thirty-five I was not yet so stricken in years as not to be able fully to rejoice in the ardor which fused his whole being in an incandescent poetic mass. I have known no man who loved poetry more generously and passionately; and I think he was above all things a poet. His work took the shape of scholarship, fiction, criticism, but poetry gave it all a touch of grace and beauty. Some years after this first meeting of ours I remember a pathetic moment with him, when I asked him why he had not written any verse of late, and he answered, as if still in sad astonishment at the fact, that he had found life was not all poetry. In those earlier days I believe he really thought it was!

Perhaps it really is, and certainly in the course of a life that stretched almost to half a century Boyesen learned more and more to see the poetry of the everyday world at least as the material of art. He did battle valiantly for that belief in many polemics, which I suppose gave people a sufficiently false notion of him; and he showed his faith by works in fiction which better illustrated his motive. Gunnar stands at the beginning of these works, and at the farthest remove from it in matter and method stands 'The Mammon of Unrighteousness'. The lovely idyl won him fame and friendship, and the great novel added neither to him, though he had put the experience and the observation of his ripened life into it. Whether it is too late or too early for it to win the place in literature which it merits I do not know; but it always seemed to me the very spite of fate that it should have failed of popular effect. Yet I must own that it has so failed, and I own this without bitterness towards Gunnar, which embalmed the spirit of his youth as 'The Mammon of Unrighteousness' embodied the thought of his manhood.

III.

It was my pleasure, my privilege, to bring Gunnar before the public as editor of the Atlantic Monthly, and to second the author in many a struggle with the strange idiom he had cast the story in. The proofs went back and forth between us till the author had profited by every hint and suggestion of the editor. He was quick to profit by any hint, and he never made the same mistake twice. He lived his English as fast as he learned it; the right word became part of him; and he put away the wrong word with instant and final rejection. He had not learned American English without learning newspaper English, but if one touched a phrase of it in his work, he felt in his nerves, which are the ultimate arbiters in such matters, its difference from true American and true English. It was wonderful how apt and how elect his diction was in those days; it seemed as if his thought clothed itself in the fittest phrase without his choosing. In his poetry he had extraordinary good fortune from the first; his mind had an apparent affinity with what was most native, most racy in our speech; and I have just been looking over Gunnar and marvelling anew at the felicity and the beauty of his phrasing.

I do not know whether those who read his books stop much to consider how rare his achievement was in the mere means of expression. Our speech is

rather more hospitable than most, and yet I can remember but five other writers born to different languages who have handled English with anything like his mastery. Two Italians, Ruffini, the novelist, and Gallenga, the journalist; two Germans, Carl Schurz and Carl Hillebrand, and the Dutch novelist Maarten Maartens, have some of them equalled but none of them surpassed him. Yet he was a man grown when he began to speak and to write English, though I believe he studied it somewhat in Norway before he came to America. What English he knew he learned the use of here, and in the measure of its idiomatic vigor we may be proud of it as Americans.

He had least of his native grace, I think, in his criticism; and yet as a critic he had qualities of rare temperance, acuteness, and knowledge. He had very decided convictions in literary art; one kind of thing he believed was good and all other kinds less good down to what was bad; but he was not a bigot, and he made allowances for art-in-error. His hand fell heavy only upon those heretics who not merely denied the faith but pretended that artifice was better than nature, that decoration was more than structure, that make-believe was something you could live by as you live by truth. He was not strongest, however, in damnatory criticism. His spirit was too large, too generous to dwell in that, and it rose rather to its full height in his appreciations of the great authors whom he loved, and whom he commented from the plenitude of his scholarship as well as from his delighted sense of their grandeur. Here he was almost as fine as in his poetry, and only less fine than in his more fortunate essays in fiction.

After Gunnar he was a long while in striking another note so true. He did not strike it again till he wrote 'The Mammon of Unrighteousness', and after that he was sometimes of a wandering and uncertain touch. There are certain stories of his which I cannot read without a painful sense of their inequality not only to his talent, but to his knowledge of human nature, and of American character. He understood our character quite as well as he understood our language, but at times he seemed not to do so. I think these were the times when he was overworked, and ought to have been resting instead of writing. In such fatigue one loses command of alien words, alien situations; and in estimating Boyesen's achievements we must never forget that he was born strange to our language and to our life. In 'Gunnar' he handled the one with grace and charm; in his great novel he handled both with masterly strength. I call 'The Mammon of Unrighteousness' a great novel, and I am quite willing to say that I know few novels by born Americans that surpass it in dealing with American types and conditions. It has the vast horizon of the masterpieces of fictions; its meanings are not for its characters alone, but for every reader of it; when you close the book the story is not at an end.

I have a pang in praising it, for I remember that my praise cannot please him any more. But it was a book worthy the powers which could have given us yet greater things if they had not been spent on lesser things. Boyesen could "toil terribly," but for his fame he did not always toil wisely, though he gave himself as utterly in his unwise work as in his best; it was always the best he could do. Several years after our first

meeting in Cambridge, he went to live in New York, a city where money counts for more and goes for less than in any other city of the world, and he could not resist the temptation to write more and more when he should have written less and less. He never wrote anything that was not worth reading, but he wrote too much for one who was giving himself with all his conscience to his academic work in the university honored by his gifts and his attainments, and was lecturing far and near in the vacations which should have been days and weeks and months of leisure. The wonder is that even such a stock of health as his could stand the strain so long, but he had no vices, and his only excesses were in the direction of the work which he loved so well. When a man adds to his achievements every year, we are apt to forget the things he has already done; and I think it well to remind the reader that Boyesen, who died at forty-eight, had written, besides articles, reviews, and lectures unnumbered, four volumes of scholarly criticism on German and Scandinavian literature, a volume of literary and social essays, a popular history of Norway, a volume of poems, twelve volumes of fiction, and four books for boys.

Boyesen's energies were inexhaustible. He was not content to be merely a scholar, merely an author; he wished to be an active citizen, to take his part in honest politics, and to live for his day in things that most men of letters shun. His experience in them helped him to know American life better and to appreciate it more justly, both in its good and its evil; and as a matter of fact he knew us very well. His acquaintance with us had been wide and varied beyond that of most of our literary men, and touched many aspects of our civilization which remain unknown to most Americans. When he died he had been a journalist in Chicago, and a teacher in Ohio; he had been a professor in Cornell University and a literary free lance in New York; and everywhere his eyes and ears had kept themselves open. As a teacher he learned to know the more fortunate or the more ambitious of our youth, and as a lecturer his knowledge was continually extending itself among all ages and classes of Americans.

He was through and through a Norseman, but he was none the less a very American. Between Norsk and Yankee there is an affinity of spirit more intimate than the ties of race. Both have the common-sense view of life; both are unsentimental. When Boyesen told me that among the Norwegians men never kissed each other, as the Germans, and the Frenchmen, and the Italians do, I perceived that we stood upon common ground. When he explained the democratic character of society in Norway, I could well understand how he should find us a little behind his own countrymen in the practice, if not the theory of equality, though they lived under a king and we under a president. But he was proud of his American citizenship; he knew all that it meant, at its best, for humanity. He divined that the true expression of America was not civic, not social, but domestic almost, and that the people in the simplest homes, or those who remained in the tradition of a simple home life, were the true Americans as yet, whatever the future Americans might be.

When I first knew him he was chafing with the impatience of youth and ambition at what he thought his exile in the West. There was, to be sure, a difference between Urbana, Ohio, and Cambridge, Massachusetts,

and he realized the difference in the extreme and perhaps beyond it. I tried to make him believe that if a man had one or two friends anywhere who loved letters and sympathized with him in his literary attempts, it was incentive enough; but of course he wished to be in the centres of literature, as we all do; and he never was content until he had set his face and his foot Eastward. It was a great step for him from the Swedenborgian school at Urbana to the young university at Ithaca; and I remember his exultation in making it. But he could not rest there, and in a few years he resigned his professorship, and came to New York, where he entered high-heartedly upon the struggle with fortune which ended in his appointment in Columbia.

New York is a mart and not a capital, in literature as well as in other things, and doubtless he increasingly felt this. I know that there came a time when he no longer thought the West must be exile for a literary man; and his latest visits to its summer schools as a lecturer impressed him with the genuineness of the interest felt there in culture of all kinds. He spoke of this, with a due sense of what was pathetic as well as what was grotesque in some of its manifestations; and I think that in reconciling himself to our popular crudeness for the sake of our popular earnestness, he completed his naturalization, in the only sense in which our citizenship is worth having.

I do not wish to imply that he forgot his native land, or ceased to love it proudly and tenderly. He kept for Norway the fondness which the man sitting at his own hearth feels for the home of his boyhood. He was of good family; his people were people of substance and condition, and he could have had an easier life there than here. He could have won even wider fame, and doubtless if he had remained in Norway, he would have been one of that group of great Norwegians who have given their little land renown surpassed by that of no other in the modern republic of letters. The name of Boyesen would have been set with the names of Bjornson, of Ibsen, of Kielland, and of Lie. But when once he had seen America (at the wish of his father, who had visited the United States before him), he thought only of becoming an American. When I first knew him he was full of the poetry of his mother-land; his talk was of fjords and glaciers, of firs and birches, of huldres and nixies, of housemen and gaardsmen; but he was glad to be here, and I think he never regretted that he had cast his lot with us. Always, of course, he had the deepest interest in his country and countrymen. He stood the friend of every Norwegian who came to him in want or trouble, and they, came to him freely and frequently. He sympathized strongly with Norway in her quarrel with Sweden, and her wish for equality as well as autonomy; and though he did not go all lengths with the national party, he was decided in his feeling that Sweden was unjust to her sister kingdom, and strenuous for the principles of the Norwegian leaders.

But, as I have said, poetry, was what his ardent spirit mainly meditated in that hour when I first knew him in Cambridge, before we had either of us grown old and sad, if not wise. He overflowed with it, and he talked as little as he dreamed of anything else in the vast half-summer we spent together. He was constantly at my house, where in an absence of my family I was living bachelor, and where we sat indoors and talked, or

sauntered outdoors and talked, with our heads in a cloud of fancies, not unmixed with the mosquitoes of Cambridge: if I could have back the fancies, I would be willing to have the mosquitoes with them. He looked the poetry he lived: his eyes were the blue of sunlit fjords; his brown silken hair was thick on the crown which it later abandoned to a scholarly baldness; his soft, red lips half hid a boyish pout in the youthful beard and mustache. He was short of stature, but of a stalwart breadth of frame, and his voice was of a peculiar and endearing quality, indescribably mellow and tender when he read his verse.

I have hardly the right to dwell so long upon him here, for he was only a sojourner in Cambridge, but the memory of that early intimacy is too much for my sense of proportion. As I have hinted, our intimacy was renewed afterwards, when I too came to live in New York, where as long as he was in this 'dolce lome', he hardly let a week go by without passing a long evening with me. Our talk was still of literature and life, but more of life than of literature, and we seldom spoke of those old times. I still found him true to the ideals which had clarified themselves to both of us as the duty of unswerving fealty to the real thing in whatever we did. This we felt, as we had felt it long before, to be the sole source of beauty and of art, and we warmed ourselves at each other's hearts in our devotion to it, amidst a misunderstanding environment which we did not characterize by so mild an epithet. Boyesen, indeed, out-realized me, in the polemics of our aesthetics, and sometimes when an unbeliever was by, I willingly left to my friend the affirmation of our faith, not without some quaking at his unsparing strenuousness in disciplining the heretic. But now that ardent and active soul is Elsewhere, and I have ceased even to expect the ring, which, making itself heard at the late hour of his coming, I knew always to be his and not another's. That mechanical expectation of those who will come no more is something terrible, but when even that ceases, we know the irreparability of our loss, and begin to realize how much of ourselves they have taken with them.

IV.

It was some years before the Boyesen summer, which was the fourth or fifth of our life in Cambridge, that I made the acquaintance of a man, very much my senior, who remains one of the vividest personalities in my recollection. I speak of him in this order perhaps because of an obscure association with Boyesen through their religious faith, which was also mine. But Henry James was incommensurably more Swedenborgian than either of us: he lived and thought and felt Swedenborg with an entirety and intensity far beyond the mere assent of other men. He did not do this in any stupidly exclusive way, but in the most luminously inclusive way, with a constant reference of these vain mundane shadows to the spiritual realities from which they project. His piety, which sometimes expressed itself in terms of alarming originality and freedom, was too large for any ecclesiastical limits, and one may learn from the books which record it, how absolutely individual his interpretations of Swedenborg were.

Clarifications they cannot be called, and in that other world whose substantial verity was the inspiration of his life here, the two sages may by this time have met and agreed to differ as to some points in the doctrine of the Seer. In such a case, I cannot imagine the apostle giving way; and I do not say he would be wrong to insist, but I think he might now be willing to allow that the exegetic pages which sentence by sentence were so brilliantly suggestive, had sometimes a collective opacity which the most resolute vision could not penetrate. He put into this dark wisdom the most brilliant intelligence ever brought to the service of his mystical faith; he lighted it up with flashes of the keenest wit and bathed it in the glow of a lambent humor, so that it is truly wonderful to me how it should remain so unintelligible. But I have only tried to read certain of his books, and perhaps if I had persisted in the effort I might have found them all as clear at last as the one which seems to me the clearest, and is certainly most encouragingly suggestive: I mean the one called 'Society the Redeemed Form of Man.'

He had his whole being in his belief; it had not only liberated him from the bonds of the Calvinistic theology in which his youth was trammelled, but it had secured him against the conscious ethicism of the prevailing Unitarian doctrine which supremely worshipped Conduct; and it had colored his vocabulary to such strange effects that he spoke of moral men with abhorrence; as more hopelessly lost than sinners. Any one whose sphere tempted him to recognition of the foibles of others, he called the Devil; but in spite of his perception of such diabolism, he was rather fond of yielding to it, for he had a most trenchant tongue. I myself once fell under his condemnation as the Devil, by having too plainly shared his joy in his characterization of certain fellow-men; perhaps a group of Bostonians from whom he had just parted and whose reciprocal pleasure of themselves he presented in the image of "simmering in their own fat and putting a nice brown on each other."

Swedenborg himself he did not spare as a man. He thought that very likely his life had those lapses in it which some of his followers deny; and he regarded him on the aesthetical side as essentially commonplace, and as probably chosen for his prophetic function just because of his imaginative nullity: his tremendous revelations could be the more distinctly and unmistakably inscribed upon an intelligence of that sort, which alone could render again a strictly literal report of them.

As to some other sorts of believers who thought they had a special apprehension of the truth, he, had no mercy upon them if they betrayed, however innocently, any self-complacency in their possession. I went one evening to call upon him with a dear old Shaker elder, who had the misfortune to say that his people believed themselves to be living the angelic life. James fastened upon him with the suggestion that according to Swedenborg the most celestial angels were unconscious of their own perfection, and that if the Shakers felt they were of angelic condition they were probably the sport of the hells. I was very glad to get my poor old friend off alive, and to find that he was not even aware of being cut asunder: I did not invite him to shake himself.

With spiritualists James had little or no sympathy; he was not so

impatient of them as the Swedenborgians commonly are, and he probably acknowledged a measure of verity in the spiritistic phenomena; but he seemed rather incurious concerning them, and he must have regarded them as superfluities of naughtiness, mostly; as emanations from the hells. His powerful and penetrating intellect interested itself with all social and civil facts through his religion. He was essentially religious, but he was very consciously a citizen, with most decided opinions upon political questions. My own darkness as to anything like social reform was then so dense that I cannot now be clear as to his feeling in such matters, but I have the impression that it was far more radical than I could understand. He was of a very merciful mind regarding things often held in pitiless condemnation, but of charity, as it is commonly understood, he had misgivings. He would never have turned away from him that asketh; but he spoke with regret of some of his benefactions in the past, large gifts of money to individuals, which he now thought had done more harm than good.

I never knew him to judge men by the society scale. He was most human in his relations with others, and was in correspondence with all sorts of people seeking light and help; he answered their letters and tried to instruct them, and no one was so low or weak but he or she could reach him on his or her own level, though he had his humorous perception of their foibles and disabilities; and he had that keen sense of the grotesque which often goes with the kindest nature. He told of his dining, early in life, next a fellow-man from Cape Cod at the Astor House, where such a man could seldom have found himself. When they were served with meat this neighbor asked if he would mind his putting his fat on James's plate: he disliked fat. James said that he considered the request, and seeing no good reason against it, consented.

He could be cruel with his tongue when he fancied insincerity or pretence, and then cruelly sorry for the hurt he gave. He was indeed tremulously sensitive, not only for himself but for others, and would offer atonement far beyond the measure of the offence he supposed himself to have given.

At all times he thought originally in words of delightful originality, which painted a fact with the greatest vividness. Of a person who had a nervous twitching of the face, and who wished to call up a friend to them, he said, "He spasmed to the fellow across the room, and introduced him." His written style had traits of the same bold adventurousness, but it was his speech which was most captivating. As I write of him I see him before me: his white bearded face, with a kindly intensity which at first glance seemed fierce, the mouth humorously shaping the mustache, the eyes vague behind the glasses; his sensitive hand gripping the stick on which he rested his weight to ease it from the artificial limb he wore.

The Goethean face and figure of Louis Agassiz were in those days to be seen in the shady walks of Cambridge to which for me they lent a Weimarish quality, in the degree that in Weimar itself a few years ago, I felt a quality of Cambridge. Agassiz, of course, was Swiss and Latin, and not Teutonic, but he was of the Continental European civilization, and was widely different from the other Cambridge men in everything but love of the place. "He is always an Europaen," said Lowell one day, in distinguishing concerning him; and for any one who had tasted the flavor of the life beyond the ocean and the channel, this had its charm. Yet he was extremely fond of his adoptive compatriots, and no alien born had a truer or tenderer sense of New England character. I have an idea that no one else of his day could have got so much money for science out of the General Court of Massachusetts; and I have heard him speak with the wisest and warmest appreciation of the hard material from which he was able to extract this treasure. The legislators who voted appropriations for his Museum and his other scientific objects were not usually lawyers or professional men, with the perspectives of a liberal education, but were hard-fisted farmers, who had a grip of the State's money as if it were their own, and yet gave it with intelligent munificence. They understood that he did not want it for himself, and had no interested aim in getting it; they knew that, as he once said, he had no time to make money, and wished to use it solely for the advancement of learning; and with this understanding they were ready, to help him generously. He compared their liberality with that of kings and princes, when these patronized science, with a recognition of the superior plebeian generosity. It was on the veranda of his summer house at Nahant, while he lay in the hammock, talking of this, that I heard him refer also to the offer which Napoleon III. had made him, inviting him upon certain splendid conditions to come to Paris after he had established himself in Cambridge. He said that he had not come to America without going over every such possibility in his own mind, and deciding beforehand against it. He was a republican, by nationality and by preference, and was entirely satisfied with his position and environment in New England.

Outside of his scientific circle in Cambridge he was more friends with Longfellow than with any one else, I believe, and Longfellow told me how, after the doctors had condemned Agassiz to inaction, on account of his failing health he had broken down in his friend's study, and wept like an 'Europaer', and lamented, "I shall never finish my work!" Some papers which he had begun to write for the Magazine, in contravention of the Darwinian theory, or part of it, which it is known Agassiz did not accept, remained part of the work which he never finished. After his death, I wished Professor Jeffries Wyman to write of him in the Atlantic, but he excused himself on account of his many labors, and then he voluntarily spoke of Agassiz's methods, which he agreed with rather than his theories, being himself thoroughly Darwinian. I think he said Agassiz was the first to imagine establishing a fact not from a single example, but from examples indefinitely repeated. If it was a question of something about robins for instance, he would have a hundred robins examined before he would receive an appearance as a fact.

Of course no preconception or prepossession of his own was suffered to bar his way to the final truth he was seeking, and he joyously renounced

even a conclusion if he found it mistaken. I do not know whether Mrs. Agassiz has put into her interesting life of him, a delightful story which she told me about him. He came to her beaming one day, and demanded, "You know I have always held such and such an opinion about a certain group of fossil fishes?" "Yes, yes!" "Well, I have just been reading -----'s new book, and he has shown me that there isn't the least truth in my theory"; and he burst into a laugh of unalloyed pleasure in relinquishing his error.

I could touch science at Cambridge only on its literary and social side, of course, and my meetings with Agassiz were not many. I recall a dinner at his house to Mr. Bret Harte, when the poet came on from California, and Agassiz approached him over the coffee through their mutual scientific interest in the last meeting of the geological "Society upon the Stanislaw." He quoted to the author some passages from the poem recording the final proceedings of this body, which had particularly pleased him, and I think Mr. Harte was as much amused at finding himself thus in touch with the savant, as Agassiz could ever have been with that delicious poem.

Agassiz lived at one end of Quincy Street, and James almost at the other end, with an interval between them which but poorly typified their difference of temperament. The one was all philosophical and the other all scientific, and yet towards the close of his life, Agassiz may be said to have led that movement towards the new position of science in matters of mystery which is now characteristic of it. He was ancestrally of the Swiss "Brahminical caste," as so many of his friends in Cambridge were of the Brahminical caste of New England; and perhaps it was the line of ancestral pasteurs which at last drew him back, or on, to the affirmation of an unformulated faith of his own. At any rate, before most other savants would say that they had souls of their own he became, by opening a summer school of science with prayer, nearly as consolatory to the unscientific who wished to believe they had souls, as Mr. John Fiske himself, though Mr. Fiske, as the arch-apostle of Darwinism, had arrived at nearly the same point by such a very different road.

Mr. Fiske had been our neighbor in our first Cambridge home, and when we went to live in Berkeley Street, he followed with his family and placed himself across the way in a house which I already knew as the home of Richard Henry Dana, the author of 'Two Years Before the Mast.' Like nearly all the other Cambridge men of my acquaintance Dana was very much my senior, and like the rest he welcomed my literary promise as cordially as if it were performance, with no suggestion of the condescension which was said to be his attitude towards many of his fellow-men. I never saw anything of this, in fact, and I suppose he may have been a blend of those patrician qualities and democratic principles which made Lowell anomalous even to himself. He is part of the anti-slavery history of his time, and he gave to the oppressed his strenuous help both as a man and a politician; his gifts and learning in the law were freely at their service. He never lost his interest in those white slaves, whose brutal bondage he remembered as bound with them in his 'Two Years Before the Mast,' and any luckless seaman with a case or cause might count upon his friendship as surely as the black slaves of the South. He was able to

temper his indignation for their oppression with a humorous perception of what was droll in its agents and circumstances; and I wish I could recall all that he said once about sea-etiquette on merchant vessels, where the chief mate might no more speak to the captain at table without being addressed by him than a subject might put a question to his sovereign. He was amusing in his stories of the Pacific trade in which he said it was very noble to deal in furs from the Northwest, and very ignoble to deal in hides along the Mexican and South American coasts. Every ship's master wished naturally to be in the fur-carrying trade, and in one of Dana's instances, two vessels encounter in mid-ocean, and exchange the usual parley as to their respective ports of departure and destination. The final demand comes through the trumpet, "What cargo?" and the captain so challenged yields to temptation and roars back "Furs!" A moment of hesitation elapses, and then the questioner pursues, "Here and there a horn?"

There were other distinctions, of which seafaring men of other days were keenly sensible, and Dana dramatized the meeting of a great, swelling East Indiaman, with a little Atlantic trader, which has hailed her. She shouts back through her captain's trumpet that she is from Calcutta, and laden with silks, spices, and other orient treasures, and in her turn she requires like answer from the sail which has presumed to enter into parley with her. "What cargo?" The trader confesses to a mixed cargo for Boston, and to the final question, her master replies in meek apology, "Only from Liverpool, sir!" and scuttles down the horizon as swiftly as possible.

Dana was not of the Cambridge men whose calling was in Cambridge. He was a lawyer in active practice, and he went every day to Boston. One was apt to meet him in those horse-cars which formerly tinkled back and forth between the two cities, and which were often so full of one's acquaintance that they had all the social elements of an afternoon tea. They were abusively overcrowded at times, of course, and one might easily see a prime literary celebrity swaying from, a strap, or hanging uneasily by the hand-rail to the lower steps of the back platform. I do not mean that I ever happened to see the author of *Two Years Before the Mast* in either fact, but in his celebrity he had every qualification for the illustration of my point. His book probably carried the American name farther and wider than any American books except those of Irving and Cooper at a day when our writers were very little known, and our literature was the only infant industry not fostered against foreign ravage, but expressly left to harden and strengthen itself as it best might in a heartless neglect even at home. The book was delightful, and I remember it from a reading of thirty years ago, as of the stuff that classics are made of. I venture no conjecture as to its present popularity, but of all books relating to the sea I think it, is the best. The author when I knew him was still Richard Henry Dana, Jr., his father, the aged poet, who first established the name in the public recognition, being alive, though past literary activity. It was distinctively a literary race, and in the actual generation it has given proofs of its continued literary vitality in the romance of 'Espiritu Santo' by the youngest daughter of the Dana I knew.

VII.

There could be no stronger contrast to him in origin, education, and character than a man who lived at the same time in Cambridge, and who produced a book which in its final fidelity to life is not unworthy to be named with 'Two Years Before the Mast.' Ralph Keeler wrote the 'Vagabond Adventures' which he had lived. I have it on my heart to name him in the presence of our great literary men not only because I had an affection for him, tenderer than I then knew, but because I believe his book is worthier of more remembrance than it seems to enjoy. I was reading it only the other day, and I found it delightful, and much better than I imagined when I accepted for the Atlantic the several papers which it is made up of. I am not sure but it belongs to the great literature in that fidelity to life which I have spoken of, and which the author brought himself to practise with such difficulty, and under so much stress from his editor. He really wanted to fake it at times, but he was docile at last and did it so honestly that it tells the history of his strange career in much better terms than it can be given again. He had been, as he claimed, "a cruel uncle's ward" in his early orphan-hood, and while yet almost a child he had run away from home, to fulfil his heart's desire of becoming a clog-dancer in a troupe of negro minstrels. But it was first his fate to be cabin-boy and bootblack on a lake steamboat, and meet with many squalid adventures, scarcely to be matched outside of a Spanish picaresque novel. When he did become a dancer (and even a danseuse) of the sort he aspired to be, the fruition of his hopes was so little what he imagined that he was very willing to leave the Floating Palace on the Mississippi in which his troupe voyaged and exhibited, and enter the college of the Jesuit Fathers at Cape Girardeau in Missouri. They were very good to him, and in their charge he picked up a good deal more Latin, if not less Greek than another strolling player who also took to literature. From college Keeler went to Europe, and then to California, whence he wrote me that he was coming on to Boston with the manuscript of a novel which he wished me to read for the magazine. I reported against it to my chief, but nothing could shake Keeler's faith in it, until he had printed it at his own cost, and known it fail instantly and decisively. He had come to Cambridge to see it through the press, and he remained there four or five years, with certain brief absences. Then, during the Cuban insurrection of the early seventies, he accepted the invitation of a New York paper to go to Cuba as its correspondent.

"Don't go, Keeler," I entreated him, when he came to tell me of his intention. "They'll garrote you down there."

"Well," he said, with the air of being pleasantly interested by the coincidence, as he stood on my study hearth with his feet wide apart in a fashion he had, and gayly flitted his hand in the air, "that's what Aldrich says, and he's agreed to write my biography, on condition that I make a last dying speech when they bring me out on the plaza to do it, 'If I had taken the advice of my friend T. B. Aldrich, author of

'Marjorie Daw and Other People,' I should not now be in this place."

He went, and he did not come back. He was not indeed garroted as his friends had promised, but he was probably assassinated on the steamer by which he sailed from Santiago, for he never arrived in Havana, and was never heard of again.

I now realize that I loved him, though I did as little to show it as men commonly do. If I am to meet somewhere else the friends who are no longer here, I should like to meet Ralph Keeler, and I would take some chances of meeting in a happy place a soul which had by no means kept itself unspotted, but which in all its consciousness of error, cheerfully trusted that "the Almighty was not going to scoop any of us." The faith worded so grotesquely could not have been more simply or humbly affirmed, and no man I think could have been more helplessly sincere. He had nothing of that false self-respect which forbids a man to own himself wrong promptly and utterly when need is; and in fact he owned to some things in his checkered past which would hardly allow him any sort of self-respect. He had always an essential gaiety not to be damped by any discipline, and a docility which expressed itself in cheerful compliance. "Why do you use bias for opinion?" I demanded, in going over a proof with him. "Oh, because I'm such an ass--such a bi-ass."

He had a philosophy which he liked to impress with a vivid touch on his listener's shoulder: "Put your finger on the present moment and enjoy it. It's the only one you've got, or ever will have." This light and joyous creature could not but be a Pariah among our Brahmins, and I need not say that I never met him in any of the great Cambridge houses. I am not sure that he was a persona grata to every one in my own, for Keeler was famed rather for men's liking, and Mr. Aldrich and I had our subtleties as to whether his mind about women was not so Chinese as somewhat to infect his manner. Keeler was too really modest to be of any rebellious mind towards the society which ignored him, and of too sweet a cheerfulness to be greatly vexed by it. He lived on in the house of a suave old actor, who oddly made his home in Cambridge, and he continued of a harmless Bohemianism in his daily walk, which included lunches at Boston restaurants as often as he could get you to let him give them you, if you were of his acquaintance. On a Sunday he would appear coming out of the post-office usually at the hour when all cultivated Cambridge was coming for its letters, and wave a glad hand in air, and shout a blithe salutation to the friend he had marked for his companion in a morning stroll. The stroll was commonly over the flats towards Brighton (I do not know why, except perhaps that it was out of the beat of the better element) and the talk was mainly of literature, in which he was doing less than he meant to do, and which he seemed never able quite to feel was not a branch of the Show Business, and might not be legitimately worked by like advertising, though he truly loved and honored it.

I suppose it was not altogether a happy life, and Keeler had his moments of amusing depression, which showed their shadows in his smiling face. He was of a slight figure and low stature, with hands and feet of almost womanish littleness. He was very blonde, and his restless eyes were blue; he wore his yellow beard in whiskers only, which he pulled

nervously but perhaps did not get to droop so much as he wished.

VIII.

Keeler was a native of Ohio, and there lived at Cambridge when I first came there an Indianian, more accepted by literary society, who was of real quality as a poet. Forceythe Willson, whose poem of "The Old Sergeant" Doctor Holmes used to read publicly in the closing year of the civil war, was of a Western altitude of figure, and of an extraordinary beauty of face in an oriental sort. He had large, dark eyes with clouded whites; his full, silken beard was of a flashing Persian blackness. He was excessively nervous, to such an extreme that when I first met him at Longfellow's, he could not hold himself still in his chair. I think this was an effect of shyness in him, as well as physical, for afterwards when I went to find him in his own house he was much more at ease.

He preferred to receive me in the dim, large hall after opening his door to me himself, and we sat down there and talked, I remember, of supernatural things. He was much interested in spiritualism, and he had several stories to tell of his own experience in such matters. But none was so good as one which I had at second hand from Lowell, who thought it almost the best ghost story he had ever heard. The spirit of Willson's father appeared to him, and stood before him. Willson was accustomed to apparitions, and so he said simply, "Won't you sit down, father?" The phantom put out his hand to lay hold of a chair-back as some people do in taking a seat, and his shadowy arm passed through the frame-work. "Ah!" he said, "I forgot that I was not substance."

I do not know whether "The Old Sergeant" is ever read now; it has probably passed with other great memories of the great war; and I am afraid none of Willson's other verse is remembered. But he was then a distinct literary figure, and not to be left out of the count of our poets. I did not see him again. Shortly afterwards I heard that he had left Cambridge with signs of consumption, which must have run a rapid course, for a very little later came the news of his death.

IX.

The most devoted Cantabrigian, after Lowell, whom I knew, would perhaps have contended that if he had stayed with us Willson might have lived; for John Holmes affirmed a faith in the virtues of the place which ascribed almost an aseptic character to its air, and when he once listened to my own complaints of an obstinate cold, he cheered himself, if not me, with the declaration, "Well, one thing, Mr. Howells, Cambridge never let a man keep a cold yet!"

If he had said it was better to live in Cambridge with a cold than

elsewhere without one I should have believed him; as it was, Cambridge bore him out in his assertion, though she took her own time to do it.

Lowell had talked to me of him before I met him, celebrating his peculiar humor with that affection which was not always so discriminating, and Holmes was one of the first Cambridge men I knew. I knew him first in the charming old Colonial house in which his famous brother and he were born. It was demolished long before I left Cambridge, but in memory it still stands on the ground since occupied by the Hemenway Gymnasium, and shows for me through that bulk a phantom frame of Continental buff in the shadow of elms that are shadows themselves. The 'genius loci' was limping about the pleasant mansion with the rheumatism which then expressed itself to his friends in a resolute smile, but which now insists upon being an essential trait of the full-length presence to my mind: a short stout figure, helped out with a cane, and a grizzled head with features formed to win the heart rather than the eye of the beholder.

In one of his own eyes there was a cast of such winning humor and geniality that it took the liking more than any beauty could have done, and the sweetest, shy laugh in the world went with this cast.

I long wished to get him to write something for the Magazine, and at last I prevailed with him to review a history of Cambridge which had come out.

He did it charmingly of course, for he loved more to speak of Cambridge than anything else. He held his native town in an idolatry which was not blind, but which was none the less devoted because he was aware of her droll points and her weak points. He always celebrated these as so many virtues, and I think it was my own passion for her that first commended me to him. I was not her son, but he felt that this was my misfortune more than my fault, and he seemed more and more to forgive it. After we had got upon the terms of editor and contributor, we met oftener than before, though I do not now remember that I ever persuaded him to write again for me. Once he gave me something, and then took it back, with a self-distrust of it which I could not overcome.

When the Holmes house was taken down, he went to live with an old domestic in a small house on the street amusingly called Appian Way. He had certain rooms of her, and his own table, but he would not allow that he was ever anything but a lodger in the place, where he continued till he died. In the process of time he came so far to trust his experience of me, that he formed the habit of giving me an annual supper. Some days before this event, he would appear in my study, and with divers delicate and tentative approaches, nearly always of the same tenor, he would say that he should like to ask my family to an oyster supper with him. "But you know," he would explain, "I haven't a house of my own to ask you to, and I should like to give you the supper here." When I had agreed to this suggestion with due gravity, he would inquire our engagements, and then say, as if a great load were off his mind, "Well, then, I will send up a few oysters to-morrow," or whatever day we had fixed on; and after a little more talk to take the strangeness out of the affair, would go his way. On the day appointed the fish-man would come with several gallons

of oysters, which he reported Mr. Holmes had asked him to bring, and in the evening the giver of the feast would reappear, with a lank oil-cloth bag, sagged by some bottles of wine. There was always a bottle of red wine, and sometimes a bottle of champagne, and he had taken the precaution to send some crackers beforehand, so that the supper should be as entirely of his own giving as possible. He was forced to let us do the cooking and to supply the cold-slaw, and perhaps he indemnified himself for putting us to these charges and for the use of our linen and silver, by the vast superfluity of his oysters, with which we remained inundated for days. He did not care to eat many himself, but seemed content to fancy doing us a pleasure; and I have known few greater ones in life, than in the hospitality that so oddly played the host to us at our own table.

It must have seemed incomprehensible to such a Cantabrigian that we should ever have been willing to leave Cambridge, and in fact I do not well understand it myself. But if he resented it, he never showed his resentment. As often as I happened to meet him after our defection he used me with unabated kindness, and sparkled into some gaiety too ethereal for remembrance. The last time I met him was at Lowell's funeral, when I drove home with him and Curtis and Child, and in the revulsion from the stress of that saddest event, had our laugh, as people do in the presence of death, at something droll we remembered of the friend we mourned.

My nearest literary neighbor, when we lived in Sacramento Street, was the Rev. Dr. John G. Palfrey, the historian of New England, whose chimney-tops amid the pine-tops I could see from my study window when the leaves were off the little grove of oaks between us. He was one of the first of my acquaintances, not suffering the great disparity of our ages to count against me, but tactfully and sweetly adjusting himself to my youth in the friendly intercourse which he invited. He was a most gentle and kindly old man, with still an interest in liberal things which lasted till the infirmities of age secluded him from the world and all its interests. As is known, he had been in his prime one of the foremost of the New England anti-slavery men, and he had fought the good fight with a heavy heart for a brother long settled in Louisiana who sided with the South, and who after the civil war found himself disfranchised. In this temporary disability he came North to visit Doctor Palfrey upon the doctor's insistence, though at first he would have nothing to do with him, and refused even to answer his letters. "Of course," the doctor said, "I was not going to stand that from my mother's son, and I simply kept on writing." So he prevailed, but the fiery old gentleman from Louisiana was reconciled to nothing in the North but his brother, and when he came to return my visit, he quickly touched upon his cause of quarrel with us. "I can't vote," he declared, "but my coachman can, and I don't know how I'm to get the suffrage, unless my physician paints me all over with the iodine he's using for my rheumatic side."

Doctor Palfrey was most distinctly of the Brahminical caste and was long an eminent Unitarian minister, but at the time I began to know him he had long quitted the pulpit. He was so far of civic or public character as to be postmaster at Boston, when we were first neighbors, but this

officiality was probably so little in keeping with his nature that it was like a return to his truer self when he ceased to hold the place, and gave his time altogether to his history. It is a work which will hardly be superseded in the interest of those who value thorough research and temperate expression. It is very just, and without endeavor for picture or drama it is to me very attractive. Much that has to be recorded of New England lacks charm, but he gave form and dignity and presence to the memories of the past, and the finer moments of that great story, he gave with the simplicity that was their best setting. It seems to me such an apology (in the old sense) as New England might have written for herself, and in fact Doctor Palfrey was a personification of New England in one of the best and truest kinds. He was refined in the essential gentleness of his heart without being refined away; he kept the faith of her Puritan tradition though he no longer kept the Puritan faith, and his defence of the Puritan severity with the witches and Quakers was as impartial as it was efficient in positing the Puritans as of their time, and rather better and not worse than other people of the same time. He was himself a most tolerant man, and his tolerance was never weak or fond; it stopped well short of condoning error, which he condemned when he preferred to leave it to its own punishment. Personally he was without any flavor of harshness; his mind was as gentle as his manner, which was one of the gentlest I have ever known.

Of as gentle make but of more pensive temper, with unexpected bursts of lyrical gaiety, was Christopher Pearse Cranch, the poet, whom I had known in New York long before he came to live in Cambridge. He could not only play and sing most amusing songs, but he wrote very good poems and painted pictures perhaps not so good. I always liked his Venetian pictures, for their poetic, unsentimentalized veracity, and I printed as well as liked many of his poems. During the time that I knew him more than his due share of troubles and sorrows accumulated themselves on his fine head, which the years had whitened, and gave a droop to the beautiful, white-bearded face. But he had the artist soul and the poet heart, and no doubt he could take refuge in these from the cares that shadowed his visage. My acquaintance with him in Cambridge renewed itself upon the very terms of its beginning in New York. We met at Longfellow's table, where he lifted up his voice in the Yankee folk-song, "On Springfield Mountain there did dwell," which he gave with a perfectly killing mock-gravity.

XI.

At Cambridge the best society was better, it seems to me, than even that of the neighboring capital. It would be rather hard to prove this, and I must ask the reader to take my word for it, if he wishes to believe it. The great interests in that pleasant world, which I think does not present itself to my memory in a false iridescence, were the intellectual interests, and all other interests were lost in these to such as did not seek them too insistently.

People held themselves high; they held themselves personally aloof from people not duly assayed; their civilization was still Puritan though their belief had long ceased to be so. They had weights and measure, stamped in an earlier time, a time surer of itself than ours, by which they rated the merit of all comers, and rejected such as did not bear the test. These standards were their own, and they were satisfied with them; most Americans have no standards of their own, but these are not satisfied even with other people's, and so our society is in a state of tolerant and tremulous misgiving.

Family counted in Cambridge, without doubt, as it counts in New England everywhere, but family alone did not mean position, and the want of family did not mean the want of it. Money still less than family commanded; one could be openly poor in Cambridge without open shame, or shame at all, for no one was very rich there, and no one was proud of his riches.

I do not wonder that Turgenieff thought the conditions ideal, as Boyesen portrayed them to him; and I look back at my own life there with wonder at my good fortune. I was sensible, and I still am sensible this had its alloys. I was young and unknown and was making my way, and I had to suffer some of the penalties of these disadvantages; but I do not believe that anywhere else in this ill-contrived economy, where it is vainly imagined that the material struggle forms a high incentive and inspiration, would my penalties have been so light. On the other hand, the good that was done me I could never repay if I lived all over again for others the life that I have so long lived for myself. At times, when I had experienced from those elect spirits with whom I was associated, some act of friendship, as signal as it was delicate, I used to ask myself, how I could ever do anything unhandsome or ungenerous towards any one again; and I had a bad conscience the next time I did it.

The air of the Cambridge that I knew was sufficiently cool to be bracing, but what was of good import in me flourished in it. The life of the place had its lateral limitations; sometimes its lights failed to detect excellent things that lay beyond it; but upward it opened illimitably. I speak of it frankly because that life as I witnessed it is now almost wholly of the past. Cambridge is still the home of much that is good and fine in our literature: one realizes this if one names Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Mr. John Fiske, Mr. William James, Mr. Horace E. Scudder, not to name any others, but the first had not yet come back to live in his birthplace at the time I have been writing of, and the rest had not yet their actual prominence. One, in deed among so many absent, is still present there, whom from time to time I have hitherto named without offering him the recognition which I should have known an infringement of his preferences. But the literary Cambridge of thirty years ago could not be clearly imagined or justly estimated without taking into account the creative sympathy of a man whose contributions to our literature only partially represent what he has constantly done for the humanities. I am sure that, after the easy heroes of the day are long forgot, and the noisy fames of the strenuous life shall dwindle to their essential insignificance before those of the gentle life, we shall all see in Charles Eliot Norton the eminent scholar who left the quiet of

his books to become our chief citizen at the moment when he warned his countrymen of the ignominy and disaster of doing wrong.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Cold-slaw
Collective opacity
Expectation of those who will come no more
Felt that this was my misfortune more than my fault
Found life was not all poetry
He had no time to make money
Intellectual poseurs
No time to make money
NYC, a city where money counts for more and goes for less
One could be openly poor in Cambridge without open shame
Put your finger on the present moment and enjoy it
Standards were their own, and they were satisfied with them
Wonderful to me how it should remain so unintelligible

End of this Project Gutenberg Etext of Cambridge Neighbors
by William Dean Howells

LITERARY FRIENDS AND ACQUAINTANCES--A Belated Guest

by William Dean Howells

A BELATED GUEST

It is doubtful whether the survivor of any order of things finds compensation in the privilege, however undisputed by his contemporaries, of recording his memories of it. This is, in the first two or three instances, a pleasure. It is sweet to sit down, in the shade or by the fire, and recall names, looks, and tones from the past; and if the Absences thus entreated to become Presences are those of famous people, they lend to the fond historian a little of their lustre, in which he basks for the time with an agreeable sense of celebrity. But another time comes, and comes very soon, when the pensive pleasure changes to the pain of duty, and the precious privilege converts itself into a grievous obligation. You are unable to choose your company among those immortal shades; if one, why not another, where all seem to have a right to such

gleams of this 'dolce lome' as your reminiscences can shed upon them? Then they gather so rapidly, as the years pass, in these pale realms, that one, if one continues to survive, is in danger of wearing out such welcome, great or small, as met ones recollections in the first two or three instances, if one does one's duty by each. People begin to say, and not without reason, in a world so hurried and wearied as this: "Ah, here he is again with his recollections!" Well, but if the recollections by some magical good-fortune chance to concern such a contemporary of his as, say, Bret Harte, shall not he be partially justified, or at least excused?

I.

My recollections of Bret Harte begin with the arrest, on the Atlantic shore, of that progress of his from the Pacific Slope, which, in the simple days of 1871, was like the progress of a prince, in the universal attention and interest which met and followed it. He was indeed a prince, a fairy prince in whom every lover of his novel and enchanting art felt a patriotic property, for his promise and performance in those earliest tales of 'The Luck of Roaring Camp', and 'Tennessee's Partner', and 'Maggles', and 'The Outcasts of Poker Flat', were the earnest of an American literature to come. If it is still to come, in great measure, that is not Harte's fault, for he kept on writing those stories, in one form or another, as long as he lived. He wrote them first and last in the spirit of Dickens, which no man of his time could quite help doing, but he wrote them from the life of Bret Harte, on the soil and in the air of the newest kind of new world, and their freshness took the soul of his fellow-countrymen not only with joy, but with pride such as the Europeans, who adored him much longer, could never know in him.

When the adventurous young editor who had proposed being his host for Cambridge and the Boston neighborhood, while Harte was still in San Francisco, and had not yet begun his princely progress eastward, read of the honors that attended his coming from point to point, his courage fell, as if he had perhaps, committed himself in too great an enterprise. Who was he, indeed, that he should think of making this

"Dear son of memory, great heir of fame,"

his guest, especially when he heard that in Chicago Harte failed of attending a banquet of honor because the givers of it had not sent a carriage to fetch him to it, as the alleged use was in San Francisco? Whether true or not, and it was probably not true in just that form, it must have been this rumor which determined his host to drive into Boston for him with the handsomest hack which the livery of Cambridge afforded, and not trust to the horse-car and the local expressman to get him and his baggage out, as he would have done with a less portentous guest. However it was, he instantly lost all fear when they met at the station, and Harte pressed forward with his cordial hand-clasp, as if he were not even a fairy prince, and with that voice and laugh which were

surely the most winning in the world. He was then, as always, a child of extreme fashion as to his clothes and the cut of his beard, which he wore in a mustache and the drooping side-whiskers of the day, and his jovial physiognomy was as winning as his voice, with its straight nose and fascinating thrust of the under lip, its fine eyes, and good forehead, then thickly crowned with the black hair which grew early white, while his mustache remained dark the most enviable and consoling effect possible in the universal mortal necessity of either aging or dying. He was, as one could not help seeing, thickly pitted, but after the first glance one forgot this, so that a lady who met him for the first time could say to him, "Mr. Harte, aren't you afraid to go about in the cars so recklessly when there is this scare about smallpox?" "No, madam," he could answer in that rich note of his, with an irony touched by pseudo-pathos, "I bear a charmed life."

The drive out from Boston was not too long for getting on terms of personal friendship with the family which just filled the hack, the two boys intensely interested in the novelties of a New England city and suburb, and the father and mother continually exchanging admiration of such aspects of nature as presented themselves in the leafless sidewalk trees, and patches of park and lawn. They found everything so fine, so refined, after the gigantic coarseness of California, where the natural forms were so vast that one could not get on companionable terms with them. Their host heard them without misgiving for the world of romance which Harte had built up among those huge forms, and with a subtle perception that this was no excursion of theirs to the East, but a lifelong exodus from the exile which he presently understood they must always have felt California to be. It is different now, when people are every day being born in California, and must begin to feel it home from the first breath, but it is notable that none of the Californians of that great early day have gone back to live amid the scenes which inspired and prospered them.

Before they came in sight of the editor's humble roof he had mocked himself to his guest for his trepidations, and Harte with burlesque magnanimity had consented to be for that occasion only something less formidable than he had loomed afar. He accepted with joy the theory of passing a week in the home of virtuous poverty, and the week began as delightfully as it went on. From first to last Cambridge amused him as much as it charmed him by that air of academic distinction which was stranger to him even than the refined trees and grass. It has already been told how, after a list of the local celebrities had been recited to him, he said, "why, you couldn't stand on your front porch and fire off your revolver without bringing down a two volumer," and no doubt the pleasure he had in it was the effect of its contrast with the wild California he had known, and perhaps, when he had not altogether known it, had invented.

Cambridge began very promptly to show him those hospitalities which he could value, and continued the fable of his fairy princeliness in the curiosity of those humbler admirers who could not hope to be his hosts or his fellow-guests at dinner or luncheon. Pretty presences in the tie-backs of the period were seen to flit before the home of virtuous poverty, hungering for any chance sight of him which his outgoings or incomings might give. The chances were better with the outgoings than with the incomings, for these were apt to be so hurried, in the final result of his constitutional delays, as to have the rapidity of the homing pigeon's flight, and to afford hardly a glimpse to the quickest eye. It cannot harm him, or any one now, to own that Harte was nearly always late for those luncheons and dinners which he was always going out to, and it needed the anxieties and energies of both families to get him into his clothes, and then into the carriage where a good deal of final buttoning must have been done, in order that he might not arrive so very late. He was the only one concerned who was quite unconcerned; his patience with his delays was inexhaustible; he arrived at the expected houses smiling, serenely jovial, radiating a bland gaiety from his whole person, and ready to ignore any discomfort he might have occasioned.

Of course, people were glad to have him on his own terms, and it may be truly said that it was worth while to have him on any terms. There never was a more charming companion, an easier or more delightful guest.

It was not from what he said, for he was not much of a talker, and almost nothing of a story-teller; but he could now and then drop the fittest word, and with a glance or smile of friendly intelligence express the appreciation of another's fit word which goes far to establish for a man the character of boon humorist. It must be said of him that if he took the honors easily that were paid him he took them modestly, and never by word or look invited them, or implied that he expected them. It was fine to see him humorously accepting the humorous attribution of scientific sympathies from Agassiz, in compliment of his famous epic describing the incidents that "broke up the society upon the Stanislaw." It was a little fearsome to hear him frankly owning to Lowell his dislike for something over-literary in the phrasing of certain verses of 'The Cathedral.' But Lowell could stand that sort of thing from a man who could say the sort of things that Harte said to him of that delicious line picturing the bobolink as he

"Runs down a brook of laughter in the air."

This, Harte told him, was the line he liked best of all his lines, and Lowell smoked well content with the praise. Yet they were not men to get on easily together, Lowell having limitations in directions where Harte had none. Afterward in London they did not meet often or willingly. Lowell owned the brilliancy and uncommonness of Harte's gift, while he sumptuously surfeited his passion of finding everybody more or less a Jew by finding that Harte was at least half a Jew on his father's side; he had long contended for the Hebraicism of his name.

With all his appreciation of the literary eminences whom Fields used to class together as "the old saints," Harte had a spice of irreverence that

enabled him to take them more ironically than they might have liked, and to see the fun of a minor literary man's relation to them. Emerson's smoking amused him, as a Jovian self-indulgence divinely out of character with so supreme a god, and he shamelessly burlesqued it, telling how Emerson at Concord had proposed having a "wet night" with him over a glass of sherry, and had urged the scant wine upon his young friend with a hospitable gesture of his cigar. But this was long after the Cambridge episode, in which Longfellow alone escaped the corrosive touch of his subtle irreverence, or, more strictly speaking, had only the effect of his reverence. That gentle and exquisitely modest dignity, of Longfellow's he honored with as much veneration as it was in him to bestow, and he had that sense of Longfellow's beautiful and perfected art which is almost a test of a critic's own fineness.

III.

As for Harte's talk, it was mostly ironical, not to the extreme of satire, but tempered to an agreeable coolness even for the things he admired. He did not apparently care to hear himself praised, but he could very accurately and perfectly mark his discernment of excellence in others. He was at times a keen observer of nature and again not, apparently. Something was said before him and Lowell of the beauty of his description of a rabbit, startled with fear among the ferns, and lifting its head with the pulsation of its frightened heart visibly shaking it; then the talk turned on the graphic homeliness of Dante's noticing how the dog's skin moves upon it, and Harte spoke of the exquisite shudder with which a horse tries to rid itself of a fly.

But once again, when an azalea was shown to him as the sort of bush that Sandy drunkenly slept under in 'The Idyl of Iced Gulch', he asked, "Why, is that an azalea?" To be sure, this might have been less from his ignorance or indifference concerning the quality of the bush he had sent Sandy to sleep under than from his willingness to make a mock of an azalea in a very small pot, so disproportionate to uses which an azalea of Californian size could easily lend itself to.

You never could be sure of Harte; he could only by chance be caught in earnest about anything or anybody. Except for those slight recognitions of literary, traits in his talk with Lowell, nothing remained from his conversation but the general criticism he passed upon his brilliant fellow-Hebrew Heine, as "rather scorbutic." He preferred to talk about the little matters of common incident and experience. He amused himself with such things as the mystification of the postman of whom he asked his way to Phillips Avenue, where he adventurously supposed his host to be living. "Why," the postman said, "there is no Phillips Avenue in Cambridge. There's Phillips Place." "Well," Harte assented, "Phillips Place will do; but there is a Phillips Avenue." He entered eagerly into the canvass of the distinctions and celebrities asked to meet him at the reception made for him, but he had even a greater pleasure in compassionating his host for the vast disparity between the caterer's

china and plated ware and the simplicities and humilities of the home of virtuous poverty; and he spluttered with delight at the sight of the lofty 'epergnes' set up and down the supper-table when he was brought in to note the preparations made in his honor. Those monumental structures were an inexhaustible joy to him; he walked round and round the room, and viewed them in different perspectives, so as to get the full effect of the towering forms that dwarfed it so.

He was a tease, as many a sweet and fine wit is apt to be, but his teasing was of the quality of a caress, so much kindness went with it. He lamented as an irreparable loss his having missed seeing that night an absent-minded brother in literature, who came in rubber shoes, and forgetfully wore them throughout the evening. That hospitable soul of Ralph Keeler, who had known him in California, but had trembled for their acquaintance when he read of all the honors that might well have spoiled Harte for the friends of his simpler days, rejoiced in the unchanged cordiality of his nature when they met, and presently gave him one of those restaurant lunches in Boston, which he was always sumptuously providing out of his destitution. Harte was the life of a time which was perhaps less a feast of reason than a flow of soul. The truth is, there was nothing but careless stories carelessly told, and jokes and laughing, and a great deal of mere laughing without the jokes, the whole as unlike the ideal of a literary symposium as well might be; but there was present one who met with that pleasant Boston company for the first time, and to whom Harte attributed a superstition of Boston seriousness not realized then and there. "Look at him," he said, from time to time. "This is the dream of his life," and then shouted and choked with fun at the difference between the occasion and the expectation he would have imagined in his commensal's mind. At a dinner long after in London, where several of the commensals of that time met again, with other literary friends of a like age and stature, Harte laid his arms well along their shoulders as they formed in a half-circle before him, and screamed out in mocking mirth at the bulbous favor to which the slim shapes of the earlier date had come. The sight was not less a rapture to him that he was himself the prey of the same practical joke from the passing years. The hair which the years had wholly swept from some of those thoughtful brows, or left spindling autumnal spears, "or few or none," to "shake against the cold," had whitened to a wintry snow on his, while his mustache had kept its youthful black. "He looks," one of his friends said to another as they walked home together, "like a French marquis of the ancien regime." "Yes," the other assented, thoughtfully, "or like an American actor made up for the part."

The saying closely fitted the outward fact, but was of a subtle injustice in its implication of anything histrionic in Harte's nature. Never was any man less a 'poseur'; he made simply and helplessly known what he was at any and every moment, and he would join the witness very cheerfully in enjoying whatever was amusing in the disadvantage to himself. In the course of events, which were in his case so very human, it came about on a subsequent visit of his to Boston that an impatient creditor decided to right himself out of the proceeds of the lecture which was to be given, and had the law corporeally present at the house of the friend where Harte dined, and in the anteroom at the lecture-hall, and on the

platform, where the lecture was delivered with beautiful aplomb and untroubled charm. He was indeed the only one privy to the law's presence who was not the least affected by it, so that when his host of an earlier time ventured to suggest, "Well, Harte, this is the old literary tradition; this is the Fleet business over again," he joyously smote his thigh and crowed out, "Yes, the Fleet!" No doubt he tasted all the delicate humor of the situation, and his pleasure in it was quite unaffected.

If his temperament was not adapted to the harsh conditions of the elder American world, it might very well be that his temperament was not altogether in the wrong. If it disabled him for certain experiences of life, it was the source of what was most delightful in his personality, and perhaps most beautiful in his talent. It enabled him to do such things as he did without being at all anguished for the things he did not do, and indeed could not. His talent was not a facile gift; he owned that he often went day after day to his desk, and sat down before that yellow post-office paper on which he liked to write his literature, in that exquisitely refined script of his, without being able to inscribe a line. It may be owned for him that though he came to the East at thirty-four, which ought to have been the very prime of his powers, he seemed to have arrived after the age of observation was past for him. He saw nothing aright, either in Newport, where he went to live, or in New York, where he sojourned, or on those lecturing tours which took him about the whole country; or if he saw it aright, he could not report it aright, or would not. After repeated and almost invariable failures to deal with the novel characters and circumstances which he encountered he left off trying, and frankly went back to the semi-mythical California he had half discovered, half created, and wrote Bret Harte over and over as long as he lived. This, whether he did it from instinct or from reason, was the best thing he could do, and it went as nearly as might be to satisfy the insatiable English fancy for the wild America no longer to be found on our map.

It is imaginable of Harte that this temperament defended him from any bitterness in the disappointment he may have shared with that simple American public which in the early eighteen-seventies expected any and everything of him in fiction and drama. The long breath was not his; he could not write a novel, though he produced the like of one or two, and his plays were too bad for the stage, or else too good for it. At any rate, they could not keep it, even when they got it, and they denoted the fatigue or the indifference of their author in being dramatizations of his longer or shorter fictions, and not originally dramatic efforts. The direction in which his originality lasted longest, and most strikingly affirmed his power, was in the direction of his verse.

Whatever minds there may be about Harte's fiction finally, there can hardly be more than one mind about his poetry. He was indeed a poet; whether he wrote what drolly called itself "dialect," or wrote language, he was a poet of a fine and fresh touch. It must be allowed him that in prose as well he had the inventive gift, but he had it in verse far more importantly. There are lines, phrases, turns in his poems, characterizations, and pictures which will remain as enduringly as

anything American, if that is not saying altogether too little for them. In poetry he rose to all the occasions he made for himself, though he could not rise to the occasions made for him, and so far failed in the demands he acceded to for a Phi Beta Kappa poem, as to come to that august Harvard occasion with a jingle so trivial, so out of keeping, so inadequate that his enemies, if he ever truly had any, must have suffered from it almost as much as his friends. He himself did not suffer from his failure, from having read before the most elect assembly of the country a poem which would hardly have served the careless needs of an informal dinner after the speaking had begun; he took the whole disastrous business lightly, gayly, leniently, kindly, as that golden temperament of his enabled him to take all the good or bad of life.

The first year of his Eastern sojourn was salaried in a sum which took the souls of all his young contemporaries with wonder, if no baser passion, in the days when dollars were of so much farther flight than now, but its net result in a literary return to his publishers was one story and two or three poems. They had not profited much by his book, which, it will doubtless amaze a time of fifty thousand editions selling before their publication, to learn had sold only thirty-five hundred in the sixth month of its career, as Harte himself,

"With sick and scornful looks averse,"

confided to his Cambridge host after his first interview with the Boston counting-room. It was the volume which contained "The Luck of Roaring Camp," and the other early tales which made him a continental, and then an all but a world-wide fame. Stories that had been talked over, and laughed over, and cried over all up and down the land, that had been received with acclaim by criticism almost as boisterous as their popularity, and recognized as the promise of greater things than any done before in their kind, came to no more than this pitiful figure over the booksellers' counters. It argued much for the publishers that in spite of this stupefying result they were willing, they were eager, to pay him ten thousand dollars for whatever, however much or little, he chose to write in a year: Their offer was made in Boston, after some offers mortifyingly mean, and others insultingly vague, had been made in New York.

It was not his fault that their venture proved of such slight return in literary material. Harte was in the midst of new and alien conditions, --[See a corollary in M. Froude who visited the U.S. for a few months and then published a comprehensive analysis of the nation and its people. Twain's rebuttal (Mr. Froude's Progress) would have been 'a propos' for Harte in Cambridge. D.W.]--and he had always his temperament against him, as well as the reluctant if not the niggard nature of his muse. He would no doubt have been only too glad to do more than he did for the money, but actually if not literally he could not do more. When it came to literature, all the gay improvidence of life forsook him, and he became a stern, rigorous, exacting self-master, who spared himself nothing to achieve the perfection at which he aimed. He was of the order of literary men like Goldsmith and De Quincey, and Sterne and Steele, in his relations with the outer world, but in his relations with the inner

world he was one of the most duteous and exemplary citizens. There was nothing of his easy-going hilarity in that world; there he was of a Puritanic severity, and of a conscience that forgave him no pang. Other California writers have testified to the fidelity with which he did his work as editor. He made himself not merely the arbiter but the inspiration of his contributors, and in a region where literature had hardly yet replaced the wild sage-brush of frontier journalism, he made the sand-lots of San Francisco to blossom as the rose, and created a literary periodical of the first class on the borders of civilization.

It is useless to wonder now what would have been his future if the publisher of the Overland Monthly had been of imagination or capital enough to meet the demand which Harte dimly intimated to his Cambridge host as the condition of his remaining in California. Publishers, men with sufficient capital, are of a greatly varying gift in the regions of prophecy, and he of the Overland Monthly was not to be blamed if he could not foresee his account in paying Harte ten thousand a year to continue editing the magazine. He did according to his lights, and Harte came to the East, and then went to England, where his last twenty-five years were passed in cultivating the wild plant of his Pacific Slope discovery. It was always the same plant, leaf and flower and fruit, but it perennially pleased the constant English world, and thence the European world, though it presently failed of much delighting these fastidious States. Probably he would have done something else if he could; he did not keep on doing the wild mining-camp thing because it was the easiest, but because it was for him the only possible thing. Very likely he might have preferred not doing anything.

IV.

The joyous visit of a week, which has been here so poorly recovered from the past, came to an end, and the host went with his guest to the station in as much vehicular magnificence as had marked his going to meet him there. Harte was no longer the alarming portent of the earlier time, but an experience of unalloyed delight. You must love a person whose worst trouble-giving was made somehow a favor by his own unconsciousness of the trouble, and it was a most flattering triumph to have got him in time, or only a little late, to so many luncheons and dinners. If only now he could be got to the train in time the victory would be complete, the happiness of the visit without a flaw. Success seemed to crown the fondest hope in this respect. The train had not yet left the station; there stood the parlor-car which Harte had seats in; and he was followed aboard for those last words in which people try to linger out pleasures they have known together. In this case the sweetest of the pleasures had been sitting up late after those dinners, and talking them over, and then degenerating from that talk into the mere giggle and making giggle which Charles Lamb found the best thing in life. It had come to this as the host and guest sat together for those parting moments, when Harte suddenly started up in the discovery of having forgotten to get some cigars. They rushed out of the train together, and after a wild descent

upon the cigar-counter of the restaurant, Harte rushed back to his car. But by this time the train was already moving with that deceitful slowness of the departing train, and Harte had to clamber up the steps of the rearmost platform. His host clambered after, to make sure that he was aboard, which done, he dropped to the ground, while Harte drew out of the station, blandly smiling, and waving his hand with a cigar in it, in picturesque farewell from the platform.

Then his host realized that he had dropped to the ground barely in time to escape being crushed against the side of the archway that sharply descended beside the steps of the train, and he went and sat down in that handsomest hack, and was for a moment deathly sick at the danger that had not realized itself to him in season. To be sure, he was able, long after, to adapt the incident to the exigencies of fiction, and to have a character, not otherwise to be conveniently disposed of, actually crushed to death between a moving train and such an archway.

Besides, he had then and always afterward, the immense super-compensation of the memories of that visit from one of the most charming personalities in the world,

"In life's morning march when his bosom was young,"

and when infinitely less would have sated him. Now death has come to join its vague conjectures to the broken expectations of life, and that blithe spirit is elsewhere. But nothing can take from him who remains the witchery of that most winning presence. Still it looks smiling from the platform of the car, and casts a farewell of mock heartbreak from it. Still a gay laugh comes across the abyss of the years that are now numbered, and out of somewhere the hearer's sense is rapt with the mellow cordial of a voice that was like no other.

[This last paragraph reminds one again that, as with Holmes: a great poet writes the best prose. D.W.]

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Always sumptuously providing out of his destitution
Could only by chance be caught in earnest about anything
Couldn't fire your revolver without bringing down a two volumner
Death's vague conjectures to the broken expectations of life
Dollars were of so much farther flight than now
Enjoying whatever was amusing in the disadvantage to himself
Express the appreciation of another's fit word
Gay laugh comes across the abyss of the years
Giggle which Charles Lamb found the best thing in life
His enemies suffered from it almost as much as his friends
His plays were too bad for the stage, or else too good for it
Insatiable English fancy for the wild America no longer there
Long breath was not his; he could not write a novel

Mellow cordial of a voice that was like no other
Not much of a talker, and almost nothing of a story-teller
Now death has come to join its vague conjectures
Offers mortifyingly mean, and others insultingly vague
Only one concerned who was quite unconcerned
So refined, after the gigantic coarseness of California
Wrote them first and last in the spirit of Dickens

End of this Project Gutenberg Etext of A Belated Guest
by William Dean Howells

LITERARY FRIENDS AND ACQUAINTANCES--My Mark Twain

by William Dean Howells

MY MARK TWAIN

I.

It was in the little office of James T. Fields, over the bookstore of Ticknor & Fields, at 124 Tremont Street, Boston, that I first met my friend of now forty-four years, Samuel L. Clemens. Mr. Fields was then the editor of The Atlantic Monthly, and I was his proud and glad assistant, with a pretty free hand as to manuscripts, and an unmanacled command of the book-notices at the end of the magazine. I wrote nearly all of them myself, and in 1869 I had written rather a long notice of a book just winning its way to universal favor. In this review I had intimated my reservations concerning the 'Innocents Abroad', but I had the luck, if not the sense, to recognize that it was such fun as we had not had before. I forget just what I said in praise of it, and it does not matter; it is enough that I praised it enough to satisfy the author. He now signified as much, and he stamped his gratitude into my memory with a story wonderfully allegorizing the situation, which the mock modesty of print forbids my repeating here. Throughout my long acquaintance with him his graphic touch was always allowing itself a freedom which I cannot bring my fainter pencil to illustrate. He had the Southwestern, the Lincolnian, the Elizabethan breadth of parlance, which I suppose one ought not to call coarse without calling one's self prudish; and I was often hiding away in discreet holes and corners the letters in which he had loosed his bold fancy to stoop on rank suggestion; I could not bear to burn them, and I could not, after the

first reading, quite bear to look at them. I shall best give my feeling on this point by saying that in it he was Shakespearian, or if his ghost will not suffer me the word, then he was Baconian.

At the time of our first meeting, which must have been well toward the winter, Clemens (as I must call him instead of Mark Twain, which seemed always somehow to mask him from my personal sense) was wearing a sealskin coat, with the fur out, in the satisfaction of a caprice, or the love of strong effect which he was apt to indulge through life. I do not know what droll comment was in Fields's mind with respect to this garment, but probably he felt that here was an original who was not to be brought to any Bostonian book in the judgment of his vivid qualities. With his crest of dense red hair, and the wide sweep of his flaming mustache, Clemens was not discordantly clothed in that sealskin coat, which afterward, in spite of his own warmth in it, sent the cold chills through me when I once accompanied it down Broadway, and shared the immense publicity it won him. He had always a relish for personal effect, which expressed itself in the white suit of complete serge which he wore in his last years, and in the Oxford gown which he put on for every possible occasion, and said he would like to wear all the time. That was not vanity in him, but a keen feeling for costume which the severity of our modern tailoring forbids men, though it flatters women to every excess in it; yet he also enjoyed the shock, the offence, the pang which it gave the sensibilities of others. Then there were times he played these pranks for pure fun, and for the pleasure of the witness. Once I remember seeing him come into his drawing-room at Hartford in a pair of white cowskin slippers, with the hair out, and do a crippled colored uncle to the joy of all beholders. Or, I must not say all, for I remember also the dismay of Mrs. Clemens, and her low, despairing cry of, "Oh, Youth!" That was her name for him among their friends, and it fitted him as no other would, though I fancied with her it was a shrinking from his baptismal Samuel, or the vernacular Sam of his earlier companionships. He was a youth to the end of his days, the heart of a boy with the head of a sage; the heart of a good boy, or a bad boy, but always a wilful boy, and wilfulest to show himself out at every, time for just the boy he was.

II.

There is a gap in my recollections of Clemens, which I think is of a year or two, for the next thing I remember of him is meeting him at a lunch in Boston, given us by that genius of hospitality, the tragically destined Ralph Keeler, author of one of the most unjustly forgotten books, 'Vagabond Adventures', a true bit of picaresque autobiography. Keeler never had any money, to the general knowledge, and he never borrowed, and he could not have had credit at the restaurant where he invited us to feast at his expense. There was T. B. Aldrich, there was J. T. Fields, much the oldest of our company, who had just freed himself from the trammels of the publishing business, and was feeling his freedom in every word; there was Bret Harte, who had lately come East in his princely

progress from California; and there was Clemens. Nothing remains to me of the happy time but a sense of idle and aimless and joyful talk-play, beginning and ending nowhere, of eager laughter, of countless good stories from Fields, of a heat-lightning shimmer of wit from Aldrich, of an occasional concentration of our joint mockeries upon our host, who took it gladly; and amid the discourse, so little improving, but so full of good fellowship, Bret Harte's fleeting dramatization of Clemens's mental attitude toward a symposium of Boston illuminates. "Why, fellows," he spluttered, "this is the dream of Mark's life," and I remember the glance from under Clemens's feathery eyebrows which betrayed his enjoyment of the fun. We had beefsteak with mushrooms, which in recognition of their shape Aldrich hailed as shoe-pegs, and to crown the feast we had an omelette souse, which the waiter brought in as flat as a pancake, amid our shouts of congratulations to poor Keeler, who took them with appreciative submission. It was in every way what a Boston literary lunch ought not to have been in the popular ideal which Harte attributed to Clemens.

Our next meeting was at Hartford, or, rather, at Springfield, where Clemens greeted us on the way to Hartford. Aldrich was going on to be his guest, and I was going to be Charles Dudley Warner's, but Clemens had come part way to welcome us both. In the good fellowship of that cordial neighborhood we had two such days as the aging sun no longer shines on in his round. There was constant running in and out of friendly houses where the lively hosts and guests called one another by their Christian names or nicknames, and no such vain ceremony as knocking or ringing at doors. Clemens was then building the stately mansion in which he satisfied his love of magnificence as if it had been another sealskin coat, and he was at the crest of the prosperity which enabled him to humor every whim or extravagance. The house was the design of that most original artist, Edward Potter, who once, when hard pressed by incompetent curiosity for the name of his style in a certain church, proposed that it should be called the English violet order of architecture; and this house was so absolutely suited to the owner's humor that I suppose there never was another house like it; but its character must be for recognition farther along in these reminiscences. The vividest impression which Clemens gave us two ravenous young Boston authors was of the satisfying, the surfeiting nature of subscription publication. An army of agents was overrunning the country with the prospectuses of his books, and delivering them by the scores of thousands in completed sale. Of the 'Innocents Abroad' he said, "It sells right along just like the Bible," and 'Roughing It' was swiftly following, without perhaps ever quite overtaking it in popularity. But he lectured Aldrich and me on the folly of that mode of publication in the trade which we had thought it the highest success to achieve a chance in. "Anything but subscription publication is printing for private circulation," he maintained, and he so won upon our greed and hope that on the way back to Boston we planned the joint authorship of a volume adapted to subscription publication. We got a very good name for it, as we believed, in Memorable Murders, and we never got farther with it, but by the time we reached Boston we were rolling in wealth so deep that we could hardly walk home in the frugal fashion by which we still thought it best to spare car fare; carriage fare we did not dream of even in that

opulence.

III.

The visits to Hartford which had begun with this affluence continued without actual increase of riches for me, but now I went alone, and in Warner's European and Egyptian absences I formed the habit of going to Clemens. By this time he was in his new house, where he used to give me a royal chamber on the ground floor, and come in at night after I had gone to bed to take off the burglar alarm so that the family should not be roused if anybody tried to get in at my window. This would be after we had sat up late, he smoking the last of his innumerable cigars, and soothing his tense nerves with a mild hot Scotch, while we both talked and talked and talked, of everything in the heavens and on the earth, and the waters under the earth. After two days of this talk I would come away hollow, realizing myself best in the image of one of those locust-shells which you find sticking to the bark of trees at the end of summer. Once, after some such bout of brains, we went down to New York together, and sat facing each other in the Pullman smoker without passing a syllable till we had occasion to say, "Well, we're there." Then, with our installation in a now vanished hotel (the old Brunswick, to be specific), the talk began again with the inspiration of the novel environment, and went on and on. We wished to be asleep, but we could not stop, and he lounged through the rooms in the long nightgown which he always wore in preference to the pajamas which he despised, and told the story of his life, the inexhaustible, the fairy, the Arabian Nights story, which I could never tire of even when it began to be told over again. Or at times he would reason high--

"Of Providence, foreknowledge, will and fate,
Fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute,"

walking up and down, and halting now and then, with a fine toss and slant of his shaggy head, as some bold thought or splendid joke struck him.

He was in those days a constant attendant at the church of his great friend, the Rev. Joseph H. Twichell, and at least tacitly far from the entire negation he came to at last. I should say he had hardly yet examined the grounds of his passive acceptance of his wife's belief, for it was hers and not his, and he held it unscanned in the beautiful and tender loyalty to her which was the most moving quality of his most faithful soul. I make bold to speak of the love between them, because without it I could not make him known to others as he was known to me. It was a greater part of him than the love of most men for their wives, and she merited all the worship he could give her, all the devotion, all the implicit obedience, by her surpassing force and beauty of character. She was in a way the loveliest person I have ever seen, the gentlest, the kindest, without a touch of weakness; she united wonderful tact with wonderful truth; and Clemens not only accepted her rule implicitly, but he rejoiced, he gloried in it. I am not sure that he noticed all her

goodness in the actions that made it a heavenly vision to others, he so had the habit of her goodness; but if there was any forlorn and helpless creature in the room Mrs. Clemens was somehow promptly at his side or hers; she was always seeking occasion of kindness to those in her household or out of it; she loved to let her heart go beyond the reach of her hand, and imagined the whole hard and suffering world with compassion for its structural as well as incidental wrongs. I suppose she had her ladyhood limitations, her female fears of etiquette and convention, but she did not let them hamper the wild and splendid generosity with which Clemens rebelled against the social stupidities and cruelties. She had been a lifelong invalid when he met her, and he liked to tell the beautiful story of their courtship to each new friend whom he found capable of feeling its beauty or worthy of hearing it. Naturally, her father had hesitated to give her into the keeping of the young strange Westerner, who had risen up out of the unknown with his giant reputation of burlesque humorist, and demanded guaranties, demanded proofs. "He asked me," Clemens would say, "if I couldn't give him the names of people who knew me in California, and when it was time to hear from them I heard from him. 'Well, Mr. Clemens,' he said, 'nobody seems to have a very good word for you.' I hadn't referred him to people that I thought were going to whitewash me. I thought it was all up with me, but I was disappointed. 'So I guess I shall have to back you myself.'"

Whether this made him faithfuler to the trust put in him I cannot say, but probably not; it was always in him to be faithful to any trust, and in proportion as a trust of his own was betrayed he was ruthlessly and implacably resentful. But I wish now to speak of the happiness of that household in Hartford which responded so perfectly to the ideals of the mother when the three daughters, so lovely and so gifted, were yet little children. There had been a boy, and "Yes, I killed him," Clemens once said, with the unsparing self-blame in which he would wreak an unavailing regret. He meant that he had taken the child out imprudently, and the child had taken the cold which he died of, but it was by no means certain this was through its father's imprudence. I never heard him speak of his son except that once, but no doubt in his deep heart his loss was irreparably present. He was a very tender father and delighted in the minds of his children, but he was wise enough to leave their training altogether to the wisdom of their mother. He left them to that in everything, keeping for himself the pleasure of teaching them little scenes of drama, learning languages with them, and leading them in singing. They came to the table with their parents, and could have set him an example in behavior when, in moments of intense excitement, he used to leave his place and walk up and down the room, flying his napkin and talking and talking.

It was after his first English sojourn that I used to visit him, and he was then full of praise of everything English: the English personal independence and public spirit, and hospitality, and truth. He liked to tell stories in proof of their virtues, but he was not blind to the defects of their virtues: their submissive acceptance of caste, their callousness with strangers; their bluntness with one another. Mrs. Clemens had been in a way to suffer socially more than he, and she praised the English less. She had sat after dinner with ladies who

snubbed and ignored one another, and left her to find her own amusement in the absence of the attention with which Americans perhaps cloy their guests, but which she could not help preferring. In their successive sojourns among them I believe he came to like the English less and she more; the fine delight of his first acceptance among them did not renew itself till his Oxford degree was given him; then it made his cup run over, and he was glad the whole world should see it.

His wife would not chill the ardor of his early Anglomania, and in this, as in everything, she wished to humor him to the utmost. No one could have realized more than she his essential fineness, his innate nobleness. Marriages are what the parties to them alone really know them to be, but from the outside I should say that this marriage was one of the most perfect. It lasted in his absolute devotion to the day of her death, that delayed long in cruel suffering, and that left one side of him in lasting night. From Florence there came to me heartbreaking letters from him about the torture she was undergoing, and at last a letter saying she was dead, with the simple-hearted cry, "I wish I was with Livy." I do not know why I have left saying till now that she was a very beautiful woman, classically regular in features, with black hair smooth over her forehead, and with tenderly peering, myopia eyes, always behind glasses, and a smile of angelic kindness. But this kindness went with a sense of humor which qualified her to appreciate the self-lawed genius of a man who will be remembered with the great humorists of all time, with Cervantes, with Swift, or with any others worthy his company; none of them was his equal in humanity.

IV.

Clemens had appointed himself, with the architect's connivance, a luxurious study over the library in his new house, but as his children grew older this study, with its carved and cushioned arm-chairs, was given over to them for a school-room, and he took the room above his stable, which had been intended for his coachman. There we used to talk together, when we were not walking and talking together, until he discovered that he could make a more commodious use of the billiard-room at the top of his house, for the purposes of literature and friendship. It was pretty cold up there in the early spring and late fall weather with which I chiefly associate the place, but by lighting up all the gas-burners and kindling a reluctant fire on the hearth we could keep it well above freezing. Clemens could also push the balls about, and, without rivalry from me, who could no more play billiards than smoke, could win endless games of pool, while he carried points of argument against imaginable differers in opinion. Here he wrote many of his tales and sketches, and for anything I know some of his books. I particularly remember his reading me here his first rough sketch of Captain Stormfield's Visit to Heaven, with the real name of the captain, whom I knew already from his many stories about him.

We had a peculiar pleasure in looking off from the high windows on the

pretty Hartford landscape, and down from them into the tops of the trees clothing the hillside by which his house stood. We agreed that there was a novel charm in trees seen from such a vantage, far surpassing that of the farther scenery. He had not been a country boy for nothing; rather he had been a country boy, or, still better, a village boy, for everything that Nature can offer the young of our species, and no aspect of her was lost on him. We were natives of the same vast Mississippi Valley; and Missouri was not so far from Ohio but that we were akin in our first knowledges of woods and fields as we were in our early parlance. I had outgrown the use of mine through my greater bookishness, but I gladly recognized the phrases which he employed for their lasting juiciness and the long-remembered savor they had on his mental palate.

I have elsewhere sufficiently spoken of his unsophisticated use of words, of the diction which forms the backbone of his manly style. If I mention my own greater bookishness, by which I mean his less quantitative reading, it is to give myself better occasion to note that he was always reading some vital book. It might be some out-of-the-way book, but it had the root of the human matter in it: a volume of great trials; one of the supreme autobiographies; a signal passage of history, a narrative of travel, a story of captivity, which gave him life at first-hand. As I remember, he did not care much for fiction, and in that sort he had certain distinct loathings; there were certain authors whose names he seemed not so much to pronounce as to spew out of his mouth. Goldsmith was one of these, but his prime abhorrence was my dear and honored prime favorite, Jane Austen. He once said to me, I suppose after he had been reading some of my unsparing praises of her--I am always praising her, "You seem to think that woman could write," and he forbore withering me with his scorn, apparently because we had been friends so long, and he more pitied than hated me for my bad taste. He seemed not to have any preferences among novelists; or at least I never heard him express any. He used to read the modern novels I praised, in or out of print; but I do not think he much liked reading fiction. As for plays, he detested the theatre, and said he would as lief do a sum as follow a plot on the stage. He could not, or did not, give any reasons for his literary abhorrences, and perhaps he really had none. But he could have said very distinctly, if he had needed, why he liked the books he did. I was away at the time of his great Browning passion, and I know of it chiefly from hearsay; but at the time Tolstoy was doing what could be done to make me over Clemens wrote, "That man seems to have been to you what Browning was to me." I do not know that he had other favorites among the poets, but he had favorite poems which he liked to read to you, and he read, of course, splendidly. I have forgotten what piece of John Hay's it was that he liked so much, but I remembered how he fiercely revelled in the vengefulness of William Morris's 'Sir Guy of the Dolorous Blast,' and how he especially exalted in the lines which tell of the supposed speaker's joy in slaying the murderer of his brother:

"I am threescore years and ten,
And my hair is 'nigh turned gray,
But I am glad to think of the moment when
I took his life away."

Generally, I fancy his pleasure in poetry was not great, and I do not believe he cared much for the conventionally accepted masterpieces of literature. He liked to find out good things and great things for himself; sometimes he would discover these in a masterpiece new to him alone, and then, if you brought his ignorance home to him, he enjoyed it, and enjoyed it the more the more you rubbed it in.

Of all the literary men I have known he was the most unliterary in his make and manner. I do not know whether he had any acquaintance with Latin, but I believe not the least; German he knew pretty well, and Italian enough late in life to have fun with it; but he used English in all its alien derivations as if it were native to his own air, as if it had come up out of American, out of Missouriian ground. His style was what we know, for good and for bad, but his manner, if I may difference the two, was as entirely his own as if no one had ever written before. I have noted before this how he was not enslaved to the consecutiveness in writing which the rest of us try to keep chained to. That is, he wrote as he thought, and as all men think, without sequence, without an eye to what went before or should come after. If something beyond or beside what he was saying occurred to him, he invited it into his page, and made it as much at home there as the nature of it would suffer him. Then, when he was through with the welcoming of this casual and unexpected guest, he would go back to the company he was entertaining, and keep on with what he had been talking about. He observed this manner in the construction of his sentences, and the arrangement of his chapters, and the ordering or disordering of his compilations.--[Nowhere is this characteristic better found than in Twain's 'Autobiography,' it was not a "style" it was unselfconscious thought D.W.]--I helped him with a Library of Humor, which he once edited, and when I had done my work according to tradition, with authors, times, and topics carefully studied in due sequence, he tore it all apart, and "chucked" the pieces in wherever the fancy, for them took him at the moment. He was right: we were not making a text-book, but a book for the pleasure rather than the instruction of the reader, and he did not see why the principle on which he built his travels and reminiscences and tales and novels should not apply to it; and I do not now see, either, though at the time it confounded me. On minor points he was, beyond any author I have known, without favorite phrases or pet words. He utterly despised the avoidance of repetitions out of fear of tautology. If a word served his turn better than a substitute, he would use it as many times in a page as he chose.

V.

At that time I had become editor of The Atlantic Monthly, and I had allegiances belonging to the conduct of what was and still remains the most scrupulously cultivated of our periodicals. When Clemens began to write for it he came willingly under its rules, for with all his wilfulness there never was a more biddable man in things you could show him a reason for. He never made the least of that trouble which so

abounds for the hapless editor from narrower-minded contributors. If you wanted a thing changed, very good, he changed it; if you suggested that a word or a sentence or a paragraph had better be struck out, very good, he struck it out. His proof-sheets came back each a veritable "mush of concession," as Emerson says. Now and then he would try a little stronger language than 'The Atlantic' had stomach for, and once when I sent him a proof I made him observe that I had left out the profanity. He wrote back: "Mrs. Clemens opened that proof, and lit into the room with danger in her eye. What profanity? You see, when I read the manuscript to her I skipped that." It was part of his joke to pretend a violence in that gentlest creature which the more amusingly realized the situation to their friends.

I was always very glad of him and proud of him as a contributor, but I must not claim the whole merit, or the first merit of having him write for us. It was the publisher, the late H. O. Houghton, who felt the incongruity of his absence from the leading periodical of the country, and was always urging me to get him to write. I will take the credit of being eager for him, but it is to the publisher's credit that he tried, so far as the modest traditions of 'The Atlantic' would permit, to meet the expectations in pay which the colossal profits of Clemens's books might naturally have bred in him. Whether he was really able to do this he never knew from Clemens himself, but probably twenty dollars a page did not surfeit the author of books that "sold right along just like the Bible."

We had several short contributions from Clemens first, all of capital quality, and then we had the series of papers which went mainly to the making of his great book, 'Life on the Mississippi'. Upon the whole I have the notion that Clemens thought this his greatest book, and he was supported in his opinion by that of the 'portier' in his hotel at Vienna, and that of the German Emperor, who, as he told me with equal respect for the preference of each, united in thinking it his best; with such far-sundered social poles approaching in its favor, he apparently found himself without standing for opposition. At any rate, the papers won instant appreciation from his editor and publisher, and from the readers of their periodical, which they expected to prosper beyond precedent in its circulation. But those were days of simpler acceptance of the popular rights of newspapers than these are, when magazines strictly guard their vested interests against them. 'The New York Times' and the 'St. Louis Democrat' profited by the advance copies of the magazine sent them to reprint the papers month by month. Together they covered nearly the whole reading territory of the Union, and the terms of their daily publication enabled them to anticipate the magazine in its own restricted field. Its subscription list was not enlarged in the slightest measure, and The Atlantic Monthly languished on the news-stands as undesired as ever.

It was among my later visits to Hartford that we began to talk up the notion of collaborating a play, but we did not arrive at any clear intention, and it was a telegram out of the clear sky that one day summoned me from Boston to help with a continuation of Colonel Sellers. I had been a witness of the high joy of Clemens in the prodigious triumph of the first Colonel Sellers, which had been dramatized from the novel of 'The Gilded Age.' This was the joint work of Clemens and Charles Dudley Warner, and the story had been put upon the stage by some one in Utah, whom Clemens first brought to book in the courts for violation of his copyright, and then indemnified for such rights as his adaptation of the book had given him. The structure of the play as John T. Raymond gave it was substantially the work of this unknown dramatist. Clemens never pretended, to me at any rate, that he had the least hand in it; he frankly owned that he was incapable of dramatization; yet the vital part was his, for the characters in the play were his as the book embodied them, and the success which it won with the public was justly his. This he shared equally with the actor, following the company with an agent, who counted out the author's share of the gate money, and sent him a note of the amount every day by postal card. The postals used to come about dinner-time, and Clemens would read them aloud to us in wild triumph.

One hundred and fifty dollars--two hundred dollars--three hundred dollars were the gay figures which they bore, and which he flaunted in the air before he sat down at table, or rose from it to brandish, and then, flinging his napkin into his chair, walked up and down to exult in.

By-and-by the popularity, of the play waned, and the time came when he sickened of the whole affair, and withdrew his agent, and took whatever gain from it the actor apportioned him. He was apt to have these sudden surceases, following upon the intensities of his earlier interest; though he seemed always to have the notion of making something more of Colonel Sellers. But when I arrived in Hartford in answer to his summons, I found him with no definite idea of what he wanted to do with him.

I represented that we must have some sort of plan, and he agreed that we should both jot down a scenario overnight and compare our respective schemes the next morning. As the author of a large number of little plays which have been privately presented throughout the United States and in parts of the United Kingdom, without ever getting upon the public stage except for the noble ends of charity, and then promptly getting off it, I felt authorized to make him observe that his scheme was as nearly nothing as chaos could be. He agreed hilariously with me, and was willing to let it stand in proof of his entire dramatic inability.

At the same time he liked my plot very much, which ultimated Sellers, according to Clemens's intention, as a man crazed by his own inventions and by his superstition that he was the rightful heir to an English earldom. The exuberant nature of Sellers and the vast range of his imagination served our purpose in other ways. Clemens made him a spiritualist, whose specialty in the occult was materialization; he became on impulse an ardent temperance reformer, and he headed a procession of temperance ladies after disinterestedly testing the deleterious effects of liquor upon himself until he could not walk straight; always he wore a marvellous fire-extinguisher strapped on his

back, to give proof in any emergency of the effectiveness of his invention in that way.

We had a jubilant fortnight in working the particulars of these things out. It was not possible for Clemens to write like anybody else, but I could very easily write like Clemens, and we took the play scene and scene about, quite secure of coming out in temperamental agreement. The characters remained for the most part his, and I varied them only to make them more like his than, if possible, he could. Several years after, when I looked over a copy of the play, I could not always tell my work from his; I only knew that I had done certain scenes. We would work all day long at our several tasks, and then at night, before dinner, read them over to each other. No dramatists ever got greater joy out of their creations, and when I reflect that the public never had the chance of sharing our joy I pity the public from a full heart. I still believe that the play was immensely funny; I still believe that if it could once have got behind the footlights it would have continued to pack the house before them for an indefinite succession of nights. But this may be my fondness.

At any rate, it was not to be. Raymond had identified himself with Sellers in the play-going imagination, and whether consciously or unconsciously we constantly worked with Raymond in our minds. But before this time bitter displeasures had risen between Clemens and Raymond, and Clemens was determined that Raymond should never have the play. He first offered it to several other actors, who eagerly caught it, only to give it back with the despairing renunciation, "That is a Raymond play." We tried managers with it, but their only question was whether they could get Raymond to do it. In the mean time Raymond had provided himself with a play for the winter--a very good play, by Demarest Lloyd; and he was in no hurry for ours. Perhaps he did not really care for it perhaps he knew when he heard of it that it must come to him in the end. In the end it did, from my hand, for Clemens would not meet him. I found him in a mood of sweet reasonableness, perhaps the more softened by one of those lunches which our publisher, the hospitable James R. Osgood, was always bringing people together over in Boston. He said that he could not do the play that winter, but he was sure that he should like it, and he had no doubt he would do it the next winter. So I gave him the manuscript, in spite of Clemens's charges, for his suspicions and rancors were such that he would not have had me leave it for a moment in the actor's hands. But it seemed a conclusion that involved success and fortune for us. In due time, but I do not remember how long after, Raymond declared himself delighted with the piece; he entered into a satisfactory agreement for it, and at the beginning of the next season he started with it to Buffalo, where he was to give a first production. At Rochester he paused long enough to return it, with the explanation that a friend had noted to him the fact that Colonel Sellers in the play was a lunatic, and insanity was so serious a thing that it could not be represented on the stage without outraging the sensibilities of the audience; or words to that effect. We were too far off to allege Hamlet to the contrary, or King Lear, or to instance the delight which generations of readers throughout the world had taken in the mad freaks of Don Quixote. Whatever were the real reasons of Raymond for rejecting the play, we had

to be content with those he gave, and to set about getting it into other hands. In this effort we failed even more signally than before, if that were possible. At last a clever and charming elocutionist, who had long wished to get himself on the stage, heard of it and asked to see it. We would have shown it to any one by this time, and we very willingly showed it to him. He came to Hartford and did some scenes from it for us. I must say he did them very well, quite as well as Raymond could have done them, in whose manner he did them. But now, late toward spring, the question was where he could get an engagement with the play, and we ended by hiring a theatre in New York for a week of trial performances.

Clemens came on with me to Boston, where we were going to make some changes in the piece, and where we made them to our satisfaction, but not to the effect of that high rapture which we had in the first draft. He went back to Hartford, and then the cold fit came upon me, and "in visions of the night, in slumberings upon the bed," ghastly forms of failure appalled me, and when I rose in the morning I wrote him: "Here is a play which every manager has put out-of-doors and which every actor known to us has refused, and now we go and give it to an elocutioner. We are fools." Whether Clemens agreed with me or not in my conclusion, he agreed with me in my premises, and we promptly bought our play off the stage at a cost of seven hundred dollars, which we shared between us. But Clemens was never a man to give up. I relinquished gratis all right and title I had in the play, and he paid its entire expenses for a week of one-night stands in the country. It never came to New York; and yet I think now that if it had come, it would have succeeded. So hard does the faith of the unsuccessful dramatist in his work die.

VII.

There is an incident of this time so characteristic of both men that I will yield to the temptation of giving it here. After I had gone to Hartford in response to Clemens's telegram, Matthew Arnold arrived in Boston, and one of my family called on his, to explain why I was not at home to receive his introduction: I had gone to see Mark Twain. "Oh, but he doesn't like that sort of thing, does he?" "He likes Mr. Clemens very much," my representative answered, "and he thinks him one of the greatest men he ever knew." I was still Clemens's guest at Hartford when Arnold came there to lecture, and one night we went to meet him at a reception. While his hand laxly held mine in greeting, I saw his eyes fixed intently on the other side of the room. "Who-who in the world is that?" I looked and said, "Oh, that is Mark Twain." I do not remember just how their instant encounter was contrived by Arnold's wish, but I have the impression that they were not parted for long during the evening, and the next night Arnold, as if still under the glamour of that potent presence, was at Clemens's house. I cannot say how they got on, or what they made of each other; if Clemens ever spoke of Arnold, I do not recall what he said, but Arnold had shown a sense of him from which the incredulous sniff of the polite world, now so universally exploded, had already

perished. It might well have done so with his first dramatic vision of that prodigious head. Clemens was then hard upon fifty, and he had kept, as he did to the end, the slender figure of his youth, but the ashes of the burnt-out years were beginning to gray the fires of that splendid shock of red hair which he held to the height of a stature apparently greater than it was, and tilted from side to side in his undulating walk. He glimmered at you from the narrow slits of fine blue-greenish eyes, under branching brows, which with age grew more and more like a sort of plumage, and he was apt to smile into your face with a subtle but amiable perception, and yet with a sort of remote absence; you were all there for him, but he was not all there for you.

VIII.

I shall, not try to give chronological order to my recollections of him, but since I am just now with him in Hartford I will speak of him in association with the place. Once when I came on from Cambridge he followed me to my room to see that the water was not frozen in my bath, or something of the kind, for it was very cold weather, and then hospitably lingered. Not to lose time in banalities I began at once from the thread of thought in my mind. "I wonder why we hate the past so," and he responded from the depths of his own consciousness, "It's so damned humiliating," which is what any man would say of his past if he were honest; but honest men are few when it comes to themselves. Clemens was one of the few, and the first of them among all the people I have known. I have known, I suppose, men as truthful, but not so promptly, so absolutely, so positively, so almost aggressively truthful. He could lie, of course, and did to save others from grief or harm; he was, not stupidly truthful; but his first impulse was to say out the thing and everything that was in him. To those who can understand it will not be contradictory of his sense of humiliation from the past, that he was not ashamed for anything he ever did to the point of wishing to hide it. He could be, and he was, bitterly sorry for his errors, which he had enough of in his life, but he was not ashamed in that mean way. What he had done he owned to, good, bad, or indifferent, and if it was bad he was rather amused than troubled as to the effect in your mind. He would not obtrude the fact upon you, but if it were in the way of personal history he would not dream of withholding it, far less of hiding it.

He was the readiest of men to allow an error if he were found in it. In one of our walks about Hartford, when he was in the first fine flush of his agnosticism, he declared that Christianity had done nothing to improve morals and conditions, and that the world under the highest pagan civilization was as well off as it was under the highest Christian influences. I happened to be fresh from the reading of Charles Loring Brace's 'Gesta Christi'; or, 'History of Humane Progress', and I could offer him abundant proofs that he was wrong. He did not like that evidently, but he instantly gave way, saying he had not known those things. Later he was more tolerant in his denials of Christianity, but just then he was feeling his freedom from it, and rejoicing in having

broken what he felt to have been the shackles of belief worn so long. He greatly admired Robert Ingersoll, whom he called an angelic orator, and regarded as an evangel of a new gospel--the gospel of free thought. He took the warmest interest in the newspaper controversy raging at the time as to the existence of a hell; when the noes carried the day, I suppose that no enemy of perdition was more pleased. He still loved his old friend and pastor, Mr. Twichell, but he no longer went to hear him preach his sage and beautiful sermons, and was, I think, thereby the greater loser. Long before that I had asked him if he went regularly to church, and he groaned out: "Oh yes, I go. It 'most kills me, but I go," and I did not need his telling me to understand that he went because his wife wished it. He did tell me, after they both ceased to go, that it had finally come to her saying, "Well, if you are to be lost, I want to be lost with you." He could accept that willingness for supreme sacrifice and exult in it because of the supreme truth as he saw it. After they had both ceased to be formal Christians, she was still grieved by his denial of immortality, so grieved that he resolved upon one of those heroic lies, which for love's sake he held above even the truth, and he went to her, saying that he had been thinking the whole matter over, and now he was convinced that the soul did live after death. It was too late. Her keen vision pierced through his ruse, as it did when he brought the doctor who had diagnosticated her case as organic disease of the heart, and, after making him go over the facts of it again with her, made him declare it merely functional.

To make an end of these records as to Clemens's beliefs, so far as I knew them, I should say that he never went back to anything like faith in the Christian theology, or in the notion of life after death, or in a conscious divinity. It is best to be honest in this matter; he would have hated anything else, and I do not believe that the truth in it can hurt any one. At one period he argued that there must have been a cause, a conscious source of things; that the universe could not have come by chance. I have heard also that in his last hours or moments he said, or his dearest ones hoped he had said, something about meeting again. But the expression, of which they could not be certain, was of the vaguest, and it was perhaps addressed to their tenderness out of his tenderness. All his expressions to me were of a courageous, renunciation of any hope of living again, or elsewhere seeing those he had lost. He suffered terribly in their loss, and he was not fool enough to try ignoring his grief. He knew that for this there were but two medicines; that it would wear itself out with the years, and that meanwhile there was nothing for it but those respites in which the mourner forgets himself in slumber. I remember that in a black hour of my own when I was called down to see him, as he thought from sleep, he said with an infinite, an exquisite compassion, "Oh, did I wake you, did I wake, you?" Nothing more, but the look, the voice, were everything; and while I live they cannot pass from my sense.

He was the most caressing of men in his pity, but he had the fine instinct, which would have pleased Lowell, of never putting his hands on you--fine, delicate hands, with taper fingers, and pink nails, like a girl's, and sensitively quivering in moments of emotion; he did not paw you with them to show his affection, as so many of us Americans are apt to do. Among the half-dozen, or half-hundred, personalities that each of us becomes, I should say that Clemens's central and final personality was something exquisite. His casual acquaintance might know him, perhaps, from his fierce intensity, his wild pleasure in shocking people with his ribaldries and profanities, or from the mere need of loosing his rebellious spirit in that way, as anything but exquisite, and yet that was what in the last analysis he was. They might come away loathing or hating him, but one could not know him well without realizing him the most serious, the most humane, the most conscientious of men. He was Southwestern, and born amid the oppression of a race that had no rights as against ours, but I never saw a man more regardful of negroes. He had a yellow butler when I first began to know him, because he said he could not bear to order a white man about, but the terms of his ordering George were those of the softest entreaty which command ever wore. He loved to rely upon George, who was such a broken reed in some things, though so staunch in others, and the fervent Republican in politics that Clemens then liked him to be. He could interpret Clemens's meaning to the public without conveying his mood, and could render his roughest answer smooth to the person denied his presence. His general instructions were that this presence was to be denied all but personal friends, but the soft heart of George was sometimes touched by importunity, and once he came up into the billiard-room saying that Mr. Smith wished to see Clemens. Upon inquiry, Mr. Smith developed no ties of friendship, and Clemens said, "You go and tell Mr. Smith that I wouldn't come down to see the Twelve Apostles." George turned from the threshold where he had kept himself, and framed a paraphrase of this message which apparently sent Mr. Smith away content with himself and all the rest of the world.

The part of him that was Western in his Southwestern origin Clemens kept to the end, but he was the most desouthernized Southerner I ever knew. No man more perfectly sensed and more entirely abhorred slavery, and no one has ever poured such scorn upon the second-hand, Walter-Scotticized, pseudo-chivalry of the Southern ideal. He held himself responsible for the wrong which the white race had done the black race in slavery, and he explained, in paying the way of a negro student through Yale, that he was doing it as his part of the reparation due from every white to every black man. He said he had never seen this student, nor ever wished to see him or know his name; it was quite enough that he was a negro. About that time a colored cadet was expelled from West Point for some point of conduct "unbecoming an officer and gentleman," and there was the usual shabby philosophy in a portion of the press to the effect that a negro could never feel the claim of honor. The man was fifteen parts white, but, "Oh yes," Clemens said, with bitter irony, "it was that one part black that undid him." It made him a "nigger" and incapable of being a gentleman. It was to blame for the whole thing. The fifteen parts white were guiltless.

Clemens was entirely satisfied with the result of the Civil War, and he

was eager to have its facts and meanings brought out at once in history. He ridiculed the notion, held by many, that "it was not yet time" to philosophize the events of the great struggle; that we must "wait till its passions had cooled," and "the clouds of strife had cleared away." He maintained that the time would never come when we should see its motives and men and deeds more clearly, and that now, now, was the hour to ascertain them in lasting verity. Picturesquely and dramatically he portrayed the imbecility of deferring the inquiry at any point to the distance of future years when inevitably the facts would begin to put on fable.

He had powers of sarcasm and a relentless rancor in his contempt which those who knew him best appreciated most. The late Noah Brooks, who had been in California at the beginning of Clemens's career, and had witnessed the effect of his ridicule before he had learned to temper it, once said to me that he would rather have any one else in the world down on him than Mark Twain. But as Clemens grew older he grew more merciful, not to the wrong, but to the men who were in it. The wrong was often the source of his wildest drolling. He considered it in such hopelessness of ever doing it justice that his despair broke in laughter.

X.

I go back to that house in Hartford, where I was so often a happy guest, with tenderness for each of its endearing aspects. Over the chimney in the library which had been cured of smoking by so much art and science, Clemens had written in perennial brass the words of Emerson, "The ornament of a house is the friends who frequent it," and he gave his guests a welcome of the simplest and sweetest cordiality: but I must not go aside to them from my recollections of him, which will be of sufficient garrulity, if I give them as fully as I wish. The windows of the library looked northward from the hillside above which the house stood, and over the little valley with the stream in it, and they showed the leaves of the trees that almost brushed them as in a Claude Lorraine glass. To the eastward the dining-room opened amply, and to the south there was a wide hall, where the voices of friends made themselves heard as they entered without ceremony and answered his joyous hail. At the west was a little semicircular conservatory of a pattern invented by Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe, and adopted in most of the houses of her kindly neighborhood. The plants were set in the ground, and the flowering vines climbed up the sides and overhung the roof above the silent spray of a fountain accompanied by callas and other water-loving lilies. There, while we breakfasted, Patrick came in from the barn and sprinkled the pretty bower, which poured out its responsive perfume in the delicate accents of its varied blossoms. Breakfast was Clemens's best meal, and he sat longer at his steak and coffee than at the courses of his dinner; luncheon was nothing to him, unless, as might happen, he made it his dinner, and reserved the later repast as the occasion of walking up and down the room, and discoursing at large on anything that came into his head. Like most good talkers, he liked other people to have their say;

he did not talk them down; he stopped instantly at another's remark and gladly or politely heard him through; he even made believe to find suggestion or inspiration in what was said. His children came to the table, as I have told, and after dinner he was apt to join his fine tenor to their trebles in singing.

Fully half our meetings were at my house in Cambridge, where he made himself as much at home as in Hartford. He would come ostensibly to stay at the Parker House, in Boston, and take a room, where he would light the gas and leave it burning, after dressing, while he drove out to Cambridge and stayed two or three days with us. Once, I suppose it was after a lecture, he came in evening dress and passed twenty-four hours with us in that guise, wearing an overcoat to hide it when we went for a walk. Sometimes he wore the slippers which he preferred to shoes at home, and if it was muddy, as it was wont to be in Cambridge, he would put a pair of rubbers over them for our rambles. He liked the lawlessness and our delight in allowing it, and he rejoiced in the confession of his hostess, after we had once almost worn ourselves out in our pleasure with the intense talk, with the stories and the laughing, that his coming almost killed her, but it was worth it.

In those days he was troubled with sleeplessness, or, rather, with reluctant sleepiness, and he had various specifics for promoting it. At first it had been champagne just before going to bed, and we provided that, but later he appeared from Boston with four bottles of lager-beer under his arms; lager-beer, he said now, was the only thing to make you go to sleep, and we provided that. Still later, on a visit I paid him at Hartford, I learned that hot Scotch was the only soporific worth considering, and Scotch-whiskey duly found its place on our sideboard. One day, very long afterward, I asked him if he were still taking hot Scotch to make him sleep. He said he was not taking anything. For a while he had found going to bed on the bath-room floor a soporific; then one night he went to rest in his own bed at ten o'clock, and had gone promptly to sleep without anything. He had done the like with the like effect ever since. Of course, it amused him; there were few experiences of life, grave or gay, which did not amuse him, even when they wronged him.

He came on to Cambridge in April, 1875, to go with me to the centennial ceremonies at Concord in celebration of the battle of the Minute Men with the British troops a hundred years before. We both had special invitations, including passage from Boston; but I said, Why bother to go into Boston when we could just as well take the train for Concord at the Cambridge station? He equally decided that it would be absurd; so we breakfasted deliberately, and then walked to the station, reasoning of many things as usual. When the train stopped, we found it packed inside and out. People stood dense on the platforms of the cars; to our startled eyes they seemed to project from the windows, and unless memory betrays me they lay strewn upon the roofs like brakemen slain at the post of duty.

Whether this was really so or not, it is certain that the train presented an impenetrable front even to our imagination, and we left it to go its

way without the slightest effort to board. We remounted the fame-worn steps of Porter's Station, and began exploring North Cambridge for some means of transportation overland to Concord, for we were that far on the road by which the British went and came on the day of the battle. The liverymen whom we appealed to received us, some with compassion, some with derision, but in either mood convinced us that we could not have hired a cat to attempt our conveyance, much less a horse, or vehicle of any description. It was a raw, windy day, very unlike the exceptionally hot April day when the routed redcoats, pursued by the Colonials, fled panting back to Boston, with "their tongues hanging out like dogs," but we could not take due comfort in the vision of their discomfiture; we could almost envy them, for they had at least got to Concord. A swift procession of coaches, carriages, and buggies, all going to Concord, passed us, inert and helpless, on the sidewalk in the peculiarly cold mud of North Cambridge. We began to wonder if we might not stop one of them and bribe it to take us, but we had not the courage to try, and Clemens seized the opportunity to begin suffering with an acute indigestion, which gave his humor a very dismal cast. I felt keenly the shame of defeat, and the guilt of responsibility for our failure, and when a gay party of students came toward us on the top of a tally ho, luxuriously empty inside, we felt that our chance had come, and our last chance. He said that if I would stop them and tell them who I was they would gladly, perhaps proudly, give us passage; I contended that if with his far vaster renown he would approach them, our success would be assured. While we stood, lost in this "contest of civilities," the coach passed us, with gay notes blown from the horns of the students, and then Clemens started in pursuit, encouraged with shouts from the merry party who could not imagine who was trying to run them down, to a rivalry in speed. The unequal match could end only in one way, and I am glad I cannot recall what he said when he came back to me. Since then I have often wondered at the grief which would have wrung those blithe young hearts if they could have known that they might have had the company of Mark Twain to Concord that day and did not.

We hung about, unavailingly, in the bitter wind a while longer, and then slowly, very slowly, made our way home. We wished to pass as much time as possible, in order to give probability to the deceit we intended to practise, for we could not bear to own ourselves baffled in our boasted wisdom of taking the train at Porter's Station, and had agreed to say that we had been to Concord and got back. Even after coming home to my house, we felt that our statement would be wanting in verisimilitude without further delay, and we crept quietly into my library, and made up a roaring fire on the hearth, and thawed ourselves out in the heat of it before we regained our courage for the undertaking. With all these precautions we failed, for when our statement was imparted to the proposed victim she instantly pronounced it unreliable, and we were left with it on our hands intact. I think the humor of this situation was finally a greater pleasure to Clemens than an actual visit to Concord would have been; only a few weeks before his death he laughed our defeat over with one of my family in Bermuda, and exulted in our prompt detection.

XI.

From our joint experience in failing I argue that Clemens's affection for me must have been great to enable him to condone in me the final defection which was apt to be the end of our enterprises. I have fancied that I presented to him a surface of such entire trustworthiness that he could not imagine the depths of unreliability beneath it; and that never realizing it, he always broke through with fresh surprise but unimpaired faith. He liked, beyond all things, to push an affair to the bitter end, and the end was never too bitter unless it brought grief or harm to another. Once in a telegraph office at a railway station he was treated with such insolent neglect by the young lady in charge, who was preoccupied in a flirtation with a "gentleman friend," that emulous of the public spirit which he admired in the English, he told her he should report her to her superiors, and (probably to her astonishment) he did so. He went back to Hartford, and in due time the poor girl came to me in, terror and in tears; for I had abetted Clemens in his action, and had joined my name to his in his appeal to the authorities. She was threatened with dismissal unless she made full apology to him and brought back assurance of its acceptance. I felt able to give this, and, of course, he eagerly approved; I think he telegraphed his approval. Another time, some years afterward, we sat down together in places near the end of a car, and a brakeman came in looking for his official note-book. Clemens found that he had sat down upon it, and handed it to him; the man scolded him very abusively, and came back again and again, still scolding him for having no more sense than to sit down on a note-book. The patience of Clemens in bearing it was so angelic that I saw fit to comment, "I suppose you will report this fellow." "Yes," he answered, slowly and sadly. "That's what I should have done once. But now I remember that he gets twenty dollars a month."

Nothing could have been wiser, nothing tenderer, and his humanity was not for humanity alone. He abhorred the dull and savage joy of the sportsman in a lucky shot, an unerring aim, and once when I met him in the country he had just been sickened by the success of a gunner in bringing down a blackbird, and he described the poor, stricken, glossy thing, how it lay throbbing its life out on the grass, with such pity as he might have given a wounded child. I find this a fit place to say that his mind and soul were with those who do the hard work of the world, in fear of those who give them a chance for their livelihoods and underpay them all they can. He never went so far in socialism as I have gone, if he went that way at all, but he was fascinated with *Looking Backward* and had Bellamy to visit him; and from the first he had a luminous vision of organized labor as the only present help for working-men. He would show that side with such clearness and such force that you could not say anything in hopeful contradiction; he saw with that relentless insight of his that with Unions was the working-man's only present hope of standing up like a man against money and the power of it. There was a time when I was afraid that his eyes were a little holden from the truth; but in the very last talk I heard from him I found that I was wrong, and that this great humorist was as great a humanist as ever. I wish that all the

work-folk could know this, and could know him their friend in life as he was in literature; as he was in such a glorious gospel of equality as the 'Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court.'

XII.

Whether I will or no I must let things come into my story thoughtwise, as he would have let them, for I cannot remember them in their order. One night, while we were giving a party, he suddenly stormed in with a friend of his and mine, Mr. Twichell, and immediately began to eat and drink of our supper, for they had come straight to our house from walking to Boston, or so great a part of the way as to be a-hungered and a-thirst. I can see him now as he stood up in the midst of our friends, with his head thrown back, and in his hand a dish of those scalloped oysters without which no party in Cambridge was really a party, exulting in the tale of his adventure, which had abounded in the most original characters and amusing incidents at every mile of their progress. They had broken their journey with a night's rest, and they had helped themselves lavishly out by rail in the last half; but still it had been a mighty walk to do in two days. Clemens was a great walker, in those years, and was always telling of his tramps with Mr. Twichell to Talcott's Tower, ten miles out of Hartford. As he walked of course he talked, and of course he smoked. Whenever he had been a few days with us, the whole house had to be aired, for he smoked all over it from breakfast to bedtime. He always went to bed with a cigar in his mouth, and sometimes, mindful of my fire insurance, I went up and took it away, still burning, after he had fallen asleep. I do not know how much a man may smoke and live, but apparently he smoked as much as a man could, for he smoked incessantly.

He did not care much to meet people, as I fancied, and we were greedy of him for ourselves; he was precious to us; and I would not have exposed him to the critical edge of that Cambridge acquaintance which might not have appreciated him at, say, his transatlantic value. In America his popularity was as instant as it was vast. But it must be acknowledged that for a much longer time here than in England polite learning hesitated his praise. In England rank, fashion, and culture rejoiced in him. Lord mayors, lord chief justices, and magnates of many kinds were his hosts; he was desired in country houses, and his bold genius captivated the favor of periodicals which spurned the rest of our nation. But in his own country it was different. In proportion as people thought themselves refined they questioned that quality which all recognize in him now, but which was then the inspired knowledge of the simple-hearted multitude. I went with him to see Longfellow, but I do not think Longfellow made much of him, and Lowell made less. He stopped as if with the long Semitic curve of Clemens's nose, which in the indulgence of his passion for finding every one more or less a Jew he pronounced unmistakably racial. It was two of my most fastidious Cambridge friends who accepted him with the English, the European entirety--namely, Charles Eliot Norton and Professor Francis J. Child. Norton was then newly back

from a long sojourn abroad, and his judgments were delocalized. He met Clemens as if they had both been in England, and rejoiced in his bold freedom from environment, and in the rich variety and boundless reach of his talk. Child was of a personal liberty as great in its fastidious way as that of Clemens himself, and though he knew him only at second hand, he exulted in the most audacious instance of his grotesquery, as I shall have to tell by-and-by, almost solely. I cannot say just why Clemens seemed not to hit the favor of our community of scribes and scholars, as Bret Harte had done, when he came on from California, and swept them before him, disrupting their dinners and delaying their lunches with impunity; but it is certain he did not, and I had better say so.

I am surprised to find from the bibliographical authorities that it was so late as 1875 when he came with the manuscript of Tom Sawyer, and asked me to read it, as a friend and critic, and not as an editor. I have an impression that this was at Mrs. Clemens's instance in his own uncertainty about printing it. She trusted me, I can say with a satisfaction few things now give me, to be her husband's true and cordial adviser, and I was so. I believe I never failed him in this part, though in so many of our enterprises and projects I was false as water through my temperamental love of backing out of any undertaking. I believe this never ceased to astonish him, and it has always astonished me; it appears to me quite out of character; though it is certain that an undertaking, when I have entered upon it, holds me rather than I it. But however this immaterial matter may be, I am glad to remember that I thoroughly liked Tom Sawyer, and said so with every possible amplification. Very likely, I also made my suggestions for its improvement; I could not have been a real critic without that; and I have no doubt they were gratefully accepted and, I hope, never acted upon. I went with him to the horse-car station in Harvard Square, as my frequent wont was, and put him aboard a car with his MS. in his hand, stayed and reassured, so far as I counted, concerning it. I do not know what his misgivings were; perhaps they were his wife's misgivings, for she wished him to be known not only for the wild and boundless humor that was in him, but for the beauty and tenderness and "natural piety"; and she would not have had him judged by a too close fidelity to the rude conditions of Tom Sawyer's life. This is the meaning that I read into the fact of his coming to me with those doubts.

XIII.

Clemens had then and for many years the habit of writing to me about what he was doing, and still more of what he was experiencing. Nothing struck his imagination, in or out of the daily routine, but he wished to write me of it, and he wrote with the greatest fulness and a lavish dramatization, sometimes to the length of twenty or forty pages, so that I have now perhaps fifteen hundred pages of his letters. They will no doubt some day be published, but I am not even referring to them in these records, which I think had best come to the reader with an old man's falterings and uncertainties. With his frequent absences and my own

abroad, and the intrusion of calamitous cares, the rich tide of his letters was more and more interrupted. At times it almost ceased, and then it would come again, a torrent. In the very last weeks of his life he burst forth, and, though too weak himself to write, he dictated his rage with me for recommending to him a certain author whose truthfulness he could not deny, but whom he hated for his truthfulness to sordid and ugly conditions. At heart Clemens was romantic, and he would have had the world of fiction stately and handsome and whatever the real world was not; but he was not romanticistic, and he was too helplessly an artist not to wish his own work to show life as he had seen it. I was preparing to rap him back for these letters when I read that he had got home to die; he would have liked the rapping back.

He liked coming to Boston, especially for those luncheons and dinners in which the fertile hospitality of our publisher, Osgood, abounded. He dwelt equidistant from Boston and New York, and he had special friends in New York, but he said he much preferred coming to Boston; of late years he never went there, and he had lost the habit of it long before he came home from Europe to live in New York. At these feasts, which were often of after-dinner-speaking measure, he could always be trusted for something of amazing delightfulness. Once, when Osgood could think of no other occasion for a dinner, he gave himself a birthday dinner, and asked his friends and authors. The beautiful and splendid trooper-like blaring was there, and I recall how in the long, rambling speech in which Clemens went round the table hitting every head at it, and especially visiting Osgood with thanks for his ingenious pretext for our entertainment, he congratulated blaring upon his engineering genius and his hypnotic control of municipal governments. He said that if there was a plan for draining a city at a cost of a million, by seeking the level of the water in the down-hill course of the sewers, blaring would come with a plan to drain that town up-hill at twice the cost and carry it through the Common Council without opposition. It is hard to say whether the time was gladder at these dinners, or at the small lunches at which Osgood and Aldrich and I foregathered with him and talked the afternoon away till well toward the winter twilight.

He was a great figure, and the principal figure, at one of the first of the now worn-out Authors' Readings, which was held in the Boston Museum to aid a Longfellow memorial. It was the late George Parsons Lathrop (everybody seems to be late in these sad days) who imagined the reading, but when it came to a price for seats I can always claim the glory of fixing it at five dollars. The price if not the occasion proved irresistible, and the museum was packed from the floor to the topmost gallery. Norton presided, and when it came Clemens's turn to read he introduced him with such exquisite praises as he best knew how to give, but before he closed he fell a prey to one of those lapses of tact which are the peculiar peril of people of the greatest tact. He was reminded of Darwin's delight in Mark Twain, and how when he came from his long day's exhausting study, and sank into bed at midnight, he took up a volume of Mark Twain, whose books he always kept on a table beside him, and whatever had been his tormenting problem, or excess of toil, he felt secure of a good night's rest from it. A sort of blank ensued which Clemens filled in the only possible way. He said he should always be

glad that he had contributed to the repose of that great man, whom science owed so much, and then without waiting for the joy in every breast to burst forth, he began to read. It was curious to watch his triumph with the house. His carefully studied effects would reach the first rows in the orchestra first, and ripple in laughter back to the standees against the wall, and then with a fine resurgence come again to the rear orchestra seats, and so rise from gallery to gallery till it fell back, a cataract of applause from the topmost rows of seats. He was such a practised speaker that he knew all the stops of that simple instrument man, and there is no doubt that these results were accurately intended from his unerring knowledge. He was the most consummate public performer I ever saw, and it was an incomparable pleasure to hear him lecture; on the platform he was the great and finished actor which he probably would not have been on the stage. He was fond of private theatricals, and liked to play in them with his children and their friends, in dramatizations of such stories of his as 'The Prince and the Pauper;' but I never saw him in any of these scenes. When he read his manuscript to you, it was with a thorough, however involuntary, recognition of its dramatic qualities; he held that an actor added fully half to the character the author created. With my own hurried and half-hearted reading of passages which I wished to try on him from unprinted chapters (say, out of 'The Undiscovered Country' or 'A Modern Instance') he said frankly that my reading could spoil anything. He was realistic, but he was essentially histrionic, and he was rightly so. What we have strongly conceived we ought to make others strongly imagine, and we ought to use every genuine art to that end.

XIV.

There came a time when the lecturing which had been the joy of his prime became his loathing, loathing unutterable, and when he renounced it with indescribable violence. Yet he was always hankering for those fleshpots whose savor lingered on his palate and filled his nostrils after his withdrawal from the platform. The Authors' Readings when they had won their brief popularity abounded in suggestion for him. Reading from one's book was not so bad as giving a lecture written for a lecture's purpose, and he was willing at last to compromise. He had a magnificent scheme for touring the country with Aldrich and Mr. G. W. Cable and myself, in a private car, with a cook of our own, and every facility for living on the fat of the land. We should read only four times a week, in an entertainment that should not last more than an hour and a half. He would be the impresario, and would guarantee us others at least seventy-five dollars a day, and pay every expense of the enterprise, which he provisionally called the Circus, himself. But Aldrich and I were now no longer in those earlier thirties when we so cheerfully imagined 'Memorable Murders' for subscription publication; we both abhorred public appearances, and, at any rate, I was going to Europe for a year. So the plan fell through except as regarded Mr. Cable, who, in his way, was as fine a performer as Clemens, and could both read and sing the matter of his books. On a far less stupendous scale they two made the rounds of

the great lecturing circuit together. But I believe a famous lecture-manager had charge of them and travelled with them.

He was a most sanguine man, a most amiable person, and such a believer in fortune that Clemens used to say of him, as he said of one of his early publishers, that you could rely upon fifty per cent. of everything he promised. I myself many years later became a follower of this hopeful prophet, and I can testify that in my case at least he was able to keep ninety-nine, and even a hundred, per cent. of his word. It was I who was much nearer failing of mine, for I promptly began to lose sleep from the nervous stress of my lecturing and from the gratifying but killing receptions afterward, and I was truly in that state from insomnia which Clemens recognized in the brief letter I got from him in the Western city, after half a dozen wakeful nights. He sardonically congratulated me on having gone into "the lecture field," and then he said: "I know where you are now. You are in hell."

It was this perdition which he re-entered when he undertook that round-the-world lecturing tour for the payment of the debts left to him by the bankruptcy of his firm in the publishing business. It was not purely perdition for him, or, rather, it was perdition for only one-half of him, the author-half; for the actor-half it was paradise. The author who takes up lecturing without the ability to give histrionic support to the literary reputation which he brings to the crude test of his reader's eyes and ears, invokes a peril and a misery unknown to the lecturer who has made his first public from the platform. Clemens was victorious on the platform from the beginning, and it would be folly to pretend that he did not exult in his triumphs there. But I suppose, with the wearing nerves of middle life, he hated more and more the personal swarming of interest upon him, and all the inevitable clatter of the thing. Yet he faced it, and he labored round our tiresome globe that he might pay the uttermost farthing of debts which he had not knowingly contracted, the debts of his partners who had meant well and done ill, not because they were evil, but because they were unwise, and as unfit for their work as he was. "Pay what thou owest." That is right, even when thou owest it by the error of others, and even when thou owest it to a bank, which had not lent it from love of thee, but in the hard line of business and thy need.

Clemens's behavior in this matter redounded to his glory among the nations of the whole earth, and especially in this nation, so wrapped in commerce and so little used to honor among its many thieves. He had behaved like Walter Scott, as millions rejoiced to know, who had not known how Walter Scott had behaved till they knew it was like Clemens. No doubt it will be put to his credit in the books of the Recording Angel, but what the Judge of all the Earth will say of it at the Last Day there is no telling. I should not be surprised if He accounted it of less merit than some other things that Clemens did and was: less than his abhorrence of the Spanish War, and the destruction of the South-African republics, and our deceit of the Filipinos, and his hate of slavery, and his payment of his portion of our race's debt to the race of the colored student whom he saw through college, and his support of a poor artist for three years in Paris, and his loan of opportunity to the youth who became

the most brilliant of our actor-dramatists, and his eager pardon of the thoughtless girl who was near paying the penalty of her impertinence with the loss of her place, and his remembering that the insolent brakeman got so few dollars a month, and his sympathy for working-men standing up to money in their Unions, and even his pity for the wounded bird throbbing out its little life on the grass for the pleasure of the cruel fool who shot it. These and the thousand other charities and beneficences in which he abounded, openly or secretly, may avail him more than the discharge of his firm's liabilities with the Judge of all the Earth, who surely will do right, but whose measures and criterions no man knows, and I least of all men.

He made no great show of sympathy with people in their anxieties, but it never failed, and at a time when I lay sick for many weeks his letters were of comfort to those who feared I might not rise again. His hand was out in help for those who needed help, and in kindness for those who needed kindness. There remains in my mind the dreary sense of a long, long drive to the uttermost bounds of the South End at Boston, where he went to call upon some obscure person whose claim stretched in a lengthening chain from his early days in Missouri--a most inadequate person, in whose vacuity the gloom of the dull day deepened till it was almost too deep for tears. He bore the ordeal with grim heroism, and silently smoked away the sense of it, as we drove back to Cambridge, in his slippers, feet, sombrely musing, sombrely swearing. But he knew he had done the right, the kind thing, and he was content. He came the whole way from Hartford to go with me to a friendless play of mine, which Alessandro Salvini was giving in a series of matinees to houses never enlarging themselves beyond the count of the brave two hundred who sat it through, and he stayed my fainting spirit with a cheer beyond flagons, joining me in my joke at the misery of it, and carrying the fun farther.

Before that he had come to witness the aesthetic suicide of Anna Dickinson, who had been a flaming light of the political platform in the war days, and had been left by them consuming in a hapless ambition for the theatre. The poor girl had had a play written especially for her, and as Anne Boleyn she ranted and exhorted through the five acts, drawing ever nearer the utter defeat of the anticlimax. We could hardly look at each other for pity, Clemens sitting there in the box he had taken, with his shaggy head out over the corner and his slippers curled under him: he either went to a place in his slippers or he carried them with him, and put them on as soon as he could put off his boots. When it was so that we could no longer follow her failure and live, he began to talk of the absolute close of her career which the thing was, and how probably she had no conception that it was the end. He philosophized the mercifulness of the fact, and of the ignorance of most of us, when mortally sick or fatally wounded. We think it is not the end, because we have never ended before, and we do not see how we can end. Some can push by the awful hour and live again, but for Anna Dickinson there could be, and was, no such palingenesis. Of course we got that solemn joy out of reading her fate aright which is the compensation of the wise spectator in witnessing the inexorable doom of others.

XV.

When Messrs. Houghton & Mifflin became owners of The Atlantic Monthly, Mr. Houghton fancied having some breakfasts and dinners, which should bring the publisher and the editor face to face with the contributors, who were bidden from far and near. Of course, the subtle fiend of advertising, who has now grown so unblushing bold, lurked under the covers at these banquets, and the junior partner and the young editor had their joint and separate fine anguishes of misgiving as to the taste and the principle of them; but they were really very simple-hearted and honestly meant hospitalities, and they prospered as they ought, and gave great pleasure and no pain. I forget some of the "emergent occasions," but I am sure of a birthday dinner most unexpectedly accepted by Whittier, and a birthday luncheon to Mrs. Stowe, and I think a birthday dinner to Longfellow; but the passing years have left me in the dark as to the pretext of that supper at which Clemens made his awful speech, and came so near being the death of us all. At the breakfasts and luncheons we had the pleasure of our lady contributors' company, but that night there were only men, and because of our great strength we survived.

I suppose the year was about 1879, but here the almanac is unimportant, and I can only say that it was after Clemens had become a very valued contributor of the magazine, where he found himself to his own great explicit satisfaction. He had jubilantly accepted our invitation, and had promised a speech, which it appeared afterward he had prepared with unusual care and confidence. It was his custom always to think out his speeches, mentally wording them, and then memorizing them by a peculiar system of mnemonics which he had invented. On the dinner-table a certain succession of knife, spoon, salt-cellar, and butter-plate symbolized a train of ideas, and on the billiard-table a ball, a cue, and a piece of chalk served the same purpose. With a diagram of these printed on the brain he had full command of the phrases which his excogitation had attached to them, and which embodied the ideas in perfect form. He believed he had been particularly fortunate in his notion for the speech of that evening, and he had worked it out in joyous self-reliance. It was the notion of three tramps, three deadbeats, visiting a California mining-camp, and imposing themselves upon the innocent miners as respectively Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and Oliver Wendell, Holmes. The humor of the conception must prosper or must fail according to the mood of the hearer, but Clemens felt sure of compelling this to sympathy, and he looked forward to an unparalleled triumph.

But there were two things that he had not taken into account. One was the species of religious veneration in which these men were held by those nearest them, a thing that I should not be able to realize to people remote from them in time and place. They were men of extraordinary dignity, of the thing called presence, for want of some clearer word, so that no one could well approach them in a personally light or trifling spirit. I do not suppose that anybody more truly valued them or more piously loved them than Clemens himself, but the intoxication of his fancy carried him beyond the bounds of that regard, and emboldened him to

the other thing which he had not taken into account-namely, the immense hazard of working his fancy out before their faces, and expecting them to enter into the delight of it. If neither Emerson, nor Longfellow, nor Holmes had been there, the scheme might possibly have carried, but even this is doubtful, for those who so devoutly honored them would have overcome their horror with difficulty, and perhaps would not have overcome it at all.

The publisher, with a modesty very ungrateful to me, had abdicated his office of host, and I was the hapless president, fulfilling the abhorred function of calling people to their feet and making them speak. When I came to Clemens I introduced him with the cordial admiring I had for him as one of my greatest contributors and dearest friends. Here, I said, in sum, was a humorist who never left you hanging your head for having enjoyed his joke; and then the amazing mistake, the bewildering blunder, the cruel catastrophe was upon us. I believe that after the scope of the burlesque made itself clear, there was no one there, including the burlesquer himself, who was not smitten with a desolating dismay. There fell a silence, weighing many tons to the square inch, which deepened from moment to moment, and was broken only by the hysterical and blood-curdling laughter of a single guest, whose name shall not be handed down to infamy. Nobody knew whether to look at the speaker or down at his plate. I chose my plate as the least affliction, and so I do not know how Clemens looked, except when I stole a glance at him, and saw him standing solitary amid his appalled and appalling listeners, with his joke dead on his hands. From a first glance at the great three whom his jest had made its theme, I was aware of Longfellow sitting upright, and regarding the humorist with an air of pensive puzzle, of Holmes busily writing on his menu, with a well-feigned effect of preoccupation, and of Emerson, holding his elbows, and listening with a sort of Jovian oblivion of this nether world in that lapse of memory which saved him in those later years from so much bother. Clemens must have dragged his joke to the climax and left it there, but I cannot say this from any sense of the fact. Of what happened afterward at the table where the immense, the wholly innocent, the truly unimagined affront was offered, I have no longer the least remembrance. I next remember being in a room of the hotel, where Clemens was not to sleep, but to toss in despair, and Charles Dudley Warner's saying, in the gloom, "Well, Mark, you're a funny fellow." It was as well as anything else he could have said, but Clemens seemed unable to accept the tribute.

I stayed the night with him, and the next morning, after a haggard breakfast, we drove about and he made some purchases of bric-a-brac for his house in Hartford, with a soul as far away from bric-a-brac as ever the soul of man was. He went home by an early train, and he lost no time in writing back to the three divine personalities which he had so involuntarily seemed to flout. They all wrote back to him, making it as light for him as they could. I have heard that Emerson was a good deal mystified, and in his sublime forgetfulness asked, Who was this gentleman who appeared to think he had offered him some sort of annoyance! But I am not sure that this is accurate. What I am sure of is that Longfellow, a few days after, in my study, stopped before a photograph of Clemens and said, "Ah, he is a wag!" and nothing more. Holmes told me, with deep

emotion, such as a brother humorist might well feel, that he had not lost an instant in replying to Clemens's letter, and assuring him that there had not been the least offence, and entreating him never to think of the matter again. "He said that he was a fool, but he was God's fool," Holmes quoted from the letter, with a true sense of the pathos and the humor of the self-abasement.

To me Clemens wrote a week later, "It doesn't get any better; it burns like fire." But now I understand that it was not shame that burnt, but rage for a blunder which he had so incredibly committed. That to have conceived of those men, the most dignified in our literature, our civilization, as impersonable by three hoboes, and then to have imagined that he could ask them personally to enjoy the monstrous travesty, was a break, he saw too late, for which there was no repair. Yet the time came, and not so very long afterward, when some mention was made of the incident as a mistake, and he said, with all his fierceness, "But I don't admit that it was a mistake," and it was not so in the minds of all witnesses at second hand. The morning after the dreadful dinner there came a glowing note from Professor Child, who had read the newspaper report of it, praising Clemens's burlesque as the richest piece of humor in the world, and betraying no sense of incongruity in its perpetration in the presence of its victims. I think it must always have ground in Clemens's soul, that he was the prey of circumstances, and that if he had some more favoring occasion he could retrieve his loss in it by giving the thing the right setting. Not more than two or three years ago, he came to try me as to trying it again at a meeting of newspaper men in Washington. I had to own my fears, while I alleged Child's note on the other hand, but in the end he did not try it with the newspaper men. I do not know whether he has ever printed it or not, but since the thing happened I have often wondered how much offence there really was in it. I am not sure but the horror of the spectators read more indignation into the subjects of the hapless drolling than they felt. But it must have been difficult for them to bear it with equanimity. To be sure, they were not themselves mocked; the joke was, of course, beside them; nevertheless, their personality was trifled with, and I could only end by reflecting that if I had been in their place I should not have liked it myself. Clemens would have liked it himself, for he had the heart for that sort of wild play, and he so loved a joke that even if it took the form of a liberty, and was yet a good joke, he would have loved it. But perhaps this burlesque was not a good joke.

XVI.

Clemens was oftenest at my house in Cambridge, but he was also sometimes at my house in Belmont; when, after a year in Europe, we went to live in Boston, he was more rarely with us. We could never be long together without something out of the common happening, and one day something far out of the common happened, which fortunately refused the nature of absolute tragedy, while remaining rather the saddest sort of comedy. We were looking out of my library window on that view of the Charles which I

was so proud of sharing with my all-but-next-door neighbor, Doctor Holmes, when another friend who was with us called out with curiously impersonal interest, "Oh, see that woman getting into the water!" This would have excited curiosity and alarmed anxiety far less lively than ours, and Clemens and I rushed downstairs and out through my basement and back gate. At the same time a coachman came out of a stable next door, and grappled by the shoulders a woman who was somewhat deliberately getting down the steps to the water over the face of the embankment. Before we could reach them he had pulled her up to the driveway, and stood holding her there while she crazily grieved at her rescue. As soon as he saw us he went back into his stable, and left us with the poor wild creature on our hands. She was not very young and not very pretty, and we could not have flattered ourselves with the notion of anything romantic in her suicidal mania, but we could take her on the broad human level, and on this we proposed to escort her up Beacon Street till we could give her into the keeping of one of those kindly policemen whom our neighborhood knew. Naturally there was no policeman known to us or unknown the whole way to the Public Garden. We had to circumvent our charge in her present design of drowning herself, and walk her past the streets crossing Beacon to the river. At these points it needed considerable reasoning to overcome her wish and some active manoeuvring in both of us to enforce our arguments. Nobody else appeared to be interested, and though we did not court publicity in the performance of the duty so strangely laid upon us, still it was rather disappointing to be so entirely ignored.

There are some four or five crossings to the river between 302 Beacon Street and the Public Garden, and the suggestions at our command were pretty well exhausted by the time we reached it. Still the expected policeman was nowhere in sight; but a brilliant thought occurred to Clemens. He asked me where the nearest police station was, and when I told him, he started off at his highest speed, leaving me in sole charge of our hapless ward. All my powers of suasion were now taxed to the utmost, and I began attracting attention as a short, stout gentleman in early middle life endeavoring to restrain a respectable female of her personal liberty, when his accomplice had abandoned him to his wicked design. After a much longer time than I thought I should have taken to get a policeman from the station, Clemens reappeared in easy conversation with an officer who had probably realized that he was in the company of Mark Twain, and was in no hurry to end the interview. He took possession of our captive, and we saw her no more. I now wonder that with our joint instinct for failure we ever got rid of her; but I am sure we did, and few things in life have given me greater relief. When we got back to my house we found the friend we had left there quite unruffled and not much concerned to know the facts of our adventure. My impression is that he had been taking a nap on my lounge; he appeared refreshed and even gay; but if I am inexact in these details he is alive to refute me.

A little after this Clemens went abroad with his family, and lived several years in Germany. His letters still came, but at longer intervals, and the thread of our intimate relations was inevitably broken. He would write me when something I had written pleased him, or when something signal occurred to him, or some political or social outrage stirred him to wrath, and he wished to free his mind in pious profanity. During this sojourn he came near dying of pneumonia in Berlin, and he had slight relapses from it after coming home. In Berlin also he had the honor of dining with the German Emperor at the table of a cousin married to a high officer of the court. Clemens was a man to enjoy such a distinction; he knew how to take it as a delegated recognition from the German people; but as coming from a rather cockahoop sovereign who had as yet only his sovereignty to value himself upon, he was not very proud of it. He expressed a quiet disdain of the event as between the imperialism and himself, on whom it was supposed to confer such glory, crowning his life with the topmost leaf of laurel. He was in the same mood in his account of an English dinner many years before, where there was a "little Scotch lord" present, to whom the English tacitly referred Clemens's talk, and laughed when the lord laughed, and were grave when he failed to smile. Of all the men I have known he was the farthest from a snob, though he valued recognition, and liked the flattery of the fashionable fair when it came in his way. He would not go out of his way for it, but like most able and brilliant men he loved the minds of women, their wit, their agile cleverness, their sensitive perception, their humorous appreciation, the saucy things they would say, and their pretty, temerarious defiances. He had, of course, the keenest sense of what was truly dignified and truly undignified in people; but he was not really interested in what we call society affairs; they scarcely existed for him, though his books witness how he abhorred the dreadful fools who through some chance of birth or wealth hold themselves different from other men.

Commonly he did not keep things to himself, especially dislikes and condemnations. Upon most current events he had strong opinions, and he uttered them strongly. After a while he was silent in them, but if you tried him you found him in them still. He was tremendously worked up by a certain famous trial, as most of us were who lived in the time of it. He believed the accused guilty, but when we met some months after it was over, and I tempted him to speak his mind upon it, he would only say. The man had suffered enough; as if the man had expiated his wrong, and he was not going to do anything to renew his penalty. I found that very curious, very delicate. His continued blame could not come to the sufferer's knowledge, but he felt it his duty to forbear it.

He was apt to wear himself out in the vehemence of his resentments; or, he had so spent himself in uttering them that he had literally nothing more to say. You could offer Clemens offences that would anger other men and he did not mind; he would account for them from human nature; but if he thought you had in any way played him false you were anathema and maranatha forever. Yet not forever, perhaps, for by and-by, after years, he would be silent. There were two men, half a generation apart in their succession, whom he thought equally atrocious in their treason to him, and of whom he used to talk terrifyingly, even after they were out of the

world. He went farther than Heine, who said that he forgave his enemies, but not till they were dead. Clemens did not forgive his dead enemies; their death seemed to deepen their crimes, like a base evasion, or a cowardly attempt to escape; he pursued them to the grave; he would like to dig them up and take vengeance upon their clay. So he said, but no doubt he would not have hurt them if he had had them living before him. He was generous without stint; he trusted without measure, but where his generosity was abused, or his trust betrayed, he was a fire of vengeance, a consuming flame of suspicion that no sprinkling of cool patience from others could quench; it had to burn itself out. He was eagerly and lavishly hospitable, but if a man seemed willing to batten on him, or in any way to lie down upon him, Clemens despised him unutterably. In his frenzies of resentment or suspicion he would not, and doubtless could not, listen to reason. But if between the paroxysms he were confronted with the facts he would own them, no matter how much they told against him. At one period he fancied that a certain newspaper was hounding him with biting censure and poisonous paragraphs, and he was filling himself up with wrath to be duly discharged on the editor's head. Later, he wrote me with a humorous joy in his mistake that Warner had advised him to have the paper watched for these injuries. He had done so, and how many mentions of him did I reckon he had found in three months? Just two, and they were rather indifferent than unfriendly. So the paper was acquitted, and the editor's life was spared. The wretch never knew how near he was to losing it, with incredible preliminaries of obloquy, and a subsequent devotion to lasting infamy.

His memory for favors was as good as for injuries, and he liked to return your friendliness with as loud a band of music as could be bought or bribed for the occasion. All that you had to do was to signify that you wanted his help. When my father was consul at Toronto during Arthur's administration, he fancied that his place was in danger, and he appealed to me. In turn I appealed to Clemens, bethinking myself of his friendship with Grant and Grant's friendship with Arthur. I asked him to write to Grant in my father's behalf, but No, he answered me, I must come to Hartford, and we would go on to New York together and see Grant personally. This was before, and long before, Clemens became Grant's publisher and splendid benefactor, but the men liked each other as such men could not help doing. Clemens made the appointment, and we went to find Grant in his business office, that place where his business innocence was afterward so betrayed. He was very simple and very cordial, and I was instantly the more at home with him, because his voice was the soft, rounded, Ohio River accent to which my years were earliest used from my steamboating uncles, my earliest heroes. When I stated my business he merely said, Oh no; that must not be; he would write to Mr. Arthur; and he did so that day; and my father lived to lay down his office, when he tired of it, with no urgency from above.

It is not irrelevant to Clemens to say that Grant seemed to like finding himself in company with two literary men, one of whom at least he could make sure of, and unlike that silent man he was reputed, he talked constantly, and so far as he might he talked literature. At least he talked of John Phoenix, that delightfulest of the early Pacific Slope humorists, whom he had known under his real name of George H. Derby, when

they were fellow-cadets at West Point. It was mighty pretty, as Pepys would say, to see the delicate deference Clemens paid our plain hero, and the manly respect with which he listened. While Grant talked, his luncheon was brought in from some unassuming restaurant near by, and he asked us to join him in the baked beans and coffee which were served us in a little room out of the office with about the same circumstance as at a railroad refreshment-counter. The baked beans and coffee were of about the railroad-refreshment quality; but eating them with Grant was like sitting down to baked beans and coffee with Julius Caesar, or Alexander, or some other great Plutarchan captain. One of the highest satisfactions of Clemens's often supremely satisfactory life was his relation to Grant. It was his proud joy to tell how he found Grant about to sign a contract for his book on certainly very good terms, and said to him that he would himself publish the book and give him a percentage three times as large. He said Grant seemed to doubt whether he could honorably withdraw from the negotiation at that point, but Clemens overbore his scruples, and it was his unparalleled privilege, his princely pleasure, to pay the author a far larger check for his work than had ever been paid to an author before. He valued even more than this splendid opportunity the sacred moments in which their business brought him into the presence of the slowly dying, heroically living man whom he was so befriending; and he told me in words which surely lost none of their simple pathos through his report how Grant described his suffering.

The prosperity, of this venture was the beginning of Clemens's adversity, for it led to excesses of enterprise which were forms of dissipation. The young sculptor who had come back to him from Paris modelled a small bust of Grant, which Clemens multiplied in great numbers to his great loss, and the success of Grant's book tempted him to launch on publishing seas where his bark presently foundered. The first and greatest of his disasters was the Life of Pope Leo XIII, which he came to tell me of, when he had imagined it, in a sort of delirious exultation. He had no words in which to paint the magnificence of the project, or to forecast its colossal success. It would have a currency bounded only by the number of Catholics in Christendom. It would be translated into every language which was anywhere written or printed; it would be circulated literally in every country of the globe, and Clemens's book agents would carry the prospectuses and then the bound copies of the work to the ends of the whole earth. Not only would every Catholic buy it, but every Catholic must, as he was a good Catholic, as he hoped to be saved. It was a magnificent scheme, and it captivated me, as it had captivated Clemens; it dazzled us both, and neither of us saw the fatal defect in it. We did not consider how often Catholics could not read, how often when they could, they might not wish to read. The event proved that whether they could read or not the immeasurable majority did not wish to read the life of the Pope, though it was written by a dignitary of the Church and issued to the world with every sanction from the Vatican. The failure was incredible to Clemens; his sanguine soul was utterly confounded, and soon a silence fell upon it where it had been so exuberantly jubilant.

XIX.

The occasions which brought us to New York together were not nearly so frequent as those which united us in Boston, but there was a dinner given him by a friend which remains memorable from the fatuity of two men present, so different in everything but their fatuity. One was the sweet old comedian Billy Florence, who was urging the unsuccessful dramatist across the table to write him a play about Oliver Cromwell, and giving the reasons why he thought himself peculiarly fitted to portray the character of Cromwell. The other was a modestly millioned rich man who was then only beginning to amass the moneys afterward heaped so high, and was still in the condition to be flattered by the condescension of a yet greater millionaire. His contribution to our gaiety was the verbatim report of a call he had made upon William H. Vanderbilt, whom he had found just about starting out of town, with his trunks actually in the front hall, but who had stayed to receive the narrator. He had, in fact, sat down on one of the trunks, and talked with the easiest friendliness, and quite, we were given to infer, like an ordinary human being. Clemens often kept on with some thread of the talk when we came away from a dinner, but now he was silent, as if "high sorrowful and cloyed"; and it was not till well afterward that I found he had noted the facts from the bitterness with which he mocked the rich man, and the pity he expressed for the actor.

He had begun before that to amass those evidences against mankind which eventuated with him in his theory of what he called "the damned human race." This was not an expression of piety, but of the kind contempt to which he was driven by our follies and iniquities as he had observed them in himself as well as in others. It was as mild a misanthropy, probably, as ever caressed the objects of its malediction. But I believe it was about the year 1900 that his sense of our perdition became insupportable and broke out in a mixed abhorrence and amusement which spared no occasion, so that I could quite understand why Mrs. Clemens should have found some compensation, when kept to her room by sickness, in the reflection that now she should not hear so much about "the damned human race." He told of that with the same wild joy that he told of overhearing her repetition of one of his most inclusive profanities, and her explanation that she meant him to hear it so that he might know how it sounded. The contrast of the lurid blasphemy with her heavenly whiteness should have been enough to cure any one less grounded than he in what must be owned was as fixed a habit as smoking with him. When I first knew him he rarely vented his fury in that sort, and I fancy he was under a promise to her which he kept sacred till the wear and tear of his nerves with advancing years disabled him. Then it would be like him to struggle with himself till he could struggle no longer and to ask his promise back, and it would be like her to give it back. His profanity was the heritage of his boyhood and young manhood in social conditions and under the duress of exigencies in which everybody swore about as impersonally as he smoked. It is best to recognize the fact of it, and I do so the more readily because I cannot suppose the Recording Angel really minded it much more than that Guardian. Angel of his. It probably grieved them about equally, but they could equally forgive it.

Nothing came of his pose regarding "the damned human race" except his invention of the Human Race Luncheon Club. This was confined to four persons who were never all got together, and it soon perished of their indifference.

In the earlier days that I have more specially in mind one of the questions that we used to debate a good deal was whether every human motive was not selfish. We inquired as to every impulse, the noblest, the holiest in effect, and he found them in the last analysis of selfish origin. Pretty nearly the whole time of a certain railroad run from New York to Hartford was taken up with the scrutiny of the self-sacrifice of a mother for her child, of the abandon of the lover who dies in saving his mistress from fire or flood, of the hero's courage in the field and the martyr's at the stake. Each he found springing from the unconscious love of self and the dread of the greater pain which the self-sacrificer would suffer in-forbearing the sacrifice. If we had any time left from this inquiry that day, he must have devoted it to a high regret that Napoleon did not carry out his purpose of invading England, for then he would have destroyed the feudal aristocracy, or "reformed the lords," as it might be called now. He thought that would have been an incalculable blessing to the English people and the world. Clemens was always beautifully and unfalteringly a republican. None of his occasional misgivings for America implicated a return to monarchy. Yet he felt passionately the splendor of the English monarchy, and there was a time when he gloried in that figurative poetry by which the king was phrased as "the Majesty of England." He rolled the words deep-throatedly out, and exulted in their beauty as if it were beyond any other glory of the world. He read, or read at, English history a great deal, and one of the by-products of his restless invention was a game of English Kings (like the game of Authors) for children. I do not know whether he ever perfected this, but I am quite sure it was not put upon the market. Very likely he brought it to a practicable stage, and then tired of it, as he was apt to do in the ultimatum of his vehement undertakings.

XX.

He satisfied the impassioned demand of his nature for incessant activities of every kind by taking a personal as well as a pecuniary interest in the inventions of others. At one moment "the damned human race" was almost to be redeemed by a process of founding brass without air bubbles in it; if this could once be accomplished, as I understood, or misunderstood, brass could be used in art-printing to a degree hitherto impossible. I dare say I have got it wrong, but I am not mistaken as to Clemens's enthusiasm for the process, and his heavy losses in paying its way to ultimate failure. He was simultaneously absorbed in the perfection of a type-setting machine, which he was paying the inventor a salary to bring to a perfection so expensive that it was practically impracticable. We were both printers by trade, and I could take the same interest in this wonderful piece of mechanism that he could; and it was so truly wonderful that it did everything but walk and

talk. Its ingenious creator was so bent upon realizing the highest ideal in it that he produced a machine of quite unimpeachable efficiency. But it was so costly, when finished, that it could not be made for less than twenty thousand dollars, if the parts were made by hand. This sum was prohibitive of its introduction, unless the requisite capital could be found for making the parts by machinery, and Clemens spent many months in vainly trying to get this money together. In the mean time simpler machines had been invented and the market filled, and his investment of three hundred thousand dollars in the beautiful miracle remained permanent but not profitable. I once went with him to witness its performance, and it did seem to me the last word in its way, but it had been spoken too exquisitely, too fastidiously. I never heard him devote the inventor to the infernal gods, as he was apt to do with the geniuses he lost money by, and so I think he did not regard him as a traitor.

In these things, and in his other schemes for the 'subiti guadagni' of the speculator and the "sudden making of splendid names" for the benefactors of our species, Clemens satisfied the Colonel Sellers nature in himself (from which he drew the picture of that wild and lovable figure), and perhaps made as good use of his money as he could. He did not care much for money in itself, but he luxuriated in the lavish use of it, and he was as generous with it as ever a man was. He liked giving it, but he commonly wearied of giving it himself, and wherever he lived he established an almoner, whom he fully trusted to keep his left hand ignorant of what his right hand was doing. I believe he felt no finality in charity, but did it because in its provisional way it was the only thing a man could do. I never heard him go really into any sociological inquiry, and I have a feeling that that sort of thing baffled and dispirited him. No one can read *The Connecticut Yankee* and not be aware of the length and breadth of his sympathies with poverty, but apparently he had not thought out any scheme for righting the economic wrongs we abound in. I cannot remember our ever getting quite down to a discussion of the matter; we came very near it once in the day of the vast wave of emotion sent over the world by 'Looking Backward,' and again when we were all so troubled by the great coal strike in Pennsylvania; in considering that he seemed to be for the time doubtful of the justice of the workingman's cause. At all other times he seemed to know that whatever wrongs the workingman committed work was always in the right.

When Clemens returned to America with his family, after lecturing round the world, I again saw him in New York, where I so often saw him while he was shaping himself for that heroic enterprise. He would come to me, and talk sorrowfully over his financial ruin, and picture it to himself as the stuff of some unhappy dream, which, after long prosperity, had culminated the wrong way. It was very melancholy, very touching, but the sorrow to which he had come home from his long journey had not that forlorn bewilderment in it. He was looking wonderfully well, and when I wanted the name of his elixir, he said it was plasmon. He was apt, for a man who had put faith so decidedly away from him, to take it back and pin it to some superstition, usually of a hygienic sort. Once, when he was well on in years, he came to New York without glasses, and announced that he and all his family, so astigmatic and myopic and old-sighted, had, so to speak, burned their spectacles behind them upon the instruction of

some sage who had found out that they were a delusion. The next time he came he wore spectacles freely, almost ostentatiously, and I heard from others that the whole Clemens family had been near losing their eyesight by the miracle worked in their behalf. Now, I was not surprised to learn that "the damned human race" was to be saved by plasmon, if anything, and that my first duty was to visit the plasmon agency with him, and procure enough plasmon to secure my family against the ills it was heir to for evermore. I did not immediately understand that plasmon was one of the investments which he had made from "the substance of things hoped for," and in the destiny of a disastrous disappointment. But after paying off the creditors of his late publishing firm, he had to do something with his money, and it was not his fault if he did not make a fortune out of plasmon.

XXI.

For a time it was a question whether he should not go back with his family to their old home in Hartford. Perhaps the father's and mother's hearts drew them there all the more strongly because of the grief written ineffaceably over it, but for the younger ones it was no longer the measure of the world. It was easier for all to stay on indefinitely in New York, which is a sojourn without circumstance, and equally the home of exile and of indecision. The Clemenses took a pleasant, spacious house at Riverdale, on the Hudson, and there I began to see them again on something like the sweet old terms. They lived far more unpretentiously than they used, and I think with a notion of economy, which they had never very successfully practised. I recall that at the end of a certain year in Hartford, when they had been saving and paying cash for everything, Clemens wrote, reminding me of their avowed experiment, and asking me to guess how many bills they had at New Year's; he hastened to say that a horse-car would not have held them. At Riverdale they kept no carriage, and there was a snowy night when I drove up to their handsome old mansion in the station carryall, which was crusted with mud as from the going down of the Deluge after transporting Noah and his family from the Ark to whatever point they decided to settle at provisionally. But the good talk, the rich talk, the talk that could never suffer poverty of mind or soul, was there, and we jubilantly found ourselves again in our middle youth. It was the mighty moment when Clemens was building his engines of war for the destruction of Christian Science, which superstition nobody, and he least of all, expected to destroy. It would not be easy to say whether in his talk of it his disgust for the illiterate twaddle of Mrs. Eddy's book, or his admiration of her genius for organization was the greater. He believed that as a religious machine the Christian Science Church was as perfect as the Roman Church and destined to be, more formidable in its control of the minds of men. He looked for its spread over the whole of Christendom, and throughout the winter he spent at Riverdale he was ready to meet all listeners more than half-way with his convictions of its powerful grasp of the average human desire to get something for nothing. The vacuous vulgarity of its texts was a perpetual joy to him, while he bowed with serious respect to

the sagacity which built so securely upon the everlasting rock of human credulity and folly.

An interesting phase of his psychology in this business was not only his admiration for the masterly policy of the Christian Science hierarchy, but his willingness to allow the miracles of its healers to be tried on his friends and family, if they wished it. He had a tender heart for the whole generation of empirics, as well as the newer sorts of scienticians, but he seemed to base his faith in them largely upon the failure of the regulars rather than upon their own successes, which also he believed in. He was recurrently, but not insistently, desirous that you should try their strange magics when you were going to try the familiar medicines.

XXII.

The order of my acquaintance, or call it intimacy, with Clemens was this: our first meeting in Boston, my visits to him in Hartford, his visits to me in Cambridge, in Belmont, and in Boston, our briefer and less frequent meetings in Paris and New York, all with repeated interruptions through my absences in Europe, and his sojourns in London, Berlin, Vienna, and Florence, and his flights to the many ends, and odds and ends, of the earth. I will not try to follow the events, if they were not rather the subjective experiences, of those different periods and points of time which I must not fail to make include his summer at York Harbor, and his divers residences in New York, on Tenth Street and on Fifth Avenue, at Riverdale, and at Stormfield, which his daughter has told me he loved best of all his houses and hoped to make his home for long years.

Not much remains to me of the week or so that we had together in Paris early in the summer of 1904. The first thing I got at my bankers was a cable message announcing that my father was stricken with paralysis, but urging my stay for further intelligence, and I went about, till the final summons came, with my head in a mist of care and dread. Clemens was very kind and brotherly through it all. He was living greatly to his mind in one of those arcaded little hotels in the Rue de Rivoli, and he was free from all household duties to range with me. We drove together to make calls of digestion at many houses where he had got indigestion through his reluctance from their hospitality, for he hated dining out. But, as he explained, his wife wanted him to make these visits, and he did it, as he did everything she wanted. 'At one place, some suburban villa, he could get no answer to his ring, and he "hove" his cards over the gate just as it opened, and he had the shame of explaining in his unexplanatory French to the man picking them up. He was excruciatingly helpless with his cabmen, but by very cordially smiling and casting himself on the drivers' mercy he always managed to get where he wanted. The family was on the verge of their many moves, and he was doing some small errands; he said that the others did the main things, and left him to do what the cat might.

It was with that return upon the buoyant billow of plasmon, renewed in

look and limb, that Clemens's universally pervasive popularity began in his own country. He had hitherto been more intelligently accepted or more largely imagined in Europe, and I suppose it was my sense of this that inspired the stupidity of my saying to him when we came to consider "the state of polite learning" among us, "You mustn't expect people to keep it up here as they do in England." But it appeared that his countrymen were only wanting the chance, and they kept it up in honor of him past all precedent. One does not go into a catalogue of dinners, receptions, meetings, speeches, and the like, when there are more vital things to speak of. He loved these obvious joys, and he eagerly strove with the occasions they gave him for the brilliancy which seemed so exhaustless and was so exhausting. His friends saw that he was wearing himself out, and it was not because of Mrs. Clemens's health alone that they were glad to have him take refuge at Riverdale. The family lived there two happy, hopeless years, and then it was ordered that they should change for his wife's sake to some less exacting climate. Clemens was not eager to go to Florence, but his imagination was taken as it would have been in the old-young days by the notion of packing his furniture into flexible steel cages from his house in Hartford and unpacking it from them untouched at his villa in Fiesole. He got what pleasure any man could out of that triumph of mind over matter, but the shadow was creeping up his life. One sunny afternoon we sat on the grass before the mansion, after his wife had begun to get well enough for removal, and we looked up toward a balcony where by-and-by that lovely presence made itself visible, as if it had stooped there from a cloud. A hand frailly waved a handkerchief; Clemens ran over the lawn toward it, calling tenderly: "What? What?" as if it might be an asking for him instead of the greeting it really was for me. It was the last time I saw her, if indeed I can be said to have seen her then, and long afterward when I said how beautiful we all thought her, how good, how wise, how wonderfully perfect in every relation of life, he cried out in a breaking voice: "Oh, why didn't you ever tell her? She thought you didn't like her." What a pang it was then not to have told her, but how could we have told her? His unreason endeared him to me more than all his wisdom.

To that Riverdale sojourn belong my impressions of his most violent anti-Christian Science rages, which began with the postponement of his book, and softened into acceptance of the delay till he had well-nigh forgotten his wrath when it came out. There was also one of those joint episodes of ours, which, strangely enough, did not eventuate in entire failure, as most of our joint episodes did. He wrote furiously to me of a wrong which had been done to one of the most helpless and one of the most helped of our literary brethren, asking me to join with him in recovering the money paid over by that brother's publisher to a false friend who had withheld it and would not give any account of it. Our hapless brother had appealed to Clemens, as he had to me, with the facts, but not asking our help, probably because he knew he need not ask; and Clemens enclosed to me a very taking-by-the-throat message which he proposed sending to the false friend. For once I had some sense, and answered that this would never do, for we had really no power in the matter, and I contrived a letter to the recreant so softly diplomatic that I shall always think of it with pride when my honesties no longer give me satisfaction, saying that this incident had come to our knowledge, and suggesting that we felt

sure he would not finally wish to withhold the money. Nothing more, practically, than that, but that was enough; there came promptly back a letter of justification, covering a very substantial check, which we hilariously forwarded to our beneficiary. But the helpless man who was so used to being helped did not answer with the gladness I, at least, expected of him. He acknowledged the check as he would any ordinary payment, and then he made us observe that there was still a large sum due him out of the moneys withheld. At this point I proposed to Clemens that we should let the nonchalant victim collect the remnant himself. Clouds of sorrow had gathered about the bowed head of the delinquent since we began on him, and my fickle sympathies were turning his way from the victim who was really to blame for leaving his affairs so unguardedly to him in the first place. Clemens made some sort of grit assent, and we dropped the matter. He was more used to ingratitude from those he helped than I was, who found being lain down upon not so amusing as he found my revolt. He reckoned I was right, he said, and after that I think we never recurred to the incident. It was not ingratitude that he ever minded; it was treachery, that really maddened him past forgiveness.

XXIII.

During the summer he spent at York Harbor I was only forty minutes away at Kittery Point, and we saw each other often; but this was before the last time at Riverdale. He had a wide, low cottage in a pine grove overlooking York River, and we used to sit at a corner of the veranda farthest away from Mrs. Clemens's window, where we could read our manuscripts to each other, and tell our stories, and laugh our hearts out without disturbing her. At first she had been about the house, and there was one gentle afternoon when she made tea for us in the parlor, but that was the last time I spoke with her. After that it was really a question of how soonest and easiest she could be got back to Riverdale; but, of course, there were specious delays in which she seemed no worse and seemed a little better, and Clemens could work at a novel he had begun. He had taken a room in the house of a friend and neighbor, a fisherman and boatman; there was a table where he could write, and a bed where he could lie down and read; and there, unless my memory has played me one of those constructive tricks that people's memories indulge in, he read me the first chapters of an admirable story. The scene was laid in a Missouri town, and the characters such as he had known in boyhood; but as often as I tried to make him own it, he denied having written any such story; it is possible that I dreamed it, but I hope the MS. will yet be found. Upon reflection I cannot believe that I dreamed it, and I cannot believe that it was an effect of that sort of pseudomnemonics which I have mentioned. The characters in the novel are too clearly outlined in my recollection, together with some critical reservations of my own concerning them. Not only does he seem to have read me those first chapters, but to have talked them over with me and outlined the whole story.

I cannot say whether or not he believed that his wife would recover; he

fought the fear of her death to the end; for her life was far more largely his than the lives of most men's wives are theirs. For his own life I believe he would never have much cared, if I may trust a saying of one who was so absolutely without pose as he was. He said that he never saw a dead man whom he did not envy for having had it over and being done with it. Life had always amused him, and in the resurgence of its interests after his sorrow had ebbed away he was again deeply interested in the world and in the human race, which, though damned, abounded in subjects of curious inquiry. When the time came for his wife's removal from York Harbor I went with him to Boston, where he wished to look up the best means of her conveyance to New York. The inquiry absorbed him: the sort of invalid car he could get; how she could be carried to the village station; how the car could be detached from the eastern train at Boston and carried round to the southern train on the other side of the city, and then how it could be attached to the Hudson River train at New York and left at Riverdale. There was no particular of the business which he did not scrutinize and master, not only with his poignant concern for her welfare, but with his strong curiosity as to how these unusual things were done with the usual means. With the inertness that grows upon an aging man he had been used to delegating more and more things, but of that thing I perceived that he would not delegate the least detail.

He had meant never to go abroad again, but when it came time to go he did not look forward to returning; he expected to live in Florence always after that; they were used to the life and they had been happy there some years earlier before he went with his wife for the cure of Nauheim. But when he came home again it was for good and all. It was natural that he should wish to live in New York, where they had already had a pleasant year in Tenth Street. I used to see him there in an upper room, looking south over a quiet open space of back yards where we fought our battles in behalf of the Filipinos and the Boers, and he carried on his campaign against the missionaries in China. He had not yet formed his habit of lying for whole days in bed and reading and writing there, yet he was a good deal in bed, from weakness, I suppose, and for the mere comfort of it.

My perspectives are not very clear, and in the foreshortening of events which always takes place in our review of the past I may not always time things aright. But I believe it was not until he had taken his house at 21 Fifth Avenue that he began to talk to me of writing his autobiography. He meant that it should be a perfectly veracious record of his life and period; for the first time in literature there should be a true history of a man and a true presentation of the men the man had known. As we talked it over the scheme enlarged itself in our riotous fancy. We said it should be not only a book, it should be a library, not only a library, but a literature. It should make good the world's loss through Omar's barbarity at Alexandria; there was no image so grotesque, so extravagant that we did not play with it; and the work so far as he carried it was really done on a colossal scale. But one day he said that as to veracity it was a failure; he had begun to lie, and that if no man ever yet told the truth about himself it was because no man ever could. How far he had carried his autobiography I cannot say; he dictated the matter several

hours each day; and the public has already seen long passages from it, and can judge, probably, of the make and matter of the whole from these. It is immensely inclusive, and it observes no order or sequence. Whether now, after his death, it will be published soon or late I have no means of knowing. Once or twice he said in a vague way that it was not to be published for twenty years, so that the discomfort of publicity might be minimized for all the survivors. Suddenly he told me he was not working at it; but I did not understand whether he had finished it or merely dropped it; I never asked.

We lived in the same city, but for old men rather far apart, he at Tenth Street and I at Seventieth, and with our colds and other disabilities we did not see each other often. He expected me to come to him, and I would not without some return of my visits, but we never ceased to be friends, and good friends, so far as I know. I joked him once as to how I was going to come out in his autobiography, and he gave me some sort of joking reassurance. There was one incident, however, that brought us very frequently and actively together. He came one Sunday afternoon to have me call with him on Maxim Gorky, who was staying at a hotel a few streets above mine. We were both interested in Gorky, Clemens rather more as a revolutionist and I as a realist, though I too wished the Russian Tsar ill, and the novelist well in his mission to the Russian sympathizers in this republic. But I had lived through the episode of Kossuth's visit to us and his vain endeavor to raise funds for the Hungarian cause in 1851, when we were a younger and nobler nation than now, with hearts if not hands, opener to the "oppressed of Europe"; the oppressed of America, the four or five millions of slaves, we did not count. I did not believe that Gorky could get the money for the cause of freedom in Russia which he had come to get; as I told a valued friend of his and mine, I did not believe he could get twenty-five hundred dollars, and I think now I set the figure too high. I had already refused to sign the sort of general appeal his friends were making to our principles and pockets because I felt it so wholly idle, and when the paper was produced in Gorky's presence and Clemens put his name to it I still refused. The next day Gorky was expelled from his hotel with the woman who was not his wife, but who, I am bound to say, did not look as if she were not, at least to me, who am, however, not versed in those aspects of human nature.

I might have escaped unnoted, but Clemens's familiar head gave us away to the reporters waiting at the elevator's mouth for all who went to see Gorky. As it was, a hunt of interviewers ensued for us severally and jointly. I could remain aloof in my hotel apartment, returning answer to such guardians of the public right to know everything that I had nothing to say of Gorky's domestic affairs; for the public interest had now strayed far from the revolution, and centred entirely upon these. But with Clemens it was different; he lived in a house with a street door kept by a single butler, and he was constantly rung for. I forget how long the siege lasted, but long enough for us to have fun with it. That was the moment of the great Vesuvian eruption, and we figured ourselves in easy reach of a volcano which was every now and then "blowing a cone off," as the telegraphic phrase was. The roof of the great market in Naples had just broken in under its load of ashes and cinders, and

crashed hundreds of people; and we asked each other if we were not sorry we had not been there, where the pressure would have been far less terrific than it was with us in Fifth Avenue. The forbidden butler came up with a message that there were some gentlemen below who wanted to see Clemens.

"How many?" he demanded.

"Five," the butler faltered.

"Reporters?"

The butler feigned uncertainty.

"What would you do?" he asked me.

"I wouldn't see them," I said, and then Clemens went directly down to them. How or by what means he appeased their voracity I cannot say, but I fancy it was by the confession of the exact truth, which was harmless enough. They went away joyfully, and he came back in radiant satisfaction with having seen them. Of course he was right and I wrong, and he was right as to the point at issue between Gorky and those who had helplessly treated him with such cruel ignominy. In America it is not the convention for men to live openly in hotels with women who are not their wives. Gorky had violated this convention and he had to pay the penalty; and concerning the destruction of his efficiency as an emissary of the revolution, his blunder was worse than a crime.

XXIV.

To the period of Clemens's residence in Fifth Avenue belongs his efflorescence in white serge. He was always rather aggressively indifferent about dress, and at a very early date in our acquaintance Aldrich and I attempted his reform by clubbing to buy him a cravat. But he would not put away his stiff little black bow, and until he imagined the suit of white serge, he wore always a suit of black serge, truly deplorable in the cut of the sagging frock. After his measure had once been taken he refused to make his clothes the occasion of personal interviews with his tailor; he sent the stuff by the kind elderly woman who had been in the service of the family from the earliest days of his marriage, and accepted the result without criticism. But the white serge was an inspiration which few men would have had the courage to act upon. The first time I saw him wear it was at the authors' hearing before the Congressional Committee on Copyright in Washington. Nothing could have been more dramatic than the gesture with which he flung off his long loose overcoat, and stood forth in white from his feet to the crown of his silvery head. It was a magnificent coup, and he dearly loved a coup; but the magnificent speech which he made, tearing to shreds the venerable farrago of nonsense about nonproperty in ideas which had formed the basis of all copyright legislation, made you forget even his spectacularity.

It is well known how proud he was of his Oxford gown, not merely because it symbolized the honor in which he was held by the highest literary body in the world, but because it was so rich and so beautiful. The red and the lavender of the cloth flattered his eyes as the silken black of the same degree of Doctor of Letters, given him years before at Yale, could not do. His frank, defiant happiness in it, mixed with a due sense of burlesque, was something that those lacking his poet-soul could never imagine; they accounted it vain, weak; but that would not have mattered to him if he had known it. In his London sojourn he had formed the top-hat habit, and for a while he lounged splendidly up and down Fifth Avenue in that society emblem; but he seemed to tire of it, and to return kindly to the soft hat of his Southwestern tradition.

He disliked clubs; I don't know whether he belonged to any in New York, but I never met him in one. As I have told, he himself had formed the Human Race Club, but as he never could get it together it hardly counted. There was to have been a meeting of it the time of my only visit to Stormfield in April of last year; but of three who were to have come I alone came. We got on very well without the absentees, after finding them in the wrong, as usual, and the visit was like those I used to have with him so many years before in Hartford, but there was not the old ferment of subjects. Many things had been discussed and put away for good, but we had our old fondness for nature and for each other, who were so differently parts of it. He showed his absolute content with his house, and that was the greater pleasure for me because it was my son who designed it. The architect had been so fortunate as to be able to plan it where a natural avenue of savins, the closeknit, slender, cypress-like cedars of New England, led away from the rear of the villa to the little level of a pergola, meant some day to be wreathed and roofed with vines. But in the early spring days all the landscape was in the beautiful nakedness of the northern winter. It opened in the surpassing loveliness of wooded and meadowed uplands, under skies that were the first days blue, and the last gray over a rainy and then a snowy floor. We walked up and down, up and down, between the villa terrace and the pergola, and talked with the melancholy amusement, the sad tolerance of age for the sort of men and things that used to excite us or enrage us; now we were far past turbulence or anger. Once we took a walk together across the yellow pastures to a chasmy creek on his grounds, where the ice still knit the clayey banks together like crystal mosses; and the stream far down clashed through and over the stones and the shards of ice. Clemens pointed out the scenery he had bought to give himself elbow-room, and showed me the lot he was going to have me build on. The next day we came again with the geologist he had asked up to Stormfield to analyze its rocks. Truly he loved the place, though he had been so weary of change and so indifferent to it that he never saw it till he came to live in it. He left it all to the architect whom he had known from a child in the intimacy which bound our families together, though we bodily lived far enough apart. I loved his little ones and he was sweet to mine and was their delighted-in and wondered-at friend. Once and once again, and yet again and again, the black shadow that shall never be lifted where it falls, fell in his house and in mine, during the forty years and more that we were friends, and endeared us the more to each other.

XXV.

My visit at Stormfield came to an end with tender reluctance on his part and on mine. Every morning before I dressed I heard him sounding my name through the house for the fun of it and I know for the fondness; and if I looked out of my door, there he was in his long nightgown swaying up and down the corridor, and wagging his great white head like a boy that leaves his bed and comes out in the hope of frolic with some one. The last morning a soft sugarsnow had fallen and was falling, and I drove through it down to the station in the carriage which had been given him by his wife's father when they were first married, and been kept all those intervening years in honorable retirement for this final use. Its springs had not grown yielding with time; it had rather the stiffness and severity of age; but for him it must have swung low like the sweet chariot of the negro "spiritual" which I heard him sing with such fervor, when those wonderful hymns of the slaves began to make their way northward. 'Go Down, Daniel', was one in which I can hear his quavering tenor now. He was a lover of the things he liked, and full of a passion for them which satisfied itself in reading them matchlessly aloud. No one could read 'Uncle Remus' like him; his voice echoed the voices of the negro nurses who told his childhood the wonderful tales. I remember especially his rapture with Mr. Cable's 'Old Creole Days,' and the thrilling force with which he gave the forbidding of the leper's brother when the city's survey ran the course of an avenue through the cottage where the leper lived in hiding: "Strit must not pass!"

Out of a nature rich and fertile beyond any I have known, the material given him by the Mystery that makes a man and then leaves him to make himself over, he wrought a character of high nobility upon a foundation of clear and solid truth. At the last day he will not have to confess anything, for all his life was the free knowledge of any one who would ask him of it. The Searcher of hearts will not bring him to shame at that day, for he did not try to hide any of the things for which he was often so bitterly sorry. He knew where the Responsibility lay, and he took a man's share of it bravely; but not the less fearlessly he left the rest of the answer to the God who had imagined men.

It is in vain that I try to give a notion of the intensity with which he pierced to the heart of life, and the breadth of vision with which he compassed the whole world, and tried for the reason of things, and then left trying. We had other meetings, insignificantly sad and brief; but the last time I saw him alive was made memorable to me by the kind, clear judicial sense with which he explained and justified the labor-unions as the sole present help of the weak against the strong.

Next I saw him dead, lying in his coffin amid those flowers with which we garland our despair in that pitiless hour. After the voice of his old friend Twichell had been lifted in the prayer which it wailed through in broken-hearted supplication, I looked a moment at the face I knew so

well; and it was patient with the patience I had so often seen in it: something of puzzle, a great silent dignity, an assent to what must be from the depths of a nature whose tragical seriousness broke in the laughter which the unwise took for the whole of him. Emerson, Longfellow, Lowell, Holmes--I knew them all and all the rest of our sages, poets, seers, critics, humorists; they were like one another and like other literary men; but Clemens was sole, incomparable, the Lincoln of our literature.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Absolute devotion to the day of her death,
Absolutely, so positively, so almost aggressively truthful
Addressed to their tenderness out of his tenderness
Amiable perception, and yet with a sort of remote absence
Amuse him, even when they wronged him
Amusingly realized the situation to their friends
But now I remember that he gets twenty dollars a month"
Christianity had done nothing to improve morals and conditions
Church: "Oh yes, I go It 'most kills me, but I go,"
Clemens was sole, incomparable, the Lincoln of our literature
Despair broke in laughter
Despised the avoidance of repetitions out of fear of tautology
Everlasting rock of human credulity and folly
Flowers with which we garland our despair in that pitiless hour
He did not care much for fiction
He did not paw you with his hands to show his affection
He was a youth to the end of his days
Heroic lies
His coming almost killed her, but it was worth it
Honest men are few when it comes to themselves
It was mighty pretty, as Pepys would say
Jane Austen
Left him to do what the cat might
Lie, of course, and did to save others from grief or harm
Liked to find out good things and great things for himself
Livy Clemens: nthe loveliest person I have ever seen
Marriages are what the parties to them alone really know
Mind and soul were with those who do the hard work of the world
Mock modesty of print forbids my repeating here
Most desouthernized Southerner I ever knew
Most serious, the most humane, the most conscientious of men
Nearly nothing as chaos could be
Never saw a dead man whom he did not envy
Never saw a man more regardful of negroes
No man ever yet told the truth about himself
No man more perfectly sensed and more entirely abhorred slavery
Not possible for Clemens to write like anybody else
Ought not to call coarse without calling one's self prudish
Polite learning hesitated his praise

Praised it enough to satisfy the author
Reparation due from every white to every black man
Shackles of belief worn so long
Some superstition, usually of a hygienic sort
Stupidly truthful
The ornament of a house is the friends who frequent it
Truthful
Used to ingratitude from those he helped
Vacuous vulgarity of its texts
Walter-Scotticized, pseudo-chivalry of the Southern ideal
We have never ended before, and we do not see how we can end
Well, if you are to be lost, I want to be lost with you
What he had done he owned to, good, bad, or indifferent
Whether every human motive was not selfish
Wonder why we hate the past so--"It's so damned humiliating!"

End of this Project Gutenberg Etext of My Mark Twain
by William Dean Howells

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Absolute devotion to the day of her death,
Absolutely, so positively, so almost aggressively truthful
Abstract, the air-drawn, afflicted me like physical discomforts
Act officiously, not officially
Addressed to their tenderness out of his tenderness
Always sumptuously providing out of his destitution
Amiable perception, and yet with a sort of remote absence
Amuse him, even when they wronged him
Amusingly realized the situation to their friends
Anglo-American genius for ugliness
Appeal, which he had come to recognize as invasive
Appeared to have no grudge left
Backed their credulity with their credit
Bayard Taylor: incomparable translation of Faust
Became gratefully strange
Best talkers are willing that you should talk if you like
But now I remember that he gets twenty dollars a month"
Candle burning on the table for the cigars
Celia Thaxter
Charles Reade
Charles F. Browne
Christianity had done nothing to improve morals and conditions
Church: "Oh yes, I go It 'most kills me, but I go,"
Clemens was sole, incomparable, the Lincoln of our literature

Cold-slaw
Collective opacity
Confidence I have nearly always felt when wrong
Could make us feel that our faults were other people's
Could easily believe now that it was some one else who saw it
Could only by chance be caught in earnest about anything
Couldn't fire your revolver without bringing down a two volumner
Dawn upon him through a cloud of other half remembered faces
Death of the joy that ought to come from work
Death's vague conjectures to the broken expectations of life
Despair broke in laughter
Despised the avoidance of repetitions out of fear of tautology
Did not feel the effect I would so willingly have experienced
Dinner was at the old-fashioned Boston hour of two
Discomfort which mistaken or blundering praise
Dollars were of so much farther flight than now
Edmund Quincy
Edward Everett Hale
Either to deny the substance of things unseen, or to affirm it
Emerson
Enjoying whatever was amusing in the disadvantage to himself
Espoused the theory of Bacon's authorship of Shakespeare
Ethical sense, not the aesthetical sense
Everlasting rock of human credulity and folly
Expectation of those who will come no more
Express the appreciation of another's fit word
Feigned the gratitude which I could see that he expected
Fell either below our pride or rose above our purse
Felt that this was my misfortune more than my fault
Few men last over from one reform to another
First dinner served in courses that I had sat down to
Flowers with which we garland our despair in that pitiless hour
Forbearance of a wise man content to bide his time
Forebore to speak needlessly to him, or to shake his hand
Found life was not all poetry
Francis Parkman
Gay laugh comes across the abysm of the years
Generous lover of all that was excellent in literature
George William Curtis
Giggle which Charles Lamb found the best thing in life
Give him your best wine
Got out of it all the fun there was in it
Greeting of great impersonal cordiality
Grieving that there could be such ire in heavenly minds
Hard of hearing on one side. But it isn't deafness
Harriet Beecher Stowe and the Autocrat clashed upon homeopathy
Hate of hate, the scorn of scorn, The love of love
He was not bored because he would not be
He did not care much for fiction
He was not constructive; he was essentially observant
He had no time to make money
He was a youth to the end of his days
He did not paw you with his hands to show his affection

Heine

Heroic lies

His remembrance absolutely ceased with an event

His readers trusted and loved him

His enemies suffered from it almost as much as his friends

His coming almost killed her, but it was worth it

His plays were too bad for the stage, or else too good for it

Hollowness, the hopelessness, the unworthiness of life

Honest men are few when it comes to themselves

I find this young man worthy

I believe neither in heroes nor in saints

I did not know, and I hated to ask

If he was half as bad, he would have been too bad to be

If he was not there to your touch, it was no fault of his

In the South there was nothing but a mistaken social ideal

Incredible in their insipidity

Industrial slavery

Insatiable English fancy for the wild America no longer there

Intellectual poseurs

It is well to hold one's country to her promises

It was mighty pretty, as Pepys would say

Jane Austen

Julia Ward Howe

Left him to do what the cat might

Lie, of course, and did to save others from grief or harm

Liked being with you, not for what he got, but for what he gave

Liked to find out good things and great things for himself

Lincoln

Literary dislikes or contempts

Livy Clemens: nthe loveliest person I have ever seen

Long breath was not his; he could not write a novel

Longfellow

Looked as if Destiny had sat upon it

Love of freedom and the hope of justice

Love and gratitude are only semi-articulate at the best

Lowell

Made all men trust him when they doubted his opinions

Man who may any moment be out of work is industrially a slave

Man who had so much of the boy in him

Marriages are what the parties to them alone really know

Mellow cordial of a voice that was like no other

Memory will not be ruled

Men who took themselves so seriously as that need

Men's lives ended where they began, in the keeping of women

Met with kindness, if not honor

Might so far forget myself as to be a novelist

Mind and soul were with those who do the hard work of the world

Mock modesty of print forbids my repeating here

Most desouthernized Southerner I ever knew

Most serious, the most humane, the most conscientious of men

Motley

Napoleonic height which spiritually overtops the Alps

Nearly nothing as chaos could be

Never saw a man more regardful of negroes
Never saw a dead man whom he did not envy
Never paid in anything but hopes of paying
No man ever yet told the truth about himself
No time to make money
No man more perfectly sensed and more entirely abhorred slavery
Not quite himself till he had made you aware of his quality
Not a man who cared to transcend; he liked bounds
Not much patience with the unmanly craving for sympathy
Not much of a talker, and almost nothing of a story-teller
Not possible for Clemens to write like anybody else
Now death has come to join its vague conjectures
NYC, a city where money counts for more and goes for less
Odious hilarity, without meaning and without remission
Offers mortifyingly mean, and others insultingly vague
Old man's tendency to revert to the past
Old man's disposition to speak of his infirmities
One could be openly poor in Cambridge without open shame
Only one concerned who was quite unconcerned
Ought not to call coarse without calling one's self prudish
Pathos of revolt from the colorless rigidities
Person who wished to talk when he could listen
Plain-speaking or Rude Speaking
Pointed the moral in all they did
Polite learning hesitated his praise
Praised it enough to satisfy the author
Praised extravagantly, and in the wrong place
Put your finger on the present moment and enjoy it
Quarrel was with error, and not with the persons who were in it
Quebec was a bit of the seventeenth century
Reformers, who are so often tedious and ridiculous
Remember the dinner-bell
Reparation due from every white to every black man
Secret of the man who is universally interesting
Seen through the wrong end of the telescope
Shackles of belief worn so long
Shy of his fellow-men, as the scholar seems always to be
So refined, after the gigantic coarseness of California
Some superstition, usually of a hygienic sort
Sometimes they sacrificed the song to the sermon
Sought the things that he could agree with you upon
Spare his years the fatigue of recalling your identity
Standards were their own, and they were satisfied with them
Stoddard
Study in a corner by the porch
Stupidly truthful
The world is well lost whenever the world is wrong
The ornament of a house is the friends who frequent it
Things common to all, however peculiar in each
Thoreau
Those who have sorrowed deepest will understand this best
Times when a man's city was a man's country
Tired themselves out in trying to catch up with him

True to an ideal of life rather than to life itself
Truthful
Turn of the talk toward the mystical
Used to ingratitude from those he helped
Vacuous vulgarity of its texts
Visited one of the great mills
Walter-Scotticized, pseudo-chivalry of the Southern ideal
Wasted face, and his gay eyes had the death-look
We have never ended before, and we do not see how we can end
Welcome me, and make the least of my shyness and strangeness
Well, if you are to be lost, I want to be lost with you
What he had done he owned to, good, bad, or indifferent
When to be an agnostic was to be almost an outcast
Whether every human motive was not selfish
Whitman's public use of his privately written praise
Wit that tries its teeth upon everything
Women's rights
Wonder why we hate the past so--"It's so damned humiliating!"
Wonderful to me how it should remain so unintelligible
Work gives the impression of an uncommon continuity
Wrote them first and last in the spirit of Dickens

End of this Project Gutenberg Etext of Literary Friends, Entire
by William Dean Howells

LITERATURE AND LIFE, Entire

by William Dean Howells

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LITERATURE AND LIFE--The Man of Letters as a Man of Business

by William Dean Howells

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL

Perhaps the reader may not feel in these papers that inner solidarity which the writer is conscious of; and it is in this doubt that the writer wishes to offer a word of explanation. He owns, as he must, that they have every appearance of a group of desultory sketches and essays, without palpable relation to one another, or superficial allegiance to any central motive. Yet he ventures to hope that the reader who makes his way through them will be aware, in the retrospect, of something like this relation and this allegiance.

For my own part, if I am to identify myself with the writer who is here on his defence, I have never been able to see much difference between what seemed to me Literature and what seemed to me Life. If I did not find life in what professed to be literature, I disabled its profession, and possibly from this habit, now inveterate with me, I am never quite sure of life unless I find literature in it. Unless the thing seen reveals to me an intrinsic poetry, and puts on phrases that clothe it pleasingly to the imagination, I do not much care for it; but if it will do this, I do not mind how poor or common or squalid it shows at first glance: it challenges my curiosity and keeps my sympathy. Instantly I love it and wish to share my pleasure in it with some one else, or as many ones else as I can get to look or listen. If the thing is something read, rather than seen, I am not anxious about the matter: if it is like life, I know that it is poetry, and take it to my heart. There can be no

offence in it for which its truth will not make me amends.

Out of this way of thinking and feeling about these two great things, about Literature and Life, there may have arisen a confusion as to which is which. But I do not wish to part them, and in their union I have found, since I learned my letters, a joy in them both which I hope will last till I forget my letters.

"So was it when my life began;
So is it, now I am a man;
So be it when I shall grow old."

It is the rainbow in the sky for me; and I have seldom seen a sky without some bit of rainbow in it. Sometimes I can make others see it, sometimes not; but I always like to try, and if I fail I harbor no worse thought of them than that they have not had their eyes examined and fitted with glasses which would at least have helped their vision.

As to the where and when of the different papers, in which I suppose their bibliography properly lies, I need not be very exact. "The Man of Letters as a Man of Business" was written in a hotel at Lakewood in the May of 1892 or 1893, and pretty promptly printed in Scribner's Magazine; "Confessions of a Summer Colonist" was done at York Harbor in the fall of 1898 for the Atlantic Monthly, and was a study of life at that pleasant resort as it was lived-in the idyllic times of the earlier settlement, long before motors and almost before private carriages; "American Literary Centres," "American Literature in Exile," "Puritanism in American Fiction," "Politics of American Authors," were, with three or four other papers, the endeavors of the American correspondent of the London Times's literary supplement, to enlighten the British understanding as to our ways of thinking and writing eleven years ago, and are here left to bear the defects of the qualities of their obsolete actuality in the year 1899. Most of the studies and sketches are from an extinct department of "Life and Letters" which I invented for Harper's Weekly, and operated for a year or so toward the close of the nineteenth century. Notable among these is the "Last Days in a Dutch Hotel," which was written at Paris in 1897; it is rather a favorite of mine, perhaps because I liked Holland so much; others, which more or less personally recognize effects of sojourn in New York or excursions into New England, are from the same department; several may be recalled by the longer-remembered reader as papers from the "Editor's Easy Chair" in Harper's Monthly; "Wild Flowers of the Asphalt" is the review of an ever-delightful book which I printed in Harper's Bazar; "The Editor's Relations with the Young Contributor" was my endeavor in Youth's Companion to shed a kindly light from my experience in both seats upon the too-often and too needlessly embittered souls of literary beginners.

So it goes as to the motives and origins of the collection which may persist in disintegrating under the reader's eye, in spite of my well-meant endeavors to establish a solidarity for it. The group at least attests, even in this event, the wide, the wild, variety of my literary production in time and space. From the beginning the journalist's independence of the scholar's solitude and seclusion has remained with

me, and though I am fond enough of a bookish entourage, of the serried volumes of the library shelves, and the inviting breadth of the library table, I am not disabled by the hard conditions of a bedroom in a summer hotel, or the narrow possibilities of a candle-stand, without a dictionary in the whole house, or a book of reference even in the running brooks outside.

W. D. HOWELLS.

LITERATURE AND LIFE

THE MAN OF LETTERS AS A MAN OF BUSINESS

I think that every man ought to work for his living, without exception, and that, when he has once avouched his willingness to work, society should provide him with work and warrant him a living. I do not think any man ought to live by an art. A man's art should be his privilege, when he has proven his fitness to exercise it, and has otherwise earned his daily bread; and its results should be free to all. There is an instinctive sense of this, even in the midst of the grotesque confusion of our economic being; people feel that there is something profane, something impious, in taking money for a picture, or a poem, or a statue. Most of all, the artist himself feels this. He puts on a bold front with the world, to be sure, and brazens it out as Business; but he knows very well that there is something false and vulgar in it; and that the work which cannot be truly priced in money cannot be truly paid in money. He can, of course, say that the priest takes money for reading the marriage service, for christening the new-born babe, and for saying the last office for the dead; that the physician sells healing; that justice itself is paid for; and that he is merely a party to the thing that is and must be. He can say that, as the thing is, unless he sells his art he cannot live, that society will leave him to starve if he does not hit its fancy in a picture, or a poem, or a statue; and all this is bitterly true. He is, and he must be, only too glad if there is a market for his wares. Without a market for his wares he must perish, or turn to making something that will sell better than pictures, or poems, or statues. All the same, the sin and the shame remain, and the averted eye sees them still, with its inward vision. Many will make believe otherwise, but I would rather not make believe otherwise; and in trying to write of Literature as Business I am tempted to begin by saying that Business is the opprobrium of Literature.

I.

Literature is at once the most intimate and the most articulate of the arts. It cannot impart its effect through the senses or the nerves as

the other arts can; it is beautiful only through the intelligence; it is the mind speaking to the mind; until it has been put into absolute terms, of an invariable significance, it does not exist at all. It cannot awaken this emotion in one, and that in another; if it fails to express precisely the meaning of the author, if it does not say him, it says nothing, and is nothing. So that when a poet has put his heart, much or little, into a poem, and sold it to a magazine, the scandal is greater than when a painter has sold a picture to a patron, or a sculptor has modelled a statue to order. These are artists less articulate and less intimate than the poet; they are more exterior to their work; they are less personally in it; they part with less of themselves in the dicker. It does not change the nature of the case to say that Tennyson and Longfellow and Emerson sold the poems in which they couched the most mystical messages their genius was charged to bear mankind. They submitted to the conditions which none can escape; but that does not justify the conditions, which are none the less the conditions of hucksters because they are imposed upon poets. If it will serve to make my meaning a little clearer, we will suppose that a poet has been crossed in love, or has suffered some real sorrow, like the loss of a wife or child. He pours out his broken heart in verse that shall bring tears of sacred sympathy from his readers, and an editor pays him a hundred dollars for the right of bringing his verse to their notice. It is perfectly true that the poem was not written for these dollars, but it is perfectly true that it was sold for them. The poet must use his emotions to pay his provision bills; he has no other means; society does not propose to pay his bills for him. Yet, and at the end of the ends, the unsophisticated witness finds the transaction ridiculous, finds it repulsive, finds it shabby. Somehow he knows that if our huckstering civilization did not at every moment violate the eternal fitness of things, the poet's song would have been given to the world, and the poet would have been cared for by the whole human brotherhood, as any man should be who does the duty that every man owes it.

The instinctive sense of the dishonor which money-purchase does to art is so strong that sometimes a man of letters who can pay his way otherwise refuses pay for his work, as Lord Byron did, for a while, from a noble pride, and as Count Tolstoy has tried to do, from a noble conscience. But Byron's publisher profited by a generosity which did not reach his readers; and the Countess Tolstoy collects the copyright which her husband foregoes; so that these two eminent instances of protest against business in literature may be said not to have shaken its money basis. I know of no others; but there may be many that I am culpably ignorant of. Still, I doubt if there are enough to affect the fact that Literature is Business as well as Art, and almost as soon. At present business is the only human solidarity; we are all bound together with that chain, whatever interests and tastes and principles separate us, and I feel quite sure that in writing of the Man of Letters as a Man of Business I shall attract far more readers than I should in writing of him as an Artist. Besides, as an artist he has been done a great deal already; and a commercial state like ours has really more concern in him as a business man. Perhaps it may sometime be different; I do not believe it will till the conditions are different, and that is a long way off.

II.

In the mean time I confidently appeal to the reader's imagination with the fact that there are several men of letters among us who are such good men of business that they can command a hundred dollars a thousand words for all they write. It is easy to write a thousand words a day, and, supposing one of these authors to work steadily, it can be seen that his net earnings during the year would come to some such sum as the President of the United States gets for doing far less work of a much more perishable sort. If the man of letters were wholly a business man, this is what would happen; he would make his forty or fifty thousand dollars a year, and be able to consort with bank presidents, and railroad officials, and rich tradesmen, and other flowers of our plutocracy on equal terms. But, unfortunately, from a business point of view, he is also an artist, and the very qualities that enable him to delight the public disable him from delighting it uninterruptedly. "No rose blooms right along," as the English boys at Oxford made an American collegian say in a theme which they imagined for him in his national parlance; and the man of letters, as an artist, is apt to have times and seasons when he cannot blossom. Very often it shall happen that his mind will lie fallow between novels or stories for weeks and months at a stretch; when the suggestions of the friendly editor shall fail to fruit in the essays or articles desired; when the muse shall altogether withhold herself, or shall respond only in a feeble dribble of verse which he might sell indeed, but which it would not be good business for him to put on the market. But supposing him to be a very diligent and continuous worker, and so happy as to have fallen on a theme that delights him and bears him along, he may please himself so ill with the result of his labors that he can do nothing less in artistic conscience than destroy a day's work, a week's work, a month's work. I know one man of letters who wrote to-day and tore up tomorrow for nearly a whole summer. But even if part of the mistaken work may be saved, because it is good work out of place, and not intrinsically bad, the task of reconstruction wants almost as much time as the production; and then, when all seems done, comes the anxious and endless process of revision. These drawbacks reduce the earning capacity of what I may call the high-cost man of letters in such measure that an author whose name is known everywhere, and whose reputation is commensurate with the boundaries of his country, if it does not transcend them, shall have the income, say, of a rising young physician, known to a few people in a subordinate city.

In view of this fact, so humiliating to an author in the presence of a nation of business men like ours, I do not know that I can establish the man of letters in the popular esteem as very much of a business man, after all. He must still have a low rank among practical people; and he will be regarded by the great mass of Americans as perhaps a little off, a little funny, a little soft! Perhaps not; and yet I would rather not have a consensus of public opinion on the question; I think I am more comfortable without it.

III.

There is this to be said in defence of men of letters on the business side, that literature is still an infant industry with us, and, so far from having been protected by our laws, it was exposed for ninety years after the foundation of the republic to the vicious competition of stolen goods. It is true that we now have the international copyright law at last, and we can at least begin to forget our shame; but literary property has only forty-two years of life under our unjust statutes, and if it is attacked by robbers the law does not seek out the aggressors and punish them, as it would seek out and punish the trespassers upon any other kind of property; it leaves the aggrieved owner to bring suit against them, and recover damages, if he can. This may be right enough in itself; but I think, then, that all property should be defended by civil suit, and should become public after forty-two years of private tenure. The Constitution guarantees us all equality before the law, but the law-makers seem to have forgotten this in the case of our literary industry. So long as this remains the case, we cannot expect the best business talent to go into literature, and the man of letters must keep his present low grade among business men.

As I have hinted, it is but a little while that he has had any standing at all. I may say that it is only since the Civil War that literature has become a business with us. Before that time we had authors, and very good ones; it is astonishing how good they were; but I do not remember any of them who lived by literature except Edgar A. Poe, perhaps; and we all know how he lived; it was largely upon loans. They were either men of fortune, or they were editors or professors, with salaries or incomes apart from the small gains of their pens; or they were helped out with public offices; one need not go over their names or classify them. Some of them must have made money by their books, but I question whether any one could have lived, even very simply, upon the money his books brought him. No one could do that now, unless he wrote a book that we could not recognize as a work of literature. But many authors live now, and live prettily enough, by the sale of the serial publication of their writings to the magazines. They do not live so nicely as successful tradespeople, of course, or as men in the other professions when they begin to make themselves names; the high state of brokers, bankers, railroad operators, and the like is, in the nature of the case, beyond their fondest dreams of pecuniary affluence and social splendor. Perhaps they do not want the chief seats in the synagogue; it is certain they do not get them. Still, they do very fairly well, as things go; and several have incomes that would seem riches to the great mass of worthy Americans who work with their hands for a living--when they can get the work. Their incomes are mainly from serial publication in the different magazines; and the prosperity of the magazines has given a whole class existence which, as a class, was wholly unknown among us before the Civil War. It is not only the famous or fully recognized authors who live in this way, but the much larger number of clever people who are as yet known chiefly to the editors, and who may never make themselves a public, but who do well a kind of acceptable work. These are the sort who do not get reprinted

from the periodicals; but the better recognized authors do get reprinted, and then their serial work in its completed form appeals to the readers who say they do not read serials. The multitude of these is not great, and if an author rested his hopes upon their favor he would be a much more embittered man than he now generally is. But he understands perfectly well that his reward is in the serial and not in the book; the return from that he may count as so much money found in the road--a few hundreds, a very few thousands, at the most, unless he is the author of an historical romance.

IV

I doubt, indeed, whether the earnings of literary men are absolutely as great as they were earlier in the century, in any of the English-speaking countries; relatively they are nothing like as great. Scott had forty thousand dollars for 'Woodstock,' which was not a very large novel, and was by no means one of his best; and forty thousand dollars then had at least the purchasing power of sixty thousand now. Moore had three thousand guineas for 'Lalla Rookh,' but what publisher would be rash enough to pay fifteen thousand dollars for the masterpiece of a minor poet now? The book, except in very rare instances, makes nothing like the return to the author that the magazine makes, and there are few leading authors who find their account in that form of publication. Those who do, those who sell the most widely in book form, are often not at all desired by editors; with difficulty they get a serial accepted by any principal magazine. On the other hand, there are authors whose books, compared with those of the popular favorites, do not sell, and yet they are eagerly sought for by editors; they are paid the highest prices, and nothing that they offer is refused. These are literary artists; and it ought to be plain from what I am saying that in belles-lettres, at least, most of the best literature now first sees the light in the magazines, and most of the second-best appears first in book form. The old-fashioned people who flatter themselves upon their distinction in not reading magazine fiction or magazine poetry make a great mistake, and simply class themselves with the public whose taste is so crude that they cannot enjoy the best. Of course, this is true mainly, if not merely, of belles-lettres; history, science, politics, metaphysics, in spite of the many excellent articles and papers in these sorts upon what used to be called various emergent occasions, are still to be found at their best in books. The most monumental example of literature, at once light and good, which has first reached the public in book form is in the different publications of Mark Twain; but Mr. Clemens has of late turned to the magazines too, and now takes their mint-mark before he passes into general circulation. All this may change again, but at present the magazines--we have no longer any reviews form the most direct approach to that part of our reading public which likes the highest things in literary art. Their readers, if we may judge from the quality of the literature they get, are more refined than the book readers in our community; and their taste has no doubt been cultivated by that of the disciplined and experienced editors. So far as I have known these, they are men of aesthetic conscience and of generous sympathy. They have their preferences in the different kinds, and they have their theory of

what kind will be most acceptable to their readers; but they exercise their selective function with the wish to give them the best things they can. I do not know one of them--and it has been, my good fortune to know them nearly all--who would print a wholly inferior thing for the sake of an inferior class of readers, though they may sometimes decline a good thing because for one reason or another, they believe it would not be liked. Still, even this does not often happen; they would rather chance the good thing they doubted of than underrate their readers' judgment.

The young author who wins recognition in a first-class magazine has achieved a double success, first, with the editor, and then with the best reading public. Many factitious and fallacious literary reputations have been made through books, but very few have been made through the magazines, which are not only the best means of living, but of outliving, with the author; they are both bread and fame to him. If I insist a little upon the high office which this modern form of publication fulfils in the literary world, it is because I am impatient of the antiquated and ignorant prejudice which classes the magazines as ephemeral. They are ephemeral in form, but in substance they are not ephemeral, and what is best in them awaits its resurrection in the book, which, as the first form, is so often a lasting death. An interesting proof of the value of the magazine to literature is the fact that a good novel will often have wider acceptance as a book from having been a magazine serial.

V.

Under the 'regime' of the great literary periodicals the prosperity of literary men would be much greater than it actually is if the magazines were altogether literary. But they are not, and this is one reason why literature is still the hungriest of the professions. Two-thirds of the magazines are made up of material which, however excellent, is without literary quality. Very probably this is because even the highest class of readers, who are the magazine readers, have small love of pure literature, which seems to have been growing less and less in all classes. I say seems, because there are really no means of ascertaining the fact, and it may be that the editors are mistaken in making their periodicals two-thirds popular science, politics, economics, and the timely topics which I will call contemporanics. But, however that may be, their efforts in this direction have narrowed the field of literary industry, and darkened the hope of literary prosperity kindled by the unexampled prosperity of their periodicals. They pay very well indeed for literature; they pay from five or six dollars a thousand words for the work of the unknown writer to a hundred and fifty dollars a thousand words for that of the most famous, or the most popular, if there is a difference between fame and popularity; but they do not, altogether, want enough literature to justify the best business talent in devoting itself to belles-lettres, to fiction, or poetry, or humorous sketches of travel, or light essays; business talent can do far better in dry goods, groceries, drugs, stocks, real estate, railroads, and the like. I do not think there is any danger of a ruinous competition from it in the field which, though narrow, seems so rich to us poor fellows, whose business talent is small, at the best.

The most of the material contributed to the magazines is the subject of agreement between the editor and the author; it is either suggested by the author or is the fruit of some suggestion from the editor; in any case the price is stipulated beforehand, and it is no longer the custom for a well-known contributor to leave the payment to the justice or the generosity of the publisher; that was never a fair thing to either, nor ever a wise thing. Usually, the price is so much a thousand words, a truly odious method of computing literary value, and one well calculated to make the author feel keenly the hatefulness of selling his art at all. It is as if a painter sold his picture at so much a square inch, or a sculptor bargained away a group of statuary by the pound. But it is a custom that you cannot always successfully quarrel with, and most writers gladly consent to it, if only the price a thousand words is large enough. The sale to the editor means the sale of the serial rights only, but if the publisher of the magazine is also a publisher of books, the republication of the material is supposed to be his right, unless there is an understanding to the contrary; the terms for this are another affair. Formerly something more could be got for the author by the simultaneous appearance of his work in an English magazine; but now the great American magazines, which pay far higher prices than any others in the world, have a circulation in England so much exceeding that of any English periodical that the simultaneous publication can no longer be arranged for from this side, though I believe it is still done here from the other side.

VI.

I think this is the case of authorship as it now stands with regard to the magazines. I am not sure that the case is in every way improved for young authors. The magazines all maintain a staff for the careful examination of manuscripts, but as most of the material they print has been engaged, the number of volunteer contributions that they can use is very small; one of the greatest of them, I know, does not use fifty in the course of a year. The new writer, then, must be very good to be accepted, and when accepted he may wait long before he is printed. The pressure is so great in these avenues to the public favor that one, two, three years, are no uncommon periods of delay. If the young writer has not the patience for this, or has a soul above cooling his heels in the courts of fame, or must do his best to earn something at once, the book is his immediate hope. How slight a hope the book is I have tried to hint already, but if a book is vulgar enough in sentiment, and crude enough in taste, and flashy enough in incident, or, better or worse still, if it is a bit hot in the mouth, and promises impropriety if not indecency, there is a very fair chance of its success; I do not mean success with a self-respecting publisher, but with the public, which does not personally put its name to it, and is not openly smirched by it. I will not talk of that kind of book, however, but of the book which the young author has written out of an unspoiled heart and an untainted mind, such as most young men and women write; and I will suppose that it has found a publisher. It is human nature, as competition has deformed human nature, for the publisher to wish the author to take all the risks, and

he possibly proposes that the author shall publish it at his own expense, and let him have a percentage of the retail price for managing it. If not that, he proposes that the author shall pay for the stereotype plates, and take fifteen per cent. of the price of the book; or if this will not go, if the author cannot, rather than will not, do it (he is commonly only too glad to do any thing he can), then the publisher offers him ten per cent. of the retail price after the first thousand copies have been sold. But if he fully believes in the book, he will give ten per cent. from the first copy sold, and pay all the costs of publication himself. The book is to be retailed for a dollar and a half, and the publisher is not displeased with a new book that sells fifteen hundred copies. Whether the author has as much reason to be pleased is a question, but if the book does not sell more he has only himself to blame, and had better pocket in silence the two hundred and twenty-five dollars he gets for it, and bless his publisher, and try to find work somewhere at five dollars a week. The publisher has not made any more, if quite as much as the author, and until a book has sold two thousand copies the division is fair enough. After that, the heavier expenses of manufacturing have been defrayed and the book goes on advertising itself; there is merely the cost of paper, printing, binding, and marketing to be met, and the arrangement becomes fairer and fairer for the publisher. The author has no right to complain of this, in the case of his first book, which he is only too grateful to get accepted at all. If it succeeds, he has himself to blame for making the same arrangement for his second or third; it is his fault, or else it is his necessity, which is practically the same thing. It will be business for the publisher to take advantage of his necessity quite the same as if it were his fault; but I do not say that he will always do so; I believe he will very often not do so.

At one time there seemed a probability of the enlargement of the author's gains by subscription publication, and one very well-known American author prospered fabulously in that way. The percentage offered by the subscription houses was only about half as much as that paid by the trade, but the sales were so much greater that the author could very well afford to take it. Where the book-dealer sold ten, the book-agent sold a hundred; or at least he did so in the case of Mark Twain's books; and we all thought it reasonable he could do so with ours. Such of us as made experiment of him, however, found the facts illogical. No book of literary quality was made to go by subscription except Mr. Clemens's books, and I think these went because the subscription public never knew what good literature they were. This sort of readers, or buyers, were so used to getting something worthless for their money that they would not spend it for artistic fiction, or, indeed, for any fiction at all except Mr. Clemens's, which they probably supposed bad. Some good books of travel had a measurable success through the book-agents, but not at all the success that had been hoped for; and I believe now the subscription trade again publishes only compilations, or such works as owe more to the skill of the editor than the art of the writer. Mr. Clemens himself no longer offers his books to the public in that way.

It is not common, I think, in this country, to publish on the half-profits system, but it is very common in England, where, owing probably

to the moisture in the air, which lends a fairy outline to every prospect, it seems to be peculiarly alluring. One of my own early books was published there on these terms, which I accepted with the insensate joy of the young author in getting any terms from a publisher. The book sold, sold every copy of the small first edition, and in due time the publisher's statement came. I did not think my half of the profits was very great, but it seemed a fair division after every imaginable cost had been charged up against my poor book, and that frail venture had been made to pay the expenses of composition, corrections, paper, printing, binding, advertising, and editorial copies. The wonder ought to have been that there was anything at all coming to me, but I was young and greedy then, and I really thought there ought to have been more. I was disappointed, but I made the best of it, of course, and took the account to the junior partner of the house which employed me, and said that I should like to draw on him for the sum due me from the London publishers. He said, Certainly; but after a glance at the account he smiled and said he supposed I knew how much the sum was? I answered, Yes; it was eleven pounds nine shillings, was not it? But I owned at the same time that I never was good at figures, and that I found English money peculiarly baffling. He laughed now, and said, It was eleven shillings and ninepence. In fact, after all those charges for composition, corrections, paper, printing, binding, advertising, and editorial copies, there was a most ingenious and wholly surprising charge of ten per cent. commission on sales, which reduced my half from pounds to shillings, and handsomely increased the publisher's half in proportion. I do not now dispute the justice of the charge. It was not the fault of the half-profits system; it was the fault of the glad young author who did not distinctly inform himself of its mysterious nature in agreeing to it, and had only to reproach himself if he was finally disappointed.

But there is always something disappointing in the accounts of publishers, which I fancy is because authors are strangely constituted, rather than because publishers are so. I will confess that I have such inordinate expectations of the sale of my books, which I hope I think modestly of, that the sales reported to me never seem great enough. The copyright due me, no matter how handsome it is, appears deplorably mean, and I feel impoverished for several days after I get it. But, then, I ought to add that my balance in the bank is always much less than I have supposed it to be, and my own checks, when they come back to me, have the air of having been in a conspiracy to betray me.

No, we literary men must learn, no matter how we boast ourselves in business, that the distress we feel from our publisher's accounts is simply idiopathic; and I for one wish to bear my witness to the constant good faith and uprightness of publishers. It is supposed that because they have the affair altogether in their hands they are apt to take advantage in it; but this does not follow, and as a matter of fact they have the affair no more in their own hands than any other business man you have an open account with. There is nothing to prevent you from looking at their books, except your own innermost belief and fear that their books are correct, and that your literature has brought you so little because it has sold so little.

The author is not to blame for his superficial delusion to the contrary, especially if he has written a book that has set every one talking, because it is of a vital interest. It may be of a vital interest, without being at all the kind of book people want to buy; it may be the kind of book that they are content to know at second hand; there are such fatal books; but hearing so much, and reading so much about it, the author cannot help hoping that it has sold much more than the publisher says. The publisher is undoubtedly honest, however, and the author had better put away the comforting question of his integrity.

The English writers seem largely to suspect their publishers; but I believe that American authors, when not flown with flattering reviews, as largely trust theirs. Of course there are rogues in every walk of life. I will not say that I ever personally met them in the flowery paths of literature, but I have heard of other people meeting them there, just as I have heard of people seeing ghosts, and I have to believe in both the rogues and the ghosts, without the witness of my own senses. I suppose, upon such grounds mainly, that there are wicked publishers, but, in the case of our books that do not sell, I am afraid that it is the graceless and inappreciative public which is far more to blame than the wickedest of the publishers. It is true that publishers will drive a hard bargain when they can, or when they must; but there is nothing to hinder an author from driving a hard bargain, too, when he can, or when he must; and it is to be said of the publisher that he is always more willing to abide by the bargain when it is made than the author is; perhaps because he has the best of it. But he has not always the best of it; I have known publishers too generous to take advantage of the innocence of authors; and I fancy that if publishers had to do with any race less diffident than authors, they would have won a repute for unselfishness that they do now now enjoy. It is certain that in the long period when we flew the black flag of piracy there were many among our corsairs on the high seas of literature who paid a fair price for the stranger craft they seized; still oftener they removed the cargo and released their capture with several weeks' provision; and although there was undoubtedly a good deal of actual throat-cutting and scuttling, still I feel sure that there was less of it than there would have been in any other line of business released to the unrestricted plunder of the neighbor. There was for a long time even a comity among these amiable buccaneers, who agreed not to interfere with each other, and so were enabled to pay over to their victims some portion of the profit from their stolen goods. Of all business men publishers are probably the most faithful and honorable, and are only surpassed in virtue when men of letters turn business men.

VII.

Publishers have their little theories, their little superstitions, and their blind faith in the great god Chance which we all worship. These things lead them into temptation and adversity, but they seem to do fairly well as business men, even in their own behalf. They do not make above the usual ninety-five per cent. of failures, and more publishers than authors get rich.

Some theories or superstitions publishers and authors share together. One of these is that it is best to keep your books all in the hands of one publisher if you can, because then he can give them more attention and sell more of them. But my own experience is that when my books were in the hands of three publishers they sold quite as well as when one had them; and a fellow-author whom I approached in question of this venerable belief laughed at it. This bold heretic held that it was best to give each new book to a new publisher, for then the fresh man put all his energies into pushing it; but if you had them all together, the publisher rested in a vain security that one book would sell another, and that the fresh venture would revive the public interest in the stale ones. I never knew this to happen; and I must class it with the superstitions of the trade. It may be so in other and more constant countries, but in our fickle republic each last book has to fight its own way to public favor, much as if it had no sort of literary lineage. Of course this is stating it rather largely, and the truth will be found inside rather than outside of my statement; but there is at least truth enough in it to give the young author pause. While one is preparing to sell his basket of glass, he may as well ask himself whether it is better to part with all to one dealer or not; and if he kicks it over, in spurning the imaginary customer who asks the favor of taking the entire stock, that will be his fault, and not the fault of the customer.

However, the most important question of all with the man of letters as a man of business is what kind of book will sell the best of itself, because, at the end of the ends, a book sells itself or does not sell at all; kissing, after long ages of reasoning and a great deal of culture, still goes by favor, and though innumerable generations of horses have been led to the water, not one horse has yet been made to drink. With the best, or the worst, will in the world, no publisher can force a book into acceptance. Advertising will not avail, and reviewing is notoriously futile. If the book does not strike the popular fancy, or deal with some universal interest, which need by no means be a profound or important one, the drums and the cymbals shall be beaten in vain. The book may be one of the best and wisest books in the world, but if it has not this sort of appeal in it the readers of it, and, worse yet, the purchasers, will remain few, though fit. The secret of this, like most other secrets of a rather ridiculous world, is in the awful keeping of fate, and we can only hope to surprise it by some lucky chance. To plan a surprise of it, to aim a book at the public favor, is the most hopeless of all endeavors, as it is one of the unworthiest; and I can, neither as a man of letters nor as a man of business, counsel the young author to do it. The best that you can do is to write the book that it gives you the most pleasure to write, to put as much heart and soul as you have about you into it, and then hope as hard as you can to reach the heart and soul of the great multitude of your fellow-men. That, and that alone, is good business for a man of letters.

The man of letters must make up his mind that in the United States the fate of a book is in the hands of the women. It is the women with us who have the most leisure, and they read the most books. They are far better educated, for the most part, than our men, and their tastes, if not their

minds, are more cultivated. Our men read the newspapers, but our women read the books; the more refined among them read the magazines. If they do not always know what is good, they do know what pleases them, and it is useless to quarrel with their decisions, for there is no appeal from them. To go from them to the men would be going from a higher to a lower court, which would be honestly surprised and bewildered, if the thing were possible. As I say, the author of light literature, and often the author of solid literature, must resign himself to obscurity unless the ladies choose to recognize him. Yet it would be impossible to forecast their favor for this kind or that. Who could prophesy it for another, who guess it for himself? We must strive blindly for it, and hope somehow that our best will also be our prettiest; but we must remember at the same time that it is not the ladies' man who is the favorite of the ladies.

There are, of course, a few, a very few, of our greatest authors who have striven forward to the first place in our Valhalla without the help of the largest reading-class among us; but I should say that these were chiefly the humorists, for whom women are said nowhere to have any warm liking, and who have generally with us come up through the newspapers, and have never lost the favor of the newspaper readers. They have become literary men, as it were, without the newspaper readers' knowing it; but those who have approached literature from another direction have won fame in it chiefly by grace of the women, who first read them; and then made their husbands and fathers read them. Perhaps, then, and as a matter of business, it would be well for a serious author, when he finds that he is not pleasing the women, and probably never will please them, to turn humorous author, and aim at the countenance of the men. Except as a humorist he certainly never will get it, for your American, when he is not making money, or trying to do it, is making a joke, or trying to do it.

VIII

I hope that I have not been hinting that the author who approaches literature through journalism is not as fine and high a literary man as the author who comes directly to it, or through some other avenue; I have not the least notion of condemning myself by any such judgment. But I think it is pretty certain that fewer and fewer authors are turning from journalism to literature, though the 'entente cordiale' between the two professions seems as great as ever. I fancy, though I may be as mistaken in this as I am in a good many other things, that most journalists would have been literary men if they could, at the beginning, and that the kindness they almost always show to young authors is an effect of the self-pity they feel for their own thwarted wish to be authors. When an author is once warm in the saddle, and is riding his winged horse to glory, the case is different: they have then often no sentiment about him; he is no longer the image of their own young aspiration, and they would willingly see Pegasus buck under him, or have him otherwise brought to grief and shame. They are apt to gird at him for his unhallowed gains, and they would be quite right in this if they proposed any way for him to live without them; as I have allowed at the outset, the gains are

unhallowed. Apparently it is unseemly for two or three authors to be making half as much by their pens as popular ministers often receive in salary; the public is used to the pecuniary prosperity of some of the clergy, and at least sees nothing droll in it; but the paragrapher can always get a smile out of his readers at the gross disparity between the ten thousand dollars Jones gets for his novel and the five pounds Milton got for his epic. I have always thought Milton was paid too little, but I will own that he ought not to have been paid at all, if it comes to that. Again I say that no man ought to live by any art; it is a shame to the art if not to the artist; but as yet there is no means of the artist's living otherwise and continuing an artist.

The literary man has certainly no complaint to make of the newspaper man, generally speaking. I have often thought with amazement of the kindness shown by the press to our whole unworthy craft, and of the help so lavishly and freely given to rising and even risen authors. To put it coarsely, brutally, I do not suppose that any other business receives so much gratuitous advertising, except the theatre. It is, enormous, the space given in the newspapers to literary notes, literary announcements, reviews, interviews, personal paragraphs, biographies, and all the rest, not to mention the vigorous and incisive attacks made from time to time upon different authors for their opinions of romanticism, realism, capitalism, socialism, Catholicism, and Sandemanianism. I have sometimes doubted whether the public cared for so much of it all as the editors gave them, but I have always said this under my breath, and I have thankfully taken my share of the common bounty. A curious fact, however, is that this vast newspaper publicity seems to have very little to do with an author's popularity, though ever so much with his notoriety. Some of those strange subterranean fellows who never come to the surface in the newspapers, except for a contemptuous paragraph at long intervals, outsell the famousest of the celebrities, and secretly have their horses and yachts and country seats, while immodest merit is left to get about on foot and look up summer-board at the cheaper hotels. That is probably right, or it would not happen; it seems to be in the general scheme, like millionairism and pauperism; but it becomes a question, then, whether the newspapers, with all their friendship for literature, and their actual generosity to literary men, can really help one much to fortune, however much they help one to fame. Such a question is almost too dreadful, and, though I have asked it, I will not attempt to answer it. I would much rather consider the question whether, if the newspapers can make an author, they can also unmake him, and I feel pretty safe in saying that I do not think they can. The Afreet, once out of the bottle, can never be coaxed back or cudgelled back; and the author whom the newspapers have made cannot be unmade by the newspapers. Perhaps he could if they would let him alone; but the art of letting alone the creature of your favor, when he has forfeited your favor, is yet in its infancy with the newspapers. They consign him to oblivion with a rumor that fills the land, and they keep visiting him there with an uproar which attracts more and more notice to him. An author who has long enjoyed their favor suddenly and rather mysteriously loses it, through his opinions on certain matters of literary taste, say. For the space of five or six years he is denounced with a unanimity and an incisive vigor that ought to convince him there is something wrong. If he thinks it is his

censors, he clings to his opinions with an abiding constancy, while ridicule, obloquy, caricature, burlesque, critical refutation, and personal detraction follow unsparingly upon every expression, for instance, of his belief that romantic fiction is the highest form of fiction, and that the base, sordid, photographic, commonplace school of Tolstoy, Tourgunief, Zola, Hardy, and James is unworthy a moment's comparison with the school of Rider Haggard. All this ought certainly to unmake the author in question, but this is not really the effect. Slowly but surely the clamor dies away, and the author, without relinquishing one of his wicked opinions, or in any wise showing himself repentant, remains apparently whole; and he even returns in a measure to the old kindness--not indeed to the earlier day of perfectly smooth things, but certainly to as much of it as he merits.

I would not have the young author, from this imaginary case; believe that it is well either to court or to defy the good opinion of the press. In fact, it will not only be better taste, but it will be better business, for him to keep it altogether out of his mind. There is only one whom he can safely try to please, and that is himself. If he does this he will very probably please other people; but if he does not please himself he may be sure that he will not please them; the book which he has not enjoyed writing no one will enjoy reading. Still, I would not have him attach too little consequence to the influence of the press. I should say, let him take the celebrity it gives him gratefully but not too seriously; let him reflect that he is often the necessity rather than the ideal of the paragrapher, and that the notoriety the journalists bestow upon him is not the measure of their acquaintance with his work, far less his meaning. They are good fellows, those hard-pushed, poor fellows of the press, but the very conditions of their censure, friendly or unfriendly, forbid it thoroughness, and it must often have more zeal than knowledge in it.

IX.

There are some sorts of light literature once greatly in demand, but now apparently no longer desired by magazine editors, who ought to know what their readers desire. Among these is the travel sketch, to me a very agreeable kind, and really to be regretted in its decline. There are some reasons for its decline besides a change of taste in readers, and a possible surfeit. Travel itself has become so universal that everybody, in a manner, has been everywhere, and the foreign scene has no longer the charm of strangeness. We do not think the Old World either so romantic or so ridiculous as we used; and perhaps from an instinctive perception of this altered mood writers no longer appeal to our sentiment or our humor with sketches of outlandish people and places. Of course, this can hold true only in a general way; the thing is still done, but not nearly so much done as formerly. When one thinks of the long line of American writers who have greatly pleased in this sort, and who even got their first fame in it, one must grieve to see it obsolescent. Irving, Curtis, Bayard Taylor, Herman Melville, Ross Browne, Warner, Ik Marvell, Longfellow, Lowell, Story, Mr. James, Mr. Aldrich, Mr. Hay, Mrs. Hunt, Mr. C. W. Stoddard, Mark Twain, and many others whose names will not come

to me at the moment, have in their several ways richly contributed to our pleasure in it; but I cannot now fancy a young author finding favor with an editor in a sketch of travel or a study of foreign manners and customs; his work would have to be of the most signal importance and brilliancy to overcome the editor's feeling that the thing had been done already; and I believe that a publisher, if offered a book of such things, would look at it askance and plead the well-known quiet of the trade. Still, I may be mistaken.

I am rather more confident about the decline of another literary species --namely, the light essay. We have essays enough and to spare of certain soberer and severer sorts, such as grapple with problems and deal with conditions; but the kind that I mean, the slightly humorous, gentle, refined, and humane kind, seems no longer to abound as it once did. I do not know whether the editor discourages them, knowing his readers' frame, or whether they do not offer themselves, but I seldom find them in the magazines. I certainly do not believe that if any one were now to write essays such as Warner's Backlog Studies, an editor would refuse them; and perhaps nobody really writes them. Nobody seems to write the sort that Colonel Higginson formerly contributed to the periodicals, or such as Emerson wrote. Without a great name behind it, I am afraid that a volume of essays would find few buyers, even after the essays had made a public in the magazines. There are, of course, instances to the contrary, but they are not so many or so striking as to make me think that the essay could be offered as a good opening for business talent.

I suspect that good poetry by well-known hands was never better paid in the magazines than it is now. I must say, too, that I think the quality of the minor poetry of our day is better than that of twenty-five or thirty years ago. I could name half a score of young poets whose work from time to time gives me great pleasure, by the reality of its feeling and the delicate perfection of its art, but I will not name them, for fear of passing over half a score of others equally meritorious. We have certainly no reason to be discouraged, whatever reason the poets themselves have to be so, and I do not think that even in the short story our younger writers are doing better work than they are doing in the slighter forms of verse. Yet the notion of inviting business talent into this field would be as preposterous as that of asking it to devote itself to the essay. What book of verse by a recent poet, if we except some such peculiarly gifted poet as Mr. Whitcomb Riley, has paid its expenses, not to speak of any profit to the author? Of course, it would be rather more offensive and ridiculous that it should do so than that any other form of literary art should do so; and yet there is no more provision in our economic system for the support of the poet apart from his poems than there is for the support of the novelist apart from his novel. One could not make any more money by writing poetry than by writing history, but it is a curious fact that while the historians have usually been rich men, and able to afford the luxury of writing history, the poets have usually been poor men, with no pecuniary justification in their devotion to a calling which is so seldom an election.

To be sure, it can be said for them that it costs far less to set up poet than to set up historian. There is no outlay for copying documents, or

visiting libraries, or buying books. In fact, except as historian, the man of letters, in whatever walk, has not only none of the expenses of other men of business, but none of the expenses of other artists. He has no such outlay to make for materials, or models, or studio rent as the painter or the sculptor has, and his income, such as it is, is immediate. If he strikes the fancy of the editor with the first thing he offers, as he very well may, it is as well with him as with other men after long years of apprenticeship. Although he will always be the better for an apprenticeship, and the longer apprenticeship the better, he may practically need none at all. Such are the strange conditions of his acceptance with the public, that he may please better without it than with it. An author's first book is too often not only his luckiest, but really his best; it has a brightness that dies out under the school he puts himself to, but a painter or a sculptor is only the gainer by all the school he can give himself.

X.

In view of this fact it becomes again very hard to establish the author's status in the business world, and at moments I have grave question whether he belongs there at all, except as a novelist. There is, of course, no outlay for him in this sort, any more than in any other sort of literature, but it at least supposes and exacts some measure of preparation. A young writer may produce a brilliant and very perfect romance, just as he may produce a brilliant and very perfect poem, but in the field of realistic fiction, or in what we used to call the novel of manners, a writer can only produce an inferior book at the outset. For this work he needs experience and observation, not so much of others as of himself, for ultimately his characters will all come out of himself, and he will need to know motive and character with such thoroughness and accuracy as he can acquire only through his own heart. A man remains in a measure strange to himself as long as he lives, and the very sources of novelty in his work will be within himself; he can continue to give it freshness in no other way than by knowing himself better and better. But a young writer and an untrained writer has not yet begun to be acquainted even with the lives of other men. The world around him remains a secret as well as the world within him, and both unfold themselves simultaneously to that experience of joy and sorrow that can come only with the lapse of time. Until he is well on towards forty, he will hardly have assimilated the materials of a great novel, although he may have amassed them. The novelist, then, is a man of letters who is like a man of business in the necessity of preparation for his calling, though he does not pay store-rent, and may carry all his affairs under his hat, as the phrase is. He alone among men of letters may look forward to that sort of continuous prosperity which follows from capacity and diligence in other vocations; for story-telling is now a fairly recognized trade, and the story-teller has a money-standing in the economic world. It is not a very high standing, I think, and I have expressed the belief that it does not bring him the respect felt for men in other lines of business. Still our people cannot deny some consideration to a man who gets a hundred dollars a thousand words or whose book sells five hundred thousand copies or less. That is a fact appreciable to business, and the

man of letters in the line of fiction may reasonably feel that his place in our civilization, though he may owe it to the women who form the great mass of his readers, has something of the character of a vested interest in the eyes of men. There is, indeed, as yet no conspiracy law which will avenge the attempt to injure him in his business. A critic, or a dark conjuration of critics, may damage him at will and to the extent of their power, and he has no recourse but to write better books, or worse. The law will do nothing for him, and a boycott of his books might be preached with immunity by any class of men not liking his opinions on the question of industrial slavery or antipaedobaptism. Still the market for his wares is steadier than the market for any other kind of literary wares, and the prices are better. The historian, who is a kind of inferior realist, has something like the same steadiness in the market, but the prices he can command are much lower, and the two branches of the novelist's trade are not to be compared in a business way. As for the essayist, the poet, the traveller, the popular scientist, they are nowhere in the competition for the favor of readers. The reviewer, indeed, has a pretty steady call for his work, but I fancy the reviewers who get a hundred dollars a thousand words could all stand upon the point of a needle without crowding one another; I should rather like to see them doing it. Another gratifying fact of the situation is that the best writers of fiction, who are most in demand with the magazines, probably get nearly as much money for their work as the inferior novelists who outsell them by tens of thousands, and who make their appeal to the innumerable multitude of the less educated and less cultivated buyers of fiction in book form. I think they earn their money, but if I did not think all of the higher class of novelists earned so much money as they get, I should not be so invidious as to single out for reproach those who did not.

The difficulty about payment, as I have hinted, is that literature has no objective value really, but only a subjective value, if I may so express it. A poem, an essay, a novel, even a paper on political economy, may be worth gold untold to one reader, and worth nothing whatever to another. It may be precious to one mood of the reader, and worthless to another mood of the same reader. How, then, is it to be priced, and how is it to be fairly marketed? All people must be fed, and all people must be clothed, and all people must be housed; and so meat, raiment, and shelter are things of positive and obvious necessity, which may fitly have a market price put upon them. But there is no such positive and obvious necessity, I am sorry to say, for fiction, or not for the higher sort of fiction. The sort of fiction which corresponds in literature to the circus and the variety theatre in the show-business seems essential to the spiritual health of the masses, but the most cultivated of the classes can get on, from time to time, without an artistic novel. This is a great pity, and I should be-very willing that readers might feel something like the pangs of hunger and cold, when deprived of their finer fiction; but apparently they never do. Their dumb and passive need is apt only to manifest itself negatively, or in the form of weariness of this author or that. The publisher of books can ascertain the fact through the declining sales of a writer; but the editor of a magazine, who is the best customer of the best writers, must feel the market with a much more delicate touch. Sometimes it may be years before he can

satisfy himself that his readers are sick of Smith, and are pining for Jones; even then he cannot know how long their mood will last, and he is by no means safe in cutting down Smith's price and putting up Jones's. With the best will in the world to pay justly, he cannot. Smith, who has been boring his readers to death for a year, may write tomorrow a thing that will please them so much that he will at once be a prime favorite again; and Jones, whom they have been asking for, may do something so uncharacteristic and alien that it will be a flat failure in the magazine. The only thing that gives either writer positive value is his acceptance with the reader; but the acceptance is from month to month wholly uncertain. Authors are largely matters of fashion, like this style of bonnet, or that shape of gown. Last spring the dresses were all made with lace berthas, and Smith was read; this year the butterfly capes are worn, and Jones is the favorite author. Who shall forecast the fall and winter modes?

XI.

In this inquiry it is always the author rather than the publisher, always the contributor rather than the editor, whom I am concerned for. I study the difficulties of the publisher and editor only because they involve the author and the contributor; if they did not, I will not say with how hard a heart I should turn from them; my only pang now in scrutinizing the business conditions of literature is for the makers of literature, not the purveyors of it.

After all, and in spite of my vaunting title, is the man of letters ever a business man? I suppose that, strictly speaking, he never is, except in those rare instances where, through need or choice, he is the publisher as well as the author of his books. Then he puts something on the market and tries to sell it there, and is a man of business. But otherwise he is an artist merely, and is allied to the great mass of wage-workers who are paid for the labor they have put into the thing done or the thing made; who live by doing or making a thing, and not by marketing a thing after some other man has done it or made it. The quality of the thing has nothing to do with the economic nature of the case; the author is, in the last analysis, merely a working-man, and is under the rule that governs the working-man's life. If he is sick or sad, and cannot work, if he is lazy or tipsy, and will not, then he earns nothing. He cannot delegate his business to a clerk or a manager; it will not go on while he is sleeping. The wage he can command depends strictly upon his skill and diligence.

I myself am neither sorry nor ashamed for this; I am glad and proud to be of those who eat their bread in the sweat of their own brows, and not the sweat of other men's brows; I think my bread is the sweeter for it. In the mean time, I have no blame for business men; they are no more of the condition of things than we working-men are; they did no more to cause it or create it; but I would rather be in my place than in theirs, and I wish that I could make all my fellow-artists realize that economically they are the same as mechanics, farmers, day-laborers. It ought to be our glory that we produce something, that we bring into the world

something that was not choately there before; that at least we fashion or shape something anew; and we ought to feel the tie that binds us to all the toilers of the shop and field, not as a galling chain, but as a mystic bond also uniting us to Him who works hitherto and evermore. I know very well that to the vast multitude of our fellow-working-men we artists are the shadows of names, or not even the shadows. I like to look the facts in the face, for though their lineaments are often terrible, yet there is light nowhere else; and I will not pretend, in this light, that the masses care any more for us than we care for the masses, or so much. Nevertheless, and most distinctly, we are not of the classes. Except in our work, they have no use for us; if now and then they fancy qualifying their material splendor or their spiritual dulness with some artistic presence, the attempt is always a failure that bruises and abashes. In so far as the artist is a man of the world, he is the less an artist, and if he fashions himself upon fashion, he deforms his art. We all know that ghastly type; it is more absurd even than the figure which is really of the world, which was born and bred in it, and conceives of nothing outside of it, or above it. In the social world, as well as in the business world, the artist is anomalous, in the actual conditions, and he is perhaps a little ridiculous.

Yet he has to be somewhere, poor fellow, and I think that he will do well to regard himself as in a transition state. He is really of the masses, but they do not know it, and what is worse, they do not know him; as yet the common people do not hear him gladly or hear him at all. He is apparently of the classes; they know him, and they listen to him; he often amuses them very much; but he is not quite at ease among them; whether they know it or not, he knows that he is not of their kind. Perhaps he will never be at home anywhere in the world as long as there are masses whom he ought to consort with, and classes whom he cannot consort with. The prospect is not brilliant for any artist now living, but perhaps the artist of the future will see in the flesh the accomplishment of that human equality of which the instinct has been divinely planted in the human soul.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Artist has seasons, as trees, when he cannot blossom
Book that they are content to know at second hand
Business to take advantage of his necessity
Competition has deformed human nature
Conditions of hucksters imposed upon poets
Fate of a book is in the hands of the women
God of chance leads them into temptation and adversity
Historian, who is a kind of inferior realist
I do not think any man ought to live by an art
If he has not enjoyed writing no one will enjoy reading
Impropriety if not indecency promises literary success
Literature beautiful only through the intelligence
Literature has no objective value

Literature is Business as well as Art
Man is strange to himself as long as he lives
Men read the newspapers, but our women read the books
More zeal than knowledge in it
Most journalists would have been literary men if they could
Never quite sure of life unless I find literature in it
No man ought to live by any art
No rose blooms right along
Our huckstering civilization
Public whose taste is so crude that they cannot enjoy the best
Results of art should be free to all
Reviewers
Reward is in the serial and not in the book--19th Century
Rogues in every walk of life
There is small love of pure literature
Two branches of the novelist's trade: Novelist and Historian
Warner's Backlog Studies
Work not truly priced in money cannot be truly paid in money

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by William Dean Howells

LITERATURE AND LIFE--The Confessions of a Summer Colonist

by William Dean Howells

CONFESSIONS OF A SUMMER COLONIST

The season is ending in the little summer settlement on the Down East coast where I have been passing the last three months, and with each loath day the sense of its peculiar charm grows more poignant. A prescience of the homesickness I shall feel for it when I go already begins to torment me, and I find myself wishing to imagine some form of words which shall keep a likeness of it at least through the winter; some shadowy semblance which I may turn to hereafter if any chance or change should destroy or transform it, or, what is more likely, if I should never come back to it. Perhaps others in the distant future may turn to it for a glimpse of our actual life in one of its most characteristic phases; I am sure that in the distant present there are many millions of our own inlanders to whom it would be altogether strange.

I.

In a certain sort fragile is written all over our colony; as far as the visible body of it is concerned it is inexpressibly perishable; a fire and a high wind could sweep it all away; and one of the most American of all American things is the least fitted among them to survive from the present to the future, and impart to it the significance of what may soon be a "portion and parcel" of our extremely forgetful past.

It is also in a supremely transitional moment: one might say that last year it was not quite what it is now, and next year it may be altogether different. In fact, our summer colony is in that happy hour when the rudeness of the first summer conditions has been left far behind, and vulgar luxury has not yet cumbrously succeeded to a sort of sylvan distinction.

The type of its simple and sufficing hospitalities is the seven-o'clock supper. Every one, in hotel or in cottage, dines between one and two, and no less scrupulously sups at seven, unless it is a few extremists who sup at half-past seven. At this function, which is our chief social event, it is 'de rigueur' for the men not to dress, and they come in any sort of sack or jacket or cutaway, letting the ladies make up the pomps which they forego. From this fact may be inferred the informality of the men's day-time attire; and the same note is sounded in the whole range of the cottage life, so that once a visitor from the world outside, who had been exasperated beyond endurance by the absence of form among us (if such an effect could be from a cause so negative), burst out with the reproach, "Oh, you make a fetish of your informality!"

"Fetish" is, perhaps, rather too strong a word, but I should not mind saying that informality was the tutelary genius of the place. American men are everywhere impatient of form. It burdens and bothers them, and they like to throw it off whenever they can. We may not be so very democratic at heart as we seem, but we are impatient of ceremonies that separate us when it is our business or our pleasure to get at one another; and it is part of our splendor to ignore the ceremonies, as we do the expenses. We have all the decent grades of riches and poverty in our colony, but our informality is not more the treasure of the humble than of the great. In the nature of things it cannot last, however, and the only question is how long it will last. I think, myself, until some one imagines giving an eight-o'clock dinner; then all the informalities will go, and the whole train of evils which such a dinner connotes will rush in.

II.

The cottages themselves are of several sorts, and some still exist in the earlier stages of mutation from the fishermen's and farmers' houses which

formed their germ. But these are now mostly let as lodgings to bachelors and other single or semi-detached folks who go for their meals to the neighboring hotels or boarding-houses. The hotels are each the centre of this sort of centripetal life, as well as the homes of their own scores or hundreds of inmates. A single boarding-house gathers about it half a dozen dependent cottages which it cares for, and feeds at its table; and even where the cottages have kitchens and all the housekeeping facilities, their inmates sometimes prefer to dine at the hotels. By far the greater number of cottagers, however, keep house, bringing their service with them from the cities, and settling in their summer homes for three or four or five months.

The houses conform more or less to one type: a picturesque structure of colonial pattern, shingled to the ground, and stained or left to take a weather-stain of grayish brown, with cavernous verandas, and dormer-windowed roofs covering ten or twelve rooms. Within they are, if not elaborately finished, elaborately fitted up, with a constant regard to health in the plumbing and drainage. The water is brought in a system of pipes from a lake five miles away, and as it is only for summer use the pipes are not buried from the frost, but wander along the surface, through the ferns and brambles of the tough little sea-side knolls on which the cottages are perched, and climb the old tumbling stone walls of the original pastures before diving into the cemented basements.

Most of the cottages are owned by their occupants, and furnished by them; the rest, not less attractive and hardly less tastefully furnished, belong to natives, who have caught on to the architectural and domestic preferences of the summer people, and have built them to let. The rugosities of the stony pasture land end in a wooded point seaward, and curve east and north in a succession of beaches. It is on the point, and mainly short of its wooded extremity, that the cottages of our settlement are dropped, as near the ocean as may be, and with as little order as birds' nests in the grass, among the sweet-fern, laurel, bay, wild raspberries, and dog-roses, which it is the ideal to leave as untouched as possible. Wheel-worn lanes that twist about among the hollows find the cottages from the highway, but foot-paths approach one cottage from another, and people walk rather than drive to each other's doors. From the deep-bosomed, well-sheltered little harbor the tides swim inland, half a score of winding miles, up the channel of a river which without them would be a trickling rivulet. An irregular line of cottages follows the shore a little way, and then leaves the river to the schooners and barges which navigate it as far as the oldest pile-built wooden bridge in New England, and these in their turn abandon it to the fleets of row-boats and canoes in which summer youth of both sexes explore it to its source over depths as clear as glass, past wooded headlands and low, rush-bordered meadows, through reaches and openings of pastoral fields, and under the shadow of dreaming groves.

If there is anything lovelier than the scenery of this gentle river I do not know it; and I doubt if the sky is purer and bluer in paradise. This seems to be the consensus, tacit or explicit, of the youth who visit it, and employ the landscape for their picnics and their water parties from the beginning to the end of summer.

The river is very much used for sunsets by the cottagers who live on it, and who claim a superiority through them to the cottagers on the point. An impartial mind obliges me to say that the sunsets are all good in our colony; there is no place from which they are bad; and yet for a certain tragical sunset, where the dying day bleeds slowly into the channel till it is filled from shore to shore with red as far as the eye can reach, the river is unmatched.

For my own purposes, it is not less acceptable, however, when the fog has come in from the sea like a visible reverie, and blurred the whole valley with its whiteness. I find that particularly good to look at from the trolley-car which visits and revisits the river before finally leaving it, with a sort of desperation, and hiding its passion with a sudden plunge into the woods.

III.

The old fishing and seafaring village, which has now almost lost the recollection of its first estate in its absorption with the care of the summer colony, was sparsely dropped along the highway bordering the harbor, and the shores of the river, where the piles of the time-worn wharves are still rotting. A few houses of the past remain, but the type of the summer cottage has impressed itself upon all the later building, and the native is passing architecturally, if not personally, into abeyance. He takes the situation philosophically, and in the season he caters to the summer colony not only as the landlord of the rented cottages, and the keeper of the hotels and boarding-houses, but as livery-stableman, grocer, butcher, marketman, apothecary, and doctor; there is not one foreign accent in any of these callings. If the native is a farmer, he devotes himself to vegetables, poultry, eggs, and fruit for the summer folks, and brings these supplies to their doors; his children appear with flowers; and there are many proofs that he has accurately sized the cottagers up in their tastes and fancies as well as their needs. I doubt if we have sized him up so well, or if our somewhat conventionalized ideal of him is perfectly representative. He is, perhaps, more complex than he seems; he is certainly much more self-sufficing than might have been expected. The summer folks are the material from which his prosperity is wrought, but he is not dependent, and is very far from submissive. As in all right conditions, it is here the employer who asks for work, not the employee; and the work must be respectfully asked for. There are many fables to this effect, as, for instance, that of the lady who said to a summer visitor, critical of the week's wash she had brought home, "I'll wash you and I'll iron you, but I won't take none of your jaw." A primitive independence is the keynote of the native character, and it suffers no infringement, but rather boasts itself. "We're independent here, I tell you," said the friendly person who consented to take off the wire door. "I was down Bangor way doin' a piece of work, and a fellow come along, and says he, 'I want you should hurry up on that job.' 'Hello!' says I, 'I guess I'll pull out.' Well,

we calculate to do our work," he added, with an accent which sufficiently implied that their consciences needed no bossing in the performance.

The native compliance with any summer-visiting request is commonly in some such form as, "Well, I don't know but what I can," or, "I guess there ain't anything to hinder me." This compliance is so rarely, if ever, carried to the point of domestic service that it may fairly be said that all the domestic service, at least of the cottagers, is imported. The natives will wait at the hotel tables; they will come in "to accommodate"; but they will not "live out." I was one day witness of the extreme failure of a friend whose city cook had suddenly abandoned him, and who applied to a friendly farmer's wife in the vain hope that she might help him to some one who would help his family out in their strait. "Why, there ain't a girl in the Hollow that lives out! Why, if you was sick abed, I don't know as I know anybody 't you could git to set up with you." The natives will not live out because they cannot keep their self-respect in the conditions of domestic service. Some people laugh at this self-respect, but most summer folks like it, as I own I do.

In our partly mythical estimate of the native and his relation to us, he is imagined as holding a kind of carnival when we leave him at the end of the season, and it is believed that he likes us to go early. We have had his good offices at a fair price all summer, but as it draws to a close they are rendered more and more fitfully. From some, perhaps flattered, reports of the happiness of the natives at the departure of the sojourners, I have pictured them dancing a sort of farandole, and stretching with linked hands from the farthest summer cottage up the river to the last on the wooded point. It is certain that they get tired, and I could not blame them if they were glad to be rid of their guests, and to go back to their own social life. This includes church festivals of divers kinds, lectures and shows, sleigh-rides, theatricals, and reading-clubs, and a plentiful use of books from the excellently chosen free village library. They say frankly that the summer folks have no idea how pleasant it is when they are gone, and I am sure that the gayeties to which we leave them must be more tolerable than those which we go back to in the city. It may be, however, that I am too confident, and that their gayeties are only different. I should really like to know just what the entertainments are which are given in a building devoted to them in a country neighborhood three or four miles from the village. It was once a church, but is now used solely for social amusements.

IV

The amusements of the summer colony I have already hinted at. Besides suppers, there are also teas, of larger scope, both afternoon and evening. There are hops every week at the two largest hotels, which are practically free to all; and the bathing-beach is, of course, a supreme attraction. The bath-houses, which are very clean and well equipped, are not very cheap, either for the season or for a single bath, and there is a pretty pavilion at the edge of the sands. This is always full of

gossiping spectators of the hardy adventurers who brave tides too remote from the Gulf Stream to be ever much warmer than sixty or sixty-five degrees. The bathers are mostly young people, who have the courage of their pretty bathing-costumes or the inextinguishable ardor of their years. If it is not rather serious business with them all, still I admire the fortitude with which some of them remain in fifteen minutes. Beyond our colony, which calls itself the Port, there is a far more populous watering-place, east of the Point, known as the Beach, which is the resort of people several grades of gentility lower than ours: so many, in fact, that we never can speak of the Beach without averting our faces, or, at the best, with a tolerant smile. It is really a succession of beaches, all much longer and, I am bound to say, more beautiful than ours, lined with rows of the humbler sort of summer cottages known as shells, and with many hotels of corresponding degree. The cottages may be hired by the week or month at about two dollars a day, and they are supposed to be taken by inland people of little social importance. Very likely this is true; but they seemed to be very nice, quiet people, and I commonly saw the ladies reading, on their verandas, books and magazines, while the gentlemen sprayed the dusty road before them with the garden hose. The place had also for me an agreeable alien suggestion, and in passing the long row of cottages I was slightly reminded of Scheveningen. Beyond the cottage settlements is a struggling little park, dedicated to the only Indian saint I ever heard of, though there may be others. His statue, colossal in sheet-lead, and painted the copper color of his race, offers any heathen comer the choice between a Bible in one of his hands and a tomahawk in the other, at the entrance of the park; and there are other sheet-lead groups and figures in the white of allegory at different points. It promises to be a pretty enough little place in future years, but as yet it is not much resorted to by the excursions which largely form the prosperity of the Beach. The concerts and the "high-class vaudeville" promised have not flourished in the pavilion provided for them, and one of two monkeys in the zoological department has perished of the public inattention. This has not fatally affected the captive bear, who rises to his hind legs, and eats peanuts and doughnuts in that position like a fellow-citizen. With the cockatoos and parrots, and the dozen deer in an inclosure of wire netting, he is no mean attraction; but he does not charm the excursionists away from the summer village at the shore, where they spend long afternoons splashing among the waves, or in lolling groups of men, women, and children on the sand. In the more active gayeties, I have seen nothing so decided during the whole season as the behavior of three young girls who once came up out of the sea, and obliged me by dancing a measure on the smooth, hard beach in their bathing-dresses.

I thought it very pretty, but I do not believe such a thing could have been seen on OUR beach, which is safe from all excursionists, and sacred to the cottage and hotel life of the Port.

Besides our beach and its bathing, we have a reading-club for the men, evolved from one of the old native houses, and verandaed round for summer use; and we have golf-links and a golf club-house within easy trolley reach. The links are as energetically, if not as generally, frequented as the sands, and the sport finds the favor which attends it everywhere

in the decay of tennis. The tennis-courts which I saw thronged about by eager girl-crowds, here, seven years ago, are now almost wholly abandoned to the lovers of the game, who are nearly always men.

Perhaps the only thing (besides, of course, our common mortality) which we have in common with the excursionists is our love of the trolley-line. This, by its admirable equipment, and by the terror it inspires in horses, has well-nigh abolished driving; and following the old country roads, as it does, with an occasional short-cut through the deep, green-lighted woods or across the prismatic salt meadows, it is of a picturesque variety entirely satisfying. After a year of fervent opposition and protest, the whole community--whether of summer or of winter folks--now gladly accepts the trolley, and the grandest cottager and the lowliest hotel dweller meet in a grateful appreciation of its beauty and comfort.

Some pass a great part of every afternoon on the trolley, and one lady has achieved celebrity by spending four dollars a week in trolley-rides. The exhilaration of these is varied with an occasional apprehension when the car pitches down a sharp incline, and twists almost at right angles on a sudden curve at the bottom without slacking its speed. A lady who ventured an appeal to the conductor at one such crisis was reassured, and at the same time taught her place, by his reply: "That motorman's life, ma'am, is just as precious to him as what yours is to you."

She had, perhaps, really ventured too far, for ordinarily the employees of the trolley do not find occasion to use so much severity with their passengers. They look after their comfort as far as possible, and seek even to anticipate their wants in unexpected cases, if I may believe a story which was told by a witness. She had long expected to see some one thrown out of the open car at one of the sharp curves, and one day she actually saw a woman hurled from the seat into the road. Luckily the woman slighted on her feet, and stood looking round in a daze.

"Oh! oh!" exclaimed another woman in the seat behind, "she's left her umbrella!"

The conductor promptly threw it out to her.

"Why," demanded the witness, "did that lady wish to get out here?"

The conductor hesitated before he jerked the bellpull to go on: Then he said, "Well, she'll want her umbrella, anyway."

The conductors are, in fact, very civil as well as kind. If they see a horse in anxiety at the approach of the car, they considerately stop, and let him get by with his driver in safety. By such means, with their frequent trips and low fares, and with the ease and comfort of their cars, they have conciliated public favor, and the trolley has drawn travel away from the steam railroad in such measure that it ran no trains last winter.

The trolley, in fact, is a fad of the summer folks this year; but what it

will be another no one knows; it may be their hissing and by-word. In the mean time, as I have already suggested, they have other amusements. These are not always of a nature so general as the trolley, or so particular as the tea. But each of the larger hotels has been fully supplied with entertainments for the benefit of their projectors, though nearly everything of the sort had some sort of charitable slant. I assisted at a stereopticon lecture on Alaska for the aid of some youthful Alaskans of both sexes, who were shown first in their savage state, and then as they appeared after a merely rudimentary education, in the costumes and profiles of our own civilization. I never would have supposed that education could do so much in so short a time; and I gladly gave my mite for their further development in classic beauty and a final elegance. My mite was taken up in a hat, which, passed round among the audience, is a common means of collecting the spectators' expressions of appreciation. Other entertainments, of a prouder frame, exact an admission fee, but I am not sure that these are better than some of the hat-shows, as they are called.

The tale of our summer amusements would be sadly incomplete without some record of the bull-fights given by the Spanish prisoners of war on the neighboring island, where they were confined the year of the war. Admission to these could be had only by favor of the officers in charge, and even among the Elite of the colony those who went were a more elect few. Still, the day I went, there were some fifty or seventy-five spectators, who arrived by trolley near the island, and walked to the stockade which confined the captives. A real bull-fight, I believe, is always given on Sunday, and Puritan prejudice yielded to usage even in the case of a burlesque bull-fight; at any rate, it was on a Sunday that we crouched in an irregular semicircle on a rising ground within the prison pale, and faced the captive audience in another semicircle, across a little alley for the entrances and exits of the performers. The president of the bull-fight was first brought to the place of honor in a hand-cart, and then came the banderilleros, the picadores, and the espada, wonderfully effective and correct in white muslin and colored tissue-paper. Much may be done in personal decoration with advertising placards; and the lofty mural crown of the president urged the public on both sides to Use Plug Cut. The picador's pasteboard horse was attached to his middle, fore and aft, and looked quite the sort of hapless jade which is ordinarily sacrificed to the bulls. The toro himself was composed of two prisoners, whose horizontal backs were covered with a brown blanket; and his feet, sometimes bare and sometimes shod with india-rubber boots, were of the human pattern. Practicable horns, of a somewhat too yielding substance, branched from a front of pasteboard, and a cloth tail, apt to come off in the charge, swung from his rear. I have never seen a genuine corrida, but a lady present, who had, told me that this was conducted with all the right circumstance; and it is certain that the performers entered into their parts with the artistic gust of their race. The picador sustained some terrific falls, and in his quality of horse had to be taken out repeatedly and sewed up; the banderilleros tormented and eluded the toro with table-covers, one red and two drab, till the espada took him from them, and with due ceremony, after a speech to the president, drove his blade home to the bull's heart. I stayed to see three bulls killed; the last was uncommonly

fierce, and when his hindquarters came off or out, his forequarters charged joyously among the aficionados on the prisoners' side, and made havoc in their thickly packed ranks. The espada who killed this bull was showered with cigars and cigarettes from our side.

I do not know what the Sabbath-keeping shades of the old Puritans made of our presence at such a fete on Sunday; but possibly they had got on so far in a better life as to be less shocked at the decay of piety among us than pleased at the rise of such Christianity as had brought us, like friends and comrades, together with our public enemies in this harmless fun. I wish to say that the tobacco lavished upon the espada was collected for the behoof of all the prisoners.

Our fiction has made so much of our summer places as the mise en scene of its love stories that I suppose I ought to say something of this side of our colonial life. But after sixty I suspect that one's eyes are poor for that sort of thing, and I can only say that in its earliest and simplest epoch the Port was particularly famous for the good times that the young people had. They still have good times, though whether on just the old terms I do not know. I know that the river is still here with its canoes and rowboats, its meadowy reaches apt for dual solitude, and its groves for picnics. There is not much bicycling--the roads are rough and hilly--but there is something of it, and it is mighty pretty to see the youth of both sexes bicycling with their heads bare. They go about bareheaded on foot and in buggies, too, and the young girls seek the tan which their mothers used so anxiously to shun.

The sail-boats, manned by weather-worn and weatherwise skippers, are rather for the pleasure of such older summer folks as have a taste for cod-fishing, which is here very good. But at every age, and in whatever sort our colonists amuse themselves, it is with the least possible ceremony. It is as if, Nature having taken them so hospitably to her heart, they felt convention an affront to her. Around their cottages, as I have said, they prefer to leave her primitive beauty untouched, and she rewards their forbearance with such a profusion of wild flowers as I have seen nowhere else. The low, pink laurel flushed all the stony fields to the edges of their verandas when we first came; the meadows were milk-white with daisies; in the swampy places delicate orchids grew, in the pools the flags and flowering rushes; all the paths and way-sides were set with dog-roses; the hollows and stony tops were broadly matted with ground juniper. Since then the goldenrod has passed from glory to glory, first mixing its yellow-powdered plumes with the red-purple tufts of the iron-weed, and then with the wild asters everywhere. There has come later a dwarf sort, six or ten inches high, wonderfully rich and fine, which, with a low, white aster, seems to hold the field against everything else, though the taller golden-rod and the masses of the high, blue asters nod less thickly above it. But these smaller blooms deck the ground in incredible profusion, and have an innocent air of being stuck in, as if they had been fancifully used for ornament by children or Indians.

In a little while now, as it is almost the end of September, all the feathery gold will have faded to the soft, pale ghosts of that

loveliness. The summer birds have long been silent; the crows, as if they were so many exultant natives, are shouting in the blue sky above the windrows of the rowan, in jubilant prescience of the depopulation of our colony, which fled the hotels a fortnight ago. The days are growing shorter, and the red evenings falling earlier; so that the cottagers' husbands who come up every Saturday from town might well be impatient for a Monday of final return. Those who came from remoter distances have gone back already; and the lady cottagers, lingering hardily on till October, must find the sight of the empty hotels and the windows of the neighboring houses, which no longer brighten after the chilly nightfall, rather depressing. Every one says that this is the loveliest time of year, and that it will be divine here all through October. But there are sudden and unexpected defections; there is a steady pull of the heart cityward, which it is hard to resist. The first great exodus was on the first of the month, when the hotels were deserted by four-fifths of their guests. The rest followed, half of them within the week, and within a fortnight none but an all but inaudible and invisible remnant were left, who made no impression of summer sojourn in the deserted trolleys.

The days now go by in moods of rapid succession. There have been days when the sea has lain smiling in placid derision of the recreants who have fled the lingering summer; there have been nights when the winds have roared round the cottages in wild menace of the faithful few who have remained.

We have had a magnificent storm, which came, as an equinoctial storm should, exactly at the equinox, and for a day and a night heaped the sea upon the shore in thundering surges twenty and thirty feet high. I watched these at their awfulest, from the wide windows of a cottage that crouched in the very edge of the surf, with the effect of clutching the rocks with one hand and holding its roof on with the other. The sea was such a sight as I have not seen on shipboard, and while I luxuriously shuddered at it, I had the advantage of a mellow log-fire at my back, purring and softly crackling in a quiet indifference to the storm.

Twenty-four hours more made all serene again. Bloodcurdling tales of lobster-pots carried to sea filled the air; but the air was as blandly unconscious of ever having been a fury as a lady who has found her lost temper. Swift alternations of weather are so characteristic of our colonial climate that the other afternoon I went out with my umbrella against the raw, cold rain of the morning, and had to raise it against the broiling sun. Three days ago I could say that the green of the woods had no touch of hectic in it; but already the low trees of the swamp-land have flamed into crimson. Every morning, when I look out, this crimson is of a fierier intensity, and the trees on the distant uplands are beginning slowly to kindle, with a sort of inner glow which has not yet burst into a blaze. Here and there the golden-rod is rusting; but there seems only to be more and more asters sorts; and I have seen ladies coming home with sheaves of blue gentians; I have heard that the orchids are beginning again to light their tender lamps from the burning blackberry vines that stray from the pastures to the edge of the swamps.

After an apparently total evanescence there has been a like resuscitation

of the spirit of summer society. In the very last week of September we have gone to a supper, which lingered far out of its season like one of these late flowers, and there has been an afternoon tea which assembled an astonishing number of cottagers, all secretly surprised to find one another still here, and professing openly a pity tinged with contempt for those who are here no longer.

I blamed those who had gone home, but I myself sniff the asphalt afar; the roar of the street calls to me with the magic that the voice of the sea is losing. Just now it shines entreatingly, it shines winningly, in the sun which is mellowing to an October tenderness, and it shines under a moon of perfect orb, which seems to have the whole heavens to itself in "the first watch of the night," except for "the red planet Mars." This begins to burn in the west before the flush of sunset has passed from it; and then, later, a few moon-washed stars pierce the vast vault with their keen points. The stars which so powdered the summer sky seem mostly to have gone back to town, where no doubt people take them for electric lights.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Ladies make up the pomps which they (the men) forego
Summer folks have no idea how pleasant it is when they are gone
Their consciences needed no bossing in the performance

End of this Project Gutenberg Etext of Confessions of a Summer Colonist,
by William Dean Howells

LITERATURE AND LIFE--The Young Contributor

by William Dean Howells

THE EDITOR'S RELATIONS WITH THE YOUNG CONTRIBUTOR

One of the trustiest jokes of the humorous paragrapher is that the editor is in great and constant dread of the young contributor; but neither my experience nor my observation bears out his theory of the case.

Of course one must not say anything to encourage a young person to

abandon an honest industry in the vain hope of early honor and profit from literature; but there have been and there will be literary men and women always, and these in the beginning have nearly always been young; and I cannot see that there is risk of any serious harm in saying that it is to the young contributor the editor looks for rescue from the old contributor, or from his failing force and charm.

The chances, naturally, are against the young contributor, and vastly against him; but if any periodical is to live, and to live long, it is by the infusion of new blood; and nobody knows this better than the editor, who may seem so unfriendly and uncaring to the young contributor. The strange voice, the novel scene, the odor of fresh woods and pastures new, the breath of morning, the dawn of tomorrow--these are what the editor is eager for, if he is fit to be an editor at all; and these are what the young contributor alone can give him.

A man does not draw near the sixties without wishing people to believe that he is as young as ever, and he has not written almost as many books as he has lived years without persuading himself that each new work of his has all the surprise of spring; but possibly there are wonted traits and familiar airs and graces in it which forbid him to persuade others. I do not say these characteristics are not charming; I am very far from wishing to say that; but I do say and must say that after the fiftieth time they do not charm for the first time; and this is where the advantage of the new contributor lies, if he happens to charm at all.

I.

The new contributor who does charm can have little notion how much he charms his first reader, who is the editor. That functionary may bide his pleasure in a short, stiff note of acceptance, or he may mask his joy in a check of slender figure; but the contributor may be sure that he has missed no merit in his work, and that he has felt, perhaps far more than the public will feel, such delight as it can give.

The contributor may take the acceptance as a token that his efforts have not been neglected, and that his achievements will always be warmly welcomed; that even his failures will be leniently and reluctantly recognized as failures, and that he must persist long in failure before the friend he has made will finally forsake him.

I do not wish to paint the situation wholly rose color; the editor will have his moods, when he will not see so clearly or judge so justly as at other times; when he will seem exacting and fastidious, and will want this or that mistaken thing done to the story, or poem, or sketch, which the author knows to be simply perfect as it stands; but he is worth bearing with, and he will be constant to the new contributor as long as there is the least hope of him.

The contributor may be the man or the woman of one story, one poem, one

sketch, for there are such; but the editor will wait the evidence of indefinite failure to this effect. His hope always is that he or she is the man or the woman of many stories, many poems, many sketches, all as good as the first.

From my own long experience as a magazine editor, I may say that the editor is more doubtful of failure in one who has once done well than of a second success. After all, the writer who can do but one good thing is rarer than people are apt to think in their love of the improbable; but the real danger with a young contributor is that he may become his own rival.

What would have been quite good enough from him in the first instance is not good enough in the second, because he has himself fixed his standard so high. His only hope is to surpass himself, and not begin resting on his laurels too soon; perhaps it is never well, soon or late, to rest upon one's laurels. It is well for one to make one's self scarce, and the best way to do this is to be more and more jealous of perfection in one's work.

The editor's conditions are that having found a good thing he must get as much of it as he can, and the chances are that he will be less exacting than the contributor imagines. It is for the contributor to be exacting, and to let nothing go to the editor as long as there is the possibility of making it better. He need not be afraid of being forgotten because he does not keep sending; the editor's memory is simply relentless; he could not forget the writer who has pleased him if he would, for such writers are few.

I do not believe that in my editorial service on the Atlantic Monthly, which lasted fifteen years in all, I forgot the name or the characteristic quality, or even the handwriting, of a contributor who had pleased me, and I forgot thousands who did not. I never lost faith in a contributor who had done a good thing; to the end I expected another good thing from him. I think I was always at least as patient with him as he was with me, though he may not have known it.

At the time I was connected with that periodical it had almost a monopoly of the work of Longfellow, Emerson, Holmes, Lowell, Whittier, Mrs. Stowe, Parkman, Higginson, Aldrich, Stedman, and many others not so well known, but still well known. These distinguished writers were frequent contributors, and they could be counted upon to respond to almost any appeal of the magazine; yet the constant effort of the editors was to discover new talent, and their wish was to welcome it.

I know that, so far as I was concerned, the success of a young contributor was as precious as if I had myself written his paper or poem, and I doubt if it gave him more pleasure. The editor is, in fact, a sort of second self for the contributor, equally eager that he should stand well with the public, and able to promote his triumphs without egotism and share them without vanity.

II.

In fact, my curious experience was that if the public seemed not to feel my delight in a contribution I thought good, my vexation and disappointment were as great as if the work had been my own. It was even greater, for if I had really written it I might have had my misgivings of its merit, but in the case of another I could not console myself with this doubt. The sentiment was at the same time one which I could not cherish for the work of an old contributor; such a one stood more upon his own feet; and the young contributor may be sure that the editor's pride, self-interest, and sense of editorial infallibility will all prompt him to stand by the author whom he has introduced to the public, and whom he has vouched for.

I hope I am not giving the young contributor too high an estimate of his value to the editor. After all, he must remember that he is but one of a great many others, and that the editor's affections, if constant, are necessarily divided. It is good for the literary aspirant to realize very early that he is but one of many; for the vice of our comparatively virtuous craft is that it tends to make each of us imagine himself central, if not sole.

As a matter of fact, however, the universe does not revolve around any one of us; we make our circuit of the sun along with the other inhabitants of the earth, a planet of inferior magnitude. The thing we strive for is recognition, but when this comes it is apt to turn our heads. I should say, then, that it was better it should not come in a great glare and aloud shout, all at once, but should steal slowly upon us, ray by ray, breath by breath.

In the mean time, if this happens, we shall have several chances of reflection, and can ask ourselves whether we are really so great as we seem to other people, or seem to seem.

The prime condition of good work is that we shall get ourselves out of our minds. Sympathy we need, of course, and encouragement; but I am not sure that the lack of these is not a very good thing, too. Praise enervates, flattery poisons; but a smart, brisk snub is always rather wholesome.

I should say that it was not at all a bad thing for a young contributor to get his manuscript back, even after a first acceptance, and even a general newspaper proclamation that he is one to make the immortals tremble for their wreaths of asphodel--or is it amaranth? I am never sure which.

Of course one must have one's hour, or day, or week, of disabling the editor's judgment, of calling him to one's self fool, and rogue, and wretch; but after that, if one is worth while at all, one puts the rejected thing by, or sends it off to some other magazine, and sets about the capture of the erring editor with something better, or at least

something else.

III.

I think it a great pity that editors ever deal other than frankly with young contributors, or put them off with smooth generalities of excuse, instead of saying they do not like this thing or that offered them. It is impossible to make a criticism of all rejected manuscripts, but in the case of those which show promise I think it is quite possible; and if I were to sin my sins over again, I think I should sin a little more on the side of candid severity. I am sure I should do more good in that way, and I am sure that when I used to dissemble my real mind I did harm to those whose feelings I wished to spare. There ought not, in fact, to be question of feeling in the editor's mind.

I know from much suffering of my own that it is terrible to get back a manuscript, but it is not fatal, or I should have been dead a great many times before I was thirty, when the thing mostly ceased for me. One survives it again and again, and one ought to make the reflection that it is not the first business of a periodical to print contributions of this one or of that, but that its first business is to amuse and instruct its readers.

To do this it is necessary to print contributions, but whose they are, or how the writer will feel if they are not printed, cannot be considered. The editor can consider only what they are, and the young contributor will do well to consider that, although the editor may not be an infallible judge, or quite a good judge, it is his business to judge, and to judge without mercy. Mercy ought no more to qualify judgment in an artistic result than in a mathematical result.

IV.

I suppose, since I used to have it myself, that there is a superstition with most young contributors concerning their geographical position. I used to think that it was a disadvantage to send a thing from a small or unknown place, and that it doubled my insignificance to do so. I believed that if my envelope had borne the postmark of New York, or Boston, or some other city of literary distinction, it would have arrived on the editor's table with a great deal more authority. But I am sure this was a mistake from the first, and when I came to be an editor myself I constantly verified the fact from my own dealings with contributors. A contribution from a remote and obscure place at once piqued my curiosity, and I soon learned that the fresh things, the original things, were apt to come from such places, and not from the literary centres. One of the most interesting facts concerning the arts of all kinds is that those who wish to give their lives to them do not appear where the

appliances for instruction in them exist. An artistic atmosphere does not create artists a literary atmosphere does not create literators; poets and painters spring up where there was never a verse made or a picture seen.

This suggests that God is no more idle now than He was at the beginning, but that He is still and forever shaping the human chaos into the instruments and means of beauty. It may also suggest to that scholar-pride, that vanity of technique, which is so apt to vaunt itself in the teacher, that the best he can do, after all, is to let the pupil teach himself. If he comes with divine authority to the thing he attempts, he will know how to use the appliances, of which the teacher is only the first.

The editor, if he does not consciously perceive the truth, will instinctively feel it, and will expect the acceptable young contributor from the country, the village, the small town, and he will look eagerly at anything that promises literature from Montana or Texas, for he will know that it also promises novelty.

If he is a wise editor, he will wish to hold his hand as much as possible; he will think twice before he asks the contributor to change this or correct that; he will leave him as much to himself as he can. The young contributor; on his part, will do well to realize this, and to receive all the editorial suggestions, which are veiled commands in most cases, as meekly and as imaginatively as possible.

The editor cannot always give his reasons; however strongly he may feel them, but the contributor, if sufficiently docile, can always divine them. It behooves him to be docile at all times, for this is merely the willingness to learn; and whether he learns that he is wrong, or that the editor is wrong, still he gains knowledge.

A great deal of knowledge comes simply from doing, and a great deal more from doing over, and this is what the editor generally means.

I think that every author who is honest with himself must own that his work would be twice as good if it were done twice. I was once so fortunately circumstanced that I was able entirely to rewrite one of my novels, and I have always thought it the best written, or at least indefinitely better than it would have been with a single writing. As a matter of fact, nearly all of them have been rewritten in a certain way. They have not actually been rewritten throughout, as in the case I speak of, but they have been gone over so often in manuscript and in proof that the effect has been much the same.

Unless you are sensible of some strong frame within your work, something vertebral, it is best to renounce it, and attempt something else in which you can feel it. If you are secure of the frame you must observe the quality and character of everything you build about it; you must touch, you must almost taste, you must certainly test, every material you employ; every bit of decoration must undergo the same scrutiny as the structure.

It will be some vague perception of the want of this vigilance in the young contributor's work which causes the editor to return it to him for revision, with those suggestions which he will do well to make the most of; for when the editor once finds a contributor he can trust, he rejoices in him with a fondness which the contributor will never perhaps understand.

It will not do to write for the editor alone; the wise editor understands this, and averts his countenance from the contributor who writes at him; but if he feels that the contributor conceives the situation, and will conform to the conditions which his periodical has invented for itself, and will transgress none of its unwritten laws; if he perceives that he has put artistic conscience in every general and detail, and though he has not done the best, has done the best that he can do, he will begin to liberate him from every trammel except those he must wear himself, and will be only too glad to leave him free. He understands, if he is at all fit for his place, that a writer can do well only what he likes to do, and his wish is to leave him to himself as soon as possible.

V.

In my own case, I noticed that the contributors who could be best left to themselves were those who were most amenable to suggestion and even correction, who took the blue pencil with a smile, and bowed gladly to the rod of the proof-reader. Those who were on the alert for offence, who resented a marginal note as a slight, and bumptiously demanded that their work should be printed just as they had written it, were commonly not much more desired by the reader than by the editor.

Of course the contributor naturally feels that the public is the test of his excellence, but he must not forget that the editor is the beginning of the public; and I believe he is a faithfuller and kinder critic than the writer will ever find again.

Since my time there is a new tradition of editing, which I do not think so favorable to the young contributor as the old. Formerly the magazines were made up of volunteer contributions in much greater measure than they are now. At present most of the material is invited and even engaged; it is arranged for a long while beforehand, and the space that can be given to the aspirant, the unknown good, the potential excellence, grows constantly less and less.

A great deal can be said for either tradition; perhaps some editor will yet imagine a return to the earlier method. In the mean time we must deal with the thing that is, and submit to it until it is changed. The moral to the young contributor is to be better than ever, to leave nothing undone that shall enhance his small chances of acceptance. If he takes care to be so good that the editor must accept him in spite of all the pressure upon his pages, he will not only be serving-himself best, but may be helping the editor to a conception of his duty that shall be more hospitable to all other young contributors. As it is,

however, it must be owned that their hope of acceptance is very, very small, and they will do well to make sure that they love literature so much that they can suffer long and often repeated disappointment in its cause.

The love of it is the great and only test of fitness for it. It is really inconceivable how any one should attempt it without this, but apparently a great many do. It is evident to every editor that a vast number of those who write the things he looks at so faithfully, and reads more or less, have no artistic motive.

People write because they wish to be known, or because they have heard that money is easily made in that way, or because they think they will chance that among a number of other things. The ignorance of technique which they often show is not nearly so disheartening as the palpable factitiousness of their product. It is something that they have made; it is not anything that has grown out of their lives.

I should think it would profit the young contributor, before he puts pen to paper, to ask himself why he does so, and, if he finds that he has no motive in the love of the thing, to forbear.

Am I interested in what I am going to write about? Do I feel it strongly? Do I know it thoroughly? Do I imagine it clearly? The young contributor had better ask himself all these questions, and as many more like them as he can think of. Perhaps he will end by not being a young contributor.

But if he is able to answer them satisfactorily to his own conscience, by all means let him begin. He may at once put aside all anxiety about style; that is a thing that will take care of itself; it will be added unto him if he really has something to say; for style is only a man's way of saying a thing.

If he has not much to say, or if he has nothing to say, perhaps he will try to say it in some other man's way, or to hide his own vacuity with rags of rhetoric and tags and fringes of manner, borrowed from this author and that. He will fancy that in this disguise his work will be more literary, and that there is somehow a quality, a grace, imparted to it which will charm in spite of the inward hollowness. His vain hope would be pitiful if it were not so shameful, but it is destined to suffer defeat at the first glance of the editorial eye.

If he really has something to say, however, about something he knows and loves, he is in the best possible case to say it well. Still, from time to time he may advantageously call a halt, and consider whether he is saying the thing clearly and simply.

If he has a good ear he will say it gracefully, and musically; and I would by no means have him aim to say it barely or sparsely. It is not so that people talk, who talk well, and literature is only the thought of the writer flowing from the pen instead of the tongue.

To aim at succinctness and brevity merely, as some teach, is to practice a kind of quackery almost as offensive as the charlatany of rhetoric. In either case the life goes out of the subject.

To please one's self, honestly and thoroughly, is the only way to please others in matters of art. I do not mean to say that if you please yourself you will always please others, but that unless you please yourself you will please no one else. It is the sweet and sacred privilege of work done artistically to delight the doer. Art is the highest joy, but any work done in the love of it is art, in a kind, and it strikes the note of happiness as nothing else can.

We hear much of drudgery, but any sort of work that is slighted becomes drudgery; poetry, fiction, painting, sculpture, acting, architecture, if you do not do your best by them, turn to drudgery sore as digging ditches, hewing wood, or drawing water; and these, by the same blessings of God, become arts if they are done with conscience and the sense of beauty.

The young contributor may test his work before the editor assays it, if he will, and he may know by a rule that is pretty infallible whether it is good or not, from his own experience in doing it. Did it give him pleasure? Did he love it as it grew under his hand? Was he glad and willing with it? Or did he force himself to it, and did it hang heavy upon him?

There is nothing mystical in all this; it is a matter of plain, every-day experience, and I think nearly every artist will say the same thing about it, if he examines himself faithfully.

If the young contributor finds that he has no delight in the thing he has attempted, he may very well give it up, for no one else will delight in it. But he need not give it up at once; perhaps his mood is bad; let him wait for a better, and try it again. He may not have learned how to do it well, and therefore he cannot love it, but perhaps he can learn to do it well.

The wonder and glory of art is that it is without formulas. Or, rather, each new piece of work requires the invention of new formulas, which will not serve again for another. You must apprentice yourself afresh at every fresh undertaking, and our mastery is always a victory over certain unexpected difficulties, and not a dominion of difficulties overcome before.

I believe, in other words, that mastery is merely the strength that comes of overcoming and is never a sovereign power that smooths the path of all obstacles. The combinations in art are infinite, and almost never the same; you must make your key and fit it to each, and the key that unlocks one combination will not unlock another.

VI.

There is no royal road to excellence in literature, but the young contributor need not be dismayed at that. Royal roads are the ways that kings travel, and kings are mostly dull fellows, and rarely have a good time. They do not go along singing; the spring that trickles into the mossy log is not for them, nor

"The wildwood flower that simply blows."

But the traveller on the country road may stop for each of these; and it is not a bad condition of his progress that he must move so slowly that he can learn every detail of the landscape, both earth and sky, by heart.

The trouble with success is that it is apt to leave life behind, or apart. The successful writer especially is in danger of becoming isolated from the realities that nurtured in him the strength to win success. When he becomes famous, he becomes precious to criticism, to society, to all the things that do not exist from themselves, or have not the root of the matter in them.

Therefore, I think that a young writer's upward course should be slow and beset with many obstacles, even hardships. Not that I believe in hardships as having inherent virtues; I think it is stupid to regard them in that way; but they oftener bring out the virtues inherent in the sufferer from them than what I may call the 'softships'; and at least they stop him, and give him time to think.

This is the great matter, for if we prosper forward rapidly, we have no time for anything but prospering forward rapidly. We have no time for art, even the art by which we prosper.

I would have the young contributor above all things realize that success is not his concern. Good work, true work, beautiful work is his affair, and nothing else. If he does this, success will take care of itself.

He has no business to think of the thing that will take. It is the editor's business to think of that, and it is the contributor's business to think of the thing that he can do with pleasure, the high pleasure that comes from the sense of worth in the thing done. Let him do the best he can, and trust the editor to decide whether it will take.

It will take far oftener than anything he attempts perfunctorily; and even if the editor thinks it will not take, and feels obliged to return it for that reason, he will return it with a real regret, with the honor and affection which we cannot help feeling for any one who has done a piece of good work, and with the will and the hope to get something from him that will take the next time, or the next, or the next.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

An artistic atmosphere does not create artists
Any sort of work that is slighted becomes drudgery
Put aside all anxiety about style
Should sin a little more on the side of candid severity
Trouble with success is that it is apt to leave life behind
Work would be twice as good if it were done twice

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by William Dean Howells

LITERATURE AND LIFE--Last Days in a Dutch Hotel

by William Dean Howells

LAST DAYS IN A DUTCH HOTEL

(1897)

When we said that we were going to Scheveningen, in the middle of September, the portier of the hotel at The Hague was sure we should be very cold, perhaps because we had suffered so much in his house already; and he was right, for the wind blew with a Dutch tenacity of purpose for a whole week, so that the guests thinly peopling the vast hostelry seemed to rustle through its chilly halls and corridors like so many autumn leaves. We were but a poor hundred at most where five hundred would not have been a crowd; and, when we sat down at the long tables d'hote in the great dining-room, we had to warm our hands with our plates before we could hold our spoons. From time to time the weather varied, as it does in Europe (American weather is of an exemplary constancy in comparison), and three or four times a day it rained, and three or four times it cleared; but through all the wind blew cold and colder. We were promised, however, that the hotel would not close till October, and we made shift, with a warm chimney in one room and three gas-burners in another, if not to keep warm quite, yet certainly to get used to the cold.

In the mean time the sea-bathing went resolutely on with all its forms. Every morning the bathing machines were drawn down to the beach from the esplanade, where they were secured against the gale every night; and every day a half-dozen hardy invalids braved the rigors of wind and wave. At the discreet distance which one ought always to keep one could not always be sure whether these bold bathers were mermen or mermaids; for the sea costume of both sexes is the same here, as regards an absence of skirts and a presence of what are, after the first plunge, effectively tights. The first time I walked down to the beach I was puzzled to make out some object rolling about in the low surf, which looked like a barrel, and which two bathing-machine men were watching with apparently the purpose of fishing it out. Suddenly this object reared itself from the surf and floundered towards the steps of a machine; then I saw that it was evidently not a barrel, but a lady, and after that I never dared carry my researches so far. I suppose that the bathing-tights are more becoming in some cases than in others; but I hold to a modest preference for skirts, however brief, in the sea-gear of ladies. Without them there may sometimes be the effect of beauty, and sometimes the effect of barrel.

For the convenience and safety of the bathers there were, even in the last half of September, some twenty machines, and half as many bath-men and bath-women, who waded into the water and watched that the bathers came to no harm, instead of a solitary lifeguard showing his statuesque shape as he paced the shore beside the lifelines, or cynically rocked in his boat beyond the breakers, as the custom is on Long Island. Here there is no need of life-lines, and, unless one held his head resolutely under water, I do not see how he could drown within quarter of a mile of the shore. Perhaps it is to prevent suicide that the bathmen are so plentifully provided.

They are a provision of the hotel, I believe, which does not relax itself in any essential towards its guests as they grow fewer. It seems, on the contrary, to use them with a more tender care, and to console them as it may for the inevitable parting near at hand. Now, within three or four days of the end, the kitchen is as scrupulously and vigilantly perfect as it could be in the height of the season; and our dwindling numbers sit down every night to a dinner that we could not get for much more love or vastly more money in the month of August, at any shore hotel in America. It is true that there are certain changes going on, but they are going on delicately, almost silently. A strip of carpeting has come up from along our corridor, but we hardly miss it from the matting which remains. Through the open doors of vacant chambers we can see that beds are coming down, and the dismantling extends into the halls at places. Certain decorative carved chairs which repeated themselves outside the doors have ceased to be there; but the pictures still hang on the walls, and within our own rooms everything is as conscientious as in midsummer. The service is instant, and, if there is some change in it, the change is not for the worse. Yesterday our waiter bade me good-bye, and when I said I was sorry he was going he alleged a boil on his cheek in excuse; he would not allow that his going had anything to do with the closing of the hotel, and he was promptly replaced by another who speaks excellent English. Now that the first is gone, I may own that he seemed not to

speak any foreign language long, but, when cornered in English, took refuge in French, and then fled from pursuit in that to German, and brought up in final Dutch, where he was practically inaccessible.

The elevator runs regularly, if not rapidly; the papers arrive unfaithfully in the reading-room, including a solitary London Times, which even I do not read, perhaps because I have no English-reading rival to contend for it with. Till yesterday, an English artist sometimes got it; but he then instantly offered it to me; and I had to refuse it because I would not be outdone in politeness. Now even he is gone, and on all sides I find myself in an unbroken circle of Dutch and German, where no one would dispute the Times with me if he could.

Every night the corridors are fully lighted, and some mornings swept, while the washing that goes on all over Holland, night and morning, does not always spare our unfrequented halls and stairs. I note these little facts, for the contrast with those of an American hotel which we once assisted in closing, and where the elevator stopped two weeks before we left, and we fell from electricity to naphtha-gas, and even this died out before us except at long intervals in the passages; while there were lightning changes in the service, and a final failure of it till we had to go down and get our own ice-water of the lingering room-clerk, after the last bell-boy had winked out.

II.

But in Europe everything is permanent, and in America everything is provisional. This is the great distinction which, if always kept in mind, will save a great deal of idle astonishment. It is in nothing more apparent than in the preparation here at Scheveningen for centuries of summer visitors, while at our Long Island hotel there was a losing bet on a scant generation of them. When it seemed likely that it might be a winning bet the sand was planked there in front of the hotel to the sea with spruce boards. It was very handsomely planked, but it was never afterwards touched, apparently, for any manner of repairs. Here, for half a mile the dune on which the hotel stands is shored up with massive masonry, and bricked for carriages, and tiled for foot-passengers; and it is all kept as clean as if wheel or foot had never passed over it. I am sure that there is not a broken brick or a broken tile in the whole length or breadth of it. But the hotel here is not a bet; it is a business. It has come to stay; and on Long Island it had come to see how it would like it.

Beyond the walk and drive, however, the dunes are left to the winds, and to the vegetation with which the Dutch planting clothes them against the winds. First a coarse grass or rush is sown; then a finer herbage comes; then a tough brushwood, with flowers and blackberry-vines; so that while the seaward slopes of the dunes are somewhat patched and tattered, the landward side and all the pleasant hollows between are fairly held against such gales as on Long Island blow the lower dunes hither and yon.

The sheep graze in the valleys at some points; in many a little pocket of the dunes I found a potato-patch of about the bigness of a city lot, and on week-days I saw wooden-shod men slowly, slowly gathering in the crop. On Sundays I saw the pleasant nooks and corners of these sandy hillocks devoted, as the dunes of Long Island were, to whispering lovers, who are here as freely and fearlessly affectionate as at home. Rocking there is not, and cannot be, in the nature of things, as there used to be at Mount Desert; but what is called Twoing at York Harbor is perfectly practicable.

It is practicable not only in the nooks and corners of the dunes, but on discreeter terms in those hooded willow chairs, so characteristic of the Dutch sea-side. These, if faced in pairs towards each other, must be as favorable to the exchange of vows as of opinions, and if the crowd is ever very great, perhaps one chair could be made to hold two persons. It was distinctly a pang, the other day, to see men carrying them up from the beach, and putting them away to hibernate in the basement of the hotel. Not all, but most of them, were taken; though I dare say that on fine days throughout October they will go trooping back to the sands on the heads of the same men, like a procession of monstrous, two-legged crabs. Such a day was last Sunday, and then the beach offered a lively image of its summer gayety. It was dotted with hundreds of hooded chairs, which foregathered in gossiping groups or confidential couples; and as the sun shone quite warm the flaps of the little tents next the dunes were let down against it, and ladies in summer white saved themselves from sunstroke in their shelter. The wooden booths for the sale of candies and mineral waters, and beer and sandwiches, were flushed with a sudden prosperity, so that when I went to buy my pound of grapes from the good woman who understands my Dutch, I dreaded an indifference in her which by no means appeared. She welcomed me as warmly as if I had been her sole customer, and did not put up the price on me; perhaps because it was already so very high that her imagination could not rise above it.

The hotel showed the same admirable constancy. The restaurant was thronged with new-comers, who spread out even over the many-tabled esplanade before it; but it was in no wise demoralized. That night we sat down in multiplied numbers to a table d'hote of serenely unconscious perfection; and we permanent guests--alas! we are now becoming transient, too--were used with unflinching recognition of our superior worth. We shared the respect which, all over Europe, attaches to establishment, and which sometimes makes us poor Americans wish for a hereditary nobility, so that we could all mirror our ancestral value in the deference of our inferiors. Where we should get our inferiors is another thing, but I suppose we could import them for the purpose, if the duties were not too great under our tariff.

We have not yet imported the idea of a European hotel in any respect, though we long ago imported what we call the European plan. No travelled American knows it in the extortionate prices of rooms when he gets home, or the preposterous charges of our restaurants, where one portion of roast beef swimming in a lake of lukewarm juice costs as much as a diversified and delicate dinner in Germany or Holland. But even if there

were any proportion in these things the European hotel will not be with us till we have the European portier, who is its spring and inspiration. He must not, dear home-keeping reader, be at all imagined in the moral or material figure of our hotel porter, who appears always in his shirt-sleeves, and speaks with the accent of Cork or of Congo. The European portier wears a uniform, I do not know why, and a gold-banded cap, and he inhabits a little office at the entrance of the hotel. He speaks eight or ten languages, up to certain limit, rather better than people born to them, and his presence commands an instant reverence softening to affection under his universal helpfulness. There is nothing he cannot tell you, cannot do for you; and you may trust yourself implicitly to him. He has the priceless gift of making each nationality, each personality, believe that he is devoted to its service alone. He turns lightly from one language to another, as if he had each under his tongue, and he answers simultaneously a fussy French woman, an angry English tourist, a stiff Prussian major, and a thin-voiced American girl in behalf of a timorous mother, and he never mixes the replies. He is an inexhaustible bottle of dialects; but this is the least of his merits, of his miracles.

Our portier here is a tall, slim Dutchman (most Dutchmen are tall and slim), and in spite of the waning season he treats me as if I were multitude, while at the same time he uses me with the distinction due the last of his guests. Twenty times in as many hours he wishes me good-day, putting his hand to his cap for the purpose; and to oblige me he wears silver braid instead of gilt on his cap and coat. I apologized yesterday for troubling him so often for stamps, and said that I supposed he was much more bothered in the season.

"Between the first of August and the fifteenth," he answered, "you cannot think. All that you can do is to say, Yes, No; Yes, No." And he left me to imagine his responsibilities.

I am sure he will hold out to the end, and will smile me a friendly farewell from the door of his office, which is also his dining-room, as I know from often disturbing him at his meals there. I have no fear of the waiters either, or of the little errand-boys who wear suits of sailor blue, and touch their foreheads when they bring you your letters like so many ancient sea-dogs. I do not know why the elevator-boy prefers a suit of snuff-color; but I know that he will salute us as we step out of his elevator for the last time as unfalteringly as if we had just arrived at the beginning of the summer.

IV

It is our last day in the hotel at Scheveningen, and I will try to recall in their pathetic order the events of the final week.

Nothing has been stranger throughout than the fluctuation of the guests. At times they have dwindled to so small a number that one must reckon

chiefly upon their quality for consolation; at other times they swelled to such a tide as to overflow the table, long or short, at dinner, and eddy round a second board beside it. There have been nights when I have walked down the long corridor to my seaward room through a harking solitude of empty chambers; there have been mornings when I have come out to breakfast past door-mats cheerful with boots of both sexes, and door-post hooks where dangling coats and trousers peopled the place with a lively if a somewhat flaccid semblance of human presence. The worst was that, when some one went, we lost a friend, and when some one came we only won a stranger.

Among the first to go were the kindly English folk whose acquaintance we made across the table the first night, and who took with them so large a share of our facile affections that we quite forgot the ancestral enmities, and grieved for them as much as if they had been Americans. There have been, in fact, no Americans here but ourselves, and we have done what we could with the Germans who spoke English. The nicest of these were a charming family from F-----, father and mother, and son and daughter, with whom we had a pleasant week of dinners. At the very first we disagreed with the parents so amicably about Ibsen and Sudermann that I was almost sorry to have the son take our modern side of the controversy and declare himself an admirer of those authors with us. Our frank literary difference established a kindness between us that was strengthened by our community of English, and when they went they left us to the sympathy of another German family with whom we had mainly our humanity in common. They spoke no English, and I only a German which they must have understood with their hearts rather than their heads, since it consisted chiefly of good-will. But in the air of their sweet natures it flourished surprisingly, and sufficed each day for praise of the weather after it began to be fine, and at parting for some fond regrets, not unmixed with philosophical reflections, sadly perplexed in the genders and the order of the verbs: with me the verb will seldom wait, as it should in German, to the end. Both of these families, very different in social tradition, I fancied, were one in the amiability which makes the alien forgive so much militarism to the German nation, and hope for its final escape from the drill-sergeant. When they went, we were left for some meals to our own American tongue, with a brief interval of that English painter and his wife with whom we spoke, our language as nearly like English as we could. Then followed a desperate lunch and dinner where an unbroken forest of German, and a still more impenetrable morass of Dutch, hemmed us in. But last night it was our joy to be addressed in our own speech by a lady who spoke it as admirably as our dear friends from F-----. She was Dutch, and when she found we were Americans she praised our historian Motley, and told us how his portrait is gratefully honored with a place in the Queen's palace, The House in the Woods, near Scheveningen.

V.

She had come up from her place in the country, four hours away, for the

last of the concerts here, which have been given throughout the summer by the best orchestra in Europe, and which have been thronged every afternoon and evening by people from The Hague.

One honored day this week even the Queen and the Queen Mother came down to the concert, and gave us incomparably the greatest event of our waning season. I had noticed all the morning a floral perturbation about the main entrance of the hotel, which settled into the form of banks of autumnal bloom on either side of the specially carpeted stairs, and put forth on the roof of the arcade in a crown, much bigger round than a barrel, of orange-colored asters, in honor of the Queen's ancestral house of Orange. Flags of blue, white, and red fluttered nervously about in the breeze from the sea, and imparted to us an agreeable anxiety not to miss seeing the Queens, as the Dutch succinctly call their sovereign and her parent; and at three o'clock we saw them drive up to the hotel. Certain officials in civil dress stood at the door of the concert-room to usher the Queens in, and a bareheaded, bald-headed dignity of military figure backed up the stairs before them. I would not rashly commit myself to particulars concerning their dress, but I am sure that the elder Queen wore black, and the younger white. The mother has one of the best and wisest faces I have seen any woman wear (and most of the good, wise faces in this imperfectly balanced world are women's) and the daughter one of the sweetest and prettiest. Pretty is the word for her face, and it showed pink through her blond veil, as she smiled and bowed right and left; her features are small and fine, and she is not above the middle height.

As soon as she had passed into the concert-room, we who had waited to see her go in ran round to another door and joined the two or three thousand people who were standing to receive the Queens. These had already mounted to the royal box, and they stood there while the orchestra played one of the Dutch national airs. (One air is not enough for the Dutch; they must have two.) Then the mother faded somewhere into the background, and the daughter sat alone in the front, on a gilt throne, with a gilt crown at top, and a very uncomfortable carved Gothic back. She looked so young, so gentle, and so good that the rudest Republican could not have helped wishing her well out of a position so essentially and irreparably false as a hereditary sovereign's. One forgot in the presence of her innocent seventeen years that most of the ruling princes of the world had left it the worse for their having been in it; at moments one forgot her altogether as a princess, and saw her only as a charming young girl, who had to sit up rather stiffly.

At the end of the programme the Queens rose and walked slowly out, while the orchestra played the other national air.

VI.

I call them the Queens, because the Dutch do; and I like Holland so much that I should hate to differ with the Dutch in anything. But, as a

matter of fact, they are neither of them quite Queens; the mother is the regent and the daughter will not be crowned till next year.

But, such as they are, they imparted a supreme emotion to our dying season, and thrilled the hotel with a fulness of summer life. Since they went, the season faintly pulses and respire, so that one can just say that it is still alive. Last Sunday was fine, and great crowds came down from The Hague to the concert, and spread out on the seaward terrace of the hotel, around the little tables which I fancied that the waiters had each morning wiped dry of the dew, from a mere Dutch desire of cleaning something. The hooded chairs covered the beach; the children played in the edges of the surf and delved in the sand; the lovers wandered up into the hollows of the dunes.

There was only the human life, however. I have looked in vain for the crabs, big and little, that swarm on the Long Island shore, and there are hardly any gulls, even; perhaps because there are no crabs for them to eat, if they eat crabs; I never saw gulls doing it, but they must eat something. Dogs there are, of course, wherever there are people; but they are part of the human life. Dutch dogs are in fact very human; and one I saw yesterday behaved quite as badly as a bad boy, with respect to his muzzle. He did not like his muzzle, and by dint of turning somersaults in the sand he got it off, and went frolicking to his master in triumph to show him what he had done.

VII.

It is now the last day, and the desolation is thickening upon our hotel. This morning the door-posts up and down my corridor showed not a single pair of trousers; not a pair of boots flattered the lonely doormats. In the lower hall I found the tables of the great dining-room assembled, and the chairs inverted on them with their legs in the air; but decently, decorously, not with the reckless abandon displayed by the chairs in our Long Island hotel for weeks before it closed. In the smaller dining-room the table was set for lunch as if we were to go on dining there forever; in the breakfast-room the service and the provision were as perfect as ever. The coffee was good, the bread delicious, the butter of an unfaltering sweetness; and the glaze of wear on the polished dress-coats of the waiters as respectable as it could have been on the first day of the season. All was correct, and if of a funereal correctness to me, I am sure this effect was purely subjective.

The little bell-boys in sailor suits (perhaps they ought to be spelled bell-buoys) clustered about the elevator-boy like so many Roman sentinels at their posts; the elevator-boy and his elevator were ready to take us up or down at any moment.

The portier and I ignored together the hour of parting, which we had definitely ascertained and agreed upon, and we exchanged some compliments to the weather, which is now settled, as if we expected to enjoy it long

together. I rather dread going in to lunch, however, for I fear the empty places.

VIII.

All is over; we are off. The lunch was an heroic effort of the hotel to hide the fact of our separation. It was perfect, unless the boiled beef was a confession of human weakness; but even this boiled beef was exquisite, and the horseradish that went with it was so mellowed by art that it checked rather than provoked the parting tear. The table d'hote had reserved a final surprise for us; and when we sat down with the fear of nothing but German around us, we heard the sound of our own speech from the pleasantest English pair we had yet encountered; and the travelling English are pleasant; I will say it, who am said by Sir Walter Besant to be the only American who hates their nation. It was really an added pang to go, on their account, but the carriage was waiting at the door; the 'domestique' had already carried our baggage to the steam-tram station; the kindly menial train formed around us for an ultimate 'douceur', and we were off, after the 'portier' had shut us into our vehicle and touched his oft-touched cap for the last time, while the hotel facade dissembled its grief by architecturally smiling in the soft Dutch sun.

I liked this manner of leaving better than carrying part of my own baggage to the train, as I had to do on Long Island, though that, too, had its charm; the charm of the whole fresh, pungent American life, which at this distance is so dear.

End of this Project Gutenberg Etext of Last Days in a Dutch Hotel
by William Dean Howells

LITERATURE AND LIFE--Some Anomalies of the Short Story

by William Dean Howells

SOME ANOMALIES OF THE SHORT STORY

The interesting experiment of one of our great publishing houses in putting out serially several volumes of short stories, with the hope that

a courageous persistence may overcome the popular indifference to such collections when severally administered, suggests some questions as to this eldest form of fiction which I should like to ask the reader's patience with. I do not know that I shall be able to answer them, or that I shall try to do so; the vitality of a question that is answered seems to exhale in the event; it palpitates no longer; curiosity flutters away from the faded flower, which is fit then only to be folded away in the 'hortus siccus' of accomplished facts. In view of this I may wish merely to state the problems and leave them for the reader's solution, or, more amusingly, for his mystification.

I.

One of the most amusing questions concerning the short story is why a form which is singly so attractive that every one likes to read a short story when he finds it alone is collectively so repellent as it is said to be. Before now I have imagined the case to be somewhat the same as that of a number of pleasant people who are most acceptable as separate householders, but who lose caste and cease to be desirable acquaintances when gathered into a boarding-house.

Yet the case is not the same quite, for we see that the short story where it is ranged with others of its species within the covers of a magazine is so welcome that the editor thinks his number the more brilliant the more short story writers he can call about his board, or under the roof of his pension. Here the boardinghouse analogy breaks, breaks so signally that I was lately moved to ask a distinguished editor why a book of short stories usually failed and a magazine usually succeeded because of them. He answered, gayly, that the short stories in most books of them were bad; that where they were good, they went; and he alleged several well-known instances in which books of prime short stories had a great vogue. He was so handsomely interested in my inquiry that I could not well say I thought some of the short stories which he had boasted in his last number were indifferent good, and yet, as he allowed, had mainly helped sell it. I had in mind many books of short stories of the first excellence which had failed as decidedly as those others had succeeded, for no reason that I could see; possibly there is really no reason in any literary success or failure that can be predicted, or applied in another Base.

I could name these books, if it would serve any purpose, but, in my doubt, I will leave the reader to think of them, for I believe that his indolence or intellectual reluctance is largely to blame for the failure of good books of short stories. He is commonly so averse to any imaginative exertion that he finds it a hardship to respond to that peculiar demand which a book of good short stories makes upon him. He can read one good short story in a magazine with refreshment, and a pleasant sense of excitement, in the sort of spur it gives to his own constructive faculty. But, if this is repeated in ten or twenty stories, he becomes fluttered and exhausted by the draft upon his energies;

whereas a continuous fiction of the same quantity acts as an agreeable sedative. A condition that the short story tacitly makes with the reader, through its limitations, is that he shall subjectively fill in the details and carry out the scheme which in its small dimensions the story can only suggest; and the greater number of readers find this too much for their feeble powers, while they cannot resist the incitement to attempt it.

My theory does not wholly account for the fact (no theory wholly accounts for any fact), and I own that the same objections would lie from the reader against a number of short stories in a magazine. But it may be that the effect is not the same in the magazine because of the variety in the authorship, and because it would be impossibly jolting to read all the short stories in a magazine 'seriatim'. On the other hand, the identity of authorship gives a continuity of attraction to the short stories in a book which forms that exhausting strain upon the imagination of the involuntary co-partner.

II.

Then, what is the solution as to the form of publication for short stories, since people do not object to them singly but collectively, and not in variety, but in identity of authorship? Are they to be printed only in the magazines, or are they to be collected in volumes combining a variety of authorship? Rather, I could wish, it might be found feasible to purvey them in some pretty shape where each would appeal singly to the reader and would not exhaust him in the subjective after-work required of him. In this event many short stories now cramped into undue limits by the editorial exigencies of the magazines might expand to greater length and breadth, and without ceasing to be each a short story might not make so heavy a demand upon the subliminal forces of the reader.

If any one were to say that all this was a little fantastic, I should not contradict him; but I hope there is some reason in it, if reason can help the short story to greater favor, for it is a form which I have great pleasure in as a reader, and pride in as an American. If we have not excelled all other moderns in it, we have certainly excelled in it; possibly because we are in the period of our literary development which corresponds to that of other peoples when the short story pre-eminently flourished among them. But when one has said a thing like this, it immediately accuses one of loose and inaccurate statement, and requires one to refine upon it, either for one's own peace of conscience or for one's safety from the thoughtful reader. I am not much afraid of that sort of reader, for he is very rare, but I do like to know myself what I mean, if I mean anything in particular.

In this instance I am obliged to ask myself whether our literary development can be recognized separately from that of the whole English-speaking world. I think it can, though, as I am always saying American literature is merely a condition of English literature. In some sense

every European literature is a condition of some other European literature, yet the impulse in each eventuates, if it does not originate indigenously. A younger literature will choose, by a sort of natural selection, some things for assimilation from an elder literature, for no more apparent reason than it will reject other things, and it will transform them in the process so that it will give them the effect of indigeneity. The short story among the Italians, who called it the novella, and supplied us with the name devoted solely among us to fiction of epical magnitude, refined indefinitely upon the Greek romance, if it derived from that; it retrenched itself in scope, and enlarged itself in the variety of its types. But still these remained types, and they remained types with the French imitators of the Italian novella. It was not till the Spaniards borrowed the form of the novella and transplanted it to their racier soil that it began to bear character, and to fruit in the richness of their picaresque fiction. When the English borrowed it they adapted it, in the metrical tales of Chaucer, to the genius of their nation, which was then both poetical and humorous. Here it was full of character, too, and more and more personality began to enlarge the bounds of the conventional types and to imbue fresh ones. But in so far as the novella was studied in the Italian sources, the French, Spanish, and English literatures were conditions of Italian literature as distinctly, though, of course, not so thoroughly, as American literature is a condition of English literature. Each borrower gave a national cast to the thing borrowed, and that is what has happened with us, in the full measure that our nationality has differenced itself from the English.

Whatever truth there is in all this, and I will confess that a good deal of it seems to me hardy conjecture, rather favors my position that we are in some such period of our literary development as those other peoples when the short story flourished among them. Or, if I restrict our claim, I may safely claim that they abundantly had the novella when they had not the novel at all, and we now abundantly have the novella, while we have the novel only subordinately and of at least no such quantitative importance as the English, French, Spanish, Norwegians, Russians, and some others of our esteemed contemporaries, not to name the Italians. We surpass the Germans, who, like ourselves, have as distinctly excelled in the modern novella as they have fallen short in the novel. Or, if I may not quite say this, I will make bold to say that I can think of many German novelle that I should like to read again, but scarcely one German novel; and I could honestly say the same of American novelle, though not of American novels.

III.

The abeyance, not to say the desuetude, that the novella fell into for several centuries is very curious, and fully as remarkable as the modern rise of the short story. It began to prevail in the dramatic form, for a play is a short story put on the stage; it may have satisfied in that form the early love of it, and it has continued to please in that form; but in its original shape it quite vanished, unless we consider the

little studies and sketches and allegories of the Spectator and Tatler and Idler and Rambler and their imitations on the Continent as guises of the novella. The germ of the modern short story may have survived in these, or in the metrical form of the novella which appeared in Chaucer and never wholly disappeared. With Crabbe the novella became as distinctly the short story as it has become in the hands of Miss Wilkins. But it was not till our time that its great merit as a form was felt, for until our time so great work was never done with it. I remind myself of Boccaccio, and of the Arabian Nights, without the wish to hedge from my bold stand. They are all elemental; compared with some finer modern work which deepens inward immeasurably, they are all of their superficial limits. They amuse, but they do not hold, the mind and stamp it with large and profound impressions.

An Occidental cannot judge the literary quality of the Eastern tales; but I will own my suspicion that the perfection of the Italian work is philological rather than artistic, while the web woven by Mr. James or Miss Jewett, by Kielland or Bjornson, by Maupassant, by Palacio Valdes, by Giovanni Verga, by Tourguenief, in one of those little frames seems to me of an exquisite color and texture and of an entire literary preciousness, not only as regards the diction, but as regards those more intangible graces of form, those virtues of truth and reality, and those lasting significances which distinguish the masterpiece.

The novella has in fact been carried so far in the short story that it might be asked whether it had not left the novel behind, as to perfection of form; though one might not like to affirm this. Yet there have been but few modern fictions of the novel's dimensions which have the beauty of form many a novella embodies. Is this because it is easier to give form in the small than in the large, or only because it is easier to hide formlessness? It is easier to give form in the novella than in the novel, because the design of less scope can be more definite, and because the persons and facts are fewer, and each can be more carefully treated. But, on the other hand, the slightest error in execution shows more in the small than in the large, and a fault of conception is more evident. The novella must be clearly imagined, above all things, for there is no room in it for those felicities of characterization or comment by which the artist of faltering design saves himself in the novel.

IV.

The question as to where the short story distinguishes itself from the anecdote is of the same nature as that which concerns the bound set between it and the novel. In both cases the difference of the novella is in the motive, or the origination. The anecdote is too palpably simple and single to be regarded as a novella, though there is now and then a novella like *The Father*, by Bjornson, which is of the actual brevity of the anecdote, but which, when released in the reader's consciousness, expands to dramatic dimensions impossible to the anecdote. Many anecdotes have come down from antiquity, but not, I believe, one short

story, at least in prose; and the Italians, if they did not invent the story, gave us something most sensibly distinguishable from the classic anecdote in the novella. The anecdote offers an illustration of character, or records a moment of action; the novella embodies a drama and develops a type.

It is not quite so clear as to when and where a piece of fiction ceases to be a novella and becomes a novel. The frontiers are so vague that one is obliged to recognize a middle species, or rather a middle magnitude, which paradoxically, but necessarily enough, we call the novelette. First we have the short story, or novella, then we have the long story, or novel, and between these we have the novelette, which is in name a smaller than the short story, though it is in point of fact two or three times longer than a short story. We may realize them physically if we will adopt the magazine parlance and speak of the novella as a one-number story, of the novel as a serial, and of the novelette as a two-number or a three-number story; if it passes the three-number limit it seems to become a novel. As a two-number or three-number story it is the despair of editors and publishers. The interest of so brief a serial will not mount sufficiently to carry strongly over from month to month; when the tale is completed it will not make a book which the Trade (inexorable force!) cares to handle. It is therefore still awaiting its authoritative avatar, which it will be some one's prosperity and glory to imagine; for in the novelette are possibilities for fiction as yet scarcely divined.

The novelette can have almost as perfect form as the novella. In fact, the novel has form in the measure that it approaches the novelette; and some of the most symmetrical modern novels are scarcely more than novelettes, like Tourguenief's *Dmitri Rudine*, or his *Smoke*, or *Spring Floods*. The *Vicar of Wakefield*, the father of the modern novel, is scarcely more than a novelette, and I have sometimes fancied, but no doubt vainly, that the ultimated novel might be of the dimensions of *Hamlet*. If any one should say there was not room in *Hamlet* for the character and incident requisite in a novel, I should be ready to answer that there seemed a good deal of both in *Hamlet*.

But no doubt there are other reasons why the novel should not finally be of the length of *Hamlet*, and I must not let my enthusiasm for the novelette carry me too far, or, rather, bring me up too short. I am disposed to dwell upon it, I suppose, because it has not yet shared the favor which the novella and the novel have enjoyed, and because until somebody invents a way for it to the public it cannot prosper like the one-number story or the serial. I should like to say as my last word for it here that I believe there are many novels which, if stripped of their padding, would turn out to have been all along merely novelettes in disguise.

It does not follow, however, that there are many novelle which, if they were duly padded, would be found novelettes. In that dim, subjective region where the aesthetic origins present themselves almost with the authority of inspirations there is nothing clearer than the difference between the short-story motive and the long-story motive. One, if one is

in that line of work, feels instinctively just the size and carrying power of the given motive. Or, if the reader prefers a different figure, the mind which the seed has been dropped into from Somewhere is mystically aware whether the seed is going to grow up a bush or is going to grow up a tree, if left to itself. Of course, the mind to which the seed is intrusted may play it false, and wilfully dwarf the growth, or force it to unnatural dimensions; but the critical observer will easily detect the fact of such treasons. Almost in the first germinal impulse the inventive mind forefeels the ultimate difference and recognizes the essential simplicity or complexity of the motive. There will be a prophetic subdivision into a variety of motives and a multiplication of characters and incidents and situations; or the original motive will be divined indivisible, and there will be a small group of people immediately interested and controlled by a single, or predominant, fact. The uninspired may contend that this is bosh, and I own that something might be said for their contention, but upon the whole I think it is gospel.

The right novel is never a congeries of novelle, as might appear to the uninspired. If it indulges even in episodes, it loses in reality and vitality. It is one stock from which its various branches put out, and form it a living growth identical throughout. The right novella is never a novel cropped back from the size of a tree to a bush, or the branch of a tree stuck into the ground and made to serve for a bush. It is another species, destined by the agencies at work in the realm of unconsciousness to be brought into being of its own kind, and not of another.

V.

This was always its case, but in the process of time the short story, while keeping the natural limits of the primal novella (if ever there was one), has shown almost limitless possibilities within them. It has shown itself capable of imparting the effect of every sort of intention, whether of humor or pathos, of tragedy or comedy or broad farce or delicate irony, of character or action. The thing that first made itself known as a little tale, usually salacious, dealing with conventionalized types and conventionalized incidents, has proved itself possibly the most flexible of all the literary forms in its adaptation to the needs of the mind that wishes to utter itself, inventively or constructively, upon some fresh occasion, or wishes briefly to criticise or represent some phase or fact of life.

The riches in this shape of fiction are effectively inestimable, if we consider what has been done in the short story, and is still doing everywhere. The good novels may be easily counted, but the good novelle, since Boccaccio began (if it was he that first began) to make them, cannot be computed. In quantity they are inexhaustible, and in quality they are wonderfully satisfying. Then, why is it that so very, very few of the most satisfactory of that innumerable multitude stay by you, as the country people say, in characterization or action? How hard it is to

recall a person or a fact out of any of them, out of the most signally good! We seem to be delightfully nourished as we read, but is it, after all, a full meal? We become of a perfect intimacy and a devoted friendship with the men and women in the short stories, but not apparently of a lasting acquaintance. It is a single meeting we have with them, and though we instantly love or hate them dearly, recurrence and repetition seem necessary to that familiar knowledge in which we hold the personages in a novel.

It is here that the novella, so much more perfect in form, shows its irremediable inferiority to the novel, and somehow to the play, to the very farce, which it may quantitatively excel. We can all recall by name many characters out of comedies and farces; but how many characters out of short stories can we recall? Most persons of the drama give themselves away by name for types, mere figments of allegory, and perhaps oblivion is the penalty that the novella pays for the fineness of its characterizations; but perhaps, also, the dramatic form has greater facilities for repetition, and so can stamp its persons more indelibly on the imagination than the narrative form in the same small space. The narrative must give to description what the drama trusts to representation; but this cannot account for the superior permanency of the dramatic types in so great measure as we might at first imagine, for they remain as much in mind from reading as from seeing the plays. It is possible that as the novella becomes more conscious, its persons will become more memorable; but as it is, though we now vividly and with lasting delight remember certain short stories, we scarcely remember by name any of the people in them. I may be risking too much in offering an instance, but who, in even such signal instances as *The Revolt of Mother*, by Miss Wilkins, or *The Dulham Ladies*, by Miss Jewett, can recall by name the characters that made them delightful?

VI.

The defect of the novella which we have been acknowledging seems an essential limitation; but perhaps it is not insuperable; and we may yet have short stories which shall supply the delighted imagination with creations of as much immortality as we can reasonably demand. The structural change would not be greater than the moral or material change which has been wrought in it since it began as a yarn, gross and palpable, which the narrator spun out of the coarsest and often the filthiest stuff, to snare the thick fancy or amuse the lewd leisure of listeners willing as children to have the same persons and the same things over and over again. Now it has not only varied the persons and things, but it has refined and verified them in the direction of the natural and the supernatural, until it is above all other literary forms the vehicle of reality and spirituality. When one thinks of a bit of Mr. James's psychology in this form, or a bit of Verga's or Kielland's sociology, or a bit of Miss Jewett's exquisite veracity, one perceives the immense distance which the short story has come on the way to the height it has reached. It serves equally the ideal and the real; that

which it is loath to serve is the unreal, so that among the short stories which have recently made reputations for their authors very few are of that peculiar cast which we have no name for but romanticistic. The only distinguished modern writer of romanticistic novelle whom I can think of is Mr. Bret Harte, and he is of a period when romanticism was so imperative as to be almost a condition of fiction. I am never so enamoured of a cause that I will not admit facts that seem to tell against it, and I will allow that this writer of romanticistic short stories has more than any other supplied us with memorable types and characters. We remember Mr. John Oakhurst by name; we remember Kentuck and Tennessee's Partner, at least by nickname; and we remember their several qualities. These figures, if we cannot quite consent that they are persons, exist in our memories by force of their creator's imagination, and at the moment I cannot think of any others that do, out of the myriad of American short stories, except Rip Van Winkle out of Irving's Legend of Sleepy Hollow, and Marjorie Daw out of Mr. Aldrich's famous little caprice of that title, and Mr. James's Daisy Miller.

It appears to be the fact that those writers who have first distinguished themselves in the novella have seldom written novels of prime order. Mr. Kipling is an eminent example, but Mr. Kipling has yet a long life before him in which to upset any theory about him, and one can only instance him provisionally. On the other hand, one can be much more confident that the best novelle have been written by the greatest novelists, conspicuously Maupassant, Verga, Bjornson, Mr. Thomas Hardy, Mr. James, Mr. Cable, Tourgenief, Tolstoy, Valdes, not to name others. These have, in fact, all done work so good in this form that one is tempted to call it their best work. It is really not their best, but it is work so good that it ought to have equal acceptance with their novels, if that distinguished editor was right who said that short stories sold well when they were good short stories. That they ought to do so is so evident that a devoted reader of them, to whom I was submitting the anomaly the other day, insisted that they did. I could only allege the testimony of publishers and authors to the contrary, and this did not satisfy him.

It does not satisfy me, and I wish that the general reader, with whom the fault lies, could be made to say why, if he likes one short story by itself and four short stories in a magazine, he does not like, or will not have, a dozen short stories in a book. This was the baffling question which I began with and which I find myself forced to end with, after all the light I have thrown upon the subject. I leave it where I found it, but perhaps that is a good deal for a critic to do. If I had left it anywhere else the reader might not feel bound to deal with it practically by reading all the books of short stories he could lay hands on, and either divining why he did not enjoy them, or else forever foregoing his prejudice against them because of his pleasure in them.

LITERATURE AND LIFE--Spanish Prisoners of War

by William Dean Howells

SPANISH PRISONERS OF WAR

Certain summers ago our cruisers, the St. Louis and the Harvard, arrived at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, with sixteen or seventeen hundred Spanish prisoners from Santiago de Cuba. They were partly soldiers of the land forces picked up by our troops in the fights before the city, but by far the greater part were sailors and marines from Cervera's ill-fated fleet. I have not much stomach for war, but the poetry of the fact I have stated made a very potent appeal to me on my literary side, and I did not hold out against it longer than to let the St. Louis get away with Cervera to Annapolis, when only her less dignified captives remained with those of the Harvard to feed either the vainglory or the pensive curiosity of the spectator. Then I went over from our summer colony to Kittery Point, and got a boat, and sailed out to have a look at these subordinate enemies in the first hours of their imprisonment.

I.

It was an afternoon of the brilliancy known only to an afternoon of the American summer, and the water of the swift Piscataqua River glittered in the sun with a really incomparable brilliancy. But nothing could light up the great monster of a ship, painted the dismal lead-color which our White Squadrons put on with the outbreak of the war, and she lay sullen in the stream with a look of ponderous repose, to which the activities of the coaling-barges at her side, and of the sailors washing her decks, seemed quite unrelated. A long gun forward and a long gun aft threatened the fleet of launches, tugs, dories, and cat-boats which fluttered about her, but the Harvard looked tired and bored, and seemed as if asleep. She had, in fact, finished her mission. The captives whom death had released had been carried out and sunk in the sea; those who survived to a further imprisonment had all been taken to the pretty island a mile farther up in the river, where the tide rushes back and forth through the Narrows like a torrent. Its defiant rapidity has won it there the graphic name of Pull-and-be-Damned; and we could only hope to reach the island by a series of skilful tacks, which should humor both the wind and the tide, both dead against us. Our boatman, one of those shore New Englanders who are born with a knowledge of sailing, was easily master of

the art of this, but it took time, and gave me more than the leisure I wanted for trying to see the shore with the strange eyes of the captives who had just looked upon it. It was beautiful, I had to own, even in my quality of exile and prisoner. The meadows and the orchards came down to the water, or, where the wandering line of the land was broken and lifted in black fronts of rock, they crept to the edge of the cliff and peered over it. A summer hotel stretched its verandas along a lovely level; everywhere in clovery hollows and on breezy knolls were gray old farm-houses and summer cottages-like weather-beaten birds' nests, and like freshly painted marten-boxes; but all of a cold New England neatness which made me homesick for my malodorous Spanish fishing-village, shambling down in stony lanes to the warm tides of my native seas. Here, every place looked as if it had been newly scrubbed with soap and water, and rubbed down with a coarse towel, and was of an antipathetic alertness. The sweet, keen breeze made me shiver, and the northern sky, from which my blinding southern sun was blazing, was as hard as sapphire. I tried to bewilder myself in the ignorance of a Catalonian or Asturian fisherman, and to wonder with his darkened mind why it should all or any of it have been, and why I should have escaped from the iron hell in which I had fought no quarrel of my own to fall into the hands of strangers, and to be haled over seas to these alien shores for a captivity of unknown term. But I need not have been at so much pains; the intelligence (I do not wish to boast) of an American author would have sufficed; for if there is anything more grotesque than another in war it is its monstrous inconsequence. If we had a grief with the Spanish government, and if it was so mortal we must do murder for it, we might have sent a joint committee of the House and Senate, and, with the improved means of assassination which modern science has put at our command, killed off the Spanish cabinet, and even the queen--mother and the little king. This would have been consequent, logical, and in a sort reasonable; but to butcher and capture a lot of wretched Spanish peasants and fishermen, hapless conscripts to whom personally and nationally we were as so many men in the moon, was that melancholy and humiliating necessity of war which makes it homicide in which there is not even the saving grace of hate, or the excuse of hot blood.

I was able to console myself perhaps a little better for the captivity of the Spaniards than if I had really been one of them, as we drew nearer and nearer their prison isle, and it opened its knotty points and little ravines, overrun with sweet-fern, blueberry-bushes, bay, and low blackberry-vines, and rigidly traversed with a high stockade of yellow pine boards. Six or eight long, low, wooden barracks stretched side by side across the general slope, with the captive officers' quarters, sheathed in weather-proof black paper, at one end of them. About their doors swarmed the common prisoners, spilling out over the steps and on the grass, where some of them lounged smoking. One operatic figure in a long blanket stalked athwart an open space; but there was such poverty of drama in the spectacle at the distance we were keeping that we were glad of so much as a shirt-sleeved contractor driving out of the stockade in his buggy. On the heights overlooking the enclosure Gatling guns were posted at three or four points, and every thirty or forty feet sentries met and parted, so indifferent to us, apparently, that we wondered if we might get nearer. We ventured, but at a certain moment a sentry called to

us, "Fifty yards off, please!" Our young skipper answered, "All right," and as the sentry had a gun on his shoulder which we had every reason to believe was loaded, it was easily our pleasure to retreat to the specified limit. In fact, we came away altogether, after that, so little promise was there of our being able to satisfy our curiosity further. We came away care fully nursing such impression as we had got of a spectacle whose historical quality we did our poor best to feel. It related us, after solicitation, to the wars against the Moors, against the Mexicans and Peruvians, against the Dutch; to the Italian campaigns of the Gran Capitan, to the Siege of Florence, to the Sack of Rome, to the wars of the Spanish Succession, and what others. I do not deny that there was a certain aesthetic joy in having the Spanish prisoners there for this effect; we came away duly grateful for what we had seen of them; and we had long duly resigned ourselves to seeing no more, when word was sent to us that our young skipper had got a permit to visit the island, and wished us to go with him.

II.

It was just such another afternoon when we went again, but this time we took the joyous trolley-car, and bounded and pirouetted along as far as the navyyard of Kittery, and there we dismounted and walked among the vast, ghostly ship-sheds, so long empty of ships. The grass grew in the Kittery navy-yard, but it was all the pleasanter for the grass, and those pale, silent sheds were far more impressive in their silence than they would have been if resonant with saw and hammer. At several points, an unarmed marine left his leisure somewhere, and lunged across our path with a mute appeal for our permit; but we were nowhere delayed till we came to the office where it had to be countersigned, and after that we had presently crossed a bridge, by shady, rustic ways, and were on the prison island. Here, if possible, the sense of something pastoral deepened; a man driving a file of cows passed before us under kindly trees, and the bell which the foremost of these milky mothers wore about her silken throat sent forth its clear, tender note as if from the depth of some grassy bosk, and instantly witched me away to the woods-pastures which my boyhood knew in southern Ohio. Even when we got to what seemed fortifications they turned out to be the walls of an old reservoir, and bore on their gate a paternal warning that children unaccompanied by adults were not allowed within.

We mounted some stone steps over this portal and were met by a young marine, who left his Gatling gun for a moment to ask for our permit, and then went back satisfied. Then we found ourselves in the presence of a sentry with a rifle on his shoulder, who was rather more exacting. Still, he only wished to be convinced, and when he had pointed out the headquarters where we were next to go, he let us over his beat. At the headquarters there was another sentry, equally serious, but equally civil, and with the intervention of an orderly our leader saw the officer of the day. He came out of the quarters looking rather blank, for he had learned that his pass admitted our party to the lines, but not to the

stockade, which we might approach, at a certain point of vantage and look over into, but not penetrate. We resigned ourselves, as we must, and made what we could of the nearest prison barrack, whose door overflowed and whose windows swarmed with swarthy captives. Here they were, at such close quarters that their black, eager eyes easily pierced the pockets full of cigarettes which we had brought for them. They looked mostly very young, and there was one smiling rogue at the first window who was obviously prepared to catch anything thrown to him. He caught, in fact, the first box of cigarettes shied over the stockade; the next box flew open, and spilled its precious contents outside the dead-line under the window, where I hope some compassionate guard gathered them up and gave them to the captives.

Our fellows looked capable of any kindness to their wards short of letting them go. They were a most friendly company, with an effect of picnicking there among the sweet-fern and blueberries, where they had pitched their wooden tents with as little disturbance to the shrubbery as possible. They were very polite to us, and when, after that misadventure with the cigarettes (I had put our young leader up to throwing the box, merely supplying the corpus delicti myself), I wandered vaguely towards a Gatling gun planted on an earthen platform where the laurel and the dogroses had been cut away for it, the man in charge explained with a smile of apology that I must not pass a certain path I had already crossed.

One always accepts the apologies of a man with a Gatling gun to back them, and I retreated. That seemed the end; and we were going crestfallenly away when the officer of the day came out and allowed us to make his acquaintance. He permitted us, with laughing reluctance, to learn that he had been in the fight at Santiago, and had come with the prisoners, and he was most obligingly sorry that our permit did not let us into the stockade. I said I had some cigarettes for the prisoners, and I supposed I might send them; in, but he said he could not allow this, for they had money to buy tobacco; and he answered another of our party, who had not a soul above buttons, and who asked if she could get one from the Spaniards, that so far from promoting her wish, he would have been obliged to take away any buttons she might have got from them.

"The fact is," he explained, "you've come to the wrong end for transactions in buttons and tobacco."

But perhaps innocence so great as ours had wrought upon him. When we said we were going, and thanked him for his unavailing good-will, he looked at his watch and said they were just going to feed the prisoners; and after some parley he suddenly called out, "Music of the guard!" Instead of a regimental band, which I had supposed summoned, a single corporal ran out the barracks, touching his cap.

"Take this party round to the gate," the officer said, and he promised us that he would see us there, and hoped we would not mind a rough walk. We could have answered that to see his prisoners fed we would wade through fathoms of red-tape; but in fact we were arrested at the last point by nothing worse than the barbed wire which fortified the outer gate. Here

two marines were willing to tell us how well the prisoners lived, while we stared into the stockade through an inner gate of plank which was run back for us. They said the Spaniards had a breakfast of coffee, and hash or stew and potatoes, and a dinner of soup and roast; and now at five o'clock they were to have bread and coffee, which indeed we saw the white-capped, whitejacketed cooks bringing out in huge tin wash-boilers. Our marines were of opinion, and no doubt rightly, that these poor Spaniards had never known in their lives before what it was to have full stomachs. But the marines said they never acknowledged it, and the one who had a German accent intimated that gratitude was not a virtue of any Roman (I suppose he meant Latin) people. But I do not know that if I were a prisoner, for no fault of my own, I should be very explicitly thankful for being unusually well fed. I thought (or I think now) that a fig or a bunch of grapes would have been more acceptable to me under my own vine and fig-tree than the stew and roast of captors who were indeed showing themselves less my enemies than my own government, but were still not quite my hosts.

III.

How is it the great pieces of good luck fall to us? The clock strikes twelve as it strikes two, and with no more premonition. As we stood there expecting nothing better of it than three at the most, it suddenly struck twelve. Our officer appeared at the inner gate and bade our marines slide away the gate of barbed wire and let us into the enclosure, where he welcomed us to seats on the grass against the stockade, with many polite regrets that the tough little knots of earth beside it were not chairs.

The prisoners were already filing out of their quarters, at a rapid trot towards the benches where those great wash-boilers of coffee were set. Each man had a soup-plate and bowl of enamelled tin, and each in his turn received quarter of a loaf of fresh bread and a big ladleful of steaming coffee, which he made off with to his place at one of the long tables under a shed at the side of the stockade. One young fellow tried to get a place not his own in the shade, and our officer when he came back explained that he was a guerrillero, and rather unruly. We heard that eight of the prisoners were in irons, by sentence of their own officers, for misconduct, but all save this guerrillero here were docile and obedient enough, and seemed only too glad to get peacefully at their bread and coffee.

First among them came the men of the Cristobal Colon, and these were the best looking of all the captives. From their pretty fair average the others varied to worse and worse, till a very scrub lot, said to be ex-convicts, brought up the rear. They were nearly all little fellows, and very dark, though here and there a six-footer towered up, or a blond showed among them. They were joking and laughing together, harmlessly enough, but I must own that they looked a crew of rather sorry jail-birds; though whether any run of humanity clad in misfits of our navy

blue and white, and other chance garments, with close-shaven heads, and sometimes bare feet, would have looked much less like jail-birds I am not sure. Still, they were not prepossessing, and though some of them were pathetically young, they had none of the charm of boyhood. No doubt they did not do themselves justice, and to be herded there like cattle did not improve their chances of making a favorable impression on the observer. They were kindly used by our officer and his subordinates, who mixed among them, and straightened out the confusion they got into at times, and perhaps sometimes wilfully. Their guards employed a few handy words of Spanish with them; where these did not avail, they took them by the arm and directed them; but I did not hear a harsh tone, and I saw no violence, or even so much indignity offered them as the ordinary trolley-car passenger is subjected to in Broadway. At a certain bugle-call they dispersed, when they had finished their bread and coffee, and scattered about over the grass, or returned to their barracks. We were told that these children of the sun dreaded its heat, and kept out of it whenever they could, even in its decline; but they seemed not so much to withdraw and hide themselves from that, as to vanish into the history of "old, unhappy, far-off" times, where prisoners of war, properly belong. I roused myself with a start as if I had lost them in the past.

Our officer came towards us and said gayly, "Well, you have seen the animals fed," and let us take our grateful leave. I think we were rather a loss, in our going, to the marines, who seemed glad of a chance to talk. I am sure we were a loss to the man on guard at the inner gate, who walked his beat with reluctance when it took him from us, and eagerly when it brought him back. Then he delayed for a rapid and comprehensive exchange of opinions and ideas, successfully blending military subordination with American equality in his manner.

The whole thing was very American in the perfect decorum and the utter absence of ceremony. Those good fellows were in the clothes they wore through the fights at Santiago, and they could not have put on much splendor if they had wished, but apparently they did not wish. They were simple, straightforward, and adequate. There was some dry joking about the superiority of the prisoners' rations and lodgings, and our officer ironically professed his intention of messing with the Spanish officers. But there was no grudge, and not a shadow of ill will, or of that stupid and atrocious hate towards the public enemy which abominable newspapers and politicians had tried to breed in the popular mind. There was nothing manifest but a sort of cheerful purpose to live up to that military ideal of duty which is so much nobler than the civil ideal of self-interest. Perhaps duty will yet become the civil ideal, when the peoples shall have learned to live for the common good, and are united for the operation of the industries as they now are for the hostilities.

IV.

Shall I say that a sense of something domestic, something homelike, imparted itself from what I had seen? Or was this more properly an

effect from our visit, on the way back to the hospital, where a hundred and fifty of the prisoners lay sick of wounds and fevers? I cannot say that a humaner spirit prevailed here than in the camp; it was only a more positive humanity which was at work. Most of the sufferers were stretched on the clean cots of two long, airy, wooden shells, which received them, four days after the orders for their reception had come, with every equipment for their comfort. At five o'clock, when we passed down the aisles between their beds, many of them had a gay, nonchalant effect of having toothpicks or cigarettes in their mouths; but it was really the thermometers with which the nurses were taking their temperature. It suggested a possibility to me, however, and I asked if they were allowed to smoke, and being answered that they did smoke, anyway, whenever they could, I got rid at last of those boxes of cigarettes which had been burning my pockets, as it were, all afternoon. I gave them to such as I was told were the most deserving among the sick captives, but Heaven knows I would as willingly have given them to the least. They took my largesse gravely, as became Spaniards; one said, smiling sadly, "Muchas gracias," but the others merely smiled sadly; and I looked in vain for the response which would have twinkled up in the faces of even moribund Italians at our looks of pity. Italians would have met our sympathy halfway; but these poor fellows were of another tradition, and in fact not all the Latin peoples are the same, though we sometimes conveniently group them together for our detestation. Perhaps there are even personal distinctions among their several nationalities, and there are some Spaniards who are as true and kind as some Americans. When we remember Cortez let us not forget Las Casas.

They lay in their beds there, these little Spanish men, whose dark faces their sickness could not blanch to more than a sickly sallow, and as they turned their dull black eyes upon us I must own that I could not "support the government" so fiercely as I might have done elsewhere. But the truth is, I was demoralized by the looks of these poor little men, who, in spite of their character of public enemies, did look so much like somebody's brothers, and even somebody's children. I may have been infected by the air of compassion, of scientific compassion, which prevailed in the place. There it was as wholly business to be kind and to cure as in another branch of the service it was business to be cruel and to kill. How droll these things are! The surgeons had their favorites among the patients, to all of whom they were equally devoted; inarticulate friendships had sprung up between them and certain of their hapless foes, whom they spoke of as "a sort of pets." One of these was very useful in making the mutinous take their medicine; another was liked apparently because he was so likable. At a certain cot the chief surgeon stopped and said, "We did not expect this boy to live through the night." He took the boy's wrist between his thumb and finger, and asked tenderly as he leaned over him, "Poco mejor?" The boy could not speak to say that he was a little better; he tried to smile--such things do move the witness; nor does the sight of a man whose bandaged cheek has been half chopped away by a machete tend to restore one's composure.

End of this Project Gutenberg Etext of Spanish Prisoners of War,
by William Dean Howells

LITERATURE AND LIFE--American Literary Centers

by William Dean Howells

AMERICAN LITERARY CENTRES

One of the facts which we Americans have a difficulty in making clear to a rather inattentive world outside is that, while we have apparently a literature of our own, we have no literary centre. We have so much literature that from time to time it seems even to us we must have a literary centre. We say to ourselves, with a good deal of logic, Where there is so much smoke there must be some fire, or at least a fireplace. But it is just here that, misled by tradition, and even by history, we deceive ourselves. Really, we have no fireplace for such fire as we have kindled; or, if any one is disposed to deny this, then I say, we have a dozen fireplaces; which is quite as bad, so far as the notion of a literary centre is concerned, if it is not worse.

I once proved this fact to my own satisfaction in some papers which I wrote several years ago; but it appears, from a question which has lately come to me from England, that I did not carry conviction quite so far as that island; and I still have my work all before me, if I understand the London friend who wishes "a comparative view of the centres of literary production" among us; "how and why they change; how they stand at present; and what is the relation, for instance, of Boston to other such centres."

I.

Here, if I cut my coat according to my cloth, I should have a garment which this whole volume would hardly stuff out with its form; and I have a fancy that if I begin by answering, as I have sometimes rather too succinctly done, that we have no more a single literary centre than Italy or than Germany has (or had before their unification), I shall not be taken at my word. I shall be right, all the same, and if I am told that in those countries there is now a tendency to such a centre, I can only say that there is none in this, and that, so far as I can see, we get further every day from having such a centre. The fault, if it is a fault, grows upon us, for the whole present tendency of American life is

centrifugal, and just so far as literature is the language of our life, it shares this tendency. I do not attempt to say how it will be when, in order to spread ourselves over the earth, and convincingly to preach the blessings of our deeply incorporated civilization by the mouths of our eight-inch guns, the mind of the nation shall be politically centred at some capital; that is the function of prophecy, and I am only writing literary history, on a very small scale, with a somewhat crushing sense of limits.

Once, twice, thrice there was apparently an American literary centre: at Philadelphia, from the time Franklin went to live there until the death of Charles Brockden Brown, our first romancer; then at New York, during the period which may be roughly described as that of Irving, Poe, Willis, and Bryant; then at Boston, for the thirty or forty years illumined by the presence of Longfellow, Lowell, Whittier, Hawthorne, Emerson, Holmes, Prescott, Parkman, and many lesser lights. These are all still great publishing centres. If it were not that the house with the largest list of American authors was still at Boston, I should say New York was now the chief publishing centre; but in the sense that London and Paris, or even Madrid and Petersburg, are literary centres, with a controlling influence throughout England and France, Spain and Russia, neither New York nor Boston is now our literary centre, whatever they may once have been. Not to take Philadelphia too seriously, I may note that when New York seemed our literary centre Irving alone among those who gave it lustre was a New-Yorker, and he mainly lived abroad; Bryant, who was a New Englander, was alone constant to the city of his adoption; Willis, a Bostonian, and Poe, a Marylander, went and came as their poverty or their prosperity compelled or invited; neither dwelt here unbrokenly, and Poe did not even die here, though he often came near starving. One cannot then strictly speak of any early American literary centre except Boston, and Boston, strictly speaking, was the New England literary centre.

However, we had really no use for an American literary centre before the Civil War, for it was only after the Civil War that we really began to have an American literature. Up to that time we had a Colonial literature, a Knickerbocker literature, and a New England literature. But as soon as the country began to feel its life in every limb with the coming of peace, it began to speak in the varying accents of all the different sections--North, East, South, West, and Farthest West; but not before that time.

II.

Perhaps the first note of this national concord, or discord, was sounded from California, in the voices of Mr. Bret Harte, of Mark Twain, of Mr. Charles Warren Stoddard (I am sorry for those who do not know his beautiful Idyls of the South Seas), and others of the remarkable group of poets and humorists whom these names must stand for. The San Francisco school briefly flourished from 1867 till 1872 or so, and while it endured it made San Francisco the first national literary centre we ever had, for

its writers were of every American origin except Californian.

After the Pacific Slope, the great Middle West found utterance in the dialect verse of Mr. John Hay, and after that began the exploitation of all the local parlances, which has sometimes seemed to stop, and then has begun again. It went on in the South in the fables of Mr. Joel Chandler Harris's Uncle Remus, and in the fiction of Miss Murfree, who so long masqueraded as Charles Egbert Craddock. Louisiana found expression in the Creole stories of Mr. G. W. Cable, Indiana in the Hoosier poems of Mr. James Whitcomb Riley, and central New York in the novels of Mr. Harold Frederic; but nowhere was the new impulse so firmly and finely directed as in New England, where Miss Sarah Orne Jewett's studies of country life antedated Miss Mary Wilkins's work. To be sure, the portrayal of Yankee character began before either of these artists was known; Lowell's Bigelow Papers first reflected it; Mrs. Stowe's Old Town Stories caught it again and again; Mrs. Harriet Prescott Spofford, in her unromantic moods, was of an excellent fidelity to it; and Mrs. Rose Terry Cooke was even truer to the New England of Connecticut. With the later group Mrs. Lily Chase Wyman has pictured Rhode Island work-life with truth pitiless to the beholder, and full of that tender humanity for the material which characterizes Russian fiction.

Mr. James Lane Allen has let in the light upon Kentucky; the Red Men and White of the great plains have found their interpreter in Mr. Owen Wister, a young Philadelphian witness of their dramatic conditions and characteristics; Mr. Hamlin Garland had already expressed the sad circumstances of the rural Northwest in his pathetic idyls, colored from the experience of one who had been part of what he saw. Later came Mr. Henry B. Fuller, and gave us what was hardest and most sordid, as well as something of what was most touching and most amusing, in the burly-burly of Chicago.

III.

A survey of this sort imparts no just sense of the facts, and I own that I am impatient of merely naming authors and books that each tempt me to an expansion far beyond the limits of this essay; for, if I may be so personal, I have watched the growth of our literature in Americanism with intense sympathy. In my poor way I have always liked the truth, and in times past I am afraid that I have helped to make it odious to those who believed beauty was something different; but I hope that I shall not now be doing our decentralized literature a disservice by saying that its chief value is its honesty, its fidelity to our decentralized life. Sometimes I wish this were a little more constant; but upon the whole I have no reason to complain; and I think that as a very interested spectator of New York I have reason to be content with the veracity with which some phases of it have been rendered. The lightning-or the flash-light, to speak more accurately--has been rather late in striking this ungainly metropolis, but it has already got in its work with notable effect at some points. This began, I believe, with the local dramas of

Mr. Edward Harrigan, a species of farces, or sketches of character, loosely hung together, with little sequence or relevancy, upon the thread of a plot which would keep the stage for two or three hours. It was very rough magic, as a whole, but in parts it was exquisite, and it held the mirror up towards politics on their social and political side, and gave us East-Side types--Irish, German, negro, and Italian--which were instantly recognizable and deliciously satisfying. I never could understand why Mr. Harrigan did not go further, but perhaps he had gone far enough; and, at any rate, he left the field open for others. The next to appear noticeably in it was Mr. Stephen Crane, whose *Red Badge of Courage* wronged the finer art which he showed in such New York studies as *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*, and *George's Mother*. He has been followed by Abraham Cahan, a Russian Hebrew, who has done portraits of his race and nation with uncommon power. They are the very Russian Hebrews of Hester Street translated from their native Yiddish into English, which the author mastered after coming here in his early manhood. He brought to his work the artistic qualities of both the Slav and the Jew, and in his '*Jekl: A Story of the Ghetto*', he gave proof of talent which his more recent book of sketches--'*The Imported Bride groom*'--confirms. He sees his people humorously, and he is as unsparing of their sordidness as he is compassionate of their hard circumstance and the somewhat frowsy pathos of their lives. He is a Socialist, but his fiction is wholly without "tendentiousness."

A good many years ago--ten or twelve, at least--Mr. Harry Harland had shown us some politer New York Jews, with a romantic coloring, though with genuine feeling for the novelty and picturesqueness of his material; but I do not think of any one who has adequately dealt with our Gentile society. Mr. James has treated it historically in *Washington Square*, and more modernly in some passages of *The Bostonians*, as well as in some of his shorter stories; Mr. Edgar Fawcett has dealt with it intelligently and authoritatively in a novel or two; and Mr. Brander Matthews has sketched it, in this aspect, and that with his Gallic cleverness, neatness, and point. In the novel, '*His Father's Son*', he in fact faces it squarely and renders certain forms of it with masterly skill. He has done something more distinctive still in '*The Action and the Word*', one of the best American stories I know. But except for these writers, our literature has hardly taken to New York society.

IV.

It is an even thing: New York society has not taken to our literature. New York publishes it, criticises it, and circulates it, but I doubt if New York society much reads it or cares for it, and New York is therefore by no means the literary centre that Boston once was, though a large number of our literary men live in or about New York. Boston, in my time at least, had distinctly a literary atmosphere, which more or less pervaded society; but New York has distinctly nothing of the kind, in any pervasive sense. It is a vast mart, and literature is one of the things marketed here; but our good society cares no more for it than for some

other products bought and sold here; it does not care nearly so much for books as for horses or for stocks, and I suppose it is not unlike the good society of any other metropolis in this. To the general, here, journalism is a far more appreciable thing than literature, and has greater recognition, for some very good reasons; but in Boston literature had vastly more honor, and even more popular recognition, than journalism. There journalism desired to be literary, and here literature has to try hard not to be journalistic. If New York is a literary centre on the business side, as London is, Boston was a literary centre, as Weimar was, and as Edinburgh was. It felt literature, as those capitals felt it, and if it did not love it quite so much as might seem, it always respected it.

To be quite clear in what I wish to say of the present relation of Boston to our other literary centres, I must repeat that we have now no such literary centre as Boston was. Boston itself has perhaps outgrown the literary consciousness which formerly distinguished it from all our other large towns. In a place of nearly a million people (I count in the outlying places) newspapers must be more than books; and that alone says everything.

Mr. Aldrich once noticed that whenever an author died in Boston, the New-Yorkers thought they had a literary centre; and it is by some such means that the primacy has passed from Boston, even if it has not passed to New York. But still there is enough literature left in the body at Boston to keep her first among equals in some things, if not easily first in all.

Mr. Aldrich himself lives in Boston, and he is, with Mr. Stedman, the foremost of our poets. At Cambridge live Colonel T. W. Higginson, an essayist in a certain sort without rival among us; and Mr. William James, the most interesting and the most literary of psychologists, whose reputation is European as well as American. Mr. Charles Eliot Norton alone survives of the earlier Cambridge group--Longfellow, Lowell, Richard Henry Dana, Louis Agassiz, Francis J. Child, and Henry James, the father of the novelist and the psychologist.

To Boston Mr. James Ford Rhodes, the latest of our abler historians, has gone from Ohio; and there Mr. Henry Cabot Lodge, the Massachusetts Senator, whose work in literature is making itself more and more known, was born and belongs, politically, socially, and intellectually. Mrs. Julia Ward Howe, a poet of wide fame in an elder generation, lives there; Mr. T. B. Aldrich lives there; and thereabouts live Mrs. Elizabeth Stuart Phelps Ward and Mrs. Harriet Prescott Spofford, the first of a fame beyond the last, who was known to us so long before her. Then at Boston, or near Boston, live those artists supreme in the kind of short story which we have carried so far: Miss Jewett, Miss Wilkins, Miss Alice Brown, Mrs. Chase-Wyman, and Miss Gertrude Smith, who comes from Kansas, and writes of the prairie farm-life, though she leaves Mr. E. W. Howe (of 'The Story of a Country Town' and presently of the Atchison Daily Globe) to constitute, with the humorous poet Ironquill, a frontier literary centre at Topeka. Of Boston, too, though she is of western Pennsylvania origin, is Mrs. Margaret Deland, one of our most successful novelists. Miss Wilkins has married out of Massachusetts into New

Jersey, and is the neighbor of Mr. H. M. Alden at Metuchen.

All these are more or less embodied and represented in the Atlantic Monthly, still the most literary, and in many things still the first of our magazines. Finally, after the chief publishing house in New York, the greatest American publishing house is in Boston, with by far the largest list of the best American books. Recently several firms of younger vigor and valor have recruited the wasted ranks of the Boston publishers, and are especially to be noted for the number of rather nice new poets they give to the light.

V.

Dealing with the question geographically, in the right American way, we descend to Hartford obliquely by way of Springfield, Massachusetts, where, in a little city of fifty thousand, a newspaper of metropolitan influence and of distinctly literary tone is published. At Hartford while Charles Dudley Warner lived, there was an indisputable literary centre; Mark Twain lives there no longer, and now we can scarcely count Hartford among our literary centres, though it is a publishing centre of much activity in subscription books.

At New Haven, Yale University has latterly attracted Mr. William H. Bishop, whose novels I always liked for the best reasons, and has long held Professor J. T. Lounsbury, who is, since Professor Child's death at Cambridge, our best Chaucer scholar. Mr. Donald G. Mitchell, once endeared to the whole fickle American public by his *Reveries of a Bachelor* and his *Dream Life*, dwells on the borders of the pleasant town, which is also the home of Mr. J. W. De Forest, the earliest real American novelist, and for certain gifts in seeing and telling our life also one of the greatest.

As to New York (where the imagination may arrive daily from New Haven, either by a Sound boat or by eight or ten of the swiftest express trains in the world), I confess I am more and more puzzled. Here abide the poets, Mr. R. H. Stoddard, Mr. E. C. Stedman, Mr. R. W. Gilder, and many whom an envious etcetera must hide from view; the fictionists, Mr. R. H. Davis, Mrs. Kate Douglas Wiggin, Mr. Brander Matthews, Mr. Frank Hopkinson Smith, Mr. Abraham Cahan, Mr. Frank Norris, and Mr. James Lane Allen, who has left Kentucky to join the large Southern contingent, which includes Mrs. Burton Harrison and Mrs. McEney Stuart; the historians, Professor William M. Sloane and Dr. Eggleston (reformed from a novelist); the literary and religious and economic essayists, Mr. Hamilton W. Mabie, Mr. H. M. Alden, Mr. J. J. Chapman, and Mr. E. L. Godkin, with critics, dramatists, satirists, magazinists, and journalists of literary stamp in number to convince the wavering reason against itself that here beyond all question is the great literary centre of these States. There is an Authors' Club, which alone includes a hundred and fifty authors, and, if you come to editors, there is simply no end. Magazines are published here and circulated hence throughout the land by millions; and

books by the ton are the daily output of our publishers, who are the largest in the country.

If these things do not mean a great literary centre, it would be hard to say what does; and I am not going to try for a reason against such facts. It is not quality that is wanting, but perhaps it is the quantity of the quality; there is leaven, but not for so large a lump. It may be that New York is going to be our literary centre, as London is the literary centre of England, by gathering into itself all our writing talent, but it has by no means done this yet. What we can say is that more authors come here from the West and South than go elsewhere; but they often stay at home, and I fancy very wisely. Mr. Joel Chandler Harris stays at Atlanta, in Georgia; Mr. James Whitcomb Riley stays at Indianapolis; Mr. Maurice Thompson spent his whole literary life, and General Lew. Wallace still lives at Crawfordsville, Indiana; Mr. Madison Cawein stays at Louisville, Kentucky; Miss Murfree stays at St. Louis, Missouri; Francis R. Stockton spent the greater part of the year at his place in West Virginia, and came only for the winter months to New York; Mr. Edward Bellamy, until his failing health exiled him to the Far West, remained at Chicopee, Massachusetts; and I cannot think of one of these writers whom it would have advantaged in any literary wise to dwell in New York. He would not have found greater incentive than at home; and in society he would not have found that literary tone which all society had, or wished to have, in Boston when Boston was a great town and not yet a big town.

In fact, I doubt if anywhere in the world there was ever so much taste and feeling for literature as there was in that Boston. At Edinburgh (as I imagine it) there was a large and distinguished literary class, and at Weimar there was a cultivated court circle; but in Boston there was not only such a group of authors as we shall hardly see here again for hundreds of years, but there was such regard for them and their calling, not only in good society, but among the extremely well-read people of the whole intelligent city, as hardly another community has shown. New York, I am quite sure, never was such a centre, and I see no signs that it ever will be. It does not influence the literature of the whole country as Boston once did through writers whom all the young writers wished to resemble; it does not give the law, and it does not inspire the love that literary Boston inspired. There is no ideal that it represents.

A glance at the map of the Union will show how very widely our smaller literary centres are scattered; and perhaps it will be useful in following me to other more populous literary centres. Dropping southward from New York, now, we find ourselves in a literary centre of importance at Philadelphia, since that is the home of Mr. J. B. McMasters, the historian of the American people; of Mr. Owen Wister, whose fresh and vigorous work I have mentioned; and of Dr. Weir Mitchell, a novelist of power long known to the better public, and now recognized by the larger in the immense success of his historical romance, Hugh Wynne.

If I skip Baltimore, I may ignore a literary centre of great promise, but while I do not forget the excellent work of Johns Hopkins University in training men for the solid literature of the future, no Baltimore names to conjure with occur to me at the moment; and we must really get on to

Washington. This, till he became ambassador at the Court of St. James, was the home of Mr. John Hay, a poet whose biography of Lincoln must rank him with the historians, and whose public service as Secretary of State classes him high among statesmen. He blotted out one literary centre at Cleveland, Ohio, when he removed to Washington, and Mr. Thomas Nelson Page another at Richmond, Virginia, when he came to the national capital. Mr. Paul Dunbar, the first negro poet to divine and utter his race, carried with him the literary centre of Dayton, Ohio, when he came to be an employee in the Congressional Library; and Mr. Charles Warren Stoddard, in settling at Washington as Professor of Literature in the Catholic University, brought somewhat indirectly away with him the last traces of the old literary centre at San Francisco.

A more recent literary centre in the Californian metropolis went to pieces when Mr. Gelett Burgess came to New York and silenced the 'Lark', a bird of as new and rare a note as ever made itself heard in this air; but since he has returned to California, there is hope that the literary centre may form itself there again. I do not know whether Mrs. Charlotte Perkins Stetson wrecked a literary centre in leaving Los Angeles or not. I am sure only that she has enriched the literary centre of New York by the addition of a talent in sociological satire which would be extraordinary even if it were not altogether unrivalled among us.

Could one say too much of the literary centre at Chicago? I fancy, yes; or too much, at least, for the taste of the notable people who constitute it. In Mr. Henry B. Fuller we have reason to hope, from what he has already done, an American novelist of such greatness that he may well leave being the great American novelist to any one who likes taking that role. Mr. Hamlin Garland is another writer of genuine and original gift who centres at Chicago; and Mrs. Mary Catherwood has made her name well known in romantic fiction. Miss Edith Wyatt is a talent, newly known, of the finest quality in minor fiction; Mr. Robert Herrick, Mr. Will Payne in their novels, and Mr. George Ade and Mr. Peter Dump in their satires form with those named a group not to be matched elsewhere in the country. It would be hard to match among our critical journals the 'Dial' of Chicago; and with a fair amount of publishing in a sort of books often as good within as they are uncommonly pretty without, Chicago has a claim to rank with our first literary centres.

It is certainly to be reckoned not so very far below London, which, with Mr. Henry James, Mr. Harry Harland, and Mr. Bret Harte, seems to me an American literary centre worthy to be named with contemporary Boston. Which is our chief literary centre, however, I am not, after all, ready to say. When I remember Mr. G. W. Cable, at Northampton, Massachusetts, I am shaken in all my preoccupations; when I think of Mark Twain, it seems to me that our greatest literary centre is just now at Riverdale-on-the-Hudson.

Leaven, but not for so large a lump
Mark Twain
Not lack of quality but quantity of the quality
Our deeply incorporated civilization

End of this Project Gutenberg Etext of American Literary Centers,
by William Dean Howells

LITERATURE AND LIFE--The Standard Household-Effect Company

by William Dean Howells

THE STANDARD HOUSEHOLD-EFFECT COMPANY

My friend came in the other day, before we had left town, and looked round at the appointments of the room in their summer shrouds, and said, with a faint sigh, "I see you have had the eternal-womanly with you, too."

I.

"Isn't the eternal-womanly everywhere? What has happened to you?" I asked.

"I wish you would come to my house and see. Every rug has been up for a month, and we have been living on bare floors. Everything that could be tied up has been tied up, everything that could be sewed up has been sewed up. Everything that could be moth-balled and put away in chests has been moth-balled and put away. Everything that could be taken down has been taken down. Bags with draw-strings at their necks have been pulled over the chandeliers and tied. The pictures have been hidden in cheese-cloth, and the mirrors veiled in gauze so that I cannot see my own miserable face anywhere."

"Come! That's something."

"Yes, it's something. But I have been thinking this matter over very seriously, and I believe it is going from bad to worse. I have heard praises of the thorough housekeeping of our grandmothers, but the housekeeping of their granddaughters is a thousand times more intense."

"Do you really believe that?" I asked. "And if you do, what of it?"

"Simply this, that if we don't put a stop to it, at the gait it's going, it will put a stop to the eternal-womanly."

"I suppose we should hate that."

"Yes, it would be bad. It would be very bad; and I have been turning the matter over in my mind, and studying out a remedy."

"The highest type of philosopher turns a thing over in his mind and lets some one else study out a remedy."

"Yes, I know. I feel that I may be wrong in my processes, but I am sure that I am right in my results. The reason why our grandmothers could be such good housekeepers without danger of putting a stop to the eternal-womanly was that they had so few things to look after in their houses. Life was indefinitely simpler with them. But the modern improvements, as we call them, have multiplied the cares of housekeeping without subtracting its burdens, as they were expected to do. Every novel convenience and comfort, every article of beauty and luxury, every means of refinement and enjoyment in our houses, has been so much added to the burdens of housekeeping, and the granddaughters have inherited from the grandmothers an undiminished conscience against rust and the moth, which will not suffer them to forget the least duty they owe to the naughtiest of their superfluities."

"Yes, I see what you mean," I said. This is what one usually says when one does not quite know what another is driving at; but in this case I really did know, or thought I did. "That survival of the conscience is a very curious thing, especially in our eternal-womanly. I suppose that the North American conscience was evolved from the rudimentary European conscience during the first centuries of struggle here, and was more or less religious and economical in its origin. But with the advance of wealth and the decay of faith among us, the conscience seems to be simply conscientious, or, if it is otherwise, it is social. The eternal-womanly continues along the old lines of housekeeping from an atavistic impulse, and no one woman can stop because all the other women are going on. It is something in the air, or something in the blood. Perhaps it is something in both."

"Yes," said my friend, quite as I had said already, "I see what you mean. But I think it is in the air more than in the blood. I was in Paris, about this time last year, perhaps because I was the only thing in my house that had not been swathed in cheese-cloth, or tied up in a bag with drawstrings, or rolled up with moth-balls and put away in chests. At any rate, I was there. One day I left my wife in New York carefully tagging three worn-out feather dusters, and putting them into a pillow-case, and tagging it, and putting the pillow-case into a camphorated self-sealing paper sack, and tagging it; and another day I was in Paris, dining at the house of a lady whom I asked how she managed with the things in her house when she went into the country for the summer. 'Leave them just as they

are,' she said. 'But what about the dust and the moths, and the rust and the tarnish?' She said, 'Why, the things would have to be all gone over when I came back in the autumn, anyway, and why should I give myself double trouble?' I asked her if she didn't even roll anything up and put it away in closets, and she said: 'Oh, you mean that old American horror of getting ready to go away. I used to go through all that at home, too, but I shouldn't dream of it here. In the first place, there are no closets in the house, and I couldn't put anything away if I wanted to. And really nothing happens. I scatter some Persian powder along the edges of things, and under the lower shelves, and in the dim corners, and I pull down the shades. When I come back in the fall I have the powder swept out, and the shades pulled up, and begin living again. Suppose a little dust has got in, and the moths have nibbled a little here and there? The whole damage would not amount to half the cost of putting everything away and taking everything out, not to speak of the weeks of discomfort, and the wear and tear of spirit. No, thank goodness--I left American housekeeping in America.' I asked her: 'But if you went back?' and she gave a sigh, and said:

"I suppose I should go back to that, along with all the rest. Everybody does it there.' So you see," my friend concluded, "it's in the air, rather than the blood."

"Then your famous specific is that our eternal-womanly should go and live in Paris?"

"Oh, dear, not" said my friend. "Nothing so drastic as all that. Merely the extinction of household property."

"I see what you mean," I said. "But--what do you mean?"

"Simply that hired houses, such as most of us live in, shall all be furnished houses, and that the landlord shall own every stick in them, and every appliance down to the last spoon and ultimate towel. There must be no compromise, by which the tenant agrees to provide his own linen and silver; that would neutralize the effect I intend by the expropriation of the personal proprietor, if that says what I mean. It must be in the lease, with severe penalties against the tenant in case of violation, that the landlord into furnish everything in perfect order when the tenant comes in, and is to put everything in perfect order when the tenant goes out, and the tenant is not to touch anything, to clean it, or dust it, or roll it up in moth-balls and put it away in chests. All is to be so sacredly and inalienably the property of the landlord that it shall constitute a kind of trespass if the tenant attempts to close the house for the summer or to open it for the winter in the usual way that houses are now closed and opened. Otherwise my scheme would be measurably vitiated."

"I see what you mean," I murmured. "Well?"

"Some years ago," my friend went on, "when we came home from Europe, we left our furniture in storage for a time, while we rather drifted about, and did not settle anywhere in particular. During that interval my wife

opened and closed five furnished houses in two years."

"And she has lived to tell the tale?"

"She has lived to tell it a great many times. She can hardly be kept from telling it yet. But it is my belief that, although she brought to the work all the anguish of a quickened conscience, under the influence of the American conditions she had returned to, she suffered far less in her encounters with either of those furnished houses than she now does with our own furniture when she shuts up our house in the summer, and opens it for the winter. But if there had been a clause in the lease, as there should have been, forbidding her to put those houses in order when she left them, life would have been simply a rapture. Why, in Europe custom almost supplies the place of statute in such cases, and you come and go so lightly in and out of furnished houses that you do not mind taking them for a month, or a few weeks. We are very far behind in this matter, but I have no doubt that if we once came to do it on any extended scale we should do it, as we do everything else we attempt, more perfectly than any other people in the world. You see what I mean?"

"I am not sure that I do. But go on."

"I would invert the whole Henry George principle, and I would tax personal property of the household kind so heavily that it would necessarily pass out of private hands; I would make its tenure so costly that it would be impossible to any but the very rich, who are also the very wicked, and ought to suffer."

"Oh, come, now!"

"I refer you to your Testament. In the end, all household property would pass into the hands of the state."

"Aren't you getting worse and worse?"

"Oh, I'm not supposing there won't be a long interval when household property will be in the hands of powerful monopolies, and many millionaires will be made by letting it out to middle-class tenants like you and me, along with the houses we hire of them. I have no doubt that there will be a Standard Household-Effect Company, which will extend its relations to Europe, and get the household effects of the whole world into its grasp. It will be a fearful oppression, and we shall probably groan under it for generations, but it will liberate us from our personal ownership of them, and from the far more crushing weight of the moth-ball. We shall suffer, but--"

"I see what you mean," I hastened to interrupt at this point, "but these suggestive remarks of yours are getting beyond--Do you think you could defer the rest of your incompleted sentence for a week?"

"Well, for not more than a week," said my friend, with an air of discomfort in his arrest.

II.

--"We shall not suffer so much as we do under our present system," said my friend, completing his sentence after the interruption of a week. By this time we had both left town, and were taking up the talk again on the veranda of a sea-side hotel. "As for the eternal-womanly, it will be her salvation from herself. When once she is expropriated from her household effects, and forbidden under severe penalties from meddling with those of the Standard Household-Effect Company, she will begin to get back her peace of mind, and be the same blessing she was before she began housekeeping."

"That may all very well be," I assented, though I did not believe it, and I found something almost too fantastical in my friend's scheme. "But when we are expropriated from all our dearest belongings, what is to become of our tender and sacred associations with them?"

"What has become of devotion to the family gods, and the worship of ancestors? Once the graves of the dead were at the door of the living, so that libations might be conveniently poured out on them, and the ground where they lay was inalienable because it was supposed to be used by their spirits as well as their bodies. A man could not sell the bones, because he could not sell the ghosts, of his kindred. By-and by, when religion ceased to be domestic and became social, and the service of the gods was carried on in temples common to all, it was found that the tombs of one's forefathers could be sold without violence to their spectres. I dare say it wouldn't be different in the case of our tender and sacred associations with tables and chairs, pots and pans, beds and bedding, pictures and bric-a-brac. We have only to evolve a little further. In fact we have already evolved far beyond the point that troubles you. Most people in modern towns and cities have changed their domiciles from ten to twenty times during their lives, and have not paid the slightest attention to the tender and sacred associations connected with them. I don't suppose you would say that a man has no such associations with the house that has sheltered him, while he has them with the stuff that has furnished it?"

"No, I shouldn't say that."

"If anything, the house should be dearer than the household gear. Yet at each remove we drag a lengthening chain of tables, chairs, side-boards, portraits, landscapes, bedsteads, washstands, stoves, kitchen utensils, and bric-a-brac after us, because, as my wife says, we cannot bear to part with them. At several times in our own lives we have accumulated stuff enough to furnish two or three house and have paid a pretty stiff house-rent in the form of storage for the overflow. Why, I am doing that very thing now! Aren't you?"

"I am--in a certain degree," I assented.

"We all are, we well-to-do people, as we think ourselves. Once my wife and I revolted by a common impulse against the ridiculous waste and slavery of the thing. We went to the storage warehouse and sent three or four vanloads of the rubbish to the auctioneer. Some of the pieces we had not seen for years, and as each was hauled out for us to inspect and decide upon, we condemned it to the auction-block with shouts of rejoicing. Tender and sacred associations! We hadn't had such light hearts since we had put everything in storage and gone to Europe indefinitely as we had when we left those things to be carted out of our lives forever. Not one had been a pleasure to us; the sight of every one had been a pang. All we wanted was never to set eyes on them again."

"I must say you have disposed of the tender and sacred associations pretty effectually, so far as they relate to things in storage. But the things that we have in daily use?"

"It is exactly the same with them. Why should they be more to us than the floors and walls of the houses we move in and move out of with no particular pathos? And I think we ought not to care for them, certainly not to the point of letting them destroy our eternal-womanly with the anxiety she feels for them. She is really much more precious, if she could but realize it, than anything she swathes in cheese-cloth or wraps up with moth-balls. The proof of the fact that the whole thing is a piece of mere sentimentality is that we may live in a furnished house for years, amid all the accidents of birth and death, joy and sorrow, and yet not form the slightest attachment to the furniture. Why should we have tender and sacred associations with a thing we have bought, and not with a thing we have hired?"

"I confess, I don't know. And do you really think we could liberate ourselves from our belongings if they didn't belong to us? Wouldn't the eternal-womanly still keep putting them away for summer and taking them out for winter?"

"At first, yes, there might be some such mechanical action in her; but it would be purely mechanical, and it would soon cease. When the Standard Household-Effect Company came down on the temporal-manly with a penalty for violation of the lease, the eternal-womanly would see the folly of her ways and stop; for the eternal-womanly is essentially economical, whatever we say about the dressmaker's bills; and the very futilities of putting away and taking out, that she now wears herself to a thread with, are founded in the instinct of saving."

"But," I asked, "wouldn't our household belongings lose a good deal of character if they didn't belong to us? Wouldn't our domestic interiors become dreadfully impersonal?"

"How many houses now have character-personality? Most people let the different dealers choose for them, as it is. Why not let the Standard Household-Effect Company, and finally the state? I am sure that either would choose much more wisely than people choose for themselves, in the few cases where they even seem to choose for themselves. In most interiors the appointments are without fitness, taste, or sense; they are

the mere accretions of accident in the greater number of cases; where they are the result of design, they are worse. I see what you mean by character and personality in them. You mean the sort of madness that let itself loose a few years ago in what was called household art, and has since gone to make the junk-shops hideous. Each of the eternal-womanly was supposed suddenly to have acquired a talent for decoration and a gift for the selection and arrangement of furniture, and each began to stamp herself upon our interiors. One painted a high-shouldered stone bottle with a stork and stood it at the right corner of the mantel on a scarf; another gilded the bottle and stood it at the left corner, and tied the scarf through its handle. One knotted a ribbon around the arm of a chair; another knotted it around the leg. In a day, an hour, a moment, the chairs suddenly became angular, cushionless, springless; and the sofas were stood across corners, or parallel with the fireplace, in slants expressive of the personality of the presiding genius. The walls became all frieze and dado; and instead of the simple and dignified ugliness of the impersonal period our interiors abandoned themselves to a hysterical chaos, full of character. Some people had their doors painted black, and the daughter or mother of the house then decorated them with morning-glories. I saw such a door in a house I looked at the other day, thinking I might hire it. The sight of that black door and its morning-glories made me wish to turn aside and live with the cattle, as Walt Whitman says. No, the less we try to get personality and character into our household effects the more beautiful and interesting they will be. As soon as we put the Standard Household-Effect Company in possession and render it a relentless monopoly, it will corrupt a competent architect and decorator in each of our large towns and cities, and when you hire a new house these will be sent to advise with the eternal-womanly concerning its appointments, and tell her what she wants, and what she will like; for at present the eternal womanly, as soon as she has got a thing she wants, begins to hate it. The company's agents will begin by convincing her that she does not need half the things she has lumbered up her house with, and that every useless thing is an ugly thing, even in the region of pure aesthetics. I once asked an Italian painter if he did not think a certain nobly imagined drawing-room was fine, and he said 'SI. Ma troppa roba.' There were too many rugs, tables, chairs, sofas, pictures; vases, statues, chandeliers. 'Troppa roba' is the vice of all our household furnishing, and it will be the death of the eternal-womanly if it is not stopped. But the corrupt agents of a giant monopoly will teach the eternal-womanly something of the wise simplicity of the South, and she will end by returning to the ideal of housekeeping as it prevails among the Latin races, whom it began with, whom civilization began with. What of a harmless, necessary moth or two, or even a few fleas?"

"That might be all very well as far as furniture and carpets and curtains are concerned," I said, "but surely you wouldn't apply it to pictures and objects of art?"

"I would apply it to them first of all and above all," rejoined my friend, hardily. "Among all the people who buy and own such things there is not one in a thousand who has any real taste or feeling for them, and the objects they choose are generally such as can only deprave and degrade them further. The pictures, statues, and vases supplied by the

Standard Household-Effect Company would be selected by agents with a real sense of art, and a knowledge of it. When the house-letting and house-furnishing finally passed into the hands of the state, these things would be lent from the public galleries, or from immense municipal stores for the purpose."

"And I suppose you would have ancestral portraits supplied along with the other pictures?" I sneered.

"Ancestral portraits, of course," said my friend, with unruffled temper. "So few people have ancestors of their own that they will be very glad to have ancestral portraits chosen for them out of the collections of the company or the state. The agents of the one, or the officers of the other, will study the existing type of family face, and will select ancestors and ancestresses whose modelling, coloring, and expression agree with it, and will keep in view the race and nationality of the family whose ancestral portraits are to be supplied, so that there shall be no chance of the grossly improbable effect which ancestral portraits now have in many cases. Yes, I see no flaw in the scheme," my friend concluded, "and no difficulty that can't be easily overcome. We must alienate our household furniture, and make it so sensitively and exclusively the property of some impersonal agency--company or community, I don't care which--that any care of it shall be a sort of crime; any sense of responsibility for its preservation a species of incivism punishable by fine or imprisonment. This, and nothing short of it, will be the salvation of the eternal-womanly."

"And the perdition of something even more precious than that!"

"What can be more precious?"

"Individuality."

"My dear friend," demanded my visitor, who had risen, and whom I was gradually edging to the door, "do you mean to say there is any individuality in such things now? What have we been saying about character?"

"Ah, I see what you mean," I said.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARK:

As soon as she has got a thing she wants, begins to hate it
Heard praises of the thorough housekeeping of our grandmothers
Yes, I see what you mean

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by William Dean Howells

LITERATURE AND LIFE--Staccato Notes of a Vanished Summer

by William Dean Howells

STACCATO NOTES OF A VANISHED SUMMER

Monday afternoon the storm which had been beating up against the southeasterly wind nearly all day thickened, fold upon fold, in the northwest. The gale increased, and blackened the harbor and whitened the open sea beyond, where sail after sail appeared round the reef of Whaleback Light, and ran in a wild scamper for the safe anchorages within.

Since noon cautious coasters of all sorts had been dropping in with a casual air; the coal schooners and barges had rocked and nodded knowingly to one another, with their taper and truncated masts, on the breast of the invisible swell; and the flock of little yachts and pleasure-boats which always fleck the bay huddled together in the safe waters. The craft that came scurrying in just before nightfall were mackerel seiners from Gloucester. They were all of one graceful shape and one size; they came with all sail set, taking the waning light like sunshine on their flying-jibs, and trailing each two dories behind them, with their seines piled in black heaps between the thwarts. As soon as they came inside their jibs weakened and fell, and the anchor-chains rattled from their bows. Before the dark hid them we could have counted sixty or seventy ships in the harbor, and as the night fell they improvised a little Venice under the hill with their lights, which twinkled rhythmically, like the lamps in the basin of St. Mark, between the Maine and New Hampshire coasts.

There was a dash of rain, and we thought the storm had begun; but that ended it, as so many times this summer a dash of rain has ended a storm. The morning came veiled in a fog that kept the shipping at anchor through the day; but the next night the weather cleared. We woke to the clucking of tackle, and saw the whole fleet standing dreamily out to sea. When they were fairly gone, the summer, which had held aloof in dismay of the sudden cold, seemed to return and possess the land again; and the succession of silver days and crystal nights resumed the tranquil round which we thought had ceased.

I.

One says of every summer, when it is drawing near its end, "There never was such a summer"; but if the summer is one of those which slip from the feeble hold of elderly hands, when the days of the years may be reckoned with the scientific logic of the insurance tables and the sad conviction of the psalmist, one sees it go with a passionate prescience of never seeing its like again such as the younger witness cannot know. Each new summer of the few left must be shorter and swifter than the last: its Junes will be thirty days long, and its Julys and Augusts thirty-one, in compliance with the almanac; but the days will be of so small a compass that fourteen of them will rattle round in a week of the old size like shrivelled peas in a pod.

To be sure they swell somewhat in the retrospect, like the same peas put to soak; and I am aware now of some June days of those which we first spent at Kittery Point this year, which were nearly twenty-four hours long. Even the days of declining years linger a little here, where there is nothing to hurry them, and where it is pleasant to loiter, and muse beside the sea and shore, which are so netted together at Kittery Point that they hardly know themselves apart. The days, whatever their length, are divided, not into hours, but into mails. They begin, without regard to the sun, at eight o'clock, when the first mail comes with a few letters and papers which had forgotten themselves the night before. At half-past eleven the great mid-day mail arrives; at four o'clock there is another indifferent and scattering post, much like that at eight in the morning; and at seven the last mail arrives with the Boston evening papers and the New York morning papers, to make you forget any letters you were looking for. The opening of the mid-day mail is that which most throngs with summer folks the little postoffice under the elms, opposite the weather-beaten mansion of Sir William Pepperrell; but the evening mail attracts a large and mainly disinterested circle of natives. The day's work on land and sea is then over, and the village leisure, perched upon fences and stayed against house walls, is of a picturesqueness which we should prize if we saw it abroad, and which I am not willing to slight on our own ground.

II.

The type is mostly of a seafaring brown, a complexion which seems to be inherited rather than personally acquired; for the commerce of Kittery Point perished long ago, and the fishing fleets that used to fit out from her wharves have almost as long ago passed to Gloucester. All that is left of the fishing interest is the weir outside which supplies, fitfully and uncertainly, the fish shipped fresh to the nearest markets. But in spite of this the tint taken from the suns and winds of the sea lingers on the local complexion; and the local manner is that freer and easier manner of people who have known other coasts, and are in some sort citizens of the world. It is very different from the inland New England manner; as different as the gentle, slow speech of the shore from the

clipped nasals of the hill-country. The lounging native walk is not the heavy plod taught by the furrow, but has the lurch and the sway of the deck in it.

Nothing could be better suited to progress through the long village, which rises and sinks beside the shore like a landscape with its sea-legs on; and nothing could be more charming and friendly than this village. It is quite untainted as yet by the summer cottages which have covered so much of the coast, and made it look as if the aesthetic suburbs of New York and Boston had gone ashore upon it. There are two or three old-fashioned summer hotels; but the summer life distinctly fails to characterize the place. The people live where their forefathers have lived for two hundred and fifty years; and for the century since the baronial domain of Sir William was broken up and his possessions confiscated by the young Republic, they have dwelt in small red or white houses on their small holdings along the slopes and levels of the low hills beside the water, where a man may pass with the least inconvenience and delay from his threshold to his gunwale. Not all the houses are small; some are spacious and ambitious to be of ugly modern patterns; but most are simple and homelike. Their gardens, following the example of Sir William's vanished pleasaunce, drop southward to the shore, where the lobster-traps and the hen-coops meet in unembarrassed promiscuity. But the fish-flakes which once gave these inclines the effect of terraced vineyards have passed as utterly as the proud parterres of the old baronet; and Kittery Point no longer "makes" a cod or a haddock for the market.

Three groceries, a butcher shop, and a small variety store study the few native wants; and with a little money one may live in as great real comfort here as for much in a larger place. The street takes care of itself; the seafaring housekeeping of New England is not of the insatiable Dutch type which will not spare the stones of the highway; but within the houses are of almost terrifying cleanliness. The other day I found myself in a kitchen where the stove shone like oxidized silver; the pump and sink were clad in oilcloth as with blue tiles; the walls were papered; the stainless floor was strewn with home-made hooked and braided rugs; and I felt the place so altogether too good for me that I pleaded to stay there for the transaction of my business, lest a sharper sense of my unfitness should await me in the parlor.

The village, with scarcely an interval of farm-lands, stretches four miles along the water-side to Portsmouth; but it seems to me that just at the point where our lines have fallen there is the greatest concentration of its character. This has apparently not been weakened, it has been accented, by the trolley-line which passes through its whole length, with gayly freighted cars coming and going every half-hour. I suppose they are not longer than other trolley-cars, but they each affect me like a procession. They are cheerful presences by day, and by night they light up the dim, winding street with the flare of their electric bulbs, and bring to the country a vision of city splendor upon terms that do not humiliate or disquiet. During July and August they are mostly filled with summer folks from a great summer resort beyond us, and their lights reveal the pretty fashions of hats and gowns in all the charm of the

latest lines and tints. But there is an increasing democracy in these splendors, and one might easily mistake a passing excursionist from some neighboring inland town, or even a local native with the instinct of clothes, for a social leader from York Harbor.

With the falling leaf, the barge-like open cars close up into well-warmed saloons, and falter to hourly intervals in their course. But we are still far from the falling leaf; we are hardly come to the blushing or fading leaf. Here and there an impassioned maple confesses the autumn; the ancient Pepperrell elms fling down showers of the baronet's fairy gold in the September gusts; the sumacs and the blackberry vines are ablaze along the tumbling black stone walls; but it is still summer, it is still summer: I cannot allow otherwise!

III.

The other day I visited for the first time (in the opulent indifference of one who could see it any time) the stately tomb of the first Pepperrell, who came from Cornwall to these coasts, and settled finally at Kittery Point. He laid there the foundations of the greatest fortune in colonial New England, which revolutionary New England seized and dispersed, as I cannot but feel, a little ruthlessly. In my personal quality I am of course averse to all great fortunes; and in my civic capacity I am a patriot. But still I feel a sort of grace in wealth a century old, and if I could now have my way, I would not have had their possessions reft from those kindly Pepperrells, who could hardly help being loyal to the fountain of their baronial honors. Sir William, indeed; had helped, more than any other man, to bring the people who despoiled him to a national consciousness. If he did not imagine, he mainly managed the plucky New England expedition against Louisbourg at Cape Breton a half century before the War of Independence; and his splendid success in rending that stronghold from the French taught the colonists that they were Americans, and need be Englishmen no longer than they liked. His soldiers were of the stamp of all succeeding American armies, and his leadership was of the neighborly and fatherly sort natural to an amiable man who knew most of them personally. He was already the richest man in America, and his grateful king made him a baronet; but he came contentedly back to Kittery, and took up his old life in a region where he had the comfortable consideration of an unrivalled magnate. He built himself the dignified mansion which still stands across the way from the post-office on Kittery Point, within an easy stone's cast of the far older house, where his father wedded Margery Bray, when he came, a thrifty young Welsh fisherman, from the Isles of Shoals, and established his family on Kittery. The Bray house had been the finest in the region a hundred years before the Pepperrell mansion was built; it still remembers its consequence in the panelling and wainscoting of the large, square parlor where the young people were married and in the elaborate staircase cramped into the little, square hall; and the Bray fortune helped materially to swell the wealth of the Pepperrells.

I do not know that I should care now to have a man able to ride thirty miles on his own land; but I do not mind Sir William's having done it here a hundred and fifty years ago; and I wish the confiscations had left his family, say, about a mile of it. They could now, indeed, enjoy it only in the collateral branches, for all Sir William's line is extinct. The splendid mansion which he built his daughter is in alien hands, and the fine old house which Lady Pepperrell built herself after his death belongs to the remotest of kinsmen. A group of these, the descendants of a prolific sister of the baronet, meets every year at Kittery Point as the Pepperrell Association, and, in a tent hard by the little grove of drooping spruces which shade the admirable renaissance cenotaph of Sir William's father, cherishes the family memories with due American "proceedings."

IV.

The meeting of the Pepperrell Association was by no means the chief excitement of our summer. In fact, I do not know that it was an excitement at all; and I am sure it was not comparable to the presence of our naval squadron, when for four days the mighty dragon and kraken shapes of steel, which had crumbled the decrepit pride of Spain in the fight at Santiago, weltered in our peaceful waters, almost under my window.

I try now to dignify them with handsome epithets; but while they were here I had moments of thinking they looked like a lot of whited locomotives, which had broken through from some trestle, in a recent accident, and were waiting the offices of a wrecking-train. The poetry of the man-of-war still clings to the "three-decker out of the foam" of the past; it is too soon yet for it to have cast a mischievous halo about the modern battle-ship; and I looked at the New York and the Texas and the Brooklyn and the rest, and thought, "Ah, but for you, and our need of proving your dire efficiency, perhaps we could have got on with the wickedness of Spanish rule in Cuba, and there had been no war!" Under my reluctant eyes the great, dreadful spectacle of the Santiago fight displayed itself in peaceful Kittery Harbor. I saw the Spanish ships drive upon the reef where a man from Dover, New Hampshire, was camping in a little wooden shanty unconscious; and I heard the dying screams of the Spanish sailors, seethed and scalded within the steel walls of their own wicked war-kettles.

As for the guns, battle or no battle, our ships, like "kind Lieutenant Belay of the 'Hot Cross-Bun'," seemed to be "banging away the whole day long." They set a bad example to the dreamy old fort on the Newcastle shore, which, till they came, only recollected itself to salute the sunrise and sunset with a single gun; but which, under provocation of the squadron, formed a habit of firing twenty or thirty times at noon.

Other martial shows and noises were not so bad. I rather liked seeing

the morning drill of the marines and the bluejackets on the iron decks, with the lively music that went with it. The bugle calls and the bells were charming; the week's wash hung out to dry had its picturesqueness by day, and by night the spectral play of the search-lights along the waves and shores, and against the startled skies, was even more impressive. There was a band which gave us every evening the airs of the latest coon-songs, and the national anthems which we have borrowed from various nations; and yes, I remember the white squadron kindly, though I was so glad to have it go, and let us lapse back into our summer silence and calm. It was (I do not mind saying now) a majestic sight to see those grotesque monsters gather themselves together, and go wallowing, one after another, out of the harbor, and drop behind the ledge of Whaleback Light, as if they had sunk into the sea.

V.

A deep peace fell upon us when they went, and it must have been at this most receptive moment, when all our sympathies were adjusted in a mood of hospitable expectation, that Jim appeared.

Jim was, and still is, and I hope will long be, a cat; but unless one has lived at Kittery Point, and realized, from observation and experience, what a leading part cats may play in society, one cannot feel the full import of this fact. Not only has every house in Kittery its cat, but every house seems to have its half-dozen cats, large, little, old, and young; of divers colors, tending mostly to a dark tortoise-shell. With a whole ocean inviting to the tragic rite, I do not believe there is ever a kitten drowned in Kittery; the illimitable sea rather employs itself in supplying the fish to which "no cat's averse," but which the cats of Kittery demand to have cooked. They do not like raw fish; they say it plainly, and they prefer to have the bones taken out for them, though they do not insist upon that point.

At least, Jim never did so from the time when he first scented the odor of delicate young mackerel in the evening air about our kitchen, and dropped in upon the maids there with a fine casual effect of being merely out for a walk, and feeling it a neighborly thing to call. He had on a silver collar, engraved with his name and surname, which offered itself for introduction like a visiting-card. He was too polite to ask himself to the table at once, but after he had been welcomed to the family circle, he formed the habit of finding himself with us at breakfast and supper, when he sauntered in like one who should say, "Did I smell fish?" but would not go further in the way of hinting.

He had no need to do so. He was made at home, and freely invited to our best not only in fish, but in chicken, for which he showed a nice taste, and in sweetcorn, for which he revealed a most surprising fondness when it was cut from the cob for him. After he had breakfasted or supped he gracefully suggested that he was thirsty by climbing to the table where the water-pitcher stood and stretching his fine feline head towards it. When he had lapped up his saucer of water; he marched into the parlor, and riveted the chains upon our fondness by taking the best chair and

going to sleep in it in attitudes of Egyptian, of Assyrian majesty. His arts were few or none; he rather disdained to practise any; he completed our conquest by maintaining himself simply a fascinating presence; and perhaps we spoiled Jim. It is certain that he came under my window at two o'clock one night, and tried the kitchen door. It resisted his efforts to get in, and then Jim began to use language which I had never heard from the lips of a cat before, and seldom from the lips of a man. I will not repeat it; enough that it carried to the listener the conviction that Jim was not sober. Where he could have got his liquor in the totally abstinent State of Maine I could not positively say, but probably of some sailor who had brought it from the neighboring New Hampshire coast. There could be no doubt, however, that Jim was drunk; and a dash from the water-pitcher seemed the only thing for him. The water did not touch him, but he started back in surprise and grief, and vanished into the night without a word.

His feelings must have been deeply wounded, for it was almost a week before he came near us again; and then I think that nothing but young lobster would have brought him. He forgave us finally, and made us of his party in the quarrel he began gradually to have with the large yellow cat of a next-door neighbor. This culminated one afternoon, after a long exchange of mediaeval defiance and insult, in a battle upon a bed of rag-weed, with wild shrieks of rage, and prodigious feats of ground and lofty tumbling. It seemed to our anxious eyes that Jim was getting the worst of it; but when we afterwards visited the battle-field and picked up several tufts of blond fur, we were in a doubt which was afterwards heightened by Jim's invasion of the yellow cat's territory, where he stretched himself defiantly upon the grass and seemed to be challenging the yellow cat to come out and try to put him off the premises.

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Here and there an impassioned maple confesses the autumn
Houses are of almost terrifying cleanliness
Leading part cats may play in society
Picturesqueness which we should prize if we saw it abroad
Has the lurch and the sway of the deck in it

End of this Project Gutenberg Etext of Notes of a Vanished Summer
by William Dean Howells

LITERATURE AND LIFE--Short Stories and Essays

by William Dean Howells

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WORRIES OF A WINTER WALK

The other winter, as I was taking a morning walk down to the East River, I came upon a bit of our motley life, a fact of our piebald civilization, which has perplexed me from time to time, ever since, and which I wish now to leave with the reader, for his or her more thoughtful consideration.

I.

The morning was extremely cold. It professed to be sunny, and there was really some sort of hard glitter in the air, which, so far from being tempered by this effulgence, seemed all the stonier for it. Blasts of frigid wind swept the streets, and buffeted each other in a fury of resentment when they met around the corners. Although I was passing through a populous tenement-house quarter, my way was not hindered by the sports of the tenement-house children, who commonly crowd one from the sidewalks; no frowzy head looked out over the fire-escapes; there were no peddlers' carts or voices in the road-way; not above three or four shawl-

hooded women cowered out of the little shops with small purchases in their hands; not so many tiny girls with jugs opened the doors of the beer saloons. The butchers' windows were painted with patterns of frost, through which I could dimly see the frozen meats hanging like hideous stalactites from the roof. When I came to the river, I ached in sympathy with the shipping painfully afloat on the rocklike surface of the brine, which broke against the piers, and sprayed itself over them like showers of powdered quartz.

But it was before I reached this final point that I received into my consciousness the moments of the human comedy which have been an increasing burden to it. Within a block of the river I met a child so small that at first I almost refused to take any account of her, until she appealed to my sense of humor by her amusing disproportion to the pail which she was lugging in front of her with both of her little mittened hands. I am scrupulous about mittens, though I was tempted to write of her little naked hands, red with the pitiless cold. This would have been more effective, but it would not have been true, and the truth obliges me to own that she had a stout, warm-looking knit jacket on. The pail-which was half her height and twice her bulk-was filled to overflowing with small pieces of coal and coke, and if it had not been for this I might have taken her for a child of the better classes, she was so comfortably clad. But in that case she would have had to be fifteen or sixteen years old, in order to be doing so efficiently and responsibly the work which, as the child of the worse classes, she was actually doing at five or six. We must, indeed, allow that the early self-helpfulness of such children is very remarkable, and all the more so because they grow up into men and women so stupid that, according to the theories of all polite economists, they have to have their discontent with their conditions put into their heads by malevolent agitators.

From time to time this tiny creature put down her heavy burden to rest; it was, of course, only relatively heavy; a man would have made nothing of it. From time to time she was forced to stop and pick up the bits of coke that tumbled from her heaping pail. She could not consent to lose one of them, and at last, when she found she could not make all of them stay on the heap, she thriftily tucked them into the pockets of her jacket, and trudged sturdily on till she met a boy some years older, who planted himself in her path and stood looking at her, with his hands in his pockets. I do not say he was a bad boy, but I could see in his furtive eye that she was a sore temptation to him. The chance to have fun with her by upsetting her bucket, and scattering her coke about till she cried with vexation, was one which might not often present itself, and I do not know what made him forego it, but I know that he did, and that he finally passed her, as I have seen a young dog pass a little cat, after having stopped it, and thoughtfully considered worrying it.

I turned to watch the child out of sight, and when I faced about towards the river again I received the second instalment of my present perplexity. A cart, heavily laden with coke, drove out of the coal-yard which I now perceived I had come to, and after this cart followed two brisk old women, snugly clothed and tightly tucked in against the cold like the child, who vied with each other in catching up the lumps of coke

that were jolted from the load, and filling their aprons with them; such old women, so hale, so spry, so tough and tireless, with the withered apples red in their cheeks, I have not often seen. They may have been about sixty years, or sixty-five, the time of life when most women are grandmothers and are relegated on their merits to the cushioned seats of their children's homes, softly silk-gowned and lace-capped, dear visions of lilac and lavender, to be loved and petted by their grandchildren. The fancy can hardly put such sweet ladies in the place of those nimble beldams, who hopped about there in the wind-swept street, plucking up their day's supply of firing from the involuntary bounty of the cart. Even the attempt is unseemly, and whether mine is at best but a feeble fancy, not bred to strenuous feats of any kind, it fails to bring them before me in that figure. I cannot imagine ladies doing that kind of thing; I can only imagine women who had lived hard and worked hard all their lives doing it; who had begun to fight with want from their cradles, like that little one with the pail, and must fight without ceasing to their graves. But I am not unreasonable; I understand and I understood what I saw to be one of the things that must be, for the perfectly good and sufficient reason that they always have been; and at the moment I got what pleasure I could out of the stolid indifference of the cart-driver, who never looked about him at the scene which interested me, but jolted onward, leaving a trail of pungent odors from his pipe in the freezing eddies of the air behind him.

II.

It is still not at all, or not so much, the fact that troubles me; it is what to do with the fact. The question began with me almost at once, or at least as soon as I faced about and began to walk homeward with the wind at my back. I was then so much more comfortable that the aesthetic instinct thawed out in me, and I found myself wondering what use I could make of what I had seen in the way of my trade. Should I have something very pathetic, like the old grandmother going out day after day to pick up coke for her sick daughter's freezing orphans till she fell sick herself? What should I do with the family in that case? They could not be left at that point, and I promptly imagined a granddaughter, a girl of about eighteen, very pretty and rather proud, a sort of belle in her humble neighborhood, who should take her grandmother's place. I decided that I should have her Italian, because I knew something of Italians, and could manage that nationality best, and I should call her Maddalena; either Maddalena or Marina; Marina would be more Venetian, and I saw that I must make her Venetian. Here I was on safe ground, and at once the love-interest appeared to help me out. By virtue of the law of contrasts; it appeared to me in the person of a Scandinavian lover, tall, silent, blond, whom I at once felt I could do, from my acquaintance with Scandinavian lovers in Norwegian novels. His name was Janssen, a good, distinctive Scandinavian name; I do not know but it is Swedish; and I thought he might very well be a Swede; I could imagine his manner from that of a Swedish waitress we once had.

Janssen--Jan Janssen, say-drove the coke-cart which Marina's grandmother used to follow out of the coke-yard, to pick up the bits of coke as they were jolted from it, and he had often noticed her with deep indifference. At first he noticed Marina--or Nina, as I soon saw I must call her--with the same unconcern; for in her grandmother's hood and jacket and check apron, with her head held shamefacedly downward, she looked exactly like the old woman. I thought I would have Nina make her self-sacrifice rebelliously, as a girl like her would be apt to do, and follow the cokecart with tears. This would catch Janssen's notice, and he would wonder, perhaps with a little pang, what the old woman was crying about, and then he would see that it was not the old woman. He would see that it was Nina, and he would be in love with her at once, for she would not only be very pretty, but he would know that she was good, if she were willing to help her family in that way.

He would respect the girl, in his dull, sluggish, Northern way. He would do nothing to betray himself. But little by little he would begin to befriend her. He would carelessly overload his cart before he left the yard, so that the coke would fall from it more lavishly; and not only this, but if he saw a stone or a piece of coal in the street he would drive over it, so that more coke would be jolted from his load.

Nina would get to watching for him. She must not notice him much at first, except as the driver of the overladen, carelessly driven cart. But after several mornings she must see that he is very strong and handsome. Then, after several mornings more, their eyes must meet, her vivid black eyes, with the tears of rage and shame in them, and his cold blue eyes. This must be the climax; and just at this point I gave my fancy a rest, while I went into a drugstore at the corner of Avenue B to get my hands warm.

They were abominably cold, even in my pockets, and I had suffered past several places trying to think of an excuse to go in. I now asked the druggist if he had something which I felt pretty sure he had not, and this put him in the wrong, so that when we fell into talk he was very polite. We agreed admirably about the hard times, and he gave way respectfully when I doubted his opinion that the winters were getting milder. I made him reflect that there was no reason for this, and that it was probably an illusion from that deeper impression which all experiences made on us in the past, when we were younger; I ought to say that he was an elderly man, too. I said I fancied such a morning as this was not very mild for people that had no fires, and this brought me back again to Janssen and Marina, by way of the coke-cart. The thought of them rapt me so far from the druggist that I listened to his answer with a glazing eye, and did not know what he said. My hands had now got warm, and I bade him good-morning with a parting regret, which he civilly shared, that he had not the thing I had not wanted, and I pushed out again into the cold, which I found not so bad as before.

My hero and heroine were waiting for me there, and I saw that to be truly modern, to be at once realistic and mystical, to have both delicacy and strength, I must not let them get further acquainted with each other. The affair must simply go on from day to day, till one morning Jan must

note that it was again the grandmother and no longer the girl who was following his cart. She must be very weak from a long sickness--I was not sure whether to have it the grippe or not, but I decided upon that provisionally and she must totter after Janssen, so that he must get down after a while to speak to her under pretence of arranging the tail-board of his cart, or something of that kind; I did not care for the detail. They should get into talk in the broken English which was the only language they could have in common, and she should burst into tears, and tell him that now Nina was sick; I imagined making this very simple, but very touching, and I really made it so touching that it brought the lump into my own throat, and I knew it would be effective with the reader. Then I had Jan get back upon his cart, and drive stolidly on again, and the old woman limp feebly after.

There should not be any more, I decided, except that one very cold morning, like that; Jan should be driving through that street, and should be passing the door of the tenement house where Nina had lived, just as a little procession should be issuing from it. The fact must be told in brief sentences, with a total absence of emotionality. The last touch must be Jan's cart turning the street corner with Jan's figure sharply silhouetted against the clear, cold morning light. Nothing more.

But it was at this point that another notion came into my mind, so antic, so impish, so fiendish, that if there were still any Evil One, in a world which gets on so poorly without him, I should attribute it to his suggestion; and this was that the procession which Jan saw issuing from the tenement-house door was not a funeral procession, as the reader will have rashly fancied, but a wedding procession, with Nina at the head of it, quite well again, and going to be married to the little brown youth with ear-rings who had long had her heart.

With a truly perverse instinct, I saw how strong this might be made, at the fond reader's expense, to be sure, and how much more pathetic, in such a case, the silhouetted figure on the coke-cart would really be. I should, of course, make it perfectly plain that no one was to blame, and that the whole affair had been so tacit on Jan's part that Nina might very well have known nothing of his feeling for her. Perhaps at the very end I might subtly insinuate that it was possible he might have had no such feeling towards her as the reader had been led to imagine.

III.

The question as to which ending I ought to have given my romance is what has ever since remained to perplex me, and it is what has prevented my ever writing it. Here is material of the best sort lying useless on my hands, which, if I could only make up my mind, might be wrought into a short story as affecting as any that wring our hearts in fiction; and I think I could get something fairly unintelligible out of the broken English of Jan and Nina's grandmother, and certainly something novel. All that I can do now, however, is to put the case before the reader, and

let him decide for himself how it should end.

The mere humanist, I suppose, might say, that I am rightly served for having regarded the fact I had witnessed as material for fiction at all; that I had no business to bewitch it with my miserable art; that I ought to have spoken to that little child and those poor old women, and tried to learn something of their lives from them, that I might offer my knowledge again for the instruction of those whose lives are easy and happy in the indifference which ignorance breeds in us. I own there is something in this, but then, on the other hand, I have heard it urged by nice people that they do not want to know about such squalid lives, that it is offensive and out of taste to be always bringing them in, and that we ought to be writing about good society, and especially creating grandes dames for their amusement. This sort of people could say to the humanist that he ought to be glad there are coke-carts for fuel to fall off from for the lower classes, and that here was no case for sentiment; for if one is to be interested in such things at all, it must be aesthetically, though even this is deplorable in the presence of fiction already overloaded with low life, and so poor in grades dames as ours.

SUMMER ISLES OF EDEN

It may be all an illusion of the map, where the Summer Islands glimmer a small and solitary little group of dots and wrinkles, remote from continental shores, with a straight line descending southeastwardly upon them, to show how sharp and swift the ship's course is, but they seem so far and alien from my wonted place that it is as if I had slid down a steepy slant from the home-planet to a group of asteroids nebulous somewhere in middle space, and were resting there, still vibrant from the rush of the meteoric fall. There were, of course, facts and incidents contrary to such a theory: a steamer starting from New York in the raw March morning, and lurching and twisting through two days of diagonal seas, with people aboard dining and undining, and talking and smoking and cocktailing and hot-scotching and beef-teaing; but when the ship came in sight of the islands, and they began to lift their cedared slopes from the turquoise waters, and to explain their drifted snows as the white walls and white roofs of houses, then the waking sense became the dreaming sense, and the sweet impossibility of that drop through air became the sole reality.

I.

Everything here, indeed, is so strange that you placidly accept whatever offers itself as the simplest and naturest fact. Those low hills, that climb, with their tough, dark cedars, from the summer sea to the summer

sky, might have drifted down across the Gulf Stream from the coast of Maine; but when, upon closer inspection, you find them skirted with palms and bananas, and hedged with oleanders, you merely wonder that you had never noticed these growths in Maine before, where you were so familiar with the cedars. The hotel itself, which has brought the Green Mountains with it, in every detail, from the dormer-windowed mansard-roof, and the white-painted, green-shuttered walls, to the neat, school-mistressly waitresses in the dining-room, has a clump of palmettos beside it, swaying and sighing in the tropic breeze, and you know that when it migrates back to the New England hill-country, at the end of the season, you shall find it with the palmettos still before its veranda, and equally at home, somewhere in the Vermont or New Hampshire July. There will be the same American groups looking out over them, and rocking and smoking, though, alas! not so many smoking as rocking.

But where, in that translation, would be the gold braided red or blue jackets of the British army and navy which lend their lustre and color here to the veranda groups? Where should one get the house walls of whitewashed stone and the garden walls which everywhere glow in the sun, and belt in little spaces full of roses and lilies? These things must come from some other association, and in the case of him who here confesses, the lustrous uniforms and the glowing walls rise from waters as far away in time as in space, and a long-ago apparition of Venetian Junes haunts the coral shore. (They are beginning to say the shore is not coral; but no matter.) To be sure, the white roofs are not accounted for in this visionary presence; and if one may not relate them to the snowfalls of home winters, then one must frankly own them absolutely tropical, together with the green-pillared and green-latticed galleries. They at least suggest the tropical scenery of Prue and I as one remembers seeing it through Titbottom's spectacles; and yet, if one supplies roofs of brown-red tiles, it is all Venetian enough, with the lagoon-like expanses that lend themselves to the fond effect. It is so Venetian, indeed, that it wants but a few silent gondolas and noisy gondoliers, in place of the dark, taciturn oarsmen of the clumsy native boats, to complete the coming and going illusion; and there is no good reason why the rough little isles that fill the bay should not call themselves respectively San Giorgio and San Clemente, and Sant' Elena and San Lazzaro: they probably have no other names!

II.

These summer isles of Eden have this advantage over the scriptural Eden, that apparently it was not woman and her seed who were expelled, when once she set foot here, but the serpent and his seed: women now abound in the Summer Islands, and there is not a snake anywhere to be found. There are some tortoises and a great many frogs in their season, but no other reptiles. The frogs are fabled of a note so deep and hoarse that its vibration almost springs the environing mines of dynamite, though it has never yet done so; the tortoises grow to a great size and a patriarchal age, and are fond of Boston brown bread and baked beans, if their

preferences may be judged from those of a colossal specimen in the care of an American family living on the islands. The observer who contributes this fact to science is able to report the case of a parrot-fish, on the same premises, so exactly like a large brown and purple cockatoo that, seeing such a cockatoo later on dry land, it was with a sense of something like cruelty in its exile from its native waters. The angel-fish he thinks not so much like angels; they are of a transparent purity of substance, and a cherubic innocence of expression, but they terminate in two tails, which somehow will not lend themselves to the resemblance.

Certainly the angel-fish is not so well named as the parrot-fish; it might better be called the ghostfish, it is so like a moonbeam in the pools it haunts, and of such a convertible quality with the iridescent vegetable growths about it. All things here are of a weird convertibility to the alien perception, and the richest and rarest facts of nature lavish themselves in humble association with the commonest and most familiar. You drive through long stretches of wayside willows, and realize only now and then that these willows are thick clumps of oleanders; and through them you can catch glimpses of banana-orchards, which look like dishevelled patches of gigantic cornstalks. The fields of Easter lilies do not quite live up to their photographs; they are presently suffering from a mysterious blight, and their flowers are not frequent enough to lend them that sculpturesque effect near to, which they wear as far off as New York. The potato-fields, on the other hand, are of a tender delicacy of coloring which compensates for the lilies' lack, and the palms give no just cause for complaint, unless because they are not nearly enough to characterize the landscape, which in spite of their presence remains so northern in aspect. They were much whipped and torn by a late hurricane, which afflicted all the vegetation of the islands, and some of the royal palms were blown down. Where these are yet standing, as four or five of them are in a famous avenue now quite one-sided, they are of a majesty befitting that of any king who could pass by them: no sovereign except Philip of Macedon in his least judicial moments could pass between them.

The century-plant, which here does not require pampering under glass, but boldly takes its place out doors with the other trees of the garden, employs much less than a hundred years to bring itself to bloom. It often flowers twice or thrice in that space of time, and ought to take away the reproach of the inhabitants for a want of industry and enterprise: a century-plant at least could do no more in any air, and it merits praise for its activity in the breath of these languorous seas. One such must be in bloom at this very writing, in the garden of a house which this very writer marked for his own on his first drive ashore from the steamer to the hotel, when he bestowed in its dim, unknown interior one of the many multiples of himself which are now pretty well dispersed among the pleasant places of the earth. It fills the night with a heavy heliotropean sweetness, and on the herb beneath, in the effulgence of the waxing moon, the multiple which has spiritually expropriated the legal owners stretches itself in an interminable reverie, and hears Youth come laughing back to it on the waters kissing the adjacent shore, where other white houses (which also it inhabits) bathe their snowy underpinning.

In this dream the multiple drives home from the balls of either hotel with the young girls in the little victorias which must pass its sojourn; and, being but a vision itself, fore casts the shapes of flirtation which shall night-long gild the visions of their sleep with the flash of military and naval uniforms. Of course the multiple has been at the dance too (with a shadowy heartache for the dances of forty years ago), and knows enough not to confuse the uniforms.

III.

In whatever way you walk, at whatever hour, the birds are sweetly calling in the way-side oleanders and the wild sage-bushes and the cedar-tops. They are mostly cat-birds, quite like our own; and bluebirds, but of a deeper blue than ours, and redbirds of as liquid a note, but not so varied, as that of the redbirds of our woods. How came they all here, seven hundred miles from any larger land? Some think, on the stronger wings of tempests, for it is not within the knowledge of men that men brought them. Men did, indeed, bring the pestilent sparrows which swarm about their habitations here, and beat away the gentler and lovelier birds with a ferocity unknown in the human occupation of the islands. Still, the sparrows have by no means conquered, and in the wilder places the catbird makes common cause with the bluebird and the redbird, and holds its own against them. The little ground-doves mimic in miniature the form and markings and the gait and mild behavior of our turtle-doves, but perhaps not their melancholy cooing. Nature has nowhere anything prettier than these exquisite creatures, unless it be the long-tailed white gulls which sail over the emerald shallows of the landlocked seas, and take the green upon their translucent bodies as they trail their meteoric splendor against the midday sky. Full twenty-four inches they measure from the beak to the tip of the single pen that protracts them a foot beyond their real bulk; but it is said their tempers are shorter than they, and they attack fiercely anything they suspect of too intimate a curiosity concerning their nests.

They are probably the only short-tempered things in the Summer Islands, where time is so long that if you lose your patience you easily find it again. Sweetness, if not light, seems to be the prevailing human quality, and a good share of it belongs to such of the natives as are in no wise light. Our poor brethren of a different pigment are in the large majority, and they have been seventy years out of slavery, with the full enjoyment of all their civil rights, without lifting themselves from their old inferiority. They do the hard work, in their own easy way, and possibly do not find life the burden they make it for the white man, whom here, as in our own country, they load up with the conundrum which their existence involves for him. They are not very gay, and do not rise to a joke with that flashing eagerness which they show for it at home. If you have them against a background of banana-stems, or low palms, or feathery canes, nothing could be more acceptably characteristic of the air and sky; nor are they out of place on the box of the little victorias, where visitors of the more inquisitive sex put them to constant question. Such

visitors spare no islander of any color. Once, in the pretty Public Garden which the multiple had claimed for its private property, three unmerciful American women suddenly descended from the heavens and began to question the multiple's gardener, who was peacefully digging at the rate of a spadeful every five minutes. Presently he sat down on his wheelbarrow, and then shifted, without relief, from one handle of it to the other. Then he rose and braced himself desperately against the tool-house, where, when his tormentors drifted away, he seemed to the soft eye of pity pinned to the wall by their cruel interrogations, whose barbed points were buried in the stucco behind him, and whose feathered shafts stuck out half a yard before his breast.

Whether he was black or not, pity could not see, but probably he was. At least the garrison of the islands is all black, being a Jamaican regiment of that color; and when one of the warriors comes down the white street, with his swagger-stick in his hand, and flaming in scarlet and gold upon the ground of his own blackness, it is as if a gigantic oriole were coming towards you, or a mighty tulip. These gorgeous creatures seem so much readier than the natives to laugh, that you wish to test them with a joke. But it might fail. The Summer Islands are a British colony, and the joke does not flourish so luxuriantly, here as some other things.

To be sure, one of the native fruits seems a sort of joke when you hear it first named, and when you are offered a 'loquat', if you are of a frivolous mind you search your mind for the connection with 'loquor' which it seems to intimate. Failing in this, you taste the fruit, and then, if it is not perfectly ripe, you are as far from loquaciousness as if you had bitten a green persimmon. But if it is ripe, it is delicious, and may be consumed indefinitely. It is the only native fruit which one can wish to eat at all, with an unpractised palate, though it is claimed that with experience a relish may come for the pawpaws. These break out in clusters of the size of oranges at the top of a thick pole, which may have some leaves or may not, and ripen as they fancy in the indefinite summer. They are of the color and flavor of a very insipid little muskmelon which has grown too near a patch of squashes.

One may learn to like this pawpaw, yes, but one must study hard. It is best when plucked by a young islander of Italian blood whose father orders him up the bare pole in the sunny Sunday morning air to oblige the signori, and then with a pawpaw in either hand stands talking with them about the two bad years there have been in Bermuda, and the probability of his doing better in Nuova York. He has not imagined our winter, however, and he shrinks from its boldly pictured rigors, and lets the signori go with a sigh, and a bunch of pink and crimson roses.

The roses are here, budding and blooming in the quiet bewilderment which attends the flowers and plants from the temperate zone in this latitude, and which in the case of the strawberries offered with cream and cake at another public garden expresses itself in a confusion of red, ripe fruit and white blossoms on the same stem. They are a pleasure to the nose and eye rather than the palate, as happens with so many growths of the tropics, if indeed the Summer Islands are tropical, which some plausibly

deny; though why should not strawberries, fresh picked from the plant in mid-March, enjoy the right to be indifferent sweet?

IV.

What remains? The events of the Summer Islands are few, and none out of the order of athletics between teams of the army and navy, and what may be called societetics, have happened in the past enchanted fortnight. But far better things than events have happened: sunshine and rain of such like quality that one could not grumble at either, and gales, now from the south and now from the north, with the languor of the one and the vigor of the other in them. There were drives upon drives that were always to somewhere, but would have been delightful the same if they had been mere goings and comings, past the white houses overlooking little lawns through the umbrage of their palm-trees. The lawns professed to be of grass, but were really mats of close little herbs which were not grass; but which, where the sparse cattle were grazing them, seemed to satisfy their inexacting stomachs. They are never very green, and in fact the landscape often has an air of exhaustion and pause which it wears with us in late August; and why not, after all its interminable, innumerable summers? Everywhere in the gentle hollows which the coral hills (if they are coral) sink into are the patches of potatoes and lilies and onions drawing their geometrical lines across the brown-red, weedless soil; and in very sheltered spots are banana-orchards which are never so snugly sheltered there but their broad leaves are whipped to shreds. The white road winds between gray walls crumbling in an amiable disintegration, but held together against ruin by a network of maidenhair ferns and creepers of unknown name, and overhung by trees where the cactus climbs and hangs in spiky links, or if another sort, pierces them with speary stems as tall and straight as the stalks of the neighboring bamboo. The loquat-trees cluster--like quinces in the garden closes, and show their pale golden, plum-shaped fruit.

For the most part the road runs by still inland waters, but sometimes it climbs to the high downs beside the open sea, grotesque with wind-worn and wave-worn rocks, and beautiful with opalescent beaches, and the black legs of the negro children paddling in the tints of the prostrate rainbow.

All this seems probable and natural enough at the writing; but how will it be when one has turned one's back upon it? Will it not lapse into the gross fable of travellers, and be as the things which the liars who swap them cannot themselves believe? What will be said to you when you tell that in the Summer Islands one has but to saw a hole in his back yard and take out a house of soft, creamy sandstone and set it up and go to living in it? What, when you relate that among the northern and southern evergreens there are deciduous trees which, in a clime where there is no fall or spring, simply drop their leaves when they are tired of keeping them on, and put out others when they feel like it? What, when you pretend that in the absence of serpents there are centipedes a span long,

and spiders the bigness of bats, and mosquitoes that sweetly sing in the drowsing ear, but bite not; or that there are swamps but no streams, and in the marshes stand mangrove-trees whose branches grow downward into the ooze, as if they wished to get back into the earth and pull in after them the holes they emerged from?

These every-day facts seem not only incredible to the liar himself, even in their presence, but when you begin the ascent of that steep slant back to New York you foresee that they will become impossible. As impossible as the summit of the slant now appears to the sense which shudderingly figures it a Bermuda pawpaw-tree seven hundred miles high, and fruiting icicles and snowballs in the March air!

WILD FLOWERS OF THE ASPHALT

Looking through Mrs. Caroline A. Creevey's charming book on the Flowers of Field, Hill, and Swamp, the other day, I was very forcibly reminded of the number of these pretty, wilding growths which I had been finding all the season long among the streets of asphalt and the sidewalks of artificial stone in this city; and I am quite sure that any one who has been kept in New York, as I have been this year, beyond the natural time of going into the country, can have as real a pleasure in this sylvan invasion as mine, if he will but give himself up to a sense of it.

I.

Of course it is altogether too late, now, to look for any of the early spring flowers, but I can recall the exquisite effect of the tender blue hepatica fringing the centre rail of the grip-cars, all up and down Broadway, and apparently springing from the hollow beneath, where the cable ran with such a brooklike gurgle that any damp-living plant must find itself at home there. The water-pimpernel may now be seen, by any sympathetic eye, blowing delicately along the track, in the breeze of the passing cabs, and elastically lifting itself from the rush of the cars. The reader can easily verify it by the picture in Mrs. Creevey's book. He knows it by its other name of brook weed; and he will have my delight, I am sure, in the cardinal-flower which will be with us in August. It is a shy flower, loving the more sequestered nooks, and may be sought along the shady stretches of Third Avenue, where the Elevated Road overhead forms a shelter as of interlacing boughs. The arrow-head likes such swampy expanses as the converging surface roads form at Dead Man's Curve and the corners of Twenty third Street. This is in flower now, and will be till September; and St.-John's-wort, which some call the false golden-rod, is already here. You may find it in any moist, low ground, but the gutters of Wall Street, or even the banks of the Stock Exchange, are not

too dry for it. The real golden-rod is not much in evidence with us, for it comes only when summer is on the wane. The other night, however, on the promenade of the Madison Square Roof Garden, I was delighted to see it growing all over the oblong dome of the auditorium, in response to the cry of a homesick cricket which found itself in exile there at the base of a potted ever green. This lonely insect had no sooner sounded its winter-boding note than the fond flower began sympathetically to wave and droop along those tarry slopes, as I have seen it on how many hill-side pastures! But this may have been only a transitory response to the cricket, and I cannot promise the visitor to the Roof Garden that he will find golden-rod there every night. I believe there is always Golden Seal, but it is the kind that comes in bottles, and not in the gloom of "deep, cool, moist woods," where Mrs. Creevey describes it as growing, along with other wildings of such sweet names or quaint as Celandine, and Dwarf Larkspur, and Squirrel-corn, and Dutchman's breeches, and Pearlwort, and Wood-sorrel, and Bishop's--cap, and Wintergreen, and Indian-pipe, and Snowberry, and Adder's-tongue, and Wakerobin, and Dragon-root, and Adam-and-Eve, and twenty more, which must have got their names from some fairy of genius. I should say it was a female fairy of genius who called them so, and that she had her own sex among mortals in mind when she invented their nomenclature, and was thinking of little girls, and slim, pretty maids, and happy young wives. The author tells how they all look, with a fine sense of their charm in her words, but one would know how they looked from their names; and when you call them over they at once transplant themselves to the depths of the dells between our sky-scrapers, and find a brief sojourn in the cavernous excavations whence other sky-scrapers are to rise.

II.

That night on the Roof Garden, when the cricket's cry flowered the dome with golden-rod, the tall stems of rye growing among the orchestra sloped all one way at times, just like the bows of violins, in the half-dollar gale that always blows over the city at that height. But as one turns the leaves of Mrs. Creevey's magic book--perhaps one ought to say turns its petals--the forests and the fields come and make themselves at home in the city everywhere. By virtue of it I have been more in the country in a half-hour than if I had lived all June there. When I lift my eyes from its pictures or its letter-press my vision prints the eidolons of wild flowers everywhere, as it prints the image of the sun against the air after dwelling on his brightness. The rose-mallow flaunts along Fifth Avenue and the golden threads of the dodder embroider the house fronts on the principal cross streets; and I might think at times that it was all mere fancy, it has so much the quality of a pleasing illusion.

Yet Mrs. Creevey's book is not one to lend itself to such a deceit by any of the ordinary arts. It is rather matter of fact in form and manner, and largely owes what magic it has to the inherent charm of its subject. One feels this in merely glancing at the index, and reading such titles of chapters as "Wet Meadows and Low Grounds"; "Dry Fields--Waste Places--

Waysides"; "Hills and Rocky Woods, Open Woods"; and "Deep, Cool, Moist Woods"; each a poem in itself, lyric or pastoral, and of a surpassing opulence of suggestion. The spring and, summer months pass in stately processional through the book, each with her fillet inscribed with the names of her characteristic flowers or blossoms, and brightened with the blooms themselves.

They are plucked from where nature bade them grow in the wild places, or their own wayward wills led them astray. A singularly fascinating chapter is that called "Escaped from Gardens," in which some of these pretty runagates are catalogued. I supposed in my liberal ignorance that the Bouncing Bet was the only one of these, but I have learned that the Pansy and the Sweet Violet love to gad, and that the Caraway, the Snapdragon, the Prince's Feather, the Summer Savory, the Star of Bethlehem, the Day-Lily, and the Tiger-Lily, and even the sluggish Stone Crop are of the vagrant, fragrant company. One is not surprised to meet the Tiger-Lily in it; that must always have had the jungle in its heart; but that the Baby's Breath should be found wandering by the road-sides from Massachusetts and Virginia to Ohio, gives one a tender pang as for a lost child. Perhaps the poor human tramps, who sleep in barns and feed at back doors along those dusty ways, are mindful of the Baby's Breath, and keep a kindly eye out for the little truant.

III.

As I was writing those homely names I felt again how fit and lovely they were, how much more fit and lovely than the scientific names of the flowers. Mrs. Creevey will make a botanist of you if you will let her, and I fancy a very good botanist, though I cannot speak from experience, but she will make a poet of you in spite of yourself, as I very well know; and she will do this simply by giving you first the familiar name of the flowers she loves to write of. I am not saying that the Day-Lily would not smell as sweet by her title of 'Hemerocallis Fulva', or that the homely, hearty Bouncing Bet would not kiss as deliciously in her scholar's cap and gown of 'Saponaria Officinalis'; but merely that their college degrees do not lend themselves so willingly to verse, or even melodious prose, which is what the poet is often after nowadays. So I like best to hail the flowers by the names that the fairies gave them, and the children know them by, especially when my longing for them makes them grow here in the city streets. I have a fancy that they would all vanish away if I saluted them in botanical terms. As long as I talk of cat-tail rushes, the homeless grimalkins of the areas and the back fences help me to a vision of the swamps thickly studded with their stiff spears; but if I called them 'Typha Latifolia', or even 'Typha Angustifolia', there is not the hardest and fiercest prowler of the roof and the fire-escape but would fly the sound of my voice and leave me forlorn amid the withered foliage of my dream. The street sparrows, pestiferous and persistent as they are, would forsake my sylvan pageant if I spoke of the Bird-foot Violet as the 'Viola Pedata'; and the commonest cur would run howling if he heard the gentle Poison Dogwood

maligned as the 'Rhus Venenata'. The very milk-cans would turn to their native pumps in disgust from my attempt to invoke our simple American Cowslip as the 'Dodecatheon Meadia'.

IV

Yet I do not deny that such scientific nomenclature has its uses; and I should be far from undervaluing this side of Mrs. Creevey's book. In fact, I secretly respect it the more for its botanical lore, and if ever I get into the woods or fields again I mean to go up to some of the humblest flowers, such as I can feel myself on easy terms with, and tell them what they are in Latin. I think it will surprise them, and I dare say they will some of them like it, and will want their initials inscribed on their leaves, like those signatures which the medicinal plants bear, or are supposed to bear. But as long as I am engaged in their culture amid this stone and iron and asphalt, I find it best to invite their presence by their familiar names, and I hope they will not think them too familiar. I should like to get them all naturalized here, so that the thousands of poor city children, who never saw them growing in their native places, might have some notion of how bountifully the world is equipped with beauty, and how it is governed by many laws which are not enforced by policemen. I think that would interest them very much, and I shall not mind their plucking my Barmecide blossoms, and carrying them home by the armfuls. When good-will costs nothing we ought to practise it even with the tramps, and these are very welcome, in their wanderings over the city pave, to rest their weary limbs in any of my pleached bowers they come to.

A CIRCUS IN THE SUBURBS

We dwellers in cities and large towns, if we are well-to-do, have more than our fill of pleasures of all kinds; and for now many years past we have been used to a form of circus where surfeit is nearly as great misery as famine in that kind could be. For our sins, or some of our friends' sins, perhaps, we have now gone so long to circuses of three rings and two raised-platforms that we scarcely realize that in the country there are still circuses of one ring and no platform at all. We are accustomed, in the gross and foolish-superfluity of these city circuses, to see no feat quite through, but to turn our greedy eyes at the most important instant in the hope of greater wonders in another ring. We have four or five clowns, in as many varieties of grotesque costume, as well as a lady clown in befitting dress; but we hear none of them speak, not even the lady clown, while in the country circus the old clown of our childhood, one and indivisible, makes the same style of jokes, if not the very same jokes, that we used to hear there. It is not

easy to believe all this, and I do not know that I should quite believe it myself if I had not lately been witness of it in the suburban village where I was passing the summer.

I.

The circus announced itself in the good old way weeks beforehand by the vast posters of former days and by a profusion of small bills which fell upon the village as from the clouds, and left it littered everywhere with their festive pink. They prophesied it in a name borne by the first circus I ever saw, which was also an animal show, but the animals must all have died during the fifty years past, for there is now no menagerie attached to it. I did not know this when I heard the band braying through the streets of the village on the morning of the performance, and for me the mangy old camels and the pimpled elephants of yore led the procession through accompanying ranks of boys who have mostly been in their graves for half a lifetime; the distracted ostrich thrust an advertising neck through the top of its cage, and the lion roared to himself in the darkness of his moving prison. I felt the old thrill of excitement, the vain hope of something preternatural and impossible, and I do not know what could have kept me from that circus as soon as I had done lunch. My heart rose at sight of the large tent (which was yet so very little in comparison with the tents of the three-ring and two-platform circuses); the alluring and illusory sideshows of fat women and lean men; the horses tethered in the background and stamping under the fly-bites; the old, weather-beaten grand chariot, which looked like the ghost of the grand chariot which used to drag me captive in its triumph; and the canvas shelters where the cooks were already at work over their kettles on the evening meal of the circus folk.

I expected to be kept a long while from the ticket-wagon by the crowd, but there was no crowd, and perhaps there never used to be much of a crowd. I bought my admittances without a moment's delay, and the man who sold me my reserve seats had even leisure to call me back and ask to look at the change he had given me, mostly nickels. "I thought I didn't give you enough," he said, and he added one more, and sent me on to the doorkeeper with my faith in human nature confirmed and refreshed.

It was cool enough outside, but within it was very warm, as it should be, to give the men with palm-leaf fans and ice-cold lemonade a chance. They were already making their rounds, and crying their wares with voices from the tombs of the dead past; and the child of the young mother who took my seat-ticket from me was going to sleep at full length on the lowermost tread of the benches, so that I had to step across its prostrate form.

These reserved seats were carpeted; but I had forgotten how little one rank was raised above another, and how very trying they were upon the back and legs. But for the carpeting, I could not see how I was advantaged above the commoner folk in the unreserved seats, and I reflected how often in this world we paid for an inappreciable splendor. I could not see but they were as well off as I; they were much more gayly dressed, and some of them were even smoking cigars, while they were

nearly all younger by ten, twenty, forty, or fifty years, and even more. They did not look like the country people whom I rather hoped and expected to see, but were apparently my fellow-villagers, in different stages of excitement. They manifested by the usual signs their impatience to have the performance begin, and I confess that I shared this, though I did not take part in the demonstration.

II.

I have no intention of following the events seriatim. From time to time during their progress I renewed my old one-sided acquaintance with the circus-men. They were quite the same people, I believe, but strangely softened and ameliorated, as I hope I am, and looking not a day older, which I cannot say of myself, exactly. The supernumeraries were patently farmer boys who had entered newly upon that life in a spirit of adventure, and who wore their partial liveries, a braided coat here and a pair of striped trousers there, with a sort of timorous pride, a deprecating bravado, as if they expected to be hooted by the spectators and were very glad when they were not. The man who went round with a dog to keep boys from hooking in under the curtain had grown gentler, and his dog did not look as if he would bite the worst boy in town. The man came up and asked the young mother about her sleeping child, and I inferred that the child had been sick, and was therefore unusually interesting to all the great, kind-hearted, simple circus family. He was good to the poor supes, and instructed them, not at all sneeringly, how best to manage the guy ropes for the nets when the trapeze events began.

There was, in fact, an air of pleasing domesticity diffused over the whole circus. This was, perhaps, partly an effect from our extreme proximity to its performances; I had never been on quite such intimate terms with equitation and aerostation of all kinds; but I think it was also largely from the good hearts of the whole company. A circus must become, during the season, a great brotherhood and sisterhood, especially sisterhood, and its members must forget finally that they are not united by ties of blood. I dare say they often become so, as husbands and wives and fathers and mothers, if not as brothers.

The domestic effect was heightened almost poignantly when a young lady in a Turkish-towel bath-gown came out and stood close by the band, waiting for her act on a barebacked horse of a conventional pattern. She really looked like a young goddess in a Turkish-towel bath-gown: goddesses must have worn bath-gowns, especially Venus, who was often imagined in the bath, or just out of it. But when this goddess threw off her bath-gown, and came bounding into the ring as gracefully as the clogs she wore on her slippers would let her, she was much more modestly dressed than most goddesses. What I am trying to say, however, is that, while she stood there by the band, she no more interested the musicians than if she were their collective sister. They were all in their shirt-sleeves for the sake of the coolness, and they banged and trumpeted and fluted away as indifferent to her as so many born brothers.

Indeed, when the gyrations of her horse brought her to our side of the ring, she was visibly not so youthful and not so divine as she might have been; but the girl who did the trapeze acts, and did them wonderfully, left nothing to be desired in that regard; though really I do not see why we who have neither youth nor beauty should always expect it of other people. I think it would have been quite enough for her to do the trapeze acts so perfectly; but her being so pretty certainly added a poignancy to the contemplation of her perils. One could follow every motion of her anxiety in that close proximity: the tremor of her chin as she bit her lips before taking her flight through the air, the straining eagerness of her eye as she measured the distance, the frown with which she forbade herself any shrinking or reluctance.

III.

How strange is life, how sad and perplexing its contradictions! Why should such an exhibition as that be supposed to give pleasure? Perhaps it does not give pleasure, but is only a necessary fulfilment of one of the many delusions we are in with regard to each other in this bewildering world. They are of all sorts and degrees, these delusions, and I suppose that in the last analysis it was not pleasure I got from the clown and his clowning, clowned he ever so merrily. I remember that I liked hearing his old jokes, not because they were jokes, but because they were old and endeared by long association. He sang one song which I must have heard him sing at my first circus (I am sure it was he), about "Things that I don't like to see," and I heartily agreed with him that his book of songs, which he sent round to be sold, was fully worth the half-dime asked for it, though I did not buy it.

Perhaps the rival author in me withheld me, but, as a brother man, I will not allow that I did not feel for him and suffer with him because of the thick, white pigment which plentifully coated his face, and, with the sweat drops upon it, made me think of a newly painted wall in the rain. He was infinitely older than his personality, than his oldest joke (though you never can be sure how old a joke is), and, representatively, I dare say he outdated the pyramids. They must have made clowns whiten their faces in the dawn of time, and no doubt there were drolls among the antediluvians who enhanced the effect of their fun by that means. All the same, I pitied this clown for it, and I fancied in his wildest waggery the note of a real irascibility. Shall I say that he seemed the only member of that little circus who was not of an amiable temper? But I do not blame him, and I think it much to have seen a clown once more who jested audibly with the ringmaster and always got the better of him in repartee. It was long since I had known that pleasure.

IV.

Throughout the performance at this circus I was troubled by a curious question, whether it were really of the same moral and material grandeur as the circuses it brought to memory, or whether these were thin and slight, too. We all know how the places of our childhood, the heights, the distances, shrink and dwindle when we go back to them, and was it possible that I had been deceived in the splendor of my early circuses? The doubt was painful, but I was forced to own that there might be more truth in it than in a blind fealty to their remembered magnificence. Very likely circuses have grown not only in size, but in the richness and variety of their entertainments, and I was spoiled for the simple joys of this. But I could see no reflection of my dissatisfaction on the young faces around me, and I must confess that there was at least so much of the circus that I left when it was half over. I meant to go into the side-shows and see the fat woman and the living skeleton, and take the giant by the hand and the armless man by his friendly foot, if I might be so honored. But I did none of these things, and I am willing to believe the fault was in me, if I was disappointed in the circus. It was I who had shrunk and dwindled, and not it. To real boys it was still the size of the firmament, and was a world of wonders and delights. At least I can recognize this fact now, and can rejoice in the peaceful progress all over the country of the simple circuses which the towns never see, but which help to render the summer fairer and brighter to the unspoiled eyes and hearts they appeal to. I hope it will be long before they cease to find profit in the pleasure they give.

A SHE HAMLET

The other night as I sat before the curtain of the Garden Theatre and waited for it to rise upon the Hamlet of Mme. Bernhardt, a thrill of the rich expectation which cannot fail to precede the rise of any curtain upon any Hamlet passed through my eager frame. There is, indeed, no scene of drama which is of a finer horror (eighteenth-century horror) than that which opens the great tragedy. The sentry pacing up and down upon the platform at Elsinore under the winter night; the greeting between him and the comrade arriving to relieve him, with its hints of the bitter cold; the entrance of Horatio and Marcellus to these before they can part; the mention of the ghost, and, while the soldiers are in the act of protesting it a veridical phantom, the apparition of the ghost, taking the word from their lips and hushing all into a pulseless awe: what could be more simply and sublimely real, more naturally supernatural? What promise of high mystical things to come there is in the mere syllabing of the noble verse, and how it enlarges us from ourselves, for that time at least, to a disembodied unity with the troubled soul whose martyrdom seems foreboded in the solemn accents! As the many Hamlets on which the curtain had risen in my time passed in long procession through my memory, I seemed to myself so much of their world, and so little of the world that arrogantly calls itself the actual

one, that I should hardly have been surprised to find myself one of the less considered persons of the drama who were seen but not heard in its course.

I.

The trouble in judging anything is that if you have the materials for an intelligent criticism, the case is already prejudiced in your hands. You do not bring a free mind to it, and all your efforts to free your mind are a species of gymnastics more or less admirable, but not really effective for the purpose. The best way is to own yourself unfair at the start, and then you can have some hope of doing yourself justice, if not your subject. In other words, if you went to see the Hamlet of Mme. Bernhardt frankly expecting to be disappointed, you were less likely in the end to be disappointed in your expectations, and you could not blame her if you were. To be ideally fair to that representation, it would be better not to have known any other Hamlet, and, above all, the Hamlet of Shakespeare.

From the first it was evident that she had three things overwhelmingly against her--her sex, her race, and her speech. You never ceased to feel for a moment that it was a woman who was doing that melancholy Dane, and that the woman was a Jewess, and the Jewess a French Jewess. These three removes put a gulf impassable between her utmost skill and the impassioned irresolution of that inscrutable Northern nature which is in nothing so masculine as its feminine reluctances and hesitations, or so little French as in those obscure emotions which the English poetry expressed with more than Gallic clearness, but which the French words always failed to convey. The battle was lost from the first, and all you could feel about it for the rest was that if it was magnificent it was not war.

While the battle went on I was the more anxious to be fair, because I had, as it were, pre-espoused the winning side; and I welcomed, in the interest of critical impartiality, another Hamlet which came to mind, through readily traceable associations. This was a Hamlet also of French extraction in the skill and school of the actor, but as much more deeply derived than the Hamlet of Mme. Bernhardt as the large imagination of Charles Fechter transcended in its virile range the effect of her subtlest womanish intuition. His was the first blond Hamlet known to our stage, and hers was also blond, if a reddish-yellow wig may stand for a complexion; and it was of the quality of his Hamlet in masterly technique.

II.

The Hamlet of Fechter, which rose ghostlike out of the gulf of the past,

and cloudily possessed the stage where the Hamlet of Mme. Bernhardt was figuring, was called a romantic Hamlet thirty years ago; and so it was in being a break from the classic Hamlets of the Anglo-American theatre. It was romantic as Shakespeare himself was romantic, in an elder sense of the word, and not romanticistic as Dumas was romanticistic. It was, therefore, the most realistic Hamlet ever yet seen, because the most naturally poetic. Mme. Bernhardt recalled it by the perfection of her school; for Fechter's poetic naturalness differed from the conventionality of the accepted Hamlets in nothing so much as the superiority of its self-instruction. In Mme. Bernhardt's Hamlet, as in his, nothing was trusted to chance, or "inspiration." Good or bad, what one saw was what was meant to be seen. When Fechter played Edmond Dantes or Claude Melnotte, he put reality into those preposterous inventions, and in Hamlet even his alien accent helped him vitalize the part; it might be held to be nearer the Elizabethan accent than ours; and after all, you said Hamlet was a foreigner, and in your high content with what he gave you did not mind its being in a broken vessel. When he challenged the ghost with "I call thee keeng, father, rawl-Dane," you would hardly have had the erring utterance bettered. It sufficed as it was; and when he said to Rosencrantz, "Will you pleh upon this pyip?" it was with such a princely authority and comradely entreaty that you made no note of the slips in the vowels except to have pleasure of their quaintness afterwards. For the most part you were not aware of these betrayals of his speech; and in certain high things it was soul interpreted to soul through the poetry of Shakespeare so finely, so directly, that there was scarcely a sense of the histrionic means.

He put such divine despair into the words, "Except my life, except my life, except my life!" following the mockery with which he had assured Polonius there was nothing he would more willingly part withal than his leave, that the heart-break of them had lingered with me for thirty years, and I had been alert for them with every Hamlet since. But before I knew, Mme. Bernhardt had uttered them with no effect whatever. Her Hamlet, indeed, cut many of the things that we have learned to think the points of Hamlet, and it so transformed others by its interpretation of the translator's interpretation of Shakespeare that they passed unrecognized. Soliloquies are the weak invention of the enemy, for the most part, but as such things go that soliloquy of Hamlet's, "To be or not to be," is at least very noble poetry; and yet Mme. Bernhardt was so unimpressive in it that you scarcely noticed the act of its delivery. Perhaps this happened because the sumptuous and sombre melancholy of Shakespeare's thought was transmitted in phrases that refused it its proper mystery. But there was always a hardness, not always from the translation, upon this feminine Hamlet. It was like a thick shell with no crevice in it through which the tenderness of Shakespeare's Hamlet could show, except for the one moment at Ophelia's grave, where he reproaches Laertes with those pathetic words

"What is the reason that you use me thus?
I loved you ever; but it is no matter."

Here Mme. Bernhardt betrayed a real grief, but as a woman would, and not a man. At the close of the Gonzago play, when Hamlet triumphs in a mad

whirl, her Hamlet hopped up and down like a mischievous crow, a mischievous she-crow.

There was no repose in her Hamlet, though there were moments of leaden lapse which suggested physical exhaustion; and there was no range in her elocution expressive of the large vibration of that tormented spirit. Her voice dropped out, or jerked itself out, and in the crises of strong emotion it was the voice of a scolding or a hysterical woman. At times her movements, which she must have studied so hard to master, were drolly womanish, especially those of the whole person. Her quickened pace was a woman's nervous little run, and not a man's swift stride; and to give herself due stature, it was her foible to wear a woman's high heels to her shoes, and she could not help tilting on them.

In the scene with the queen after the play, most English and American Hamlets have required her to look upon the counterfeit presentment of two brothers in miniatures something the size of tea-plates; but Mme. Bernhardt's preferred full-length, life-size family portraits. The dead king's effigy did not appear a flattered likeness in the scene-painter's art, but it was useful in disclosing his ghost by giving place to it in the wall at the right moment. She achieved a novelty by this treatment of the portraits, and she achieved a novelty in the tone she took with the wretched queen. Hamlet appeared to scold her mother, but though it could be said that her mother deserved a scolding, was it the part of a good daughter to give it her?

One should, of course, say a good son, but long before this it had become impossible to think at all of Mme. Bernhardt's Hamlet as a man, if it ever had been possible. She had traversed the bounds which tradition as well as nature has set, and violated the only condition upon which an actress may personate a man. This condition is that there shall be always a hint of comedy in the part, that the spectator shall know all the time that the actress is a woman, and that she shall confess herself such before the play is over; she shall be fascinating in the guise of a man only because she is so much more intensely a woman in it. Shakespeare had rather a fancy for women in men's roles, which, as women's roles in his time were always taken by pretty and clever boys, could be more naturally managed than now. But when it came to the eclairsissement, and the pretty boys, who had been playing the parts of women disguised as men, had to own themselves women, the effect must have been confused if not weakened. If Mme. Bernhardt, in the necessity of doing something Shakespearean, had chosen to do Rosalind, or Viola, or Portia, she could have done it with all the modern advantages of women in men's roles. These characters are, of course, "lighter motions bounded in a shallower brain" than the creation she aimed at; but she could at least have made much of them, and she does not make much of Hamlet.

III.

The strongest reason against any woman Hamlet is that it does violence to

an ideal. Literature is not so rich in great imaginary masculine types that we can afford to have them transformed to women; and after seeing Mme. Bernhardt's Hamlet no one can altogether liberate himself from the fancy that the Prince of Denmark was a girl of uncertain age, with crises of mannishness in which she did not seem quite a lady. Hamlet is in nothing more a man than in the things to which as a man he found himself unequal; for as a woman he would have been easily superior to them. If we could suppose him a woman as Mme. Bernhardt, in spite of herself, invites us to do, we could only suppose him to have solved his perplexities with the delightful precipitation of his putative sex. As the niece of a wicked uncle, who in that case would have had to be a wicked aunt, wedded to Hamlet's father hard upon the murder of her mother, she would have made short work of her vengeance. No fine scruples would have delayed her; she would not have had a moment's question whether she had not better kill herself; she would have out with her bare bodkin and ended the doubt by first passing it through her aunt's breast.

To be sure, there would then have been no play of "Hamlet," as we have it; but a Hamlet like that imagined, a frankly feminine Hamlet, Mme. Bernhardt could have rendered wonderfully. It is in attempting a masculine Hamlet that she transcends the imaginable and violates an ideal. It is not thinkable. After you have seen it done, you say, as Mr. Clemens is said to have said of bicycling: "Yes, I have seen it, but it's impossible. It doesn't stand to reason."

Art, like law, is the perfection of reason, and whatever is unreasonable in the work of an artist is inartistic. By the time I had reached these bold conclusions I was ready to deduce a principle from them, and to declare that in a true civilization such a thing as that Hamlet would be forbidden, as an offence against public morals, a violence to something precious and sacred.

In the absence of any public regulation the precious and sacred ideals in the arts must be trusted to the several artists, who bring themselves to judgment when they violate them. After Mme. Bernhardt was perversely willing to attempt the part of Hamlet, the question whether she did it well or not was of slight consequence. She had already made her failure in wishing to play the part. Her wish impugned her greatness as an artist; of a really great actress it would have been as unimaginable as the assumption of a sublime feminine role by a really great actor. There is an obscure law in this matter which it would be interesting to trace, but for the present I must leave the inquiry with the reader. I can note merely that it seems somehow more permissible for women in imaginary actions to figure as men than for men to figure as women. In the theatre we have conjectured how and why this may be, but the privilege, for less obvious reasons, seems yet more liberally granted in fiction. A woman may tell a story in the character of a man and not give offence, but a man cannot write a novel in autobiographical form from the personality of a woman without imparting the sense of something unwholesome. One feels this true even in the work of such a master as Tolstoy, whose Katia is a case in point. Perhaps a woman may play Hamlet with a less shocking effect than a man may play Desdemona, but all the same she must not play

Hamlet at all. That sublime ideal is the property of the human imagination, and may not be profaned by a talent enamoured of the impossible. No harm could be done by the broadest burlesque, the most irreverent travesty, for these would still leave the ideal untouched. Hamlet, after all the horse-play, would be Hamlet; but Hamlet played by a woman, to satisfy her caprice, or to feed her famine for a fresh effect, is Hamlet disabled, for a long time, at least, in its vital essence. I felt that it would take many returns to the Hamlet of Shakespeare to efface the impression of Mme. Bernhardt's Hamlet; and as I prepared to escape from my row of stalls in the darkening theatre, I experienced a noble shame for having seen the Dane so disnatured, to use Mr. Lowell's word. I had not been obliged to come; I had voluntarily shared in the wrong done; by my presence I had made myself an accomplice in the wrong. It was high ground, but not too high for me, and I recovered a measure of self-respect in assuming it.

THE MIDNIGHT PLATOON

He had often heard of it. Connoisseurs of such matters, young newspaper men trying to make literature out of life and smuggle it into print under the guard of unwary editors, and young authors eager to get life into their literature, had recommended it to him as one of the most impressive sights of the city; and he had willingly agreed with them that he ought to see it. He imagined it very dramatic, and he was surprised to find it in his experience so largely subjective. If there was any drama at all it was wholly in his own consciousness. But the thing was certainly impressive in its way.

I.

He thought it a great piece of luck that he should come upon it by chance, and so long after he had forgotten about it that he was surprised to recognize it for the spectacle he had often promised himself the pleasure of seeing.

Pleasure is the right word; for pleasure of the painful sort that all hedonists will easily imagine was what he expected to get from it; though upon the face of it there seems no reason why a man should delight to see his fellow-men waiting in the winter street for the midnight dole of bread which must in some cases be their only meal from the last midnight to the next midnight. But the mere thought of it gave him pleasure, and the sight of it, from the very first instant. He was proud of knowing just what it was at once, with the sort of pride which one has in knowing an earthquake, though one has never felt one before. He saw the double file of men stretching up one street, and stretching down the other from

the corner of the bakery where the loaves were to be given out on the stroke of twelve, and he hugged himself in a luxurious content with his perspicacity.

It was all the more comfortable to do this because he was in a coup, warmly shut against the sharp, wholesome Christmas-week weather, and was wrapped to the chin in a long fur overcoat, which he wore that night as a duty to his family, with a conscience against taking cold and alarming them for his health. He now practised another piece of self-denial: he let the cabman drive rapidly past the interesting spectacle, and carry him to the house where he was going to fetch away the child from the Christmas party. He wished to be in good time, so as to save the child from anxiety about his coming; but he promised himself to stop, going back, and glut his sensibility in a leisurely study of the scene. He got the child, with her arms full of things from the Christmas-tree, into the coup, and then he said to the cabman, respectfully leaning as far over from his box to listen as his thick greatcoat would let him: "When you get up there near that bakery again, drive slowly. I want to have a look at those men."

"All right, sir," said the driver intelligently, and he found his way skilfully out of the street among the high banks of the seasonable Christmas-week snow, which the street-cleaners had heaped up there till they could get round to it with their carts.

When they were in Broadway again it seemed lonelier and silenter than it was a few minutes before. Except for their own coup, the cable-cars, with their flaming foreheads, and the mechanical clangor of their gongs at the corners, seemed to have it altogether to themselves. A tall, lumbering United States mail van rolled by, and impressed my friend in the coup with a cheap and agreeable sense of mystery relative to the letters it was carrying to their varied destination at the Grand Central Station. He listened with half an ear to the child's account of the fun she had at the party, and he watched with both eyes for the sight of the men waiting at the bakery for the charity of the midnight loaves.

He played with a fear that they might all have vanished, and with an apprehension that the cabman might forget and whirl him rapidly by the place where he had left them. But the driver remembered, and checked his horses in good time; and there were the men still, but in even greater number than before, stretching farther up Broadway and farther out along the side street. They stood slouched in dim and solemn phalanx under the night sky, so seasonably, clear and frostily atwinkle with Christmas-week stars; two by two they stood, slouched close together, perhaps for their mutual warmth, perhaps in an unconscious effort to get near the door where the loaves were to be given out, in time to share in them before they were all gone.

My friend's heart beat with glad anticipation. He was really to see this important, this representative thing to the greatest possible advantage. He rapidly explained to his companion that the giver of the midnight loaves got rid of what was left of his daily bread in that way: the next day it could not be sold, and he preferred to give it away to those who needed it, rather than try to find his account in it otherwise. She understood, and he tried to think that sometimes coffee was given with the bread, but he could not make sure of this, though he would have liked very much to have it done; it would have been much more dramatic. Afterwards he learned that it was done, and he was proud of having fancied it.

He decided that when he came alongside of the Broadway file he would get out, and go to the side door of the bakery and watch the men receiving the bread. Perhaps he would find courage to speak to them, and ask them about themselves. At the time it did not strike him that it would be indecent.

A great many things about them were open to reasonable conjecture. It was not probable that they were any of them there for their health, as the saying is. They were all there because they were hungry, or else they were there in behalf of some one else who was hungry. But it was always possible that some of them were impostors, and he wondered if any test was applied to them that would prove them deserving or undeserving. If one were poor, one ought to be deserving; if one were rich, it did not so much matter.

It seemed to him very likely that if he asked these men questions they would tell him lies. A fantastic association of their double files and those of the galley-slaves whom Don Quixote released, with the tonguey Gines de Passamonte at their head, came into his mind. He smiled, and then he thought how these men were really a sort of slaves and convicts --slaves to want and self-convicted of poverty. All at once he fancied them actually manacled there together, two by two, a coffle of captives taken in some cruel foray, and driven to a market where no man wanted to buy. He thought how old their slavery was; and he wondered if it would ever be abolished, as other slaveries had been. Would the world ever outlive it? Would some New-Year's day come when some President would proclaim, amid some dire struggle, that their slavery was to be no more? That would be fine.

III.

He noticed how still the most of them were. A few of them stepped a little out of the line, and stamped to shake off the cold; but all the rest remained motionless, shrinking into themselves, and closer together. They might have been their own dismal ghosts, they were so still, with no more need of defence from the cold than the dead have.

He observed now that not one among them had a fur overcoat on; and at a

second glance he saw that there was not an overcoat of any kind among them. He made his reflection that if any of them were impostors, and not true men, with real hunger, and if they were alive to feel that stiff, wholesome, Christmas-week cold, they were justly punished for their deceit.

He was interested by the celerity, the simultaneity of his impressions, his reflections. It occurred to him that his abnormal alertness must be something like that of a drowning person, or a person in mortal peril, and being perfectly safe and well, he was obscurely flattered by the fact.

To test his condition further he took note of the fine mass of the great dry-goods store on the hither corner, blocking itself out of the blue-black night, and of the Gothic beauty of the church beyond, so near that the coffle of captives might have issued from its sculptured portal, after vain prayer.

Fragments of conjecture, of speculation, drifted through his mind. How early did these files begin to form themselves for the midnight dole of bread? As early as ten, as nine o'clock? If so, did the fact argue habitual destitution, or merely habitual leisure? Did the slaves in the coffle make acquaintance, or remain strangers to one another, though they were closely neighbored night after night by their misery? Perhaps they joked away the weary hours of waiting; they must have their jokes. Which of them were old-comers, and which novices? Did they ever quarrel over questions of precedence? Had they some comity, some etiquette, which a man forced to leave his place could appeal to, and so get it back? Could one say to his next-hand man, "Will you please keep my place?" and would this man say to an interloper, "Excuse me, this place is engaged"? How was it with them, when the coffle worked slowly or swiftly past the door where the bread and coffee were given out, and word passed to the rear that the supply was exhausted? This must sometimes happen, and what did they do then?

IV.

My friend did not quite like to think. Vague, reproachful thoughts for all the remote and immediate luxury of his life passed through his mind. If he reformed that and gave the saving to hunger and cold? But what was the use? There was so much hunger, so much cold, that it could not go round.

The cabman was obeying his orders too faithfully. He was not only walking by the Broadway coffle, he was creeping by. His action caught the notice of the slaves, and as the coups passed them they all turned and faced it, like soldiers under review making ready to salute a superior. They were perfectly silent, perfectly respectful, but their eyes seemed to pierce the coupe through and through.

My friend was suddenly aware of a certain quality of representivity; he stood to these men for all the ease and safety that they could never, never hope to know. He was Society: Society that was to be preserved because it embodies Civilization. He wondered if they hated him in his capacity of Better Classes. He no longer thought of getting out and watching their behavior as they took their bread and coffee. He would have liked to excuse that thought, and protest that he was ashamed of it; that he was their friend, and wished them well--as well as might be without the sacrifice of his own advantages or superfluities, which he could have persuaded them would be perfectly useless. He put his hand on that of his companion trembling on his arm with sympathy, or at least with intelligence.

"You mustn't mind. What we are and what we do is all right. It's what they are and what they suffer that's all wrong."

V.

"Does that view of the situation still satisfy you?" I asked, when he had told me of this singular experience; I liked his apparently not coloring it at all.

"I don't know," he answered. "It seems to be the only way out."

"Well, it's an easy way," I admitted, "and it's an idea that ought to gratify the midnight platoon."

THE BEACH AT ROCKAWAY

I confess that I cannot hear people rejoice in their summer sojourn as beyond the reach of excursionists without a certain rebellion; and yet I have to confess also that after spending a Sunday afternoon of late July, four or five years ago, with the excursionists at one of the beaches near New York, I was rather glad that my own summer sojourn was not within reach of them. I know very well that the excursionists must go somewhere, and as a man and a brother I am willing they should go anywhere, but as a friend of quiet and seclusion I should be sorry to have them come much where I am. It is not because I would deny them a share of any pleasure I enjoy, but because they are so many and I am so few that I think they would get all the pleasure and I none. I hope the reader will see how this attitude distinguishes me from the selfish people who inhumanly exult in their remoteness from excursionists.

I.

It was at Rockaway Beach that I saw these fellow-beings whose mere multitude was too much for me. They were otherwise wholly without offence towards me, and so far as I noted, towards each other; they were, in fact, the most entirely peaceable multitude I ever saw in any country, and the very quietest.

There were thousands, mounting well up towards tens of thousands, of them, in every variety of age and sex; yet I heard no voice lifted above the conversational level, except that of some infant ignorant of its privileges in a day at the sea-side, or some showman crying the attractions of the spectacle in his charge. I used to think the American crowds rather boisterous and unruly, and many years ago, when I lived in Italy, I celebrated the greater amiability and self-control of the Italian crowds. But we have certainly changed all that within a generation, and if what I saw the other day was a typical New York crowd, then the popular joy of our poorer classes is no longer the terror it once was to the peaceful observer. The tough was not visibly present, nor the toughness, either of the pure native East Side stock or of the Celtic extraction; yet there were large numbers of Americans with rather fewer recognizable Irish among the masses, who were mainly Germans, Russians, Poles, and the Jews of these several nationalities.

There was eating and drinking without limit, on every hand and in every kind, at the booths abounding in fried seafood, and at the tables under all the wide-spreading verandas of the hotels and restaurants; yet I saw not one drunken man, and of course not any drunken women. No one that I saw was even affected by drink, and no one was guilty of any rude or unseemly behavior. The crowd was, in short, a monument to the democratic ideal of life in that very important expression of life, personal conduct, I have not any notion who or what the people were, or how virtuous or vicious they privately might be; but I am sure that no society assemblage could be of a goodlier outside; and to be of a goodly outside is all that the mere spectator has a right to ask of any crowd.

I fancied, however, that great numbers of this crowd, or at least all the Americans in it, were Long-Islanders from the inland farms and villages within easy distance of the beach. They had probably the hereditary habit of coming to it, for it was a favorite resort in the time of their fathers and grandfathers, who had

--"many an hour whiled away
Listening to the breakers' roar
That washed the beach at Rockaway."

But the clothing store and the paper pattern have equalized the cheaper dress of the people so that you can no longer know citizen and countryman apart by their clothes, still less citizeness and countrywoman; and I can only conjecture that the foreign-looking folk I saw were from New York and Brooklyn. They came by boat, and came and went by the continually arriving and departing trains, and last but not least by bicycles, both

sexes. A few came in the public carriages and omnibuses of the neighborhood, but by far the vaster number whom neither the boats nor the trains had brought had their own vehicles, the all-pervading bicycles, which no one seemed so poor as not to be able to keep. The bicyclers stormed into the frantic village of the beach the whole afternoon, in the proportion of one woman to five men, and most of these must have ridden down on their wheels from the great cities. Boys ran about in the roadway with bunches of brasses, to check the wheels, and put them for safekeeping in what had once been the stable-yards of the hotels; the restaurants had racks for them, where you could see them in solid masses, side by side, for a hundred feet, and no shop was without its door-side rack, which the wheelman might slide his wheel into when he stopped for a soda, a cigar, or a sandwich. All along the road the gay bicycler and bicycless swarmed upon the piazzas of the inns, munching, lunching, while their wheels formed a fantastic decoration for the underpinning of the house and a novel balustering for the steps.

II.

The amusements provided for these throngs of people were not different from those provided for throngs of people everywhere, who must be of much the same mind and taste the world over. I had fine moments when I moved in an illusion of the Midway Plaisance; again I was at the Fete de Neuilly, with all of Paris but the accent about me; yet again the county agricultural fairs of my youth spread their spectral joys before me. At none of these places, however, was there a sounding sea or a mountainous chute, and I made haste to experience the variety these afforded, beginning with the chute, since the sea was always there, and the chute might be closed for the day if I waited to view it last. I meant only to enjoy the pleasure of others in it, and I confined my own participation to the ascent of the height from which the boat plunges down the watery steep into the oblong pool below. When I bought my ticket for the car that carried passengers up, they gave me also a pasteboard medal, certifying for me, "You have shot the chute," and I resolved to keep this and show it to doubting friends as a proof of my daring; but it is a curious evidence of my unfitness for such deceptions that I afterwards could not find the medal. So I will frankly own that for me it was quite enough to see others shoot the chute, and that I came tamely down myself in the car. There is a very charming view from the top, of the sea with its ships, and all the mad gayety of the shore, but of course my main object was to exult in the wild absurdity of those who shot the chute. There was always a lady among the people in the clumsy flat-boat that flew down the long track, and she tried usually to be a pretty girl, who clutched her friends and lovers and shrieked aloud in her flight; but sometimes it was a sober mother of a family, with her brood about her, who was probably meditating, all the way, the inculcation of their father for any harm that came of it. Apparently no harm came of it in any case.

The boat struck the water with the impetus gained from a half-perpendicular slide of a hundred feet, bounded high into the air, struck

again and again, and so flounced awkwardly across the pond to the farther shore, where the passengers debarked and went away to commune with their viscera, and to get their breath as they could. I did not ask any of them what their emotions or sensations were, but, so far as I could conjecture, the experience of shooting the chute must comprise the rare transport of a fall from a ten-story building and the delight of a tempestuous passage of the Atlantic, powerfully condensed.

The mere sight was so athletic that it took away any appetite I might have had to witness the feats of strength performed by Madame La Noire at the nearest booth on my coming out, though madame herself was at the door-to testify, in her own living picture, how much muscular force may be masked in vast masses of adipose. She had a weary, bored look, and was not without her pathos, poor soul, as few of those are who amuse the public; but I could not find her quite justifiable as a Sunday entertainment. One forgot, however, what day it was, and for the time I did not pretend to be so much better than my neighbors that I would not compromise upon a visit to, an animal show a little farther on. It was a pretty fair collection of beasts that had once been wild, perhaps, and in the cage of the lions there was a slight, sad-looking, long-haired young man, exciting them to madness by blows of a whip and pistol-shots whom I was extremely glad to have get away without being torn in pieces, or at least bitten in two. A little later I saw him at the door of the tent, very breathless, dishevelled, and as to his dress not of the spotlessness one could wish. But perhaps spotlessness is not compatible with the intimacy of lions and lionesses. He had had his little triumph; one spectator of his feat had declared that you would not see anything like that at Coney Island; and soiled and dusty as he was in his cotton tights, he was preferable to the living picture of a young lady whom he replaced as an attraction of the show. It was professedly a moral show; the manager exhorted us as we came out to say whether it was good or not; and in the box-office sat a kind and motherly faced matron who would have apparently abhorred to look upon a living picture at any distance, much less have it at her elbow.

Upon the whole, there seemed a melancholy mistake in it all; the people to whom the showmen made their appeal were all so much better, evidently, than the showmen supposed; the showmen themselves appeared harmless enough, and one could not say that there was personally any harm in the living picture; rather she looked listless and dull, but as to the face respectable enough.

I would not give the impression that most of the amusements were not in every respect decorous. As a means of pleasure, the merry-go-round, both horizontal with horses and vertical with swinging cradles, prevailed, and was none the worse for being called by the French name of carrousel, for our people aniglicize the word, and squeeze the last drop of Gallic wickedness from it by pronouncing it carousal. At every other step there were machines for weighing you and ascertaining your height; there were photographers' booths, and X-ray apparatus for showing you the inside of your watch; and in one open tent I saw a gentleman (with his back to the public) having his fortune read in the lines of his hand by an Egyptian seeress. Of course there was everywhere soda, and places of the softer

drinks abounded.

III.

I think you could only get a hard drink by ordering something to eat and sitting down to your wine or beer at a table. Again I say that I saw no effects of drink in the crowd, and in one of the great restaurants built out over the sea on piers, where there was perpetual dancing to the braying of a brass-band, the cotillon had no fire imparted to its figures by the fumes of the bar. In fact it was a very rigid sobriety that reigned here, governing the common behavior by means of the placards which hung from the roof over the heads of the dancers, and repeatedly announced that gentlemen were not allowed to dance together, or to carry umbrellas or canes while dancing, while all were entreated not to spit on the floor.

The dancers looked happy and harmless, if not very wise or splendid; they seemed people of the same simple neighborhoods, village lovers, young wives and husbands, and parties of friends who had come together for the day's pleasure. A slight mother, much weighed down by a heavy baby, passed, rapt in an innocent envy of them, and I think she and the child's father meant to join them as soon as they could find a place where to lay it. Almost any place would do; at another great restaurant I saw two chairs faced together, and a baby sleeping on them as quietly amid the coming and going of lagers and frankfurters as if in its cradle at home.

Lagers and frankfurters were much in evidence everywhere, especially frankfurters, which seemed to have whole booths devoted to broiling them. They disputed this dignity with soft-shell crabs, and sections of eels, piled attractively on large platters, or sizzling to an impassioned brown in deep skilletts of fat. The old acrid smell of frying brought back many holidays of Italy to me, and I was again at times on the Riva at Venice, and in the Mercato Vecchio at Florence. But the Continental Sunday cannot be felt to have quite replaced the old American Sabbath yet; the Puritan leaven works still, and though so many of our own people consent willingly to the transformation, I fancy they always enjoy themselves on Sunday with a certain consciousness of wrong-doing.

IV.

I have already said that the spectator quite lost sense of what day it was. Nothing could be more secular than all the sights and sounds. It was the Fourth of July, less the fire-crackers and the drunkenness, and it was the high day of the week. But if it was very wicked, and I must recognize that the scene would be shocking to most of my readers, I feel bound to say that the people themselves did not look wicked. They looked harmless; they even looked good, the most of them. I am sorry to say

they were not very good-looking. The women were pretty enough, and the men were handsome enough; perhaps the average was higher in respect of beauty than the average is anywhere else; I was lately from New England, where the people were distinctly more hard-favored; but among all those thousands at Rockaway I found no striking types. It may be that as we grow older and our satisfaction with our own looks wanes, we become more fastidious as to the looks of others. At any rate, there seems to be much less beauty in the world than there was thirty or forty years ago.

On the other hand, the dresses seem indefinitely prettier, as they should be in compensation. When we were all so handsome we could well afford to wear hoops or peg-top trousers, but now it is different, and the poor things must eke out their personal ungainliness with all the devices of the modiste and the tailor. I do not mean that there was any distinction in the dress of the crowd, but I saw nothing positively ugly or grotesquely out of taste. The costumes were as good as the customs, and I have already celebrated the manners of this crowd. I believe I must except the costumes of the bicyclesses, who were unfailingly dumpy in effect when dismounted, and who were all the more lamentable for tottering about, in their short skirts, upon the tips of their narrow little, sharp-pointed, silly high-heeled shoes. How severe I am! But those high heels seemed to take all honesty from their daring in the wholesome exercise of the wheel, and to keep them in the tradition of cheap coquetry still, and imbecilly dependent.

V.

I have almost forgotten in the interest of the human spectacle that there is a sea somewhere about at Rockaway Beach, and it is this that the people have come for. I might well forget that modest sea, it is so built out of sight by the restaurants and bath-houses and switch-backs and shops that border it, and by the hotels and saloons and shows flaring along the road that divides the village, and the planked streets that intersect this. But if you walk southward on any of the streets, you presently find the planks foundering in sand, which drifts far up over them, and then you find yourself in full sight of the ocean and the ocean bathing. Swarms and heaps of people in all lolling and lying and wallowing shapes strew the beach, and the water is full of slopping and shouting and shrieking human creatures, clinging with bare white arms to the life-lines that run from the shore to the buoys; beyond these the lifeguard stays himself in his boat with outspread oars, and rocks on the incoming surf.

All that you can say of it is that it is queer. It is not picturesque, or poetic, or dramatic; it is queer. An enfiling glance gives this impression and no other; if you go to the balcony of the nearest marine restaurant for a flanking eye-shot, it is still queer, with the added effect, in all those arms upstretched to the life-lines, of frogs' legs inverted in a downward plunge.

On the sand before this spectacle I talked with a philosopher of humble condition who backed upon me and knocked my umbrella out of my hand. This made us beg each other's pardon; he said that he did not know I was there, and I said it did not matter. Then we both looked at the bathing, and he said:

"I don't like that."

"Why," I asked, "do you see any harm in it?"

"No. But I don't like the looks of it. It ain't nice. It's queer."

It was indeed like one of those uncomfortable dreams where you are not dressed sufficiently for company, or perhaps at all, and yet are making a very public appearance. This promiscuous bathing was not much in excess of the convention that governs the sea-bathing of the politest people; it could not be; and it was marked by no grave misconduct. Here and there a gentleman was teaching a lady to swim, with his arms round her; here and there a wild nereid was splashing another; a young Jew pursued a flight of naiads with a section of dead eel in his hand. But otherwise all was a damp and dreary decorum. I challenged my philosopher in vain for a specific cause of his dislike of the scene.

Most of the people on the sand were in bathing-dress, but there were a multitude of others who had apparently come for the sea-air and not the sea-bathing. A mother sat with a sick child on her knees; babies were cradled in the sand asleep, and people walked carefully round and over them. There were everywhere a great many poor mothers and children, who seemed getting the most of the good that was going.

VI.

But upon the whole, though I drove away from the beach celebrating the good temper and the good order of the scene to an applausive driver, I have since thought of it as rather melancholy. It was in fact no wiser or livelier than a society function in the means of enjoyment it afforded. The best thing about it was that it left the guests very much to their own devices. The established pleasures were clumsy and tiresome-looking; but one could eschew them. The more of them one eschewed, the merrier perhaps; for I doubt if the race is formed for much pleasure; and even a day's rest is more than most people can bear. They endure it in passing, but they get home weary and cross, even after a twenty-mile run on the wheel. The road, by-the-by, was full of homeward wheels by this time, single and double and tandem, and my driver professed that their multitude greatly increased the difficulties of his profession.

SAWDUST IN THE ARENA

It was in the old Roman arena of beautiful Verona that the circus events I wish to speak of took place; in fact, I had the honor and profit of seeing two circuses there. Or, strictly speaking, it was one entire circus that I saw, and the unique speciality of another, the dying glory of a circus on its last legs, the triumphal fall of a circus superb in adversity.

I.

The entire circus was altogether Italian, with the exception of the clowns, who, to the credit of our nation, are always Americans, or advertised as such, in Italy. Its chief and almost absorbing event was a reproduction of the tournament which had then lately been held at Rome in celebration of Prince Tommaso's coming of age, and for a copy of a copy it was really fine. It had fitness in the arena, which must have witnessed many such mediaeval shows in their time, and I am sensible still of the pleasure its effects of color gave me. There was one beautiful woman, a red blonde in a green velvet gown, who might have ridden, as she was, out of a canvas of Titian's, if he had ever painted equestrian pictures, and who at any rate was an excellent Carpaccio. Then, the 'Clowns Americani' were very amusing, from a platform devoted solely to them, and it was a source of pride if not of joy with me to think that we were almost the only people present who understood their jokes. In the vast oval of the arena, however, the circus ring looked very little, not half so large, say, as the rim of a lady's hat in front of you at the play; and on the gradines of the ancient amphitheatre we were all such a great way off that a good field-glass would have been needed to distinguish the features of the actors. I could not make out, therefore, whether the 'Clowns Americani' had the national expression or not, but one of them, I am sorry to say, spoke the United States language with a cockney accent. I suspect that he was an Englishman who had passed himself off upon the Italian management as a true Yankee, and who had formed himself upon our school of clowning, just as some of the recent English humorists have patterned after certain famous wits of ours. I do not know that I would have exposed this impostor, even if occasion had offered, for, after all, his fraud was a tribute to our own primacy in clowning, and the Veronese were none the worse for his erring aspirates.

The audience was for me the best part of the spectacle, as the audience always is in Italy, and I indulged my fancy in some cheap excursions concerning the place and people. I reflected that it was the same race essentially as that which used to watch the gladiatorial shows in that arena when it was new, and that very possibly there were among these spectators persons of the same blood as those Veronese patricians who had left their names carved on the front of the gradines in places, to claim

this or that seat for their own. In fact, there was so little difference, probably, in their qualities, from that time to this, that I felt the process of the generations to be a sort of impertinence; and if Nature had been present, I might very well have asked her why, when she had once arrived at a given expression of humanity, she must go on repeating it indefinitely? How were all those similar souls to know themselves apart in their common eternity? Merely to have been differently circumstanced in time did not seem enough; and I think Nature would have been puzzled to answer me. But perhaps not; she may have had her reasons, as that you cannot have too much of a good thing, and that when the type was so fine in most respects as the Italian you could not do better than go on repeating impressions from it.

Certainly I myself could have wished no variation from it in the young officer of 'bersaglieri', who had come down from antiquity to the topmost gradine of the arena over against me, and stood there defined against the clear evening sky, one hand on his hip, and the other at his side, while his thin cockerel plumes streamed in the light wind. I have since wondered if he knew how beautiful he was, and I am sure that, if he did not, all the women there did, and that was doubtless enough for the young officer of 'bersaglieri'.

II.

I think that he was preliminary to the sole event of that partial circus I have mentioned. This event was one that I have often witnessed elsewhere, but never in such noble and worthy keeping. The top of the outer arena wall must itself be fifty feet high, and the pole in the centre of its oval seemed to rise fifty feet higher yet. At its base an immense net was stretched, and a man in a Prince Albert coat and a derby hat was figuring about, anxiously directing the workmen who were fixing the guy-ropes, and testing every particular of the preparation with his own hands. While this went on, a young girl ran out into the arena, and, after a bow to the spectators, quickly mounted to the top of the pole, where she presently stood in statuesque beauty that took all eyes even from the loveliness of the officer of 'bersaglieri'. There the man in the Prince Albert coat and the derby hat stepped back from the net and looked up at her.

She called down, in English that sounded like some delocalized, denaturalized speech, it was so strange then and there, "Is it all right?"

He shouted back in the same alienated tongue, "Yes; keep to the left," and she dived straight downward in the long plunge, till, just before she reached the net, she turned a quick somersault into its elastic mesh.

It was all so exquisitely graceful that one forgot how wickedly dangerous it was; but I think that the brief English colloquy was the great wonder of the event for me, and I doubt if I could ever have been perfectly

happy again, if chance had not amiably suffered me to satisfy my curiosity concerning the speakers. A few evenings after that, I was at that copy of a copy of a tournament, and, a few gradines below me, I saw the man of the Prince Albert coat and the derby hat. I had already made up my mind that he was an American, for I supposed that an Englishman would rather perish than wear such a coat with such a hat, and as I had wished all my life to speak to a circus-man, I went down and boldly accosted him. "Are you a brother Yankee?" I asked, and he laughed, and confessed that he was an Englishman, but he said he was glad to meet any one who spoke English, and he made a place for me by his side. He was very willing to tell how he happened to be there, and he explained that he was the manager of a circus, which had been playing to very good business all winter in Spain. In an evil hour he decided to come to Italy, but he found the prices so ruinously low that he was forced to disband his company. This diving girl was all that remained to him of its many attractions, and he was trying to make a living for both in a country where the admission to a circus was six of our cents, with fifty for a reserved seat. But he was about to give it up and come to America, where he said Barnum had offered him an engagement. I hope he found it profitable, and is long since an American citizen, with as good right as any of us to wear a Prince Albert coat with a derby hat.

III.

There used to be very good circuses in Venice, where many Venetians had the only opportunity of their lives to see a horse. The horses were the great attraction for them, and, perhaps in concession to their habitual destitution in this respect, the riding was providentially very good. It was so good that it did not bore me, as circus-riding mostly does, especially that of the silk-clad jockey who stands in his high boots, on his back-bared horse, and ends by waving an American flag in triumph at having been so tiresome.

I am at a loss to know why they make such an ado about the lady who jumps through paper hoops, which have first had holes poked in them to render her transit easy, or why it should be thought such a merit in her to hop over a succession of banners which are swept under her feet in a manner to minify her exertion almost to nothing, but I observe it is so at all circuses. At my first Venetian circus, which was on a broad expanse of the Riva degli Schiavoni, there was a girl who flung herself to the ground and back to her horse again, holding by his mane with one hand, quite like the goddess out of the bath-gown at my village circus the other day; and apparently there are more circuses in the world than circus events. It must be as hard to think up anything new in that kind as in romanticistic fiction, which circus-acting otherwise largely resembles.

At a circus which played all one winter in Florence I saw for the first time--outside of polite society--the clown in evening dress, who now seems essential to all circuses of metropolitan pretensions, and whom I missed

so gladly at my village circus. He is nearly as futile as the lady clown, who is one of the saddest and strangest developments of New Womanhood.

Of the clowns who do not speak, I believe I like most the clown who catches a succession of peak-crowned soft hats on his head, when thrown across the ring by an accomplice. This is a very pretty sight always, and at the Hippodrome in Paris I once saw a gifted creature take his stand high up on the benches among the audience and catch these hats on his head from a flight of a hundred feet through the air. This made me proud of human nature, which is often so humiliating; and altogether I do not think that after a real country circus there are many better things in life than the Hippodrome. It had a state, a dignity, a smoothness, a polish, which I should not know where to match, and when the superb coach drove into the ring to convey the lady performers to the scene of their events, there was a majesty in the effect which I doubt if courts have the power to rival. Still, it should be remembered that I have never been at court, and speak from a knowledge of the Hippodrome only.

AT A DIME MUSEUM

"I see," said my friend, "that you have been writing a good deal about the theatre during the past winter. You have been attacking its high hats and its high prices, and its low morals; and I suppose that you think you have done good, as people call it."

I.

This seemed like a challenge of some sort, and I prepared myself to take it up warily. I said I should be very sorry to do good, as people called it; because such a line of action nearly always ended in spiritual pride for the doer and general demoralization for the doer. Still, I said, a law had lately been passed in Ohio giving a man who found himself behind a high hat at the theatre a claim for damages against the manager; and if the passage of this law could be traced ever so faintly and indirectly to my teachings, I should not altogether grieve for the good I had done. I added that if all the States should pass such a law, and other laws fixing a low price for a certain number of seats at the theatres, or obliging the managers to give one free performance every month, as the law does in Paris, and should then forbid indecent and immoral plays--

"I see what you mean," said my friend, a little impatiently. "You mean sumptuary legislation. But I have not come to talk to you upon that subject, for then you would probably want to do all the talking yourself. I want to ask you if you have visited any of the cheaper amusements of

this metropolis, or know anything of the really clever and charming things one may see there for a very little money."

"Ten cents, for instance?"

"Yes."

I answered that I would never own to having come as low down as that; and I expressed a hardy and somewhat inconsistent doubt of the quality of the amusement that could be had for that money. I questioned if anything intellectual could be had for it.

"What do you say to the ten-cent magazines?" my friend retorted. "And do you pretend that the two-dollar drama is intellectual?"

I had to confess that it generally was not, and that this was part of my grief with it.

Then he said: "I don't contend that it is intellectual, but I say that it is often clever and charming at the ten-cent shows, just as it is less often clever and charming in the ten-cent magazines. I think the average of propriety is rather higher than it is at the two-dollar theatres; and it is much more instructive at the ten-cent shows, if you come to that. The other day," said my friend, and in squaring himself comfortably in his chair and finding room for his elbow on the corner of my table he knocked off some books for review, "I went to a dime museum for an hour that I had between two appointments, and I must say that I never passed an hour's time more agreeably. In the curio hall, as one of the lecturers on the curios called it--they had several lecturers in white wigs and scholars' caps and gowns--there was not a great deal to see, I confess; but everything was very high-class. There was the inventor of a perpetual motion, who lectured upon it and explained it from a diagram. There was a fortune-teller in a three-foot tent whom I did not interview; there were five macaws in one cage, and two gloomy apes in another. On a platform at the end of the hall was an Australian family a good deal gloomier than the apes, who sat in the costume of our latitude, staring down the room with varying expressions all verging upon melancholy madness, and who gave me such a pang of compassion as I have seldom got from the tragedy of the two-dollar theatres. They allowed me to come quite close up to them, and to feed my pity upon their wild dejection in exile without stint. I couldn't enter into conversation with them, and express my regret at finding them so far from their native boomerangs and kangaroos and pinetree grubs, but I know they felt my sympathy, it was so evident. I didn't see their performance, and I don't know that they had any. They may simply have been there ethnologically, but this was a good object, and the sight of their spiritual misery was alone worth the price of admission.

"After the inventor of the perpetual motion had brought his harangue to a close, we all went round to the dais where a lady in blue spectacles lectured us upon a fire-escape which she had invented, and operated a small model of it. None of the events were so exciting that we could regret it when the chief lecturer announced that this was the end of the

entertainment in the curio hall, and that now the performance in the theatre was about to begin. He invited us to buy tickets at an additional charge of five, ten, or fifteen cents for the gallery, orchestra circle, or orchestra.

"I thought I could afford an orchestra stall, for once. We were three in the orchestra, another man and a young mother, not counting the little boy she had with her; there were two people in the gallery, and a dozen at least in the orchestra circle. An attendant shouted, 'Hats off!' and the other man and I uncovered, and a lady came up from under the stage and began to play the piano in front of it. The curtain rose, and the entertainment began at once. It was a passage apparently from real life, and it involved a dissatisfied boarder and the daughter of the landlady. There was not much coherence in it, but there was a good deal of conscience on the part of the actors, who toiled through it with unflagging energy. The young woman was equipped for the dance she brought into it at one point rather than for the part she had to sustain in the drama. It was a very blameless dance, and she gave it as if she was tired of it, but was not going to falter. She delivered her lines with a hard, Southwestern accent, and I liked fancying her having come up in a simpler-hearted section of the country than ours, encouraged by a strong local belief that she was destined to do Juliet and Lady Macbeth, or Peg Woffington at the least; but very likely she had not.

"Her performance was followed by an event involving a single character. The actor, naturally, was blackened as to his skin, but as to his dress he was all in white, and at the first glance I could see that he had temperament. I suspect that he thought I had, too, for he began to address his entire drama to me. This was not surprising, for it would not have been the thing for him to single out the young mother; and the other man in the orchestra stalls seemed a vague and inexperienced youth, whom he would hardly have given the preference over me. I felt the compliment, but upon the whole it embarrassed me; it was too intimate, and it gave me a publicity I would willingly have foregone. I did what I could to reject it, by feigning an indifference to his jokes; I even frowned a measure of disapproval; but this merely stimulated his ambition. He was really a merry creature, and when he had got off a number of very good things which were received in perfect silence, and looked over his audience with a woe-begone eye, and said, with an effect of delicate apology, 'I hope I'm not disturbing you any,' I broke down and laughed, and that delivered me into his hand. He immediately said to me that now he would tell me about a friend of his, who had a pretty large family, eight of them living, and one in Philadelphia; and then for no reason he seemed to change his mind, and said he would sing me a song written expressly for him--by an expressman; and he went on from one wild gayety to another, until he had worked his audience up to quite a frenzy of enthusiasm, and almost had a recall when he went off.

"I was rather glad to be rid of him, and I was glad that the next performers, who were a lady and a gentleman contortionist of Spanish-American extraction, behaved more impartially. They were really remarkable artists in their way, and though it's a painful way, I couldn't help admiring their gift in bowknots and other difficult poses.

The gentleman got abundant applause, but the lady at first got none. I think perhaps it was because, with the correct feeling that prevailed among us, we could not see a lady contort herself with so much approval as a gentleman, and that there was a wound to our sense of propriety in witnessing her skill. But I could see that the poor girl was hurt in her artist pride by our severity, and at the next thing she did I led off the applause with my umbrella. She instantly lighted up with a joyful smile, and the young mother in the orchestra leaned forward to nod her sympathy to me while she clapped. We were fast becoming a domestic circle, and it was very pleasant, but I thought that upon the whole I had better go."

"And do you think you had a profitable hour at that show?" I asked, with a smile that was meant to be sceptical.

"Profitable?" said my friend. "I said agreeable. I don't know about the profit. But it was very good variety, and it was very cheap. I understand that this is the kind of thing you want the two-dollar theatre to come down to, or up to."

"Not exactly, or not quite," I returned, thoughtfully, "though I must say I think your time was as well spent as it would have been at most of the plays I have seen this winter."

My friend left the point, and said, with a dreamy air: "It was all very pathetic, in a way. Three out of those five people were really clever, and certainly artists. That colored brother was almost a genius, a very common variety of genius, but still a genius, with a gift for his calling that couldn't be disputed. He was a genuine humorist, and I sorrowed over him--after I got safely away from his intimacy--as I should over some author who was struggling along without winning his public. Why not? One is as much in the show business as the other. There is a difference of quality rather than of kind. Perhaps by-and-by my colored humorist will make a strike with his branch of the public, as you are always hoping to do with yours."

"You don't think you're making yourself rather offensive?" I suggested.

"Not intentionally. Aren't the arts one? How can you say that any art is higher than the others? Why is it nobler to contort the mind than to contort the body?"

"I am always saying that it is not at all noble to contort the mind," I returned, "and I feel that to aim at nothing higher than the amusement of your readers is to bring yourself most distinctly to the level of the show business."

"Yes, I know that is your pose," said my friend. "And I dare say you really think that you make a distinction in facts when you make a distinction in terms. If you don't amuse your readers, you don't keep them; practically, you cease to exist. You may call it interesting them, if you like; but, really, what is the difference? You do your little act, and because the stage is large and the house is fine, you fancy you are not of that sad brotherhood which aims to please in humbler places,

with perhaps cruder means--"

"I don't know whether I like your saws less than your instances, or your instances less than your saws," I broke in. "Have you been at the circus yet?"

II.

"Yet?" demanded my friend. "I went the first night, and I have been a good deal interested in the examination of my emotions ever since. I can't find out just why I have so much pleasure in the trapeze. Half the time I want to shut my eyes, and a good part of the time I do look away; but I wouldn't spare any actor the most dangerous feat. One of the poor girls, that night, dropped awkwardly into the net after her performance, and limped off to the dressing-room with a sprained ankle. It made me rather sad to think that now she must perhaps give up her perilous work for a while, and pay a doctor, and lose her salary, but it didn't take away my interest in the other trapezists flying through the air above another net.

"If I had honestly complained of anything it would have been of the superfluity which glutted rather than fed me. How can you watch three sets of trapezists at once? You really see neither well. It's the same with the three rings. There should be one ring, and each act should have a fair chance with the spectator, if it took six hours; I would willingly give the time. Fancy three stages at the theatre, with three plays going on at once!"

"No, don't fancy that!" I entreated. "One play is bad enough."

"Or fancy reading three novels simultaneously, and listening at the same time to a lecture and a sermon, which could represent the two platforms between the rings," my friend calmly persisted. "The three rings are an abuse and an outrage, but I don't know but I object still more to the silencing of the clowns. They have a great many clowns now, but they are all dumb, and you only get half the good you used to get out of the single clown of the old one-ring circus. Why, it's as if the literary humorist were to lead up to a charming conceit or a subtle jest, and then put asterisks where the humor ought to come in."

"Don't you think you are going from bad to worse?" I asked.

My friend went on: "I'm afraid the circus is spoiled for me. It has become too much of a good thing; for it is a good thing; almost the best thing in the way of an entertainment that there is. I'm still very fond of it, but I come away defeated and defrauded because I have been embarrassed with riches, and have been given more than I was able to grasp. My greed has been overfed. I think I must keep to those entertainments where you can come at ten in the morning and stay till ten at night, with a perpetual change of bill, only one stage, and no fall of

the curtain. I suppose you would object to them because they're getting rather dear; at the best of them now they ask you a dollar for the first seats."

I said that I did not think this too much for twelve hours, if the intellectual character of the entertainment was correspondingly high.

"It's as high as that of some magazines," said my friend, "though I could sometimes wish it were higher. It's like the matter in the Sunday papers--about that average. Some of it's good, and most of it isn't. Some of it could hardly be worse. But there is a great deal of it, and you get it consecutively and not simultaneously. That constitutes its advantage over the circus."

My friend stopped, with a vague smile, and I asked:

"Then, do I understand that you would advise me to recommend the dime museums, the circus, and the perpetual-motion varieties in the place of the theatres?"

"You have recommended books instead, and that notion doesn't seem to have met with much favor, though you urged their comparative cheapness. Now, why not suggest something that is really level with the popular taste?"

AMERICAN LITERATURE IN EXILE

A recently lecturing Englishman is reported to have noted the unenviable primacy of the United States among countries where the struggle for material prosperity has been disastrous to the pursuit of literature.

He said, or is said to have said (one cannot be too careful in attributing to a public man the thoughts that may be really due to an imaginative frame in the reporter), that among us, "the old race of writers of distinction, such as Longfellow, Bryant, Holmes, and Washington Irving, have (sic) died out, and the Americans who are most prominent in cultivated European opinion in art or literature, like Sargent, Henry James, or Marion Crawford, live habitually out of America, and draw their inspiration from England, France, and Italy."

I.

If this were true, I confess that I am so indifferent to what many Americans glory in that it would not distress me, or wound me in the sort of self-love which calls itself patriotism. If it would at all help to put an end to that struggle for material prosperity which has eventuated with us in so many millionaires and so many tramps, I should be glad to

believe that it was driving our literary men out of the country. This would be a tremendous object-lesson, and might be a warning to the millionaires and the tramps. But I am afraid it would not have this effect, for neither our very rich nor our very poor care at all for the state of polite learning among us; though for the matter of that, I believe that economic conditions have little to do with it; and that if a general mediocrity of fortune prevailed and there were no haste to be rich and to get poor, the state of polite learning would not be considerably affected. As matters stand, I think we may reasonably ask whether the Americans "most prominent in cultivated European opinion," the Americans who "live habitually out of America," are not less exiles than advance agents of the expansion now advertising itself to the world. They may be the vanguard of the great army of adventurers destined to overrun the earth from these shores, and exploit all foreign countries to our advantage. They probably themselves do not know it, but in the act of "drawing their inspiration" from alien scenes, or taking their own where they find it, are not they simply transporting to Europe "the struggle for material prosperity," which Sir Lepel supposes to be fatal to them here?

There is a question, however, which comes before this, and that is the question whether they have quitted us in such numbers as justly to alarm our patriotism. Qualitatively, in the authors named and in the late Mr. Bret Harte, Mr. Harry Harland, and the late Mr. Harold Frederic, as well as in Mark Twain, once temporarily resident abroad, the defection is very great; but quantitatively it is not such as to leave us without a fair measure of home-keeping authorship. Our destitution is not nearly so great now in the absence of Mr. James and Mr. Crawford as it was in the times before the "struggle for material prosperity" when Washington Irving went and lived in England and on the European continent well-nigh half his life.

Sir Lepel Griffin--or Sir Lepel Griffin's reporter--seems to forget the fact of Irving's long absenteeism when he classes him with "the old race" of eminent American authors who stayed at home. But really none of those he names were so constant to our air as he seems--or his reporter seems--to think. Longfellow sojourned three or four years in Germany, Spain, and Italy; Holmes spent as great time in Paris; Bryant was a frequent traveller, and each of them "drew his inspiration" now and then from alien sources. Lowell was many years in Italy, Spain, and England; Motley spent more than half his life abroad; Hawthorne was away from us nearly a decade.

II.

If I seem to be proving too much in one way, I do not feel that I am proving too much in another. My facts go to show that the literary spirit is the true world-citizen, and is at home everywhere. If any good American were distressed by the absenteeism of our authors, I should first advise him that American literature was not derived from the folk-

lore of the red Indians, but was, as I have said once before, a condition of English literature, and was independent even of our independence. Then I should entreat him to consider the case of foreign authors who had found it more comfortable or more profitable to live out of their respective countries than in them. I should allege for his consolation the case of Byron, Shelley, and Leigh Hunt, and more latterly that of the Brownings and Walter Savage Landor, who preferred an Italian to an English sojourn; and yet more recently that of Mr. Rudyard Kipling, who voluntarily lived several years in Vermont, and has "drawn his inspiration" in notable instances from the life of these States. It will serve him also to consider that the two greatest Norwegian authors, Bjornsen and Ibsen, have both lived long in France and Italy. Heinrich Heine loved to live in Paris much better than in Dusseldorf, or even in Hamburg; and Tourguenief himself, who said that any man's country could get on without him, but no man could get on without his country, managed to dispense with his own in the French capital, and died there after he was quite free to go back to St. Petersburg. In the last century Rousseau lived in France rather than Switzerland; Voltaire at least tried to live in Prussia, and was obliged to a long exile elsewhere; Goldoni left fame and friends in Venice for the favor of princes in Paris.

Literary absenteeism, it seems to me, is not peculiarly an American vice or an American virtue. It is an expression and a proof of the modern sense which enlarges one's country to the bounds of civilization. I cannot think it justly a reproach in the eyes of the world, and if any American feels it a grievance, I suggest that he do what he can to have embodied in the platform of his party a plank affirming the right of American authors to a public provision that will enable them to live as agreeably at home as they can abroad on the same money. In the mean time, their absenteeism is not a consequence of "the struggle for material prosperity," not a high disdain of the strife which goes on not less in Europe than in America, and must, of course, go on everywhere as long as competitive conditions endure, but is the result of chances and preferences which mean nothing nationally calamitous or discreditable.

THE HORSE SHOW

"As good as the circus--not so good as the circus--better than the circus." These were my varying impressions, as I sat looking down upon the tanbark, the other day, at the Horse Show in Madison Square Garden; and I came away with their blend for my final opinion.

I.

I might think that the Horse Show (which is so largely a Man Show and a

Woman Show) was better or worse than the circus, or about as good; but I could not get away from the circus, in my impression of it. Perhaps the circus is the norm of all splendors where the horse and his master are joined for an effect upon the imagination of the spectator. I am sure that I have never been able quite to dissociate from it the picturesqueness of chivalry, and that it will hereafter always suggest to me the last correctness of fashion. It is through the horse that these far extremes meet; in all times the horse has been the supreme expression of aristocracy; and it may very well be that a dream of the elder world prophesied the ultimate type of the future, when the Swell shall have evolved into the Centaur.

Some such teasing notion of their mystical affinity is what haunts you as you make your round of the vast ellipse, with the well-groomed men about you and the well-groomed horses beyond the barrier.

In this first affair of the new--comer, the horses are not so much on show as the swells; you get only glimpses of shining coats and tossing manes, with a glint here and there of a flying hoof through the lines of people coming and going, and the ranks of people, three or four feet deep, against the rails of the ellipse; but the swells are there in perfect relief, and it is they who finally embody the Horse Show to you. The fact is that they are there to see, of course, but the effect is that they are there to be seen.

The whole spectacle had an historical quality, which I tasted with pleasure. It was the thing that had eventuated in every civilization, and the American might feel a characteristic pride that what came to Rome in five hundred years had come to America in a single century. There was something fine in the absolutely fatal nature of the result, and I perceived that nowhere else in our life, which is apt to be reclusive in its exclusiveness, is the prime motive at work in it so dramatically apparent. "Yes," I found myself thinking, "this is what it all comes to: the 'subiti guadagni' of the new rich, made in large masses and seeking a swift and eager exploitation, and the slowly accumulated fortunes, put together from sparing and scrimping, from slaving and enslaving, in former times, and now in the stainless white hands of the second or third generation, they both meet here to the purpose of a common ostentation, and create a Horse Show."

I cannot say that its creators looked much as if they liked it, now they had got it; and, so far as I have been able to observe them, people of wealth and fashion always dissemble their joy, and have the air of being bored in the midst of their amusements. This reserve of rapture may be their delicacy, their unwillingness to awaken envy in the less prospered; and I should not have objected to the swells at the Horse Show looking dreary if they had looked more like swells; except for a certain hardness of the countenance (which I found my own sympathetically taking on) I should not have thought them very patrician, and this hardness may have been merely the consequence of being so much stared at. Perhaps, indeed, they were not swells whom I saw in the boxes, but only companies of ordinary people who had clubbed together and hired their boxes; I understand that this can be done, and the student of civilization so

far misled. But certainly if they were swells they did not look quite up to themselves; though, for that matter, neither do the nobilities of foreign countries, and on one or two occasions when I have seen them, kings and emperors have failed me in like manner. They have all wanted that indescribable something which I have found so satisfying in aristocracies and royalties on the stage; and here at the Horse Show, while I made my tour, I constantly met handsome, actor-like folk on foot who could much better have taken the role of the people in the boxes. The promenaders may not have been actors at all; they may have been the real thing for which I was in vain scanning the boxes, but they looked like actors, who indeed set an example to us all in personal beauty and in correctness of dress.

I mean nothing offensive either to swells or to actors. We have not distinction, as a people; Matthew Arnold noted that; and it is not our business to have it: When it is our business our swells will have it, just as our actors now have it, especially our actors of English birth. I had not this reflection about me at the time to console me for my disappointment, and it only now occurs to me that what I took for an absence of distinction may have been such a universal prevalence of it that the result was necessarily a species of indistinction. But in the complexion of any social assembly we Americans are at a disadvantage with Europeans from the want of uniforms. A few military scattered about in those boxes, or even a few sporting bishops in shovel-hats and aprons, would have done much to relieve them from the reproach I have been heaping upon them. Our women, indeed, poor things, always do their duty in personal splendor, and it is not of a poverty in their modes at the Horse Show that I am complaining. If the men had borne their part as well, there would not have been these tears: and yet, what am I saying? There was here and there a clean-shaven face (which I will not believe was always an actor's), and here and there a figure superbly set up, and so faultlessly appointed as to shoes, trousers, coat, tie, hat, and gloves as to have a salience from the mass of good looks and good clothes which I will not at last call less than distinction.

II.

At any rate, I missed these marked presences when I left the lines of the promenaders around the ellipse, and climbed to a seat some tiers above the boxes. I am rather anxious to have it known that my seat was not one of those cheap ones in the upper gallery, but was with the virtuous poor who could afford to pay a dollar and a half for their tickets. I bought it of a speculator on the sidewalk, who said it was his last, so that I conceived it the last in the house; but I found the chairs by no means all filled, though it was as good an audience as I have sometimes seen in the same place at other circuses. The people about me were such as I had noted at the other circuses, hotel-sojourners, kindly-looking comers from provincial towns and cities, whom I instantly felt myself at home with, and free to put off that gloomy severity of aspect which had grown upon me during my association with the swells below. My neighbors were

sufficiently well dressed, and if they had no more distinction than their betters, or their richers, they had not the burden of the occasion upon them, and seemed really glad of what was going on in the ring.

There again I was sensible of the vast advantage of costume. The bugler who stood up at one end of the central platform and blew a fine fanfare (I hope it was a fanfare) towards the gates where the horses were to enter from their stalls in the basement was a hussar-like shape that filled my romantic soul with joy; and the other figures of the management I thought very fortunate compromises between grooms and ringmasters. At any rate, their nondescript costumes were gay, and a relief from the fashions in the boxes and the promenade; they were costumes, and costumes are always more sincere, if not more effective, than fashions. As I have hinted, I do not know just what costumes they were, but they took the light well from the girandole far aloof and from the thousands of little electric bulbs that beaded the roof in long lines, and dispersed the sullenness of the dull, rainy afternoon. When the knights entered the lists on the seats of their dog-carts, with their squires beside them, and their shining tandems before them, they took the light well, too, and the spectacle was so brilliant that I trust my imagery may be forgiven a novelist pining for the pageantries of the past. I do not know to this moment whether these knights were bona fide gentlemen, or only their deputies, driving their tandems for them, and I am equally at a loss to account for the variety, of their hats. Some wore tall, shining silk hats; some flat-topped, brown derbys; some simple black pot-hats;--and is there, then, no rigor as to the head-gear of people driving tandems? I felt that there ought to be, and that there ought to be some rule as to where the number of each tandem should be displayed. As it was, this was sometimes carelessly stuck into the seat of the cart; sometimes it was worn at the back of the groom's waist, and sometimes full upon his stomach. In the last position it gave a touch of burlesque which wounded me; for these are vital matters, and I found myself very exacting in them.

With the horses themselves I could find no fault upon the grounds of my censure of the show in some other ways. They had distinction; they were patrician; they were swell. They felt it, they showed it, they rejoiced in it; and the most reluctant observer could not deny them the glory of blood, of birth, which the thoroughbred horse has expressed in all lands and ages. Their lordly port was a thing that no one could dispute, and for an aristocracy I suppose that they had a high average of intelligence, though there might be two minds about this. They made me think of mettled youths and haughty dames; they abashed the humble spirit of the beholder with the pride of their high-stepping, their curvetting and caracoling, as they jingled in their shining harness around the long ring. Their noble uselessness took the fancy, for I suppose that there is nothing so superbly superfluous as a tandem, outside or inside of the best society. It is something which only the ambition of wealth and unbroken leisure can mount to; and I was glad that the display of tandems was the first event of the Horse Show which I witnessed, for it seemed to me that it must beyond all others typify the power which created the Horse Show. I wished that the human side of it could have been more unquestionably adequate, but the equine side of the event was perfect.

Still, I felt a certain relief, as in something innocent and simple and childlike, in the next event.

III.

This was the inundation of the tan-bark with troops of pretty Shetland ponies of all ages, sizes, and colors. A cry of delight went up from a group of little people near me, and the spell of the Horse Show was broken. It was no longer a solemnity of fashion, it was a sweet and kindly pleasure which every one could share, or every one who had ever had, or ever wished to have, a Shetland pony; the touch of nature made the whole show kin. I could not see that the freakish, kittenish creatures did anything to claim our admiration, but they won our affection by every trait of ponyish caprice and obstinacy. The small colts broke away from the small mares, and gambolled over the tanbark in wanton groups, with gay or plaintive whinnings, which might well have touched a responsive chord in the bosom of fashion itself: I dare say it is not so hard as it looks. The scene remanded us to a moment of childhood; and I found myself so fond of all the ponies that I felt it invidious of the judges to choose among them for the prizes; they ought every one to have had the prize.

I suppose a Shetland pony is not a very useful animal in our conditions; no doubt a good, tough, stubbed donkey would be worth all their tribe when it came down to hard work; but we cannot all be hard-working donkeys, and some of us may be toys and playthings without too great reproach. I gazed after the broken, refluent wave of these amiable creatures, with the vague toleration here formulated, but I was not quite at peace in it, or fully consoled in my habitual ethicism till the next event brought the hunters with their high-jumping into the ring. These noble animals unite use and beauty in such measure that the censor must be of Catonian severity who can refuse them his praise. When I reflected that by them and their devoted riders our civilization had been assimilated to that of the mother-country in its finest expression, and another tie added to those that bind us to her through the language of Shakespeare and Milton; that they had tamed the haughty spirit of the American farmer in several parts of the country so that he submitted for a consideration to have his crops ridden over, and that they had all but exterminated the ferocious anise-seed bag, once so common and destructive among us, I was in a fit mood to welcome the bars and hurdles which were now set up at four or five places for the purposes of the high-jumping. As to the beauty of the hunting-horse, though, I think I must hedge a little, while I stand firmly to my admiration of his use. To be honest, the tandem horse is more to my taste. He is better shaped, and he bears himself more proudly. The hunter is apt to behave, whatever his reserve of intelligence, like an excited hen; he is apt to be ewe-necked and bred away to nothing where the ideal horse abounds; he has the behavior of a turkey-hen when not behaving like the common or garden hen. But there can be no question of his jumping, which seems to be his chief business in a world where we are all appointed our several duties, and I at once

began to take a vivid pleasure in his proficiency. I have always felt a blind and insensate joy in running races, which has no relation to any particular horse, and I now experienced an impartial rapture in the performances of these hunters. They looked very much alike, and if it had not been for the changing numbers on the sign-board in the centre of the ring announcing that 650, 675, or 602 was now jumping, I might have thought it was 650 all the time.

A high jump is not so fine a sight as a running race when the horses have got half a mile away and look like a covey of swift birds, but it is still a fine sight. I became very fastidious as to which moment of it was the finest, whether when the horse rose in profile, or when his aerial hoof touched the ground (with the effect of half jerking his rider's head half off), or when he showed a flying heel in perspective; and I do not know to this hour which I prefer. But I suppose I was becoming gradually spoiled by my pleasure, for as time went on I noticed that I was not satisfied with the monotonous excellence of the horses' execution. Will it be credited that I became willing something should happen, anything, to vary it? I asked myself why, if some of the more exciting incidents of the hunting-field which I had read of must befall; I should not see them. Several of the horses had balked at the barriers, and almost thrown their riders across them over their necks, but not quite done it; several had carried away the green-tufted top rail with their heels; when suddenly there came a loud clatter from the farther side of the ellipse, where a whole panel of fence had gone down. I looked eagerly for the prostrate horse and rider under the bars, but they were cantering safely away.

IV.

It was enough, however. I perceived that I was becoming demoralized, and that if I were to write of the Horse Show with at all the superiority one likes to feel towards the rich and great, I had better come away. But I came away critical, even in my downfall, and feeling that, circus for circus, the Greatest Show on Earth which I had often seen in that place had certain distinct advantages of the Horse Show. It had three rings and two platforms; and, for another thing, the drivers and riders in the races, when they won, bore the banner of victory aloft in their hands, instead of poorly letting a blue or red ribbon flicker at their horses' ears. The events were more frequent and rapid; the costumes infinitely more varied and picturesque. As for the people in the boxes, I do not know that they were less distinguished than these at the Horse Show, but if they were not of the same high level in which distinction was impossible, they did not show it in their looks.

The Horse Show, in fine, struck me as a circus of not all the first qualities; and I had moments of suspecting that it was no more than the evolution of the county cattle show. But in any case I had to own that its great success was quite legitimate; for the horse, upon the whole, appeals to a wider range of humanity, vertically as well as horizontally,

than any other interest, not excepting politics or religion. I cannot, indeed, regard him as a civilizing influence; but then we cannot be always civilizing.

THE PROBLEM OF THE SUMMER

It has sometimes seemed to me that the solution of the problem how and where to spend the summer was simplest with those who were obliged to spend it as they spent the winter, and increasingly difficult in the proportion of one's ability to spend it wherever and however one chose. Few are absolutely released to this choice, however, and those few are greatly to be pitied. I know that they are often envied and hated for it by those who have no such choice, but that is a pathetic mistake. If we could look into their hearts, indeed, we should witness there so much misery that we should wish rather to weep over them than to reproach them with their better fortune, or what appeared so.

I.

For most people choice is a curse, and it is this curse that the summer brings upon great numbers who would not perhaps otherwise be afflicted. They are not in the happy case of those who must stay at home; their hard necessity is that they can go away, and try to be more agreeably placed somewhere else; but although I say they are in great numbers, they are an infinitesimal minority of the whole bulk of our population. Their bane is not, in its highest form, that of the average American who has no choice of the kind; and when one begins to speak of the summer problem, one must begin at once to distinguish. It is the problem of the East rather than of the West (where people are much more in the habit of staying at home the year round), and it is the problem of the city and not of the country. I am not sure that there is one practical farmer in the whole United States who is obliged to witness in his household those sad dissensions which almost separate the families of professional men as to where and how they shall pass the summer. People of this class, which is a class with some measure of money, ease, and taste, are commonly of varying and decided minds, and I once knew a family of the sort whose combined ideal for their summer outing was summed up in the simple desire for society and solitude, mountain-air and sea-bathing. They spent the whole months of April, May, and June in a futile inquiry for a resort uniting these attractions, and on the first of July they drove to the station with no definite point in view. But they found that they could get return tickets for a certain place on an inland lake at a low figure, and they took the first train for it. There they decided next morning to push on to the mountains, and sent their baggage to the station, but before it was checked they changed their minds, and remained two weeks

where they were. Then they took train for a place on the coast, but in the cars a friend told them they ought to go to another place; they decided to go there, but before arriving at the junction they decided again to keep on. They arrived at their original destination, and the following day telegraphed for rooms at a hotel farther down the coast. The answer came that there were no rooms, and being by this time ready to start, they started, and in due time reported themselves at the hotel. The landlord saw that something must be done, and he got them rooms, at a smaller house, and 'mealed' them (as it used to be called at Mt. Desert) in his own. But upon experiment of the fare at the smaller house they liked it so well that they resolved to live there altogether, and they spent a summer of the greatest comfort there, so that they would hardly come away when the house closed in the fall.

This was an extreme case, and perhaps such a venture might not always turn out so happily; but I think that people might oftener trust themselves to Providence in these matters than they do. There is really an infinite variety of pleasant resorts of all kinds now, and one could quite safely leave it to the man in the ticket-office where one should go, and check one's baggage accordingly. I think the chances of an agreeable summer would be as good in that way as in making a hard-and-fast choice of a certain place and sticking to it. My own experience is that in these things chance makes a very good choice for one, as it does in most non-moral things.

II.

A joke dies hard, and I am not sure that the life is yet quite out of the kindly ridicule that was cast for a whole generation upon the people who left their comfortable houses in town to starve upon farm-board or stifle in the narrow rooms of mountain and seaside hotels. Yet such people were in the right, and their mockers were in the wrong, and their patient persistence in going out of town for the summer in the face of severe discouragements has multiplied indefinitely the kinds of summer resorts, and reformed them altogether. I believe the city boarding-house remains very much what it used to be; but I am bound to say that the country boarding-house has vastly improved since I began to know it. As for the summer hotel, by steep or by strand, it leaves little to be complained of except the prices. I take it for granted, therefore, that the out-of-town summer has come to stay, for all who can afford it, and that the chief sorrow attending it is that curse of choice, which I have already spoken of.

I have rather favored chance than choice, because, whatever choice you make, you are pretty sure to regret it, with a bitter sense of responsibility added, which you cannot feel if chance has chosen for you. I observe that people who own summer cottages are often apt to wish they did not, and were foot-loose to roam where they listed, and I have been told that even a yacht is not a source of unmixed content, though so eminently detachable. To great numbers Europe looks from this shore like

a safe refuge from the American summer problem; and yet I am not sure that it is altogether so; for it is not enough merely to go to Europe; one has to choose where to go when one has got there. A European city is certainly always more tolerable than an American city, but one cannot very well pass the summer in Paris, or even in London. The heart there, as here, will yearn for some blessed seat

"Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard lawns
And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea,"

and still, after your keel touches the strand of that alluring old world, you must buy your ticket and register your trunk for somewhere in particular.

III.

It is truly a terrible stress, this summer problem, and, as I say, my heart aches much more for those who have to solve it and suffer the consequences of their choice than for those who have no choice, but must stay the summer through where their work is, and be humbly glad that they have any work to keep them there. I am not meaning now, of course, business men obliged to remain in the city to earn the bread--or, more correctly, the cake--of their families in the country, or even their clerks and bookkeepers, and porters and messengers, but such people as I sometimes catch sight of from the elevated trains (in my reluctant midsummer flights through the city), sweltering in upper rooms over sewing-machines or lap-boards, or stewing in the breathless tenement streets, or driving clangorous trucks, or monotonous cars, or bending over wash-tubs at open windows for breaths of the no-air without. These all get on somehow, and at the end of the summer they have not to accuse themselves of folly in going to one place rather than another. Their fate is decided for them, and they submit to it; whereas those who decide their fate are always rebelling against it. They it is whom I am truly sorry for, and whom I write of with tears in my ink. Their case is hard, and it will seem all the harder if we consider how foolish they will look and how flat they will feel at the judgment-day, when they are asked about their summer outings. I do not really suppose we shall be held to a very strict account for our pleasures because everybody else has not enjoyed them, too; that would be a pity of our lives; and yet there is an old-fashioned compunction which will sometimes visit the heart if we take our pleasures ungraciously, when so many have no pleasures to take. I would suggest, then, to those on whom the curse of choice between pleasures rests, that they should keep in mind those who have chiefly pains to their portion in life.

I am not, I hope, urging my readers to any active benevolence, or counselling them to share their pleasures with others; it has been accurately ascertained that there are not pleasures enough to go round,

as things now are; but I would seriously entreat them to consider whether they could not somewhat alleviate the hardships of their own lot at the sea-side or among the mountains, by contrasting it with the lot of others in the sweat-shops and the boiler-factories of life. I know very well that it is no longer considered very good sense or very good morality to take comfort in one's advantages from the disadvantages of others, and this is not quite what I mean to teach. Perhaps I mean nothing more than an overhauling of the whole subject of advantages and disadvantages, which would be a light and agreeable occupation for the leisure of the summer outer. It might be very interesting, and possibly it might be amusing, for one stretched upon the beach or swaying in the hammock to inquire into the reasons for his or her being so favored, and it is not beyond the bounds of expectation that a consensus of summer opinion on this subject would go far to enlighten the world upon a question that has vexed the world ever since mankind was divided into those who work too much and those who rest too much.

AESTHETIC NEW YORK FIFTY-ODD YEARS AGO

A study of New York civilization in 1849 has lately come into my hands, with a mortifying effect, which I should like to share with the reader, to my pride of modernity. I had somehow believed that after half a century of material prosperity, such as the world has never seen before, New York in 1902 must be very different from New York in 1849, but if I am to trust either the impressions of the earlier student or my own, New York is essentially the same now that it was then. The spirit of the place has not changed; it is as it was, splendidly and sordidly commercial. Even the body of it has undergone little or no alteration; it was as shapeless, as incongruous; as ugly when the author of 'New York in Slices' wrote as it is at this writing; it has simply grown, or overgrown, on the moral and material lines which seem to have been structural in it from the beginning. He felt in his time the same vulgarity, the same violence, in its architectural anarchy that I have felt in my time, and he noted how all dignity and beauty perished, amid the warring forms, with a prescience of my own affliction, which deprives me of the satisfaction of a discoverer and leaves me merely the sense of being rather old-fashioned in my painful emotions.

I.

I wish I could pretend that my author philosophized the facts of his New York with something less than the raw haste of the young journalist; but I am afraid I must own that 'New York in Slices' affects one as having first been printed in an evening paper, and that the writer brings to the study of the metropolis something like the eager horror of a country

visitor. This probably enabled him to heighten the effect he wished to make with readers of a kindred tradition, and for me it adds a certain innocent charm to his work. I may make myself better understood if I say that his attitude towards the depravities of a smaller New York is much the same as that of Mr. Stead towards the wickedness of a much larger Chicago. He seizes with some such avidity upon the darker facts of the prisons, the slums, the gambling-houses, the mock auctions, the toughs (who then called themselves b'hoys and g'hals), the quacks, the theatres, and even the intelligence offices, and exploits their iniquities with a ready virtue which the wickedest reader can enjoy with him.

But if he treated of these things alone, I should not perhaps have brought his curious little book to the polite notice of my readers. He treats also of the press, the drama, the art, and, above all, "the literary soirees" of that remote New York of his in a manner to make us latest New-Yorkers feel our close proximity to it. Fifty-odd years ago journalism had already become "the absorbing, remorseless, clamorous thing" we now know, and very different from the thing it was when "expresses were unheard of, and telegraphs were uncrystallized from the lightning's blue and fiery film." Reporterism was beginning to assume its present importance, but it had not yet become the paramount intellectual interest, and did not yet "stand shoulder to shoulder" with the counting-room in authority. Great editors, then as now, ranked great authors in the public esteem, or achieved a double primacy by uniting journalism and literature in the same personality. They were often the owners as well as the writers of their respective papers, and they indulged for the advantage of the community the rancorous rivalries, recriminations, and scurrilities which often form the charm, if not the chief use, of our contemporaneous journals. Apparently, however, notarially authenticated boasts of circulation had not yet been made the delight of their readers, and the press had not become the detective agency that it now is, nor the organizer and distributer of charities.

But as dark a cloud of doubt rested upon its relations to the theatre as still eclipses the popular faith in dramatic criticism. "How can you expect," our author asks, "a frank and unbiassed criticism upon the performance of George Frederick Cooke Snooks . . . when the editor or reporter who is to write it has just been supping on beefsteak and stewed potatoes at Windust's, and regaling himself on brandy-and-water cold, without, at the expense of the aforesaid George Frederick Cooke Snooks?" The severest censor of the press, however, would hardly declare now that "as to such a thing as impartial and independent criticism upon theatres in the present state of the relations between editors, reporters, managers, actors--and actresses--the thing is palpably out of the question," and if matters were really at the pass hinted, the press has certainly improved in fifty years, if one may judge from its present frank condemnations of plays and players. The theatre apparently has not, for we read that at that period "a very great majority of the standard plays and farces on the stage depend mostly for their piquancy and their power of interesting an audience upon intrigues with married women, elopements, seductions, bribery, cheating, and fraud of every description Stage costume, too, wherever there is half a chance, is usually made as lascivious and immodest as possible; and a

freedom and impropriety prevails among the characters of the piece which would be kicked out of private society the instant it would have the audacity to make its appearance there."

II.

I hope private society in New York would still be found as correct if not quite so violent; and I wish I could believe that the fine arts were presently in as flourishing a condition among us as they were in 1849. That was the prosperous day of the Art Unions, in which the artists clubbed their output, and the subscribers parted the works among themselves by something so very like raffling that the Art Unions were finally suppressed under the law against lotteries. While they lasted, however, they had exhibitions thronged by our wealth, fashion, and intellect (to name them in the order they hold the New York mind), as our private views now are, or ought to be; and the author "devotes an entire number" of his series "to a single institution"--fearless of being accused of partiality by any who rightly appreciate the influences of the fine arts upon the morals and refinement of mankind.

He devotes even more than an entire number to literature; for, besides treating of various literary celebrities at the "literary soirees," he imagines encountering several of them at the high-class restaurants. At Delmonico's, where if you had "French and money" you could get in that day "a dinner which, as a work of art, ranks with a picture by Huntington, a poem by Willis, or a statue by Powers," he meets such a musical critic as Richard Grant White, such an intellectual epicurean as N. P. Willis, such a lyric poet as Charles Fenno Hoffman. But it would be a warm day for Delmonico's when the observer in this epoch could chance upon so much genius at its tables, perhaps because genius among us has no longer the French or the money. Indeed, the author of 'New York in Slices' seems finally to think that he has gone too far, even for his own period, and brings himself up with the qualifying reservation that if Willis and Hoffman never did dine together at Delmonico's, they ought to have done so. He has apparently no misgivings as to the famous musical critic, and he has no scruple in assembling for us at his "literary soiree" a dozen distinguished-looking men and "twice as many women.... listening to a tall, deaconly man, who stands between two candles held by a couple of sticks summoned from the recesses of the back parlor, reading a basketful of gilt-edged notes. It is . . . the annual Valentine Party, to which all the male and female authors have contributed for the purpose of saying on paper charming things of each other, and at which, for a few hours, all are gratified with the full meed of that praise which a cold world is chary of bestowing upon its literary cobweb-spinners."

It must be owned that we have no longer anything so like a 'salon' as this. It is, indeed, rather terrible, and it is of a quality in its celebrities which may well carry dismay to any among us presently intending immortality. Shall we, one day, we who are now in the rich

and full enjoyment of our far-reaching fame, affect the imagination of posterity as these phantoms of the past affect ours? Shall we, too, appear in some pale limbo of unimportance as thin and faded as "John Inman, the getter-up of innumerable things for the annuals and magazines," or as Dr. Rufus Griswold, supposed for picturesque purposes to be "stalking about with an immense quarto volume under his arm . . . an early copy of his forthcoming 'Female Poets of America'"; or as Lewis Gaylord Clark, the "sunnyfaced, smiling" editor of the Knickerbocker Magazine, "who don't look as if the Ink-Fiend had ever heard of him," as he stands up to dance a polka with "a demure lady who has evidently spilled the inkstand over her dress"; or as "the stately Mrs. Seba Smith, bending aristocratically over the centre-table, and talking in a bright, cold, steady stream, like an antique fountain by moonlight"; or as "the spiritual and dainty Fanny Osgood, clapping her hands and crowing like a baby," where she sits "nestled under a shawl of heraldic devices, like a bird escaped from its cage"; or as Margaret Fuller, "her large, gray eyes Tamping inspiration, and her thin, quivering lip prophesying like a Pythoness"?

I hope not; I earnestly hope not. Whatever I said at the outset, affirming the persistent equality of New York characteristics and circumstances, I wish to take back at this point; and I wish to warn malign foreign observers, of the sort who have so often refused to see us as we see ourselves, that they must not expect to find us now grouped in the taste of 1849. Possibly it was not so much the taste of 1849 as the author of 'New York in Slices' would have us believe; and perhaps any one who trusted his pictures of life among us otherwise would be deceived by a parity of the spirit in which they are portrayed with that of our modern "society journalism."

FROM NEW YORK INTO NEW ENGLAND

There is, of course, almost a world's difference between England and the Continent anywhere; but I do not recall just now any transition between Continental countries which involves a more distinct change in the superficial aspect of things than the passage from the Middle States into New England. It is all American, but American of diverse ideals; and you are hardly over the border before you are sensible of diverse effects, which are the more apparent to you the more American you are. If you want the contrast at its sharpest you had better leave New York on a Sound boat; for then you sleep out of the Middle State civilization and wake into the civilization of New England, which seems to give its stamp to nature herself. As to man, he takes it whether native or alien; and if he is foreign-born it marks him another Irishman, Italian, Canadian, Jew, or negro from his brother in any other part of the United States.

I.

When you have a theory of any kind, proofs of it are apt to seek you out, and I, who am rather fond of my faith in New England's influence of this sort, had as pretty an instance of it the day after my arrival as I could wish. A colored brother of Massachusetts birth, as black as a man can well be, and of a merely anthropoidal profile, was driving me along shore in search of a sea-side hotel when we came upon a weak-minded young chicken in the road. The natural expectation is that any chicken in these circumstances will wait for your vehicle, and then fly up before it with a loud screech; but this chicken may have been overcome by the heat (it was a land breeze and it drew like the breath of a furnace over the hay-cocks and the clover), or it may have mistimed the wheel, which passed over its head and left it to flop a moment in the dust and then fall still. The poor little tragedy was sufficiently distressful to me, but I bore it well, compared with my driver. He could hardly stop lamenting it; and when presently we met a young farmer, he pulled up. "You goin' past Jim Marden's?" "Yes." "Well, I wish you'd tell him I just run over a chicken of his, and I killed it, I guess. I guess it was a pretty big one." "Oh no," I put in, "it was only a broiler. What do you think it was worth?" I took out some money, and the farmer noted the largest coin in my hand; "About half a dollar, I guess." On this I put it all back in my pocket, and then he said, "Well, if a chicken don't know enough to get out of the road, I guess you ain't to blame." I expressed that this was my own view of the case, and we drove on. When we parted I gave the half-dollar to my driver, and begged him not to let the owner of the chicken come on me for damages; and though he chuckled his pleasure in the joke, I could see that he was still unhappy, and I have no doubt that he has that pullet on his conscience yet, unless he has paid for it. He was of a race which elsewhere has so immemorably plundered hen-roosts that chickens are as free to it as the air it breathes, without any conceivable taint of private ownership. But the spirit of New England had so deeply entered into him that the imbecile broiler of another, slain by pure accident and by its own contributory negligence, was saddening him, while I was off in my train without a pang for the owner and with only an agreeable pathos for the pullet.

II.

The instance is perhaps extreme; and, at any rate, it has carried me in a psychological direction away from the simpler differences which I meant to note in New England. They were evident as soon as our train began to run from the steamboat landing into the country, and they have intensified, if they have not multiplied, themselves as I have penetrated deeper and deeper into the beautiful region. The land is poorer than the land to the southward--one sees that at once; the soil is thin, and often so thickly burdened with granite boulders that it could never have borne any other crop since the first Puritans, or Pilgrims, cut away the primeval woods and betrayed its hopeless sterility to the light. But

wherever you come to a farm-house, whether standing alone or in one of the village groups that New England farm-houses have always liked to gather themselves into, it is of a neatness that brings despair, and of a repair that ought to bring shame to the beholder from more easy-going conditions. Everything is kept up with a strenuous virtue that imparts an air of self-respect to the landscape, which the bleaching and blackening stone walls, wandering over the hill-slopes, divide into wood lots of white birch and pine, stony pastures, and little patches of potatoes and corn. The mowing-lands alone are rich; and if the New England year is in the glory of the latest June, the breath of the clover blows honey--sweet into the car windows, and the fragrance of the new-cut hay rises hot from the heavy swaths that seem to smoke in the sun.

We have struck a hot spell, one of those torrid mood of continental weather which we have telegraphed us ahead to heighten our suffering by anticipation. But the farmsteads and village houses are safe in the shade of their sheltering trees amid the fluctuation of the grass that grows so tall about them that the June roses have to strain upward to get themselves free of it. Behind each dwelling is a billowy mass of orchard, and before it the Gothic archway of the elms stretches above the quiet street. There is no tree in the world so full of sentiment as the American elm, and it is nowhere so graceful as in these New England villages, which are themselves, I think, the prettiest and wholesomest of mortal sojourns. By a happy instinct, their wooden houses are all painted white, to a marble effect that suits our meridional sky, and the contrast of their dark-green shutters is deliciously refreshing. There was an evil hour, the terrible moment of the aesthetic revival now happily past, when white walls and green blinds were thought in bad taste, and the village houses were often tinged a dreary ground color, or a doleful olive, or a gloomy red, but now they have returned to their earlier love. Not the first love; that was a pale buff with white trim; but I doubt if it were good for all kinds of village houses; the eye rather demands the white. The pale buff does very well for large colonial mansions, like Lowell's or Longfellow's in Cambridge; but when you come, say, to see the great square houses built in Portsmouth, New Hampshire; early in this century, and painted white, you find that white, after all, is the thing for our climate, even in the towns.

In such a village as my colored brother drove me through on the way to the beach it was of an absolute fitness; and I wish I could convey a due sense of the exquisite keeping of the place. Each white house was more or less closely belted in with a white fence, of panels or pickets; the grassy door-yards glowed with flowers, and often a climbing rose embowered the door-way with its bloom. Away backward or sidewise stretched the woodshed from the dwelling to the barn, and shut the whole under one cover; the turf grew to the wheel-tracks of the road-way, over which the elms rose and drooped; and from one end of the village to the other you could not, as the saying is, find a stone to throw at a dog. I know Holland; I have seen the wives of Scheveningen scrubbing up for Sunday to the very middle of their brick streets, but I doubt if Dutch cleanliness goes so far without, or comes from so deep a scruple within, as the cleanliness of New England. I felt so keenly the feminine quality of its motive as I passed through that village, that I think if I had

dropped so much as a piece of paper in the street I must have knocked at the first door and begged the lady of the house (who would have opened it in person after wiping her hands from her work, taking off her apron, and giving a glance at herself in the mirror and at me through the window blind) to report me to the selectmen in the interest of good morals.

III.

I did not know at once quite how to reconcile the present foulness of the New England capital with the fairness of the New England country; and I am still somewhat embarrassed to own that after New York (even under the relaxing rule of Tammany) Boston seemed very dirty when we arrived there. At best I was never more than a naturalized Bostonian; but it used to give me great pleasure--so penetratingly does the place qualify even the sojourning Westerner--to think of the defect of New York in the virtue that is next to godliness; and now I had to hang my head for shame at the mortifying contrast of the Boston streets to the well-swept asphalt which I had left frying in the New York sun the afternoon before. Later, however, when I began to meet the sort of Boston faces I remembered so well--good, just, pure, but set and severe, with their look of challenge, of interrogation, almost of reproof--they not only ignored the disgraceful untidiness of the streets, but they convinced me of a state of transition which would leave the place swept and garnished behind it; and comforted me against the litter of the winding thoroughfares and narrow lanes, where the dust had blown up against the brick walls, and seemed permanently to have smutched and discolored them.

In New York you see the American face as Europe characterizes it; in Boston you see it as it characterizes Europe; and it is in Boston that you can best imagine the strenuous grapple of the native forces which all alien things must yield to till they take the American cast. It is almost dismaying, that physiognomy, before it familiarizes itself anew; and in the brief first moment while it is yet objective, you ransack your conscience for any sins you may have committed in your absence from it and make ready to do penance for them. I felt almost as if I had brought the dirty streets with me, and were guilty of having left them lying about, so impossible were they with reference to the Boston face.

It is a face that expresses care, even to the point of anxiety, and it looked into the window of our carriage with the serious eyes of our elderly hackman to make perfectly sure of our destination before we drove away from the station. It was a little rigorous with us, as requiring us to have a clear mind; but it was not unfriendly, not unkind, and it was patient from long experience. In New York there are no elderly hackmen; but in Boston they abound, and I cannot believe they would be capable of bad faith with travellers. In fact, I doubt if this class is anywhere as predatory as it is painted; but in Boston it appears to have the public honor in its keeping. I do not mean that it was less mature, less self-respectful in Portsmouth, where we were next to arrive; more so it could not be; an equal sense of safety, of ease, began with it in both places,

and all through New England it is of native birth, while in New York it is composed of men of many nations, with a weight in numbers towards the Celtic strain. The prevalence of the native in New England helps you sensibly to realize from the first moment that here you are in America as the first Americans imagined and meant it; and nowhere in New England is the original tradition more purely kept than in the beautiful old seaport of New Hampshire. In fact, without being quite prepared to defend a thesis to this effect, I believe that Portsmouth is preeminently American, and in this it differs from Newburyport and from Salem, which have suffered from different causes an equal commercial decline, and, though among the earliest of the great Puritan towns after Boston, are now largely made up of aliens in race and religion; these are actually the majority, I believe, in Newburyport.

IV.

The adversity of Portsmouth began early in the century, but before that time she had prospered so greatly that her merchant princes were able to build themselves wooden palaces with white walls and green shutters, of a grandeur and beauty unmatched elsewhere in the country. I do not know what architect had his way with them, though his name is richly worth remembrance, but they let him make them habitations of such graceful proportion and of such delicate ornament that they have become shrines of pious pilgrimage with the young architects of our day who hope to house our well-to-do people fitly in country or suburbs. The decoration is oftenest spent on a porch or portal, or a frieze of peculiar refinement; or perhaps it feels its way to the carven casements or to the delicate iron-work of the transoms; the rest is a simplicity and a faultless propriety of form in the stately mansions which stand under the arching elms, with their gardens sloping, or dropping by easy terraces behind them to the river, or to the borders of other pleasancesses. They are all of wood, except for the granite foundations and doorsteps, but the stout edifices rarely sway out of the true line given them, and they look as if they might keep it yet another century.

Between them, in the sun-shotten shade, lie the quiet streets, whose gravelled stretch is probably never cleaned because it never needs cleaning. Even the business streets, and the quaint square which gives the most American of towns an air so foreign and Old Worldly, look as if the wind and rain alone cared for them; but they are not foul, and the narrower avenues, where the smaller houses of gray, unpainted wood crowd each other, flush upon the pavements, towards the water-side, are doubtless unvisited by the hoe or broom, and must be kept clean by a New England conscience against getting them untidy.

When you get to the river-side there is one stretch of narrow, high-shouldered warehouses which recall Holland, especially in a few with their gables broken in steps, after the Dutch fashion. These, with their mouldering piers and grass-grown wharves, have their pathos, and the whole place embodies in its architecture an interesting record of the

past, from the time when the homesick exiles huddled close to the water's edge till the period of post-colonial prosperity, when proud merchants and opulent captains set their vast square houses each in its handsome space of gardened ground.

My adjectives might mislead as to size, but they could not as to beauty, and I seek in vain for those that can duly impart the peculiar charm of the town. Portsmouth still awaits her novelist; he will find a rich field when he comes; and I hope he will come of the right sex, for it needs some minute and subtle feminine skill, like that of Jane Austen, to express a fit sense of its life in the past. Of its life in the present I know nothing. I could only go by those delightful, silent houses, and sigh my longing soul into their dim interiors. When now and then a young shape in summer silk, or a group of young shapes in diaphanous muslin, fluttered out of them, I was no wiser; and doubtless my elderly fancy would have been unable to deal with what went on in them. Some girl of those flitting through the warm, odorous twilight must become the creative historian of the place; I can at least imagine a Jane Austen now growing up in Portsmouth.

V.

If Miss Jewett were of a little longer breath than she has yet shown herself in fiction, I might say the Jane Austen of Portsmouth was already with us, and had merely not yet begun to deal with its precious material. One day when we crossed the Piscataqua from New Hampshire into Maine, and took the trolley-line for a run along through the lovely coast country, we suddenly found ourselves in the midst of her own people, who are a little different sort of New-Englanders from those of Miss Wilkins. They began to flock into the car, young maidens and old, mothers and grandmothers, and nice boys and girls, with a very, very few farmer youth of marriageable age, and more rustic and seafaring elders long past it, all in the Sunday best which they had worn to the graduation exercises at the High School, where we took them mostly up. The womenkind were in a nervous twitter of talk and laughter, and the men tolerantly gay beyond their wont, "passing the time of day" with one another, and helping the more tumultuous sex to get settled in the overcrowded open car. They courteously made room for one another, and let the children stand between their knees, or took them in their laps, with that unflinching American kindness which I am prouder of than the American valor in battle, observing in all that American decorum which is no bad thing either. We had chanced upon the high and mighty occasion of the neighborhood year, when people might well have been a little off their balance, but there was not a boisterous note in the subdued affair. As we passed the school-house door, three dear, pretty maids in white gowns and white slippers stood on the steps and gently smiled upon our company. One could see that they were inwardly glowing and thrilling with the excitement of their graduation, but were controlling their emotions to a calm worthy of the august event, so that no one might ever have it to say that they had appeared silly.

The car swept on, and stopped to set down passengers at their doors or gates, where they severally left it, with an easy air as of private ownership, into some sense of which the trolley promptly flatters people along its obliging lines. One comfortable matron, in a cinnamon silk, was just such a figure as that in the Miss Wilkins's story where the bridegroom fails to come on the wedding-day; but, as I say, they made me think more of Miss Jewett's people. The shore folk and the Down-Easters are specifically hers; and these were just such as might have belonged in 'The Country of the Pointed Firs', or 'Sister Wisby's Courtship', or 'Dulham Ladies', or 'An Autumn Ramble', or twenty other entrancing tales. Sometimes one of them would try her front door, and then, with a bridling toss of the head, express that she had forgotten locking it, and slip round to the kitchen; but most of the ladies made their way back at once between the roses and syringas of their grassy door-yards, which were as neat and prim as their own persons, or the best chamber in their white-walled, green-shuttered, story-and-a-half house, and as perfectly kept as the very kitchen itself.

The trolley-line had been opened only since the last September, but in an effect of familiar use it was as if it had always been there, and it climbed and crooked and clambered about with the easy freedom of the country road which it followed. It is a land of low hills, broken by frequent reaches of the sea, and it is most amusing, most amazing, to see how frankly the trolley-car takes and overcomes its difficulties. It scrambles up and down the little steeps like a cat, and whisks round a sharp and sudden curve with a feline screech, broadening into a loud caterwaul as it darts over the estuaries on its trestles. Its course does not lack excitement, and I suppose it does not lack danger; but as yet there have been no accidents, and it is not so disfiguring as one would think. The landscape has already accepted it, and is making the best of it; and to the country people it is an inestimable convenience. It passes everybody's front door or back door, and the farmers can get themselves or their produce (for it runs an express car) into Portsmouth in an hour, twice an hour, all day long. In summer the cars are open, with transverse seats, and stout curtains that quite shut out a squall of wind or rain. In winter the cars are closed, and heated by electricity. The young motorman whom I spoke with, while we waited on a siding to let a car from the opposite direction get by, told me that he was caught out in a blizzard last Winter, and passed the night in a snowdrift. "But the cah was so wa'm, I neva suff'ed a mite."

"Well," I summarized, "it must be a great advantage to all the people along the line."

"Well, you wouldn't 'a' thought so, from the kick they made."

"I suppose the cottagers"--the summer colony--"didn't like the noise."

"Oh yes; that's what I mean. The's whe' the kick was. The natives like it. I guess the summa folks 'll like it, too."

He looked round at me with enjoyment of his joke in his eye, for we both

understood that the summer folks could not help themselves, and must bow to the will of the majority.

THE ART OF THE ADSMITH

The other day, a friend of mine, who professes all the intimacy of a bad conscience with many of my thoughts and convictions, came in with a bulky book under his arm, and said, "I see by a guilty look in your eye that you are meaning to write about spring."

"I am not," I retorted, "and if I were, it would be because none of the new things have been said yet about spring, and because spring is never an old story, any more than youth or love."

"I have heard something like that before," said my friend, "and I understand. The simple truth of the matter is that this is the fag-end of the season, and you have run low in your subjects. Now take my advice and don't write about spring; it will make everybody hate you, and will do no good. Write about advertising." He tapped the book under his arm significantly. "Here is a theme for you."

I.

He had no sooner pronounced these words than I began to feel a weird and potent fascination in his suggestion. I took the book from him and looked it eagerly through. It was called Good Advertising, and it was written by one of the experts in the business who have advanced it almost to the grade of an art, or a humanity.

"But I see nothing here," I said, musingly, "which would enable a self-respecting author to come to the help of his publisher in giving due hold upon the public interest those charming characteristics of his book which no one else can feel so penetratingly or celebrate so persuasively."

"I expected some such objection from you," said my friend. "You will admit that there is everything else here?"

"Everything but that most essential thing. You know how we all feel about it: the bitter disappointment, the heart-sickening sense of insufficiency that the advertised praises of our books give us poor authors. The effect is far worse than that of the reviews, for the reviewer is not your ally and copartner, while your publisher--"

"I see what you mean," said my friend. "But you must have patience. If the author of this book can write so luminously of advertising in

other respects, I am sure he will yet be able to cast a satisfactory light upon your problem. The question is, I believe, how to translate into irresistible terms all that fond and exultant regard which a writer feels for his book, all his pervasive appreciation of its singular beauty, unique value, and utter charm, and transfer it to print, without infringing upon the delicate and shrinking modesty which is the distinguishing ornament of the literary spirit?"

"Something like that. But you understand."

"Perhaps a Roentgen ray might be got to do it," said my friend, thoughtfully, "or perhaps this author may bring his mind to bear upon it yet. He seems to have considered every kind of advertising except book-advertising."

"The most important of all!" I cried, impatiently.

"You think so because you are in that line. If you were in the line of varnish, or bicycles, or soap, or typewriters, or extract of beef, or of malt--"

"Still I should be interested in book--advertising, because it is the most vital of human interests."

"Tell me," said my friend, "do you read the advertisements of the books of rival authors?"

"Brother authors," I corrected him.

"Well, brother authors."

I said, No, candidly, I did not; and I forbore to add that I thought them little better than a waste of the publishers' money.

II.

My friend did not pursue his inquiry to my personal disadvantage, but seemed to prefer a more general philosophy of the matter.

"I have often wondered," he said, "at the enormous expansion of advertising, and doubted whether it was not mostly wasted. But my author, here, has suggested a brilliant fact which I was unwittingly groping for. When you take up a Sunday paper"--I shuddered, and my friend smiled intelligence--"you are simply appalled at the miles of announcements of all sorts. Who can possibly read them? Who cares even to look at them? But if you want something in particular--to furnish a house, or buy a suburban place, or take a steamer for Europe, or go, to the theatre--then you find out at once who reads the advertisements, and cares to look at them. They respond to the multifarious wants of the whole community. You have before you the living operation of that law of

demand and supply which it has always been such a bore to hear about. As often happens, the supply seems to come before the demand; but that's only an appearance. You wanted something, and you found an offer to meet your want."

"Then you don't believe that the offer to meet your want suggested it?"

"I see that my author believes something of the kind. We may be full of all sorts of unconscious wants which merely need the vivifying influence of an advertisement to make them spring into active being; but I have a feeling that the money paid for advertising which appeals to potential wants is largely thrown away. You must want a thing, or think you want it; otherwise you resent the proffer of it as a kind of impertinence."

"There are some kinds of advertisements, all the same, that I read without the slightest interest in the subject matter. Simply the beauty of the style attracts me."

"I know. But does it ever move you to get what you don't want?"

"Never; and I should be glad to know what your author thinks of that sort of advertising: the literary, or dramatic, or humorous, or quaint."

"He doesn't condemn it, quite. But I think he feels that it may have had its day. Do you still read such advertisements with your early zest?"

"No; the zest for nearly everything goes. I don't care so much for Tourguenief as I used. Still, if I come upon the jaunty and laconic suggestions of a certain well-known clothing-house, concerning the season's wear, I read them with a measure of satisfaction. The advertising expert--"

"This author calls him the adsmith."

"Delightful! Ad is a loathly little word, but we must come to it. It's as legitimate as lunch. But as I was saying, the adsmith seems to have caught the American business tone, as perfectly as any of our novelists have caught the American social tone."

"Yes," said my friend, "and he seems to have prospered as richly by it. You know some of those chaps make fifteen or twenty thousand dollars by adsmithing. They have put their art quite on a level with fiction pecuniarily."

"Perhaps it is a branch of fiction."

"No; they claim that it is pure fact. My author discourages the slightest admixture of fable. The truth, clearly and simply expressed, is the best in an ad.

"It is best in a wof, too. I am always saying that."

"Wof?"

"Well, work of fiction. It's another new word, like lunch or ad."

"But in a wof," said my friend, instantly adopting it, "my author insinuates that the fashion of payment tempts you to verbosity, while in an ad the conditions oblige you to the greatest possible succinctness. In one case you are paid by the word; in the other you pay by the word. That is where the adsmith stands upon higher moral ground than the wofsmith."

"I should think your author might have written a recent article in 'The -----, reproaching fiction with its unhallowed gains."

"If you mean that for a sneer, it is misplaced. He would have been incapable of it. My author is no more the friend of honesty in adsmithing than he is of propriety, He deprecates jocosity in apothecaries and undertakers, not only as bad taste, but as bad business; and he is as severe as any one could be upon ads that seize the attention by disgusting or shocking the reader.

"He is to be praised for that, and for the other thing; and I shouldn't have minded his criticising the ready wofsmith. I hope he attacks the use of display type, which makes our newspapers look like the poster-plastered fences around vacant lots. In New York there is only one paper whose advertisements are not typographically a shock to the nerves."

"Well," said my friend, "he attacks foolish and ineffective display."

"It is all foolish and ineffective. It is like a crowd of people trying to make themselves heard by shouting each at the top of his voice. A paper full of display advertisements is an image of our whole congested and delirious state of competition; but even in competitive conditions it is unnecessary, and it is futile. Compare any New York paper but one with the London papers, and you will see what I mean. Of course I refer to the ad pages; the rest of our exception is as offensive with pictures and scare heads as all the rest. I wish your author could revise his opinions and condemn all display in ads."

"I dare say he will when he knows what you think," said my friend, with imaginable sarcasm.

III.

"I wish," I went on, "that he would give us some philosophy of the prodigious increase of advertising within the last twenty-five years, and some conjecture as to the end of it all. Evidently, it can't keep on increasing at the present rate. If it does, there will presently be no room in the world for things; it will be filled up with the advertisements of things."

"Before that time, perhaps," my friend suggested, "adsmithing will have become so fine and potent an art that advertising will be reduced in bulk, while keeping all its energy and even increasing its effectiveness."

"Perhaps," I said, "some silent electrical process will be contrived, so that the attractions of a new line of dress-goods or the fascination of a spring or fall opening may be imparted to a lady's consciousness without even the agency of words. All other facts of commercial and industrial interest could be dealt with in the same way. A fine thrill could be made to go from the last new book through the whole community, so that people would not willingly rest till they had it. Yes, one can see an indefinite future for advertising in that way. The adsmith may be the supreme artist of the twentieth century. He may assemble in his grasp, and employ at will, all the arts and sciences."

"Yes," said my friend, with a sort of fall in his voice, "that is very well. But what is to become of the race when it is penetrated at every pore with a sense of the world's demand and supply?"

"Oh, that is another affair. I was merely imagining the possible resources of invention in providing for the increase of advertising while guarding the integrity of the planet. I think, very likely, if the thing keeps on, we shall all go mad; but then we shall none of us be able to criticise the others. Or possibly the thing may work its own cure. You know the ingenuity of the political economists in justifying the egotism to which conditions appeal. They do not deny that these foster greed and rapacity in merciless degree, but they contend that when the wealth-winner drops off gorged there is a kind of miracle wrought, and good comes of it all. I never could see how; but if it is true, why shouldn't a sort of ultimate immunity come back to us from the very excess and invasion of the appeals now made to us, and destined to be made to us still more by the adsmith? Come, isn't there hope in that?"

"I see a great opportunity for the wofsmith in some such dream," said my friend. "Why don't you turn it to account?"

"You know that isn't my line; I must leave that sort of wofsmithing to the romantic novelist. Besides, I have my well-known panacea for all the ills our state is heir to, in a civilization which shall legislate foolish and vicious and ugly and adulterate things out of the possibility of existence. Most of the adsmithing is now employed in persuading people that such things are useful, beautiful, and pure. But in any civilization they shall not even be suffered to be made, much less foisted upon the community by adsmiths."

"I see what you mean," said my friend; and he sighed gently. "I had much better let you write about spring."

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF PLAGIARISM

A late incident in the history of a very widespread English novelist, triumphantly closed by the statement of his friend that the novelist had casually failed to accredit a given passage in his novel to the real author, has brought freshly to my mind a curious question in ethics. The friend who vindicated the novelist, or, rather, who contemptuously dismissed the matter, not only confessed the fact of adoption, but declared that it was one of many which could be found in the novelist's works. The novelist, he said, was quite in the habit of so using material in the rough, which he implied was like using any fact or idea from life, and he declared that the novelist could not bother to answer critics who regarded these exploitations as a sort of depredation. In a manner he brushed the impertinent accusers aside, assuring the general public that the novelist always meant, at his leisure, and in his own way, duly to ticket the flies preserved in his amber.

I.

When I read this haughty vindication, I thought at first that if the case were mine I would rather have several deadly enemies than such a friend as that; but since, I have not been so sure. I have asked myself upon a careful review of the matter whether plagiarism may not be frankly avowed, as in nowise dishonest, and I wish some abler casuist would take the affair into consideration and make it clear for me. If we are to suppose that offences against society disgrace the offender, and that public dishonor argues the fact of some such offence, then apparently plagiarism is not such an offence; for in even very flagrant cases it does not disgrace. The dictionary, indeed, defines it as "the crime of literary theft"; but as no penalty attaches to it, and no lasting shame, it is hard to believe it either a crime or a theft; and the offence, if it is an offence (one has to call it something, and I hope the word is not harsh), is some such harmless infraction of the moral law as white-lying.

The much-perverted saying of Moliere, that he took his own where he found it, is perhaps in the consciousness of those who appropriate the things other people have rushed in with before them. But really they seem to need neither excuse nor defence with the impartial public if they are caught in the act of reclaiming their property or despoiling the rash intruder upon their premises. The novelist in question is by no means the only recent example, and is by no means a flagrant example. While the ratification of the treaty with Spain was pending before the Senate of the United States, a member of that body opposed it in a speech almost word for word the same as a sermon delivered in New York City only a few days earlier and published broadcast. He was promptly exposed by the parallel-column system; but I have never heard that his standing was affected or his usefulness impaired by the offence proven against him. A few years ago an eminent divine in one of our cities preached as his own

the sermon of a brother divine, no longer living; he, too, was detected and promptly exposed by the parallel-column system, but nothing whatever happened from the exposure. Every one must recall like instances, more or less remote. I remember one within my youthfuller knowledge of a journalist who used as his own all the denunciatory passages of Macaulay's article on Barrere, and applied them with changes of name to the character and conduct of a local politician whom he felt it his duty to devote to infamy. He was caught in the fact, and by means of the parallel column pilloried before the community. But the community did not mind it a bit, and the journalist did not either. He prospered on amid those who all knew what he had done, and when he removed to another city it was to a larger one, and to a position of more commanding influence, from which he was long conspicuous in helping shape the destinies of the nation.

So far as any effect from these exposures was concerned, they were as harmless as those exposures of fraudulent spiritistic mediums which from time to time are supposed to shake the spiritistic superstition to its foundations. They really do nothing of the kind; the table-tippings, rappings, materializations, and levitations keep on as before; and I do not believe that the exposure of the novelist who has been the latest victim of the parallel column will injure him a jot in the hearts or heads of his readers.

II.

I am very glad of it, being a disbeliever in punishments of all sorts. I am always glad to have sinners get off, for I like to get off from my own sins; and I have a bad moment from my sense of them whenever another's have found him out. But as yet I have not convinced myself that the sort of thing we have been considering is a sin at all, for it seems to deprave no more than it dishonors; or that it is what the dictionary (with very unnecessary brutality) calls a "crime" and a "theft." If it is either, it is differently conditioned, if not differently natured, from all other crimes and thefts. These may be more or less artfully and hopefully concealed, but plagiarism carries inevitable detection with it. If you take a man's hat or coat out of his hall, you may pawn it before the police overtake you; if you take his horse out of his stable, you may ride it away beyond pursuit and sell it; if you take his purse out of his pocket, you may pass it to a pal in the crowd, and easily prove your innocence. But if you take his sermon, or his essay, or even his apposite reflection, you cannot escape discovery. The world is full of idle people reading books, and they are only too glad to act as detectives; they please their miserable vanity by showing their alertness, and are proud to hear witness against you in the court of parallel columns. You have no safety in the obscurity of the author from whom you take your own; there is always that most terrible reader, the reader of one book, who knows that very author, and will the more indecently hasten to bring you to the bar because he knows no other, and wishes to display his erudition. A man may escape for centuries and yet

be found out. In the notorious case of William Shakespeare the offender seemed finally secure of his prey; and yet one poor lady, who ended in a lunatic asylum, was able to detect him at last, and to restore the goods to their rightful owner, Sir Francis Bacon.

In spite, however, of this almost absolute certainty of exposure, plagiarism goes on as it has always gone on; and there is no probability that it will cease as long as there are novelists, senators, divines, and journalists hard pressed for ideas which they happen not to have in mind at the time, and which they see going to waste elsewhere. Now and then it takes a more violent form and becomes a real mania, as when the plagiarist openly claims and urges his right to a well-known piece of literary property. When Mr. William Allen Butler's famous poem of "Nothing to Wear" achieved its extraordinary popularity, a young girl declared and apparently quite believed that she had written it and lost the MS. in an omnibus. All her friends apparently believed so, too; and the friends of the different gentlemen and ladies who claimed the authorship of "Beautiful Snow" and "Rock Me to Sleep" were ready to support them by affidavit against the real authors of those pretty worthless pieces.

From all these facts it must appear to the philosophic reader that plagiarism is not the simple "crime" or "theft" that the lexicographers would have us believe. It argues a strange and peculiar courage on the part of those who commit it or indulge it, since they are sure of having it brought home to them, for they seem to dread the exposure, though it involves no punishment outside of themselves. Why do they do it, or, having done it, why do they mind it, since the public does not? Their temerity and their timidity are things almost irreconcilable, and the whole position leaves one quite puzzled as to what one would do if one's own plagiarisms were found out. But this is a mere question of conduct, and of infinitely less interest than that of the nature or essence of the thing itself.

PURITANISM IN AMERICAN FICTION

The question whether the fiction which gives a vivid impression of reality does truly represent the conditions studied in it, is one of those inquiries to which there is no very final answer. The most baffling fact of such fiction is that its truths are self-evident; and if you go about to prove them you are in some danger of shaking the convictions of those whom they have persuaded. It will not do to affirm anything wholesale concerning them; a hundred examples to the contrary present themselves if you know the ground, and you are left in doubt of the verity which you cannot gainsay. The most that you can do is to appeal to your own consciousness, and that is not proof to anybody else. Perhaps the best test in this difficult matter is the quality of the art which created the picture. Is it clear, simple, unaffected? Is it true

to human experience generally? If it is so, then it cannot well be false to the special human experience it deals with.

I.

Not long ago I heard of something which amusingly, which pathetically, illustrated the sense of reality imparted by the work of one of our writers, whose art is of the kind I mean. A lady was driving with a young girl of the lighter-minded civilization of New York through one of those little towns of the North Shore in Massachusetts, where the small; wooden houses cling to the edges of the shallow bay, and the schooners slip, in and out on the hidden channels of the salt meadows as if they were blown about through the tall grass. She tried to make her feel the shy charm of the place, that almost subjective beauty, which those to the manner born are so keenly aware of in old-fashioned New England villages; but she found that the girl was not only not looking at the sad-colored cottages, with their weather-worn shingle walls, their grassy door-yards lit by patches of summer bloom, and their shutterless windows with their close-drawn shades, but she was resolutely averting her eyes from them, and staring straightforward until she should be out of sight of them altogether. She said that they were terrible, and she knew that in each of them was one of those dreary old women, or disappointed girls, or unhappy wives, or bereaved mothers, she had read of in Miss Wilkins's stories.

She had been too little sensible of the humor which forms the relief of these stories, as it forms the relief of the bare, duteous, conscientious, deeply individualized lives portrayed in them; and no doubt this cannot make its full appeal to the heart of youth aching for their stoical sorrows. Without being so very young, I, too, have found the humor hardly enough at times, and if one has not the habit of experiencing support in tragedy itself, one gets through a remote New England village, at nightfall, say, rather limp than otherwise, and in quite the mood that Miss Wilkins's bleaker studies leave one in. At mid-day, or in the bright sunshine of the morning, it is quite possible to fling off the melancholy which breathes the same note in the fact and the fiction; and I have even had some pleasure at such times in identifying this or that one-story cottage with its lean-to as a Mary Wilkins house and in placing one of her muted dramas in it. One cannot know the people of such places without recognizing her types in them, and one cannot know New England without owning the fidelity of her stories to New England character, though, as I have already suggested, quite another sort of stories could be written which should as faithfully represent other phases of New England village life.

To the alien inquirer, however, I should be by no means confident that their truth would evince itself, for the reason that human nature is seldom on show anywhere. I am perfectly certain of the truth of Tolstoy and Tourguenief to Russian life, yet I should not be surprised if I went through Russia and met none of their people. I should be rather more

surprised if I went through Italy and met none of Verga's or Fogazzaro's, but that would be because I already knew Italy a little. In fact, I suspect that the last delight of truth in any art comes only to the connoisseur who is as well acquainted with the subject as the artist himself. One must not be too severe in challenging the truth of an author to life; and one must bring a great deal of sympathy and a great deal of patience to the scrutiny. Types are very backward and shrinking things, after all; character is of such a mimosian sensibility that if you seize it too abruptly its leaves are apt to shut and hide all that is distinctive in it; so that it is not without some risk to an author's reputation for honesty that he gives his readers the impression of his truth.

II.

The difficulty with characters in fiction is that the reader there finds them dramatized; not only their actions, but also their emotions are dramatized; and the very same sort of persons when one meets them in real life are recreantly undramatic. One might go through a New England village and see Mary Wilkins houses and Mary Wilkins people, and yet not witness a scene nor hear a word such as one finds in her tales. It is only too probable that the inhabitants one met would say nothing quaint or humorous, or betray at all the nature that she reveals in them; and yet I should not question her revelation on that account. The life of New England, such as Miss Wilkins deals with, and Miss Sarah O. Jewett, and Miss Alice Brown, is not on the surface, or not visibly so, except to the accustomed eye. It is Puritanism scarcely animated at all by the Puritanic theology. One must not be very positive in such things, and I may be too bold in venturing to say that while the belief of some New Englanders approaches this theology the belief of most is now far from it; and yet its penetrating individualism so deeply influenced the New England character that Puritanism survives in the moral and mental make of the people almost in its early strength. Conduct and manner conform to a dead religious ideal; the wish to be sincere, the wish to be just, the wish to be righteous are before the wish to be kind, merciful, humble. A people are not a chosen people for half a dozen generations without acquiring a spiritual pride that remains with them long after they cease to believe themselves chosen. They are often stiffened in the neck and they are often hardened in the heart by it, to the point of making them angular and cold; but they are of an inveterate responsibility to a power higher than themselves, and they are strengthened for any fate. They are what we see in the stories which, perhaps, hold the first place in American fiction.

As a matter of fact, the religion of New England is not now so Puritanical as that of many parts of the South and West, and yet the inherited Puritanism stamps the New England manner, and differences it from the manner of the straightest sects elsewhere. There was, however, always a revolt against Puritanism when Puritanism was severest and securest; this resulted in types of shiftlessness if not wickedness,

which have not yet been duly studied, and which would make the fortune of some novelist who cared to do a fresh thing. There is also a sentimentality, or pseudo-emotionality (I have not the right phrase for it), which awaits full recognition in fiction. This efflorescence from the dust of systems and creeds, carried into natures left vacant by the ancestral doctrine, has scarcely been noticed by the painters of New England manners. It is often a last state of Unitarianism, which prevailed in the larger towns and cities when the Calvinistic theology ceased to be dominant, and it is often an effect of the spiritualism so common in New England, and, in fact, everywhere in America. Then, there is a wide-spread love of literature in the country towns and villages which has in great measure replaced the old interest in dogma, and which forms with us an author's closest appreciation, if not his best. But as yet little hint of all this has got into the short stories, and still less of that larger intellectual life of New England, or that exalted beauty of character which tempts one to say that Puritanism was a blessing if it made the New-Englanders what they are; though one can always be glad not to have lived among them in the disciplinary period. Boston, the capital of that New England nation which is fast losing itself in the American nation, is no longer of its old literary primacy, and yet most of our right thinking, our high thinking, still begins there, and qualifies the thinking of the country at large. The good causes, the generous causes, are first befriended there, and in a wholesome sort the New England culture, as well as the New England conscience, has imparted itself to the American people.

Even the power of writing short stories, which we suppose ourselves to have in such excellent degree, has spread from New England. That is, indeed, the home of the American short story, and it has there been brought to such perfection in the work of Miss Wilkins, of Miss Jewett, of Miss Brown, and of that most faithful, forgotten painter of manners, Mrs. Rose Terry Cook, that it presents upon the whole a truthful picture of New England village life in some of its more obvious phases. I say obvious because I must, but I have already said that this is a life which is very little obvious; and I should not blame any one who brought the portrait to the test of reality, and found it exaggerated, overdrawn, and unnatural, though I should be perfectly sure that such a critic was wrong.

THE WHAT AND THE HOW IN ART

One of the things always enforcing itself upon the consciousness of the artist in any sort is the fact that those whom artists work for rarely care for their work artistically. They care for it morally, personally, partially. I suspect that criticism itself has rather a muddled preference for the what over the how, and that it is always haunted by a philistine question of the material when it should, aesthetically speaking, be concerned solely with the form.

I.

The other night at the theatre I was witness of a curious and amusing illustration of my point. They were playing a most soul-filling melodrama, of the sort which gives you assurance from the very first that there will be no trouble in the end, but everything will come out just as it should, no matter what obstacles oppose themselves in the course of the action. An over-ruling Providence, long accustomed to the exigencies of the stage, could not fail to intervene at the critical moment in behalf of innocence and virtue, and the spectator never had the least occasion for anxiety. Not unnaturally there was a black-hearted villain in the piece; so very black-hearted that he seemed not to have a single good impulse from first to last. Yet he was, in the keeping of the stage Providence, as harmless as a blank cartridge, in spite of his deadly aims. He accomplished no more mischief, in fact, than if all his intents had been of the best; except for the satisfaction afforded by the edifying spectacle of his defeat and shame, he need not have been in the play at all; and one might almost have felt sorry for him, he was so continually baffled. But this was not enough for the audience, or for that part of it which filled the gallery to the roof. Perhaps he was such an uncommonly black-hearted villain, so very, very cold-blooded in his wickedness that the justice unsparingly dealt out to him by the dramatist could not suffice. At any rate, the gallery took such a vivid interest in his punishment that it had out the actor who impersonated the wretch between all the acts, and hissed him throughout his deliberate passage across the stage before the curtain. The hisses were not at all for the actor, but altogether for the character. The performance was fairly good, quite as good as the performance of any virtuous part in the piece, and easily up to the level of other villanous performances (I never find much nature in them, perhaps because there is not much nature in villainy itself; that is, villainy pure and simple); but the mere conception of the wickedness this bad man had attempted was too much for an audience of the average popular goodness. It was only after he had taken poison, and fallen dead before their eyes, that the spectators forbore to visit him with a lively proof of their abhorrence; apparently they did not care to "give him a realizing sense that there was a punishment after death," as the man in Lincoln's story did with the dead dog.

II.

The whole affair was very amusing at first, but it has since put me upon thinking (I like to be put upon thinking; the eighteenth-century essayists were) that the attitude of the audience towards this deplorable reprobate is really the attitude of most readers of books, lookers at pictures and statues, listeners to music, and so on through the whole

list of the arts. It is absolutely different from the artist's attitude, from the connoisseur's attitude; it is quite irreconcilable with their attitude, and yet I wonder if in the end it is not what the artist works for. Art is not produced for artists, or even for connoisseurs; it is produced for the general, who can never view it otherwise than morally, personally, partially, from their associations and preconceptions.

Whether the effect with the general is what the artist works for or not, he, does not succeed without it. Their brute liking or misliking is the final test; it is universal suffrage that elects, after all. Only, in some cases of this sort the polls do not close at four o'clock on the first Tuesday after the first Monday of November, but remain open forever, and the voting goes on. Still, even the first day's canvass is important, or at least significant. It will not do for the artist to electioneer, but if he is beaten, he ought to ponder the causes of his defeat, and question how he has failed to touch the chord of universal interest. He is in the world to make beauty and truth evident to his fellowmen, who are as a rule incredibly stupid and ignorant of both, but whose judgment he must nevertheless not despise. If he can make something that they will cheer, or something that they will hiss, he may not have done any great thing, but if he has made something that they will neither cheer nor hiss, he may well have his misgivings, no matter how well, how finely, how truly he has done the thing.

This is very humiliating, but a tacit snub to one's artist-pride such as one gets from public silence is not a bad thing for one. Not long ago I was talking about pictures with a painter, a very great painter, to my thinking; one whose pieces give me the same feeling I have from reading poetry; and I was excusing myself to him with respect to art, and perhaps putting on a little more modesty than I felt. I said that I could enjoy pictures only on the literary side, and could get no answer from my soul to those excellences of handling and execution which seem chiefly to interest painters. He replied that it was a confession of weakness in a painter if he appealed merely or mainly to technical knowledge in the spectator; that he narrowed his field and dwarfed his work by it; and that if he painted for painters merely, or for the connoisseurs of painting, he was denying his office, which was to say something clear and appreciable to all sorts of men in the terms of art. He even insisted that a picture ought to tell a story.

The difficulty in humbling one's self to this view of art is in the ease with which one may please the general by art which is no art. Neither the play nor the playing that I saw at the theatre when the actor was hissed for the wickedness of the villain he was personating, was at all fine; and yet I perceived, on reflection, that they had achieved a supreme effect. If I may be so confidential, I will say that I should be very sorry to have written that piece; yet I should be very proud if, on the level I chose and with the quality I cared for, I could invent a villain that the populace would have out and hiss for his surpassing wickedness. In other words, I think it a thousand pities whenever an artist gets so far away from the general, so far within himself or a little circle of amateurs, that his highest and best work awakens no response in the multitude. I am afraid this is rather the danger of the

arts among us, and how to escape it is not so very plain. It makes one sick and sorry often to see how cheaply the applause of the common people is won. It is not an infallible test of merit, but if it is wanting to any performance, we may be pretty sure it is not the greatest performance.

III.

The paradox lies in wait here, as in most other human affairs, to confound us, and we try to baffle it, in this way and in that. We talk, for instance, of poetry for poets, and we fondly imagine that this is different from talking of cookery for cooks. Poetry is not made for poets; they have enough poetry of their own, but it is made for people who are not poets. If it does not please these, it may still be poetry, but it is poetry which has failed of its truest office. It is none the less its truest office because some very wretched verse seems often to do it.

The logic of such a fact is not that the poet should try to achieve this truest office of his art by means of doggerel, but that he should study how and where and why the beauty and the truth he has made manifest are wanting in universal interest, in human appeal. Leaving the drama out of the question, and the theatre which seems now to be seeking only the favor of the dull rich, I believe that there never was a time or a race more open to the impressions of beauty and of truth than ours. The artist who feels their divine charm, and longs to impart it, has now and here a chance to impart it more widely than ever artist had in the world before. Of course, the means of reaching the widest range of humanity are the simple and the elementary, but there is no telling when the complex and the recondite may not universally please. 288

The art is to make them plain to every one, for every one has them in him. Lowell used to say that Shakespeare was subtle, but in letters a foot high.

The painter, sculptor, or author who pleases the polite only has a success to be proud of as far as it goes, and to be ashamed of that it goes no further. He need not shrink from giving pleasure to the vulgar because bad art pleases them. It is part of his reason for being that he should please them, too; and if he does not it is a proof that he is wanting in force, however much he abounds in fineness. Who would not wish his picture to draw a crowd about it? Who would not wish his novel to sell five hundred thousand copies, for reasons besides the sordid love of gain which I am told governs novelists? One should not really wish it any the less because chromos and historical romances are popular.

Sometime, I believe, the artist and his public will draw nearer together in a mutual understanding, though perhaps not in our present conditions. I put that understanding off till the good time when life shall be more than living, more even than the question of getting a living; but in the

mean time I think that the artist might very well study the springs of feeling in others; and if I were a dramatist I think I should quite humbly go to that play where they hiss the villain for his villany, and inquire how his wickedness had been made so appreciable, so vital, so personal. Not being a dramatist, I still cannot indulge the greatest contempt of that play and its public.

POLITICS OF AMERICAN AUTHORS

No thornier theme could well be suggested than I was once invited to consider by an Englishman who wished to know how far American politicians were scholars, and how far American authors took part in politics. In my mind I first revolted from the inquiry, and then I cast about, in the fascination it began to have for me, to see how I might handle it and prick myself least. In a sort, which it would take too long to set forth, politics are very intimate matters with us, and if one were to deal quite frankly with the politics of a contemporary author, one might accuse one's self of an unwarrantable personality. So, in what I shall have to say in answer to the question asked me, I shall seek above all things not to be quite frank.

I.

My uncandor need not be so jealously guarded in speaking of authors no longer living. Not to go too far back among these, it is perfectly safe to say that when the slavery question began to divide all kinds of men among us, Lowell, Longfellow, Whittier, Curtis, Emerson, and Bryant more or less promptly and openly took sides against slavery. Holmes was very much later in doing so, but he made up for his long delay by his final strenuousness; as for Hawthorne, he was, perhaps, too essentially a spectator of life to be classed with either party, though his associations, if not his sympathies, were with the Northern men who had Southern principles until the civil war came. After the war, when our political questions ceased to be moral and emotional and became economic and sociological, literary men found their standing with greater difficulty. They remained mostly Republicans, because the Republicans were the anti-slavery party, and were still waging war against slavery in their nerves.

I should say that they also continued very largely the emotional tradition in politics, and it is doubtful if in the nature of things the politics of literary men can ever be otherwise than emotional. In fact, though the questions may no longer be so, the politics of vastly the greater number of Americans are so. Nothing else would account for the fact that during the last ten or fifteen years men have remained

Republicans and remained Democrats upon no tangible issues except of office, which could practically concern only a few hundreds or thousands out of every million voters. Party fealty is praised as a virtue, and disloyalty to party is treated as a species of incivism next in wickedness to treason. If any one were to ask me why then American authors were not active in American politics, as they once were, I should feel a certain diffidence in replying that the question of other people's accession to office was, however emotional, unimportant to them as compared with literary questions. I should have the more diffidence because it might be retorted that literary men were too unpractical for politics when they did not deal with moral issues.

Such a retort would be rather mild and civil, as things go, and might even be regarded as complimentary. It is not our custom to be tender with any one who doubts if any actuality is right, or might not be bettered, especially in public affairs. We are apt to call such a one out of his name and to punish him for opinions he has never held. This may be a better reason than either given why authors do not take part in politics with us. They are a thin-skinned race, fastidious often, and always averse to hard knocks; they are rather modest, too, and distrust their fitness to lead, when they have quite a firm faith in their convictions. They hesitate to urge these in the face of practical politicians, who have a confidence in their ability to settle all affairs of State not surpassed even by that of business men in dealing with economic questions.

I think it is a pity that our authors do not go into politics at least for the sake of the material it would yield them; but really they do not. Our politics are often vulgar, but they are very picturesque; yet, so far, our fiction has shunned them even more decidedly than it has shunned our good society--which is not picturesque or apparently anything but a tiresome adaptation of the sort of drama that goes on abroad under the same name. In nearly the degree that our authors have dealt with our politics as material, they have given the practical politicians only too much reason to doubt their insight and their capacity to understand the mere machinery, the simplest motives, of political life.

II.

There are exceptions, of course, and if my promise of reticence did not withhold me I might name some striking ones. Privately and unprofessionally, I think our authors take as vivid an interest in public affairs as any other class of our citizens, and I should be sorry to think that they took a less intelligent interest. Now and then, but only very rarely, one of them speaks out, and usually on the unpopular side. In this event he is spared none of the penalties with which we like to visit difference of opinion; rather they are accumulated on him.

Such things are not serious, and they are such as no serious man need shrink from, but they have a bearing upon what I am trying to explain,

and in a certain measure they account for a certain attitude in our literary men. No one likes to have stones, not to say mud, thrown at him, though they are not meant to hurt him badly and may be partly thrown in joke. But it is pretty certain that if a man not in politics takes them seriously, he will have more or less mud, not to say stones, thrown at him. He might burlesque or caricature them, or misrepresent them, with safety; but if he spoke of public questions with heart and conscience, he could not do it with impunity, unless he were authorized to do so by some practical relation to them. I do not mean that then he would escape; but in this country, where there were once supposed to be no classes, people are more strictly classified than in any other. Business to the business man, law to the lawyer, medicine to the physician, politics to the politician, and letters to the literary man; that is the rule. One is not expected to transcend his function, and commonly one does not. We keep each to his last, as if there were not human interests, civic interests, which had a higher claim than the last upon our thinking and feeling. The tendency has grown upon us severally and collectively through the long persistence of our prosperity; if public affairs were going ill, private affairs were going so well that we did not mind the others; and we Americans are, I think, meridional in our improvidence. We are so essentially of to-day that we behave as if to-morrow no more concerned us than yesterday. We have taught ourselves to believe that it will all come out right in the end so long that we have come to act upon our belief; we are optimistic fatalists.

III.

The turn which our politics have taken towards economics, if I may so phrase the rise of the questions of labor and capital, has not largely attracted literary men. It is doubtful whether Edward Bellamy himself, whose fancy of better conditions has become the abiding faith of vast numbers of Americans, supposed that he was entering the field of practical politics, or dreamed of influencing elections by his hopes of economic equality. But he virtually founded the Populist party, which, as the vital principle of the Democratic party, came so near electing its candidate for the Presidency some years ago; and he is to be named first among our authors who have dealt with politics on their more human side since the days of the old antislavery agitation. Without too great disregard of the reticence concerning the living which I promised myself, I may mention Dr. Edward Everett Hale and Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson as prominent authors who encouraged the Nationalist movement eventuating in Populism, though they were never Populists. It may be interesting to note that Dr. Hale and Colonel Higginson, who later came together in their sociological sympathies, were divided by the schism of 1884, when the first remained with the Republicans and the last went off to the Democrats. More remotely, Colonel Higginson was anti slavery almost to the point of Abolitionism, and he led a negro regiment in the war. Dr. Hale was of those who were less radically opposed to slavery before the war, but hardly so after it came. Since the war a sort of reflux of the old anti-slavery politics carried from his moorings in

Southern tradition Mr. George W. Cable, who, against the white sentiment of his section, sided with the former slaves, and would, if the indignant renunciation of his fellow-Southerners could avail, have consequently ceased to be the first of Southern authors, though he would still have continued the author of at least one of the greatest American novels.

If I must burn my ships behind me in alleging these modern instances, as I seem really to be doing, I may mention Mr. R. W. Gilder, the poet, as an author who has taken part in the politics of municipal reform, Mr. Hamlin Garland has been known from the first as a zealous George man, or single-taxer. Mr. John Hay, Mr. Theodore Roosevelt, and Mr. Henry Cabot Lodge are Republican politicians, as well as recognized literary men. Mr. Joel Chandler Harris, when not writing Uncle Remus, writes political articles in a leading Southern journal. Mark Twain is a leading anti-imperialist.

IV.

I am not sure whether I have made out a case for our authors or against them; perhaps I have not done so badly; but I have certainly not tried to be exhaustive; the exhaustion is so apt to extend from the subject to the reader, and I wish to leave him in a condition to judge for himself whether American literary men take part in American politics or not. I think they bear their share, in the quieter sort of way which we hope (it may be too fondly) is the American way. They are none of them politicians in the Latin sort. Few, if any, of our statesmen have come forward with small volumes of verse in their hands as they used to do in Spain; none of our poets or historians have been chosen Presidents of the republic as has happened to their French confreres; no great novelist of ours has been exiled as Victor Hugo was, or atrociously mishandled as Zola has been, though I have no doubt that if, for instance, one had once said the Spanish war wrong he would be pretty generally 'conspue'. They have none of them reached the heights of political power, as several English authors have done; but they have often been ambassadors, ministers, and consuls, though they may not often have been appointed for political reasons. I fancy they discharge their duties in voting rather faithfully, though they do not often take part in caucuses or conventions.

As for the other half of the question--how far American politicians are scholars--one's first impulse would be to say that they never were so. But I have always had an heretical belief that there were snakes in Ireland; and it may be some such disposition to question authority that keeps me from yielding to this impulse. The law of demand and supply alone ought to have settled the question in favor of the presence of the scholar in our politics, there has been such a cry for him among us for almost a generation past. Perhaps the response has not been very direct, but I imagine that our politicians have never been quite so destitute of scholarship as they would sometimes make appear. I do not think so many of them now write a good style, or speak a good style, as the politicians

of forty, or fifty, or sixty years ago; but this may be merely part of the impression of the general worsening of things, familiar after middle life to every one's experience, from the beginning of recorded time. If something not so literary is meant by scholarship, if a study of finance, of economics, of international affairs is in question, it seems to go on rather more to their own satisfaction than that of their critics. But without being always very proud of the result, and without professing to know the facts very profoundly, one may still suspect that under an outside by no means academic there is a process of thinking in our statesmen which is not so loose, not so unscientific, and not even so unscholarly as it might be supposed. It is not the effect of specific training, and yet it is the effect of training. I do not find that the matters dealt with are anywhere in the world intrusted to experts; and in this sense scholarship has not been called to the aid of our legislation or administration; but still I should not like to say that none of our politicians were scholars. That would be offensive, and it might not be true. In fact, I can think of several whom I should be tempted to call scholars if I were not just here recalled to a sense of my purpose not to deal quite frankly with this inquiry.

STORAGE

It has been the belief of certain kindly philosophers that if the one half of mankind knew how the other half lived, the two halves might be brought together in a family affection not now so observable in human relations. Probably if this knowledge were perfect, there would still be things, to bar the perfect brotherhood; and yet the knowledge itself is so interesting, if not so salutary as it has been imagined, that one can hardly refuse to impart it if one has it, and can reasonably hope, in the advantage of the ignorant, to find one's excuse with the better informed.

I.

City and country are still so widely apart in every civilization that one can safely count upon a reciprocal strangeness in many every-day things. For instance, in the country, when people break up house-keeping, they sell their household goods and gods, as they did in cities fifty or a hundred years ago; but now in cities they simply store them; and vast warehouses in all the principal towns have been devoted to their storage. The warehouses are of all types, from dusty lofts over stores, and ammoniacal lofts over stables, to buildings offering acres of space, and carefully planned for the purpose. They are more or less fire-proof, slow-burning, or briskly combustible, like the dwellings they have devastated. But the modern tendency is to a type where flames do not destroy, nor moth corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal. Such a

warehouse is a city in itself, laid out in streets and avenues, with the private tenements on either hand duly numbered, and accessible only to the tenants or their order. The aisles are concreted, the doors are iron, and the roofs are ceiled with iron; the whole place is heated by steam and lighted by electricity. Behind the iron doors, which in the New York warehouses must number hundreds of thousands, and throughout all our other cities, millions, the furniture of a myriad households is stored--the effects of people who have gone to Europe, or broken up house-keeping provisionally or definitively, or have died, or been divorced. They are the dead bones of homes, or their ghosts, or their yet living bodies held in hypnotic trances; destined again in some future time to animate some house or flat anew. In certain cases the spell lasts for many years, in others for a few, and in others yet it prolongs itself indefinitely.

I may mention the case of one owner whom I saw visiting the warehouse to take out the household stuff that had lain there a long fifteen years. He had been all that while in Europe, expecting any day to come home and begin life again, in his own land. That dream had passed, and now he was taking his stuff out of storage and shipping it to Italy. I did not envy him his feelings as the parts of his long-dead past rose round him in formless resurrection. It was not that they were all broken or defaced. On the contrary, they were in a state of preservation far more heartbreaking than any decay. In well-managed storage warehouses the things are handled with scrupulous care, and they are so packed into the appointed rooms that if not disturbed they could suffer little harm in fifteen or fifty years. The places are wonderfully well kept, and if you will visit them, say in midwinter, after the fall influx of furniture has all been hidden away behind the iron doors of the several cells, you shall find their far-branching corridors scrupulously swept and dusted, and shall walk up and down their concrete length with some such sense of secure finality as you would experience in pacing the aisle of your family vault.

That is what it comes to. One may feign that these storage warehouses are cities, but they are really cemeteries: sad columbaria on whose shelves are stowed exanimate things once so intimately of their owners' lives that it is with the sense of looking at pieces and bits of one's dead self that one revisits them. If one takes the fragments out to fit them to new circumstance, one finds them not only uncomformable and incapable, but so volubly confidential of the associations in which they are steeped, that one wishes to hurry them back to their cell and lock it upon them forever. One feels then that the old way was far better, and that if the things had been auctioned off, and scattered up and down, as chance willed, to serve new uses with people who wanted them enough to pay for them even a tithe of their cost, it would have been wiser. Failing this, a fire seems the only thing for them, and their removal to the cheaper custody of a combustible or slow-burning warehouse the best recourse. Desperate people, aging husbands and wives, who have attempted the reconstruction of their homes with these

"Portions and parcels of the dreadful past"

have been known to wish for an earthquake, even, that would involve their belongings in an indiscriminate ruin.

II.

In fact, each new start in life should be made with material new to you, if comfort is to attend the enterprise. It is not only sorrowful but it is futile to store your possessions, if you hope to find the old happiness in taking them out and using them again. It is not that they will not go into place, after a fashion, and perform their old office, but that the pang they will inflict through the suggestion of the other places where they served their purpose in other years will be only the keener for the perfection with which they do it now. If they cannot be sold, and if no fire comes down from heaven to consume them, then they had better be stored with no thought of ever taking them out again.

That will be expensive, or it will be inexpensive, according to the sort of storage they are put into. The inexperienced in such matters may be surprised, and if they have hearts they may be grieved, to learn that the fire-proof storage of the furniture of the average house would equal the rent of a very comfortable domicile in a small town, or a farm by which a family's living can be earned, with a decent dwelling in which it can be sheltered. Yet the space required is not very great; three fair-sized rooms will hold everything; and there is sometimes a fierce satisfaction in seeing how closely the things that once stood largely about, and seemed to fill ample parlors and chambers, can be packed away. To be sure they are not in their familiar attitudes; they lie on their sides or backs, or stand upon their heads; between the legs of library or dining tables are stuffed all kinds of minor movables, with cushions, pillows, pictures, cunningly adjusted to the environment; and mattresses pad the walls, or interpose their soft bulk between pieces of furniture that would otherwise rend each other. Carpets sewn in cotton against moths, and rugs in long rolls; the piano hovering under its ample frame a whole brood of helpless little guitars, mandolins, and banjos, and supporting on its broad back a bulk of lighter cases to the fire-proof ceiling of the cell; paintings in boxes indistinguishable outwardly from their companioning mirrors; barrels of china and kitchen utensils, and all the what-not of householding and house-keeping contribute to the repletion.

There is a science observed in the arrangement of the various effects; against the rear wall and packed along the floor, and then in front of and on top of these, is built a superstructure of the things that may be first wanted, in case of removal, or oftenest wanted in some exigency of the homeless life of the owners, pending removal. The lightest and slightest articles float loosely about the door, or are interwoven in a kind of fabric just within, and curtaining the ponderous mass behind. The effect is not so artistic as the mortuary mosaics which the Roman Capuchins design with the bones of their dead brethren in the crypt of their church, but the warehousemen no doubt have their just pride in it, and feel an artistic pang in its provisional or final disturbance.

It had better never be disturbed, for it is disturbed only in some futile dream of returning to the past; and we never can return to the past on the old terms. It is well in all things to accept life implicitly, and when an end has come to treat it as the end, and not vainly mock it as a suspense of function. When the poor break up their homes, with no immediate hope of founding others, they must sell their belongings because they cannot afford to pay storage on them. The rich or richer store their household effects, and cheat themselves with the illusion that they are going some time to rehabilitate with them just such a home as they have dismantled. But the illusion probably deceives nobody so little as those who cherish the vain hope. As long as they cherish it, however--and they must cherish it till their furniture or themselves fall to dust--they cannot begin life anew, as the poor do who have kept nothing of the sort to link them to the past. This is one of the disabilities of the prosperous, who will probably not be relieved of it till some means of storing the owner as well as the furniture is invented. In the immense range of modern ingenuity, this is perhaps not impossible. Why not, while we are still in life, some sweet oblivious antidote which shall drug us against memory, and after time shall elapse for the reconstruction of a new home in place of the old, shall repossess us of ourselves as unchanged as the things with which we shall again array it? Here is a pretty idea for some dreamer to spin into the filmy fabric of a romance, and I handsomely make a present of it to the first comer. If the dreamer is of the right quality he will know how to make the reader feel that with the universal longing to return to former conditions or circumstances it must always be a mistake to do so, and he will subtly insinuate the disappointment and discomfort of the stored personality in resuming its old relations. With that just mixture of the comic and pathetic which we desire in romance, he will teach convincingly that a stored personality is to be desired only if it is permanently stored, with the implication of a like finality in the storage of its belongings.

Save in some signal exception, a thing taken out of storage cannot be established in its former function without a sense of its comparative inadequacy. It stands in the old place, it serves the old use, and yet a new thing would be better; it would even in some subtle wise be more appropriate, if I may indulge so audacious a paradox; for the time is new, and so will be all the subconscious keeping in which our lives are mainly passed. We are supposed to have associations with the old things which render them precious, but do not the associations rather render them painful? If that is true of the inanimate things, how much truer it is of those personalities which once environed and furnished our lives! Take the article of old friends, for instance: has it ever happened to the reader to witness the encounter of old friends after the lapse of years? Such a meeting is conventionally imagined to be full of tender joy, a rapture that vents itself in manly tears, perhaps, and certainly in womanly tears. But really is it any such emotion? Honestly is not it a cruel embarrassment, which all the hypocritical pretences cannot hide? The old friends smile and laugh, and babble incoherently at one another, but are they genuinely glad? Is not each wishing the other at that end of the earth from which he came? Have they any use for each other such

as people of unbroken associations have?

I have lately been privy to the reunion of two old comrades who are bound together more closely than most men in a community of interests, occupations, and ideals. During a long separation they had kept account of each other's opinions as well as experiences; they had exchanged letters, from time to time, in which they opened their minds fully to each other, and found themselves constantly in accord. When they met they made a great shouting, and each pretended that he found the other just what he used to be. They talked a long, long time, fighting the invisible enemy which they felt between them. The enemy was habit, the habit of other minds and hearts, the daily use of persons and things which in their separation they had not had in common. When the old friends parted they promised to meet every day, and now, since their lines had been cast in the same places again, to repair the ravage of the envious years, and become again to each other all that they had ever been. But though they live in the same town, and often dine at the same table, and belong to the same club, yet they have not grown together again. They have grown more and more apart, and are uneasy in each other's presence, tacitly self-reproachful for the same effect which neither of them could avert or repair. They had been respectively in storage, and each, in taking the other out, has experienced in him the unfitness which grows upon the things put away for a time and reinstated in a former function.

III.

I have not touched upon these facts of life, without the purpose of finding some way out of the coil. There seems none better than the counsel of keeping one's face set well forward, and one's eyes fixed steadfastly upon the future. This is the hint we will get from nature if we will heed her, and note how she never recurs, never stores or takes out of storage. Fancy rehabilitating one's first love: how nature would mock at that! We cannot go back and be the men and women we were, any more than we can go back and be children. As we grow older, each year's change in us is more chasmal and complete. There is no elixir whose magic will recover us to ourselves as we were last year; but perhaps we shall return to ourselves more and more in the times, or the eternity, to come. Some instinct or inspiration implies the promise of this, but only on condition that we shall not cling to the life that has been ours, and hoard its mummified image in our hearts. We must not seek to store ourselves, but must part with what we were for the use and behoof of others, as the poor part with their worldly gear when they move from one place to another. It is a curious and significant property of our outworn characteristics that, like our old furniture, they will serve admirably in the life of some other, and that this other can profitably make them his when we can no longer keep them ours, or ever hope to resume them. They not only go down to successive generations, but they spread beyond our lineages, and serve the turn of those whom we never knew to be within the circle of our influence.

Civilization imparts itself by some such means, and the lower classes are clothed in the cast conduct of the upper, which if it had been stored would have left the inferiors rude and barbarous. We have only to think how socially naked most of us would be if we had not had the beautiful manners of our exclusive society to put on at each change of fashion when it dropped them.

All earthly and material things should be worn out with use, and not preserved against decay by any unnatural artifice. Even when broken and disabled from overuse they have a kind of respectability which must commend itself to the observer, and which partakes of the pensive grace of ruin. An old table with one leg gone, and slowly lapsing to decay in the woodshed, is the emblem of a fitter order than the same table, with all its legs intact, stored with the rest of the furniture from a broken home. Spinning-wheels gathering dust in the garret of a house that is itself falling to pieces have a dignity that deserts them when they are dragged from their refuge, and furbished up with ribbons and a tuft of fresh tow, and made to serve the hollow occasions of bric-a-brac, as they were a few years ago. A pitcher broken at the fountain, or a battered kettle on a rubbish heap, is a venerable object, but not crockery and copper-ware stored in the possibility of future need. However carefully handed down from one generation to another, the old objects have a forlorn incongruity in their successive surroundings which appeals to the compassion rather than the veneration of the witness.

It was from a truth deeply mystical that Hawthorne declared against any sort of permanence in the dwellings of men, and held that each generation should newly house itself. He preferred the perishability of the wooden American house to the durability of the piles of brick or stone which in Europe affected him as with some moral miasm from the succession of sires and sons and grandsons that had died out of them. But even of such structures as these it is impressive how little the earth makes with the passage of time. Where once a great city of them stood, you shall find a few tottering walls, scarcely more mindful of the past than "the cellar and the well" which Holmes marked as the ultimate monuments, the last witnesses, to the existence of our more transitory habitations. It is the law of the patient sun that everything under it shall decay, and if by reason of some swift calamity, some fiery cataclysm, the perishable shall be overtaken by a fate that fixes it in unwasting arrest, it cannot be felt that the law has been set aside in the interest of men's happiness or cheerfulness. Neither Pompeii nor Herculaneum invites the gayety of the spectator, who as he walks their disinterred thoroughfares has the weird sense of taking a former civilization out of storage, and the ache of finding it wholly unadapted to the actual world. As far as his comfort is concerned, it had been far better that those cities had not been stored, but had fallen to the ruin that has overtaken all their contemporaries.

No, good friend, sir or madam, as the case may be, but most likely madam: if you are about to break up your household for any indefinite period, and are not so poor that you need sell your things, be warned against putting them in storage, unless of the most briskly combustible type. Better, far better, give them away, and disperse them by that means to a continuous use that shall end in using them up; or if no one will take them, then hire a vacant lot, somewhere, and devote them to the flames. By that means you shall bear witness against a custom that insults the order of nature, and crowds the cities with the cemeteries of dead homes, where there is scarcely space for the living homes. Do not vainly fancy that you shall take your stuff out of storage and find it adapted to the ends that it served before it was put in. You will not be the same, or have the same needs or desire, when you take it out, and the new place which you shall hope to equip with it will receive it with cold reluctance, or openly refuse it, insisting upon forms and dimensions that render it ridiculous or impossible. The law is that nothing taken out of storage is the same as it was when put in, and this law, hieroglyphed in those rude 'graffiti' apparently inscribed by accident in the process of removal, has only such exceptions as prove the rule.

The world to which it has returned is not the same, and that makes all the difference. Yet, truth and beauty do not change, however the moods and fashions change. The ideals remain, and these alone you can go back to, secure of finding them the same, to-day and to-morrow, that they were yesterday. This perhaps is because they have never been in storage, but in constant use, while the moods and fashions have been put away and taken out a thousand times. Most people have never had ideals, but only moods and fashions, but such people, least of all, are fitted to find in them that pleasure of the rococo which consoles the idealist when the old moods and fashions reappear.

"FLOATING DOWN THE RIVER ON THE O-HI-O"

There was not much promise of pleasure in the sodden afternoon of a mid-March day at Pittsburg, where the smoke of a thousand foundry chimneys gave up trying to rise through the thick, soft air, and fell with the constant rain which it dyed its own black. But early memories stirred joyfully in the two travellers in whose consciousness I was making my tour, at sight of the familiar stern-wheel steamboat lying beside the wharf boat at the foot of the dilapidated levee, and doing its best to represent the hundreds of steamboats that used to lie there in the old days. It had the help of three others in its generous effort, and the levee itself made a gallant pretence of being crowded with freight, and succeeded in displaying several saturated piles of barrels and agricultural implements on the irregular pavement whose wheel-worn stones, in long stretches, were sunken out of sight in their parent mud. The boats and the levee were jointly quite equal to the demand made upon

them by the light-hearted youngsters of sixty-five and seventy, who were setting out on their journey in fulfilment of a long-cherished dream, and for whom much less freight and much fewer boats would have rehabilitated the past.

I.

When they mounted the broad stairway, tidily strewn with straw to save it from the mud of careless boots, and entered the long saloon of the steamboat, the promise of their fancy was more than made good for them. From the clerk's office, where they eagerly paid their fare, the saloon stretched two hundred feet by thirty away to the stern, a cavernous splendor of white paint and gilding, starred with electric bulbs, and fenced at the stern with wide windows of painted glass. Midway between the great stove in the bow where the men were herded, and the great stove at the stern where the women kept themselves in the seclusion which the tradition of Western river travel still guards, after well-nigh a hundred years, they were given ample state-rooms, whose appointments so exactly duplicated those they remembered from far-off days that they could have believed themselves awakened from a dream of insubstantial time, with the events in which it had seemed to lapse, mere feints of experience. When they sat down at the supper-table and were served with the sort of belated steamboat dinner which it recalled as vividly, the kind, sooty faces and snowy aprons of those who served them were so quite those of other days that they decided all repasts since were mere Barmecide feasts, and made up for the long fraud practised upon them with the appetites of the year 1850.

II.

A rigider sincerity than shall be practised here might own that the table of the good steamboat 'Avonek' left something to be desired, if tested by more sophisticated cuisines, but in the article of corn-bread it was of an inapproachable preeminence. This bread was made of the white corn which North knows not, nor the hapless East; and the buckwheat cakes at breakfast were without blame, and there was a simple variety in the abundance which ought to have satisfied if it did not flatter the choice. The only thing that seemed strangely, that seemed sadly, anomalous in a land flowing with ham and bacon was that the 'Avonek' had not imagined providing either for the guests, no one of whom could have had a religious scruple against them.

The thing, indeed, which was first and last conspicuous in the passengers, was their perfectly American race and character. At the start, when with an acceptable observance of Western steamboat tradition the 'Avonek' left her wharf eight hours behind her appointed time, there were very few passengers; but they began to come aboard at the little

towns of both shores as she swam southward and westward, till all the tables were so full that, in observance of another Western steamboat tradition; one did well to stand guard over his chair lest some other who liked it should seize it earlier. The passengers were of every age and condition, except perhaps the highest condition, and they seemed none the worse for being more like Americans of the middle of the last century than of the beginning of this. Their fashions were of an approximation to those of the present, but did not scrupulously study detail; their manners were those of simpler if not sincerer days.

The women kept to themselves at their end of the saloon, aloof from the study of any but their husbands or kindred, but the men were everywhere else about, and open to observation. They were not so open to conversation, for your mid-Westerner is not a facile, though not an unwilling, talker. They sat by their tall, cast-iron stove (of the oval pattern unvaried since the earliest stove of the region), and silently ruminated their tobacco and spat into the clustering, cuspidors at their feet. They would always answer civilly if questioned, and oftenest intelligently, but they asked nothing in return, and they seemed to have none of that curiosity once known or imagined in them by Dickens and other averse aliens. They had mostly faces of resolute power, and such a looking of knowing exactly what they wanted as would not have promised well for any collectively or individually opposing them. If ever the sense of human equality has expressed itself in the human countenance it speaks unmistakably from American faces like theirs.

They were neither handsome nor unhandsome; but for a few striking exceptions, they had been impartially treated by nature; and where they were notably plain their look of force made up for their lack of beauty. They were notably handsomest in a tall young fellow of a lean face, absolute Greek in profile, amply thwarted with a branching mustache, and slender of figure, on whom his clothes, lustrous from much sitting down and leaning up, grew like the bark on a tree, and who moved slowly and gently about, and spoke with a low, kind voice. In his young comeliness he was like a god, as the gods were fancied in the elder world: a chewing and a spitting god, indeed, but divine in his passionless calm.

He was a serious divinity, and so were all the mid-Western human-beings about him. One heard no joking either of the dapper or cockney sort of cities, or the quaint graphic phrasing of Eastern country folk; and it may have been not far enough West for the true Western humor. At any rate, when they were not silent these men still were serious.

The women were apparently serious, too, and where they were associated with the men were, if they were not really subject, strictly abeyant, in the spectator's eye. The average of them was certainly not above the American woman's average in good looks, though one young mother of six children, well grown save for the baby in her arms, was of the type some masters loved to paint, with eyes set wide under low arched brows. She had the placid dignity and the air of motherly goodness which goes fitly with such beauty, and the sight of her was such as to disperse many of the misgivings that beset the beholder who looketh upon the woman when she is New. As she seemed, so any man might wish to remember his mother

seeming.

All these river folk, who came from the farms and villages along the stream, and never from the great towns or cities, were well mannered, if quiet manners are good; and though the men nearly all chewed tobacco and spat between meals, at the table they were of an exemplary behavior. The use of the fork appeared strange to them, and they handled it strenuously rather than agilely, yet they never used their knives shovel-wise, however they planted their forks like daggers in the steak: the steak deserved no gentler usage, indeed. They were usually young, and they were constantly changing, bent upon short journeys between the shore villages; they were mostly farm youth, apparently, though some were said to be going to find work at the great potteries up the river for wages fabulous to home-keeping experience.

One personality which greatly took the liking of one of our tourists was a Kentucky mountaineer who, after three years' exile in a West Virginia oil town, was gladly returning to the home for which he and all his brood-of large and little comely, red-haired boys and girls-had never ceased to pine. His eagerness to get back was more than touching; it was awing; for it was founded on a sort of mediaeval patriotism that could own no excellence beyond the borders of the natal region. He had prospered at high wages in his trade at that oil town, and his wife and children had managed a hired farm so well as to pay all the family expenses from it, but he was gladly leaving opportunity behind, that he might return to a land where, if you were passing a house at meal-time, they came out and made you come in and eat. "When you eat where I've been living you pay fifty cents," he explained. "And are you taking all your household stuff with you?" "Only the cook-stove. Well, I'll tell you: we made the other things ourselves; made them out of plank, and they were not worth-moving." Here was the backwoods surviving into the day of Trusts; and yet we talk of a world drifted hopelessly far from the old ideals!

III.

The new ideals, the ideals of a pitiless industrialism, were sufficiently expressed along the busy shores, where the innumerable derricks of oil-wells silhouetted their gibbet shapes against the horizon, and the myriad chimneys of the foundries sent up the smoke of their torment into the quiet skies and flamed upon the forehead of the evening like baleful suns. But why should I be so violent of phrase against these guiltless means of millionairing? There must be iron and coal as well as wheat and corn in the world, and without their combination we cannot have bread. If the combination is in the form of a trust, such as has laid its giant clutch upon all those warring industries beside the Ohio and swept them into one great monopoly, why, it has still to show that it is worse than competition; that it is not, indeed, merely the first blind stirrings of the universal cooperation of which the dreamers of ideal commonwealths have always had the vision.

The derricks and the chimneys, when one saw them, seem to have all the land to themselves; but this was an appearance only, terrifying in its strenuousness, but not, after all, the prevalent aspect. That was rather of farm, farms, and evermore farms, lying along the rich levels of the stream, and climbing as far up its beautiful hills as the plough could drive. In the spring and in the fall, when it is suddenly swollen by the earlier and the later rains, the river scales its banks and swims over those levels to the feet of those hills, and when it recedes it leaves the cornfields enriched for the crop that, has never failed since the forests were first cut from the land. Other fertilizing the fields have never had any, but they teem as if the guano islands had been emptied into their laps. They feel themselves so rich that they part with great lengths and breadths of their soil to the river, which is not good for the river, and is not well for the fields; so that the farmers, whose ease learns slowly, are beginning more and more to fence their borders with the young willows which form a hedge in the shallow wash such a great part of the way up and down the Ohio. Elms and maples wade in among the willows, and in time the river will be denied the indigestion which it confesses in shoals and bars at low water, and in a difficulty of channel at all stages.

Meanwhile the fields flourish in spite of their unwise largesse to the stream, whose shores the comfortable farmsteads keep so constantly that they are never out of sight. Most commonly they are of brick, but sometimes of painted wood, and they are set on little eminences high enough to save them from the freshets, but always so near the river that they cannot fail of its passing life. Usually a group of planted evergreens half hides the house from the boat, but its inmates will not lose any detail of the show, and come down to the gate of the paling fence to watch the 'Avonek' float by: motionless men and women, who lean upon the supporting barrier, and rapt children who hold by their skirts and hands. There is not the eager New England neatness about these homes; now and then they have rather a sloven air, which does not discord with their air of comfort; and very, very rarely they stagger drunkenly in a ruinous neglect. Except where a log cabin has hardily survived the pioneer period, the houses are nearly all of one pattern; their facades front the river, and low chimneys point either gable, where a half-story forms the attic of the two stories below. Gardens of pot-herbs flank them, and behind cluster the corn-cribs, and the barns and stables stretch into the fields that stretch out to the hills, now scantily wooded, but ever lovely in the lines that change with the steamer's course.

Except in the immediate suburbs of the large towns, there is no ambition beyond that of rustic comfort in the buildings on the shore. There is no such thing, apparently, as a summer cottage, with its mock humility of name, up or down the whole tortuous length of the Ohio. As yet the land is not openly depraved by shows of wealth; those who amass it either keep it to themselves or come away to spend it in European travel, or pause to waste it unrecognized on the ungrateful Atlantic seaboard. The only distinctions that are marked are between the homes of honest industry above the banks and the homes below them of the leisure, which it is

hoped is not dishonest. But, honest or dishonest, it is there apparently to stay in the house-boats which line the shores by thousands, and repeat on Occidental terms in our new land the river-life of old and far Cathay.

They formed the only feature of their travel which our tourists found absolutely novel; they could clearly or dimly recall from the past every other feature but the houseboats, which they instantly and gladly naturalized to their memories of it. The houses had in common the form of a freight-car set in a flat-bottomed boat; the car would be shorter or longer, with one, or two, or three windows in its sides, and a section of stovepipe softly smoking from its roof. The windows might be curtained or they might be bare, but apparently there was no other distinction among the houseboat dwellers, whose sluggish craft lay moored among the willows, or tied to an elm or a maple, or even made fast to a stake on shore. There were cases in which they had not followed the fall of the river promptly enough, and lay slanted on the beach, or propped up to a more habitable level on its slope; in a sole, sad instance, the house had gone down with the boat and lay wallowing in the wash of the flood. But they all gave evidence of a tranquil and unhurried life which the soul of the beholder envied within him, whether it manifested itself in the lord of the house-boat fishing from its bow, or the lady coming to cleanse some household utensil at its stern. Infrequently a group of the house-boat dwellers seemed to be drawing a net, and in one high event they exhibited a good-sized fish of their capture, but nothing so strenuous characterized their attitude on any other occasion. The accepted theory of them was that they did by day as nearly nothing as men could do and live, and that by night their forays on the bordering farms supplied the simple needs of people who desired neither to toil nor to spin, but only to emulate Solomon in his glory with the least possible exertion. The joyful witness of their ease would willingly have sacrificed to them any amount of the facile industrial or agricultural prosperity about them and left them slumberously afloat, unmolested by dreams of landlord or tax-gatherer. Their existence for the fleeting time seemed the true interpretation of the sage's philosophy, the fulfilment of the poet's aspiration.

"Why should we only toil, that are the roof and crown of things."

How did they pass their illimitable leisure, when they rested from the fishing-net by day and the chicken-coop by night? Did they read the new historical fictions aloud to one another? Did some of them even meditate the thankless muse and not mind her ingratitude? Perhaps the ladies of the house-boats, when they found themselves--as they often did--in companies of four or five, had each other in to "evenings," at which one of them read a paper on some artistic or literary topic.

IV.

The trader's boat, of an elder and more authentic tradition, sometimes shouldered the house-boats away from a village landing, but it, too, was

a peaceful home, where the family life visibly went hand-in-hand with commerce. When the trader has supplied all the wants and wishes of a neighborhood, he unmoors his craft and drops down the river's tide to where it meets the ocean's tide in the farthest Mississippi, and there either sells out both his boat and his stock, or hitches his home to some returning steamboat, and climbs slowly, with many pauses, back to the upper Ohio. But his home is not so interesting as that of the houseboatman, nor so picturesque as that of the raftsman, whose floor of logs rocks flexibly under his shanty, but securely rides the current. As the pilots said, a steamboat never tries to hurt a raft of logs, which is adapted to dangerous retaliation; and by night it always gives a wide berth to the lantern tilting above the raft from a swaying pole. By day the raft forms one of the pleasantest aspects of the river-life, with its convoy of skiffs always searching the stream or shore for logs which have broken from it, and which the skiffmen recognize by distinctive brands or stamps. Here and there the logs lie in long ranks upon the shelving beaches, mixed with the drift of trees and fence-rails, and frames of corn-cribs and hencoops, and even house walls, which the freshets have brought down and left stranded. The tops of the little willows are tufted gayly with hay and rags, and other spoil of the flood; and in one place a disordered mattress was lodged high among the boughs of a water-maple, where it would form building material for countless generations of birds. The fat cornfields were often littered with a varied wreckage which the farmers must soon heap together and burn, to be rid of it, and everywhere were proofs of the river's power to devastate as well as enrich its shores. The dwellers there had no power against it, in its moments of insensate rage, and the land no protection from its encroachments except in the simple device of the willow hedges, which, if planted, sometimes refused to grow, but often came of themselves and kept the torrent from the loose, unfathomable soil of the banks, otherwise crumbling helplessly into it.

The rafts were very well, and the house-boats and the traders' boats, but the most majestic feature of the riverlife was the tow of coal-barges which, going or coming, the 'Avonek' met every few miles. Whether going or coming they were pushed, not pulled, by the powerful steamer which gathered them in tens and twenties before her, and rode the mid-current with them, when they were full, or kept the slower water near shore when they were empty. They claimed the river where they passed, and the 'Avonek' bowed to an unwritten law in giving them the full right of way, from the time when their low bulk first rose in sight, with the chimneys of their steamer towering above them and her gay contours gradually making themselves seen, till she receded from the encounter, with the wheel at her stern pouring a cataract of yellow water from its blades. It was insurpassably picturesque always, and not the tapering masts or the swelling sails of any sea-going craft could match it.

V.

So at least the travellers thought who were here revisiting the earliest

scenes of childhood, and who perhaps found them unduly endeared. They perused them mostly from an easy seat at the bow of the hurricane-deck, and, whenever the weather favored them, spent the idle time in selecting shelters for their declining years among the farmsteads that offered themselves to their choice up and down the shores. The weather commonly favored them, and there was at least one whole day on the lower river when the weather was divinely flattering. The soft, dull air lulled their nerves while it buffeted their faces, and the sun, that looked through veils of mist and smoke, gently warmed their aging frames and found itself again in their hearts. Perhaps it was there that the water-elms and watermaples chiefly budded, and the red-birds sang, and the drifting flocks of blackbirds called and clattered; but surely these also spread their gray and pink against the sky and filled it with their voices. There were meadow-larks and robins without as well as within, and it was no subjective plough that turned the earliest furrows in those opulent fields.

When they were tired of sitting there, they climbed, invited or uninvited, but always welcomed, to the pilothouse, where either pilot of the two who were always on watch poured out in an unstinted stream the lore of the river on which all their days had been passed. They knew from indelible association every ever-changing line of the constant hills; every dwelling by the low banks; every aspect of the smoky towns; every caprice of the river; every-tree, every stump; probably every bud and bird in the sky. They talked only of the river; they cared for nothing else. The Cuban cumber and the Philippine folly were equally far from them; the German prince was not only as if he had never been here, but as if he never had been; no public question concerned them but that of abandoning the canals which the Ohio legislature was then foolishly debating. Were not the canals water-ways, too, like the river, and if the State unnaturally abandoned them would not it be for the behoof of those railroads which the rivermen had always fought, and which would have made a solitude of the river if they could?

But they could not, and there was nothing more surprising and delightful in this blissful voyage than the evident fact that the old river traffic had strongly survived, and seemed to be more strongly reviving. Perhaps it was not; perhaps the fondness of those Ohio-river-born passengers was abused by an illusion (as subjective as that of the buds and birds) of a vivid variety of business and pleasure on the beloved stream. But again, perhaps not. They were seldom out of sight of the substantial proofs of both in the through or way packets they encountered, or the nondescript steam craft that swarmed about the mouths of the contributory rivers, and climbed their shallowing courses into the recesses of their remotest hills, to the last lurking-places of their oil and coal.

VI.

The Avonek was always stopping to put off or take on merchandise or men. She would stop for a single passenger, plaited in the mud with his

telescope valise or gripsack under the edge of a lonely cornfield, or to gather upon her decks the few or many casks or bales that a farmer wished to ship. She lay long hours by the wharf-boats of busy towns, exchanging one cargo for another, in that anarchic fetching and carrying which we call commerce, and which we drolly suppose to be governed by laws. But wherever she paused or parted, she tested the pilot's marvellous skill; for no landing, no matter how often she landed in the same place, could be twice the same. At each return the varying stream and shore must be studied, and every caprice of either divined. It was always a triumph, a miracle, whether by day or by night, a constant wonder how under the pilot's inspired touch she glided softly to her moorings, and without a jar slipped from them again and went on her course.

But the landings by night were of course the finest. Then the wide fan of the search-light was unfurled upon the point to be attained and the heavy staging lowered from the bow to the brink, perhaps crushing the willow hedges in it's fall, and scarcely touching the land before a black, ragged deck-hand had run out through the splendor and made a line fast to the trunk of the nearest tree. Then the work of lading or unlading rapidly began in the witching play of the light that set into radiant relief the black, eager faces and the black, eager figures of the deck-hands struggling up or down the staging under boxes of heavy wares, or kegs of nails, or bales of straw, or blocks of stone, steadily mocked or cursed at in their shapeless effort, till the last of them reeled back to the deck down the steep of the lifting stage, and dropped to his broken sleep wherever he could coil himself, doglike, down among the heaps of freight.

No dog, indeed, leads such a hapless life as theirs; and ah! and ah! why should their sable shadows intrude in a picture that was meant to be all so gay and glad? But ah! and ah! where, in what business of this hard world, is not prosperity built upon the struggle of toiling men, who still endeavor their poor best, and writhe and writhe under the burden of their brothers above, till they lie still under the lighter load of their mother earth?

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Absence of distinction

Advertising

Aim at nothing higher than the amusement of your readers

Anise-seed bag

Any man's country could get on without him

Begun to fight with want from their cradles

Blasts of frigid wind swept the streets

Clemens is said to have said of bicycling

Could not, as the saying is, find a stone to throw at a dog

Disbeliever in punishments of all sorts

Do not want to know about such squalid lives

Early self-helpfulness of children is very remarkable

Encounter of old friends after the lapse of years
Even a day's rest is more than most people can bear
Eyes fixed steadfastly upon the future
Face that expresses care, even to the point of anxiety
For most people choice is a curse
General worsening of things, familiar after middle life
Happy in the indifference which ignorance breeds in us
Hard to think up anything new
Heart of youth aching for their stoical sorrows
Heighten our suffering by anticipation
If one were poor, one ought to be deserving
Lascivious and immodest as possible
Literary spirit is the true world-citizen
Look of challenge, of interrogation, almost of reproof
Malevolent agitators
Meet here to the purpose of a common ostentation
Neatness that brings despair
Noble uselessness
Openly depraved by shows of wealth
People have never had ideals, but only moods and fashions
People might oftener trust themselves to Providence
People of wealth and fashion always dissemble their joy
Plagiarism carries inevitable detection with it
Pure accident and by its own contributory negligence
Refused to see us as we see ourselves
Should be very sorry to do good, as people called it
So many millionaires and so many tramps
So touching that it brought the lump into my own throat
Solution of the problem how and where to spend the summer
Some of it's good, and most of it isn't
Some of us may be toys and playthings without reproach
Superiority one likes to feel towards the rich and great
Take our pleasures ungraciously
The old and ugly are fastidious as to the looks of others
They are so many and I am so few
Those who decide their fate are always rebelling against it
Those who work too much and those who rest too much
Unfailing American kindness
Visitors of the more inquisitive sex
We cannot all be hard-working donkeys
We who have neither youth nor beauty should always expect it
Whatever choice you make, you are pretty sure to regret it

End of this Project Gutenberg Etext of Short Stories and Essays
by William Dean Howells

MY LITERARY PASSIONS

By William Dean Howells

1895

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BIBLIOGRAPHICAL

The papers collected here under the name of 'My Literary Passions' were printed serially in a periodical of such vast circulation that they might well have been supposed to have found there all the acceptance that could be reasonably hoped for them. Nevertheless, they were reissued in a volume the year after they first appeared, in 1895, and they had a pleasing share of such favor as their author's books have enjoyed. But it is to be doubted whether any one liked reading them so much as he liked writing them--say, some time in the years 1893 and 1894, in a New York flat, where he could look from his lofty windows over two miles and a half of woodland in Central Park, and halloo his fancy wherever he chose in that faery realm of books which he re-entered in reminiscences perhaps too fond at times, and perhaps always too eager for the reader's following. The name was thought by the friendly editor of the popular publication where they were serialized a main part of such inspiration as they might be conjectured to have, and was, as seldom happens with editor and author, cordially agreed upon before they were begun.

The name says, indeed, so exactly and so fully what they are that little remains for their bibliographer to add beyond the meagre historical detail here given. Their short and simple annals could be eked out by confidences which would not appreciably enrich the materials of the literary history of their time, and it seems better to leave them to the imagination of such posterity as they may reach. They are rather helplessly frank, but not, I hope, with all their rather helpless frankness, offensively frank. They are at least not part of the polemic which their author sustained in the essays following them in this volume, and which might have been called, in conformity with 'My Literary Passions', by the title of 'My Literary Opinions' better than by the vague name which they actually wear.

They deal, to be sure, with the office of Criticism and the art of Fiction, and so far their present name is not a misnomer. It follows them from an earlier date and could not easily be changed, and it may serve to recall to an elder generation than this the time when their author was breaking so many lances in the great, forgotten war between Realism and Romanticism that the floor of the "Editor's Study" in Harper's Magazine was strewn with the embattled splinters. The "Editor's Study" is now quite another place, but he who originally imagined it in 1886, and abode in it until 1892, made it at once the scene of such constant offence that he had no time, if he had the temper, for defence. The great Zola, or call him the immense Zola, was the prime mover in the attack upon the masters of the Romanticistic school; but he lived to own that he had fought a losing fight, and there are some proofs that he was right. The Realists, who were undoubtedly the masters of fiction in their passing generation, and who prevailed not only in France, but in Russia, in Scandinavia, in Spain, in Portugal, were overborne in all Anglo-Saxon countries by the innumerable hosts of Romanticism, who to this day possess the land; though still, whenever a young novelist does work instantly recognizable for its truth and beauty among us, he is seen and felt to have wrought in the spirit of Realism. Not even yet, however, does the average critic recognize this, and such lesson as the "Editor's Study" assumed to teach remains here in all its essentials for

his improvement.

Month after month for the six years in which the "Editor's Study" continued in the keeping of its first occupant, its lesson was more or less stormily delivered, to the exclusion, for the greater part, of other prophecy, but it has not been found well to keep the tempestuous manner along with the fulminant matter in this volume. When the author came to revise the material, he found sins against taste which his zeal for righteousness could not suffice to atone for. He did not hesitate to omit the proofs of these, and so far to make himself not only a precept, but an example in criticism. He hopes that in other and slighter things he has bettered his own instruction, and that in form and in fact the book is altogether less crude and less rude than the papers from which it has here been a second time evolved.

The papers, as they appeared from month to month, were not the product of those unities of time and place which were the happy conditioning of 'My Literary Passions.' They could not have been written in quite so many places as times, but they enjoyed a comparable variety of origin. Beginning in Boston, they were continued in a Boston suburb, on the shores of Lake George, in a Western New York health resort, in Buffalo, in Nahant; once, twice, and thrice in New York, with reversions to Boston, and summer excursions to the hills and waters of New England, until it seemed that their author had at last said his say, and he voluntarily lapsed into silence with the applause of friends and enemies alike.

The papers had made him more of the last than of the first, but not as still appears to him with greater reason. At moments his deliverances seemed to stir people of different minds to fury in two continents, so far as they were English-speaking, and on the coasts of the seven seas; and some of these came back at him with such violent personalities as it is his satisfaction to remember that he never indulged in his attacks upon their theories of criticism and fiction. His opinions were always impersonal; and now as their manner rather than their make has been slightly tempered, it may surprise the belated reader to learn that it was the belief of one English critic that their author had "placed himself beyond the pale of decency" by them. It ought to be less surprising that, since these dreadful words were written of him, more than one magnanimous Englishman has penitently expressed to the author the feeling that he was not so far wrong in his overboldly hazarded convictions. The penitence of his countrymen is still waiting expression, but it may come to that when they have recurred to the evidences of his offence in their present shape.

KITTERY POINT, MAINE, July, 1909.

I. THE BOOKCASE AT HOME

To give an account of one's reading is in some sort to give an account of one's life; and I hope that I shall not offend those who follow me in these papers, if I cannot help speaking of myself in speaking of the authors I must call my masters: my masters not because they taught me this or that directly, but because I had such delight in them that I could not fail to teach myself from them whatever I was capable of learning. I do not know whether I have been what people call a great reader; I cannot claim even to have been a very wise reader; but I have always been conscious of a high purpose to read much more, and more discreetly, than I have ever really done, and probably it is from the vantage-ground of this good intention that I shall sometimes be found writing here rather than from the facts of the case.

But I am pretty sure that I began right, and that if I had always kept the lofty level which I struck at the outset I should have the right to use authority in these reminiscences without a bad conscience. I shall try not to use authority, however, and I do not expect to speak here of all my reading, whether it has been much or little, but only of those books, or of those authors that I have felt a genuine passion for. I have known such passions at every period of my life, but it is mainly of the loves of my youth that I shall write, and I shall write all the more frankly because my own youth now seems to me rather more alien than that of any other person.

I think that I came of a reading race, which has always loved literature in a way, and in spite of varying fortunes and many changes. From a letter of my great-grandmother's written to a stubborn daughter upon some unfilial behavior, like running away to be married, I suspect that she was fond of the high-colored fiction of her day, for she tells the wilful child that she has "planted a dagger in her mother's heart," and I should not be surprised if it were from this fine-languaged lady that my grandfather derived his taste for poetry rather than from his father, who was of a worldly wiser mind. To be sure, he became a Friend by Convincement as the Quakers say, and so I cannot imagine that he was altogether worldly; but he had an eye to the main chance: he founded the industry of making flannels in the little Welsh town where he lived, and he seems to have grown richer, for his day and place, than any of us have since grown for ours. My grandfather, indeed, was concerned chiefly in getting away from the world and its wickedness. He came to this country early in the nineteenth century and settled his family in a log-cabin in the Ohio woods, that they might be safe from the sinister influences of the village where he was managing some woollen-mills. But he kept his affection for certain poets of the graver, not to say gloomier sort, and he must have suffered his children to read them, pending that great question of their souls' salvation which was a lifelong trouble to him.

My father, at any rate, had such a decided bent in the direction of literature, that he was not content in any of his several economical

experiments till he became the editor of a newspaper, which was then the sole means of satisfying a literary passion. His paper, at the date when I began to know him, was a living, comfortable and decent, but without the least promise of wealth in it, or the hope even of a much better condition. I think now that he was wise not to care for the advancement which most of us have our hearts set upon, and that it was one of his finest qualities that he was content with a lot in life where he was not exempt from work with his hands, and yet where he was not so pressed by need but he could give himself at will not only to the things of the spirit, but the things of the mind too. After a season of scepticism he had become a religious man, like the rest of his race, but in his own fashion, which was not at all the fashion of my grandfather: a Friend who had married out of Meeting, and had ended a fervid Methodist. My father, who could never get himself converted at any of the camp-meetings where my grandfather often led the forces of prayer to his support, and had at last to be given up in despair, fell in with the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, and embraced the doctrine of that philosopher with a content that has lasted him all the days of his many years. Ever since I can remember, the works of Swedenborg formed a large part of his library; he read them much himself, and much to my mother, and occasionally a "Memorable Relation" from them to us children. But he did not force them upon our notice, nor urge us to read them, and I think this was very well. I suppose his conscience and his reason kept him from doing so. But in regard to other books, his fondness was too much for him, and when I began to show a liking for literature he was eager to guide my choice.

His own choice was for poetry, and the most of our library, which was not given to theology, was given to poetry. I call it the library now, but then we called it the bookcase, and that was what literally it was, because I believe that whatever we had called our modest collection of books, it was a larger private collection than any other in the town where we lived. Still it was all held, and shut with glass doors, in a case of very few shelves. It was not considerably enlarged during my childhood, for few books came to my father as editor, and he indulged himself in buying them even more rarely. My grandfather's book store (it was also the village drug-store) had then the only stock of literature for sale in the place; and once, when Harper & Brothers' agent came to replenish it, he gave my father several volumes for review. One of these was a copy of Thomson's Seasons, a finely illustrated edition, whose pictures I knew long before I knew the poetry, and thought them the most beautiful things that ever were. My father read passages of the book aloud, and he wanted me to read it all myself. For the matter of that he wanted me to read Cowper, from whom no one could get anything but good, and he wanted me to read Byron, from whom I could then have got no harm; we get harm from the evil we understand. He loved Burns, too, and he used to read aloud from him, I must own, to my inexpressible weariness. I could not away with that dialect, and I could not then feel the charm of the poet's wit, nor the tender beauty of his pathos. Moore, I could manage better; and when my father read "Lalla Rookh" to my mother I sat up to listen, and entered into all the woes of Iran in the story of the "Fire Worshipers." I drew the line at the "Veiled Prophet of Khorassan," though I had some sense of the humor of the poet's conception of the critic in "Fadladeen." But I liked Scott's poems far better, and

got from Ispahan to Edinburgh with a glad alacrity of fancy. I followed the "Lady of the Lake" throughout, and when I first began to contrive verses of my own I found that poem a fit model in mood and metre.

Among other volumes of verse on the top shelf of the bookcase, of which I used to look at the outside without penetrating deeply within, were Pope's translation of the Iliad and the Odyssey, and Dryden's Virgil, pretty little tomes in tree-calf, published by James Crissy in Philadelphia, and illustrated with small copper-plates, which somehow seemed to put the matter hopelessly beyond me. It was as if they said to me in so many words that literature which furnished the subjects of such pictures I could not hope to understand, and need not try. At any rate, I let them alone for the time, and I did not meddle with a volume of Shakespeare, in green cloth and cruelly fine print, which overawed me in like manner with its wood-cuts. I cannot say just why I conceived that there was something unhallowed in the matter of the book; perhaps this was a tint from the reputation of the rather profligate young man from whom my father had it. If he were not profligate I ask his pardon. I have not the least notion who he was, but that was the notion I had of him, whoever he was, or wherever he now is. There may never have been such a young man at all; the impression I had may have been pure invention of my own, like many things with children, who do not very distinctly know their dreams from their experiences, and live in the world where both project the same quality of shadow.

There were, of course, other books in the bookcase, which my consciousness made no account of, and I speak only of those I remember. Fiction there was none at all that I can recall, except Poe's 'Tales of the Grotesque and the Arabesque' (I long afflicted myself as to what those words meant, when I might easily have asked and found out) and Bulwer's Last Days of Pompeii, all in the same kind of binding. History is known, to my young remembrance of that library, by a History of the United States, whose dust and ashes I hardly made my way through; and by a 'Chronicle of the Conquest of Granada', by the ever dear and precious Fray Antonio Agapida, whom I was long in making out to be one and the same as Washington Irving.

In school there was as little literature then as there is now, and I cannot say anything worse of our school reading; but I was not really very much in school, and so I got small harm from it. The printing-office was my school from a very early date. My father thoroughly believed in it, and he had his beliefs as to work, which he illustrated as soon as we were old enough to learn the trade he followed. We could go to school and study, or we could go into the printing-office and work, with an equal chance of learning, but we could not be idle; we must do something, for our souls' sake, though he was willing enough we should play, and he liked himself to go into the woods with us, and to enjoy the pleasures that manhood can share with childhood. I suppose that as the world goes now we were poor. His income was never above twelve hundred a year, and his family was large; but nobody was rich there or then; we lived in the simple abundance of that time and place, and we did not know that we were poor. As yet the unequal modern conditions were undreamed of (who indeed could have dreamed of them forty or fifty years ago?) in

the little Southern Ohio town where nearly the whole of my most happy boyhood was passed.

II. GOLDSMITH

When I began to have literary likings of my own, and to love certain books above others, the first authors of my heart were Goldsmith, Cervantes, and Irving. In the sharply foreshortened perspective of the past I seem to have read them all at once, but I am aware of an order of time in the pleasure they gave me, and I know that Goldsmith came first. He came so early that I cannot tell when or how I began to read him, but it must have been before I was ten years old. I read other books about that time, notably a small book on Grecian and Roman mythology, which I perused with such a passion for those pagan gods and goddesses that, if it had ever been a question of sacrificing to Diana, I do not really know whether I should have been able to refuse. I adored indiscriminately all the tribes of nymphs and naiads, demigods and heroes, as well as the high ones of Olympus; and I am afraid that by day I dwelt in a world peopled and ruled by them, though I faithfully said my prayers at night, and fell asleep in sorrow for my sins. I do not know in the least how Goldsmith's Greece came into my hands, though I fancy it must have been procured for me because of a taste which I showed for that kind of reading, and I can imagine no greater luck for a small boy in a small town of Southwestern Ohio well-nigh fifty years ago. I have the books yet; two little, stout volumes in fine print, with the marks of wear on them, but without those dishonorable blots, or those other injuries which boys inflict upon books in resentment of their dulness, or out of mere wantonness. I was always sensitive to the maltreatment of books; I could not bear to see a book faced down or dogs-eared or broken-backed. It was like a hurt or an insult to a thing that could feel.

Goldsmith's History of Rome came to me much later, but quite as immemorably, and after I had formed a preference for the Greek Republics, which I dare say was not mistaken. Of course I liked Athens best, and yet there was something in the fine behavior of the Spartans in battle, which won a heart formed for hero-worship. I mastered the notion of their communism, and approved of their iron money, with the poverty it obliged them to, yet somehow their cruel treatment of the Helots failed to shock me; perhaps I forgave it to their patriotism, as I had to forgive many ugly facts in the history of the Romans to theirs. There was hardly any sort of bloodshed which I would not pardon in those days to the slayers of tyrants; and the swagger form of such as despatched a despot with a fine speech was so much to my liking that I could only grieve that I was born too late to do and to say those things.

I do not think I yet felt the beauty of the literature which made them all live in my fancy, that I conceived of Goldsmith as an artist using for my rapture the finest of the arts; and yet I had been taught to see the loveliness of poetry, and was already trying to make it on my own poor account. I tried to make verses like those I listened to when my

father read Moore and Scott to my mother, but I heard them with no such happiness as I read my beloved histories, though I never thought then of attempting to write like Goldsmith. I accepted his beautiful work as ignorantly as I did my other blessings. I was concerned in getting at the Greeks and Romans, and I did not know through what nimble air and by what lovely ways I was led to them. Some retrospective perception of this came long afterward when I read his essays, and after I knew all of his poetry, and later yet when I read the 'Vicar of Wakefield'; but for the present my eyes were holden, as the eyes of a boy mostly are in the world of art. What I wanted with my Greeks and Romans after I got at them was to be like them, or at least to turn them to account in verse, and in dramatic verse at that. The Romans were less civilized than the Greeks, and so were more like boys, and more to a boy's purpose. I did not make literature of the Greeks, but I got a whole tragedy out of the Romans; it was a rhymed tragedy, and in octosyllabic verse, like the "Lady of the Lake." I meant it to be acted by my schoolmates, but I am not sure that I ever made it known to them. Still, they were not ignorant of my reading, and I remember how proud I was when a certain boy, who had always whipped me when we fought together, and so outranked me in that little boys' world, once sent to ask me the name of the Roman emperor who lamented at nightfall, when he had done nothing worthy, that he had lost a day. The boy was going to use the story, in a composition, as we called the school themes then, and I told him the emperor's name; I could not tell him now without turning to the book.

My reading gave me no standing among the boys, and I did not expect it to rank me with boys who were more valiant in fight or in play; and I have since found that literature gives one no more certain station in the world of men's activities, either idle or useful. We literary folk try to believe that it does, but that is all nonsense. At every period of life, among boys or men, we are accepted when they are at leisure, and want to be amused, and at best we are tolerated rather than accepted. I must have told the boys stories out of my Goldsmith's Greece and Rome, or it would not have been known that I had read them, but I have no recollection now of doing so, while I distinctly remember rehearsing the allegories and fables of the 'Gesta Romanorum', a book which seems to have been in my hands about the same time or a little later. I had a delight in that stupid collection of monkish legends which I cannot account for now, and which persisted in spite of the nightmare confusion it made of my ancient Greeks and Romans. They were not at all the ancient Greeks and Romans of Goldsmith's histories.

I cannot say at what times I read these books, but they must have been odd times, for life was very full of play then, and was already beginning to be troubled with work. As I have said, I was to and fro between the schoolhouse and the printing-office so much that when I tired of the one I must have been very promptly given my choice of the other. The reading, however, somehow went on pretty constantly, and no doubt my love for it won me a chance for it. There were some famous cherry-trees in our yard, which, as I look back at them, seem to have been in flower or fruit the year round; and in one of them there was a level branch where a boy could sit with a book till his dangling legs went to sleep, or till some idler or busier boy came to the gate and called him down to play

marbles or go swimming. When this happened the ancient world was rolled up like a scroll, and put away until the next day, with all its orators and conspirators, its nymphs and satyrs, gods and demigods; though sometimes they escaped at night and got into the boy's dreams.

I do not think I cared as much as some of the other boys for the 'Arabian Nights' or 'Robinson Crusoe,' but when it came to the 'Ingenious Gentleman of La Mancha,' I was not only first, I was sole.

Before I speak, however, of the beneficent humorist who next had my boyish heart after Goldsmith, let me acquit myself in full of my debt to that not unequal or unkindred spirit. I have said it was long after I had read those histories, full of his inalienable charm, mere pot-boilers as they were, and far beneath his more willing efforts, that I came to know his poetry. My father must have read the "Deserted Village" to us, and told us something of the author's pathetic life, for I cannot remember when I first knew of "sweet Auburn," or had the light of the poet's own troubled day upon the "loveliest village of the plain." The 'Vicar of Wakefield' must have come into my life after that poem and before 'The Traveler'. It was when I would have said that I knew all Goldsmith; we often give ourselves credit for knowledge in this way without having any tangible assets; and my reading has always been very desultory. I should like to say here that the reading of any one who reads to much purpose is always very desultory, though perhaps I had better not say so, but merely state the fact in my case, and own that I never read any one author quite through without wandering from him to others. When I first read the 'Vicar of Wakefield' (for I have since read it several times, and hope yet to read it many times), I found its persons and incidents familiar, and so I suppose I must have heard it read. It is still for me one of the most modern novels: that is to say, one of the best. It is unmistakably good up to a certain point, and then unmistakably bad, but with always good enough in it to be forever imperishable. Kindness and gentleness are never out of fashion; it is these in Goldsmith which make him our contemporary, and it is worth the while of any young person presently intending deathless renown to take a little thought of them. They are the source of all refinement, and I do not believe that the best art in any kind exists without them. The style is the man, and he cannot hide himself in any garb of words so that we shall not know somehow what manner of man he is within it; his speech betrayeth him, not only as to his country and his race, but more subtly yet as to his heart, and the loves and hates of his heart. As to Goldsmith, I do not think that a man of harsh and arrogant nature, of worldly and selfish soul, could ever have written his style, and I do not think that, in far greater measure than criticism has recognized, his spiritual quality, his essential friendliness, expressed itself in the literary beauty that wins the heart as well as takes the fancy in his work.

I should have my reservations and my animadversions if it came to close criticism of his work, but I am glad that he was the first author I loved, and that even before I knew I loved him I was his devoted reader. I was not consciously his admirer till I began to read, when I was fourteen, a little volume of his essays, made up, I dare say, from the

'Citizen of the World' and other unsuccessful ventures of his. It contained the papers on Beau Tibbs, among others, and I tried to write sketches and studies of life in their manner. But this attempt at Goldsmith's manner followed a long time after I tried to write in the style of Edgar A. Poe, as I knew it from his 'Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque.' I suppose the very poorest of these was the "Devil in the Belfry," but such as it was I followed it as closely as I could in the "Devil in the Smoke-Pipes"; I meant tobacco-pipes. The resemblance was noted by those to whom I read my story; I alone could not see it or would not own it, and I really felt it a hardship that I should be found to have produced an imitation.

It was the first time I had imitated a prose writer, though I had imitated several poets like Moore, Campbell, and Goldsmith himself. I have never greatly loved an author without wishing to write like him. I have now no reluctance to confess that, and I do not see why I should not say that it was a long time before I found it best to be as like myself as I could, even when I did not think so well of myself as of some others. I hope I shall always be able and willing to learn something from the masters of literature and still be myself, but for the young writer this seems impossible. He must form himself from time to time upon the different authors he is in love with, but when he has done this he must wish it not to be known, for that is natural too. The lover always desires to ignore the object of his passion, and the adoration which a young writer has for a great one is truly a passion passing the love of women. I think it hardly less fortunate that Cervantes was one of my early passions, though I sat at his feet with no more sense of his mastery than I had of Goldsmith's.

III. CERVANTES

I recall very fully the moment and the place when I first heard of 'Don Quixote,' while as yet I could not connect it very distinctly with anybody's authorship. I was still too young to conceive of authorship, even in my own case, and wrote my miserable verses without any notion of literature, or of anything but the pleasure of seeing them actually come out rightly rhymed and measured. The moment was at the close of a summer's day just before supper, which, in our house, we had lawlessly late, and the place was the kitchen where my mother was going about her work, and listening as she could to what my father was telling my brother and me and an apprentice of ours, who was like a brother to us both, of a book that he had once read. We boys were all shelling peas, but the story, as it went on, rapt us from the poor employ, and whatever our fingers were doing, our spirits were away in that strange land of adventures and mishaps, where the fevered life of the knight truly without fear and without reproach burned itself out. I dare say that my father tried to make us understand the satirical purpose of the book. I vaguely remember his speaking of the books of chivalry it was meant to ridicule; but a boy could not care for this, and what I longed to do at once was to get that book and plunge into its story. He told us at

random of the attack on the windmills and the flocks of sheep, of the night in the valley of the fulling-mills with their trip-hammers, of the inn and the muleteers, of the tossing of Sancho in the blanket, of the island that was given him to govern, and of all the merry pranks at the duke's and duchess's, of the liberation of the galley-slaves, of the capture of Mambrino's helmet, and of Sancho's invention of the enchanted Dulcinea, and whatever else there was wonderful and delightful in the most wonderful and delightful book in the world. I do not know when or where my father got it for me, and I am aware of an appreciable time that passed between my hearing of it and my having it. The event must have been most important to me, and it is strange I cannot fix the moment when the precious story came into my hands; though for the matter of that there is nothing more capricious than a child's memory, what it will hold and what it will lose.

It is certain my Don Quixote was in two small, stout volumes not much bigger each than my Goldsmith's 'Greece', bound in a sort of law-calf, well fitted to withstand the wear they were destined to undergo. The translation was, of course, the old-fashioned version of Jervas, which, whether it was a closely faithful version or not, was honest eighteenth-century English, and reported faithfully enough the spirit of the original. If it had any literary influence with me the influence must have been good. But I cannot make out that I was sensible of the literature; it was the forever enchanting story that I enjoyed.

I exulted in the boundless freedom of the design; the open air of that immense scene, where adventure followed adventure with the natural sequence of life, and the days and the nights were not long enough for the events that thronged them, amidst the fields and woods, the streams and hills, the highways and byways, hostelries and hovels, prisons and palaces, which were the setting of that matchless history. I took it as simply as I took everything else in the world about me. It was full of meaning that I could not grasp, and there were significances of the kind that literature unhappily abounds in, but they were lost upon my innocence. I did not know whether it was well written or not; I never thought about that; it was simply there in its vast entirety, its inexhaustible opulence, and I was rich in it beyond the dreams of avarice.

My father must have told us that night about Cervantes as well as about his 'Don Quixote', for I seem to have known from the beginning that he was once a slave in Algiers, and that he had lost a hand in battle, and I loved him with a sort of personal affection, as if he were still living and he could somehow return my love. His name and nature endeared the Spanish name and nature to me, so that they were always my romance, and to this day I cannot meet a Spanish man without clothing him in something of the honor and worship I lavished upon Cervantes when I was a child. While I was in the full flush of this ardor there came to see our school, one day, a Mexican gentleman who was studying the American system of education; a mild, fat, saffron man, whom I could almost have died to please for Cervantes' and Don Quixote's sake, because I knew he spoke their tongue. But he smiled upon us all, and I had no chance to distinguish myself from the rest by any act of devotion before the blessed vision faded, though for long afterwards, in impassioned

reveries, I accosted him and claimed him kindred because of my fealty, and because I would have been Spanish if I could.

I would not have had the boy-world about me know anything of these fond dreams; but it was my tastes alone, my passions, which were alien there; in everything else I was as much a citizen as any boy who had never heard of Don Quixote. But I believe that I carried the book about with me most of the time, so as not to lose any chance moment of reading it. Even in the blank of certain years, when I added little other reading to my store, I must still have been reading it. This was after we had removed from the town where the earlier years of my boyhood were passed, and I had barely adjusted myself to the strange environment when one of my uncles asked me to come with him and learn the drug business, in the place, forty miles away, where he practised medicine. We made the long journey, longer than any I have made since, in the stage-coach of those days, and we arrived at his house about twilight, he glad to get home, and I sick to death with yearning for the home I had left. I do not know how it was that in this state, when all the world was one hopeless blackness around me, I should have got my 'Don Quixote' out of my bag; I seem to have had it with me as an essential part of my equipment for my new career. Perhaps I had been asked to show it, with the notion of beguiling me from my misery; perhaps I was myself trying to drown my sorrows in it. But anyhow I have before me now the vision of my sweet young aunt and her young sister looking over her shoulder, as they stood together on the lawn in the summer evening light. My aunt held my Don Quixote open in one hand, while she clasped with the other the child she carried on her arm. She looked at the book, and then from time to time she looked at me, very kindly but very curiously, with a faint smile, so that as I stood there, inwardly writhing in my bashfulness, I had the sense that in her eyes I was a queer boy. She returned the book without comment, after some questions, and I took it off to my room, where the confidential friend of Cervantes cried himself to sleep.

In the morning I rose up and told them I could not stand it, and I was going home. Nothing they could say availed, and my uncle went down to the stage-office with me and took my passage back.

The horror of cholera was then in the land; and we heard in the stage-office that a man lay dead of it in the hotel overhead. But my uncle led me to his drugstore, where the stage was to call for me, and made me taste a little camphor; with this prophylactic, Cervantes and I somehow got home together alive.

The reading of 'Don Quixote' went on throughout my boyhood, so that I cannot recall any distinctive period of it when I was not, more or less, reading that book. In a boy's way I knew it well when I was ten, and a few years ago, when I was fifty, I took it up in the admirable new version of Ormsby, and found it so full of myself and of my own irrevocable past that I did not find it very gay. But I made a great many discoveries in it; things I had not dreamt of were there, and must always have been there, and other things wore a new face, and made a new effect upon me. I had my doubts, my reserves, where once I had given it my whole heart without question, and yet in what formed the greatness of

the book it seemed to me greater than ever. I believe that its free and simple design, where event follows event without the fettering control of intrigue, but where all grows naturally out of character and conditions, is the supreme form of fiction; and I cannot help thinking that if we ever have a great American novel it must be built upon some such large and noble lines. As for the central figure, Don Quixote himself, in his dignity and generosity, his unselfish ideals, and his fearless devotion to them, he is always heroic and beautiful; and I was glad to find in my latest look at his history that I had truly conceived of him at first, and had felt the sublimity of his nature. I did not want to laugh at him so much, and I could not laugh at all any more at some of the things done to him. Once they seemed funny, but now only cruel, and even stupid, so that it was strange to realize his qualities and indignities as both flowing from the same mind. But in my mature experience, which threw a broader light on the fable, I was happy to keep my old love of an author who had been almost personally, dear to me.

IV

IRVING

I have told how Cervantes made his race precious to me, and I am sure that it must have been he who fitted me to understand and enjoy the American author who now stayed me on Spanish ground and kept me happy in Spanish air, though I cannot trace the tie in time and circumstance between Irving and Cervantes. The most I can make sure of is that I read the 'Conquest of Granada' after I read Don Quixote, and that I loved the historian so much because I had loved the novelist much more. Of course I did not perceive then that Irving's charm came largely from Cervantes and the other Spanish humorists yet unknown to me, and that he had formed himself upon them almost as much as upon Goldsmith, but I dare say that this fact had insensibly a great deal to do with my liking. Afterwards I came to see it, and at the same time to see what was Irving's own in Irving; to feel his native, if somewhat attenuated humor, and his original, if somewhat too studied grace. But as yet there was no critical question with me. I gave my heart simply and passionately to the author who made the scenes of that most pathetic history live in my sympathy, and companioned me with the stately and gracious actors in them.

I really cannot say now whether I loved the Moors or the Spaniards more. I fought on both sides; I would not have had the Spaniards beaten, and yet when the Moors lost I was vanquished with them; and when the poor young King Boabdil (I was his devoted partisan and at the same time a follower of his fiery old uncle and rival, Hamet el Zegri) heaved the Last Sigh of the Moor, as his eyes left the roofs of Granada forever, it was as much my grief as if it had burst from my own breast. I put both these princes into the first and last historical romance I ever wrote. I have now no idea what they did in it, but as the story never came to a conclusion it does not greatly matter. I had never yet read an

historical romance that I can make sure of, and probably my attempt must have been based almost solely upon the facts of Irving's history. I am certain I could not have thought of adding anything to them, or at all varying them.

In reading his 'Chronicle' I suffered for a time from its attribution to Fray Antonio Agapida, the pious monk whom he feigns to have written it, just as in reading 'Don Quixote' I suffered from Cervantes masquerading as the Moorish scribe, Cid Hamet Ben Engeli. My father explained the literary caprice, but it remained a confusion and a trouble for me, and I made a practice of skipping those passages where either author insisted upon his invention. I will own that I am rather glad that sort of thing seems to be out of fashion now, and I think the directer and franker methods of modern fiction will forbid its revival. Thackeray was fond of such open disguises, and liked to greet his reader from the mask of Yellowplush and Michael Angelo Titmarsh, but it seems to me this was in his least modern moments.

My 'Conquest of Granada' was in two octavo volumes, bound in drab boards, and printed on paper very much yellowed with time at its irregular edges. I do not know when the books happened in my hands. I have no remembrance that they were in any wise offered or commended to me, and in a sort of way they were as authentically mine as if I had made them. I saw them at home, not many months ago, in my father's library (it has long outgrown the old bookcase, which has gone I know not where), and upon the whole I rather shrank from taking them down, much more from opening them, though I could not say why, unless it was from the fear of perhaps finding the ghost of my boyish self within, pressed flat like a withered leaf, somewhere between the familiar pages.

When I learned Spanish it was with the purpose, never yet fulfilled, of writing the life of Cervantes, although I have since had some forty-odd years to do it in. I taught myself the language, or began to do so, when I knew nothing of the English grammar but the prosody at the end of the book. My father had the contempt of familiarity with it, having himself written a very brief sketch of our accident, and he seems to have let me plunge into the sea of Spanish verbs and adverbs, nouns and pronouns, and all the rest, when as yet I could not confidently call them by name, with the serene belief that if I did not swim I would still somehow get ashore without sinking. The end, perhaps, justified him, and I suppose I did not do all that work without getting some strength from it; but I wish I had back the time that it cost me; I should like to waste it in some other way. However, time seemed interminable then, and I thought there would be enough of it for me in which to read all Spanish literature; or, at least, I did not propose to do anything less.

I followed Irving, too, in my later reading, but at haphazard, and with other authors at the same time. I did my poor best to be amused by his 'Knickerbocker History of New York', because my father liked it so much, but secretly I found it heavy; and a few years ago when I went carefully through it again. I could not laugh. Even as a boy I found some other things of his uphill work. There was the beautiful manner, but the thought seemed thin; and I do not remember having been much amused by

'Bracebridge Hall', though I read it devoutly, and with a full sense that it would be very 'comme il faut' to like it. But I did like the 'Life of Goldsmith'; I liked it a great deal better than the more authoritative 'Life by Forster', and I think there is a deeper and sweeter sense of Goldsmith in it. Better than all, except the 'Conquest of Granada', I liked the 'Legend of Sleepy Hollow' and the story of Rip Van Winkle, with their humorous and affectionate caricatures of life that was once of our own soil and air; and the 'Tales of the Alhambra', which transported me again, to the scenes of my youth beside the Xenil. It was long after my acquaintance with his work that I came to a due sense of Irving as an artist, and perhaps I have come to feel a full sense of it only now, when I perceive that he worked willingly only when he worked inventively. At last I can do justice to the exquisite conception of his 'Conquest of Granada', a study of history which, in unique measure, conveys not only the pathos, but the humor of one of the most splendid and impressive situations in the experience of the race. Very possibly something of the severer truth might have been sacrificed to the effect of the pleasing and touching tale, but I do not understand that this was really done. Upon the whole I am very well content with my first three loves in literature, and if I were to choose for any other boy I do not see how I could choose better than Goldsmith and Cervantes and Irving, kindred spirits, and each not a master only, but a sweet and gentle friend, whose kindness could not fail to profit him.

V. FIRST FICTION AND DRAMA

In my own case there followed my acquaintance with these authors certain Boeotian years, when if I did not go backward I scarcely went forward in the paths I had set out upon. They were years of the work, of the overwork, indeed, which falls to the lot of so many that I should be ashamed to speak of it except in accounting for the fact. My father had sold his paper in Hamilton and had bought an interest in another at Dayton, and we were all straining our utmost to help pay for it. My daily tasks began so early and ended so late that I had little time, even if I had the spirit, for reading; and it was not till what we thought ruin, but what was really release, came to us that I got back again to my books. Then we went to live in the country for a year, and that stress of toil, with the shadow of failure darkening all, fell from me like the horror of an evil dream. The only new book which I remember to have read in those two or three years at Dayton, when I hardly remember to have read any old ones, was the novel of 'Jane Eyre,' which I took in very imperfectly, and which I associate with the first rumor of the Rochester Knockings, then just beginning to reverberate through a world that they have not since left wholly at peace. It was a gloomy Sunday afternoon when the book came under my hand; and mixed with my interest in the story was an anxiety lest the pictures on the walls should leave their nails and come and lay themselves at my feet; that was what the pictures had been doing in Rochester and other places where the disembodied spirits were beginning to make themselves felt. The thing did not really happen in my case, but I was alone in the house, and it might very easily have

happened.

If very little came to me in those days from books, on the other hand my acquaintance with the drama vastly enlarged itself. There was a hapless company of players in the town from time to time, and they came to us for their printing. I believe they never paid for it, or at least never wholly, but they lavished free passes upon us, and as nearly as I can make out, at this distance of time, I profited by their generosity, every night. They gave two or three plays at every performance to houses ungratefully small, but of a lively spirit and impatient temper that would not brook delay in the representation; and they changed the bill each day. In this way I became familiar with Shakespeare before I read him, or at least such plays of his as were most given in those days, and I saw "Macbeth" and "Hamlet," and above all "Richard III.," again and again. I do not know why my delight in those tragedies did not send me to the volume of his plays, which was all the time in the bookcase at home, but I seem not to have thought of it, and rapt as I was in them I am not sure that they gave me greater pleasure, or seemed at all finer, than "Rollo," "The Wife," "The Stranger," "Barbarossa," "The Miser of Marseilles," and the rest of the melodramas, comedies, and farces which I saw at that time. I have a notion that there were some clever people in one of these companies, and that the lighter pieces at least were well played, but I may be altogether wrong. The gentleman who took the part of villain, with an unflinching love of evil, in the different dramas, used to come about the printing-office a good deal, and I was puzzled to find him a very mild and gentle person. To be sure he had a mustache, which in those days devoted a man to wickedness, but by day it was a blond mustache, quite flaxen, in fact, and not at all the dark and deadly thing it was behind the footlights at night. I could scarcely gasp in his presence, my heart bounded so in awe and honor of him when he paid a visit to us; perhaps he used to bring the copy of the show-bills. The company he belonged to left town in the adversity habitual with them.

Our own adversity had been growing, and now it became overwhelming. We had to give up the paper we had struggled so hard to keep, but when the worst came it was not half so bad as what had gone before. There was no more waiting till midnight for the telegraphic news, no more waking at dawn to deliver the papers, no more weary days at the case, heavier for the doom hanging over us. My father and his brothers had long dreamed of a sort of family colony somewhere in the country, and now the uncle who was most prosperous bought a milling property on a river not far from Dayton, and my father went out to take charge of it until the others could shape their business to follow him. The scheme came to nothing finally, but in the mean time we escaped from the little city and its sorrowful associations of fruitless labor, and had a year in the country, which was blest, at least to us children, by sojourn in a log-cabin, while a house was building for us.

VI. LONGFELLOW'S "SPANISH STUDENT"

This log-cabin had a loft, where we boys slept, and in the loft were stored in barrels the books that had now begun to overflow the bookcase. I do not know why I chose the loft to renew my long-neglected friendship with them. The light could not have been good, though if I brought my books to the little gable window that overlooked the groaning and whistling gristmill I could see well enough. But perhaps I liked the loft best because the books were handiest there, and because I could be alone. At any rate, it was there that I read Longfellow's "Spanish Student," which I found in an old paper copy of his poems in one of the barrels, and I instantly conceived for it the passion which all things Spanish inspired in me. As I read I not only renewed my acquaintance with literature, but renewed my delight in people and places where I had been happy before those heavy years in Dayton. At the same time I felt a little jealousy, a little grudge, that any one else should love them as well as I, and if the poem had not been so beautiful I should have hated the poet for trespassing on my ground. But I could not hold out long against the witchery of his verse. The "Spanish Student" became one of my passions; a minor passion, not a grand one, like 'Don Quixote' and the 'Conquest of Granada', but still a passion, and I should dread a little to read the piece now, lest I should disturb my old ideal of its beauty. The hero's rogue servant, Chispa, seemed to me, then and long afterwards, so fine a bit of Spanish character that I chose his name for my first pseudonym when I began to write for the newspapers, and signed my legislative correspondence for a Cincinnati paper with it. I was in love with the heroine, the lovely dancer whose 'cachucha' turned my head, along with that of the cardinal, but whose name even I have forgotten, and I went about with the thought of her burning in my heart, as if she had been a real person.

VII. SCOTT

All the while I was bringing up the long arrears of play which I had not enjoyed in the toil-years at Dayton, and was trying to make my Spanish reading serve in the sports that we had in the woods and by the river. We were Moors and Spaniards almost as often as we were British and Americans, or settlers and Indians. I suspect that the large, mild boy, the son of a neighboring farmer, who mainly shared our games, had but a dim notion of what I meant by my strange people, but I did my best to enlighten him, and he helped me make a dream out of my life, and did his best to dwell in the region of unrealities where I preferably had my being; he was from time to time a Moor when I think he would rather have been a Mingo.

I got hold of Scott's poems, too, in that cabin loft, and read most of the tales which were yet unknown to me after those earlier readings of my father's. I could not say why "Harold the Dauntless" most took my fancy; the fine, strongly flowing rhythm of the verse had a good deal to do with it, I believe. I liked these things, all of them, and in after years I liked the "Lady of the Lake" more and more, and from mere love of it got great lengths of it by heart; but I cannot say that Scott was then or

ever a great passion with me. It was a sobered affection at best, which came from my sympathy with his love of nature, and the whole kindly and humane keeping of his genius. Many years later, during the month when I was waiting for my passport as Consul for Venice, and had the time on my hands, I passed it chiefly in reading all his novels, one after another, without the interruption of other reading. 'Ivanhoe' I had known before, and the 'Bride of Lammermoor' and 'Woodstock', but the rest had remained in that sort of abeyance which is often the fate of books people expect to read as a matter of course, and come very near not reading at all, or read only very late. Taking them in this swift sequence, little or nothing of them remained with me, and my experience with them is against that sort of ordered and regular reading, which I have so often heard advised for young people by their elders. I always suspect their elders of not having done that kind of reading themselves.

For my own part I believe I have never got any good from a book that I did not read lawlessly and wilfully, out of all leading and following, and merely because I wanted to read it; and I here make bold to praise that way of doing. The book which you read from a sense of duty, or because for any reason you must, does not commonly make friends with you. It may happen that it will yield you an unexpected delight, but this will be in its own unentreated way and in spite of your good intentions. Little of the book read for a purpose stays with the reader, and this is one reason why reading for review is so vain and unprofitable. I have done a vast deal of this, but I have usually been aware that the book was subtly withholding from me the best a book can give, since I was not reading it for its own sake and because I loved it, but for selfish ends of my own, and because I wished to possess myself of it for business purposes, as it were. The reading that does one good, and lasting good, is the reading that one does for pleasure, and simply and unselfishly, as children do. Art will still withhold herself from thrift, and she does well, for nothing but love has any right to her.

Little remains of the events of any period, however vivid they were in passing. The memory may hold record of everything, as it is believed, but it will not be easily entreated to give up its facts, and I find myself striving in vein to recall the things that I must have read that year in the country. Probably I read the old things over; certainly I kept on with Cervantes, and very likely with Goldsmith. There was a delightful history of Ohio, stuffed with tales of the pioneer times, which was a good deal in the hands of us boys; and there was a book of Western Adventure, full of Indian fights and captivities, which we wore to pieces. Still, I think that it was now that I began to have a literary sense of what I was reading. I wrote a diary, and I tried to give its record form and style, but mostly failed. The versifying which I was always at was easier, and yielded itself more to my hand. I should be very glad to, know at present what it dealt with.

When my uncles changed their minds in regard to colonizing their families at the mills, as they did in about a year, it became necessary for my father to look about for some new employment, and he naturally looked in the old direction. There were several schemes for getting hold of this paper and that, and there were offers that came to nothing. In that day there were few salaried editors in the country outside of New York, and the only hope we could have was of some place as printers in an office which we might finally buy. The affair ended in our going to the State capital, where my father found work as a reporter of legislative proceedings for one of the daily journals, and I was taken into the office as a compositor. In this way I came into living contact with literature again, and the daydreams began once more over the familiar cases of type. A definite literary ambition grew up in me, and in the long reveries of the afternoon, when I was distributing my case, I fashioned a future of overpowering magnificence and undying celebrity. I should be ashamed to say what literary triumphs I achieved in those preposterous deliriums. What I actually did was to write a good many copies of verse, in imitation, never owned, of Moore and Goldsmith, and some minor poets, whose work caught my fancy, as I read it in the newspapers or put it into type.

One of my pieces, which fell so far short of my visionary performances as to treat of the lowly and familiar theme of Spring, was the first thing I ever had in print. My father offered it to the editor of the paper I worked on, and I first knew, with mingled shame and pride, of what he had done when I saw it in the journal. In the tumult of my emotions I promised myself that if I got through this experience safely I would never suffer anything else of mine to be published; but it was not long before I offered the editor a poem myself. I am now glad to think it dealt with so humble a fact as a farmer's family leaving their old home for the West. The only fame of my poem which reached me was when another boy in the office quoted some lines of it in derision. This covered me with such confusion that I wonder that I did not vanish from the earth. At the same time I had my secret joy in it, and even yet I think it was attempted in a way which was not false or wrong. I had tried to sketch an aspect of life that I had seen and known, and that was very well indeed, and I had wrought patiently and carefully in the art of the poor little affair.

My elder brother, for whom there was no place in the office where I worked, had found one in a store, and he beguiled the leisure that light trade left on his hands by reading the novels of Captain Marryat. I read them after him with a great deal of amusement, but without the passion that I bestowed upon my favorite authors. I believe I had no critical reserves in regard to them, but simply they did not take my fancy. Still, we had great fun with Japhet in 'Search of a Father', and with 'Midshipman Easy', and we felt a fine physical shiver in the darkling moods of 'Snarle-yow the Dog-Fiend.' I do not remember even the names of the other novels, except 'Jacob Faithful,' which I chanced upon a few years ago and found very, hard reading.

We children who were used to the free range of woods and fields were homesick for the country in our narrow city yard, and I associate with

this longing the 'Farmer's Boy of Bloomfield,' which my father got for me. It was a little book in blue cloth, and there were some mild wood-cuts in it. I read it with a tempered pleasure, and with a vague resentment of its trespass upon Thomson's ground in the division of its parts under the names of the seasons. I do not know why I need have felt this. I was not yet very fond of Thomson. I really liked Bloomfield better; for one thing, his poem was written in the heroic decasyllabics which I preferred to any other verse.

IX. POPE

I infer, from the fact of this preference that I had already begun to read Pope, and that I must have read the "Deserted Village" of Goldsmith. I fancy, also, that I must by this time have read the Odyssey, for the "Battle of the Frogs and Mice" was in the second volume, and it took me so much that I paid it the tribute of a bald imitation in a mock-heroic epic of a cat fight, studied from the cat fights in our back yard, with the wonted invocation to the Muse, and the machinery of partisan gods and goddesses. It was in some hundreds of verses, which I did my best to balance as Pope did, with a caesura falling in the middle of the line, and a neat antithesis at the end.

The story of the Odyssey charmed me, of course, and I had moments of being intimate friends with Ulysses, but I was passing out of that phase, and was coming to read more with a sense of the author, and less with a sense of his characters as real persons; that is, I was growing more literary, and less human. I fell in love with Pope, whose life I read with an ardor of sympathy which I am afraid he hardly merited. I was of his side in all his quarrels, as far as I understood them, and if I did not understand them I was of his side anyway. When I found that he was a Catholic I was almost ready to abjure the Protestant religion for his sake; but I perceived that this was not necessary when I came to know that most of his friends were Protestants. If the truth must be told, I did not like his best things at first, but long remained chiefly attached to his rubbishing pastorals, which I was perpetually imitating, with a whole apparatus of swains and shepherdesses, purling brooks, enamelled meads, rolling years, and the like.

After my day's work at the case I wore the evening away in my boyish literary attempts, forcing my poor invention in that unnatural kind, and rubbing and polishing at my wretched verses till they did sometimes take on an effect, which, if it was not like Pope's, was like none of mine. With all my pains I do not think I ever managed to bring any of my pastorals to a satisfactory close. They all stopped somewhere about halfway. My swains could not think of anything more to say, and the merits of my shepherdesses remained undecided. To this day I do not know whether in any given instance it was the champion of Chloe or of Sylvia that carried off the prize for his fair, but I dare say it does not much matter. I am sure that I produced a rhetoric as artificial and treated of things as unreal as my master in the art, and I am rather glad that I

acquainted myself so thoroughly with a mood of literature which, whatever we may say against it, seems to have expressed very perfectly a mood of civilization.

The severe schooling I gave myself was not without its immediate use. I learned how to choose between words after a study of their fitness, and though I often employed them decoratively and with no vital sense of their qualities, still in mere decoration they had to be chosen intelligently, and after some thought about their structure and meaning. I could not imitate Pope without imitating his methods, and his method was to the last degree intelligent. He certainly knew what he was doing, and although I did not always know what I was doing, he made me wish to know, and ashamed of not knowing. There are several truer poets who might not have done this; and after all the modern contempt of Pope, he seems to me to have been at least one of the great masters, if not one of the great poets. The poor man's life was as weak and crooked as his frail, tormented body, but he had a dauntless spirit, and he fought his way against odds that might well have appalled a stronger nature. I suppose I must own that he was from time to time a snob, and from time to time a liar, but I believe that he loved the truth, and would have liked always to respect himself if he could. He violently revolted, now and again, from the abasement to which he forced himself, and he always bit the heel that trod on him, especially if it was a very high, narrow heel, with a clocked stocking and a hooped skirt above it. I loved him fondly at one time, and afterwards despised him, but now I am not sorry for the love, and I am very sorry for the despite. I humbly own a vast debt to him, not the least part of which is the perception that he is a model of ever so much more to be shunned than to be followed in literature.

He was the first of the writers of great Anna's time whom I knew, and he made me ready to understand, if he did not make me understand at once, the order of mind and life which he belonged to. Thanks to his pastorals, I could long afterwards enjoy with the double sense requisite for full pleasure in them, such divinely excellent artificialities at Tasso's "Aminta" and Guarini's "Pastor Fido"; things which you will thoroughly like only after you are in the joke of thinking how people once seriously liked them as high examples of poetry.

Of course I read other things of Pope's besides his pastorals, even at the time I read these so much. I read, or not very easily or willingly read at, his 'Essay on Man,' which my father admired, and which he probably put Pope's works into my hands to have me read; and I read the 'Dunciad,' with quite a furious ardor in the tiresome quarrels it celebrates, and an interest in its machinery, which it fatigues me to think of. But it was only a few years ago that I read the 'Rape of the Lock,' a thing perfect of its kind, whatever we may choose to think of the kind. Upon the whole I think much better of the kind than I once did, though still not so much as I should have thought if I had read the poem when the fever of my love for Pope was at the highest.

It is a nice question how far one is helped or hurt by one's idealizations of historical or imaginary characters, and I shall not try

to answer it fully. I suppose that if I once cherished such a passion for Pope personally that I would willingly have done the things that he did, and told the lies, and vented the malice, and inflicted the cruelties that the poor soul was full of, it was for the reason, partly, that I did not see these things as they were, and that in the glamour of his talent I was blind to all but the virtues of his defects, which he certainly had, and partly that in my love of him I could not take sides against him, even when I knew him to be wrong. After all, I fancy not much harm comes to the devoted boy from his enthusiasms for this imperfect hero or that. In my own case I am sure that I distinguished as to certain sins in my idols. I could not cast them down or cease to worship them, but some of their frailties grieved me and put me to secret shame for them. I did not excuse these things in them, or try to believe that they were less evil for them than they would have been for less people. This was after I came more or less to the knowledge of good and evil. While I remained in the innocence of childhood I did not even understand the wrong. When I realized what lives some of my poets had led, how they were drunkards, and swindlers, and unchaste, and untrue, I lamented over them with a sense of personal disgrace in them, and to this day I have no patience with that code of the world which relaxes itself in behalf of the brilliant and gifted offender; rather he should suffer more blame. The worst of the literature of past times, before an ethical conscience began to inform it, or the advance of the race compelled it to decency, is that it leaves the mind foul with filthy images and base thoughts; but what I have been trying to say is that the boy, unless he is exceptionally depraved beforehand, is saved from these through his ignorance. Still I wish they were not there, and I hope the time will come when the beast-man will be so far subdued and tamed in us that the memory of him in literature shall be left to perish; that what is lewd and ribald in the great poets shall be kept out of such editions as are meant for general reading, and that the pedant-pride which now perpetuates it as an essential part of those poets shall no longer have its way. At the end of the ends such things do defile, they do corrupt. We may palliate them or excuse them for this reason or that, but that is the truth, and I do not see why they should not be dropped from literature, as they were long ago dropped from the talk of decent people. The literary histories might keep record of them, but it is loath some to think of those heaps of ordure, accumulated from generation to generation, and carefully passed down from age to age as something precious and vital, and not justly regarded as the moral offal which they are.

During the winter we passed at Columbus I suppose that my father read things aloud to us after his old habit, and that I listened with the rest. I have a dim notion of first knowing Thomson's 'Castle of Indolence' in this way, but I was getting more and more impatient of having things read to me. The trouble was that I caught some thought or image from the text, and that my fancy remained playing with that while the reading went on, and I lost the rest. But I think the reading was less in every way than it had been, because his work was exhausting and his leisure less. My own hours in the printing-office began at seven and ended at six, with an hour at noon for dinner, which I often used for putting down such verses as had come to me during the morning. As soon

as supper was over at night I got out my manuscripts, which I kept in great disorder, and written in several different hands on several different kinds of paper, and sawed, and filed, and hammered away at my blessed Popean heroics till nine, when I went regularly to bed, to rise again at five. Sometimes the foreman gave me an afternoon off on Saturdays, and though the days were long the work was not always constant, and was never very severe. I suspect now the office was not so prosperous as might have been wished. I was shifted from place to place in it, and there was plenty of time for my day-dreams over the distribution of my case. I was very fond of my work, though, and proud of my swiftness and skill in it. Once when the perplexed foreman could not think of any task to set me he offered me a holiday, but I would not take it, so I fancy that at this time I was not more interested in my art of poetry than in my trade of printing. What went on in the office interested me as much as the quarrels of the Augustan age of English letters, and I made much more record of it in the crude and shapeless diary which I kept, partly in verse and partly in prose, but always of a distinctly lower literary kind than that I was trying otherwise to write. There must have been some mention in it of the tremendous combat with wet sponges I saw there one day between two of the boys who hurled them back and forth at each other. This amiable fray, carried on during the foreman's absence, forced upon my notice for the first time the boy who has come to be a name well-known in literature. I admired his vigor as a combatant, but I never spoke to him at that time, and I never dreamed that he, too, was effervescing with verse, probably as fiercely as myself. Six or seven years later we met again, when we had both become journalists, and had both had poems accepted by Mr. Lowell for the Atlantic Monthly, and then we formed a literary friendship which eventuated in the joint publication of a volume of verse. 'The Poems of Two Friends' became instantly and lastingly unknown to fame; the West waited, as it always does, to hear what the East should say; the East said nothing, and two-thirds of the small edition of five hundred came back upon the publisher's hands. I imagine these copies were "ground up" in the manner of worthless stock, for I saw a single example of the book quoted the other day in a book-seller's catalogue at ten dollars, and I infer that it is so rare as to be prized at least for its rarity. It was a very pretty little book, printed on tinted paper then called "blush," in the trade, and it was manufactured in the same office where we had once been boys together, unknown to each other. Another boy of that time had by this time become foreman in the office, and he was very severe with us about the proofs, and sent us hurting messages on the margin. Perhaps he thought we might be going to take on airs, and perhaps we might have taken on airs if the fate of our book had been different. As it was I really think we behaved with sufficient meekness, and after thirty four or five years for reflection I am still of a very modest mind about my share of the book, in spite of the price it bears in the book-seller's catalogue. But I have steadily grown in liking for my friend's share in it, and I think that there is at present no American of twenty-three writing verse of so good a quality, with an ideal so pure and high, and from an impulse so authentic as John J. Piatt's were then. He already knew how to breathe into his glowing rhyme the very spirit of the region where we were both native, and in him the Middle West has its true poet, who was much more than its poet, who had a rich and tender

imagination, a lovely sense of color, and a touch even then securely and fully his own. I was reading over his poems in that poor little book a few days ago, and wondering with shame and contrition that I had not at once known their incomparable superiority to mine. But I used then and for long afterwards to tax him with obscurity, not knowing that my own want of simplicity and directness was to blame for that effect.

My reading from the first was such as to enamour me of clearness, of definiteness; anything left in the vague was intolerable to me; but my long subjection to Pope, while it was useful in other ways, made me so strictly literary in my point of view that sometimes I could not see what was, if more naturally approached and without any technical preoccupation, perfectly transparent. It remained for another great passion, perhaps the greatest of my life, to fuse these gyves in which I was trying so hard to dance, and free me forever from the bonds which I had spent so much time and trouble to involve myself in. But I was not to know that passion for five or six years yet, and in the mean time I kept on as I had been going, and worked out my deliverance in the predestined way. What I liked then was regularity, uniformity, exactness. I did not conceive of literature as the expression of life, and I could not imagine that it ought to be desultory, mutable, and unfixd, even if at the risk of some vagueness.

X. VARIOUS PREFERENCES

My father was very fond of Byron, and I must before this have known that his poems were in our bookcase. While we were still in Columbus I began to read them, but I did not read so much of them as could have helped me to a truer and freer ideal. I read "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers," and I liked its vulgar music and its heavy-handed sarcasm. These would, perhaps, have fascinated any boy, but I had such a fanaticism for methodical verse that any variation from the octosyllabic and decasyllabic couplets was painful to me. The Spencerian stanza, with its rich variety of movement and its harmonious closes, long shut "Childe Harold" from me, and whenever I found a poem in any book which did not rhyme its second line with its first I read it unwillingly or not at all.

This craze could not last, of course, but it lasted beyond our stay in Columbus, which ended with the winter, when the Legislature adjourned, and my father's employment ceased. He tried to find some editorial work on the paper which had printed his reports, but every place was full, and it was hopeless to dream of getting a proprietary interest in it. We had nothing, and we must seek a chance where something besides money would avail us. This offered itself in the village of Ashtabula, in the northeastern part of the State, and there we all found ourselves one moonlight night of early summer. The Lake Shore Railroad then ended at Ashtabula, in a bank of sand, and my elder brother and I walked up from the station, while the rest of the family, which pretty well filled the omnibus, rode. We had been very happy at Columbus, as we were apt to be anywhere, but none of us liked the narrowness of city streets, even so near to the woods as those were, and we were eager for the country again.

We had always lived hitherto in large towns, except for that year at the Mills, and we were eager to see what a village was like, especially a village peopled wholly by Yankees, as our father had reported it. I must own that we found it far prettier than anything we had known in Southern Ohio, which we were so fond of and so loath to leave, and as I look back it still seems to me one of the prettiest little places I have ever known, with its white wooden houses, glimmering in the dark of its elms and maples, and their silent gardens beside each, and the silent, grass-bordered, sandy streets between them. The hotel, where we rejoined our family, lurked behind a group of lofty elms, and we drank at the town pump before it just for the pleasure of pumping it.

The village was all that we could have imagined of simply and sweetly romantic in the moonlight, and when the day came it did not rob it of its charm. It was as lovely in my eyes as the loveliest village of the plain, and it had the advantage of realizing the Deserted Village without being deserted.

XI. UNCLE TOM'S CABIN

The book that moved me most, in our stay of six months at Ashtabula, was then beginning to move the whole world more than any other book has moved it. I read it as it came out week after week in the old National Era, and I broke my heart over Uncle Tom's Cabin, as every one else did. Yet I cannot say that it was a passion of mine like Don Quixote, or the other books that I had loved intensely. I felt its greatness when I read it first, and as often as I have read it since, I have seen more and more clearly that it was a very great novel. With certain obvious lapses in its art, and with an art that is at its best very simple, and perhaps primitive, the book is still a work of art. I knew this, in a measure then, as I know it now, and yet neither the literary pride I was beginning to have in the perception of such things, nor the powerful appeal it made to my sympathies, sufficed to impassion me of it. I could not say why this was so. Why does the young man's fancy, when it lightly turns to thoughts of love, turn this way and not that? There seems no more reason for one than for the other.

Instead of remaining steeped to the lips in the strong interest of what is still perhaps our chief fiction, I shed my tribute of tears, and went on my way. I did not try to write a story of slaver, as I might very well have done; I did not imitate either the make or the manner of Mrs. Stowe's romance; I kept on at my imitation of Pope's pastorals, which I dare say I thought much finer, and worthier the powers of such a poet as I meant to be. I did this, as I must have felt then, at some personal risk of a supernatural kind, for my studies were apt to be prolonged into the night after the rest of the family had gone to bed, and a certain ghost, which I had every reason to fear, might very well have visited the small room given me to write in. There was a story, which I shrank from verifying, that a former inmate of our house had hung himself in it, but I do not know to this day whether it was true or not. The doubt did not

prevent him from dangling at the door-post, in my consciousness, and many a time I shunned the sight of this problematical suicide by keeping my eyes fastened on the book before me. It was a very simple device, but perfectly effective, as I think any one will find who employs it in like circumstances; and I would really like to commend it to growing boys troubled as I was then.

I never heard who the poor soul was, or why he took himself out of the world, if he really did so, or if he ever was in it; but I am sure that my passion for Pope, and my purpose of writing pastorals, must have been powerful indeed to carry me through dangers of that kind. I suspect that the strongest proof of their existence was the gloomy and ruinous look of the house, which was one of the oldest in the village, and the only one that was for rent there. We went into it because we must, and we were to leave it as soon as we could find a better. But before this happened we left Ashtabula, and I parted with one of the few possibilities I have enjoyed of seeing a ghost on his own ground, as it were.

I was not sorry, for I believe I never went in or came out of the place, by day or by night, without a shudder, more or less secret; and at least, now, we should be able to get another house.

XII. OSSIAN

Very likely the reading of Ossian had something to do with my morbid anxieties. I had read Byron's imitation of him before that, and admired it prodigiously, and when my father got me the book--as usual I did not know where or how he got it--not all the tall forms that moved before the eyes of haunted bards in the dusky vale of autumn could have kept me from it. There were certain outline illustrations in it, which were very good in the cold Flaxman manner, and helped largely to heighten the fascination of the poems for me. They did not supplant the pastorals of Pope in my affections, and they were never the grand passion with me that Pope's poems had been.

I began at once to make my imitations of Ossian, and I dare say they were not windier and mistier than the original. At the same time I read the literature of the subject, and gave the pretensions of Macpherson an unquestioning faith. I should have made very short work of any one who had impugned the authenticity of the poems, but happily there was no one who held the contrary opinion in that village, so far as I knew, or who cared for Ossian, or had even heard of him. This saved me a great deal of heated controversy with my contemporaries, but I had it out in many angry reveries with Dr. Johnson and others, who had dared to say in their time that the poems of Ossian were not genuine lays of the Gaelic bard, handed down from father to son, and taken from the lips of old women in Highland huts, as Macpherson claimed.

In fact I lived over in my small way the epoch of the eighteenth century in which these curious frauds found polite acceptance all over Europe,

and I think yet that they were really worthier of acceptance than most of the artificialities that then passed for poetry. There was a light of nature in them, and this must have been what pleased me, so long-shut up to the studio-work of Pope. But strangely enough I did not falter in my allegiance to him, or realize that here in this free form was a deliverance, if I liked, from the fetters and manacles which I had been at so much pains to fit myself with. Probably nothing would then have persuaded me to put them off permanently, or to do more than lay them aside for the moment while I tried that new stop and that new step.

I think that even then I had an instinctive doubt whether formlessness was really better than formality. Something, it seems to me, may be contained and kept alive in formality, but in formlessness everything spills and wastes away. This is what I find the fatal defect of our American Ossian, Walt Whitman, whose way is where artistic madness lies. He had great moments, beautiful and noble thoughts, generous aspirations, and a heart wide and warm enough for the whole race, but he had no bounds, no shape; he was as liberal as the casing air, but he was often as vague and intangible. I cannot say how long my passion for Ossian lasted, but not long, I fancy, for I cannot find any trace of it in the time following our removal from Ashtabula to the county seat at Jefferson. I kept on with Pope, I kept on with Cervantes, I kept on with Irving, but I suppose there was really not substance enough in Ossian to feed my passion, and it died of inanition.

XIII. SHAKESPEARE

The establishment of our paper in the village where there had been none before, and its enlargement from four to eight pages, were events so filling that they left little room for any other excitement but that of getting acquainted with the young people of the village, and going to parties, and sleigh rides, and walks, and drives, and picnics, and dances, and all the other pleasures in which that community seemed to indulge beyond any other we had known. The village was smaller than the one we had just left, but it was by no means less lively, and I think that for its size and time and place it had an uncommon share of what has since been called culture. The intellectual experience of the people was mainly theological and political, as it was everywhere in that day, but there were several among them who had a real love for books, and when they met at the druggist's, as they did every night, to dispute of the inspiration of the Scriptures and the principles of the Free Soil party, the talk sometimes turned upon the respective merits of Dickens and Thackeray, Gibbon and Macaulay, Wordsworth and Byron. There were law students who read "Noctes Ambrosianae," the 'Age of Reason', and Bailey's "Festus," as well as Blackstone's 'Commentaries;' and there was a public library in that village of six hundred people, small but very well selected, which was kept in one of the lawyers' offices, and was free to all. It seems to me now that the people met there oftener than they do in most country places, and rubbed their wits together more, but this may be one of those pleasing illusions of memory which men in later life are

subject to.

I insist upon nothing, but certainly the air was friendlier to the tastes I had formed than any I had yet known, and I found a wider if not deeper sympathy with them. There was one of our printers who liked books, and we went through 'Don Quixote' together again, and through the 'Conquest of Granada', and we began to read other things of Irving's. There was a very good little stock of books at the village drugstore, and among those that began to come into my hands were the poems of Dr. Holmes, stray volumes of De Quincey, and here and there minor works of Thackeray. I believe I had no money to buy them, but there was an open account, or a comity, between the printer and the bookseller, and I must have been allowed a certain discretion in regard to getting books.

Still I do not think I went far in the more modern authors, or gave my heart to any of them. Suddenly, it was now given to Shakespeare, without notice or reason, that I can recall, except that my friend liked him too, and that we found it a double pleasure to read him together. Printers in the old-time offices were always spouting Shakespeare more or less, and I suppose I could not have kept away from him much longer in the nature of things. I cannot fix the time or place when my friend and I began to read him, but it was in the fine print of that unhallowed edition of ours, and presently we had great lengths of him by heart, out of "Hamlet," out of "The Tempest," out of "Macbeth," out of "Richard III.," out of "Midsummer-Night's Dream," out of the "Comedy of Errors," out of "Julius Caesar," out of "Measure for Measure," out of "Romeo and Juliet," out of "Two Gentlemen of Verona."

These were the plays that we loved, and must have read in common, or at least at the same time: but others that I more especially liked were the Histories, and among them particularly were the Henrys, where Falstaff appeared. This gross and palpable reprobate greatly took my fancy. I delighted in him immensely, and in his comrades, Pistol, and Bardolph, and Nym. I could not read of his death without emotion, and it was a personal pang to me when the prince, crowned king, denied him: blackguard for blackguard, I still think the prince the worse blackguard. Perhaps I flatter myself, but I believe that even then, as a boy of sixteen, I fully conceived of Falstaff's character, and entered into the author's wonderfully humorous conception of him. There is no such perfect conception of the selfish sensualist in literature, and the conception is all the more perfect because of the wit that lights up the vice of Falstaff, a cold light without tenderness, for he was not a good fellow, though a merry companion. I am not sure but I should put him beside Hamlet, and on the name level, for the merit of his artistic completeness, and at one time I much preferred him, or at least his humor.

As to Falstaff personally, or his like, I was rather fastidious, and would not have made friends with him in the flesh, much or little. I revelled in all his appearances in the Histories, and I tried to be as happy where a factitious and perfunctory Falstaff comes to life again in the "Merry Wives of Windsor," though at the bottom of my heart I felt the difference. I began to make my imitations of Shakespeare, and I wrote 57

out passages where Falstaff and Pistol and Bardolph talked together, in that Eracles vein which is so easily caught. This was after a year or two of the irregular and interrupted acquaintance with the author which has been my mode of friendship with all the authors I have loved. My worship of Shakespeare went to heights and lengths that it had reached with no earlier idol, and there was a supreme moment, once, when I found myself saying that the creation of Shakespeare was as great as the creation of a planet.

There ought certainly to be some bound beyond which the cult of favorite authors should not be suffered to go. I should keep well within the limit of that early excess now, and should not liken the creation of Shakespeare to the creation of any heavenly body bigger, say, than one of the nameless asteroids that revolve between Mars and Jupiter. Even this I do not feel to be a true means of comparison, and I think that in the case of all great men we like to let our wonder mount and mount, till it leaves the truth behind, and honesty is pretty much cast out as ballast. A wise criticism will no more magnify Shakespeare because he is already great than it will magnify any less man. But we are loaded down with the responsibility of finding him all we have been told he is, and we must do this or suspect ourselves of a want of taste, a want of sensibility. At the same time, we may really be honest than those who have led us to expect this or that of him, and more truly his friends. I wish the time might come when we could read Shakespeare, and Dante, and Homer, as sincerely and as fairly as we read any new book by the least known of our contemporaries. The course of criticism is towards this, but when I began to read Shakespeare I should not have ventured to think that he was not at every moment great. I should no more have thought of questioning the poetry of any passage in him than of questioning the proofs of holy writ. All the same, I knew very well that much which I read was really poor stuff, and the persons and positions were often preposterous. It is a great pity that the ardent youth should not be permitted and even encouraged to say this to himself, instead of falling slavishly before a great author and accepting him at all points as infallible. Shakespeare is fine enough and great enough when all the possible detractions are made, and I have no fear of saying now that he would be finer and greater for the loss of half his work, though if I had heard any one say such a thing then I should have held him as little better than one of the wicked.

Upon the whole it was well that I had not found my way to Shakespeare earlier, though it is rather strange that I had not. I knew him on the stage in most of the plays that used to be given. I had shared the conscience of Macbeth, the passion of Othello, the doubt of Hamlet; many times, in my natural affinity for villains, I had mocked and suffered with Richard III.

Probably no dramatist ever needed the stage less, and none ever brought more to it. There have been few joys for me in life comparable to that of seeing the curtain rise on "Hamlet," and hearing the guards begin to talk about the ghost; and yet how fully this joy imparts itself without any material embodiment! It is the same in the whole range of his plays: they fill the scene, but if there is no scene they fill the soul. They

are neither worse nor better because of the theatre. They are so great that it cannot hamper them; they are so vital that they enlarge it to their own proportions and endue it with something of their own living force. They make it the size of life, and yet they retire it so wholly that you think no more of it than you think of the physiognomy of one who talks importantly to you. I have heard people say that they would rather not see Shakespeare played than to see him played ill, but I cannot agree with them. He can better afford to be played ill than any other man that ever wrote. Whoever is on the stage, it is always Shakespeare who is speaking to me, and perhaps this is the reason why in the past I can trace no discrepancy between reading his plays and seeing them.

The effect is so equal from either experience that I am not sure as to some plays whether I read them or saw them first, though as to most of them I am aware that I never saw them at all; and if the whole truth must be told there is still one of his plays that I have not read, and I believe it is esteemed one of his greatest. There are several, with all my reading of others, that I had not read till within a few years; and I do not think I should have lost much if I, had never read "Pericles" and "Winter's Tale."

In those early days I had no philosophized preference for reality in literature, and I dare say if I had been asked, I should have said that the plays of Shakespeare where reality is least felt were the most imaginative; that is the belief of the puerile critics still; but I suppose it was my instinctive liking for reality that made the great Histories so delightful to me, and that rendered "Macbeth" and "Hamlet" vital in their very ghosts and witches. There I found a world appreciable to experience, a world inexpressibly vaster and grander than the poor little affair that I had only known a small obscure corner of, and yet of one quality with it, so that I could be as much at home and citizen in it as where I actually lived. There I found joy and sorrow mixed, and nothing abstract or typical, but everything standing for itself, and not for some other thing. Then, I suppose it was the interfusion of humor through so much of it, that made it all precious and friendly. I think I had a native love of laughing, which was fostered in me by my father's way of looking at life, and had certainly been flattered by my intimacy with Cervantes; but whether this was so or not, I know that I liked best and felt deepest those plays and passages in Shakespeare where the alliance of the tragic and the comic was closest. Perhaps in a time when self-consciousness is so widespread, it is the only thing that saves us from ourselves. I am sure that without it I should not have been naturalized to that world of Shakespeare's Histories, where I used to spend so much of my leisure, with such a sense of his own intimate companionship there as I had nowhere else. I felt that he must somehow like my being in the joke of it all, and that in his great heart he had room for a boy willing absolutely to lose himself in him, and be as one of his creations.

It was the time of life with me when a boy begins to be in love with the pretty faces that then peopled this world so thickly, and I did not fail to fall in love with the ladies of that Shakespeare-world where I lived equally. I cannot tell whether it was because I found them like my

ideals here, or whether my ideals acquired merit because of their likeness to the realities there; they appeared to be all of one degree of enchanting loveliness; but upon the whole I must have preferred them in the plays, because it was so much easier to get on with them there; I was always much better dressed there; I was vastly handsomer; I was not bashful or afraid, and I had some defects of these advantages to contend with here.

That friend of mine, the printer whom I have mentioned, was one with me in a sense of the Shakespearean humor, and he dwelt with me in the sort of double being I had in those two worlds. We took the book into the woods at the ends of the long summer afternoons that remained to us when we had finished our work, and on the shining Sundays of the warm, late spring, the early, warm autumn, and we read it there on grassy slopes or heaps of fallen leaves; so that much of the poetry is mixed for me with a rapturous sense of the out-door beauty of this lovely natural world. We read turn about, one taking the story up as the other tired, and as we read the drama played itself under the open sky and in the free air with such orchestral effects as the sighing woods or some rippling stream afforded. It was not interrupted when a squirrel dropped a nut on us from the top of a tall hickory; and the plaint of a meadow-lark prolonged itself with unbroken sweetness from one world to the other.

But I think it takes two to read in the open air. The pressure of walls is wanted to keep the mind within itself when one reads alone; otherwise it wanders and disperses itself through nature. When my friend left us for want of work in the office, or from the vagarious impulse which is so strong in our craft, I took my Shakespeare no longer to the woods and fields, but pored upon him mostly by night, in the narrow little space which I had for my study, under the stairs at home. There was a desk pushed back against the wall, which the irregular ceiling eloped down to meet behind it, and at my left was a window, which gave a good light on the writing-leaf of my desk. This was my workshop for six or seven years, and it was not at all a bad one; I have had many since that were not so much to the purpose; and though I would not live my life over, I would willingly enough have that little study mine again. But it is gone an utterly as the faces and voices that made home around it, and that I was fierce to shut out of it, so that no sound or sight should molest me in the pursuit of the end which I sought gropingly, blindly, with very little hope, but with an intense ambition, and a courage that gave way under no burden, before no obstacle. Long ago changes were made in the low, rambling house which threw my little closet into a larger room; but this was not until after I had left it many years; and as long as I remained a part of that dear and simple home it was my place to read, to write, to muse, to dream.

I sometimes wish in these later years that I had spent less time in it, or that world of books which it opened into; that I had seen more of the actual world, and had learned to know my brethren in it better. I might so have amassed more material for after use in literature, but I had to fit myself to use it, and I suppose that this was what I was doing, in my own way, and by such light as I had. I often toiled wrongly and foolishly; but certainly I toiled, and I suppose no work is wasted. Some

strength, I hope, was coming to me, even from my mistakes, and though I went over ground that I need not have traversed, if I had not been left so much to find the way alone, yet I was not standing still, and some of the things that I then wished to do I have done. I do not mind owning that in others I have failed. For instance, I have never surpassed Shakespeare as a poet, though I once firmly meant to do so; but then, it is to be remembered that very few other people have surpassed him, and that it would not have been easy.

XIV. IK MARVEL

My ardor for Shakespeare must have been at its height when I was between sixteen and seventeen years old, for I fancy when I began to formulate my admiration, and to try to measure his greatness in phrases, I was less simply impassioned than at some earlier time. At any rate, I am sure that I did not proclaim his planetary importance in creation until I was at least nineteen. But even at an earlier age I no longer worshipped at a single shrine; there were many gods in the temple of my idolatry, and I bowed the knee to them all in a devotion which, if it was not of one quality, was certainly impartial. While I was reading, and thinking, and living Shakespeare with such an intensity that I do not see how there could have been room in my consciousness for anything else, there seem to have been half a dozen other divinities there, great and small, whom I have some present difficulty in distinguishing. I kept Irving, and Goldsmith, and Cervantes on their old altars, but I added new ones, and these I translated from the contemporary: literary world quite as often as from the past. I am rather glad that among them was the gentle and kindly Ik Marvel, whose 'Reveries of a Bachelor' and whose 'Dream Life' the young people of that day were reading with a tender rapture which would not be altogether surprising, I dare say, to the young people of this. The books have survived the span of immortality fixed by our amusing copyright laws, and seem now, when any pirate publisher may plunder their author, to have a new life before them. Perhaps this is ordered by Providence, that those who have no right to them may profit by them, in that divine contempt of such profit which Providence so often shows.

I cannot understand just how I came to know of the books, but I suppose it was through the contemporary criticism which I was then beginning to read, wherever I could find it, in the magazines and newspapers; and I could not say why I thought it would be very 'comme il faut' to like them. Probably the literary fine world, which is always rubbing shoulders with the other fine world, and bringing off a little of its powder and perfume, was then dawning upon me, and I was wishing to be of it, and to like the things that it liked; I am not so anxious to do it now. But if this is true, I found the books better than their friends, and had many a heartache from their pathos, many a genuine glow of purpose from their high import, many a tender suffusion from their sentiment. I dare say I should find their pose now a little old-fashioned. I believe it was rather full of sighs, and shrugs and starts,

expressed in dashes, and asterisks, and exclamations, but I am sure that the feeling was the genuine and manly sort which is of all times and always the latest wear. Whatever it was, it sufficed to win my heart, and to identify me with whatever was most romantic and most pathetic in it. I read 'Dream Life' first--though the 'Reveries of a Bachelor' was written first, and I believe is esteemed the better book--and 'Dream Life' remains first in my affections. I have now little notion what it was about, but I love its memory. The book is associated especially in my mind with one golden day of Indian summer, when I carried it into the woods with me, and abandoned myself to a welter of emotion over its page. I lay, under a crimson maple, and I remember how the light struck through it and flushed the print with the gules of the foliage. My friend was away by this time on one of his several absences in the Northwest, and I was quite alone in the absurd and irrelevant melancholy with which I read myself and my circumstances into the book. I began to read them out again in due time, clothed with the literary airs and graces that I admired in it, and for a long time I imitated Ik Marvel in the voluminous letters I wrote my friend in compliance with his Shakespearean prayer:

"To Milan let me hear from thee by letters,
Of thy success in love, and what news else
Betideth here in absence of thy friend;
And I likewise will visit thee with mine."

Milan was then presently Sheboygan, Wisconsin, and Verona was our little village; but they both served the soul of youth as well as the real places would have done, and were as really Italian as anything else in the situation was really this or that. Heaven knows what gaudy sentimental parade we made in our borrowed plumes, but if the travesty had kept itself to the written word it would have been all well enough. My misfortune was to carry it into print when I began to write a story, in the Ik Marvel manner, or rather to compose it in type at the case, for that was what I did; and it was not altogether imitated from Ik Marvel either, for I drew upon the easier art of Dickens at times, and helped myself out with bald parodies of Bleak House in many places. It was all very well at the beginning, but I had not reckoned with the future sufficiently to have started with any clear ending in my mind, and as I went on I began to find myself more and more in doubt about it. My material gave out; incidents failed me; the characters wavered and threatened to perish on my hands. To crown my misery there grew up an impatience with the story among its readers, and this found its way to me one day when I overheard an old farmer who came in for his paper say that he did not think that story amounted to much. I did not think so either, but it was deadly to have it put into words, and how I escaped the mortal effect of the stroke I do not know. Somehow I managed to bring the wretched thing to a close, and to live it slowly into the past. Slowly it seemed then, but I dare say it was fast enough; and there is always this consolation to be whispered in the ear of wounded vanity, that the world's memory is equally bad for failure and success; that if it will not keep your triumphs in mind as you think it ought, neither will it long dwell upon your defeats. But that experience was really terrible. It was like some dreadful dream one has of finding one's self in battle without the courage needed to carry one creditably through the action,

or on the stage unprepared by study of the part which one is to appear in. I have never looked at that story since, so great was the shame and anguish that I suffered from it, and yet I do not think it was badly conceived, or attempted upon lines that were mistaken. If it were not for what happened in the past I might like some time to write a story on the same lines in the future.

XV. DICKENS

What I have said of Dickens reminds me that I had been reading him at the same time that I had been reading I. K. Marvel; but a curious thing about the reading of my later boyhood is that the dates do not sharply detach themselves one from another. This may be so because my reading was much more multifarious than it had been earlier, or because I was reading always two or three authors at a time. I think Macaulay a little antedated Dickens in my affections, but when I came to the novels of that masterful artist (as I must call him, with a thousand reservations as to the times when he is not a master and not an artist), I did not fail to fall under his spell.

This was in a season of great depression, when I began to feel in broken health the effect of trying to burn my candle at both ends. It seemed for a while very simple and easy to come home in the middle of the afternoon, when my task at the printing-office was done, and sit down to my books in my little study, which I did not finally leave until the family were in bed; but it was not well, and it was not enough that I should like to do it. The most that can be said in defence of such a thing is that with the strong native impulse and the conditions it was inevitable. If I was to do the thing I wanted to do I was to do it in that way, and I wanted to do that thing, whatever it was, more than I wanted to do anything else, and even more than I wanted to do nothing. I cannot make out that I was fond of study, or cared for the things I was trying to do, except as a means to other things. As far as my pleasure went, or my natural bent was concerned, I would rather have been wandering through the woods with a gun on my shoulder, or lying under a tree, or reading some book that cost me no sort of effort. But there was much more than my pleasure involved; there was a hope to fulfil, an aim to achieve, and I could no more have left off trying for what I hoped and aimed at than I could have left off living, though I did not know very distinctly what either was. As I look back at the endeavor of those days much of it seems mere purblind groping, wilful and wandering. I can see that doing all by myself I was not truly a law to myself, but only a sort of helpless force.

I studied Latin because I believed that I should read the Latin authors, and I suppose I got as much of the language as most school-boys of my age, but I never read any Latin author but Cornelius Nepos. I studied Greek, and I learned so much of it as to read a chapter of the Testament, and an ode of Anacreon. Then I left it, not because I did not mean to go farther, or indeed stop short of reading all Greek literature, but

because that friend of mine and I talked it over and decided that I could go on with Greek any time, but I had better for the present study German, with the help of a German who had come to the village. Apparently I was carrying forward an attack on French at the same time, for I distinctly recall my failure to enlist with me an old gentleman who had once lived a long time in France, and whom I hoped to get at least an accent from. Perhaps because he knew he had no accent worth speaking of, or perhaps because he did not want the bother of imparting it, he never would keep any of the engagements he made with me, and when we did meet he so abounded in excuses and subterfuges that he finally escaped me, and I was left to acquire an Italian accent of French in Venice seven or eight years later. At the same time I was reading Spanish, more or less, but neither wisely nor too well. Having had so little help in my studies, I had a stupid pride in refusing all, even such as I might have availed myself of, without shame, in books, and I would not read any Spanish author with English notes. I would have him in an edition wholly Spanish from beginning to end, and I would fight my way through him single-handed, with only such aid as I must borrow from a lexicon.

I now call this stupid, but I have really no more right to blame the boy who was once I than I have to praise him, and I am certainly not going to do that. In his day and place he did what he could in his own way; he had no true perspective of life, but I do not know that youth ever has that. Some strength came to him finally from the mere struggle, undirected and misdirected as it often was, and such mental fibre as he had was toughened by the prolonged stress. It could be said, of course, that the time apparently wasted in these effectless studies could have been well spent in deepening and widening a knowledge of English literature never yet too great, and I have often said this myself; but then, again, I am not sure that the studies were altogether effectless. I have sometimes thought that greater skill had come to my hand from them than it would have had without, and I have trusted that in making known to me the sources of so much English, my little Latin and less Greek have enabled me to use my own speech with a subtler sense of it than I should have had otherwise.

But I will by no means insist upon my conjecture. What is certain is that for the present my studies, without method and without stint, began to tell upon my health, and that my nerves gave way in all manner of hypochondriacal fears. These finally resolved themselves into one, incessant, inexorable, which I could escape only through bodily fatigue, or through some absorbing interest that took me out of myself altogether and filled my morbid mind with the images of another's creation.

In this mood I first read Dickens, whom I had known before in the reading I had listened to. But now I devoured his books one after another as fast as I could read them. I plunged from the heart of one to another, so as to leave myself no chance for the horrors that beset me. Some of them remain associated with the gloom and misery of that time, so that when I take them up they bring back its dreadful shadow. But I have since read them all more than once, and I have had my time of thinking Dickens, talking Dickens, and writing Dickens, as we all had who lived in the days of the mighty magician. I fancy the readers who have come to

him since he ceased to fill the world with his influence can have little notion how great it was. In that time he colored the parlance of the English-speaking race, and formed upon himself every minor talent attempting fiction. While his glamour lasted it was no more possible for a young novelist to escape writing Dickens than it was for a young poet to escape writing Tennyson. I admired other authors more; I loved them more, but when it came to a question of trying to do something in fiction I was compelled, as by a law of nature, to do it at least partially in his way.

All the while that he held me so fast by his potent charm I was aware that it was a very rough magic now and again, but I could not assert my sense of this against him in matters of character and structure. To these I gave in helplessly; their very grotesqueness was proof of their divine origin, and I bowed to the crudest manifestations of his genius in these kinds as if they were revelations not to be doubted without sacrilege. But in certain small matters, as it were of ritual, I suffered myself to think, and I remember boldly speaking my mind about his style, which I thought bad.

I spoke it even to the quaint character whom I borrowed his books from, and who might almost have come out of his books. He lived in Dickens in a measure that I have never known another to do, and my contumely must have brought him a pang that was truly a personal grief. He forgave it, no doubt because I bowed in the Dickens worship without question on all other points. He was then a man well on towards fifty, and he had come to America early in life, and had lived in our village many years, without casting one of his English prejudices, or ceasing to be of a contrary opinion on every question, political, religious and social. He had no fixed belief, but he went to the service of his church whenever it was held among us, and he revered the Book of Common Prayer while he disputed the authority of the Bible with all comers. He had become a citizen, but he despised democracy, and achieved a hardy consistency only by voting with the pro-slavery party upon all measures friendly to the institution which he considered the scandal and reproach of the American name. From a heart tender to all, he liked to say wanton, savage and cynical things, but he bore no malice if you gainsaid him. I know nothing of his origin, except the fact of his being an Englishman, or what his first calling had been; but he had evolved among us from a house-painter to an organ-builder, and he had a passionate love of music. He built his organs from the ground up, and made every part of them with his own hands; I believe they were very good, and at any rate the churches in the country about took them from him as fast as he could make them. He had one in his own house, and it was fine to see him as he sat before it, with his long, tremulous hands outstretched to the keys, his noble head thrown back and his sensitive face lifted in the rapture of his music. He was a rarely intelligent creature, and an artist in every fibre; and if you did not quarrel with his manifold perversities, he was a delightful companion.

After my friend went away I fell much to him for society, and we took long, rambling walks together, or sat on the stoop before his door, or lounged over the books in the drug-store, and talked evermore of

literature. He must have been nearly three times my age, but that did not matter; we met in the equality of the ideal world where there is neither old nor young, any more than there is rich or poor. He had read a great deal, but of all he had read he liked Dickens best, and was always coming back to him with affection, whenever the talk strayed. He could not make me out when I criticised the style of Dickens; and when I praised Thackeray's style to the disadvantage of Dickens's he could only accuse me of a sort of aesthetic snobbishness in my preference. Dickens, he said, was for the million, and Thackeray was for the upper ten thousand. His view amused me at the time, and yet I am not sure that it was altogether mistaken.

There is certainly a property in Thackeray that somehow flatters the reader into the belief that he is better than other people. I do not mean to say that this was why I thought him a finer writer than Dickens, but I will own that it was probably one of the reasons why I liked him better; if I appreciated him so fully as I felt, I must be of a finer porcelain than the earthen pots which were not aware of any particular difference in the various liquors poured into them. In Dickens the virtue of his social defect is that he never appeals to the principle which sniffs, in his reader. The base of his work is the whole breadth and depth of humanity itself. It is helplessly elemental, but it is not the less grandly so, and if it deals with the simpler manifestations of character, character affected by the interests and passions rather than the tastes and preferences, it certainly deals with the larger moods through them. I do not know that in the whole range of his work he once suffers us to feel our superiority to a fellow-creature through any social accident, or except for some moral cause. This makes him very fit reading for a boy, and I should say that a boy could get only good from him. His view of the world and of society, though it was very little philosophized, was instinctively sane and reasonable, even when it was most impossible.

We are just beginning to discern that certain conceptions of our relations to our fellow-men, once formulated in generalities which met with a dramatic acceptance from the world, and were then rejected by it as mere rhetoric, have really a vital truth in them, and that if they have ever seemed false it was because of the false conditions in which we still live. Equality and fraternity, these are the ideals which once moved the world, and then fell into despite and mockery, as unrealities; but now they assert themselves in our hearts once more.

Blindly, unwittingly, erringly as Dickens often urged them, these ideals mark the whole tendency of his fiction, and they are what endear him to the heart, and will keep him dear to it long after many a cunninger artificer in letters has passed into forgetfulness. I do not pretend that I perceived the full scope of his books, but I was aware of it in the finer sense which is not consciousness. While I read him, I was in a world where the right came out best, as I believe it will yet do in this world, and where merit was crowned with the success which I believe will yet attend it in our daily life, untrammelled by social convention or economic circumstance. In that world of his, in the ideal world, to which the real world must finally conform itself, I dwelt among the shows

of things, but under a Providence that governed all things to a good end, and where neither wealth nor birth could avail against virtue or right. Of course it was in a way all crude enough, and was already contradicted by experience in the small sphere of my own being; but nevertheless it was true with that truth which is at the bottom of things, and I was happy in it. I could not fail to love the mind which conceived it, and my worship of Dickens was more grateful than that I had yet given any writer. I did not establish with him that one-sided understanding which I had with Cervantes and Shakespeare; with a contemporary that was not possible, and as an American I was deeply hurt at the things he had said against us, and the more hurt because I felt that they were often so just. But I was for the time entirely his, and I could not have wished to write like any one else.

I do not pretend that the spell I was under was wholly of a moral or social texture. For the most part I was charmed with him because he was a delightful story-teller; because he could thrill me, and make me hot and cold; because he could make me laugh and cry, and stop my pulse and breath at will. There seemed an inexhaustible source of humor and pathos in his work, which I now find choked and dry; I cannot laugh any more at Pickwick or Sam Weller, or weep for little Nell or Paul Dombey; their jokes, their griefs, seemed to me to be turned on, and to have a mechanical action. But beneath all is still the strong drift of a genuine emotion, a sympathy, deep and sincere, with the poor, the lowly, the unfortunate. In all that vast range of fiction, there is nothing that tells for the strong, because they are strong, against the weak, nothing that tells for the haughty against the humble, nothing that tells for wealth against poverty. The effect of Dickens is purely democratic, and however contemptible he found our pseudo-equality, he was more truly democratic than any American who had yet written fiction. I suppose it was our instinctive perception in the region of his instinctive expression, that made him so dear to us, and wounded our silly vanity so keenly through our love when he told us the truth about our horrible sham of a slave-based freedom. But at any rate the democracy is there in his work more than he knew perhaps, or would ever have known, or ever recognized by his own life. In fact, when one comes to read the story of his life, and to know that he was really and lastingly ashamed of having once put up shoe-blackening as a boy, and was unable to forgive his mother for suffering him to be so degraded, one perceives that he too was the slave of conventions and the victim of conditions which it is the highest function of his fiction to help destroy.

I imagine that my early likes and dislikes in Dickens were not very discriminating. I liked 'David Copperfield,' and 'Barnaby Rudge,' and 'Bleak House,' and I still like them; but I do not think I liked them more than 'Dombey & Son,' and 'Nicholas Nickleby,' and the 'Pickwick Papers,' which I cannot read now with any sort of patience, not to speak of pleasure. I liked 'Martin Chuzzlewit,' too, and the other day I read a great part of it again, and found it roughly true in the passages that referred to America, though it was surcharged in the serious moods, and caricatured in the comic. The English are always inadequate observers; they seem too full of themselves to have eyes and ears for any alien people; but as far as an Englishman could, Dickens had caught the look of

our life in certain aspects. His report of it was clumsy and farcical; but in a large, loose way it was like enough; at least he had caught the note of our self-satisfied, intolerant, and hypocritical provinciality, and this was not altogether lost in his mocking horse-play.

I cannot make out that I was any the less fond of Dickens because of it. I believe I was rather more willing to accept it as a faithful portraiture than I should be now; and I certainly never made any question of it with my friend the organ-builder. 'Martin Chuzzlewit' was a favorite book with him, and so was the 'Old Curiosity Shop.' No doubt a fancied affinity with Tom Pinch through their common love of music made him like that most sentimental and improbable personage, whom he would have disowned and laughed to scorn if he had met him in life; but it was a purely altruistic sympathy that he felt with Little Nell and her grandfather. He was fond of reading the pathetic passages from both books, and I can still hear his rich, vibrant voice as it lingered in tremulous emotion on the periods he loved. He would catch the volume up anywhere, any time, and begin to read, at the book-store, or the harness-shop, or the law-office, it did not matter in the wide leisure of a country village, in those days before the war, when people had all the time there was; and he was sure of his audience as long as he chose to read. One Christmas eve, in answer to a general wish, he read the 'Christmas Carol' in the Court-house, and people came from all about to hear him.

He was an invalid and he died long since, ending a life of suffering in the saddest way. Several years before his death money fell to his family, and he went with them to an Eastern city, where he tried in vain to make himself at home. He never ceased to pine for the village he had left, with its old companionships, its easy usages, its familiar faces; and he escaped to it again and again, till at last every tie was severed, and he could come back no more. He was never reconciled to the change, and in a manner he did really die of the homesickness which deepened an hereditary taint, and enfeebled him to the disorder that carried him off. My memories of Dickens remain mingled with my memories of this quaint and most original genius, and though I knew Dickens long before I knew his lover, I can scarcely think of one without thinking of the other.

XVI. WORDSWORTH, LOWELL, CHAUCER

Certain other books I associate with another pathetic nature, of whom the organ-builder and I were both fond. This was the young poet who looked after the book half of the village drug and book store, and who wrote poetry in such leisure as he found from his duties, and with such strength as he found in the disease preying upon him. He must have been far gone in consumption when I first knew him, for I have no recollection of a time when his voice was not faint and husky, his sweet smile wan, and his blue eyes dull with the disease that wasted him away,

"Like wax in the fire,
Like snow in the sun."

People spoke of him as once strong and vigorous, but I recall him fragile and pale, gentle, patient, knowing his inexorable doom, and not hoping or seeking to escape it. As the end drew near he left his employment and went home to the farm, some twenty miles away, where I drove out to see him once through the deep snow of a winter which was to be his last. My heart was heavy all the time, but he tried to make the visit pass cheerfully with our wonted talk about books. Only at parting, when he took my hand in his thin, cold clasp, he said, "I suppose my disease is progressing," with the patience he always showed.

I did not see him again, and I am not sure now that his gift was very distinct or very great. It was slight and graceful rather, I fancy, and if he had lived it might not have sufficed to make him widely known, but he had a real and a very delicate sense of beauty in literature, and I believe it was through sympathy with his preferences that I came into appreciation of several authors whom I had not known, or had not cared for before. There could not have been many shelves of books in that store, and I came to be pretty well acquainted with them all before I began to buy them. For the most part, I do not think it occurred to me that they were there to be sold; for this pale poet seemed indifferent to the commercial property in them, and only to wish me to like them.

I am not sure, but I think it was through some volume which I found in his charge that I first came to know of De Quincey; he was fond of Dr. Holmes's poetry; he loved Whittier and Longfellow, each represented in his slender stock by some distinctive work. There were several stray volumes of Thackeray's minor writings, and I still have the 'Yellowplush Papers' in the smooth red cloth (now pretty well tattered) of Appleton's Popular Library, which I bought there. But most of the books were in the famous old brown cloth of Ticknor & Fields, which was a warrant of excellence in the literature it covered. Besides these there were standard volumes of poetry, published by Phillips & Sampson, from worn-out plates; for a birthday present my mother got me Wordsworth in this shape, and I am glad to think that I once read the "Excursion" in it, for I do not think I could do so now, and I have a feeling that it is very right and fit to have read the "Excursion." To be honest, it was very hard reading even then, and I cannot truthfully pretend that I have ever liked Wordsworth except in parts, though for the matter of that, I do not suppose that any one ever did. I tried hard enough to like everything in him, for I had already learned enough to know that I ought to like him, and that if I did not, it was a proof of intellectual and moral inferiority in me. My early idol, Pope, had already been tumbled into the dust by Lowell, whose lectures on English Poetry had lately been given in Boston, and had met with my rapturous acceptance in such newspaper report as I had of them. So, my preoccupations were all in favor of the Lake School, and it was both in my will and my conscience to like Wordsworth. If I did not do so it was not my fault, and the fault remains very much what it first was.

I feel and understand him more deeply than I did then, but I do not think

that I then failed of the meaning of much that I read in him, and I am sure that my senses were quick to all the beauty in him. After suffering once through the "Excursion" I did not afflict myself with it again, but there were other poems of his which I read over and over, as I fancy it is the habit of every lover of poetry to do with the pieces he is fond of. Still, I do not make out that Wordsworth was ever a passion of mine; on the other hand, neither was Byron. Him, too, I liked in passages and in certain poems which I knew before I read Wordsworth at all; I read him throughout, but I did not try to imitate him, and I did not try to imitate Wordsworth.

Those lectures of Lowell's had a great influence with me, and I tried to like whatever they bade me like, after a fashion common to young people when they begin to read criticisms; their aesthetic pride is touched; they wish to realize that they too can feel the fine things the critic admires. From this motive they do a great deal of factitious liking; but after all the affections will not be bidden, and the critic can only avail to give a point of view, to enlighten a perspective. When I read Lowell's praises of him, I had all the will in the world to read Spencer, and I really meant to do so, but I have not done so to this day, and as often as I have tried I have found it impossible. It was not so with Chaucer, whom I loved from the first word of his which I found quoted in those lectures, and in Chambers's 'Encyclopaedia of English Literature,' which I had borrowed of my friend the organ-builder.

In fact, I may fairly class Chaucer among my passions, for I read him with that sort of personal attachment I had for Cervantes, who resembled him in a certain sweet and cheery humanity. But I do not allege this as the reason, for I had the same feeling for Pope, who was not like either of them. Kissing goes by favor, in literature as in life, and one cannot quite account for one's passions in either; what is certain is, I liked Chaucer and I did not like Spencer; possibly there was an affinity between reader and poet, but if there was I should be at a loss to name it, unless it was the liking for reality; and the sense of mother earth in human life. By the time I had read all of Chaucer that I could find in the various collections and criticisms, my father had been made a clerk in the legislature, and on one of his visits home he brought me the poet's works from the State Library, and I set about reading them with a glossary. It was not easy, but it brought strength with it, and lifted my heart with a sense of noble companionship.

I will not pretend that I was insensible to the grossness of the poet's time, which I found often enough in the poet's verse, as well as the goodness of his nature, and my father seems to have felt a certain misgiving about it. He repeated to me the librarian's question as to whether he thought he ought to put an unexpurgated edition in the hands of a boy, and his own answer that he did not believe it would hurt me. It was a kind of appeal to me to make the event justify him, and I suppose he had not given me the book without due reflection. Probably he reasoned that with my greed for all manner of literature the bad would become known to me along with the good at any rate, and I had better know that he knew it.

The streams of filth flow down through the ages in literature, which sometimes seems little better than an open sewer, and, as I have said, I do not see why the time should not come when the noxious and noisome channels should be stopped; but the base of the mind is bestial, and so far the beast in us has insisted upon having his full say. The worst of lewd literature is that it seems to give a sanction to lewdness in the life, and that inexperience takes this effect for reality: that is the danger and the harm, and I think the fact ought not to be blinked. Compared with the meaner poets the greater are the cleaner, and Chaucer was probably safer than any other English poet of his time, but I am not going to pretend that there are not things in Chaucer which a boy would be the better for not reading; and so far as these words of mine shall be taken for counsel, I am not willing that they should unqualifiedly praise him. The matter is by no means simple; it is not easy to conceive of a means of purifying the literature of the past without weakening it, and even falsifying it, but it is best to own that it is in all respects just what it is, and not to feign it otherwise. I am not ready to say that the harm from it is positive, but you do get smeared with it, and the filthy thought lives with the filthy rhyme in the ear, even when it does not corrupt the heart or make it seem a light thing for the reader's tongue and pen to sin in kind.

I loved my Chaucer too well, I hope, not to get some good from the best in him; and my reading of criticism had taught me how and where to look for the best, and to know it when I had found it. Of course I began to copy him. That is, I did not attempt anything like his tales in kind; they must have seemed too hopelessly far away in taste and time, but I studied his verse, and imitated a stanza which I found in some of his things and had not found elsewhere; I rejoiced in the freshness and sweetness of his diction, and though I felt that his structure was obsolete, there was in his wording something homelier and heartier than the imported analogues that had taken the place of the phrases he used.

I began to employ in my own work the archaic words that I fancied most, which was futile and foolish enough, and I formed a preference for the simpler Anglo-Saxon woof of our speech, which was not so bad. Of course, being left so much as I was to my own whim in such things, I could not keep a just mean; I had an aversion for the Latin derivatives which was nothing short of a craze. Some half-bred critic whom I had read made me believe that English could be written without them, and had better be written so, and I did not escape from this lamentable error until I had produced with weariness and vexation of spirit several pieces of prose wholly composed of monosyllables. I suspect now that I did not always stop to consider whether my short words were not as Latin by race as any of the long words I rejected, and that I only made sure they were short.

The frivolous ingenuity which wasted itself in this exercise happily could not hold out long, and in verse it was pretty well helpless from the beginning. Yet I will not altogether blame it, for it made me know, as nothing else could, the resources of our tongue in that sort; and in the revolt from the slavish bondage I took upon myself I did not go so far as to plunge into any very wild polysyllabic excesses. I still like the little word if it says the thing I want to say as well as the big

one, but I honor above all the word that says the thing. At the same time I confess that I have a prejudice against certain words that I cannot overcome; the sight of some offends me, the sound of others, and rather than use one of those detested vocables, even when I perceive that it would convey my exact meaning, I would cast about long for some other. I think this is a foible, and a disadvantage, but I do not deny it.

An author who had much to do with preparing me for the quixotic folly in point was that Thomas Babington Macaulay, who taught simplicity of diction in phrases of as "learned length and thundering sound," as any he would have had me shun, and who deplored the Latinistic English of Johnson in terms emulous of the great doctor's orotundity and ronderosity. I wonder now that I did not see how my physician avoided his medicine, but I did not, and I went on to spend myself in an endeavor as vain and senseless as any that pedantry has conceived. It was none the less absurd because I believed in it so devoutly, and sacrificed myself to it with such infinite pains and labor. But this was long after I read Macaulay, who was one of my grand passions before Dickens or Chaucer.

XVII. MACAULAY

One of the many characters of the village was the machinist who had his shop under our printing-office when we first brought our newspaper to the place, and who was just then a machinist because he was tired of being many other things, and had not yet made up his mind what he should be next. He could have been whatever he turned his agile intellect and his cunning hand to; he had been a schoolmaster and a watch-maker, and I believe an amateur doctor and irregular lawyer; he talked and wrote brilliantly, and he was one of the group that nightly disposed of every manner of theoretical and practical question at the drug-store; it was quite indifferent to him which side he took; what he enjoyed was the mental exercise. He was in consumption, as so many were in that region, and he carbonized against it, as he said; he took his carbon in the liquid form, and the last time I saw him the carbon had finally prevailed over the consumption, but it had itself become a seated vice; that was many years since, and it is many years since he died.

He must have been known to me earlier, but I remember him first as he swam vividly into my ken, with a volume of Macaulay's essays in his hand, one day. Less figuratively speaking, he came up into the printing-office to expose from the book the nefarious plagiarism of an editor in a neighboring city, who had adapted with the change of names and a word or two here and there, whole passages from the essay on Barere, to the denunciation of a brother editor. It was a very simple-hearted fraud, and it was all done with an innocent trust in the popular ignorance which now seems to me a little pathetic; but it was certainly very barefaced, and merited the public punishment which the discoverer inflicted by means of what journalists call the deadly parallel column. The effect ought logically to have been ruinous for the plagiarist, but it was really

nothing of the kind. He simply ignored the exposure, and the comments of the other city papers, and in the process of time he easily lived down the memory of it and went on to greater usefulness in his profession.

But for the moment it appeared to me a tremendous crisis, and I listened as the minister of justice read his communication, with a thrill which lost itself in the interest I suddenly felt in the plundered author.

Those facile and brilliant phrases and ideas struck me as the finest things I had yet known in literature, and I borrowed the book and read it through. Then I borrowed another volume of Macaulay's essays, and another and another, till I had read them every one. It was like a long debauch, from which I emerged with regret that it should ever end.

I tried other essayists, other critics, whom the machinist had in his library, but it was useless; neither Sidney Smith nor Thomas Carlyle could console me; I sighed for more Macaulay and evermore Macaulay. I read his History of England, and I could measurably console myself with that, but only measurably; and I could not go back to the essays and read them again, for it seemed to me I had absorbed them so thoroughly that I had left nothing unenjoyed in them. I used to talk with the machinist about them, and with the organ-builder, and with my friend the printer, but no one seemed to feel the intense fascination in them that I did, and that I should now be quite unable to account for.

Once more I had an author for whom I could feel a personal devotion, whom I could dream of and dote upon, and whom I could offer my intimacy in many an impassioned reverie. I do not think T. B. Macaulay would really have liked it; I dare say he would not have valued the friendship of the sort of a youth I was, but in the conditions he was helpless, and I poured out my love upon him without a rebuff. Of course I reformed my prose style, which had been carefully modelled upon that of Goldsmith and Irving, and began to write in the manner of Macaulay, in short, quick sentences, and with the prevalent use of brief Anglo-Saxon words, which he prescribed, but did not practise. As for his notions of literature, I simply accepted them with the feeling that any question of them would have been little better than blasphemy.

For a long time he spoiled my taste for any other criticism; he made it seem pale, and poor, and weak; and he blunted my sense to subtler excellences than I found in him. I think this was a pity, but it was a thing not to be helped, like a great many things that happen to our hurt in life; it was simply inevitable. How or when my frenzy for him began to abate I cannot say, but it certainly waned, and it must have waned rapidly, for after no great while I found myself feeling the charm of quite different minds, as fully as if his had never enslaved me. I cannot regret that I enjoyed him so keenly as I did; it was in a way a generous delight, and though he swayed me helplessly whatever way he thought, I do not think yet that he swayed me in any very wrong way. He was a bright and clear intelligence, and if his light did not go far, it is to be said of him that his worst fault was only to have stopped short of the finest truth in art, in morals, in politics.

XVIII. CRITICS AND REVIEWS

What remained to me from my love of Macaulay was a love of criticism, and I read almost as much in criticism as I read in poetry and history and fiction. It was of an eccentric doctor, another of the village characters, that I got the works of Edgar A. Poe; I do not know just how, but it must have been in some exchange of books; he preferred metaphysics. At any rate I fell greedily upon them, and I read with no less zest than his poems the bitter, and cruel, and narrow-minded criticisms which mainly filled one of the volumes. As usual, I accepted them implicitly, and it was not till long afterwards that I understood how worthless they were.

I think that hardly less immoral than the lubricity of literature, and its celebration of the monkey and the goat in us, is the spectacle such criticism affords of the tigerish play of satire. It is monstrous that for no offence but the wish to produce something beautiful, and the mistake of his powers in that direction, a writer should become the prey of some ferocious wit, and that his tormentor should achieve credit by his lightness and ease in rending his prey; it is shocking to think how alluring and depraving the fact is to the young reader emulous of such credit, and eager to achieve it. Because I admired these barbarities of Poe's, I wished to irritate them, to spit some hapless victim on my own spear, to make him suffer and to make the reader laugh. This is as far as possible from the criticism that enlightens and ennobles, but it is still the ideal of most critics, deny it as they will; and because it is the ideal of most critics criticism still remains behind all the other literary arts.

I am glad to remember that at the same time I exulted in these ferocities I had mind enough and heart enough to find pleasure in the truer and finer work, the humaner work of other writers, like Hazlitt, and Leigh Hunt, and Lamb, which became known to me at a date I cannot exactly fix. I believe it was Hazlitt whom I read first, and he helped me to clarify and formulate my admiration of Shakespeare as no one else had yet done; Lamb helped me too, and with all the dramatists, and on every hand I was reaching out for light that should enable me to place in literary history the authors I knew and loved.

I fancy it was well for me at this period to have got at the four great English reviews, the Edinburgh, the Westminster, the London Quarterly, and the North British, which I read regularly, as well as Blackwood's Magazine. We got them in the American editions in payment for printing the publisher's prospectus, and their arrival was an excitement, a joy, and a satisfaction with me, which I could not now describe without having to accuse myself of exaggeration. The love of literature, and the hope of doing something in it, had become my life to the exclusion of all other interests, or it was at least the great reality, and all other things were as shadows. I was living in a time of high political tumult, and I certainly cared very much for the question of slavery which was then filling the minds of men; I felt deeply the shame and wrong of our

Fugitive Slave Law; I was stirred by the news from Kansas, where the great struggle between the two great principles in our nationality was beginning in bloodshed; but I cannot pretend that any of these things were more than ripples on the surface of my intense and profound interest in literature. If I was not to live by it, I was somehow to live for it.

If I thought of taking up some other calling it was as a means only; literature was always the end I had in view, immediately or finally. I did not see how it was to yield me a living, for I knew that almost all the literary men in the country had other professions; they were editors, lawyers, or had public or private employments; or they were men of wealth; there was then not one who earned his bread solely by his pen in fiction, or drama, or history, or poetry, or criticism, in a day when people wanted very much less butter on their bread than they do now. But I kept blindly at my studies, and yet not altogether blindly, for, as I have said, the reading I did had more tendency than before, and I was beginning to see authors in their proportion to one another, and to the body of literature.

The English reviews were of great use to me in this; I made a rule of reading each one of them quite through. To be sure I often broke this rule, as people are apt to do with rules of the kind; it was not possible for a boy to wade through heavy articles relating to English politics and economics, but I do not think I left any paper upon a literary topic unread, and I did read enough politics, especially in Blackwood's, to be of Tory opinions; they were very fit opinions for a boy, and they did not exact of me any change in regard to the slavery question.

XIX. A NON-LITERARY EPISODE

I suppose I might almost class my devotion to English reviews among my literary passions, but it was of very short lease, not beyond a year or two at the most. In the midst of it I made my first and only essay aside from the lines of literature, or rather wholly apart from it. After some talk with my father it was decided, mainly by myself, I suspect, that I should leave the printing-office and study law; and it was arranged with the United States Senator who lived in our village, and who was at home from Washington for the summer, that I was to come into his office. The Senator was by no means to undertake my instruction himself; his nephew, who had just begun to read law, was to be my fellow-student, and we were to keep each other up to the work, and to recite to each other, until we thought we had enough law to go before a board of attorneys and test our fitness for admission to the bar.

This was the custom in that day and place, as I suppose it is still in most parts of the country. We were to be fitted for practice in the courts, not only by our reading, but by a season of pettifogging before justices of the peace, which I looked forward to with no small shrinking of my shy spirit; but what really troubled me most, and was always the grain of sand between my teeth, was Blackstone's confession of his own

original preference for literature, and his perception that the law was "a jealous mistress," who would suffer no rival in his affections. I agreed with him that I could not go through life with a divided interest; I must give up literature or I must give up law. I not only consented to this logically, but I realized it in my attempt to carry on the reading I had loved, and to keep at the efforts I was always making to write something in verse or prose, at night, after studying law all day. The strain was great enough when I had merely the work in the printing-office; but now I came home from my Blackstone mentally fagged, and I could not take up the authors whom at the bottom of my heart I loved so much better. I tried it a month, but almost from the fatal day when I found that confession of Blackstone's, my whole being turned from the "jealous mistress" to the high minded muses: I had not only to go back to literature, but I had also to go back to the printing-office. I did not regret it, but I had made my change of front in the public eye, and I felt that it put me at a certain disadvantage with my fellow-citizens; as for the Senator, whose office I had forsaken, I met him now and then in the street, without trying to detain him, and once when he came to the printing-office for his paper we encountered at a point where we could not help speaking. He looked me over in my general effect of base mechanical, and asked me if I had given up the law; I had only to answer him I had, and our conference ended. It was a terrible moment for me, because I knew that in his opinion I had chosen a path in life, which if it did not lead to the Poor House was at least no way to the White House. I suppose now that he thought I had merely gone back to my trade, and so for the time I had; but I have no reason to suppose that he judged my case narrow-mindedly, and I ought to have had the courage to have the affair out with him, and tell him just why I had left the law; we had sometimes talked the English reviews over, for he read them as well as I, and it ought not to have been impossible for me to be frank with him; but as yet I could not trust any one with my secret hope of some day living for literature, although I had already lived for nothing else. I preferred the disadvantage which I must be at in his eyes, and in the eyes of most of my fellow-citizens; I believe I had the applause of the organ-builder, who thought the law no calling for me.

In that village there was a social equality which, if not absolute, was as nearly so as can ever be in a competitive civilization; and I could have suffered no slight in the general esteem for giving up a profession and going back to a trade; if I was despised at all it was because I had thrown away the chance of material advancement; I dare say some people thought I was a fool to do that. No one, indeed, could have imagined the rapture it was to do it, or what a load rolled from my shoulders when I dropped the law from them. Perhaps Sinbad or Christian could have conceived of my ecstatic relief; yet so far as the popular vision reached I was not returning to literature, but to the printing business, and I myself felt the difference. My reading had given me criterions different from those of the simple life of our village, and I did not flatter myself that my calling would have been thought one of great social dignity in the world where I hoped some day to make my living. My convictions were all democratic, but at heart I am afraid I was a snob, and was unworthy of the honest work which I ought to have felt it an honor to do; this, whatever we falsely pretend to the contrary, is the

frame of every one who aspires beyond the work of his hands. I do not know how it had become mine, except through my reading, and I think it was through the devotion I then had for a certain author that I came to a knowledge not of good and evil so much as of common and superfine.

XX. THACKERAY

It was of the organ-builder that I had Thackeray's books first. He knew their literary quality, and their rank in the literary world; but I believe he was surprised at the passion I instantly conceived for them. He could not understand it; he deplored it almost as a moral defect in me; though he honored it as a proof of my critical taste. In a certain measure he was right.

What flatters the worldly pride in a young man is what fascinates him with Thackeray. With his air of looking down on the highest, and confidentially inviting you to be of his company in the seat of the scorner he is irresistible; his very confession that he is a snob, too, is balm and solace to the reader who secretly admires the splendors he affects to despise. His sentimentality is also dear to the heart of youth, and the boy who is dazzled by his satire is melted by his easy pathos. Then, if the boy has read a good many other books, he is taken with that abundance of literary turn and allusion in Thackeray; there is hardly a sentence but reminds him that he is in the society of a great literary swell, who has read everything, and can mock or burlesque life right and left from the literature always at his command. At the same time he feels his mastery, and is abjectly grateful to him in his own simple love of the good for his patronage of the unassuming virtues. It is so pleasing to one's vanity, and so safe, to be of the master's side when he assails those vices and foibles which are inherent in the system of things, and which one can condemn with vast applause so long as one does not attempt to undo the conditions they spring from.

I exulted to have Thackeray attack the aristocrats, and expose their wicked pride and meanness, and I never noticed that he did not propose to do away with aristocracy, which is and must always be just what it has been, and which cannot be changed while it exists at all. He appeared to me one of the noblest creatures that ever was when he derided the shams of society; and I was far from seeing that society, as we have it, was necessarily a sham; when he made a mock of snobbishness I did not know but snobbishness was something that might be reached and cured by ridicule. Now I know that so long as we have social inequality we shall have snobs; we shall have men who bully and truckle, and women who snub and crawl. I know that it is futile to, spurn them, or lash them for trying to get on in the world, and that the world is what it must be from the selfish motives which underlie our economic life. But I did not know these things then, nor for long afterwards, and so I gave my heart to Thackeray, who seemed to promise me in his contempt of the world a refuge from the shame I felt for my own want of figure in it. He had the effect of taking me into the great world, and making me a party to his splendid

indifference to titles, and even to royalties; and I could not see that sham for sham he was unwittingly the greatest sham of all.

I think it was 'Pendennis' I began with, and I lived in the book to the very last line of it, and made its alien circumstance mine to the smallest detail. I am still not sure but it is the author's greatest book, and I speak from a thorough acquaintance with every line he has written, except the Virginians, which I have never been able to read quite through; most of his work I have read twice, and some of it twenty times.

After reading 'Pendennis' I went to 'Vanity Fair,' which I now think the poorest of Thackeray's novels--crude, heavy-handed, caricatured. About the same time I revelled in the romanticism of 'Henry Esmond,' with its pseudo-eighteenth-century sentiment, and its appeals to an overwrought ideal of gentlemanhood and honor. It was long before I was duly revolted by Esmond's transfer of his passion from the daughter to the mother whom he is successively enamoured of. I believe this unpleasant and preposterous affair is thought one of the fine things in the story; I do not mind owning that I thought it so myself when I was seventeen; and if I could have found a Beatrix to be in love with, and a Lady Castlewood to be in love with me, I should have asked nothing finer of fortune.

The glamour of Henry Esmond was all the deeper because I was reading the 'Spectator' then, and was constantly in the company of Addison, and Steele, and Swift, and Pope, and all the wits at Will's, who are presented evanescently in the romance. The intensely literary keeping, as well as quality, of the story I suppose is what formed its highest fascination for me; but that effect of great world which it imparts to the reader, making him citizen, and, if he will, leading citizen of it, was what helped turn my head.

This is the toxic property of all Thackeray's writing. He is himself forever dominated in imagination by the world, and even while he tells you it is not worth while he makes you feel that it is worth while. It is not the honest man, but the man of honor, who shines in his page; his meek folk are proudly meek, and there is a touch of superiority, a glint of mundane splendor, in his lowliest. He rails at the order of things, but he imagines nothing different, even when he shows that its baseness, and cruelty, and hypocrisy are well-nigh inevitable, and, for most of those who wish to get on in it, quite inevitable. He has a good word for the virtues, he patronizes the Christian graces, he pats humble merit on the head; he has even explosions of indignation against the insolence and pride of birth, and purse-pride. But, after all, he is of the world, worldly, and the highest hope he holds out is that you may be in the world and despise its ambitions while you compass its ends.

I should be far from blaming him for all this. He was of his time; but since his time men have thought beyond him, and seen life with a vision which makes his seem rather purblind. He must have been immensely in advance of most of the thinking and feeling of his day, for people then used to accuse his sentimental pessimism of cynical qualities which we could hardly find in it now. It was the age of intense individualism, when you were to do right because it was becoming to you, say, as a

gentleman, and you were to have an eye single to the effect upon your character, if not your reputation; you were not to do a mean thing because it was wrong, but because it was mean. It was romanticism carried into the region of morals. But I had very little concern then as to that sort of error.

I was on a very high esthetic horse, which I could not have conveniently stooped from if I had wished; it was quite enough for me that Thackeray's novels were prodigious works of art, and I acquired merit, at least with myself, for appreciating them so keenly, for liking them so much. It must be, I felt with far less consciousness than my formulation of the feeling expresses, that I was of some finer sort myself to be able to enjoy such a fine sort. No doubt I should have been a coxcomb of some kind, if not that kind, and I shall not be very strenuous in censuring Thackeray for his effect upon me in this way. No doubt the effect was already in me, and he did not so much produce it as find it.

In the mean time he was a vast delight to me, as much in the variety of his minor works--his 'Yellowplush,' and 'Letters of Mr. Brown,' and 'Adventures of Major Gahagan,' and the 'Paris Sketch Book,' and the 'Irish Sketch Book,' and the 'Great Hoggarty Diamond,' and the 'Book of Snobs,' and the 'English Humorists,' and the 'Four Georges,' and all the multitude of his essays, and verses, and caricatures--as in the spacious designs of his huge novels, the 'Newcomes,' and 'Pendennis,' and 'Vanity Fair,' and 'Henry Esmond,' and 'Barry Lyndon.'

There was something in the art of the last which seemed to me then, and still seems, the farthest reach of the author's great talent. It is couched, like so much of his work, in the autobiographic form, which next to the dramatic form is the most natural, and which lends itself with such flexibility to the purpose of the author. In 'Barry Lyndon' there is imagined to the life a scoundrel of such rare quality that he never supposes for a moment but he is the finest sort of a gentleman; and so, in fact, he was, as most gentlemen went in his day. Of course, the picture is over-colored; it was the vice of Thackeray, or of Thackeray's time, to surcharge all imitations of life and character, so that a generation apparently much slower, if not duller than ours, should not possibly miss the artist's meaning. But I do not think it is so much surcharged as 'Esmond;' 'Barry Lyndon' is by no manner of means so conscious as that mirror of gentlemanhood, with its manifold self-reverberations; and for these reasons I am inclined to think he is the most perfect creation of Thackeray's mind.

I did not make the acquaintance of Thackeray's books all at once, or even in rapid succession, and he at no time possessed the whole empire of my catholic, not to say, fickle, affections, during the years I was compassing a full knowledge and sense of his greatness, and burning incense at his shrine. But there was a moment when he so outshone and overtopped all other divinities in my worship that I was effectively his alone, as I have been the helpless and, as it were, hypnotized devotee of three or four others of the very great. From his art there flowed into me a literary quality which tinged my whole mental substance, and made it impossible for me to say, or wish to say, anything without giving it the

literary color. That is, while he dominated my love and fancy, if I had been so fortunate as to have a simple concept of anything in life, I must have tried to give the expression of it some turn or tint that would remind the reader of books even before it reminded him of men.

It is hard to make out what I mean, but this is a try at it, and I do not know that I shall be able to do better unless I add that Thackeray, of all the writers that I have known, is the most thoroughly and profoundly imbued with literature, so that when he speaks it is not with words and blood, but with words and ink. You may read the greatest part of Dickens, as you may read the greatest part of Hawthorne or Tolstoy, and not once be reminded of literature as a business or a cult, but you can hardly read a paragraph, hardly a sentence, of Thackeray's without being reminded of it either by suggestion or downright allusion.

I do not blame him for this; he was himself, and he could not have been any other manner of man without loss; but I say that the greatest talent is not that which breathes of the library, but that which breathes of the street, the field, the open sky, the simple earth. I began to imitate this master of mine almost as soon as I began to read him; this must be, and I had a greater pride and joy in my success than I should probably have known in anything really creative; I should have suspected that, I should have distrusted that, because I had nothing to test it by, no model; but here before me was the very finest and noblest model, and I had but to form my lines upon it, and I had produced a work of art altogether more estimable in my eyes than anything else could have been. I saw the little world about me through the lenses of my master's spectacles, and I reported its facts, in his tone and his attitude, with his self-flattered scorn, his showy sighs, his facile satire. I need not say I was perfectly satisfied with the result, or that to be able to imitate Thackeray was a much greater thing for me than to have been able to imitate nature. In fact, I could have valued any picture of the life and character I knew only as it put me in mind of life and character as these had shown themselves to me in his books.

XXI. "LAZARILLO DE TORMES"

At the same time, I was not only reading many books besides Thackeray's, but I was studying to get a smattering of several languages as well as I could, with or without help. I could now manage Spanish fairly well, and I was sending on to New York for authors in that tongue. I do not remember how I got the money to buy them; to be sure it was no great sum; but it must have been given me out of the sums we were all working so hard to make up for the debt, and the interest on the debt (that is always the wicked pinch for the debtor!), we had incurred in the purchase of the newspaper which we lived by, and the house which we lived in. I spent no money on any other sort of pleasure, and so, I suppose, it was afforded me the more readily; but I cannot really recall the history of those acquisitions on its financial side. In any case, if the sums I laid out in literature could not have been comparatively great, the

excitement attending the outlay was prodigious.

I know that I used to write on to Messrs. Roe Lockwood & Son, New York, for my Spanish books, and I dare say that my letters were sufficiently pedantic, and filled with a simulated acquaintance with all Spanish literature. Heaven knows what they must have thought, if they thought anything, of their queer customer in that obscure little Ohio village; but he could not have been queerer to them than to his fellow-villagers, I am sure. I haunted the post-office about the time the books were due, and when I found one of them in our deep box among a heap of exchange newspapers and business letters, my emotion was so great that it almost took my breath. I hurried home with the precious volume, and shut myself into my little den, where I gave myself up to a sort of transport in it. These books were always from the collection of Spanish authors published by Baudry in Paris, and they were in saffron-colored paper cover, printed full of a perfectly intoxicating catalogue of other Spanish books which I meant to read, every one, some time. The paper and the ink had a certain odor which was sweeter to me than the perfumes of Araby. The look of the type took me more than the glance of a girl, and I had a fever of longing to know the heart of the book, which was like a lover's passion. Some times I did not reach its heart, but commonly I did. Moratin's 'Origins of the Spanish Theatre,' and a large volume of Spanish dramatic authors, were the first Spanish books I sent for, but I could not say why I sent for them, unless it was because I saw that there were some plays of Cervantes among the rest. I read these and I read several comedies of Lope de Vega, and numbers of archaic dramas in Moratin's history, and I really got a fairish perspective of the Spanish drama, which has now almost wholly faded from my mind. It is more intelligible to me why I should have read Conde's 'Dominion of the Arabs in Spain;' for that was in the line of my reading in Irving, which would account for my pleasure in the 'History of the Civil Wars of Granada;' it was some time before I realized that the chronicles in this were a bundle of romances and not veritable records; and my whole study in these things was wholly undirected and unenlightened. But I meant to be thorough in it, and I could not rest satisfied with the Spanish-English grammars I had; I was not willing to stop short of the official grammar of the Spanish Academy. I sent to New York for it, and my booksellers there reported that they would have to send to Spain for it. I lived till it came to hand through them from Madrid; and I do not understand why I did not perish then from the pride and joy I had in it.

But, after all, I am not a Spanish scholar, and can neither speak nor write the language. I never got more than a good reading use of it, perhaps because I never really tried for more. But I am very glad of that, because it has been a great pleasure to me, and even some profit, and it has lighted up many meanings in literature, which must always have remained dark to me. Not to speak now of the modern Spanish writers whom it has enabled me to know in their own houses as it were, I had even in that remote day a rapturous delight in a certain Spanish book, which was well worth all the pains I had undergone to get at it. This was the famous picaresque novel, 'Lazarillo de Tormes,' by Hurtado de Mendoza, whose name then so familiarized itself to my fondness that now as I write it I feel as if it were that of an old personal friend whom I had known

in the flesh. I believe it would not have been always comfortable to know Mendoza outside of his books; he was rather a terrible person; he was one of the Spanish invaders of Italy, and is known in Italian history as the Tyrant of Sierra. But at my distance of time and place I could safely revel in his friendship, and as an author I certainly found him a most charming companion. The adventures of his rogue of a hero, who began life as the servant and accomplice of a blind beggar, and then adventured on through a most diverting career of knavery, brought back the atmosphere of Don Quixote, and all the landscape of that dear wonder-world of Spain, where I had lived so much, and I followed him with all the old delight.

I do not know that I should counsel others to do so, or that the general reader would find his account in it, but I am sure that the intending author of American fiction would do well to study the Spanish picaresque novels; for in their simplicity of design he will find one of the best forms for an American story. The intrigue of close texture will never suit our conditions, which are so loose and open and variable; each man's life among us is a romance of the Spanish model, if it is the life of a man who has risen, as we nearly all have, with many ups and downs. The story of 'Lazarillo' is gross in its facts, and is mostly "unmeet for ladies," like most of the fiction in all languages before our times; but there is an honest simplicity in the narration, a pervading humor, and a rich feeling for character that gives it value.

I think that a good deal of its foulness was lost upon me, but I certainly understood that it would not do to present it to an American public just as it was, in the translation which I presently planned to make. I went about telling the story to people, and trying to make them find it as amusing as I did, but whether I ever succeeded I cannot say, though the notion of a version with modifications constantly grew with me, till one day I went to the city of Cleveland with my father. There was a branch house of an Eastern firm of publishers in that place, and I must have had the hope that I might have the courage to propose a translation of Lazarillo to them. My father urged me to try my fortune, but my heart failed me. I was half blind with one of the headaches that tormented me in those days, and I turned my sick eyes from the sign, "J. P. Jewett & Co., Publishers," which held me fascinated, and went home without at least having my much-dreamed-of version of Lazarillo refused.

XXII. CURTIS, LONGFELLOW, SCHLEGEL

I am quite at a loss to know why my reading had this direction or that in those days. It had necessarily passed beyond my father's suggestion, and I think it must have been largely by accident or experiment that I read one book rather than another. He made some sort of newspaper arrangement with a book-store in Cleveland, which was the means of enriching our home library with a goodly number of books, shop-worn, but none the worse for that, and new in the only way that books need be new to the lover of them. Among these I found a treasure in Curtis's two books, the 'Nile

Notes of a Howadji,' and the 'Howadji in Syria.' I already knew him by his 'Potiphar Papers,' and the ever-delightful reveries which have since gone under the name of 'Prue and I;' but those books of Eastern travel opened a new world of thinking and feeling. They had at once a great influence upon me. The smooth richness of their diction; the amiable sweetness of their mood, their gracious caprice, the delicacy of their satire (which was so kind that it should have some other name), their abundance of light and color, and the deep heart of humanity underlying their airiest fantasticality, all united in an effect which was different from any I had yet known.

As usual, I steeped myself in them, and the first runnings of my fancy when I began to pour it out afterwards were of their flavor. I tried to write like this new master; but whether I had tried or not, I should probably have done so from the love I bore him. He was a favorite not only of mine, but of all the young people in the village who were reading current literature, so that on this ground at least I had abundant sympathy. The present generation can have little notion of the deep impression made upon the intelligence and conscience of the whole nation by the 'Potiphar Papers,' or how its fancy was rapt with the 'Prue and I' sketches, These are among the most veritable literary successes we have had, and probably we who were so glad when the author of these beautiful things turned aside from the flowery paths where he led us, to battle for freedom in the field of politics, would have felt the sacrifice too great if we could have dreamed it would be life-long. But, as it was, we could only honor him the more, and give him a place in our hearts which he shared with Longfellow.

This divine poet I have never ceased to read. His Hiawatha was a new book during one of those terrible Lake Shore winters, but all the other poems were old friends with me by that time. With a sister who is no longer living I had a peculiar affection for his pretty and touching and lightly humorous tale of 'Kavanagh,' which was of a village life enough like our own, in some things, to make us know the truth of its delicate realism. We used to read it and talk it fondly over together, and I believe some stories of like make and manner grew out of our pleasure in it. They were never finished, but it was enough to begin them, and there were few writers, if any, among those I delighted in who escaped the tribute of an imitation. One has to begin that way, or at least one had in my day; perhaps it is now possible for a young writer to begin by being himself; but for my part, that was not half so important as to be like some one else. Literature, not life, was my aim, and to reproduce it was my joy and my pride.

I was widening my knowledge of it helplessly and involuntarily, and I was always chancing upon some book that served this end among the great number of books that I read merely for my pleasure without any real result of the sort. Schlegel's 'Lectures on Dramatic Literature' came into my hands not long after I had finished my studies in the history of the Spanish theatre, and it made the whole subject at once luminous. I cannot give a due notion of the comfort this book afforded me by the light it cast upon paths where I had dimly made my way before, but which I now followed in the full day.

Of course, I pinned my faith to everything that Schlegel said. I obediently despised the classic unities and the French and Italian theatre which had perpetuated them, and I revered the romantic drama which had its glorious course among the Spanish and English poets, and which was crowned with the fame of the Cervantes and the Shakespeare whom I seemed to own, they owned me so completely. It vexes me now to find that I cannot remember how the book came into my hands, or who could have suggested it to me. It is possible that it may have been that artist who came and stayed a month with us while she painted my mother's portrait. She was fresh from her studies in New York, where she had met authors and artists at the house of the Carey sisters, and had even once seen my adored Curtis somewhere, though she had not spoken with him. Her talk about these things simply emparadised me; it lifted me into a heaven of hope that I, too, might some day meet such elect spirits and converse with them face to face. My mood was sufficiently foolish, but it was not such a frame of mind as I can be ashamed of; and I could wish a boy no happier fortune than to possess it for a time, at least.

XXIII. TENNYSON

I cannot quite see now how I found time for even trying to do the things I had in hand more or less. It is perfectly clear to me that I did none of them well, though I meant at the time to do none of them other than excellently. I was attempting the study of no less than four languages, and I presently added a fifth to these. I was reading right and left in every direction, but chiefly in that of poetry, criticism, and fiction. From time to time I boldly attacked a history, and carried it by a 'coup de main,' or sat down before it for a prolonged siege. There was occasionally an author who worsted me, whom I tried to read and quietly gave up after a vain struggle, but I must say that these authors were few. I had got a very fair notion of the range of all literature, and the relations of the different literatures to one another, and I knew pretty well what manner of book it was that I took up before I committed myself to the task of reading it. Always I read for pleasure, for the delight of knowing something more; and this pleasure is a very different thing from amusement, though I read a great deal for mere amusement, as I do still, and to take my mind away from unhappy or harassing thoughts. There are very few things that I think it a waste of time to have read; I should probably have wasted the time if I had not read them, and at the period I speak of I do not think I wasted much time.

My day began about seven o'clock, in the printing-office, where it took me till noon to do my task of so many thousand ems, say four or five. Then we had dinner, after the simple fashion of people who work with their hands for their dinners. In the afternoon I went back and corrected the proof of the type I had set, and distributed my case for the next day. At two or three o'clock I was free, and then I went home and began my studies; or tried to write something; or read a book. We had supper at six, and after that I rejoiced in literature, till I

went to bed at ten or eleven. I cannot think of any time when I did not go gladly to my books or manuscripts, when it was not a noble joy as well as a high privilege.

But it all ended as such a strain must, in the sort of break which was not yet known as nervous prostration. When I could not sleep after my studies, and the sick headaches came oftener, and then days and weeks of hypochondriacal misery, it was apparent I was not well; but that was not the day of anxiety for such things, and if it was thought best that I should leave work and study for a while, it was not with the notion that the case was at all serious, or needed an uninterrupted cure. I passed days in the woods and fields, gunning or picking berries; I spent myself in heavy work; I made little journeys; and all this was very wholesome and very well; but I did not give up my reading or my attempts to write. No doubt I was secretly proud to have been invalided in so great a cause, and to be sicklied over with the pale cast of thought, rather than by some ignoble ague or the devastating consumption of that region. If I lay awake, noting the wild pulsations of my heart, and listening to the death-watch in the wall, I was certainly very much scared, but I was not without the consolation that I was at least a sufferer for literature. At the same time that I was so horribly afraid of dying, I could have composed an epitaph which would have moved others to tears for my untimely fate. But there was really not impairment of my constitution, and after a while I began to be better, and little by little the health which has never since failed me under any reasonable stress of work established itself.

I was in the midst of this unequal struggle when I first became acquainted with the poet who at once possessed himself of what was best worth having in me. Probably I knew of Tennyson by extracts, and from the English reviews, but I believe it was from reading one of Curtis's "Easy Chair" papers that I was prompted to get the new poem of "Maud," which I understood from the "Easy Chair" was then moving polite youth in the East. It did not seem to me that I could very well live without that poem, and when I went to Cleveland with the hope that I might have courage to propose a translation of Lazarillo to a publisher it was with the fixed purpose of getting "Maud" if it was to be found in any book-store there.

I do not know why I was so long in reaching Tennyson, and I can only account for it by the fact that I was always reading rather the earlier than the later English poetry. To be sure I had passed through what I may call a paroxysm of Alexander Smith, a poet deeply unknown to the present generation, but then acclaimed immortal by all the critics, and put with Shakespeare, who must be a good deal astonished from time to time in his Elysian quiet by the companionship thrust upon him. I read this now dead-and-gone immortal with an ecstasy unspeakable; I raved of him by day, and dreamed of him by night; I got great lengths of his "Life-Drama" by heart; and I can still repeat several gorgeous passages from it; I would almost have been willing to take the life of the sole critic who had the sense to laugh at him, and who made his wicked fun in Graham's Magazine, an extinct periodical of the old extinct Philadelphian species. I cannot tell how I came out of this craze, but neither could

any of the critics who led me into it, I dare say. The reading world is very susceptible of such-lunacies, and all that can be said is that at a given time it was time for criticism to go mad over a poet who was neither better nor worse than many another third-rate poet apotheosized before and since. What was good in Smith was the reflected fire of the poets who had a vital heat in them; and it was by mere chance that I bathed myself in his second-hand effulgence. I already knew pretty well the origin of the Tennysonian line in English poetry; Wordsworth, and Keats, and Shelley; and I did not come to Tennyson's worship a sudden convert, but my devotion to him was none the less complete and exclusive. Like every other great poet he somehow expressed the feelings of his day, and I suppose that at the time he wrote "Maud" he said more fully what the whole English-speaking race were then dimly longing to utter than any English poet who has lived.

One need not question the greatness of Browning in owning the fact that the two poets of his day who preeminently voiced their generation were Tennyson and Longfellow; though Browning, like Emerson, is possibly now more modern than either. However, I had then nothing to do with Tennyson's comparative claim on my adoration; there was for the time no parallel for him in the whole range of literary divinities that I had bowed the knee to. For that while, the temple was not only emptied of all the other idols, but I had a richly flattering illusion of being his only worshipper. When I came to the sense of this error, it was with the belief that at least no one else had ever appreciated him so fully, stood so close to him in that holy of holies where he wrought his miracles.

I say tawdily and ineffectively and falsely what was a very precious and sacred experience with me. This great poet opened to me a whole world of thinking and feeling, where I had my being with him in that mystic intimacy, which cannot be put into words. I at once identified myself not only with the hero of the poem, but in some so with the poet himself, when I read "Maud"; but that was only the first step towards the lasting state in which his poetry has upon the whole been more to me than that of any other poet. I have never read any other so closely and continuously, or read myself so much into and out of his verse. There have been times and moods when I have had my questions, and made my cavils, and when it seemed to me that the poet was less than I had thought him; and certainly I do not revere equally and unreservedly all that he has written; that would be impossible. But when I think over all the other poets I have read, he is supreme above them in his response to some need in me that he has satisfied so perfectly.

Of course, "Maud" seemed to me the finest poem I had read, up to that time, but I am not sure that this conclusion was wholly my own; I think it was partially formed for me by the admiration of the poem which I felt to be everywhere in the critical atmosphere, and which had already penetrated to me. I did not like all parts of it equally well, and some parts of it seemed thin and poor (though I would not suffer myself to say so then), and they still seem so. But there were whole passages and spaces of it whose divine and perfect beauty lifted me above life. I did not fully understand the poem then; I do not fully understand it now, but that did not and does not matter; for there something in poetry that

reaches the soul by other means than the intelligence. Both in this poem and others of Tennyson, and in every poet that I have loved, there are melodies and harmonies enfolding significance that appeared long after I had first read them, and had even learned them by heart; that lay weedy in my outer ear and were enough in their mere beauty of phrasing, till the time came for them to reveal their whole meaning. In fact they could do this only to later and greater knowledge of myself and others, as every one must recognize who recurs in after-life to a book that he read when young; then he finds it twice as full of meaning as it was at first.

I could not rest satisfied with "Maud"; I sent the same summer to Cleveland for the little volume which then held all the poet's work, and abandoned myself so wholly to it, that for a year I read no other verse that I can remember. The volume was the first of that pretty blue-and-gold series which Ticknor & Fields began to publish in 1856, and which their imprint, so rarely affixed to an unworthy book, at once carried far and wide. Their modest old brown cloth binding had long been a quiet warrant of quality in the literature it covered, and now this splendid blossom of the bookmaking art, as it seemed, was fitly employed to convey the sweetness and richness of the loveliest poetry that I thought the world had yet known. After an old fashion of mine, I read it continuously, with frequent recurrences from each new poem to some that had already pleased me, and with a most capricious range among the pieces. "In Memoriam" was in that book, and the "Princess"; I read the "Princess" through and through, and over and over, but I did not then read "In Memoriam" through, and I have never read it in course; I am not sure that I have even yet read every part of it. I did not come to the "Princess," either, until I had saturated my fancy and my memory with some of the shorter poems, with the "Dream of Fair Women," with the "Lotus-Eaters," with the "Miller's Daughter," with the "Morte d'Arthur," with "Edwin Morris, or The Lake," with "Love and Duty," and a score of other minor and briefer poems. I read the book night and day, in-doors and out, to myself and to whomever I could make listen. I have no words to tell the rapture it was to me; but I hope that in some more articulate being, if it should ever be my unmerited fortune to meet that 'sommo poeta' face to face, it shall somehow be uttered from me to him, and he will understand how completely he became the life of the boy I was then. I think it might please, or at least amuse, that lofty ghost, and that he would not resent it, as he would probably have done on earth. I can well understand why the homage of his worshippers should have afflicted him here, and I could never have been one to burn incense in his earthly presence; but perhaps it might be done hereafter without offence. I eagerly caught up and treasured every personal word I could find about him, and I dwelt in that sort of charmed intimacy with him through his verse, in which I could not presume nor he repel, and which I had enjoyed in turn with Cervantes and Shakespeare, without a snub from them.

I have never ceased to adore Tennyson, though the rapture of the new convert could not last. That must pass like the flush of any other passion. I think I have now a better sense of his comparative greatness, but a better sense of his positive greatness I could not have than I had at the beginning; and I believe this is the essential knowledge of a poet. It is very well to say one is greater than Keats, or not so great

as Wordsworth; that one is or is not of the highest order of poets like Shakespeare and Dante and Goethe; but that does not mean anything of value, and I never find my account in it. I know it is not possible for any less than the greatest writer to abide lastingly in one's life. Some dazzling comer may enter and possess it for a day, but he soon wears his welcome out, and presently finds the door, to be answered with a not-at-home if he knocks again. But it was only this morning that I read one of the new last poems of Tennyson with a return of the emotion which he first woke in me well-nigh forty years ago. There has been no year of those many when I have not read him and loved him with something of the early fire if not all the early conflagration; and each successive poem of his has been for me a fresh joy.

He went with me into the world from my village when I left it to make my first venture away from home. My father had got one of those legislative clerkships which used to fall sometimes to deserving country editors when their party was in power, and we together imagined and carried out a scheme for corresponding with some city newspapers. We were to furnish a daily, letter giving an account of the legislative proceedings which I was mainly to write up from material he helped me to get together. The letters at once found favor with the editors who agreed to take them, and my father then withdrew from the work altogether, after telling them who was doing it. We were afraid they might not care for the reports of a boy of nineteen, but they did not seem to take my age into account, and I did not boast of my youth among the lawmakers. I looked three or four years older than I was; but I experienced a terrible moment once when a fatherly Senator asked me my age. I got away somehow without saying, but it was a great relief to me when my twentieth birthday came that winter, and I could honestly proclaim that I was in my twenty-first year.

I had now the free range of the State Library, and I drew many sorts of books from it. Largely, however, they were fiction, and I read all the novels of Bulwer, for whom I had already a great liking from 'The Caxtons' and 'My Novel.' I was dazzled by them, and I thought him a great writer, if not so great a one as he thought himself. Little or nothing of those romances, with their swelling prefaces about the poet and his function, their glittering criminals, and showy rakes and rogues of all kinds, and their patrician perfume and social splendor, remained with me; they may have been better or worse; I will not attempt to say. If I may call my fascination with them a passion at all, I must say that it was but a fitful fever. I also read many volumes of Zschokke's admirable tales, which I found in a translation in the Library, and I think I began at the same time to find out De Quincey. These authors I recall out of the many that passed through my mind almost as tracelessly as they passed through my hands. I got at some versions of Icelandic poems, in the metre of "Hiawatha"; I had for a while a notion of studying Icelandic, and I did take out an Icelandic grammar and lexicon, and decided that I would learn the language later. By this time I must have begun German, which I afterwards carried so far, with one author at least, as to find in him a delight only second to that I had in Tennyson; but as yet Tennyson was all in all to me in poetry. I suspect that I carried his poems about with me a great part of the time; I am afraid that I always had that blue-and-gold Tennyson in my pocket; and I was

ready to draw it upon anybody, at the slightest provocation. This is the worst of the ardent lover of literature: he wishes to make every one else share his rapture, will he, nill he. Many good fellows suffered from my admiration of this author or that, and many more pretty, patient maids. I wanted to read my favorite passages, my favorite poems to them; I am afraid I often did read, when they would rather have been talking; in the case of the poems I did worse, I repeated them. This seems rather incredible now, but it is true enough, and absurd as it is, it at least attests my sincerity. It was long before I cured myself of so pestilent a habit; and I am not yet so perfectly well of it that I could be safely trusted with a fascinating book and a submissive listener. I dare say I could not have been made to understand at this time that Tennyson was not so nearly the first interest of life with other people as he was with me; I must often have suspected it, but I was helpless against the wish to make them feel him as important to their prosperity and well-being as he was to mine. My head was full of him; his words were always behind my lips; and when I was not repeating his phrase to myself or to some one else, I was trying to frame something of my own as like him as I could. It was a time of melancholy from ill-health, and of anxiety for the future in which I must make my own place in the world. Work, and hard work, I had always been used to and never afraid of; but work is by no means the whole story. You may get on without much of it, or you may do a great deal, and not get on. I was willing to do as much of it as I could get to do, but I distrusted my health, somewhat, and I had many forebodings, which my adored poet helped me to transfigure to the substance of literature, or enabled me for the time to forget. I was already imitating him in the verse I wrote; he now seemed the only worthy model for one who meant to be as great a poet as I did. None of the authors whom I read at all displaced him in my devotion, and I could not have believed that any other poet would ever be so much to me. In fact, as I have expressed, none ever has been.

XXIV. HEINE

That winter passed very quickly and happily for me, and at the end of the legislative session I had acquitted myself so much to the satisfaction of one of the newspapers which I wrote for that I was offered a place on it. I was asked to be city editor, as it was called in that day, and I was to have charge of the local reporting. It was a great temptation, and for a while I thought it the greatest piece of good fortune. I went down to Cincinnati to acquaint myself with the details of the work, and to fit myself for it by beginning as reporter myself. One night's round of the police stations with the other reporters satisfied me that I was not meant for that work, and I attempted it no farther. I have often been sorry since, for it would have made known to me many phases of life that I have always remained ignorant of, but I did not know then that life was supremely interesting and important. I fancied that literature, that poetry was so; and it was humiliation and anguish indescribable to think of myself torn from my high ideals by labors like those of the reporter. I would not consent even to do the office work of the department, and the

proprietor and editor who was more especially my friend tried to make some other place for me. All the departments were full but the one I would have nothing to do with, and after a few weeks of sufferance and suffering I turned my back on a thousand dollars a year, and for the second time returned to the printing-office.

I was glad to get home, for I had been all the time tormented by my old malady of homesickness. But otherwise the situation was not cheerful for me, and I now began trying to write something for publication that I could sell. I sent off poems and they came back; I offered little translations from the Spanish that nobody wanted. At the same time I took up the study of German, which I must have already played with, at such odd times as I could find. My father knew something of it, and that friend of mine among the printers was already reading it and trying to speak it. I had their help with the first steps so far as the recitations from Ollendorff were concerned, but I was impatient to read German, or rather to read one German poet who had seized my fancy from the first line of his I had seen.

This poet was Heinrich Heine, who dominated me longer than any one author that I have known. Where or when I first acquainted myself with his most fascinating genius, I cannot be sure, but I think it was in some article of the Westminster Review, where several poems of his were given in English and German; and their singular beauty and grace at once possessed my soul. I was in a fever to know more of him, and it was my great good luck to fall in with a German in the village who had his books. He was a bookbinder, one of those educated artisans whom the revolutions of 1848 sent to us in great numbers. He was a Hanoverian, and his accent was then, I believe, the standard, though the Berlinese is now the accepted pronunciation. But I cared very little for accent; my wish was to get at Heine with as little delay as possible; and I began to cultivate the friendship of that bookbinder in every way. I dare say he was glad of mine, for he was otherwise quite alone in the village, or had no companionship outside of his own family. I clothed him in all the romantic interest I began to feel for his race and language, which new took the place of the Spaniards and Spanish in my affections. He was a very quick and gay intelligence, with more sympathy for my love of our author's humor than for my love of his sentiment, and I can remember very well the twinkle of his little sharp black eyes, with their Tartar slant, and the twitching of his keenly pointed, sensitive nose, when we came to some passage of biting satire, or some phrase in which the bitter Jew had unpacked all the insult of his soul.

We began to read Heine together when my vocabulary had to be dug almost word by word out of the dictionary, for the bookbinder's English was rather scanty at the best, and was not literary. As for the grammar, I was getting that up as fast as I could from Ollendorff, and from other sources, but I was enjoying Heine before I well knew a declension or a conjugation. As soon as my task was done at the office, I went home to the books, and worked away at them until supper. Then my bookbinder and I met in my father's editorial room, and with a couple of candles on the table between us, and our Heine and the dictionary before us, we read till we were both tired out.

The candles were tallow, and they lopped at different angles in the flat candlesticks heavily loaded with lead, which composers once used. It seems to have been summer when our readings began, and they are associated in my memory with the smell of the neighboring gardens, which came in at the open doors and windows, and with the fluttering of moths, and the bumbling of the dorbugs, that stole in along with the odors. I can see the perspiration on the shining forehead of the bookbinder as he looks up from some brilliant passage, to exchange a smile of triumph with me at having made out the meaning with the meagre facilities we had for the purpose; he had beautiful red pouting lips, and a stiff little branching mustache above them, that went to the making of his smile. Sometimes, in the truce we made with the text, he told a little story of his life at home, or some anecdote relevant to our reading, or quoted a passage from some other author. It seemed to me the make of a high intellectual banquet, and I should be glad if I could enjoy anything as much now.

We walked home as far as his house, or rather his apartment over one of the village stores; and as he mounted to it by an outside staircase, we exchanged a joyous "Gute Nacht," and I kept on homeward through the dark and silent village street, which was really not that street, but some other, where Heine had been, some street out of the Reisebilder, of his knowledge, or of his dream. When I reached home it was useless to go to bed. I shut myself into my little study, and went over what we had read, till my brain was so full of it that when I crept up to my room at last, it was to lie down to slumbers which were often a mere phantasmagory of those witching Pictures of Travel.

I was awake at my father's call in the morning, and before my mother had breakfast ready I had recited my lesson in Ollendorff to him. To tell the truth, I hated those grammatical studies, and nothing but the love of literature, and the hope of getting at it, could ever have made me go through them. Naturally, I never got any scholarly use of the languages I was worrying at, and though I could once write a passable literary German, it has all gone from me now, except for the purposes of reading. It cost me so much trouble, however, to dig the sense out of the grammar and lexicon, as I went on with the authors I was impatient to read, that I remember the words very well in all their forms and inflections, and I have still what I think I may call a fair German vocabulary.

The German of Heine, when once you are in the joke of his capricious genius, is very simple, and in his poetry it is simple from the first, so that he was, perhaps, the best author I could have fallen in with if I wanted to go fast rather than far. I found this out later, when I attempted other German authors without the glitter of his wit or the lambent glow of his fancy to light me on my hard way. I should find it hard to say just why his peculiar genius had such an absolute fascination for me from the very first, and perhaps I had better content myself with saying simply that my literary liberation began with almost the earliest word from him; for if he chained me to himself he freed me from all other bondage. I had been at infinite pains from time to time, now upon one model and now upon another, to literarify myself, if I may make a word

which does not quite say the thing for me. What I mean is that I had supposed, with the sense at times that I was all wrong, that the expression of literature must be different from the expression of life; that it must be an attitude, a pose, with something of state or at least of formality in it; that it must be this style, and not that; that it must be like that sort of acting which you know is acting when you see it and never mistake for reality. There are a great many children, apparently grown-up, and largely accepted as critical authorities, who are still of this youthful opinion of mine. But Heine at once showed me that this ideal of literature was false; that the life of literature was from the springs of the best common speech and that the nearer it could be made to conform, in voice, look and gait, to graceful, easy, picturesque and humorous or impassioned talk, the better it was.

He did not impart these truths without imparting certain tricks with them, which I was careful to imitate as soon as I began to write in his manner, that is to say instantly. His tricks he had mostly at second-hand, and mainly from Sterne, whom I did not know well enough then to know their origin. But in all essentials he was himself, and my final lesson from him, or the final effect of all my lessons from him, was to find myself, and to be for good or evil whatsoever I really was.

I kept on writing as much like Heine as I could for several years, though, and for a much longer time than I should have done if I had ever become equally impassioned of any other author.

Some traces of his method lingered so long in my work that nearly ten years afterwards Mr. Lowell wrote me about something of mine that he had been reading: "You must sweat the Heine out of your bones as men do mercury," and his kindness for me would not be content with less than the entire expulsion of the poison that had in its good time saved my life. I dare say it was all well enough not to have it in my bones after it had done its office, but it did do its office.

It was in some prose sketch of mine that his keen analysis had found the Heine, but the foreign property had been so prevalent in my earlier work in verse that he kept the first contribution he accepted from me for the Atlantic Monthly a long time, or long enough to make sure that it was not a translation of Heine. Then he printed it, and I am bound to say that the poem now justifies his doubt to me, in so much that I do not see why Heine should not have had the name of writing it if he had wanted. His potent spirit became immediately so wholly my "control," as the mediums say, that my poems might as well have been communications from him so far as any authority of my own was concerned; and they were quite like other inspirations from the other world in being so inferior to the work of the spirit before it had the misfortune to be disembodied and obliged to use a medium. But I do not think that either Heine or I had much lasting harm from it, and I am sure that the good, in my case at least, was one that can only end with me. He undid my hands, which had taken so much pains to tie behind my back, and he forever persuaded me that though it may be ingenious and surprising to dance in chains, it is neither pretty nor useful.

XXV. DE QUINCEY, GOETHE, LONGFELLOW

Another author who was a prime favorite with me about this time was De Quincey, whose books I took out of the State Library, one after another, until I had read them all. We who were young people of that day thought his style something wonderful, and so indeed it was, especially in those passages, abundant everywhere in his work, relating to his own life with an intimacy which was always more rather than less. His rhetoric there, and in certain of his historical studies, had a sort of luminous richness, without losing its colloquial ease. I keenly enjoyed this subtle spirit, and the play of that brilliant intelligence which lighted up so many ways of literature with its lambent glow or its tricky glimmer, and I had a deep sympathy with certain morbid moods and experiences so like my own, as I was pleased to fancy. I have not looked at his *Twelve Caesars* for twice as many years, but I should be greatly surprised to find it other than one of the greatest historical monographs ever written. His literary criticisms seemed to me not only exquisitely humorous, but perfectly sane and just; and it delighted me to have him personally present, with the warmth of his own temperament in regions of cold abstraction; I am not sure that I should like that so much now. De Quincey was hardly less autobiographical when he wrote of Kant, or the *Flight of the Crim-Tartars*, than when he wrote of his own boyhood or the miseries of the opium habit. He had the hospitable gift of making you at home with him, and appealing to your sense of comradeship with something of the flattering confidentiality of Thackeray, but with a wholly different effect.

In fact, although De Quincey was from time to time perfunctorily Tory, and always a good and faithful British subject, he was so eliminated from his time and place by his single love for books, that one could be in his company through the whole vast range of his writings, and come away without a touch of snobbishness; and that is saying a great deal for an English writer. He was a great little creature, and through his intense personality he achieved a sort of impersonality, so that you loved the man, who was forever talking of himself, for his modesty and reticence. He left you feeling intimate with him but by no means familiar; with all his frailties, and with all those freedoms he permitted himself with the lives of his contemporaries, he is to me a figure of delicate dignity, and winning kindness. I think it a misfortune for the present generation that his books have fallen into a kind of neglect, and I believe that they will emerge from it again to the advantage of literature.

In spite of Heine and Tennyson, De Quincey had a large place in my affections, though this was perhaps because he was not a poet; for more than those two great poets there was then not much room. I read him the first winter I was at Columbus, and when I went down from the village the next winter, to take up my legislative correspondence again, I read him more than ever. But that was destined to be for me a very disheartening time. I had just passed through a rheumatic fever, which left my health more broken than before, and one morning shortly after I was settled in

the capital, I woke to find the room going round me like a wheel. It was the beginning of a vertigo which lasted for six months, and which I began to fight with various devices and must yield to at last. I tried medicine and exercise, but it was useless, and my father came to take my letters off my hands while I gave myself some ineffectual respites. I made a little journey to my old home in southern Ohio, but there and everywhere, the sure and firm-set earth waved and billowed under my feet, and I came back to Columbus and tried to forget in my work the fact that I was no better. I did not give up trying to read, as usual, and part of my endeavor that winter was with Schiller, and Uhland, and even Goethe, whose 'Wahlverwandschaften,' hardly yielded up its mystery to me. To tell the truth, I do not think that I found my account in that novel. It must needs be a disappointment after Wilhelm Meister, which I had read in English; but I dare say my disappointment was largely my own fault; I had certainly no right to expect such constant proofs and instances of wisdom in Goethe as the unwisdom of his critics had led me to hope for. I remember little or nothing of the story, which I tried to find very memorable, as I held my, sick way through it. Longfellow's "Miles Standish" came out that winter, and I suspect that I got vastly more real pleasure from that one poem of his than I found in all my German authors put together, the adored Heine always excepted; though certainly I felt the romantic beauty of 'Uhland,' and was aware of something of Schiller's generous grandeur.

Of the American writers Longfellow has been most a passion with me, as the English, and German, and Spanish, and Russian writers have been. I am sure that this was largely by mere chance. It was because I happened, in such a frame and at such a time, to come upon his books that I loved them above those of other men as great. I am perfectly sensible that Lowell and Emerson outvalue many of the poets and prophets I have given my heart to; I have read them with delight and with a deep sense of their greatness, and yet they have not been my life like those other, those lesser, men. But none of the passions are reasoned, and I do not try to account for my literary preferences or to justify them.

I dragged along through several months of that winter, and did my best to carry out that notable scheme of not minding my vertigo. I tried doing half-work, and helping my father with the correspondence, but when it appeared that nothing would avail, he remained in charge of it, till the close of the session, and I went home to try what a complete and prolonged rest would do for me. I was not fit for work in the printing-office, but that was a simpler matter than the literary work that was always tempting me. I could get away from it only by taking my gun and tramping day after day through the deep, primeval woods. The fatigue was wholesome, and I was so bad a shot that no other creature suffered loss from my gain except one hapless wild pigeon. The thawing snow left the fallen beechnuts of the autumn before uncovered among the dead leaves, and the forest was full of the beautiful birds. In most parts of the middle West they are no longer seen, except in twos or threes, but once they were like the sands of the sea for multitude. It was not now the season when they hid half the heavens with their flight day after day; but they were in myriads all through the woods, where their iridescent breasts shone like a sudden untimely growth of flowers when you came upon

them from the front. When they rose in fright, it was like the upward leap of fire, and with the roar of flame. I use images which, after all, are false to the thing I wish to express; but they must serve. I tried honestly enough to kill the pigeons, but I had no luck, or too much, till I happened to bring down one of a pair that I found apart from the rest in a softy tree-top. The poor creature I had widowed followed me to the verge of the woods, as I started home with my prey, and I do not care to know more personally the feelings of a murderer than I did then. I tried to shoot the bird, but my aim was so bad that I could not do her this mercy, and at last she flew away, and I saw her no more.

The spring was now opening, and I was able to keep more and more with Nature, who was kinder to me than I was to her other children, or wished to be, and I got the better of my malady, which gradually left me for no more reason apparently than it came upon me. But I was still far from well, and I was in despair of my future. I began to read again-- I suppose I had really never altogether stopped. I borrowed from my friend the bookbinder a German novel, which had for me a message of lasting cheer. It was the 'Afraja' of Theodore Mugge, a story of life in Norway during the last century, and I remember it as a very lovely story indeed, with honest studies of character among the Norwegians, and a tender pathos in the fate of the little Lap heroine Gula, who was perhaps sufficiently romanced. The hero was a young Dane, who was going up among the fiords to seek his fortune in the northern fisheries; and by a process inevitable in youth I became identified with him, so that I adventured, and enjoyed, and suffered in his person throughout. There was a supreme moment when he was sailing through the fiords, and finding himself apparently locked in by their mountain walls without sign or hope of escape, but somehow always escaping by some unimagined channel, and keeping on. The lesson for him was one of trust and courage; and I, who seemed to be then shut in upon a mountain-walled fiord without inlet or outlet, took the lesson home and promised myself not to lose heart again. It seems a little odd that this passage of a book, by no means of the greatest, should have had such an effect with me at a time when I was no longer so young as to be unduly impressed by what I read; but it is true that I have never since found myself in circumstances where there seemed to be no getting forward or going back, without a vision of that fiord scenery, and then a rise of faith, that if I kept on I should, somehow, come out of my prisoning environment.

XXVI. GEORGE ELIOT, HAWTHORNE, GOETHE, HEINE

I got back health enough to be of use in the printing office that autumn, and I was quietly at work there with no visible break in my surroundings when suddenly the whole world opened to me through what had seemed an impenetrable wall. The Republican newspaper at the capital had been bought by a new management, and the editorial force reorganized upon a footing of what we then thought metropolitan enterprise; and to my great joy and astonishment I was asked to come and take a place in it. The place offered me was not one of lordly distinction; in fact, it was

partly of the character of that I had already rejected in Cincinnati, but I hoped that in the smaller city its duties would not be so odious; and by the time I came to fill it, a change had taken place in the arrangements so that I was given charge of the news department. This included the literary notices and the book reviews, and I am afraid that I at once gave my prime attention to these.

It was an evening paper, and I had nearly as much time for reading and study as I had at home. But now society began to claim a share of this leisure, which I by no means begrudged it. Society was very charming in Columbus then, with a pretty constant round of dances and suppers, and an easy cordiality, which I dare say young people still find in it everywhere. I met a great many cultivated people, chiefly young ladies, and there were several houses where we young fellows went and came almost as freely as if they were our own. There we had music and cards, and talk about books, and life appeared to me richly worth living; if any one had said this was not the best planet in the universe I should have called him a pessimist, or at least thought him so, for we had not the word in those days. A world in which all those pretty and gracious women dwelt, among the figures of the waltz and the lancers, with chat between about the last instalment of 'The Newcomes,' was good enough world for me; I was only afraid it was too good. There were, of course, some girls who did not read, but few openly professed indifference to literature, and there was much lending of books back and forth, and much debate of them. That was the day when 'Adam Bede' was a new book, and in this I had my first knowledge of that great intellect for which I had no passion, indeed, but always the deepest respect, the highest honor; and which has from time to time profoundly influenced me by its ethics.

I state these things simply and somewhat baldly; I might easily refine upon them, and study that subtle effect for good and for evil which young people are always receiving from the fiction they read; but this is not the time or place for the inquiry, and I only wish to own that so far as I understand it, the chief part of my ethical experience has been from novels. The life and character I have found portrayed there have appealed always to the consciousness of right and wrong implanted in me; and from no one has this appeal been stronger than from George Eliot. Her influence continued through many years, and I can question it now only in the undue burden she seems to throw upon the individual, and her failure to account largely enough for motive from the social environment. There her work seems to me unphilosophical.

It shares whatever error there is in its perspective with that of Hawthorne, whose 'Marble Faun' was a new book at the same time that 'Adam Bede' was new, and whose books now came into my life and gave it their tinge. He was always dealing with the problem of evil, too, and I found a more potent charm in his more artistic handling of it than I found in George Eliot. Of course, I then preferred the region of pure romance where he liked to place his action; but I did not find his instances the less veritable because they shone out in

"The light that never was on sea or land."

I read the 'Marble Faun' first, and then the 'Scarlet Letter,' and then the 'House of Seven Gables,' and then the 'Blithedale Romance;' but I always liked best the last, which is more nearly a novel, and more realistic than the others. They all moved me with a sort of effect such as I had not felt before. They veers so far from time and place that, although most of them related to our country and epoch, I could not imagine anything approximate from them; and Hawthorne himself seemed a remote and impalpable agency, rather than a person whom one might actually meet, as not long afterward happened with me. I did not hold the sort of fancied converse with him that I held with ether authors, and I cannot pretend that I had the affection for him that attracted me to them. But he held me by his potent spell, and for a time he dominated me as completely as any author I have read. More truly than any other American author he has been a passion with me, and lately I heard with a kind of pang a young man saying that he did not believe I should find the 'Scarlet Letter' bear reading now. I did not assent to the possibility, but the notion gave me a shiver of dismay. I thought how much that book had been to me, how much all of Hawthorne's books had been, and to have parted with my faith in their perfection would have been something I would not willingly have risked doing.

Of course there is always something fatally weak in the scheme of the pure romance, which, after the color of the contemporary mood dies out of it, leaves it in danger of tumbling into the dust of allegory; and perhaps this inherent weakness was what that bold critic felt in the 'Scarlet Letter.' But none of Hawthorne's fables are without a profound and distant reach into the recesses of nature and of being. He came back from his researches with no solution of the question, with no message, indeed, but the awful warning, "Be true, be true," which is the burden of the Scarlet Letter; yet in all his books there is the hue of thoughts that we think only in the presence of the mysteries of life and death. It is not his fault that this is not intelligence, that it knots the brow in sorer doubt rather than shapes the lips to utterance of the things that can never be said. Some of his shorter stories I have found thin and cold to my later reading, and I have never cared much for the 'House of Seven Gables,' but the other day I was reading the 'Blithedale Romance' again, and I found it as potent, as significant, as sadly and strangely true as when it first enthralled my soul.

In those days when I tried to kindle my heart at the cold altar of Goethe, I did read a great deal of his prose and somewhat of his poetry, but it was to be ten years yet before I should go faithfully through with his Faust and come to know its power. For the present, I read 'Wilhelm Meister' and the 'Wahlverwandschaften,' and worshipped him much at second-hand through Heine. In the mean time I invested such Germans as I met with the halo of their national poetry, and there was one lady of whom I heard with awe that she had once known my Heine. When I came to meet her, over a glass of the mild egg-nog which she served at her house on Sunday nights, and she told me about Heine, and how he looked, and some few things he said, I suffered an indescribable disappointment; and if I could have been frank with myself I should have owned to a fear that it might have been something like that, if I had myself met the poet in the flesh, and tried to hold the intimate converse with him that I held

in the spirit. But I shut my heart to all such misgivings and went on reading him much more than I read any other German author. I went on writing him too, just as I went on reading and writing Tennyson. Heine was always a personal interest with me, and every word of his made me long to have had him say it to me, and tell me why he said it. In a poet of alien race and language and religion I found a greater sympathy than I have experienced with any other. Perhaps the Jews are still the chosen people, but now they bear the message of humanity, while once they bore the message of divinity. I knew the ugliness of Heine's nature: his revengefulness, and malice, and cruelty, and treachery, and uncleanness; and yet he was supremely charming among the poets I have read. The tenderness I still feel for him is not a reasoned love, I must own; but, as I am always asking, when was love ever reasoned?

I had a room-mate that winter in Columbus who was already a contributor to the Atlantic Monthly, and who read Browning as devotedly as I read Heine. I will not say that he wrote him as constantly, but if that had been so, I should not have cared. What I could not endure without pangs of secret jealousy was that he should like Heine, too, and should read him, though it was but an arm's-length in an English version. He had found the origins of those tricks and turns of Heine's in 'Tristram Shandy' and the 'Sentimental Journey;' and this galled me, as if he had shown that some mistress of my soul had studied her graces from another girl, and that it was not all her own hair that she wore. I hid my rancor as well as I could, and took what revenge lay in my power by insinuating that he might have a very different view if he read Heine in the original. I also made haste to try my own fate with the Atlantic, and I sent off to Mr. Lowell that poem which he kept so long in order to make sure that Heine had not written it, as well as authorized it.

XXVII. CHARLES READE

This was the winter when my friend Piatt and I made our first literary venture together in those 'Poems of Two Friends;' which hardly passed the circle of our amity; and it was altogether a time of high literary exaltation with me. I walked the streets of the friendly little city by day and by night with my head so full of rhymes and poetic phrases that it seemed as if their buzzing might have been heard several yards away; and I do not yet see quite how I contrived to keep their music out of my newspaper paragraphs. Out of the newspaper I could not keep it, and from time to time I broke into verse in its columns, to the great amusement of the leading editor, who knew me for a young man with a very sharp tooth for such self-betrayals in others. He wanted to print a burlesque review he wrote of the 'Poems of Two Friends' in our paper, but I would not suffer it. I must allow that it was very, funny, and that he was always a generous friend, whose wounds would have been as faithful as any that could have been dealt me then. He did not indeed care much for any poetry but that of Shakespeare and the 'Ingoldsby Legends;' and when one morning a State Senator came into the office with a volume of Tennyson, and began to read,

"The poet in a golden clime was born,
With golden stars above;
Dowered with the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn
The love of love,"

he hitched his chair about, and started in on his leader for the day.

He might have been more patient if he had known that this State Senator was to be President Garfield. But who could know anything of the tragical history that was so soon to follow that winter of 1859-60? Not I; at least I listened rapt by the poet and the reader, and it seemed to me as if the making and the reading of poetry were to go on forever, and that was to be all there was of it. To be sure I had my hard little journalistic misgivings that it was not quite the thing for a State Senator to come round reading Tennyson at ten o'clock in the morning, and I dare say I felt myself superior in my point of view, though I could not resist the charm of the verse. I myself did not bring Tennyson to the office at that time. I brought Thackeray, and I remember that one day when I had read half an hour or so in the 'Book of Snobs,' the leading editor said frankly, Well, now, he guessed we had had enough of that. He apologized afterwards as if he were to blame, and not I, but I dare say I was a nuisance with my different literary passions, and must have made many of my acquaintances very tired of my favorite authors. I had some consciousness of the fact, but I could not help it.

I ought not to omit from the list of these favorites an author who was then beginning to have his greatest vogue, and who somehow just missed of being a very great one. We were all reading his jaunty, nervy, knowing books, and some of us were questioning whether we ought not to set him above Thackeray and Dickens and George Eliot, 'tulli quanti', so great was the effect that Charles Reade had with our generation. He was a man who stood at the parting of the ways between realism and romanticism, and if he had been somewhat more of a man he might have been the master of a great school of English realism; but, as it was, he remained content to use the materials of realism and produce the effect of romanticism. He saw that life itself infinitely outvalued anything that could be feigned about it, but its richness seemed to corrupt him, and he had not the clear, ethical conscience which forced George Eliot to be realistic when probably her artistic prepossessions were romantic.

As yet, however, there was no reasoning of the matter, and Charles Reade was writing books of tremendous adventure and exaggerated character, which he prided himself on deriving from the facts of the world around him. He was intoxicated with the discovery he had made that the truth was beyond invention, but he did not know what to do with the truth in art after he had found it in life, and to this day the English mostly do not. We young people were easily taken with his glittering error, and we read him with much the same fury, that he wrote. 'Never Too Late to Mend,' 'Love Me Little, Love Me Long,' 'Christie Johnstone,' 'Peg Woffington,' and then, later, 'Hard Cash,' 'The Cloister and the Hearth,' 'Foul Play,' 'Put Yourself in His Place'--how much they all meant once, or seemed to mean!

The first of them, and the other poems and fictions I was reading, meant more to me than the rumors of war that were then filling the air, and that so soon became its awful actualities. To us who have our lives so largely in books the material world is always the fable, and the ideal the fact. I walked with my feet on the ground, but my head was in the clouds, as light as any of them. I neither praise nor blame this fact; but I feel bound to own it, for that time, and for every time in my life, since the witchery of literature began with me.

Those two happy winters in Columbus, when I was finding opportunity and recognition, were the heyday of life for me. There has been no time like them since, though there have been smiling and prosperous times a plenty; for then I was in the blossom of my youth, and what I had not I could hope for without unreason, for I had so much of that which I had most desired. Those times passed, and there came other times, long years of abeyance, and waiting, and defeat, which I thought would never end, but they passed, too.

I got my appointment of Consul to Venice, and I went home to wait for my passport and to spend the last days, so full of civic trouble, before I should set out for my post. If I hoped to serve my country there and sweep the Confederate cruisers from the Adriatic, I am afraid my prime intent was to add to her literature and to my own credit. I intended, while keeping a sleepless eye out for privateers, to write poems concerning American life which should eclipse anything yet done in that kind, and in the mean time I read voraciously and perpetually, to make the days go swiftly which I should have been so glad to have linger. In this month I devoured all the 'Waverley novels,' but I must have been devouring a great many others, for Charles Reade's 'Christie Johnstone' is associated with the last moment of the last days.

A few months ago I was at the old home, and I read that book again, after not looking at it for more than thirty years; and I read it with amazement at its prevailing artistic vulgarity, its prevailing aesthetic error shot here and there with gleams of light, and of the truth that Reade himself was always dimly groping for. The book is written throughout on the verge of realism, with divinations and conjectures across its border, and with lapses into the fool's paradise of romanticism, and an apparent content with its inanity and impossibility. But then it was brilliantly new and surprising; it seemed to be the last word that could be said for the truth in fiction; and it had a spell that held us like an anesthetic above the ache of parting, and the anxiety for the years that must pass, with all their redoubled chances, before our home circle could be made whole again. I read on, and the rest listened, till the wheels of the old stage made themselves heard in their approach through the absolute silence of the village street. Then we shut the book and all went down to the gate together, and parted under the pale sky of the October night. There was one of the home group whom I was not to see again: the young brother who died in the blossom of his years before I returned from my far and strange sojourn. He was too young then to share our reading of the novel, but when I ran up to his room to bid him good-by I found him awake, and, with aching hearts, we bade each

other good-by forever!

XXVIII. DANTE

I ran through an Italian grammar on my way across the Atlantic, and from my knowledge of Latin, Spanish, and French, I soon had a reading acquaintance with the language. I had really wanted to go to Germany, that I might carry forward my studies in German literature, and I first applied for the consulate at Munich. The powers at Washington thought it quite the same thing to offer me Rome; but I found that the income of the Roman consulate would not give me a living, and I was forced to decline it. Then the President's private secretaries, Mr. John Nicolay and Mr. John Hay, who did not know me except as a young Westerner who had written poems in the Atlantic Monthly, asked me how I would like Venice, and promised that they would have the salary put up to a thousand a year, under the new law to embarrass privateers. It was really put up to fifteen hundred, and with this income assured me I went out to the city whose influence changed the whole course of my literary life.

No privateers ever came, though I once had notice from Turin that the Florida had been sighted off Ancona; and I had nearly four years of nearly uninterrupted leisure at Venice, which I meant to employ in reading all Italian literature, and writing a history of the republic. The history, of course, I expected would be a long affair, and I did not quite suppose that I could despatch the literature in any short time; besides, I had several considerable poems on hand that occupied me a good deal, and worked at these as well as advanced myself in Italian, preparatory to the efforts before me.

I had already a slight general notion of Italian letters from Leigh Hunt, and from other agreeable English Italianates; and I knew that I wanted to read not only the four great poets, Dante, Petrarch, Ariosto, and Tasso, but that whole group of burlesque poets, Pulci, Berni, and the rest, who, from what I knew of them, I thought would be even more to my mind. As a matter of fact, and in the process of time, I did read somewhat of all these, but rather in the minor than the major way; and I soon went off from them to the study of the modern poets, novelists, and playwrights who interested me so much more. After my wonted fashion I read half a dozen of these authors together, so that it would be hard to say which I began with, but I had really a devotion to Dante, though not at that time, or ever for the whole of Dante. During my first year in Venice I met an ingenious priest, who had been a tutor in a patrician family, and who was willing to lead my faltering steps through the "Inferno." This part of the "Divine Comedy" I read with a beginner's carefulness, and with a rapture in its beauties, which I will whisper the reader do not appear in every line.

Again I say it is a great pity that criticism is not honest about the masterpieces of literature, and does not confess that they are not every moment masterly, that they are often dull and tough and dry, as is

certainly the case with Dante's. Some day, perhaps, we shall have this way of treating literature, and then the lover of it will not feel obliged to browbeat himself into the belief that if he is not always enjoying himself it is his own fault. At any rate I will permit myself the luxury of frankly saying that while I had a deep sense of the majesty and grandeur of Dante's design, many points of its execution bored me, and that I found the intermixture of small local fact and neighborhood history in the fabric of his lofty creation no part of its noblest effect. What is marvellous in it is its expression of Dante's personality, and I can never think that his personalities enhance its greatness as a work of art. I enjoyed them, however, and I enjoyed them the more, as the innumerable perspectives of Italian history began to open all about me. Then, indeed, I understood the origins if I did not understand the aims of Dante, which there is still much dispute about among those who profess to know them clearly. What I finally perceived was that his poem came through him from the heart of Italian life, such as it was in his time, and that whatever it teaches, his poem expresses that life, in all its splendor and squalor, its beauty and deformity, its love and its hate.

Criticism may torment this sense or that sense out of it, but at the end of the ends the "Divine Comedy" will stand for the patriotism of medieval Italy, as far as its ethics is concerned, and for a profound and lofty ideal of beauty, as far as its aesthetics is concerned. This is vague enough and slight enough, I must confess, but I must confess also that I had not even a conception of so much when I first read the "Inferno." I went at it very simply, and my enjoyment of it was that sort which finds its account in the fine passages, the brilliant episodes, the striking pictures. This was the effect with me of all the criticism which I had hitherto read, and I am not sure yet that the criticism which tries to be of a larger scope, and to see things "whole," is of any definite effect. As a matter of fact we see nothing whole, neither life nor art. We are so made, in soul and in sense, that we can deal only with parts, with points, with degrees; and the endeavor to compass any entirety must involve a discomfort and a danger very threatening to our intellectual integrity.

Or if this postulate is as untenable as all the others, still I am very glad that I did not then lose any fact of the majesty, and beauty, and pathos of the great certain measures for the sake of that fourth dimension of the poem which is not yet made palpable or visible. I took my sad heart's fill of the sad story of "Paolo and Francesca," which I already knew in Leigh Hunt's adorable dilution, and most of the lines read themselves into my memory, where they linger yet. I supped on the horrors of Ugolino's fate with the strong gust of youth, which finds every, exercise of sympathy a pleasure. My good priest sat beside me in these rich moments, knotting in his lap the calico handkerchief of the snuff-taker, and entering with tremulous eagerness into my joy in things that he had often before enjoyed. No doubt he had an inexhaustible pleasure in them apart from mine, for I have found my pleasure in them perennial, and have not failed to taste it as often as I have read or repeated any of the great passages of the poem to myself. This pleasure came often from some vital phrase, or merely the inspired music of a

phrase quite apart from its meaning. I did not get then, and I have not got since, a distinct conception of the journey through Hell, and as often as I have tried to understand the topography of the poem I have fatigued myself to no purpose, but I do not think the essential meaning was lost upon me.

I dare say my priest had his notion of the general shape and purport, the gross material body of the thing, but he did not trouble me with it, while we sat tranced together in the presence of its soul. He seemed, at times, so lost in the beatific vision, that he forgot my stumblings in the philological darkness, till I appealed to him for help. Then he would read aloud with that magnificent rhythm the Italians have in reading their verse, and the obscured meaning would seem to shine out of the mere music of the poem, like the color the blind feel in sound.

I do not know what has become of him, but if he is like the rest of the strange group of my guides, philosophers, and friends in literature--the printer, the organ-builder, the machinist, the drug-clerk, and the bookbinder--I am afraid he is dead. In fact, I who was then I, might be said to be dead too, so little is my past self like my present self in anything but the "increasing purpose" which has kept me one in my love of literature. He was a gentle and kindly man, with a life and a longing, quite apart from his vocation, which were never lived or fulfilled. I did not see him after he ceased to read Dante with me, and in fact I was instructed by the suspicions of my Italian friends to be careful how I consorted with a priest, who might very well be an Austrian spy. I parted with him for no such picturesque reason, for I never believed him other than the truest and faithfulest of friends, but because I was then giving myself more entirely to work in which he could not help me.

Naturally enough this was a long poem in the terza rima of the "Divina Commedia," and dealing with a story of our civil war in a fashion so remote that no editor would print it. This was the first fruits and the last of my reading of Dante, in verse, and it was not so like Dante as I would have liked to make it; but Dante is not easy to imitate; he is too unconscious, and too single, too bent upon saying the thing that is in him, with whatever beauty inheres in it, to put on the graces that others may catch.

XXIX. GOLDONI, MANZONI, D'AZEGLIO

However, this poem only shared the fate of nearly, all the others that I wrote at this time; they came back to me with unfailing regularity from all the magazine editors of the English-speaking world; I had no success with any of them till I sent Mr. Lowell a paper on recent Italian comedy for the North American Review, which he and Professor Norton had then begun to edit. I was in the mean time printing the material of Venetian Life and the Italian Journeys in a Boston newspaper after its rejection by the magazines; and my literary life, almost without my willing it, had taken the course of critical observance of books and men in their

actuality.

That is to say, I was studying manners, in the elder sense of the word, wherever I could get at them in the frank life of the people about me, and in such literature of Italy as was then modern. In this pursuit I made a discovery that greatly interested me, and that specialized my inquiries. I found that the Italians had no novels which treated of their contemporary life; that they had no modern fiction but the historical romance. I found that if I wished to know their life from their literature I must go to their drama, which was even then endeavoring to give their, stage a faithful picture of their civilization. There was even then in the new circumstance of a people just liberated from every variety of intellectual repression and political oppression, a group of dramatic authors, whose plays were not only delightful to see but delightful to read, working in the good tradition of one of the greatest realists who has ever lived, and producing a drama of vital strength and charm. One of them, whom I by no means thought the best, has given us a play, known to all the world, which I am almost ready to think with Zola is the greatest play of modern times; or if it is not so, I should be puzzled to name the modern drama that surpasses "La Morte Civile" of Paolo Giacometti. I learned to know all the dramatists pretty well, in the whole range of their work, on the stage and in the closet, and I learned to know still better, and to love supremely, the fine, amiable genius whom, as one of them said, they did not so much imitate as learn from to imitate nature.

This was Carlo Goldoni, one of the first of the realists, but antedating conscious realism so long as to have been born at Venice early in the eighteenth century, and to have come to his hand-to-hand fight with the romanticism of his day almost before that century had reached its noon. In the early sixties of our own century I was no more conscious of his realism than he was himself a hundred years before; but I had eyes in my head, and I saw that what he had seen in Venice so long before was so true that it was the very life of Venice in my own day; and because I have loved the truth in art above all other things, I fell instantly and lastingly in love with Carlo Goldoni. I was reading his memoirs, and learning to know his sweet, honest, simple nature while I was learning to know his work, and I wish that every one who reads his plays would read his life as well; one must know him before one can fully know them. I believe, in fact, that his autobiography came into my hands first. But, at any rate, both are associated with the fervors and languors of that first summer in Venice, so that I cannot now take up a book of Goldoni's without a renewed sense of that sunlight and moonlight, and of the sounds and silences of a city that is at once the stillest and shrillest in the world.

Perhaps because I never found his work of great ethical or aesthetical proportions, but recognized that it pretended to be good only within its strict limitations, I recur to it now without that painful feeling of a diminished grandeur in it, which attends us so often when we go back to something that once greatly pleased us. It seemed to me at the time that I must have read all his comedies in Venice, but I kept reading new ones after I came home, and still I can take a volume of his from the shelf,

and when thirty years are past, find a play or two that I missed before. Their number is very great, but perhaps those that I fancy I have not read, I have really read once or more and forgotten. That might very easily be, for there is seldom anything more poignant in any one of them than there is in the average course of things. The plays are light and amusing transcripts from life, for the most part, and where at times they deepen into powerful situations, or express strong emotions, they do so with persons so little different from the average of our acquaintance that we do not remember just who the persons are.

There is no doubt but the kindly playwright had his conscience, and meant to make people think as well as laugh. I know of none of his plays that is of wrong effect, or that violates the instincts of purity, or insults common sense with the romantic pretence that wrong will be right if you will only paint it rose-color. He is at some obvious pains to "punish vice and reward virtue," but I do not mean that easy morality when I praise his; I mean the more difficult sort that recognizes in each man's soul the arbiter not of his fate surely, but surely of his peace. He never makes a fool of the spectator by feigning that passion is a reason or justification, or that suffering of one kind can atone for wrong of another. That was left for the romanticists of our own century to discover; even the romanticists whom Goldoni drove from the stage, were of that simpler eighteenth-century sort who had not yet liberated the individual from society, but held him accountable in the old way. As for Goldoni himself, he apparently never dreams of transgression; he is of rather an explicit conventionality in most things, and he deals with society as something finally settled. How artfully he deals with it, how decently, how wholesomely, those who know Venetian society of the eighteenth century historically, will perceive when they recall the adequate impression he gives of it without offence in character or language or situation. This is the perpetual miracle of his comedy, that it says so much to experience and worldly wisdom, and so little to inexperience and worldly innocence. No doubt the Serenest Republic was very strict with the theatre, and suffered it to hold the mirror up to nature only when nature was behaving well, or at least behaving as if young people were present. Yet the Italians are rather plain-spoken, and they recognize facts which our company manners at least do not admit the existence of. I should say that Goldoni was almost English, almost American, indeed, in his observance of the proprieties, and I like this in him; though the proprieties are not virtues, they are very good things, and at least are better than the improprieties.

This, however, I must own, had not a great deal to do with my liking him so much, and I should be puzzled to account for my passion, as much in his case as in most others. If there was any reason for it, perhaps it was that he had the power of taking me out of my life, and putting me into the lives of others, whom I felt to be human beings as much as myself. To make one live in others, this is the highest effect of religion as well as of art, and possibly it will be the highest bliss we shall ever know. I do not pretend that my translation was through my unselfishness; it was distinctly through that selfishness which perceives that self is misery; and I may as well confess here that I do not regard the artistic ecstasy as in any sort noble. It is not noble to love the

beautiful, or to live for it, or by it; and it may even not be refining. I would not have any reader of mine, looking forward to some aesthetic career, suppose that this love is any merit in itself; it may be the grossest egotism. If you cannot look beyond the end you aim at, and seek the good which is not your own, all your sacrifice is to yourself and not of yourself, and you might as well be going into business. In itself and for itself it is no more honorable to win fame than to make money, and the wish to do the one is no more elevating than the wish to do the other.

But in the days I write of I had no conception of this, and I am sure that my blindness to so plain a fact kept me even from seeking and knowing the highest beauty in the things I worshipped. I believe that if I had been sensible of it I should have read much more of such humane Italian poets and novelists as Manzoni and D'Azeglio, whom I perceived to be delightful, without dreaming of them in the length and breadth of their goodness. Now and then its extent flashed upon me, but the glimpse was lost to my retroverted vision almost as soon as won. It is only in thinking back to there that I can realize how much they might always have meant to me. They were both living in my time in Italy, and they were two men whom I should now like very much to have seen, if I could have done so without that futility which seems to attend every effort to pay one's duty to such men.

The love of country in all the Italian poets and romancers of the long period of the national resurrection ennobled their art in a measure which criticism has not yet taken account of. I conceived of its effect then, but I conceived of it as a misfortune, a fatality; now I am by no means sure that it was so; hereafter the creation of beauty, as we call it, for beauty's sake, may be considered something monstrous. There is forever a poignant meaning in life beyond what mere living involves, and why should not there be this reference in art to the ends beyond art?

The situation, the long patience, the hope against hope, dignified and beautified the nature of the Italian writers of that day, and evoked from them a quality which I was too little trained in their school to appreciate. But in a sort I did feel it, I did know it in them all, so far as I knew any of them, and in the tragedies of Manzoni, and in the romances of D'Azeglio, and yet more in the simple and modest records of D'Azeglio's life published after his death, I profited by it, and unconsciously prepared myself for that point of view whence all the arts appear one with all the uses, and there is nothing beautiful that is false.

I am very glad of that experience of Italian literature, which I look back upon as altogether wholesome and sanative, after my excesses of Heine. No doubt it was all a minor affair as compared with equal knowledge of French literature, and so far it was a loss of time. It is idle to dispute the general positions of criticism, and there is no useful gainsaying its judgment that French literature is a major literature and Italian a minor literature in this century; but whether this verdict will stand for all time, there may be a reasonable doubt. Criteria may change, and hereafter people may look at the whole affair so differently that a literature which went to the making of a people

will not be accounted a minor literature, but will take its place with the great literary movements.

I do not insist upon this possibility, and I am far from defending myself for liking the comedies of Goldoni better than the comedies of Moliere, upon purely aesthetic grounds, where there is no question as to the artistic quality. Perhaps it is because I came to Moliere's comedies later, and with my taste formed for those of Goldoni; but again, it is here a matter of affection; I find Goldoni for me more sympathetic, and because he is more sympathetic I cannot do otherwise than find him more natural, more true. I will allow that this is vulnerable, and as I say, I do not defend it. Moliere has a place in literature infinitely loftier than Goldoni's; and he has supplied types, characters, phrases, to the currency of thought, and Goldoni has supplied none. It is, therefore, without reason which I can allege that I enjoy Goldoni more. I am perfectly willing to be rated low for my preference, and yet I think that if it had been Goldoni's luck to have had the great age of a mighty monarchy for his scene, instead of the decline of an outworn republic, his place in literature might have been different.

XXX. "PASTOR FIDO," "AMINTA," "ROMOLA," "YEAST," "PAUL FERROLL"

I have always had a great love for the absolutely unreal, the purely fanciful in all the arts, as well as of the absolutely real; I like the one on a far lower plane than the other, but it delights me, as a pantomime at a theatre does, or a comic opera, which has its being wholly outside the realm of the probabilities. When I once transport myself to this sphere I have no longer any care for them, and if I could I would not exact of them an allegiance which has no concern with them. For this reason I have always vastly enjoyed the artificialities of pastoral poetry; and in Venice I read with a pleasure few serious poems have given me the "Pastor Fido" of Guarini. I came later but not with fainter zest to the "Aminta" of Tasso, without which, perhaps, the "Pastor Fido" would not have been, and I revelled in the pretty impossibilities of both these charming effects of the liberated imagination.

I do not the least condemn that sort of thing; one does not live by sweets, unless one is willing to spoil one's digestion; but one may now and then indulge one's self without harm, and a sugar-plum or two after dinner may even be of advantage. What I object to is the romantic thing which asks to be accepted with all its fantasticality on the ground of reality; that seems to me hopelessly bad. But I have been able to dwell in their charming out-land or no-land with the shepherds and shepherdesses and nymphs, satyrs, and fauns, of Tasso and Guarini, and I take the finest pleasure in their company, their Dresden china loves and sorrows, their airy raptures, their painless throes, their polite anguish, their tears not the least salt, but flowing as sweet as the purling streams of their enamelled meadows. I wish there were more of that sort of writing; I should like very much to read it.

The greater part of my reading in Venice, when I began to find that I could not help writing about the place, was in books relating to its life and history, which I made use of rather than found pleasure in. My studies in Italian literature were full of the most charming interest, and if I had to read a good many books for conscience' sake, there were a good many others I read for their own sake. They were chiefly poetry; and after the first essays in which I tasted the classic poets, they were chiefly the books of the modern poets.

For the present I went no farther in German literature, and I recurred to it in later years only for deeper and fuller knowledge of Heine; my Spanish was ignored, as all first loves are when one has reached the age of twenty-six. My English reading was almost wholly in the Tauchnitz editions, for otherwise English books were not easily come at then and there. George Eliot's 'Romola' was then new, and I read it again and again with the sense of moral enlargement which the first fiction to conceive of the true nature of evil gave all of us who were young in that day. Tito Malema was not only a lesson, he was a revelation, and I trembled before him as in the presence of a warning and a message from the only veritable perdition. His life, in which so much that was good was mixed, with so much that was bad, lighted up the whole domain of egotism with its glare, and made one feel how near the best and the worst were to each other, and how they sometimes touched without absolute division in texture and color. The book was undoubtedly a favorite of mine, and I did not see then the artistic falterings in it which were afterwards evident to me.

There were not Romolas to read all the time, though, and I had to devolve upon inferior authors for my fiction the greater part of the time. Of course, I kept up with 'Our Mutual Friend,' which Dickens was then writing, and with 'Philip,' which was to be the last of Thackeray. I was not yet sufficiently instructed to appreciate Trollope, and I did not read him at all.

I got hold of Kingsley, and read 'Yeast,' and I think some other novels of his, with great relish, and without sensibility to his Charles Readeish lapses from his art into the material of his art. But of all the minor fiction that I read at this time none impressed me so much as three books which had then already had their vogue, and which I knew somewhat from reviews. They were Paul Ferroll, 'Why Paul Ferroll Killed His Wife,' and 'Day after Day.' The first two were, of course, related to each other, and they were all three full of unwholesome force. As to their aesthetic merit I will not say anything, for I have not looked at either of the books for thirty years. I fancy, however, that their strength was rather of the tetanic than the titanic sort. They made your sympathies go with the hero, who deliberately puts his wife to death for the lie she told to break off his marriage with the woman he had loved, and who then marries this tender and gentle girl, and lives in great happiness with her till her death. Murder in the first degree is flattered by his fate up to the point of letting him die peacefully in Boston after these dealings of his in England; and altogether his story could not be commended to people with a morbid taste for bloodshed. Naturally enough the books were written by a perfectly good woman, the

wife of an English clergyman, whose friends were greatly scandalized by them. As a sort of atonement she wrote 'Day after Day,' the story of a dismal and joyless orphan, who dies to the sound of angelic music, faint and farheard, filling the whole chamber. A careful study of the phenomenon reveals the fact that the seraphic strains are produced by the steam escaping from the hot-water bottles at the feet of the invalid.

As usual, I am not able fully to account for my liking of these books, and I am so far from wishing to justify it that I think I ought rather to excuse it. But since I was really greatly fascinated with them, and read them with an evergrowing fascination, the only honest thing to do is to own my subjection to them. It would be an interesting and important question for criticism to study, that question why certain books at a certain time greatly dominate our fancy, and others manifestly better have no influence with us. A curious proof of the subtlety of these Paul Ferroll books in the appeal they made to the imagination is the fact that I came to them fresh from 'Romolo,' and full of horror for myself in Tito; yet I sympathized throughout with Paul Ferroll, and was glad when he got away.

XXXI. ERCKMANN-CHATRIAN, BJORSTJERNE BJORNSON

On my return to America, my literary life immediately took such form that most of my reading was done for review. I wrote at first a good many of the lighter criticisms in 'The Nation', at New York, and after I went to Boston to become the assistant editor of the 'Atlantic Monthly' I wrote the literary notices in that periodical for four or five years.

It was only when I came into full charge of the magazine that I began to share these labors with others, and I continued them in some measure as long as I had any relation to it. My reading for reading's sake, as I had hitherto done it, was at an end, and I read primarily for the sake of writing about the book in hand, and secondarily for the pleasure it might give me. This was always considerable, and sometimes so great that I forgot the critic in it, and read on and on for pleasure. I was master to review this book or that as I chose, and generally I reviewed only books I liked to read, though sometimes I felt that I ought to do a book, and did it from a sense of duty; these perfunctory criticisms I do not think were very useful, but I tried to make them honest.

In a long sickness, which I had shortly after I went to live in Cambridge, a friend brought me several of the stories of Erckmann-Chatrian, whom people were then reading much more than they are now, I believe; and I had a great joy in them, which I have renewed since as often as I have read one of their books. They have much the same quality of simple and sincerely moralized realism that I found afterwards in the work of the early Swiss realist, Jeremias Gotthelf, and very likely it was this that captivated my judgment. As for my affections, battered and exhausted as they ought to have been in many literary passions, they never went out with fresher enjoyment than they did to the charming story

of 'L'Ami Fritz,' which, when I merely name it, breathes the spring sun and air about me, and fills my senses with the beauty and sweetness of cherry blossoms. It is one of the loveliest and kindest books that ever was written, and my heart belongs to it still; to be sure it belongs to several hundreds of other books in equal entirety.

It belongs to all the books of the great Norwegian Bjornstjerne Bjornson, whose 'Arne,' and whose 'Happy Boy,' and whose 'Fisher Maiden' I read in this same fortunate sickness. I have since read every other book of his that I could lay hands on: 'Sinnove Solbakken,' and 'Magnhild,' and 'Captain Manzanca,' and 'Dust,' and 'In God's Ways,' and 'Sigurd,' and plays like "The Glove" and "The Bankrupt." He has never, as some authors have, dwindled in my sense; when I open his page, there I find him as large, and free, and bold as ever. He is a great talent, a clear conscience, a beautiful art. He has my love not only because he is a poet of the most exquisite verity, but because he is a lover of men, with a faith in them such as can move mountains of ignorance, and dulness, and greed. He is next to Tolstoy in his willingness to give himself for his kind; if he would rather give himself in fighting than in suffering wrong, I do not know that his self-sacrifice is less in degree.

I confess, however, that I do not think of him as a patriot and a socialist when I read him; he is then purely a poet, whose gift holds me rapt above the world where I have left my troublesome and wearisome self for the time. I do not know of any novels that a young endeavorer in fiction could more profitably read than his for their large and simple method, their trust of the reader's intelligence, their sympathy with life. With him the problems are all soluble by the enlightened and regenerate will; there is no baffling Fate, but a helping God. In Bjornson there is nothing of Ibsen's scornful despair, nothing of his anarchistic contempt, but his art is full of the warmth and color of a poetic soul, with no touch of the icy cynicism which freezes you in the other. I have felt the cold fascination of Ibsen, too, and I should be far from denying his mighty mastery, but he has never possessed me with the delight that Bjornson has.

In those days I read not only all the new books, but I made many forays into the past, and came back now and then with rich spoil, though I confess that for the most part I had my trouble for my pains; and I wish now that I had given the time I spent on the English classics to contemporary literature, which I have not the least hesitation in saying I like vastly better. In fact, I believe that the preference for the literature of the past, except in the case of the greatest masters, is mainly the affectation of people who cannot otherwise distinguish themselves from the herd, and who wish very much to do so.

There is much to be learned from the minor novelists and poets of the past about people's ways of thinking and feeling, but not much that the masters do not give you in better quality and fuller measure; and I should say, Read the old masters and let their schools go, rather than neglect any possible master of your own time. Above all, I would not have any one read an old author merely that he might not be ignorant of him; that is most beggarly, and no good can come of it. When literature

becomes a duty it ceases to be a passion, and all the schoolmastering in the world, solemnly addressed to the conscience, cannot make the fact otherwise. It is well to read for the sake of knowing a certain ground if you are to make use of your knowledge in a certain way, but it would be a mistake to suppose that this is a love of literature.

XXXII. TOURGUENIEF, AUERBACH

In those years at Cambridge my most notable literary experience without doubt was the knowledge of Tourguenief's novels, which began to be recognized in all their greatness about the middle seventies. I think they made their way with such of our public as were able to appreciate them before they were accepted in England; but that does not matter. It is enough for the present purpose that 'Smoke,' and 'Lisa,' and 'On the Eve,' and 'Dimitri Roudine,' and 'Spring Floods,' passed one after another through my hands, and that I formed for their author one of the profoundest literary passions of my life.

I now think that there is a finer and truer method than his, but in its way, Tourguenief's method is as far as art can go. That is to say, his fiction is to the last degree dramatic. The persons are sparsely described, and briefly accounted for, and then they are left to transact their affair, whatever it is, with the least possible comment or explanation from the author. The effect flows naturally from their characters, and when they have done or said a thing you conjecture why as unerringly as you would if they were people whom you knew outside of a book. I had already conceived of the possibility of this from Bjornson, who practises the same method, but I was still too sunken in the gross darkness of English fiction to rise to a full consciousness of its excellence. When I remembered the deliberate and impertinent moralizing of Thackeray, the clumsy exegesis of George Eliot, the knowing nods and winks of Charles Reade, the stage-carpentering and limelighting of Dickens, even the fine and important analysis of Hawthorne, it was with a joyful astonishment that I realized the great art of Tourguenief.

Here was a master who was apparently not trying to work out a plot, who was not even trying to work out a character, but was standing aside from the whole affair, and letting the characters work the plot out. The method was revealed perfectly in 'Smoke,' but each successive book of his that I read was a fresh proof of its truth, a revelation of its transcendent superiority. I think now that I exaggerated its value somewhat; but this was inevitable in the first surprise. The sane aesthetics of the first Russian author I read, however, have seemed more and more an essential part of the sane ethics of all the Russians I have read. It was not only that Tourguenief had painted life truly, but that he had painted it conscientiously.

Tourguenief was of that great race which has more than any other fully and freely uttered human nature, without either false pride or false shame in its nakedness. His themes were oftenest those of the French

novelist, but how far he was from handling them in the French manner and with the French spirit! In his hands sin suffered no dramatic punishment; it did not always show itself as unhappiness, in the personal sense, but it was always unrest, and without the hope of peace. If the end did not appear, the fact that it must be miserable always appeared. Life showed itself to me in different colors after I had once read Tourguenief; it became more serious, more awful, and with mystical responsibilities I had not known before. My gay American horizons were bathed in the vast melancholy of the Slav, patient, agnostic, trustful. At the same time nature revealed herself to me through him with an intimacy she had not hitherto shown me. There are passages in this wonderful writer alive with a truth that seems drawn from the reader's own knowledge; who else but Tourguenief and one's own most secret self ever felt all the rich, sad meaning of the night air drawing in at the open window, of the fires burning in the darkness on the distant fields? I try in vain to give some notion of the subtle sympathy with nature which scarcely put itself into words with him. As for the people of his fiction, though they were of orders and civilizations so remote from my experience, they were of the eternal human types whose origin and potentialities every one may find in his own heart, and I felt their verity in every touch.

I cannot describe the satisfaction his work gave me; I can only impart some sense of it, perhaps, by saying that it was like a happiness I had been waiting for all my life, and now that it had come, I was richly content forever. I do not mean to say that the art of Tourguenief surpasses the art of Bjornson; I think Bjornson is quite as fine and true. But the Norwegian deals with simple and primitive circumstances for the most part, and always with a small world; and the Russian has to do with human nature inside of its conventional shells, and his scene is often as large as Europe. Even when it is as remote as Norway, it is still related to the great capitals by the history if not the actuality of the characters. Most of Tourguenief's books I have read many times over, all of them I have read more than twice. For a number of years I read them again and again without much caring for other fiction. It was only the other day that I read *Smoke* through once more, with no diminished sense of its truth, but with somewhat less than my first satisfaction in its art. Perhaps this was because I had reached the point through my acquaintance with Tolstoy where I was impatient even of the artifice that hid itself. In '*Smoke*' I was now aware of an artifice that kept out of sight, but was still always present somewhere, invisibly operating the story.

I must not fail to own the great pleasure that I have had in some of the stories of Auerbach. It is true that I have never cared greatly for '*On the Heights*,' which in its dealing with royalties seems too far aloof from the ordinary human life, and which on the moral side finally fades out into a German mistiness. But I speak of it with the imperfect knowledge of one who was never able to read it quite through, and I have really no right to speak of it. The book of his that pleased me most was '*Edelweiss*,' which, though the story was somewhat too catastrophic, seemed to me admirably good and true. I still think it very delicately done, and with a deep insight; but there is something in all Auerbach's

work which in the retrospect affects me as if it dealt with pigmies.

XXXIII. CERTAIN PREFERENCES AND EXPERIENCES

I have always loved history, whether in the annals of peoples or in the lives of persons, and I have at all times read it. I am not sure but I rather prefer it to fiction, though I am aware that in looking back over this record of my literary passions I must seem to have cared for very little besides fiction. I read at the time I have just been speaking of, nearly all the new poetry as it came out, and I constantly recurred to it in its mossier sources, where it sprang from the green English ground, or trickled from the antique urns of Italy.

I do not think that I have ever cared much for metaphysics, or to read much in that way, but from time to time I have done something of it.

Travels, of course, I have read as part of the great human story, and autobiography has at times appeared to me the most delightful reading in the world; I have a taste in it that rejects nothing, though I have never enjoyed any autobiographies so much as those of such Italians as have reasoned of themselves.

I suppose I have not been a great reader of the drama, and I do not know that I have ever greatly relished any plays but those of Shakespeare and Goldoni, and two or three of Beaumont and Fletcher, and one or so of Marlow's, and all of Ibsen's and Maeterlinck's. The taste for the old English dramatists I believe I have never formed.

Criticism, ever since I filled myself so full of it in my boyhood, I have not cared for, and often I have found it repulsive.

I have a fondness for books of popular science, perhaps because they too are part of the human story.

I have read somewhat of the theology of the Swedenborgian faith I was brought up in, but I have not read other theological works; and I do not apologize for not liking any. The Bible itself was not much known to me at an age when most children have been obliged to read it several times over; the gospels were indeed familiar, and they have always been to me the supreme human story; but the rest of the New Testament I had not read when a man grown, and only passages of the Old Testament, like the story of the Creation, and the story of Joseph, and the poems of Job and Ecclesiastes, with occasional Psalms. I therefore came to the Scriptures with a sense at once fresh and mature, and I can never be too glad that I learned to see them under the vaster horizon and in the truer perspectives of experience.

Again as lights on the human story I have liked to read such books of medicine as have fallen in my way, and I seldom take up a medical

periodical without reading of all the cases it describes, and in fact every article in it.

But I did not mean to make even this slight departure from the main business of these papers, which is to confide my literary passions to the reader; he probably has had a great many of his own. I think I may class the "Ring and the Book" among them, though I have never been otherwise a devotee of Browning. But I was still newly home from Italy, or away from home, when that poem appeared, and whether or not it was because it took me so with the old enchantment of that land, I gave my heart promptly to it. Of course, there are terrible longueurs in it, and you do get tired of the same story told over and over from the different points of view, and yet it is such a great story, and unfolded with such a magnificent breadth and noble fulness, that one who blames it lightly blames himself heavily. There are certain books of it--"Caponsacchi's story," "Pompilia's story," and "Count Guido's story"--that I think ought to rank with the greatest poetry ever written, and that have a direct, dramatic expression of the fact and character, which is without rival. There is a noble and lofty pathos in the close of Caponsacchi's statement, an artless and manly break from his self-control throughout, that seems to me the last possible effect in its kind; and Pompilia's story holds all of womanhood in it, the purity, the passion, the tenderness, the helplessness. But if I begin to praise this or any of the things I have liked, I do not know when I should stop. Yes, as I think it over, the "Ring and the Book" appears to me one of the great few poems whose splendor can never suffer lasting eclipse, however it may have presently fallen into abeyance. If it had impossibly come down to us from some elder time, or had not been so perfectly modern in its recognition of feeling and motives ignored by the less conscious poetry of the past, it might be ranked with the great epics.

Of other modern poets I have read some things of William Morris, like the "Life and Death of Jason," the "Story of Gudrun," and the "Trial of Guinevere," with a pleasure little less than passionate, and I have equally liked certain pieces of Dante Rossetti. I have had a high joy in some of the great minor poems of Emerson, where the goddess moves over Concord meadows with a gait that is Greek, and her sandalled tread expresses a high scorn of the india-rubber boots that the American muse so often gets about in.

The "Commemoration Ode" of Lowell has also been a source from which I drank something of the divine ecstasy of the poet's own exalted mood, and I would set this level with the 'Biglow Papers,' high above all his other work, and chief of the things this age of our country shall be remembered by. Holmes I always loved, and not for his wit alone, which is so obvious to liking, but for those rarer and richer strains of his in which he shows himself the lover of nature and the brother of men. The deep spiritual insight, the celestial music, and the brooding tenderness of Whittier have always taken me more than his fierier appeals and his civic virtues, though I do not underrate the value of these in his verse.

My acquaintance with these modern poets, and many I do not name because they are so many, has been continuous with their work, and my pleasure in

it not inconstant if not equal. I have spoken before of Longfellow as one of my first passions, and I have never ceased to delight in him; but some of the very newest and youngest of our poets have given me thrills of happiness, for which life has become lastingly sweeter.

Long after I had thought never to read it--in fact when I was 'nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita'--I read Milton's "Paradise Lost," and found in it a majestic beauty that justified to me the fame it wears, and eclipsed the worth of those lesser poems which I had ignorantly accounted his worthiest. In fact, it was one of the literary passions of the time I speak of, and it shared my devotion for the novels of Tourguenief and (shall I own it?) the romances of Cherbuliez. After all, it is best to be honest, and if it is not best, it is at least easiest; it involves the fewest embarrassing consequences; and if I confess the spell that the Revenge of Joseph Noirel cast upon me for a time, perhaps I shall be able to whisper the reader behind my hand that I have never yet read the "Aeneid" of Virgil; the "Georgics," yes; but the "Aeneid," no. Some time, however, I expect to read it and to like it immensely. That is often the case with things that I have held aloof from indefinitely.

One fact of my experience which the reader may, find interesting is that when I am writing steadily I have little relish for reading. I fancy, that reading is not merely a pastime when it is apparently the merest pastime, but that a certain measure of mind-stuff is used up in it, and that if you are using up all the mind stuff you have, much or little, in some other way, you do not read because you have not the mind-stuff for it. At any rate it is in this sort only that I can account for my failure to read a great deal during four years of the amplest quiet that I spent in the country at Belmont, whither we removed from Cambridge. I had promised myself that in this quiet, now that I had given up reviewing, and wrote little or nothing in the magazine but my stories, I should again read purely for the pleasure of it, as I had in the early days before the critical purpose had qualified it with a bitter alloy. But I found that not being forced to read a number of books each month, so that I might write about them, I did not read at all, comparatively speaking. To be sure I dawdled over a great many books that I had read before, and a number of memoirs and biographies, but I had no intense pleasure from reading in that time, and have no passions to record of it. It may have been a period when no new thing happened in literature deeply to stir one's interest; I only state the fact concerning myself, and suggest the most plausible theory I can think of.

I wish also to note another incident, which may or may not have its psychological value. An important event of these years was a long sickness which kept me helpless some seven or eight weeks, when I was forced to read in order to pass the intolerable time. But in this misery I found that I could not read anything of a dramatic cast, whether in the form of plays or of novels. The mere sight of the printed page, broken up in dialogue, was anguish. Yet it was not the excitement of the fiction that I dreaded, for I consumed great numbers of narratives of travel, and was not in the least troubled by hairbreadth escapes, or shipwrecks, or perils from wild beasts or deadly serpents; it was the

dramatic effect contrived by the playwright or novelist, and worked up to in the speech of his characters that I could not bear. I found a like impossible stress from the Sunday newspaper which a mistaken friend sent in to me, and which with its scare-headings, and artfully wrought sensations, had the effect of fiction, as in fact it largely was.

At the end of four years we went abroad again, and travel took away the appetite for reading as completely as writing did. I recall nothing read in that year in Europe which moved me, and I think I read very little, except the local histories of the Tuscan cities which I afterwards wrote of.

XXXIV. VALDES, GALDOS, VERGA, ZOLA, TROLLOPE, HARDY

In fact, it was not till I returned, and took up my life again in Boston, in the old atmosphere of work, that I turned once more to books. Even then I had to wait for the time when I undertook a critical department in one of the magazines, before I felt the rise of the old enthusiasm for an author. That is to say, I had to begin reading for business again before I began reading for pleasure. One of the first great pleasures which I had upon these terms was in the book of a contemporary Spanish author. This was the 'Marta y Maria' of Armando Palacio Valdes, a novelist who delights me beyond words by his friendly and abundant humor, his feeling for character, and his subtle insight. I like every one of his books that I have read, and I believe that I have read nearly every one that he has written. As I mention 'Riverito, Maximina, Un Idilio de un Inferno, La Hermana de San Sulpizio, El Cuarto Poder, Espuma,' the mere names conjure up the scenes and events that have moved me to tears and laughter, and filled me with a vivid sense of the life portrayed in them. I think the 'Marta y Maria' one of the most truthful and profound fictions I have read, and 'Maximina' one of the most pathetic, and 'La Hermana de San Sulpizio' one of the most amusing. Fortunately, these books of Valdes's have nearly all been translated, and the reader may test the matter in English; though it necessarily halts somewhat behind the Spanish.

I do not know whether the Spaniards themselves rank Valdes with Galdos or not, and I have no wish to decide upon their relative merits. They are both present passions of mine, and I may say of the 'Dona Perfecta' of Galdos that no book, if I except those of the greatest Russians, has given me a keener and deeper impression; it is infinitely pathetic, and is full of humor, which, if more caustic than that of Valdes, is not less delicious. But I like all the books of Galdos that I have read, and though he seems to have worked more tardily out of his romanticism than Valdes, since he has worked finally into such realism as that of Leon Roch, his greatness leaves nothing to be desired.

I have read one of the books of Emilia Pardo-Bazan, called 'Morrina,' which must rank her with the great realists of her country and age; she, too, has that humor of her race, which brings us nearer the Spanish than

any other non-Anglo-Saxon people.

A contemporary Italian, whom I like hardly less than these noble Spaniards, is Giovanni Verga, who wrote 'I Malavoglia,' or, as we call it in English, 'The House by the Medlar Tree': a story of infinite beauty, tenderness and truth. As I have said before, I think with Zola that Giacometti, the Italian author of "La Morte Civile," has written almost the greatest play, all round, of modern times.

But what shall I say of Zola himself, and my admiration of his epic greatness? About his material there is no disputing among people of our Puritanic tradition. It is simply abhorrent, but when you have once granted him his material for his own use, it is idle and foolish to deny his power. Every literary theory of mine was contrary to him when I took up 'L'Assommoir,' though unconsciously I had always been as much of a realist as I could, but the book possessed me with the same fascination that I felt the other day in reading his 'L'Argent.' The critics know now that Zola is not the realist he used to fancy himself, and he is full of the best qualities of the romanticism he has hated so much; but for what he is, there is but one novelist of our time, or of any, that outmasters him, and that is Tolstoy. For my own part, I think that the books of Zola are not immoral, but they are indecent through the facts that they nakedly represent; they are infinitely more moral than the books of any other French novelist. This may not be saying a great deal, but it is saying the truth, and I do not mind owning that he has been one of my great literary passions, almost as great as Flaubert, and greater than Daudet or Maupassant, though I have profoundly appreciated the exquisite artistry of both these. No French writer, however, has moved me so much as the Spanish, for the French are wanting in the humor which endears these, and is the quintessence of their charm.

You cannot be at perfect ease with a friend who does not joke, and I suppose this is what deprived me of a final satisfaction in the company of Anthony Trollope, who jokes heavily or not at all, and whom I should otherwise make bold to declare the greatest of English novelists; as it is, I must put before him Jane Austen, whose books, late in life, have been a youthful rapture with me. Even without, much humor Trollope's books have been a vast pleasure to me through their simple truthfulness. Perhaps if they were more humorous they would not be so true to the British life and character present in them in the whole length and breadth of its expansive commonplaceness. It is their serious fidelity which gives them a value unique in literature, and which if it were carefully analyzed would afford a principle of the same quality in an author who was undoubtedly one of the finest of artists as well as the most Philistine of men.

I came rather late, but I came with all the ardor of what seems my perennial literary youth, to the love of Thomas Hardy, whom I first knew in his story 'A Pair of Blue Eyes.' As usual, after I had read this book and felt the new charm in it, I wished to read the books of no other author, and to read his books over and over. I love even the faults of Hardy; I will let him play me any trick he chooses (and he is not above playing tricks, when he seems to get tired of his story or perplexed with

it), if only he will go on making his peasants talk, and his rather uncertain ladies get in and out of love, and serve themselves of every chance that fortune offers them of having their own way. We shrink from the unmorality of the Latin races, but Hardy has divined in the heart of our own race a lingering heathenism, which, if not Greek, has certainly been no more baptized than the neo-hellenism of the Parisians. His heroines especially exemplify it, and I should be safe in saying that his Ethelbertas, his Eustacias, his Elfridas, his Bathshebas, his Fancies, are wholly pagan. I should not dare to ask how much of their charm came from that fact; and the author does not fail to show you how much harm, so that it is not on my conscience. His people live very close to the heart of nature, and no one, unless it is Tourguenief, gives you a richer and sweeter sense of her unity with human nature. Hardy is a great poet as well as a great humorist, and if he were not a great artist also his humor would be enough to endear him to me.

XXXV. TOLSTOY

I come now, though not quite in the order of time, to the noblest of all these enthusiasms--namely, my devotion for the writings of Lyof Tolstoy. I should wish to speak of him with his own incomparable truth, yet I do not know how to give a notion of his influence without the effect of exaggeration. As much as one merely human being can help another I believe that he has helped me; he has not influenced me in aesthetics only, but in ethics, too, so that I can never again see life in the way I saw it before I knew him. Tolstoy awakens in his reader the will to be a man; not effectively, not spectacularly, but simply, really. He leads you back to the only true ideal, away from that false standard of the gentleman, to the Man who sought not to be distinguished from other men, but identified with them, to that Presence in which the finest gentleman shows his alloy of vanity, and the greatest genius shrinks to the measure of his miserable egotism. I learned from Tolstoy to try character and motive by no other test, and though I am perpetually false to that sublime ideal myself, still the ideal remains with me, to make me ashamed that I am not true to it. Tolstoy gave me heart to hope that the world may yet be made over in the image of Him who died for it, when all Caesars things shall be finally rendered unto Caesar, and men shall come into their own, into the right to labor and the right to enjoy the fruits of their labor, each one master of himself and servant to every other. He taught me to see life not as a chase of a forever impossible personal happiness, but as a field for endeavor towards the happiness of the whole human family; and I can never lose this vision, however I close my eyes, and strive to see my own interest as the highest good. He gave me new criterions, new principles, which, after all, were those that are taught us in our earliest childhood, before we have come to the evil wisdom of the world. As I read his different ethical books, 'What to Do,' 'My Confession,' and 'My Religion,' I recognized their truth with a rapture such as I have known in no other reading, and I rendered them my allegiance, heart and soul, with whatever sickness of the one and despair of the other. They have it yet, and I believe they will have it while I

live. It is with inexpressible astonishment that I bear them attainted of pessimism, as if the teaching of a man whose ideal was simple goodness must mean the prevalence of evil. The way he showed me seemed indeed impossible to my will, but to my conscience it was and is the only possible way. If there is any point on which he has not convinced my reason it is that of our ability to walk this narrow way alone. Even there he is logical, but as Zola subtly distinguishes in speaking of Tolstoy's essay on "Money," he is not reasonable. Solitude enfeebles and palsies, and it is as comrades and brothers that men must save the world from itself, rather than themselves from the world. It was so the earliest Christians, who had all things common, understood the life of Christ, and I believe that the latest will understand it so.

I have spoken first of the ethical works of Tolstoy, because they are of the first importance to me, but I think that his aesthetical works are as perfect. To my thinking they transcend in truth, which is the highest beauty, all other works of fiction that have been written, and I believe that they do this because they obey the law of the author's own life. His conscience is one ethically and one aesthetically; with his will to be true to himself he cannot be false to his knowledge of others. I thought the last word in literary art had been said to me by the novels of Tourguenief, but it seemed like the first, merely, when I began to acquaint myself with the simpler method of Tolstoy. I came to it by accident, and without any manner, of preoccupation in *The Cossacks*, one of his early books, which had been on my shelves unread for five or six years. I did not know even Tolstoy's name when I opened it, and it was with a kind of amaze that I read it, and felt word by word, and line by line, the truth of a new art in it.

I do not know how it is that the great Russians have the secret of simplicity. Some say it is because they have not a long literary past and are not conventionalized by the usage of many generations of other writers, but this will hardly account for the brotherly directness of their dealing with human nature; the absence of experience elsewhere characterizes the artist with crudeness, and simplicity is the last effect of knowledge. Tolstoy is, of course, the first of them in this supreme grace. He has not only Tourguenief's transparency of style, unclouded by any mist of the personality which we mistakenly value in style, and which ought no more to be there than the artist's personality should be in a portrait; but he has a method which not only seems without artifice, but is so. I can get at the manner of most writers, and tell what it is, but I should be baffled to tell what Tolstoy's manner is; perhaps he has no manner. This appears to me true of his novels, which, with their vast variety of character and incident, are alike in their single endeavor to get the persons living before you, both in their action and in the peculiarly dramatic interpretation of their emotion and cogitation. There are plenty of novelists to tell you that their characters felt and thought so and so, but you have to take it on trust; Tolstoy alone makes you know how and why it was so with them and not otherwise. If there is anything in him which can be copied or burlesqued it is this ability of his to show men inwardly as well as outwardly; it is the only trait of his which I can put my hand on.

After 'The Cossacks' I read 'Anna Karenina' with a deepening sense of the author's unrivalled greatness. I thought that I saw through his eyes a human affair of that most sorrowful sort as it must appear to the Infinite Compassion; the book is a sort of revelation of human nature in circumstances that have been so perpetually lied about that we have almost lost the faculty of perceiving the truth concerning an illicit love. When you have once read 'Anna Karenina' you know how fatally miserable and essentially unhappy such a love must be. But the character of Karenin himself is quite as important as the intrigue of Anna and Vronsky. It is wonderful how such a man, cold, Philistine and even mean in certain ways, towers into a sublimity unknown (to me, at least), in fiction when he forgives, and yet knows that he cannot forgive with dignity. There is something crucial, and something triumphant, not beyond the power, but hitherto beyond the imagination of men in this effect, which is not solicited, not forced, not in the least romantic, but comes naturally, almost inevitably, from the make of man.

The vast prospects, the far-reaching perspectives of 'War and Peace' made it as great a surprise for me in the historical novel as 'Anna Karenina' had been in the study of contemporary life; and its people and interests did not seem more remote, since they are of a civilization always as strange and of a humanity always as known.

I read some shorter stories of Tolstoy's before I came to this greatest work of his: I read 'Scenes of the Siege of Sebastopol,' which is so much of the same quality as 'War and Peace;' and I read 'Policoushka' and most of his short stories with a sense of my unity with their people such as I had never felt with the people of other fiction.

His didactic stories, like all stories of the sort, dwindle into allegories; perhaps they do their work the better for this, with the simple intelligences they address; but I think that where Tolstoy becomes impatient of his office of artist, and prefers to be directly a teacher, he robs himself of more than half his strength with those he can move only through the realization of themselves in others. The simple pathos, and the apparent indirectness of such a tale as that of 'Poticoushka,' the peasant conscript, is of vastly more value to the world at large than all his parables; and 'The Death of Ivan Ilyitch,' the Philistine worldling, will turn the hearts of many more from the love of the world than such pale fables of the early Christian life as "Work while ye have the Light." A man's gifts are not given him for nothing, and the man who has the great gift of dramatic fiction has no right to cast it away or to let it rust out in disuse.

Terrible as the 'Kreutzer Sonata' was, it had a moral effect dramatically which it lost altogether when the author descended to exegesis, and applied to marriage the lesson of one evil marriage. In fine, Tolstoy is certainly not to be held up as infallible. He is very, distinctly fallible, but I think his life is not less instructive because in certain things it seems a failure. There was but one life ever lived upon the earth which was without failure, and that was Christ's, whose erring and stumbling follower Tolstoy is. There is no other example, no other ideal, and the chief use of Tolstoy is to enforce this fact in our age,

after nineteen centuries of hopeless endeavor to substitute ceremony for character, and the creed for the life. I recognize the truth of this without pretending to have been changed in anything but my point of view of it. What I feel sure is that I can never look at life in the mean and sordid way that I did before I read Tolstoy.

Artistically, he has shown me a greatness that he can never teach me. I am long past the age when I could wish to form myself upon another writer, and I do not think I could now insensibly take on the likeness of another; but his work has been a revelation and a delight to me, such as I am sure I can never know again. I do not believe that in the whole course of my reading, and not even in the early moment of my literary enthusiasms, I have known such utter satisfaction in any writer, and this supreme joy has come to me at a time of life when new friendships, not to say new passions, are rare and reluctant. It is as if the best wine at this high feast where I have sat so long had been kept for the last, and I need not deny a miracle in it in order to attest my skill in judging vintages. In fact, I prefer to believe that my life has been full of miracles, and that the good has always come to me at the right time, so that I could profit most by it. I believe if I had not turned the corner of my fiftieth year, when I first knew Tolstoy, I should not have been able to know him as fully as I did. He has been to me that final consciousness, which he speaks of so wisely in his essay on "Life." I came in it to the knowledge of myself in ways I had not dreamt of before, and began at least to discern my relations to the race, without which we are each nothing. The supreme art in literature had its highest effect in making me set art forever below humanity, and it is with the wish to offer the greatest homage to his heart and mind, which any man can pay another, that I close this record with the name of Lyof Tolstoy.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Account of one's reading is an account of one's life

Adam Bede

Affections will not be bidden

Air of looking down on the highest

Alliance of the tragic and the comic

Anthony Trollope

Authors I must call my masters

Capriciousness of memory: what it will hold and what lose

Celebration of the monkey and the goat in us

Conquest of Granada

Contemptible he found our pseudo-equality

Criticism still remains behind all the other literary arts

Dickens is purely democratic

Escaped at night and got into the boy's dreams

Fictions subtle effect for good and for evil on the young

Finer sort myself to be able to enjoy such a fine sort

Had the sense that in her eyes I was a queer boy

Hardly any sort of bloodshed which I would not pardon

Hazlitt
He undid my hands
Hospitable gift of making you at home with him
In school there was as little literature then as there is now
Inexperience takes this effect (literary lewdness) for realit
Jews are still the chosen people
Kindness and gentleness are never out of fashion
Kissing goes by favor, in literature as in life
Lamb
Lewd literature seems to give a sanction to lewdness in the life
Life of Goldsmith
Live it slowly into the past
Lubricity of literature
Made many of my acquaintances very tired of my favorite authors
Men who bully and truckle
Mustache, which in those days devoted a man to wickedness
My own youth now seems to me rather more alien
My reading gave me no standing among the boys
Neither worse nor better because of the theatre
Never appeals to the principle which sniffs, in his reader
None of the passions are reasoned,
Not very distinctly know their dreams from their experiences
Now little notion what it was about, but I love its memory
Our horrible sham of a slave-based freedom
Pendennis
Prejudice against certain words that I cannot overcome
President Garfield
Probably no dramatist ever needed the stage less
Rape of the Lock
Rapture of the new convert could not last
Reservations as to the times when he is not a master
Responsibility of finding him all we have been told he is
Secretly admires the splendors he affects to despise
Self-flattered scorn, his showy sighs, his facile satire
Self-satisfied, intolerant, and hypocritical provinciality
Should probably have wasted the time if I had not read them
Slave-based freedom
So long as we have social inequality we shall have snobs
Society, as we have it, was necessarily a sham
Somehow expressed the feelings of his day
Somewhat too studied grace
Speaks it is not with words and blood, but with words and ink
Spit some hapless victim: make him suffer and the reader laugh
Style is the man, and he cannot hide himself in any garb
Surcharge all imitations of life and character
Surcharged in the serious moods, and caricatured in the comic
Swedenborg
Tales of the Alhambra
The great doctor's orotundity and ronderosity
To be for good or evil whatsoever I really was
Toiled, and I suppose no work is wasted
Trace no discrepancy between reading his plays and seeing them
Tried to like whatever they bade me like

Truth is beyond invention
Unmeet for ladies
Vicar of Wakefield
Vices and foibles which are inherent in the system of things
We did not know that we were poor
We see nothing whole, neither life nor art
What I had not I could hope for without unreason
What we thought ruin, but what was really release
When was love ever reasoned?
Wide leisure of a country village
Women who snub and crawl
Words of learned length and thundering sound
World's memory is equally bad for failure and success
Worst came it was not half so bad as what had gone before
You cannot be at perfect ease with a friend who does not joke
You may do a great deal(of work), and not get on

End of this Project Gutenberg Etext of My Literary Passions
by William Dean Howells

CRITICISM AND FICTION

By William Dean Howells

The question of a final criterion for the appreciation of art is one that perpetually recurs to those interested in any sort of aesthetic endeavor. Mr. John Addington Symonds, in a chapter of 'The Renaissance in Italy' treating of the Bolognese school of painting, which once had so great cry, and was vaunted the supreme exemplar of the grand style, but which he now believes fallen into lasting contempt for its emptiness and soullessness, seeks to determine whether there can be an enduring criterion or not; and his conclusion is applicable to literature as to the other arts. "Our hope," he says, "with regard to the unity of taste in the future then is, that all sentimental or academical seekings after the ideal having been abandoned, momentary theories founded upon idiosyncratic or temporary partialities exploded, and nothing accepted but what is solid and positive, the scientific spirit shall make men progressively more and more conscious of these 'bleibende Verhältnisse,' more and more capable of living in the whole; also, that in proportion as we gain a firmer hold upon our own place in the world, we shall come to comprehend with more instinctive certitude what is simple, natural, and honest, welcoming with gladness all artistic products that exhibit these qualities. The perception of the enlightened man will then be the task

of a healthy person who has made himself acquainted with the laws of evolution in art and in society, and is able to test the excellence of work in any stage from immaturity to decadence by discerning what there is of truth, sincerity, and natural vigor in it."

I

That is to say, as I understand, that moods and tastes and fashions change; people fancy now this and now that; but what is unpretentious and what is true is always beautiful and good, and nothing else is so. This is not saying that fantastic and monstrous and artificial things do not please; everybody knows that they do please immensely for a time, and then, after the lapse of a much longer time, they have the charm of the rococo. Nothing is more curious than the charm that fashion has. Fashion in women's dress, almost every fashion, is somehow delightful, else it would never have been the fashion; but if any one will look through a collection of old fashion plates, he must own that most fashions have been ugly. A few, which could be readily instanced, have been very pretty, and even beautiful, but it is doubtful if these have pleased the greatest number of people. The ugly delights as well as the beautiful, and not merely because the ugly in fashion is associated with the young loveliness of the women who wear the ugly fashions, and wins a grace from them, not because the vast majority of mankind are tasteless, but for some cause that is not perhaps ascertainable. It is quite as likely to return in the fashions of our clothes and houses and furniture, and poetry and fiction and painting, as the beautiful, and it may be from an instinctive or a reasoned sense of this that some of the extreme naturalists have refused to make the old discrimination against it, or to regard the ugly as any less worthy of celebration in art than the beautiful; some of them, in fact, seem to regard it as rather more worthy, if anything. Possibly there is no absolutely ugly, no absolutely beautiful; or possibly the ugly contains always an element of the beautiful better adapted to the general appreciation than the more perfectly beautiful. This is a somewhat discouraging conjecture, but I offer it for no more than it is worth; and I do not pin my faith to the saying of one whom I heard denying, the other day, that a thing of beauty was a joy forever. He contended that Keats's line should have read, "Some things of beauty are sometimes joys forever," and that any assertion beyond this was too hazardous.

II

I should, indeed, prefer another line of Keats's, if I were to profess any formulated creed, and should feel much safer with his "Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty," than even with my friend's reformation of the more quoted verse. It brings us back to the solid ground taken by Mr. Symonds, which is not essentially different from that taken in the great

Mr. Burke's Essay on the Sublime and the Beautiful--a singularly modern book, considering how long ago it was wrote (as the great Mr. Steele would have written the participle a little longer ago), and full of a certain well-mannered and agreeable instruction. In some things it is of that droll little eighteenth-century world, when philosophy had got the neat little universe into the hollow of its hand, and knew just what it was, and what it was for; but it is quite without arrogance. "As for those called critics," the author says, "they have generally sought the rule of the arts in the wrong place; they have sought among poems, pictures, engravings, statues, and buildings; but art can never give the rules that make an art. This is, I believe, the reason why artists in general, and poets principally, have been confined in so narrow a circle; they have been rather imitators of one another than of nature. Critics follow them, and therefore can do little as guides. I can judge but poorly of anything while I measure it by no other standard than itself. The true standard of the arts is in every man's power; and an easy observation of the most common, sometimes of the meanest things, in nature will give the truest lights, where the greatest sagacity and industry that slights such observation must leave us in the dark, or, what is worse, amuse and mislead us by false lights."

If this should happen to be true and it certainly commends itself to acceptance--it might portend an immediate danger to the vested interests of criticism, only that it was written a hundred years ago; and we shall probably have the "sagacity and industry that slights the observation" of nature long enough yet to allow most critics the time to learn some more useful trade than criticism as they pursue it. Nevertheless, I am in hopes that the communistic era in taste foreshadowed by Burke is approaching, and that it will occur within the lives of men now overawed by the foolish old superstition that literature and art are anything but the expression of life, and are to be judged by any other test than that of their fidelity to it. The time is coming, I hope, when each new author, each new artist, will be considered, not in his proportion to any other author or artist, but in his relation to the human nature, known to us all, which it is his privilege, his high duty, to interpret. "The true standard of the artist is in every man's power" already, as Burke says; Michelangelo's "light of the piazza," the glance of the common eye, is and always was the best light on a statue; Goethe's "boys and blackbirds" have in all ages been the real connoisseurs of berries; but hitherto the mass of common men have been afraid to apply their own simplicity, naturalness, and honesty to the appreciation of the beautiful. They have always cast about for the instruction of some one who professed to know better, and who browbeat wholesome common-sense into the self-distrust that ends in sophistication. They have fallen generally to the worst of this bad species, and have been "amused and misled" (how pretty that quaint old use of amuse is!) "by the false lights" of critical vanity and self-righteousness. They have been taught to compare what they see and what they read, not with the things that they have observed and known, but with the things that some other artist or writer has done. Especially if they have themselves the artistic impulse in any direction they are taught to form themselves, not upon life, but upon the masters who became masters only by forming themselves upon life. The seeds of death are planted in them, and they can produce

only the still-born, the academic. They are not told to take their work into the public square and see if it seems true to the chance passer, but to test it by the work of the very men who refused and decried any other test of their own work. The young writer who attempts to report the phrase and carriage of every-day life, who tries to tell just how he has heard men talk and seen them look, is made to feel guilty of something low and unworthy by people who would like to have him show how Shakespeare's men talked and looked, or Scott's, or Thackeray's, or Balzac's, or Hawthorne's, or Dickens's; he is instructed to idealize his personages, that is, to take the life-likeness out of them, and put the book-likeness into them. He is approached in the spirit of the pedantry into which learning, much or little, always decays when it withdraws itself and stands apart from experience in an attitude of imagined superiority, and which would say with the same confidence to the scientist: "I see that you are looking at a grasshopper there which you have found in the grass, and I suppose you intend to describe it. Now don't waste your time and sin against culture in that way. I've got a grasshopper here, which has been evolved at considerable pains and expense out of the grasshopper in general; in fact, it's a type. It's made up of wire and card-board, very prettily painted in a conventional tint, and it's perfectly indestructible. It isn't very much like a real grasshopper, but it's a great deal nicer, and it's served to represent the notion of a grasshopper ever since man emerged from barbarism. You may say that it's artificial. Well, it is artificial; but then it's ideal too; and what you want to do is to cultivate the ideal. You'll find the books full of my kind of grasshopper, and scarcely a trace of yours in any of them. The thing that you are proposing to do is commonplace; but if you say that it isn't commonplace, for the very reason that it hasn't been done before, you'll have to admit that it's photographic."

As I said, I hope the time is coming when not only the artist, but the common, average man, who always "has the standard of the arts in his power," will have also the courage to apply it, and will reject the ideal grasshopper wherever he finds it, in science, in literature, in art, because it is not "simple, natural, and honest," because it is not like a real grasshopper. But I will own that I think the time is yet far off, and that the people who have been brought up on the ideal grasshopper, the heroic grasshopper, the impassioned grasshopper, the self-devoted, adventurous, good old romantic card-board grasshopper, must die out before the simple, honest, and natural grasshopper can have a fair field. I am in no haste to compass the end of these good people, whom I find in the mean time very amusing. It is delightful to meet one of them, either in print or out of it--some sweet elderly lady or excellent gentleman whose youth was pastured on the literature of thirty or forty years ago --and to witness the confidence with which they preach their favorite authors as all the law and the prophets. They have commonly read little or nothing since, or, if they have, they have judged it by a standard taken from these authors, and never dreamed of judging it by nature; they are destitute of the documents in the case of the later writers; they suppose that Balzac was the beginning of realism, and that Zola is its wicked end; they are quite ignorant, but they are ready to talk you down, if you differ from them, with an assumption of knowledge sufficient for

any occasion. The horror, the resentment, with which they receive any question of their literary saints is genuine; you descend at once very far in the moral and social scale, and anything short of offensive personality is too good for you; it is expressed to you that you are one to be avoided, and put down even a little lower than you have naturally fallen.

These worthy persons are not to blame; it is part of their intellectual mission to represent the petrification of taste, and to preserve an image of a smaller and cruder and emptier world than we now live in, a world which was feeling its way towards the simple, the natural, the honest, but was a good deal "amused and misled" by lights now no longer mistakable for heavenly luminaries. They belong to a time, just passing away, when certain authors were considered authorities in certain kinds, when they must be accepted entire and not questioned in any particular. Now we are beginning to see and to say that no author is an authority except in those moments when he held his ear close to Nature's lips and caught her very accent. These moments are not continuous with any authors in the past, and they are rare with all. Therefore I am not afraid to say now that the greatest classics are sometimes not at all great, and that we can profit by them only when we hold them, like our meanest contemporaries, to a strict accounting, and verify their work by the standard of the arts which we all have in our power, the simple, the natural, and the honest.

Those good people must always have a hero, an idol of some sort, and it is droll to find Balzac, who suffered from their sort such bitter scorn and hate for his realism while he was alive, now become a fetich in his turn, to be shaken in the faces of those who will not blindly worship him. But it is no new thing in the history of literature: whatever is established is sacred with those who do not think. At the beginning of the century, when romance was making the same fight against effete classicism which realism is making to-day against effete romanticism, the Italian poet Monti declared that "the romantic was the cold grave of the Beautiful," just as the realistic is now supposed to be. The romantic of that day and the real of this are in certain degree the same. Romanticism then sought, as realism seeks now, to widen the bounds of sympathy, to level every barrier against aesthetic freedom, to escape from the paralysis of tradition. It exhausted itself in this impulse; and it remained for realism to assert that fidelity to experience and probability of motive are essential conditions of a great imaginative literature. It is not a new theory, but it has never before universally characterized literary endeavor. When realism becomes false to itself, when it heaps up facts merely, and maps life instead of picturing it, realism will perish too. Every true realist instinctively knows this, and it is perhaps the reason why he is careful of every fact, and feels himself bound to express or to indicate its meaning at the risk of overmoralizing. In life he finds nothing insignificant; all tells for destiny and character; nothing that God has made is contemptible. He cannot look upon human life and declare this thing or that thing unworthy of notice, any more than the scientist can declare a fact of the material world beneath the dignity of his inquiry. He feels in every nerve the equality of things and the unity of men; his soul is exalted, not by vain

shows and shadows and ideals, but by realities, in which alone the truth lives. In criticism it is his business to break the images of false gods and misshapen heroes, to take away the poor silly, toys that many grown people would still like to play with. He cannot keep terms with "Jack the Giant-killer" or "Puss-in-Boots," under any name or in any place, even when they reappear as the convict Vautrec, or the Marquis de Montrivaut, or the Sworn Thirteen Noblemen. He must say to himself that Balzac, when he imagined these monsters, was not Balzac, he was Dumas; he was not realistic, he was romanticistic.

III

Such a critic will not respect Balzac's good work the less for contemning his bad work. He will easily account for the bad work historically, and when he has recognized it, will trouble himself no further with it. In his view no living man is a type, but a character; now noble, now ignoble; now grand, now little; complex, full of vicissitude. He will not expect Balzac to be always Balzac, and will be perhaps even more attracted to the study of him when he was trying to be Balzac than when he had become so. In 'Cesar Birotteau,' for instance, he will be interested to note how Balzac stood at the beginning of the great things that have followed since in fiction. There is an interesting likeness between his work in this and Nicolas Gogol's in 'Dead Souls,' which serves to illustrate the simultaneity of the literary movement in men of such widely separated civilizations and conditions. Both represent their characters with the touch of exaggeration which typifies; but in bringing his story to a close, Balzac employs a beneficence unknown to the Russian, and almost as universal and as apt as that which smiles upon the fortunes of the good in the Vicar of Wakefield. It is not enough to have rehabilitated Birotteau pecuniarily and socially; he must make him die triumphantly, spectacularly, of an opportune hemorrhage, in the midst of the festivities which celebrate his restoration to his old home. Before this happens, human nature has been laid under contribution right and left for acts of generosity towards the righteous bankrupt; even the king sends him six thousand francs. It is very pretty; it is touching, and brings the lump into the reader's throat; but it is too much, and one perceives that Balzac lived too soon to profit by Balzac. The later men, especially the Russians, have known how to forbear the excesses of analysis, to withhold the weakly recurring descriptive and caressing epithets, to let the characters suffice for themselves. All this does not mean that 'Cesar Birotteau' is not a beautiful and pathetic story, full of shrewdly considered knowledge of men, and of a good art struggling to free itself from self-consciousness. But it does mean that Balzac, when he wrote it, was under the burden of the very traditions which he has helped fiction to throw off. He felt obliged to construct a mechanical plot, to surcharge his characters, to moralize openly and baldly; he permitted himself to "sympathize" with certain of his people, and to point out others for the abhorrence of his readers. This is not so bad in him as it would be in a novelist of our day. It is simply primitive and inevitable, and he is not to be judged by it.

In the beginning of any art even the most gifted worker must be crude in his methods, and we ought to keep this fact always in mind when we turn, say, from the purblind worshippers of Scott to Scott himself, and recognize that he often wrote a style cumbrous and diffuse; that he was tediously analytical where the modern novelist is dramatic, and evolved his characters by means of long-winded explanation and commentary; that, except in the case of his lower-class personages, he made them talk as seldom man and never woman talked; that he was tiresomely descriptive; that on the simplest occasions he went about half a mile to express a thought that could be uttered in ten paces across lots; and that he trusted his readers' intuitions so little that he was apt to rub in his appeals to them. He was probably right: the generation which he wrote for was duller than this; slower-witted, aesthetically untrained, and in maturity not so apprehensive of an artistic intention as the children of to-day. All this is not saying Scott was not a great man; he was a great man, and a very great novelist as compared with the novelists who went before him. He can still amuse young people, but they ought to be instructed how false and how mistaken he often is, with his mediaeval ideals, his blind Jacobitism, his intense devotion to aristocracy and royalty; his acquiescence in the division of men into noble and ignoble, patrician and plebeian, sovereign and subject, as if it were the law of God; for all which, indeed, he is not to blame as he would be if he were one of our contemporaries. Something of this is true of another master, greater than Scott in being less romantic, and inferior in being more German, namely, the great Goethe himself. He taught us, in novels otherwise now antiquated, and always full of German clumsiness, that it was false to good art--which is never anything but the reflection of life--to pursue and round the career of the persons introduced, whom he often allowed to appear and disappear in our knowledge as people in the actual world do. This is a lesson which the writers able to profit by it can never be too grateful for; and it is equally a benefaction to readers; but there is very little else in the conduct of the Goethean novels which is in advance of their time; this remains almost their sole contribution to the science of fiction. They are very primitive in certain characteristics, and unite with their calm, deep insight, an amusing helplessness in dramatization. "Wilhelm retired to his room, and indulged in the following reflections," is a mode of analysis which would not be practised nowadays; and all that fancifulness of nomenclature in Wilhelm Meister is very drolly sentimental and feeble. The adventures with robbers seem as if dreamed out of books of chivalry, and the tendency to allegorization affects one like an endeavor on the author's part to escape from the unrealities which he must have felt harassingly, German as he was. Mixed up with the shadows and illusions are honest, wholesome, every-day people, who have the air of wandering homelessly about among them, without definite direction; and the mists are full of a luminosity which, in spite of them, we know for common-sense and poetry. What is useful in any review of Goethe's methods is the recognition of

the fact, which it must bring, that the greatest master cannot produce a masterpiece in a new kind. The novel was too recently invented in Goethe's day not to be, even in his hands, full of the faults of apprentice work.

V.

In fact, a great master may sin against the "modesty of nature" in many ways, and I have felt this painfully in reading Balzac's romance--it is not worthy the name of novel--'Le Pere Goriot,' which is full of a malarial restlessness, wholly alien to healthful art. After that exquisitely careful and truthful setting of his story in the shabby boarding-house, he fills the scene with figures jerked about by the exaggerated passions and motives of the stage. We cannot have a cynic reasonably wicked, disagreeable, egoistic; we must have a lurid villain of melodrama, a disguised convict, with a vast criminal organization at his command, and

"So dyed double red"

indeed and purpose that he lights up the faces of the horrified spectators with his glare. A father fond of unworthy children, and leading a life of self-denial for their sake, as may probably and pathetically be, is not enough; there must be an imbecile, trembling dotard, willing to promote even the liaisons of his daughters to give them happiness and to teach the sublimity of the paternal instinct. The hero cannot sufficiently be a selfish young fellow, with alternating impulses of greed and generosity; he must superfluously intend a career of iniquitous splendor, and be swerved from it by nothing but the most cataclysmal interpositions. It can be said that without such personages the plot could not be transacted; but so much the worse for the plot. Such a plot had no business to be; and while actions so unnatural are imagined, no mastery can save fiction from contempt with those who really think about it. To Balzac it can be forgiven, not only because in his better mood he gave us such biographies as 'Eugenie Grandet,' but because he wrote at a time when fiction was just beginning to verify the externals of life, to portray faithfully the outside of men and things. It was still held that in order to interest the reader the characters must be moved by the old romantic ideals; we were to be taught that "heroes" and "heroines" existed all around us, and that these abnormal beings needed only to be discovered in their several humble disguises, and then we should see every-day people actuated by the fine frenzy of the creatures of the poets. How false that notion was, few but the critics, who are apt to be rather belated, need now be told. Some of these poor fellows, however, still contend that it ought to be done, and that human feelings and motives, as God made them and as men know them, are not good enough for novel-readers.

This is more explicable than would appear at first glance. The critics --and in speaking of them one always modestly leaves one's self out of

the count, for some reason--when they are not elders ossified in tradition, are apt to be young people, and young people are necessarily conservative in their tastes and theories. They have the tastes and theories of their instructors, who perhaps caught the truth of their day, but whose routine life has been alien to any other truth. There is probably no chair of literature in this country from which the principles now shaping the literary expression of every civilized people are not denounced and confounded with certain objectionable French novels, or which teaches young men anything of the universal impulse which has given us the work, not only of Zola, but of Tourguenief and Tolstoy in Russia, of Bjornson and Ibsen in Norway, of Valdes and Galdos in Spain, of Verga in Italy. Till these younger critics have learned to think as well as to write for themselves they will persist in heaving a sigh, more and more perfunctory, for the truth as it was in Sir Walter, and as it was in Dickens and in Hawthorne. Presently all will have been changed; they will have seen the new truth in larger and larger degree; and when it shall have become the old truth, they will perhaps see it all.

VI.

In the mean time the average of criticism is not wholly bad with us. To be sure, the critic sometimes appears in the panoply of the savages whom we have supplanted on this continent; and it is hard to believe that his use of the tomahawk and the scalping-knife is a form of conservative surgery. It is still his conception of his office that he should assail those who differ with him in matters of taste or opinion; that he must be rude with those he does not like. It is too largely his superstition that because he likes a thing it is good, and because he dislikes a thing it is bad; the reverse is quite possibly the case, but he is yet indefinitely far from knowing that in affairs of taste his personal preference enters very little. Commonly he has no principles, but only an assortment of prepossessions for and against; and this otherwise very perfect character is sometimes uncandid to the verge of dishonesty. He seems not to mind misstating the position of any one he supposes himself to disagree with, and then attacking him for what he never said, or even implied; he thinks this is droll, and appears not to suspect that it is immoral. He is not tolerant; he thinks it a virtue to be intolerant; it is hard for him to understand that the same thing may be admirable at one time and deplorable at another; and that it is really his business to classify and analyze the fruits of the human mind very much as the naturalist classifies the objects of his study, rather than to praise or blame them; that there is a measure of the same absurdity in his trampling on a poem, a novel, or an essay that does not please him as in the botanist's grinding a plant underfoot because he does not find it pretty. He does not conceive that it is his business rather to identify the species and then explain how and where the specimen is imperfect and irregular. If he could once acquire this simple idea of his duty he would be much more agreeable company than he now is, and a more useful member of society; though considering the hard conditions under which he works, his necessity of writing hurriedly from an imperfect examination

of far more books, on a greater variety of subjects, than he can even hope to read, the average American critic--the ordinary critic of commerce, so to speak--is even now very, well indeed. Collectively he is more than this; for the joint effect of our criticism is the pretty thorough appreciation of any book submitted to it

VII.

The misfortune rather than the fault of our individual critic is that he is the heir of the false theory and bad manners of the English school. The theory of that school has apparently been that almost any person of glib and lively expression is competent to write of almost any branch of polite literature; its manners are what we know. The American, whom it has largely formed, is by nature very glib and very lively, and commonly his criticism, viewed as imaginative work, is more agreeable than that of the Englishman; but it is, like the art of both countries, apt to be amateurish. In some degree our authors have freed themselves from English models; they have gained some notion of the more serious work of the Continent: but it is still the ambition of the American critic to write like the English critic, to show his wit if not his learning, to strive to eclipse the author under review rather than illustrate him. He has not yet caught on to the fact that it is really no part of his business to display himself, but that it is altogether his duty to place a book in such a light that the reader shall know its class, its function, its character. The vast good-nature of our people preserves us from the worst effects of this criticism without principles. Our critic, at his lowest, is rarely malignant; and when he is rude or untruthful, it is mostly without truculence; I suspect that he is often offensive without knowing that he is so. Now and then he acts simply under instruction from higher authority, and denounces because it is the tradition of his publication to do so. In other cases the critic is obliged to support his journal's reputation for severity, or for wit, or for morality, though he may himself be entirely amiable, dull, and wicked; this necessity more or less warps his verdicts.

The worst is that he is personal, perhaps because it is so easy and so natural to be personal, and so instantly attractive. In this respect our criticism has not improved from the accession of numbers of ladies to its ranks, though we still hope so much from women in our politics when they shall come to vote. They have come to write, and with the effect to increase the amount of little-digging, which rather superabounded in our literary criticism before. They "know what they like"--that pernicious maxim of those who do not know what they ought to like and they pass readily from censuring an author's performance to censuring him. They bring a stock of lively misapprehensions and prejudices to their work; they would rather have heard about than known about a book; and they take kindly to the public wish to be amused rather than edified. But neither have they so much harm in them: they, too, are more ignorant than malevolent.

VIII.

Our criticism is disabled by the unwillingness of the critic to learn from an author, and his readiness to mistrust him. A writer passes his whole life in fitting himself for a certain kind of performance; the critic does not ask why, or whether the performance is good or bad, but if he does not like the kind, he instructs the writer to go off and do some other sort of thing--usually the sort that has been done already, and done sufficiently. If he could once understand that a man who has written the book he dislikes, probably knows infinitely more about its kind and his own fitness for doing it than any one else, the critic might learn something, and might help the reader to learn; but by putting himself in a false position, a position of superiority, he is of no use. He is not to suppose that an author has committed an offence against him by writing the kind of book he does not like; he will be far more profitably employed on behalf of the reader in finding out whether they had better not both like it. Let him conceive of an author as not in any wise on trial before him, but as a reflection of this or that aspect of life, and he will not be tempted to browbeat him or bully him.

The critic need not be impolite even to the youngest and weakest author. A little courtesy, or a good deal, a constant perception of the fact that a book is not a misdemeanor, a decent self-respect that must forbid the civilized man the savage pleasure of wounding, are what I would ask for our criticism, as something which will add sensibly to its present lustre.

IX.

I would have my fellow-critics consider what they are really in the world for. The critic must perceive, if he will question himself more carefully, that his office is mainly to ascertain facts and traits of literature, not to invent or denounce them; to discover principles, not to establish them; to report, not to create.

It is so much easier to say that you like this or dislike that, than to tell why one thing is, or where another thing comes from, that many flourishing critics will have to go out of business altogether if the scientific method comes in, for then the critic will have to know something besides his own mind. He will have to know something of the laws of that mind, and of its generic history.

The history of all literature shows that even with the youngest and weakest author criticism is quite powerless against his will to do his own work in his own way; and if this is the case in the green wood, how much more in the dry! It has been thought by the sentimentalist that criticism, if it cannot cure, can at least kill, and Keats was long

alleged in proof of its efficacy in this sort. But criticism neither cured nor killed Keats, as we all now very well know. It wounded, it cruelly hurt him, no doubt; and it is always in the power of the critic to give pain to the author--the meanest critic to the greatest author--for no one can help feeling a rudeness. But every literary movement has been violently opposed at the start, and yet never stayed in the least, or arrested, by criticism; every author has been condemned for his virtues, but in no wise changed by it. In the beginning he reads the critics; but presently perceiving that he alone makes or mars himself, and that they have no instruction for him, he mostly leaves off reading them, though he is always glad of their kindness or grieved by their harshness when he chances upon it. This, I believe, is the general experience, modified, of course, by exceptions.

Then, are we critics of no use in the world? I should not like to think that, though I am not quite ready to define our use. More than one sober thinker is inclining at present to suspect that aesthetically or specifically we are of no use, and that we are only useful historically; that we may register laws, but not enact them. I am not quite prepared to admit that aesthetic criticism is useless, though in view of its futility in any given instance it is hard to deny that it is so. It certainly seems as useless against a book that strikes the popular fancy, and prospers on in spite of condemnation by the best critics, as it is against a book which does not generally please, and which no critical favor can make acceptable. This is so common a phenomenon that I wonder it has never hitherto suggested to criticism that its point of view was altogether mistaken, and that it was really necessary to judge books not as dead things, but as living things--things which have an influence and a power irrespective of beauty and wisdom, and merely as expressions of actuality in thought and feeling. Perhaps criticism has a cumulative and final effect; perhaps it does some good we do not know of. It apparently does not affect the author directly, but it may reach him through the reader. It may in some cases enlarge or diminish his audience for a while, until he has thoroughly measured and tested his own powers. If criticism is to affect literature at all, it must be through the writers who have newly left the starting-point, and are reasonably uncertain of the race, not with those who have won it again and again in their own way.

X.

Sometimes it has seemed to me that the crudest expression of any creative art is better than the finest comment upon it. I have sometimes suspected that more thinking, more feeling certainly, goes to the creation of a poor novel than to the production of a brilliant criticism; and if any novel of our time fails to live a hundred years, will any censure of it live? Who can endure to read old reviews? One can hardly read them if they are in praise of one's own books.

The author neglected or overlooked need not despair for that reason, if

he will reflect that criticism can neither make nor unmake authors; that there have not been greater books since criticism became an art than there were before; that in fact the greatest books seem to have come much earlier.

That which criticism seems most certainly to have done is to have put a literary consciousness into books unfelt in the early masterpieces, but unfelt now only in the books of men whose lives have been passed in activities, who have been used to employing language as they would have employed any implement, to effect an object, who have regarded a thing to be said as in no wise different from a thing to be done. In this sort I have seen no modern book so unconscious as General Grant's 'Personal Memoirs.' The author's one end and aim is to get the facts out in words. He does not cast about for phrases, but takes the word, whatever it is, that will best give his meaning, as if it were a man or a force of men for the accomplishment of a feat of arms. There is not a moment wasted in preening and prettifying, after the fashion of literary men; there is no thought of style, and so the style is good as it is in the 'Book of Chronicles,' as it is in the 'Pilgrim's Progress,' with a peculiar, almost plebeian, plainness at times. There is no more attempt at dramatic effect than there is at ceremonious pose; things happen in that tale of a mighty war as they happened in the mighty war itself, without setting, without artificial reliefs one after another, as if they were all of one quality and degree. Judgments are delivered with the same unimposing quiet; no awe surrounds the tribunal except that which comes from the weight and justice of the opinions; it is always an unaffected, unpretentious man who is talking; and throughout he prefers to wear the uniform of a private, with nothing of the general about him but the shoulder-straps, which he sometimes forgets.

XI.

Canon Fairfax's opinions of literary criticism are very much to my liking, perhaps because when I read them I found them so like my own, already delivered in print. He tells the critics that "they are in no sense the legislators of literature, barely even its judges and police"; and he reminds them of Mr. Ruskin's saying that "a bad critic is probably the most mischievous person in the world," though a sense of their relative proportion to the whole of life would perhaps acquit the worst among them of this extreme of culpability. A bad critic is as bad a thing as can be, but, after all, his mischief does not carry very far. Otherwise it would be mainly the conventional books and not the original books which would survive; for the censor who imagines himself a law-giver can give law only to the imitative and never to the creative mind. Criticism has condemned whatever was, from time to time, fresh and vital in literature; it has always fought the new good thing in behalf of the old good thing; it has invariably fostered and encouraged the tame, the trite, the negative. Yet upon the whole it is the native, the novel, the positive that has survived in literature. Whereas, if bad criticism were the most mischievous thing in the world, in the full implication of the

words, it must have been the tame, the trite, the negative, that survived.

Bad criticism is mischievous enough, however; and I think that much if not most current criticism as practised among the English and Americans is bad, is falsely principled, and is conditioned in evil. It is falsely principled because it is unprincipled, or without principles; and it is conditioned in evil because it is almost wholly anonymous. At the best its opinions are not conclusions from certain easily verifiable principles, but are effects from the worship of certain models. They are in so far quite worthless, for it is the very nature of things that the original mind cannot conform to models; it has its norm within itself; it can work only in its own way, and by its self-given laws. Criticism does not inquire whether a work is true to life, but tacitly or explicitly compares it with models, and tests it by them. If literary art travelled by any such road as criticism would have it go, it would travel in a vicious circle, and would arrive only at the point of departure. Yet this is the course that criticism must always prescribe when it attempts to give laws. Being itself artificial, it cannot conceive of the original except as the abnormal. It must altogether reconceive its office before it can be of use to literature. It must reduce this to the business of observing, recording, and comparing; to analyzing the material before it, and then synthetizing its impressions. Even then, it is not too much to say that literature as an art could get on perfectly well without it. Just as many good novels, poems, plays, essays, sketches, would be written if there were no such thing as criticism in the literary world, and no more bad ones.

But it will be long before criticism ceases to imagine itself a controlling force, to give itself airs of sovereignty, and to issue decrees. As it exists it is mostly a mischief, though not the greatest mischief; but it may be greatly ameliorated in character and softened in manner by the total abolition of anonymity.

I think it would be safe to say that in no other relation of life is so much brutality permitted by civilized society as in the criticism of literature and the arts. Canon Farrar is quite right in reproaching literary criticism with the uncandor of judging an author without reference to his aims; with pursuing certain writers from spite and prejudice, and mere habit; with misrepresenting a book by quoting a phrase or passage apart from the context; with magnifying misprints and careless expressions into important faults; with abusing an author for his opinions; with base and personal motives.

Every writer of experience knows that certain critical journals will condemn his work without regard to its quality, even if it has never been his fortune to learn, as one author did from a repentent reviewer, that in a journal pretending to literary taste his books were given out for review with the caution, "Remember that the Clarion is opposed to Mr. Blank's books."

The final conclusion appears to be that the man, or even the young lady, who is given a gun, and told to shoot at some passer from behind a hedge,

is placed in circumstances of temptation almost too strong for human nature.

XII.

As I have already intimated, I doubt the more lasting effects of unjust criticism. It is no part of my belief that Keats's fame was long delayed by it, or Wordsworth's, or Browning's. Something unwonted, unexpected, in the quality of each delayed his recognition; each was not only a poet, he was a revolution, a new order of things, to which the critical perceptions and habitudes had painfully to adjust themselves: But I have no question of the gross and stupid injustice with which these great men were used, and of the barbarization of the public mind by the sight of the wrong inflicted on them with impunity. This savage condition still persists in the toleration of anonymous criticism, an abuse that ought to be as extinct as the torture of witnesses. It is hard enough to treat a fellow-author with respect even when one has to address him, name to name, upon the same level, in plain day; swooping down upon him in the dark, panoplied in the authority of a great journal, it is impossible.

Every now and then some idealist comes forward and declares that you should say nothing in criticism of a man's book which you would not say of it to his face. But I am afraid this is asking too much. I am afraid it would put an end to all criticism; and that if it were practised literature would be left to purify itself. I have no doubt literature would do this; but in such a state of things there would be no provision for the critics. We ought not to destroy critics, we ought to reform them, or rather transform them, or turn them from the assumption of authority to a realization of their true function in the civilized state. They are no worse at heart, probably, than many others, and there are probably good husbands and tender fathers, loving daughters and careful mothers, among them.

It is evident to any student of human nature that the critic who is obliged to sign his review will be more careful of an author's feelings than he would if he could intangibly and invisibly deal with him as the representative of a great journal. He will be loath to have his name connected with those perversions and misstatements of an author's meaning in which the critic now indulges without danger of being turned out of honest company. He will be in some degree forced to be fair and just with a book he dislikes; he will not wish to misrepresent it when his sin can be traced directly to him in person; he will not be willing to voice the prejudice of a journal which is "opposed to the books" of this or that author; and the journal itself, when it is no longer responsible for the behavior of its critic, may find it interesting and profitable to give to an author his innings when he feels wronged by a reviewer and desires to right himself; it may even be eager to offer him the opportunity. We shall then, perhaps, frequently witness the spectacle of authors turning upon their reviewers, and improving their manners and morals by confronting them in public with the errors they may now commit with impunity. Many an author smarts under injuries and indignities

which he might resent to the advantage of literature and civilization, if he were not afraid of being browbeaten by the journal whose nameless critic has outraged him.

The public is now of opinion that it involves loss of dignity to creative talent to try to right itself if wronged, but here we are without the requisite statistics. Creative talent may come off with all the dignity it went in with, and it may accomplish a very good work in demolishing criticism.

In any other relation of life the man who thinks himself wronged tries to right himself, violently, if he is a mistaken man, and lawfully if he is a wise man or a rich one, which is practically the same thing. But the author, dramatist, painter, sculptor, whose book, play, picture, statue, has been unfairly dealt with, as he believes, must make no effort to right himself with the public; he must bear his wrong in silence; he is even expected to grin and bear it, as if it were funny. Every body understands that it is not funny to him, not in the least funny, but everybody says that he cannot make an effort to get the public to take his point of view without loss of dignity. This is very odd, but it is the fact, and I suppose that it comes from the feeling that the author, dramatist, painter, sculptor, has already said the best he can for his side in his book, play, picture, statue. This is partly true, and yet if he wishes to add something more to prove the critic wrong, I do not see how his attempt to do so should involve loss of dignity. The public, which is so jealous for his dignity, does not otherwise use him as if he were a very great and invaluable creature; if he fails, it lets him starve like any one else. I should say that he lost dignity or not as he behaved, in his effort to right himself, with petulance or with principle. If he betrayed a wounded vanity, if he impugned the motives and accused the lives of his critics, I should certainly feel that he was losing dignity; but if he temperately examined their theories, and tried to show where they were mistaken, I think he would not only gain dignity, but would perform a very useful work.

XIII.

I would beseech the literary critics of our country to disabuse themselves of the mischievous notion that they are essential to the progress of literature in the way critics have imagined. Canon Farrar confesses that with the best will in the world to profit by the many criticisms of his books, he has never profited in the least by any of them; and this is almost the universal experience of authors. It is not always the fault of the critics. They sometimes deal honestly and fairly by a book, and not so often they deal adequately. But in making a book, if it is at all a good book, the author has learned all that is knowable about it, and every strong point and every weak point in it, far more accurately than any one else can possibly learn them. He has learned to do better than well for the future; but if his book is bad, he cannot be taught anything about it from the outside. It will perish; and if he has

not the root of literature in him, he will perish as an author with it. But what is it that gives tendency in art, then? What is it makes people like this at one time, and that at another? Above all, what makes a better fashion change for a worse; how can the ugly come to be preferred to the beautiful; in other words, how can an art decay?

This question came up in my mind lately with regard to English fiction and its form, or rather its formlessness. How, for instance, could people who had once known the simple verity, the refined perfection of Miss Austere, enjoy, anything less refined and less perfect?

With her example before them, why should not English novelists have gone on writing simply, honestly, artistically, ever after? One would think it must have been impossible for them to do otherwise, if one did not remember, say, the lamentable behavior of the actors who support Mr. Jefferson, and their theatricality in the very presence of his beautiful naturalness. It is very difficult, that simplicity, and nothing is so hard as to be honest, as the reader, if he has ever happened to try it, must know. "The big bow-wow I can do myself, like anyone going," said Scott, but he owned that the exquisite touch of Miss Austere was denied him; and it seems certainly to have been denied in greater or less measure to all her successors. But though reading and writing come by nature, as Dogberry justly said, a taste in them may be cultivated, or once cultivated, it may be preserved; and why was it not so among those poor islanders? One does not ask such things in order to be at the pains of answering them one's self, but with the hope that some one else will take the trouble to do so, and I propose to be rather a silent partner in the enterprise, which I shall leave mainly to Senor Armando Palacio Valdes. This delightful author will, however, only be able to answer my question indirectly from the essay on fiction with which he prefaces one of his novels, the charming story of 'The Sister of San Sulpizio,' and I shall have some little labor in fitting his saws to my instances. It is an essay which I wish every one intending to read, or even to write, a novel, might acquaint himself with; for it contains some of the best and clearest things which have been said of the art of fiction in a time when nearly all who practise it have turned to talk about it.

Senor Valdes is a realist, but a realist according to his own conception of realism; and he has some words of just censure for the French naturalists, whom he finds unnecessarily, and suspects of being sometimes even mercenarily, nasty. He sees the wide difference that passes between this naturalism and the realism of the English and Spanish; and he goes somewhat further than I should go in condemning it. "The French naturalism represents only a moment, and an insignificant part of life." . . . It is characterized by sadness and narrowness. The prototype of this literature is the 'Madame Bovary' of Flaubert. I am an admirer of this novelist, and especially of this novel; but often in thinking of it I have said, How dreary would literature be if it were no more than this! There is something antipathetic and gloomy and limited in it, as there is in modern French life; but this seems to me exactly the best possible reason for its being. I believe with Senor Valdes that "no literature can live long without joy," not because of its mistaken aesthetics, however, but because no civilization can live long without joy. The

expression of French life will change when French life changes; and French naturalism is better at its worst than French unnaturalism at its best. "No one," as Senor Valdes truly says, "can rise from the perusal of a naturalistic book . . . without a vivid desire to escape" from the wretched world depicted in it, "and a purpose, more or less vague, of helping to better the lot and morally elevate the abject beings who figure in it. Naturalistic art, then, is not immoral in itself, for then it would not merit the name of art; for though it is not the business of art to preach morality, still I think that, resting on a divine and spiritual principle, like the idea of the beautiful, it is perforce moral. I hold much more immoral other books which, under a glamour of something spiritual and beautiful and sublime, portray the vices in which we are allied to the beasts. Such, for example, are the works of Octave Feuillet, Arsene Houssaye, Georges Ohnet, and other contemporary novelists much in vogue among the higher classes of society."

But what is this idea of the beautiful which art rests upon, and so becomes moral? "The man of our time," says Senor Valdes, "wishes to know everything and enjoy everything: he turns the objective of a powerful equatorial towards the heavenly spaces where gravitates the infinitude of the stars, just as he applies the microscope to the infinitude of the smallest insects; for their laws are identical. His experience, united with intuition, has convinced him that in nature there is neither great nor small; all is equal. All is equally grand, all is equally just, all is equally beautiful, because all is equally divine." But beauty, Senor Valdes explains, exists in the human spirit, and is the beautiful effect which it receives from the true meaning of things; it does not matter what the things are, and it is the function of the artist who feels this effect to impart it to others. I may add that there is no joy in art except this perception of the meaning of things and its communication; when you have felt it, and portrayed it in a poem, a symphony, a novel, a statue, a picture, an edifice, you have fulfilled the purpose for which you were born an artist.

The reflection of exterior nature in the individual spirit, Senor Valdes believes to be the fundamental of art. "To say, then, that the artist must not copy but create is nonsense, because he can in no wise copy, and in no wise create. He who sets deliberately about modifying nature, shows that he has not felt her beauty, and therefore cannot make others feel it. The puerile desire which some artists without genius manifest to go about selecting in nature, not what seems to them beautiful, but what they think will seem beautiful to others, and rejecting what may displease them, ordinarily produces cold and insipid works. For, instead of exploring the illimitable fields of reality, they cling to the forms invented by other artists who have succeeded, and they make statues of statues, poems of poems, novels of novels. It is entirely false that the great romantic, symbolic, or classic poets modified nature; such as they have expressed her they felt her; and in this view they are as much realists as ourselves. In like manner if in the realistic tide that now bears us on there are some spirits who feel nature in another way, in the romantic way, or the classic way, they would not falsify her in expressing her so. Only those falsify her who, without feeling classic wise or romantic wise, set about being classic or romantic, wearisomely

reproducing the models of former ages; and equally those who, without sharing the sentiment of realism, which now prevails, force themselves to be realists merely to follow the fashion."

The pseudo-realists, in fact, are the worse offenders, to my thinking, for they sin against the living; whereas those who continue to celebrate the heroic adventures of "Puss-in-Boots" and the hair-breadth escapes of "Tom Thumb," under various aliases, only cast disrespect upon the immortals who have passed beyond these noises.

XIV.

"The principal cause," our Spaniard says, "of the decadence of contemporary literature is found, to my thinking, in the vice which has been very graphically called effectism, or the itch of awaking at all cost in the reader vivid and violent emotions, which shall do credit to the invention and originality of the writer. This vice has its roots in human nature itself, and more particularly in that of the artist; he has always some thing feminine in him, which tempts him to coquet with the reader, and display qualities that he thinks will astonish him, as women laugh for no reason, to show their teeth when they have them white and small and even, or lift their dresses to show their feet when there is no mud in the street What many writers nowadays wish, is to produce an effect, grand and immediate, to play the part of geniuses. For this they have learned that it is only necessary to write exaggerated works in any sort, since the vulgar do not ask that they shall be quietly made to think and feel, but that they shall be startled; and among the vulgar, of course, I include the great part of those who write literary criticism, and who constitute the worst vulgar, since they teach what they do not know There are many persons who suppose that the highest proof an artist can give of his fantasy is the invention of a complicated plot, spiced with perils, surprises, and suspenses; and that anything else is the sign of a poor and tepid imagination. And not only people who seem cultivated, but are not so, suppose this, but there are sensible persons, and even sagacious and intelligent critics, who sometimes allow themselves to be hoodwinked by the dramatic mystery and the surprising and fantastic scenes of a novel. They own it is all false; but they admire the imagination, what they call the 'power' of the author. Very well; all I have to say is that the 'power' to dazzle with strange incidents, to entertain with complicated plots and impossible characters, now belongs to some hundreds of writers in Europe; while there are not much above a dozen who know how to interest with the ordinary events of life, and by the portrayal of characters truly human. If the former is a talent, it must be owned that it is much commoner than the latter If we are to rate novelists according to their fecundity, or the riches of their invention, we must put Alexander Dumas above Cervantes. Cervantes wrote a novel with the simplest plot, without belying much or little the natural and logical course of events. This novel which was called 'Don Quixote,' is perhaps the greatest work of human wit. Very well; the same Cervantes, mischievously influenced

afterwards by the ideas of the vulgar, who were then what they are now and always will be, attempted to please them by a work giving a lively proof of his inventive talent, and wrote the 'Persiles and Sigismunda,' where the strange incidents, the vivid complications, the surprises, the pathetic scenes, succeed one another so rapidly and constantly that it really fatigues you But in spite of this flood of invention, imagine," says Seflor Valdes, "the place that Cervantes would now occupy in the heaven of art, if he had never written 'Don Quixote,'" but only 'Persiles and Sigismund!'

From the point of view of modern English criticism, which likes to be melted, and horrified, and astonished, and blood-curdled, and goose-fleshed, no less than to be "chipped up" in fiction, Senor Valdes were indeed incorrigible. Not only does he despise the novel of complicated plot, and everywhere prefer 'Don Quixote' to 'Persiles and Sigismunda,' but he has a lively contempt for another class of novels much in favor with the gentilities of all countries. He calls their writers "novelists of the world," and he says that more than any others they have the rage of effectism. "They do not seek to produce effect by novelty and invention in plot . . . they seek it in character. For this end they begin by deliberately falsifying human feelings, giving them a paradoxical appearance completely inadmissible Love that disguises itself as hate, incomparable energy under the cloak of weakness, virginal innocence under the aspect of malice and impudence, wit masquerading as folly, etc., etc. By this means they hope to make an effect of which they are incapable through the direct, frank, and conscientious study of character." He mentions Octave Feuillet as the greatest offender in this sort among the French, and Bulwer among the English; but Dickens is full of it (Boffin in 'Our Mutual Friend' will suffice for all example), and most drama is witness of the result of this effectism when allowed full play.

But what, then, if he is not pleased with Dumas, or with the effectists who delight genteel people at all the theatres, and in most of the romances, what, I ask, will satisfy this extremely difficult Spanish gentleman? He would pretend, very little. Give him simple, lifelike character; that is all he wants. "For me, the only condition of character is that it be human, and that is enough. If I wished to know what was human, I should study humanity."

But, Senor Valdes, Senor Valdes! Do not you know that this small condition of yours implies in its fulfilment hardly less than the gift of the whole earth? You merely ask that the character portrayed in fiction be human; and you suggest that the novelist should study humanity if he would know whether his personages are human. This appears to me the cruelest irony, the most sarcastic affectation of humility. If you had asked that character in fiction be superhuman, or subterhuman, or preterhuman, or intrahuman, and had bidden the novelist go, not to humanity, but the humanities, for the proof of his excellence, it would have been all very easy. The books are full of those "creations," of every pattern, of all ages, of both sexes; and it is so much handier to get at books than to get at Men; and when you have portrayed "passion" instead of feeling, and used "power" instead of common-sense, and shown

yourself a "genius" instead of an artist, the applause is so prompt and the glory so cheap, that really anything else seems wickedly wasteful of one's time. One may not make one's reader enjoy or suffer nobly, but one may give him the kind of pleasure that arises from conjuring, or from a puppet-show, or a modern stage-play, and leave him, if he is an old fool, in the sort of stupor that comes from hitting the pipe; or if he is a young fool, half crazed with the spectacle of qualities and impulses like his own in an apotheosis of achievement and fruition far beyond any earthly experience.

But apparently Senor Valdes would not think this any great artistic result. "Things that appear ugliest in reality to the spectator who is not an artist, are transformed into beauty and poetry when the spirit of the artist possesses itself of them. We all take part every day in a thousand domestic scenes, every day we see a thousand pictures in life, that do not make any impression upon us, or if they make any it is one of repugnance; but let the novelist come, and without betraying the truth, but painting them as they appear to his vision, he produces a most interesting work, whose perusal enchants us. That which in life left us indifferent, or repelled us, in art delights us. Why? Simply because the artist has made us see the idea that resides in it. Let not the novelists, then, endeavor to add anything to reality, to turn it and twist it, to restrict it. Since nature has endowed them with this precious gift of discovering ideas in things, their work will be beautiful if they paint these as they appear. But if the reality does not impress them, in vain will they strive to make their work impress others."

XV.

Which brings us again, after this long way about, to Jane Austen and her novels, and that troublesome question about them. She was great and they were beautiful, because she and they were honest, and dealt with nature nearly a hundred years ago as realism deals with it to-day. Realism is nothing more and nothing less than the truthful treatment of material, and Jane Austen was the first and the last of the English novelists to treat material with entire truthfulness. Because she did this, she remains the most artistic of the English novelists, and alone worthy to be matched with the great Scandinavian and Slavic and Latin artists. It is not a question of intellect, or not wholly that. The English have mind enough; but they have not taste enough; or, rather, their taste has been perverted by their false criticism, which is based upon personal preference, and not upon principle; which instructs a man to think that what he likes is good, instead of teaching him first to distinguish what is good before he likes it. The art of fiction, as Jane Austen knew it, declined from her through Scott, and Bulwer, and Dickens, and Charlotte Bronte, and Thackeray, and even George Eliot, because the mania of romanticism had seized upon all Europe, and these great writers could not escape the taint of their time; but it has shown few signs of recovery in England, because English criticism, in the presence of the Continental

masterpieces, has continued provincial and special and personal, and has expressed a love and a hate which had to do with the quality of the artist rather than the character of his work. It was inevitable that in their time the English romanticists should treat, as Senor Valdes says, "the barbarous customs of the Middle Ages, softening and distorting them, as Walter Scott and his kind did;" that they should "devote themselves to falsifying nature, refining and subtilizing sentiment, and modifying psychology after their own fancy," like Bulwer and Dickens, as well as like Rousseau and Madame de Stael, not to mention Balzac, the worst of all that sort at his worst. This was the natural course of the disease; but it really seems as if it were their criticism that was to blame for the rest: not, indeed, for the performance of this writer or that, for criticism can never affect the actual doing of a thing; but for the esteem in which this writer or that is held through the perpetuation of false ideals. The only observer of English middle-class life since Jane Austen worthy to be named with her was not George Eliot, who was first ethical and then artistic, who transcended her in everything but the form and method most essential to art, and there fell hopelessly below her. It was Anthony Trollope who was most like her in simple honesty and instinctive truth, as unphilosophized as the light of common day; but he was so warped from a wholesome ideal as to wish at times to be like Thackeray, and to stand about in his scene, talking it over with his hands in his pockets, interrupting the action, and spoiling the illusion in which alone the truth of art resides. Mainly, his instinct was too much for his ideal, and with a low view of life in its civic relations and a thoroughly bourgeois soul, he yet produced works whose beauty is surpassed only by the effect of a more poetic writer in the novels of Thomas Hardy. Yet if a vote of English criticism even at this late day, when all Continental Europe has the light of aesthetic truth, could be taken, the majority against these artists would be overwhelmingly in favor of a writer who had so little artistic sensibility, that he never hesitated on any occasion, great or small, to make a foray among his characters, and catch them up to show them to the reader and tell him how beautiful or ugly they were; and cry out over their amazing properties.

"How few materials," says Emerson, "are yet used by our arts! The mass of creatures and of qualities are still hid and expectant," and to break new ground is still one of the uncommonest and most heroic of the virtues. The artists are not alone to blame for the timidity that keeps them in the old furrows of the worn-out fields; most of those whom they live to please, or live by pleasing, prefer to have them remain there; it wants rare virtue to appreciate what is new, as well as to invent it; and the "easy things to understand" are the conventional things. This is why the ordinary English novel, with its hackneyed plot, scenes, and figures, is more comfortable to the ordinary American than an American novel, which deals, at its worst, with comparatively new interests and motives. To adjust one's self to the enjoyment of these costs an intellectual effort, and an intellectual effort is what no ordinary person likes to make. It is only the extraordinary person who can say, with Emerson: "I ask not for the great, the remote, the romantic . . . I embrace the common; I sit at the feet of the familiar and the low . . . Man is surprised to find that things near are not less beautiful and wondrous than things remote . . . The perception of the worth of the vulgar

is fruitful in discoveries The foolish man wonders at the unusual, but the wise man at the usual To-day always looks mean to the thoughtless; but to-day is a king in disguise Banks and tariffs, the newspaper and caucus, Methodism and Unitarianism, are flat and dull to dull people, but rest on the same foundations of wonder as the town of Troy and the temple of Delphos."

Perhaps we ought not to deny their town of Troy and their temple of Delphos to the dull people; but if we ought, and if we did, they would still insist upon having them. An English novel, full of titles and rank, is apparently essential to the happiness of such people; their weak and childish imagination is at home in its familiar environment; they know what they are reading; the fact that it is hash many times warmed over reassures them; whereas a story of our own life, honestly studied and faithfully represented, troubles them with varied misgiving. They are not sure that it is literature; they do not feel that it is good society; its characters, so like their own, strike them as commonplace; they say they do not wish to know such people.

Everything in England is appreciable to the literary sense, while the sense of the literary worth of things in America is still faint and weak with most people, with the vast majority who "ask for the great, the remote, the romantic," who cannot "embrace the common," cannot "sit at the feet of the familiar and the low," in the good company of Emerson. We are all, or nearly all, struggling to be distinguished from the mass, and to be set apart in select circles and upper classes like the fine people we have read about. We are really a mixture of the plebeian ingredients of the whole world; but that is not bad; our vulgarity consists in trying to ignore "the worth of the vulgar," in believing that the superfine is better.

XVII.

Another Spanish novelist of our day, whose books have given me great pleasure, is so far from being of the same mind of Senor Valdes about fiction that he boldly declares himself, in the preface to his 'Pepita Ximenez,' "an advocate of art for art's sake." I heartily agree with him that it is "in very bad taste, always impertinent and often pedantic, to attempt to prove theses by writing stories," and yet if it is true that "the object of a novel should be to charm through a faithful representation of human actions and human passions, and to create by this fidelity to nature a beautiful work," and if "the creation of the beautiful" is solely "the object of art," it never was and never can be solely its effect as long as men are men and women are women. If ever the race is resolved into abstract qualities, perhaps this may happen; but till then the finest effect of the "beautiful" will be ethical and not aesthetic merely. Morality penetrates all things, it is the soul of all things. Beauty may clothe it on, whether it is false morality and an evil soul, or whether it is true and a good soul. In the one case the beauty will corrupt, and in the other it will edify, and in either case

it will infallibly and inevitably have an ethical effect, now light, now grave, according as the thing is light or grave. We cannot escape from this; we are shut up to it by the very conditions of our being. For the moment, it is charming to have a story end happily, but after one has lived a certain number of years, and read a certain number of novels, it is not the prosperous or adverse fortune of the characters that affects one, but the good or bad faith of the novelist in dealing with them. Will he play us false or will he be true in the operation of this or that principle involved? I cannot hold him to less account than this: he must be true to what life has taught me is the truth, and after that he may let any fate betide his people; the novel ends well that ends faithfully. The greater his power, the greater his responsibility before the human conscience, which is God in us. But men come and go, and what they do in their limited physical lives is of comparatively little moment; it is what they say that really survives to bless or to ban; and it is the evil which Wordsworth felt in Goethe, that must long survive him. There is a kind of thing--a kind of metaphysical lie against righteousness and common-sense which is called the Unmoral; and is supposed to be different from the Immoral; and it is this which is supposed to cover many of the faults of Goethe. His 'Wilhelm Meister,' for example, is so far removed within the region of the "ideal" that its unprincipled, its evil principled, tenor in regard to women is pronounced "unmorality," and is therefore inferably harmless. But no study of Goethe is complete without some recognition of the qualities which caused Wordsworth to hurl the book across the room with an indignant perception of its sensuality. For the sins of his life Goethe was perhaps sufficiently punished in his life by his final marriage with Christiane; for the sins of his literature many others must suffer. I do not despair, however, of the day when the poor honest herd of man kind shall give universal utterance to the universal instinct, and shall hold selfish power in politics, in art, in religion, for the devil that it is; when neither its crazy pride nor its amusing vanity shall be flattered by the puissance of the "geniuses" who have forgotten their duty to the common weakness, and have abused it to their own glory. In that day we shall shudder at many monsters of passion, of self-indulgence, of heartlessness, whom we still more or less openly adore for their "genius," and shall account no man worshipful whom we do not feel and know to be good. The spectacle of strenuous achievement will then not dazzle or mislead; it will not sanctify or palliate iniquity; it will only render it the more hideous and pitiable.

In fact, the whole belief in "genius" seems to me rather a mischievous superstition, and if not mischievous always, still always a superstition. From the account of those who talk about it, "genius" appears to be the attribute of a sort of very potent and admirable prodigy which God has created out of the common for the astonishment and confusion of the rest of us poor human beings. But do they really believe it? Do they mean anything more or less than the Mastery which comes to any man according to his powers and diligence in any direction? If not, why not have an end of the superstition which has caused our race to go on so long writing and reading of the difference between talent and genius? It is within the memory of middle-aged men that the Maelstrom existed in the belief of the geographers, but we now get on perfectly well without it;

and why should we still suffer under the notion of "genius" which keeps so many poor little authorlings trembling in question whether they have it, or have only "talent"?

One of the greatest captains who ever lived [General U. S. Grant D.W.] --a plain, taciturn, unaffected soul--has told the story of his wonderful life as unconsciously as if it were all an every-day affair, not different from other lives, except as a great exigency of the human race gave it importance. So far as he knew, he had no natural aptitude for arms, and certainly no love for the calling. But he went to West Point because, as he quaintly tells us, his father "rather thought he would go"; and he fought through one war with credit, but without glory. The other war, which was to claim his powers and his science, found him engaged in the most prosaic of peaceful occupations; he obeyed its call because he loved his country, and not because he loved war. All the world knows the rest, and all the world knows that greater military mastery has not been shown than his campaigns illustrated. He does not say this in his book, or hint it in any way; he gives you the facts, and leaves them with you. But the Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant, written as simply and straightforwardly as his battles were fought, couched in the most unpretentious phrase, with never a touch of grandiosity or attitudinizing, familiar, homely in style, form a great piece of literature, because great literature is nothing more nor less than the clear expression of minds that have some thing great in them, whether religion, or beauty, or deep experience. Probably Grant would have said that he had no more vocation to literature than he had to war. He owns, with something like contrition, that he used to read a great many novels; but we think he would have denied the soft impeachment of literary power. Nevertheless, he shows it, as he showed military power, unexpectedly, almost miraculously. All the conditions here, then, are favorable to supposing a case of "genius." Yet who would trifle with that great heir of fame, that plain, grand, manly soul, by speaking of "genius" and him together? Who calls Washington a genius? or Franklin, or Bismarck, or Cavour, or Columbus, or Luther, or Darwin, or Lincoln? Were these men second-rate in their way? Or is "genius" that indefinable, preternatural quality, sacred to the musicians, the painters, the sculptors, the actors, the poets, and above all, the poets? Or is it that the poets, having most of the say in this world, abuse it to shameless self-flattery, and would persuade the inarticulate classes that they are on peculiar terms of confidence with the deity?

XVIII.

In General Grant's confession of novel-reading there is a sort of inference that he had wasted his time, or else the guilty conscience of the novelist in me imagines such an inference. But however this may be, there is certainly no question concerning the intention of a correspondent who once wrote to me after reading some rather bragging claims I had made for fiction as a mental and moral means. "I have very grave doubts," he said, "as to the whole list of magnificent things that

you seem to think novels have done for the race, and can witness in myself many evil things which they have done for me. Whatever in my mental make-up is wild and visionary, whatever is untrue, whatever is injurious, I can trace to the perusal of some work of fiction. Worse than that, they beget such high-strung and supersensitive ideas of life that plain industry and plodding perseverance are despised, and matter-of-fact poverty, or every-day, commonplace distress, meets with no sympathy, if indeed noticed at all, by one who has wept over the impossibly accumulated sufferings of some gaudy hero or heroine."

I am not sure that I had the controversy with this correspondent that he seemed to suppose; but novels are now so fully accepted by every one pretending to cultivated taste and they really form the whole intellectual life of such immense numbers of people, without question of their influence, good or bad, upon the mind that it is refreshing to have them frankly denounced, and to be invited to revise one's ideas and feelings in regard to them. A little honesty, or a great deal of honesty, in this quest will do the novel, as we hope yet to have it, and as we have already begun to have it, no harm; and for my own part I will confess that I believe fiction in the past to have been largely injurious, as I believe the stage-play to be still almost wholly injurious, through its falsehood, its folly, its wantonness, and its aimlessness. It may be safely assumed that most of the novel-reading which people fancy an intellectual pastime is the emptiest dissipation, hardly more related to thought or the wholesome exercise of the mental faculties than opium-eating; in either case the brain is drugged, and left weaker and crazier for the debauch. If this may be called the negative result of the fiction habit, the positive injury that most novels work is by no means so easily to be measured in the case of young men whose character they help so much to form or deform, and the women of all ages whom they keep so much in ignorance of the world they misrepresent. Grown men have little harm from them, but in the other cases, which are the vast majority, they hurt because they are not true--not because they are malevolent, but because they are idle lies about human nature and the social fabric, which it behooves us to know and to understand, that we may deal justly with ourselves and with one another. One need not go so far as our correspondent, and trace to the fiction habit "whatever is wild and visionary, whatever is untrue, whatever is injurious," in one's life; bad as the fiction habit is it is probably not responsible for the whole sum of evil in its victims, and I believe that if the reader will use care in choosing from this fungus-growth with which the fields of literature teem every day, he may nourish himself as with the true mushroom, at no risk from the poisonous species.

The tests are very plain and simple, and they are perfectly infallible. If a novel flatters the passions, and exalts them above the principles, it is poisonous; it may not kill, but it will certainly injure; and this test will alone exclude an entire class of fiction, of which eminent examples will occur to all. Then the whole spawn of so-called unmoral romances, which imagine a world where the sins of sense are unvisited by the penalties following, swift or slow, but inexorably sure, in the real world, are deadly poison: these do kill. The novels that merely tickle our prejudices and lull our judgment, or that coddle our sensibilities or

pamper our gross appetite for the marvellous, are not so fatal, but they are innutritious, and clog the soul with unwholesome vapors of all kinds. No doubt they too help to weaken the moral fibre, and make their readers indifferent to "plodding perseverance and plain industry," and to "matter-of-fact poverty and commonplace distress."

Without taking them too seriously, it still must be owned that the "gaudy hero and heroine" are to blame for a great deal of harm in the world. That heroine long taught by example, if not precept, that Love, or the passion or fancy she mistook for it, was the chief interest of a life, which is really concerned with a great many other things; that it was lasting in the way she knew it; that it was worthy of every sacrifice, and was altogether a finer thing than prudence, obedience, reason; that love alone was glorious and beautiful, and these were mean and ugly in comparison with it. More lately she has begun to idolize and illustrate Duty, and she is hardly less mischievous in this new role, opposing duty, as she did love, to prudence, obedience, and reason. The stock hero, whom, if we met him, we could not fail to see was a most deplorable person, has undoubtedly imposed himself upon the victims of the fiction habit as admirable. With him, too, love was and is the great affair, whether in its old romantic phase of chivalrous achievement or manifold suffering for love's sake, or its more recent development of the "virile," the bullying, and the brutal, or its still more recent agonies of self-sacrifice, as idle and useless as the moral experiences of the insane asylums. With his vain posturings and his ridiculous splendor he is really a painted barbarian, the prey of his passions and his delusions, full of obsolete ideals, and the motives and ethics of a savage, which the guilty author of his being does his best--or his worst --in spite of his own light and knowledge, to foist upon the reader as something generous and noble. I am not merely bringing this charge against that sort of fiction which is beneath literature and outside of it, "the shoreless lakes of ditch-water," whose miasms fill the air below the empyrean where the great ones sit; but I am accusing the work of some of the most famous, who have, in this instance or in that, sinned against the truth, which can alone exalt and purify men. I do not say that they have constantly done so, or even commonly done so; but that they have done so at all marks them as of the past, to be read with the due historical allowance for their epoch and their conditions. For I believe that, while inferior writers will and must continue to imitate them in their foibles and their errors, no one here after will be able to achieve greatness who is false to humanity, either in its facts or its duties. The light of civilization has already broken even upon the novel, and no conscientious man can now set about painting an image of life without perpetual question of the verity of his work, and without feeling bound to distinguish so clearly that no reader of his may be misled, between what is right and what is wrong, what is noble and what is base, what is health and what is perdition, in the actions and the characters he portrays.

The fiction that aims merely to entertain--the fiction that is to serious fiction as the opera-bouffe, the ballet, and the pantomime are to the true drama--need not feel the burden of this obligation so deeply; but even such fiction will not be gay or trivial to any reader's hurt, and

criticism should hold it to account if it passes from painting to teaching folly.

I confess that I do not care to judge any work of the imagination without first of all applying this test to it. We must ask ourselves before we ask anything else, Is it true?--true to the motives, the impulses, the principles that shape the life of actual men and women? This truth, which necessarily includes the highest morality and the highest artistry--this truth given, the book cannot be wicked and cannot be weak; and without it all graces of style and feats of invention and cunning of construction are so many superfluities of naughtiness. It is well for the truth to have all these, and shine in them, but for falsehood they are merely meretricious, the bedizenment of the wanton; they atone for nothing, they count for nothing. But in fact they come naturally of truth, and grace it without solicitation; they are added unto it. In the whole range of fiction I know of no true picture of life--that is, of human nature--which is not also a masterpiece of literature, full of divine and natural beauty. It may have no touch or tint of this special civilization or of that; it had better have this local color well ascertained; but the truth is deeper and finer than aspects, and if the book is true to what men and women know of one another's souls it will be true enough, and it will be great and beautiful. It is the conception of literature as something apart from life, superfinely aloof, which makes it really unimportant to the great mass of mankind, without a message or a meaning for them; and it is the notion that a novel may be false in its portrayal of causes and effects that makes literary art contemptible even to those whom it amuses, that forbids them to regard the novelist as a serious or right-minded person. If they do not in some moment of indignation cry out against all novels, as my correspondent does, they remain besotted in the fume of the delusions purveyed to them, with no higher feeling for the author than such maudlin affection as the frequenter of an opium-joint perhaps knows for the attendant who fills his pipe with the drug.

Or, as in the case of another correspondent who writes that in his youth he "read a great many novels, but always regarded it as an amusement, like horse racing and card-playing," for which he had no time when he entered upon the serious business of life, it renders them merely contemptuous. His view of the matter may be commended to the brotherhood and sisterhood of novelists as full of wholesome if bitter suggestion; and I urge them not to dismiss it with high literary scorn as that of some Boeotian dull to the beauty of art. Refuse it as we may, it is still the feeling of the vast majority of people for whom life is earnest, and who find only a distorted and misleading likeness of it in our books. We may fold ourselves in our scholars' gowns, and close the doors of our studies, and affect to despise this rude voice; but we cannot shut it out. It comes to us from wherever men are at work, from wherever they are truly living, and accuses us of unfaithfulness, of triviality, of mere stage-play; and none of us can escape conviction except he prove himself worthy of his time--a time in which the great masters have brought literature back to life, and filled its ebbing veins with the red tides of reality. We cannot all equal them; we need not copy them; but we can all go to the sources of their inspiration and

their power; and to draw from these no one need go far--no one need really go out of himself.

Fifty years ago, Carlyle, in whom the truth was always alive, but in whom it was then unperverted by suffering, by celebrity, and by despair, wrote in his study of Diderot: "Were it not reasonable to prophesy that this exceeding great multitude of novel-writers and such like must, in a new generation, gradually do one of two things: either retire into the nurseries, and work for children, minors, and semi-fatuous persons of both sexes, or else, what were far better, sweep their novel-fabric into the dust-cart, and betake themselves with such faculty as they have to understand and record what is true, of which surely there is, and will forever be, a whole infinitude unknown to us of infinite importance to us? Poetry, it will more and more come to be understood, is nothing but higher knowledge; and the only genuine Romance (for grown persons), Reality."

If, after half a century, fiction still mainly works for "children, minors, and semi-fatuous persons of both sexes," it is nevertheless one of the hopefulest signs of the world's progress that it has begun to work for "grown persons," and if not exactly in the way that Carlyle might have solely intended in urging its writers to compile memoirs instead of building the "novel-fabric," still it has, in the highest and widest sense, already made Reality its Romance. I cannot judge it, I do not even care for it, except as it has done this; and I can hardly conceive of a literary self-respect in these days compatible with the old trade of make-believe, with the production of the kind of fiction which is too much honored by classification with card-playing and horse-racing. But let fiction cease to lie about life; let it portray men and women as they are, actuated by the motives and the passions in the measure we all know; let it leave off painting dolls and working them by springs and wires; let it show the different interests in their true proportions; let it forbear to preach pride and revenge, folly and insanity, egotism and prejudice, but frankly own these for what they are, in whatever figures and occasions they appear; let it not put on fine literary airs; let it speak the dialect, the language, that most Americans know--the language of unaffected people everywhere--and there can be no doubt of an unlimited future, not only of delightfulness but of usefulness, for it.

XIX.

This is what I say in my severer moods, but at other times I know that, of course, no one is going to hold all fiction to such strict account. There is a great deal of it which may be very well left to amuse us, if it can, when we are sick or when we are silly, and I am not inclined to despise it in the performance of this office. Or, if people find pleasure in having their blood curdled for the sake of having it uncurdled again at the end of the book, I would not interfere with their amusement, though I do not desire it.

There is a certain demand in primitive natures for the kind of fiction that does this, and the author of it is usually very proud of it. The kind of novels he likes, and likes to write, are intended to take his reader's mind, or what that reader would probably call his mind, off himself; they make one forget life and all its cares and duties; they are not in the least like the novels which make you think of these, and shame you into at least wishing to be a helpfuller and wholesomer creature than you are. No sordid details of verity here, if you please; no wretched being humbly and weakly struggling to do right and to be true, suffering for his follies and his sins, tasting joy only through the mortification of self, and in the help of others; nothing of all this, but a great, whirling splendor of peril and achievement, a wild scene of heroic adventure and of emotional ground and lofty tumbling, with a stage "picture" at the fall of the curtain, and all the good characters in a row, their left hands pressed upon their hearts, and kissing their right hands to the audience, in the old way that has always charmed and always will charm, Heaven bless it!

In a world which loves the spectacular drama and the practically bloodless sports of the modern amphitheatre the author of this sort of fiction has his place, and we must not seek to destroy him because he fancies it the first place. In fact, it is a condition of his doing well the kind of work he does that he should think it important, that he should believe in himself; and I would not take away this faith of his, even if I could. As I say, he has his place. The world often likes to forget itself, and he brings on his heroes, his goblins, his feats, his hair-breadth escapes, his imminent deadly breaches, and the poor, foolish, childish old world renews the excitements of its nonage. Perhaps this is a work of beneficence; and perhaps our brave conjurer in his cabalistic robe is a philanthropist in disguise.

Within the last four or five years there has been throughout the whole English-speaking world what Mr. Grant Allen happily calls the "recrudescence" of taste in fiction. The effect is less noticeable in America than in England, where effete Philistinism, conscious of the dry-rot of its conventionality, is casting about for cure in anything that is wild and strange and unlike itself. But the recrudescence has been evident enough here, too; and a writer in one of our periodicals has put into convenient shape some common errors concerning popularity as a test of merit in a book. He seems to think, for instance, that the love of the marvellous and impossible in fiction, which is shown not only by "the unthinking multitude clamoring about the book counters" for fiction of that sort, but by the "literary elect" also, is proof of some principle in human nature which ought to be respected as well as tolerated. He seems to believe that the ebullition of this passion forms a sufficient answer to those who say that art should represent life, and that the art which misrepresents life is feeble art and false art. But it appears to me that a little carefuller reasoning from a little closer inspection of the facts would not have brought him to these conclusions. In the first place, I doubt very much whether the "literary elect" have been fascinated in great numbers by the fiction in question; but if I supposed them to have really fallen under that spell, I should still be able to account for their fondness and that of the "unthinking multitude"

upon the same grounds, without honoring either very much. It is the habit of hasty casuists to regard civilization as inclusive of all the members of a civilized community; but this is a palpable error. Many persons in every civilized community live in a state of more or less evident savagery with respect to their habits, their morals, and their propensities; and they are held in check only by the law. Many more yet are savage in their tastes, as they show by the decoration of their houses and persons, and by their choice of books and pictures; and these are left to the restraints of public opinion. In fact, no man can be said to be thoroughly civilized or always civilized; the most refined, the most enlightened person has his moods, his moments of barbarism, in which the best, or even the second best, shall not please him. At these times the lettered and the unlettered are alike primitive and their gratifications are of the same simple sort; the highly cultivated person may then like melodrama, impossible fiction, and the trapeze as sincerely and thoroughly as a boy of thirteen or a barbarian of any age.

I do not blame him for these moods; I find something instructive and interesting in them; but if they lastingly established themselves in him, I could not help deploring the state of that person. No one can really think that the "literary elect," who are said to have joined the "unthinking multitude" in clamoring about the book counters for the romances of no-man's land, take the same kind of pleasure in them as they do in a novel of Tolstoy, Tourguenief, George Eliot, Thackeray, Balzac, Manzoni, Hawthorne, Mr. Henry James, Mr. Thomas Hardy, Senor Palacio Valdes, or even Walter Scott. They have joined the "unthinking multitude," perhaps because they are tired of thinking, and expect to find relaxation in feeling--feeling crudely, grossly, merely. For once in a way there is no great harm in this; perhaps no harm at all. It is perfectly natural; let them have their innocent debauch. But let us distinguish, for our own sake and guidance, between the different kinds of things that please the same kind of people; between the things that please them habitually and those that please them occasionally; between the pleasures that edify them and those that amuse them. Otherwise we shall be in danger of becoming permanently part of the "unthinking multitude," and of remaining puerile, primitive, savage. We shall be so in moods and at moments; but let us not fancy that those are high moods or fortunate moments. If they are harmless, that is the most that can be said for them. They are lapses from which we can perhaps go forward more vigorously; but even this is not certain.

My own philosophy of the matter, however, would not bring me to prohibition of such literary amusements as the writer quoted seems to find significant of a growing indifference to truth and sanity in fiction. Once more, I say, these amusements have their place, as the circus has, and the burlesque and negro minstrelsy, and the ballet, and prestidigitation. No one of these is to be despised in its place; but we had better understand that it is not the highest place, and that it is hardly an intellectual delight. The lapse of all the "literary elect" in the world could not dignify unreality; and their present mood, if it exists, is of no more weight against that beauty in literature which comes from truth alone, and never can come from anything else, than the permanent state of the "unthinking multitude."

Yet even as regards the "unthinking multitude," I believe I am not able to take the attitude of the writer I have quoted. I am afraid that I respect them more than he would like to have me, though I cannot always respect their taste, any more than that of the "literary elect."

I respect them for their good sense in most practical matters; for their laborious, honest lives; for their kindness, their good-will; for that aspiration towards something better than themselves which seems to stir, however dumbly, in every human breast not abandoned to literary pride or other forms of self-righteousness. I find every man interesting, whether he thinks or unthinks, whether he is savage or civilized; for this reason I cannot thank the novelist who teaches us not to know but to unknow our kind. Yet I should by no means hold him to such strict account as Emerson, who felt the absence of the best motive, even in the greatest of the masters, when he said of Shakespeare that, after all, he was only master of the revels. The judgment is so severe, even with the praise which precedes it, that one winces under it; and if one is still young, with the world gay before him, and life full of joyous promise, one is apt to ask, defiantly, Well, what is better than being such a master of the revels as Shakespeare was? Let each judge for himself. To the heart again of serious youth, uncontaminate and exigent of ideal good, it must always be a grief that the great masters seem so often to have been willing to amuse the leisure and vacancy of meaner men, and leave their mission to the soul but partially fulfilled. This, perhaps, was what Emerson had in mind; and if he had it in mind of Shakespeare, who gave us, with his histories and comedies and problems, such a searching homily as "Macbeth," one feels that he scarcely recognized the limitations of the dramatist's art. Few consciences, at times, seem so enlightened as that of this personally unknown person, so withdrawn into his work, and so lost to the intensest curiosity of after-time; at other times he seems merely Elizabethan in his coarseness, his courtliness, his imperfect sympathy.

XX.

Of the finer kinds of romance, as distinguished from the novel, I would even encourage the writing, though it is one of the hard conditions of romance that its personages starting with a 'parti pris' can rarely be characters with a living growth, but are apt to be types, limited to the expression of one principle, simple, elemental, lacking the God-given complexity of motive which we find in all the human beings we know.

Hawthorne, the great master of the romance, had the insight and the power to create it anew as a kind in fiction; though I am not sure that 'The Scarlet Letter' and the 'Blithedale Romance' are not, strictly speaking, novels rather than romances. They, do not play with some old superstition long outgrown, and they do not invent a new superstition to play with, but deal with things vital in every one's pulse. I am not saying that what may be called the fantastic romance--the romance that descends from 'Frankenstein' rather than 'The Scarlet Letter'--ought not

to be. On the contrary, I should grieve to lose it, as I should grieve to lose the pantomime or the comic opera, or many other graceful things that amuse the passing hour, and help us to live agreeably in a world where men actually sin, suffer, and die. But it belongs to the decorative arts, and though it has a high place among them, it cannot be ranked with the works of the imagination--the works that represent and body forth human experience. Its ingenuity, can always afford a refined pleasure, and it can often, at some risk to itself, convey a valuable truth.

Perhaps the whole region of historical romance might be reopened with advantage to readers and writers who cannot bear to be brought face to face with human nature, but require the haze of distance or a far perspective, in which all the disagreeable details shall be lost. There is no good reason why these harmless people should not be amused, or their little preferences indulged.

But here, again, I have my modest doubts, some recent instances are so fatuous, as far as the portrayal of character goes, though I find them admirably contrived in some respects. When I have owned the excellence of the staging in every respect, and the conscience with which the carpenter (as the theatrical folks say) has done his work, I am at the end of my praises. The people affect me like persons of our generation made up for the parts; well trained, well costumed, but actors, and almost amateurs. They have the quality that makes the histrionics of amateurs endurable; they are ladies and gentlemen; the worst, the wickedest of them, is a lady or gentleman behind the scene.

Yet, no doubt it is well that there should be a reversion to the earlier types of thinking and feeling, to earlier ways of looking at human nature, and I will not altogether refuse the pleasure offered me by the poetic romancer or the historical romancer because I find my pleasure chiefly in Tolstoy and Valdes and Thomas Hardy and Tourguenief, and Balzac at his best.

XXI.

It used to be one of the disadvantages of the practice of romance in America, which Hawthorne more or less whimsically lamented, that there were so few shadows and inequalities in our broad level of prosperity; and it is one of the reflections suggested by Dostoievsky's novel, 'The Crime and the Punishment,' that whoever struck a note so profoundly tragic in American fiction would do a false and mistaken thing--as false and as mistaken in its way as dealing in American fiction with certain nudities which the Latin peoples seem to find edifying. Whatever their deserts, very few American novelists have been led out to be shot, or finally exiled to the rigors of a winter at Duluth; and in a land where journeymen carpenters and plumbers strike for four dollars a day the sum of hunger and cold is comparatively small, and the wrong from class to class has been almost inappreciable, though all this is changing for the

worse. Our novelists, therefore, concern themselves with the more smiling aspects of life, which are the more American, and seek the universal in the individual rather than the social interests. It is worth while, even at the risk of being called commonplace, to be true to our well-to-do actualities; the very passions themselves seem to be softened and modified by conditions which formerly at least could not be said to wrong any one, to cramp endeavor, or to cross lawful desire. Sin and suffering and shame there must always be in the world, I suppose, but I believe that in this new world of ours it is still mainly from one to another one, and oftener still from one to one's self. We have death, too, in America, and a great deal of disagreeable and painful disease, which the multiplicity of our patent medicines does not seem to cure; but this is tragedy that comes in the very nature of things, and is not peculiarly American, as the large, cheerful average of health and success and happy life is. It will not do to boast, but it is well to be true to the facts, and to see that, apart from these purely mortal troubles, the race here has enjoyed conditions in which most of the ills that have darkened its annals might be averted by honest work and unselfish behavior.

Fine artists we have among us, and right-minded as far as they go; and we must not forget this at evil moments when it seems as if all the women had taken to writing hysterical improprieties, and some of the men were trying to be at least as hysterical in despair of being as improper. Other traits are much more characteristic of our life and our fiction. In most American novels, vivid and graphic as the best of them are, the people are segregated if not sequestered, and the scene is sparsely populated. The effect may be in instinctive response to the vacancy of our social life, and I shall not make haste to blame it. There are few places, few occasions among us, in which a novelist can get a large number of polite people together, or at least keep them together. Unless he carries a snap-camera his picture of them has no probability; they affect one like the figures perfunctorily associated in such deadly old engravings as that of "Washington Irving and his Friends." Perhaps it is for this reason that we excel in small pieces with three or four figures, or in studies of rustic communities, where there is propinquity if not society. Our grasp of more urbane life is feeble; most attempts to assemble it in our pictures are failures, possibly because it is too transitory, too intangible in its nature with us, to be truthfully represented as really existent.

I am not sure that the Americans have not brought the short story nearer perfection in the all-round sense that almost any other people, and for reasons very simple and near at hand. It might be argued from the national hurry and impatience that it was a literary form peculiarly adapted to the American temperament, but I suspect that its extraordinary development among us is owing much more to more tangible facts. The success of American magazines, which is nothing less than prodigious, is only commensurate with their excellence. Their sort of success is not only from the courage to decide which ought to please, but from the knowledge of what does please; and it is probable that, aside from the pictures, it is the short stories which please the readers of our best magazines. The serial novels they must have, of course; but rather more

of course they must have short stories, and by operation of the law of supply and demand, the short stories, abundant in quantity and excellent in quality, are forthcoming because they are wanted. By another operation of the same law, which political economists have more recently taken account of, the demand follows the supply, and short stories are sought for because there is a proven ability to furnish them, and people read them willingly because they are usually very good. The art of writing them is now so disciplined and diffused with us that there is no lack either for the magazines or for the newspaper "syndicates" which deal in them almost to the exclusion of the serials.

An interesting fact in regard to the different varieties of the short story among us is that the sketches and studies by the women seem faithfuller and more realistic than those of the men, in proportion to their number. Their tendency is more distinctly in that direction, and there is a solidity, an honest observation, in the work of such women, which often leaves little to be desired. I should, upon the whole, be disposed to rank American short stories only below those of such Russian writers as I have read, and I should praise rather than blame their free use of our different local parlances, or "dialects," as people call them. I like this because I hope that our inherited English may be constantly freshened and revived from the native sources which our literary decentralization will help to keep open, and I will own that as I turn over novels coming from Philadelphia, from New Mexico, from Boston, from Tennessee, from rural New England, from New York, every local flavor of diction gives me courage and pleasure. Alphonse Daudet, in a conversation with H. H. Boyesen said, speaking of Tourguenief, "What a luxury it must be to have a great big untrodden barbaric language to wade into! We poor fellows who work in the language of an old civilization, we may sit and chisel our little verbal felicities, only to find in the end that it is a borrowed jewel we are polishing. The crown-jewels of our French tongue have passed through the hands of so many generations of monarchs that it seems like presumption on the part of any late-born pretender to attempt to wear them."

This grief is, of course, a little whimsical, yet it has a certain measure of reason in it, and the same regret has been more seriously expressed by the Italian poet Alcardi:

"Muse of an aged people, in the eve
Of fading civilization, I was born.
. Oh, fortunate,
My sisters, who in the heroic dawn
Of races sung! To them did destiny give
The virgin fire and chaste ingenuousness
Of their land's speech; and, revered, their hands
Ran over potent strings."

It will never do to allow that we are at such a desperate pass in English, but something of this divine despair we may feel too in thinking of "the spacious times of great Elizabeth," when the poets were trying the stops of the young language, and thrilling with the surprises of their own music. We may comfort ourselves, however, unless we prefer a

luxury of grief, by remembering that no language is ever old on the lips of those who speak it, no matter how decrepit it drops from the pen. We have only to leave our studies, editorial and other, and go into the shops and fields to find the "spacious times" again; and from the beginning Realism, before she had put on her capital letter, had divined this near-at-hand truth along with the rest. Lowell, almost the greatest and finest realist who ever wrought in verse, showed us that Elizabeth was still Queen where he heard Yankee farmers talk. One need not invite slang into the company of its betters, though perhaps slang has been dropping its "s" and becoming language ever since the world began, and is certainly sometimes delightful and forcible beyond the reach of the dictionary. I would not have any one go about for new words, but if one of them came aptly, not to reject its help. For our novelists to try to write Americanly, from any motive, would be a dismal error, but being born Americans, I then use "Americanisms" whenever these serve their turn; and when their characters speak, I should like to hear them speak true American, with all the varying Tennessean, Philadelphian, Bostonian, and New York accents. If we bother ourselves to write what the critics imagine to be "English," we shall be priggish and artificial, and still more so if we make our Americans talk "English." There is also this serious disadvantage about "English," that if we wrote the best "English" in the world, probably the English themselves would not know it, or, if they did, certainly would not own it. It has always been supposed by grammarians and purists that a language can be kept as they find it; but languages, while they live, are perpetually changing. God apparently meant them for the common people; and the common people will use them freely as they use other gifts of God. On their lips our continental English will differ more and more from the insular English, and I believe that this is not deplorable, but desirable.

In fine, I would have our American novelists be as American as they unconsciously can. Matthew Arnold complained that he found no "distinction" in our life, and I would gladly persuade all artists intending greatness in any kind among us that the recognition of the fact pointed out by Mr. Arnold ought to be a source of inspiration to them, and not discouragement. We have been now some hundred years building up a state on the affirmation of the essential equality of men in their rights and duties, and whether we have been right or been wrong the gods have taken us at our word, and have responded to us with a civilization in which there is no "distinction" perceptible to the eye that loves and values it. Such beauty and such grandeur as we have is common beauty, common grandeur, or the beauty and grandeur in which the quality of solidarity so prevails that neither distinguishes itself to the disadvantage of anything else. It seems to me that these conditions invite the artist to the study and the appreciation of the common, and to the portrayal in every art of those finer and higher aspects which unite rather than sever humanity, if he would thrive in our new order of things. The talent that is robust enough to front the every-day world and catch the charm of its work-worn, care-worn, brave, kindly face, need not fear the encounter, though it seems terrible to the sort nurtured in the superstition of the romantic, the bizarre, the heroic, the distinguished, as the things alone worthy of painting or carving or writing. The arts must become democratic, and then we shall have the

expression of America in art; and the reproach which Arnold was half right in making us shall have no justice in it any longer; we shall be "distinguished."

XXII.

In the mean time it has been said with a superficial justice that our fiction is narrow; though in the same sense I suppose the present English fiction is as narrow as our own; and most modern fiction is narrow in a certain sense. In Italy the best men are writing novels as brief and restricted in range as ours; in Spain the novels are intense and deep, and not spacious; the French school, with the exception of Zola, is narrow; the Norwegians are narrow; the Russians, except Tolstoy, are narrow, and the next greatest after him, Tourguenief, is the narrowest great novelist, as to mere dimensions, that ever lived, dealing nearly always with small groups, isolated and analyzed in the most American fashion. In fact, the charge of narrowness accuses the whole tendency of modern fiction as much as the American school. But I do not by any means allow that this narrowness is a defect, while denying that it is a universal characteristic of our fiction; it is rather, for the present, a virtue. Indeed, I should call the present American work, North and South, thorough rather than narrow. In one sense it is as broad as life, for each man is a microcosm, and the writer who is able to acquaint us intimately with half a dozen people, or the conditions of a neighborhood or a class, has done something which cannot in any, bad sense be called narrow; his breadth is vertical instead of lateral, that is all; and this depth is more desirable than horizontal expansion in a civilization like ours, where the differences are not of classes, but of types, and not of types either so much as of characters. A new method was necessary in dealing with the new conditions, and the new method is worldwide, because the whole world is more or less Americanized. Tolstoy is exceptionally voluminous among modern writers, even Russian writers; and it might be said that the forte of Tolstoy himself is not in his breadth sidewise, but in his breadth upward and downward. 'The Death of Ivan Ilyitch' leaves as vast an impression on the reader's soul as any episode of 'War and Peace,' which, indeed, can be recalled only in episodes, and not as a whole. I think that our writers may be safely counselled to continue their work in the modern way, because it is the best way yet known. If they make it true, it will be large, no matter what its superficialities are; and it would be the greatest mistake to try to make it big. A big book is necessarily a group of episodes more or less loosely connected by a thread of narrative, and there seems no reason why this thread must always be supplied. Each episode may be quite distinct, or it may be one of a connected group; the final effect will be from the truth of each episode, not from the size of the group.

The whole field of human experience as never so nearly covered by imaginative literature in any age as in this; and American life especially is getting represented with unexampled fulness. It is true that no one writer, no one book, represents it, for that is not possible;

our social and political decentralization forbids this, and may forever forbid it. But a great number of very good writers are instinctively striving to make each part of the country and each phase of our civilization known to all the other parts; and their work is not narrow in any feeble or vicious sense. The world was once very little, and it is now very large. Formerly, all science could be grasped by a single mind; but now the man who hopes to become great or useful in science must devote himself to a single department. It is so in everything--all arts, all trades; and the novelist is not superior to the universal rule against universality. He contributes his share to a thorough knowledge of groups of the human race under conditions which are full of inspiring novelty and interest. He works more fearlessly, frankly, and faithfully than the novelist ever worked before; his work, or much of it, may be destined never to be reprinted from the monthly magazines; but if he turns to his book-shelf and regards the array of the British or other classics, he knows that they, too, are for the most part dead; he knows that the planet itself is destined to freeze up and drop into the sun at last, with all its surviving literature upon it. The question is merely one of time. He consoles himself, therefore, if he is wise, and works on; and we may all take some comfort from the thought that most things cannot be helped. Especially a movement in literature like that which the world is now witnessing cannot be helped; and we could no more turn back and be of the literary fashions of any age before this than we could turn back and be of its social, economical, or political conditions.

If I were authorized to address any word directly to our novelists I should say, Do not trouble yourselves about standards or ideals; but try to be faithful and natural: remember that there is no greatness, no beauty, which does not come from truth to your own knowledge of things; and keep on working, even if your work is not long remembered.

At least three-fifths of the literature called classic, in all languages, no more lives than the poems and stories that perish monthly in our magazines. It is all printed and reprinted, generation after generation, century after century; but it is not alive; it is as dead as the people who wrote it and read it, and to whom it meant something, perhaps; with whom it was a fashion, a caprice, a passing taste. A superstitious piety preserves it, and pretends that it has aesthetic qualities which can delight or edify; but nobody really enjoys it, except as a reflection of the past moods and humors of the race, or a revelation of the author's character; otherwise it is trash, and often very filthy trash, which the present trash generally is not.

XXIII.

One of the great newspapers the other day invited the prominent American authors to speak their minds upon a point in the theory and practice of fiction which had already vexed some of them. It was the question of how much or how little the American novel ought to deal with certain facts of life which are not usually talked of before young people, and especially

young ladies. Of course the question was not decided, and I forget just how far the balance inclined in favor of a larger freedom in the matter. But it certainly inclined that way; one or two writers of the sex which is somehow supposed to have purity in its keeping (as if purity were a thing that did not practically concern the other sex, preoccupied with serious affairs) gave it a rather vigorous tilt to that side. In view of this fact it would not be the part of prudence to make an effort to dress the balance; and indeed I do not know that I was going to make any such effort. But there are some things to say, around and about the subject, which I should like to have some one else say, and which I may myself possibly be safe in suggesting.

One of the first of these is the fact, generally lost sight of by those who censure the Anglo-Saxon novel for its prudishness, that it is really not such a prude after all; and that if it is sometimes apparently anxious to avoid those experiences of life not spoken of before young people, this may be an appearance only. Sometimes a novel which has this shuffling air, this effect of truckling to propriety, might defend itself, if it could speak for itself, by saying that such experiences happened not to come within its scheme, and that, so far from maiming or mutilating itself in ignoring them, it was all the more faithfully representative of the tone of modern life in dealing with love that was chaste, and with passion so honest that it could be openly spoken of before the tenderest society but at dinner. It might say that the guilty intrigue, the betrayal, the extreme flirtation even, was the exceptional thing in life, and unless the scheme of the story necessarily involved it, that it would be bad art to lug it in, and as bad taste as to introduce such topics in a mixed company. It could say very justly that the novel in our civilization now always addresses a mixed company, and that the vast majority of the company are ladies, and that very many, if not most, of these ladies are young girls. If the novel were written for men and for married women alone, as in continental Europe, it might be altogether different. But the simple fact is that it is not written for them alone among us, and it is a question of writing, under cover of our universal acceptance, things for young girls to read which you would be put out-of-doors for saying to them, or of frankly giving notice of your intention, and so cutting yourself off from the pleasure--and it is a very high and sweet one of appealing to these vivid, responsive intelligences, which are none the less brilliant and admirable because they are innocent.

One day a novelist who liked, after the manner of other men, to repine at his hard fate, complained to his friend, a critic, that he was tired of the restriction he had put upon himself in this regard; for it is a mistake, as can be readily shown, to suppose that others impose it. "See how free those French fellows are!" he rebelled. "Shall we always be shut up to our tradition of decency?"

"Do you think it's much worse than being shut up to their tradition of indecency?" said his friend.

Then that novelist began to reflect, and he remembered how sick the invariable motive of the French novel made him. He perceived finally

that, convention for convention, ours was not only more tolerable, but on the whole was truer to life, not only to its complexion, but also to its texture. No one will pretend that there is not vicious love beneath the surface of our society; if he did, the fetid explosions of the divorce trials would refute him; but if he pretended that it was in any just sense characteristic of our society, he could be still more easily refuted. Yet it exists, and it is unquestionably the material of tragedy, the stuff from which intense effects are wrought. The question, after owning this fact, is whether these intense effects are not rather cheap effects. I incline to think they are, and I will try to say why I think so, if I may do so without offence. The material itself, the mere mention of it, has an instant fascination; it arrests, it detains, till the last word is said, and while there is anything to be hinted. This is what makes a love intrigue of some sort all but essential to the popularity of any fiction. Without such an intrigue the intellectual equipment of the author must be of the highest, and then he will succeed only with the highest class of readers. But any author who will deal with a guilty love intrigue holds all readers in his hand, the highest with the lowest, as long as he hints the slightest hope of the smallest potential naughtiness. He need not at all be a great author; he may be a very shabby wretch, if he has but the courage or the trick of that sort of thing. The critics will call him "virile" and "passionate"; decent people will be ashamed to have been limed by him; but the low average will only ask another chance of flocking into his net. If he happens to be an able writer, his really fine and costly work will be unheeded, and the lure to the appetite will be chiefly remembered. There may be other qualities which make reputations for other men, but in his case they will count for nothing. He pays this penalty for his success in that kind; and every one pays some such penalty who deals with some such material.

But I do not mean to imply that his case covers the whole ground. So far as it goes, though, it ought to stop the mouths of those who complain that fiction is enslaved to propriety among us. It appears that of a certain kind of impropriety it is free to give us all it will, and more. But this is not what serious men and women writing fiction mean when they rebel against the limitations of their art in our civilization. They have no desire to deal with nakedness, as painters and sculptors freely do in the worship of beauty; or with certain facts of life, as the stage does, in the service of sensation. But they ask why, when the conventions of the plastic and histrionic arts liberate their followers to the portrayal of almost any phase of the physical or of the emotional nature, an American novelist may not write a story on the lines of 'Anna Karenina' or 'Madame Bovary.' They wish to touch one of the most serious and sorrowful problems of life in the spirit of Tolstoy and Flaubert, and they ask why they may not. At one time, they remind us, the Anglo-Saxon novelist did deal with such problems--De Foe in his spirit, Richardson in his, Goldsmith in his. At what moment did our fiction lose this privilege? In what fatal hour did the Young Girl arise and seal the lips of Fiction, with a touch of her finger, to some of the most vital interests of life?

Whether I wished to oppose them in their aspiration for greater freedom, or whether I wished to encourage them, I should begin to answer them by

saying that the Young Girl has never done anything of the kind. The manners of the novel have been improving with those of its readers; that is all. Gentlemen no longer swear or fall drunk under the table, or abduct young ladies and shut them up in lonely country-houses, or so habitually set about the ruin of their neighbors' wives, as they once did. Generally, people now call a spade an agricultural implement; they have not grown decent without having also grown a little squeamish, but they have grown comparatively decent; there is no doubt about that. They require of a novelist whom they respect unquestionable proof of his seriousness, if he proposes to deal with certain phases of life; they require a sort of scientific decorum. He can no longer expect to be received on the ground of entertainment only; he assumes a higher function, something like that of a physician or a priest, and they expect him to be bound by laws as sacred as those of such professions; they hold him solemnly pledged not to betray them or abuse their confidence. If he will accept the conditions, they give him their confidence, and he may then treat to his greater honor, and not at all to his disadvantage, of such experiences, such relations of men and women as George Eliot treats in 'Adam Bede,' in 'Daniel Deronda,' in 'Romola,' in almost all her books; such as Hawthorne treats in 'The Scarlet Letter;' such as Dickens treats in 'David Copperfield;' such as Thackeray treats in 'Pendennis,' and glances at in every one of his fictions; such as most of the masters of English fiction have at same time treated more or less openly. It is quite false or quite mistaken to suppose that our novels have left untouched these most important realities of life. They have only not made them their stock in trade; they have kept a true perspective in regard to them; they have relegated them in their pictures of life to the space and place they occupy in life itself, as we know it in England and America. They have kept a correct proportion, knowing perfectly well that unless the novel is to be a map, with everything scrupulously laid down in it, a faithful record of life in far the greater extent could be made to the exclusion of guilty love and all its circumstances and consequences.

I justify them in this view not only because I hate what is cheap and meretricious, and hold in peculiar loathing the cant of the critics who require "passion" as something in itself admirable and desirable in a novel, but because I prize fidelity in the historian of feeling and character. Most of these critics who demand "passion" would seem to have no conception of any passion but one. Yet there are several other passions: the passion of grief, the passion of avarice, the passion of pity, the passion of ambition, the passion of hate, the passion of envy, the passion of devotion, the passion of friendship; and all these have a greater part in the drama of life than the passion of love, and infinitely greater than the passion of guilty love. Wittingly or unwittingly, English fiction and American fiction have recognized this truth, not fully, not in the measure it merits, but in greater degree than most other fiction.

Who can deny that fiction would be incomparably stronger, incomparably truer, if once it could tear off the habit which enslaves it to the celebration chiefly of a single passion, in one phase or another, and could frankly dedicate itself to the service of all the passions, all the interests, all the facts? Every novelist who has thought about his art knows that it would, and I think that upon reflection he must doubt whether his sphere would be greatly enlarged if he were allowed to treat freely the darker aspects of the favorite passion. But, as I have shown, the privilege, the right to do this, is already perfectly recognized. This is proved again by the fact that serious criticism recognizes as master-works (I will not push the question of supremacy) the two great novels which above all others have, moved the world by their study of guilty love. If by any chance, if by some prodigious miracle, any American should now arise to treat it on the level of 'Anna Karenina' and 'Madame Bovary,' he would be absolutely sure of success, and of fame and gratitude as great as those books have won for their authors.

But what editor of what American magazine would print such a story?

Certainly I do not think any one would; and here our novelist must again submit to conditions. If he wishes to publish such a story (supposing him to have once written it), he must publish it as a book. A book is something by itself, responsible for its character, which becomes quickly known, and it does not necessarily penetrate to every member of the household. The father or the mother may say to the child, "I would rather you wouldn't read that book"; if the child cannot be trusted, the book may be locked up. But with the magazine and its serial the affair is different. Between the editor of a reputable English or American magazine and the families which receive it there is a tacit agreement that he will print nothing which a father may not read to his daughter, or safely leave her to read herself.

After all, it is a matter of business; and the insurgent novelist should consider the situation with coolness and common-sense. The editor did not create the situation; but it exists, and he could not even attempt to change it without many sorts of disaster. He respects it, therefore, with the good faith of an honest man. Even when he is himself a novelist, with ardor for his art and impatience of the limitations put upon it, he interposes his veto, as Thackeray did in the case of Trollope when a contributor approaches forbidden ground.

It does not avail to say that the daily papers teem with facts far fouler and deadlier than any which fiction could imagine. That is true, but it is true also that the sex which reads the most novels reads the fewest newspapers; and, besides, the reporter does not command the novelist's skill to fix impressions in a young girl's mind or to suggest conjecture. The magazine is a little despotic, a little arbitrary; but unquestionably its favor is essential to success, and its conditions are not such narrow ones. You cannot deal with Tolstoy's and Flaubert's subjects in the absolute artistic freedom of Tolstoy and Flaubert; since De Foe, that is unknown among us; but if you deal with them in the manner of George Eliot, of Thackeray, of Dickens, of society, you may deal with them even

in the magazines. There is no other restriction upon you. All the horrors and miseries and tortures are open to you; your pages may drop blood; sometimes it may happen that the editor will even exact such strong material from you. But probably he will require nothing but the observance of the convention in question; and if you do not yourself prefer bloodshed he will leave you free to use all sweet and peaceable means of interesting his readers.

It is no narrow field he throws open to you, with that little sign to keep off the grass up at one point only. Its vastness is still almost unexplored, and whole regions in it are unknown to the fictionist. Dig anywhere, and do but dig deep enough, and you strike riches; or, if you are of the mind to range, the gentler climes, the softer temperatures, the serener skies, are all free to you, and are so little visited that the chance of novelty is greater among them.

XXV.

While the Americans have greatly excelled in the short story generally, they have almost created a species of it in the Thanksgiving story. We have transplanted the Christmas story from England, while the Thanksgiving story is native to our air; but both are of Anglo-Saxon growth. Their difference is from a difference of environment; and the Christmas story when naturalized among us becomes almost identical in motive, incident, and treatment with the Thanksgiving story. If I were to generalize a distinction between them, I should say that the one dealt more with marvels and the other more with morals; and yet the critic should beware of speaking too confidently on this point. It is certain, however, that the Christmas season is meteorologically more favorable to the effective return of persons long supposed lost at sea, or from a prodigal life, or from a darkened mind. The longer, darker, and colder nights are better adapted to the apparition of ghosts, and to all manner of signs and portents; while they seem to present a wider field for the intervention of angels in behalf of orphans and outcasts. The dreams of elderly sleepers at this time are apt to be such as will effect a lasting change in them when they awake, turning them from the hard, cruel, and grasping habits of a lifetime, and reconciling them to their sons, daughters, and nephews, who have thwarted them in marriage; or softening them to their meek, uncomplaining wives, whose hearts they have trampled upon in their reckless pursuit of wealth; and generally disposing them to a distribution of hampers among the sick and poor, and to a friendly reception of gentlemen with charity subscription papers.

Ships readily drive upon rocks in the early twilight, and offer exciting difficulties of salvage; and the heavy snows gather quickly round the steps of wanderers who lie down to die in them, preparatory to their discovery and rescue by immediate relatives. The midnight weather is also very suitable for encounter with murderers and burglars; and the contrast of its freezing gloom with the light and cheer in-doors promotes the gayeties which merge, at all well-regulated country-houses, in love

and marriage. In the region of pure character no moment could be so available for flinging off the mask of frivolity, or imbecility, or savagery, which one has worn for ten or twenty long years, say, for the purpose of foiling some villain, and surprising the reader, and helping the author out with his plot. Persons abroad in the Alps, or Apennines, or Pyrenees, or anywhere seeking shelter in the huts of shepherds or the dens of smugglers, find no time like it for lying in a feigned slumber, and listening to the whispered machinations of their suspicious looking entertainers, and then suddenly starting up and fighting their way out; or else springing from the real sleep into which they have sunk exhausted, and finding it broad day and the good peasants whom they had so unjustly doubted, waiting breakfast for them.

We need not point out the superior advantages of the Christmas season for anything one has a mind to do with the French Revolution, of the Arctic explorations, or the Indian Mutiny, or the horrors of Siberian exile; there is no time so good for the use of this material; and ghosts on shipboard are notoriously fond of Christmas Eve. In our own logging camps the man who has gone into the woods for the winter, after quarrelling with his wife, then hears her sad appealing voice, and is moved to good resolutions as at no other period of the year; and in the mining regions, first in California and later in Colorado, the hardened reprobate, dying in his boots, smells his mother's doughnuts, and breathes his last in a soliloquized vision of the old home, and the little brother, or sister, or the old father coming to meet him from heaven; while his rude companions listen round him, and dry their eyes on the butts of their revolvers.

It has to be very grim, all that, to be truly effective; and here, already, we have a touch in the Americanized Christmas story of the moralistic quality of the American Thanksgiving story. This was seldom written, at first, for the mere entertainment of the reader; it was meant to entertain him, of course; but it was meant to edify him, too, and to improve him; and some such intention is still present in it. I rather think that it deals more probably with character to this end than its English cousin, the Christmas story, does. It is not so improbable that a man should leave off being a drunkard on Thanksgiving, as that he should leave off being a curmudgeon on Christmas; that he should conquer his appetite as that he should instantly change his nature, by good resolutions. He would be very likely, indeed, to break his resolutions in either case, but not so likely in the one as in the other.

Generically, the Thanksgiving story is cheerfuller in its drama and simpler in its persons than the Christmas story. Rarely has it dealt with the supernatural, either the apparition of ghosts or the intervention of angels. The weather being so much milder at the close of November than it is a month later, very little can be done with the elements; though on the coast a northeasterly storm has been, and can be, very usefully employed. The Thanksgiving story is more restricted in its range; the scene is still mostly in New England, and the characters are of New England extraction, who come home from the West usually, or New York, for the event of the little drama, whatever it may be. It may be the reconciliation of kinsfolk who have quarrelled; or the union of

lovers long estranged; or husbands and wives who have had hard words and parted; or mothers who had thought their sons dead in California and find themselves agreeably disappointed in their return; or fathers who for old time's sake receive back their erring and conveniently dying daughters. The notes are not many which this simple music sounds, but they have a Sabbath tone, mostly, and win the listener to kindlier thoughts and better moods. The art is at its highest in some strong sketch of Rose Terry Cooke's, or some perfectly satisfying study of Miss Jewett's, or some graphic situation of Miss Wilkins's; and then it is a very fine art. But mostly it is poor and rude enough, and makes openly, shamelessly, for the reader's emotions, as well as his morals. It is inclined to be rather descriptive. The turkey, the pumpkin, the corn-field, figure throughout; and the leafless woods are blue and cold against the evening sky behind the low hip-roofed, old-fashioned homestead. The parlance is usually the Yankee dialect and its Western modifications.

The Thanksgiving story is mostly confined in scene to the country; it does not seem possible to do much with it in town; and it is a serious question whether with its geographical and topical limitations it can hold its own against the Christmas story; and whether it would not be well for authors to consider a combination with its elder rival.

The two feasts are so near together in point of time that they could be easily covered by the sentiment of even a brief narrative. Under the agglutinated style of 'A Thanksgiving-Christmas Story,' fiction appropriate to both could be produced, and both could be employed naturally and probably in the transaction of its affairs and the development of its characters. The plot for such a story could easily be made to include a total-abstinence pledge and family reunion at Thanksgiving, and an apparition and spiritual regeneration over a bowl of punch at Christmas.

XXVI.

It would be interesting to know the far beginnings of holiday literature, and I commend the quest to the scientific spirit which now specializes research in every branch of history. In the mean time, without being too confident of the facts, I venture to suggest that it came in with the romantic movement about the beginning of this century, when mountains ceased to be horrid and became picturesque; when ruins of all sorts, but particularly abbeys and castles, became habitable to the most delicate constitutions; when the despised Gothick of Addison dropped its "k," and arose the chivalrous and religious Gothic of Scott; when ghosts were redeemed from the contempt into which they had fallen, and resumed their place in polite society; in fact, the politer the society; the welcomer the ghosts, and whatever else was out of the common. In that day the Annual flourished, and this artificial flower was probably the first literary blossom on the Christmas Tree which has since borne so much tinsel foliage and painted fruit. But the Annual was extremely Oriental; it was much preoccupied with, Haidees and Gulnares and Zuleikas, with

Hindas and Nourmahals, owing to the distinction which Byron and Moore had given such ladies; and when it began to concern itself with the actualities of British beauty, the daughters of Albion, though inscribed with the names of real countesses and duchesses, betrayed their descent from the well-known Eastern odalisques. It was possibly through an American that holiday literature became distinctively English in material, and Washington Irving, with his New World love of the past, may have given the impulse to the literary worship of Christmas which has since so widely established itself. A festival revived in popular interest by a New-Yorker to whom Dutch associations with New-year's had endeared the German ideal of Christmas, and whom the robust gayeties of the season in old-fashioned country-houses had charmed, would be one of those roundabout results which destiny likes, and "would at least be Early English."

If we cannot claim with all the patriotic confidence we should like to feel that it was Irving who set Christmas in that light in which Dickens saw its aesthetic capabilities, it is perhaps because all origins are obscure. For anything that we positively know to the contrary, the Druidic rites from which English Christmas borrowed the inviting mistletoe, if not the decorative holly, may have been accompanied by the recitations of holiday triads. But it is certain that several plays of Shakespeare were produced, if not written, for the celebration of the holidays, and that then the black tide of Puritanism which swept over men's souls blotted out all such observance of Christmas with the festival itself. It came in again, by a natural reaction, with the returning Stuarts, and throughout the period of the Restoration it enjoyed a perfunctory favor. There is mention of it; often enough in the eighteenth-century essayists, in the Spectators and Idlers and Tatlers; but the world about the middle of the last century laments the neglect into which it had fallen. Irving seems to have been the first to observe its surviving rites lovingly, and Dickens divined its immense advantage as a literary occasion. He made it in some sort entirely his for a time, and there can be no question but it was he who again endeared it to the whole English-speaking world, and gave it a wider and deeper hold than it had ever had before upon the fancies and affections of our race.

The might of that great talent no one can gainsay, though in the light of the truer work which has since been done his literary principles seem almost as grotesque as his theories of political economy. In no one direction was his erring force more felt than in the creation of holiday literature as we have known it for the last half-century. Creation, of course, is the wrong word; it says too much; but in default of a better word, it may stand. He did not make something out of nothing; the material was there before him; the mood and even the need of his time contributed immensely to his success, as the volition of the subject helps on the mesmerist; but it is within bounds to say that he was the chief agency in the development of holiday literature as we have known it, as he was the chief agency in universalizing the great Christian holiday as we now have it. Other agencies wrought with him and after him; but it was he who rescued Christmas from Puritan distrust, and humanized it and consecrated it to the hearts and homes of all.

Very rough magic, as it now seems, he used in working his miracle, but there is no doubt about his working it. One opens his Christmas stories in this later day--'The Carol, The Chimes, The Haunted Man, The Cricket on the Hearth,' and all the rest--and with "a heart high-sorrowful and cloyed," asks himself for the preternatural virtue that they once had. The pathos appears false and strained; the humor largely horseplay; the character theatrical; the joviality pumped; the psychology commonplace; the sociology alone funny. It is a world of real clothes, earth, air, water, and the rest; the people often speak the language of life, but their motives are as disproportioned and improbable, and their passions and purposes as overcharged, as those of the worst of Balzac's people. Yet all these monstrosities, as they now appear, seem to have once had symmetry and verity; they moved the most cultivated intelligences of the time; they touched true hearts; they made everybody laugh and cry.

This was perhaps because the imagination, from having been fed mostly upon gross unrealities, always responds readily to fantastic appeals. There has been an amusing sort of awe of it, as if it were the channel of inspired thought, and were somehow sacred. The most preposterous inventions of its activity have been regarded in their time as the greatest feats of the human mind, and in its receptive form it has been nursed into an imbecility to which the truth is repugnant, and the fact that the beautiful resides nowhere else is inconceivable. It has been flattered out of all sufferance in its toyings with the mere elements of character, and its attempts to present these in combinations foreign to experience are still praised by the poorer sort of critics as masterpieces of creative work.

In the day of Dickens's early Christmas stories it was thought admirable for the author to take types of humanity which everybody knew, and to add to them from his imagination till they were as strange as beasts and birds talking. Now we begin to feel that human nature is quite enough, and that the best an author can do is to show it as it is. But in those stories of his Dickens said to his readers, Let us make believe so-and-so; and the result was a joint juggle, a child's-play, in which the wholesome allegiance to life was lost. Artistically, therefore, the scheme was false, and artistically, therefore, it must perish. It did not perish, however, before it had propagated itself in a whole school of unrealities so ghastly that one can hardly recall without a shudder those sentimentalities at secondhand to which holiday literature was abandoned long after the original conjurer had wearied of his performance.

Under his own eye and of conscious purpose a circle of imitators grew up in the fabrication of Christmas stories. They obviously formed themselves upon his sobered ideals; they collaborated with him, and it was often hard to know whether it was Dickens or Sala or Collins who was writing. The Christmas book had by that time lost its direct application to Christmas. It dealt with shipwrecks a good deal, and with perilous adventures of all kinds, and with unmerited suffering, and with ghosts and mysteries, because human nature, secure from storm and danger in a well-lighted room before a cheerful fire, likes to have these things imaged for it, and its long-puerilized fancy will bear an endless repetition of them. The wizards who wrought their spells with them

contented themselves with the lasting efficacy of these simple means; and the apprentice-wizards and journeyman-wizards who have succeeded them practise the same arts at the old stand; but the ethical intention which gave dignity to Dickens's Christmas stories of still earlier date has almost wholly disappeared. It was a quality which could not be worked so long as the phantoms and hair-breadth escapes. People always knew that character is not changed by a dream in a series of tableaux; that a ghost cannot do much towards reforming an inordinately selfish person; that a life cannot be turned white, like a head of hair, in a single night, by the most allegorical apparition; that want and sin and shame cannot be cured by kettles singing on the hob; and gradually they ceased to make believe that there was virtue in these devices and appliances. Yet the ethical intention was not fruitless, crude as it now appears.

It was well once a year, if not oftener, to remind men by parable of the old, simple truths; to teach them that forgiveness, and charity, and the endeavor for life better and purer than each has lived, are the principles upon which alone the world holds together and gets forward. It was well for the comfortable and the refined to be put in mind of the savagery and suffering all round them, and to be taught, as Dickens was always teaching, that certain feelings which grace human nature, as tenderness for the sick and helpless, self-sacrifice and generosity, self-respect and manliness and womanliness, are the common heritage of the race; the direct gift of Heaven, shared equally by the rich and poor. It did not necessarily detract from the value of the lesson that, with the imperfect art of the time, he made his paupers and porters not only human, but superhuman, and too altogether virtuous; and it remained true that home life may be lovely under the lowliest roof, although he liked to paint it without a shadow on its beauty there. It is still a fact that the sick are very often saintly, although he put no peevishness into their patience with their ills. His ethical intention told for manhood and fraternity and tolerance, and when this intention disappeared from the better holiday literature, that literature was sensibly the poorer for the loss.

XXVII.

But if the humanitarian impulse has mostly disappeared from Christmas fiction, I think it has never so generally characterized all fiction. One may refuse to recognize this impulse; one may deny that it is in any greater degree shaping life than ever before, but no one who has the current of literature under his eye can fail to note it there. People are thinking and feeling generously, if not living justly, in our time; it is a day of anxiety to be saved from the curse that is on selfishness, of eager question how others shall be helped, of bold denial that the conditions in which we would fain have rested are sacred or immutable. Especially in America, where the race has gained a height never reached before, the eminence enables more men than ever before to see how even here vast masses of men are sunk in misery that must grow every day more hopeless, or embroiled in a struggle for mere life that must end in

enslaving and imbruting them.

Art, indeed, is beginning to find out that if it does not make friends with Need it must perish. It perceives that to take itself from the many and leave them no joy in their work, and to give itself to the few whom it can bring no joy in their idleness, is an error that kills. The men and women who do the hard work of the world have learned that they have a right to pleasure in their toil, and that when justice is done them they will have it. In all ages poetry has affirmed something of this sort, but it remained for ours to perceive it and express it somehow in every form of literature. But this is only one phase of the devotion of the best literature of our time to the service of humanity. No book written with a low or cynical motive could succeed now, no matter how brilliantly written; and the work done in the past to the glorification of mere passion and power, to the deification of self, appears monstrous and hideous. The romantic spirit worshipped genius, worshipped heroism, but at its best, in such a man as Victor Hugo, this spirit recognized the supreme claim of the lowest humanity. Its error was to idealize the victims of society, to paint them impossibly virtuous and beautiful; but truth, which has succeeded to the highest mission of romance, paints these victims as they are, and bids the world consider them not because they are beautiful and virtuous, but because they are ugly and vicious, cruel, filthy, and only not altogether loathsome because the divine can never wholly die out of the human. The truth does not find these victims among the poor alone, among the hungry, the houseless, the ragged; but it also finds them among the rich, cursed with the aimlessness, the satiety, the despair of wealth, wasting their lives in a fool's paradise of shows and semblances, with nothing real but the misery that comes of insincerity and selfishness.

I do not think the fiction of our own time even always equal to this work, or perhaps more than seldom so. But as I once expressed, to the long-reverberating discontent of two continents, fiction is now a finer art than it, has been hitherto, and more nearly meets the requirements of the infallible standard. I have hopes of real usefulness in it, because it is at last building on the only sure foundation; but I am by no means certain that it will be the ultimate literary form, or will remain as important as we believe it is destined to become. On the contrary, it is quite imaginable that when the great mass of readers, now sunk in the foolish joys of mere fable, shall be lifted to an interest in the meaning of things through the faithful portrayal of life in fiction, then fiction the most faithful may be superseded by a still more faithful form of contemporaneous history. I willingly leave the precise character of this form to the more robust imagination of readers whose minds have been nurtured upon romantic novels, and who really have an imagination worth speaking of, and confine myself, as usual, to the hither side of the regions of conjecture.

The art which in the mean time disdains the office of teacher is one of the last refuges of the aristocratic spirit which is disappearing from politics and society, and is now seeking to shelter itself in aesthetics. The pride of caste is becoming the pride of taste; but as before, it is averse to the mass of men; it consents to know them only in some

conventionalized and artificial guise. It seeks to withdraw itself, to stand aloof; to be distinguished, and not to be identified. Democracy in literature is the reverse of all this. It wishes to know and to tell the truth, confident that consolation and delight are there; it does not care to paint the marvellous and impossible for the vulgar many, or to sentimentalize and falsify the actual for the vulgar few. Men are more like than unlike one another: let us make them know one another better, that they may be all humbled and strengthened with a sense of their fraternity. Neither arts, nor letters, nor sciences, except as they somehow, clearly or obscurely, tend to make the race better and kinder, are to be regarded as serious interests; they are all lower than the rudest crafts that feed and house and clothe, for except they do this office they are idle; and they cannot do this except from and through the truth.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

A Thanksgiving-Christmas Story

Anthony Trollope

Authorities

Browbeat wholesome common-sense into the self-distrust

Canon Fairfax,'s opinions of literary criticism

Comfort from the thought that most things cannot be helped

Concerning popularity as a test of merit in a book

Critical vanity and self-righteousness

Critics are in no sense the legislators of literature

Dickens rescued Christmas from Puritan distrust

Effectism

Fact that it is hash many times warmed over reassures them

Forbear the excesses of analysis

Glance of the common eye, is and always was the best light

Greatest classics are sometimes not at all great

Holiday literature

Imitators of one another than of nature

Jane Austen

Languages, while they live, are perpetually changing

Let fiction cease to lie about life

Long-puerilized fancy will bear an endless repetition

Made them talk as seldom man and never woman talked

Michelangelo's "light of the piazza,"

No greatness, no beauty, which does not come from truth

Novels hurt because they are not true

Plain industry and plodding perseverance are despised

Pseudo-realists

Public wish to be amused rather than edified

Teach what they do not know

Tediously analytical

To break new ground

Unless we prefer a luxury of grief

Vulgarity: bad art to lug it in

What makes a better fashion change for a worse
Whatever is established is sacred with those who do not think

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by William Dean Howells

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS FOR THE ENTIRE FILE:

Absence of distinction
Advertising
Aim at nothing higher than the amusement of your readers
Ambitious to be of ugly modern patterns
An artistic atmosphere does not create artists
Anise-seed bag
Any man's country could get on without him
Any sort of work that is slighted becomes drudgery
Artist has seasons, as trees, when he cannot blossom
As soon as she has got a thing she wants, begins to hate it
Begun to fight with want from their cradles
Blasts of frigid wind swept the streets
Book that they are content to know at second hand
Business to take advantage of his necessity
Clemens is said to have said of bicycling
Competition has deformed human nature
Conditions of hucksters imposed upon poets
Could not, as the saying is, find a stone to throw at a dog
Disbeliever in punishments of all sorts
Do not want to know about such squalid lives
Early self-helpfulness of children is very remarkable
Encounter of old friends after the lapse of years
Even a day's rest is more than most people can bear
Eyes fixed steadfastly upon the future
Face that expresses care, even to the point of anxiety
Fate of a book is in the hands of the women
For most people choice is a curse
General worsening of things, familiar after middle life
God of chance leads them into temptation and adversity
Happy in the indifference which ignorance breeds in us
Hard to think up anything new
Heart of youth aching for their stoical sorrows
Heighten our suffering by anticipation
Here and there an impassioned maple confesses the autumn
Historian, who is a kind of inferior realist
Houses are of almost terrifying cleanliness
I do not think any man ought to live by an art
If he has not enjoyed writing no one will enjoy reading

If one were poor, one ought to be deserving
Impropriety if not indecency promises literary success
Ladies make up the pomps which they (the men) forego
Lascivious and immodest as possible
Leading part cats may play in society
Leaven, but not for so large a lump
Literary spirit is the true world-citizen
Literature beautiful only through the intelligence
Literature has no objective value
Literature is Business as well as Art
Look of challenge, of interrogation, almost of reproof
Malevolent agitators
Man is strange to himself as long as he lives
Mark Twain
Meet here to the purpose of a common ostentation
Men read the newspapers, but our women read the books
More zeal than knowledge in it
Most journalists would have been literary men if they could
Neatness that brings despair
Never quite sure of life unless I find literature in it
No man ought to live by any art
No rose blooms right along
Noble uselessness
Not lack of quality but quantity of the quality
Openly depraved by shows of wealth
Our deeply incorporated civilization
Our huckstering civilization
People have never had ideals, but only moods and fashions
People might oftener trust themselves to Providence
People of wealth and fashion always dissemble their joy
Picturesqueness which we should prize if we saw it abroad
Plagiarism carries inevitable detection with it
Public whose taste is so crude that they cannot enjoy the best
Pure accident and by its own contributory negligence
Put aside all anxiety about style
Refused to see us as we see ourselves
Results of art should be free to all
Reviewers
Reward is in the serial and not in the book--19th Century
Rogues in every walk of life
Should be very sorry to do good, as people called it
Should sin a little more on the side of candid severity
So many millionaires and so many tramps
So touching that it brought the lump into my own throat
Solution of the problem how and where to spend the summer
Some of it's good, and most of it isn't
Some of us may be toys and playthings without reproach
Summer folks have no idea how pleasant it is when they are gone
Superiority one likes to feel towards the rich and great
Take our pleasures ungraciously
The old and ugly are fastidious as to the looks of others
Their consciences needed no bossing in the performance
There is small love of pure literature

They are so many and I am so few
Those who decide their fate are always rebelling against it
Those who work too much and those who rest too much
Trouble with success is that it is apt to leave life behind
Two branches of the novelist's trade: Novelist and Historian
Unfailing American kindness
Visitors of the more inquisitive sex
Wald with the lurch and the sway of the deck in it
Warner's Backlog Studies
We cannot all be hard-working donkeys
We who have neither youth nor beauty should always expect it
Whatever choice you make, you are pretty sure to regret it
Work not truly priced in money cannot be truly paid in money
Work would be twice as good if it were done twice

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by William Dean Howells

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS FOR THE ENTIRE "OF LITERATURE":

Absence of distinction
Absolute devotion to the day of her death,
Absolutely, so positively, so almost aggressively truthful
Abstract, the air-drawn, afflicted me like physical discomforts
Act officiously, not officially
Addressed to their tenderness out of his tenderness
Advertising
Aim at nothing higher than the amusement of your readers
Always sumptuously providing out of his destitution
Ambitious to be of ugly modern patterns
Amiable perception, and yet with a sort of remote absence
Amuse him, even when they wronged him
Amusingly realized the situation to their friends
An artistic atmosphere does not create artists
Anglo-American genius for ugliness
Anise-seed bag
Any sort of work that is slighted becomes drudgery
Any man's country could get on without him
Appeal, which he had come to recognize as invasive
Appeared to have no grudge left
Artist has seasons, as trees, when he cannot blossom
As soon as she has got a thing she wants, begins to hate it
Backed their credulity with their credit
Bayard Taylor: incomparable translation of Faust
Became gratefully strange

Begun to fight with want from their cradles
Best talkers are willing that you should talk if you like
Blasts of frigid wind swept the streets
Book that they are content to know at second hand
Business to take advantage of his necessity
But now I remember that he gets twenty dollars a month"
Candle burning on the table for the cigars
Celia Thaxter
Charles F. Browne
Charles Reade
Christianity had done nothing to improve morals and conditions
Church: "Oh yes, I go It 'most kills me, but I go,"
Clemens was sole, incomparable, the Lincoln of our literature
Clemens is said to have said of bicycling
Cold-slaw
Collective opacity
Competition has deformed human nature
Conditions of hucksters imposed upon poets
Confidence I have nearly always felt when wrong
Could easily believe now that it was some one else who saw it
Could make us feel that our faults were other people's
Could not, as the saying is, find a stone to throw at a dog
Could only by chance be caught in earnest about anything
Couldn't fire your revolver without bringing down a two volumner
Dawn upon him through a cloud of other half remembered faces
Death of the joy that ought to come from work
Death's vague conjectures to the broken expectations of life
Despair broke in laughter
Despised the avoidance of repetitions out of fear of tautology
Did not feel the effect I would so willingly have experienced
Dinner was at the old-fashioned Boston hour of two
Disbeliever in punishments of all sorts
Discomfort which mistaken or blundering praise
Do not want to know about such squalid lives
Dollars were of so much farther flight than now
Early self-helpfulness of children is very remarkable
Edmund Quincy
Edward Everett Hale
Either to deny the substance of things unseen, or to affirm it
Emerson
Encounter of old friends after the lapse of years
Enjoying whatever was amusing in the disadvantage to himself
Espoused the theory of Bacon's authorship of Shakespeare
Ethical sense, not the aesthetical sense
Even a day's rest is more than most people can bear
Everlasting rock of human credulity and folly
Expectation of those who will come no more
Express the appreciation of another's fit word
Eyes fixed steadfastly upon the future
Face that expresses care, even to the point of anxiety
Fate of a book is in the hands of the women
Feigned the gratitude which I could see that he expected
Fell either below our pride or rose above our purse

Felt that this was my misfortune more than my fault
Few men last over from one reform to another
First dinner served in courses that I had sat down to
Flowers with which we garland our despair in that pitiless hour
For most people choice is a curse
Forbearance of a wise man content to bide his time
Forebore to speak needlessly to him, or to shake his hand
Found life was not all poetry
Francis Parkman
Gay laugh comes across the abyss of the years
General worsening of things, familiar after middle life
Generous lover of all that was excellent in literature
George William Curtis
Giggle which Charles Lamb found the best thing in life
Give him your best wine
God of chance leads them into temptation and adversity
Got out of it all the fun there was in it
Greeting of great impersonal cordiality
Grieving that there could be such ire in heavenly minds
Happy in the indifference which ignorance breeds in us
Hard of hearing on one side. But it isn't deafness
Hard to think up anything new
Harriet Beecher Stowe and the Autocrat clashed upon homeopathy
Hate of hate, the scorn of scorn, The love of love
He did not care much for fiction
He was not bored because he would not be
He was not constructive; he was essentially observant
He did not paw you with his hands to show his affection
He was a youth to the end of his days
He had no time to make money
Heart of youth aching for their stoical sorrows
Heighten our suffering by anticipation
Heine
Here and there an impassioned maple confesses the autumn
Heroic lies
His plays were too bad for the stage, or else too good for it
His coming almost killed her, but it was worth it
His remembrance absolutely ceased with an event
His enemies suffered from it almost as much as his friends
His readers trusted and loved him
Historian, who is a kind of inferior realist
Hollowness, the hopelessness, the unworthiness of life
Honest men are few when it comes to themselves
Houses are of almost terrifying cleanliness
I do not think any man ought to live by an art
I find this young man worthy
I believe neither in heroes nor in saints
I did not know, and I hated to ask
If he was not there to your touch, it was no fault of his
If he was half as bad, he would have been too bad to be
If he has not enjoyed writing no one will enjoy reading
If one were poor, one ought to be deserving
Impropriety if not indecency promises literary success

In the South there was nothing but a mistaken social ideal
Incredible in their insipidity
Industrial slavery
Insatiable English fancy for the wild America no longer there
Intellectual poseurs
It was mighty pretty, as Pepys would say
It is well to hold one's country to her promises
Jane Austen
Julia Ward Howe
Ladies make up the pomps which they (the men) forego
Lascivious and immodest as possible
Leading part cats may play in society
Leaven, but not for so large a lump
Left him to do what the cat might
Lie, of course, and did to save others from grief or harm
Liked being with you, not for what he got, but for what he gave
Liked to find out good things and great things for himself
Lincoln
Literary dislikes or contempts
Literary spirit is the true world-citizen
Literature has no objective value
Literature is Business as well as Art
Literature beautiful only through the intelligence
Livy Clemens: nthe loveliest person I have ever seen
Long breath was not his; he could not write a novel
Longfellow
Look of challenge, of interrogation, almost of reproof
Looked as if Destiny had sat upon it
Love and gratitude are only semi-articulate at the best
Love of freedom and the hope of justice
Lowell
Made all men trust him when they doubted his opinions
Malevolent agitators
Man who may any moment be out of work is industrially a slave
Man is strange to himself as long as he lives
Man who had so much of the boy in him
Mark Twain
Marriages are what the parties to them alone really know
Meet here to the purpose of a common ostentation
Mellow cordial of a voice that was like no other
Memory will not be ruled
Men who took themselves so seriously as that need
Men read the newspapers, but our women read the books
Men's lives ended where they began, in the keeping of women
Met with kindness, if not honor
Might so far forget myself as to be a novelist
Mind and soul were with those who do the hard work of the world
Mock modesty of print forbids my repeating here
More zeal than knowledge in it
Most desouthernized Southerner I ever knew
Most serious, the most humane, the most conscientious of men
Most journalists would have been literary men if they could
Motley

Napoleonic height which spiritually overtops the Alps
Nearly nothing as chaos could be
Neatness that brings despair
Never saw a dead man whom he did not envy
Never quite sure of life unless I find literature in it
Never paid in anything but hopes of paying
Never saw a man more regardful of negroes
No rose blooms right along
No man ever yet told the truth about himself
No man ought to live by any art
No time to make money
No man more perfectly sensed and more entirely abhorred slavery
Noble uselessness
Not much patience with the unmanly craving for sympathy
Not a man who cared to transcend; he liked bounds
Not quite himself till he had made you aware of his quality
Not lack of quality but quantity of the quality
Not much of a talker, and almost nothing of a story-teller
Not possible for Clemens to write like anybody else
Now death has come to join its vague conjectures
NYC, a city where money counts for more and goes for less
Odious hilarity, without meaning and without remission
Offers mortifyingly mean, and others insultingly vague
Old man's tendency to revert to the past
Old man's disposition to speak of his infirmities
One could be openly poor in Cambridge without open shame
Only one concerned who was quite unconcerned
Openly depraved by shows of wealth
Ought not to call coarse without calling one's self prudish
Our huckstering civilization
Our deeply incorporated civilization
Pathos of revolt from the colorless rigidities
People have never had ideals, but only moods and fashions
People might oftener trust themselves to Providence
People of wealth and fashion always dissemble their joy
Person who wished to talk when he could listen
Picturesqueness which we should prize if we saw it abroad
Plagiarism carries inevitable detection with it
Plain-speaking or Rude Speaking
Pointed the moral in all they did
Polite learning hesitated his praise
Praised it enough to satisfy the author
Praised extravagantly, and in the wrong place
Public whose taste is so crude that they cannot enjoy the best
Pure accident and by its own contributory negligence
Put your finger on the present moment and enjoy it
Put aside all anxiety about style
Quarrel was with error, and not with the persons who were in it
Quebec was a bit of the seventeenth century
Reformers, who are so often tedious and ridiculous
Refused to see us as we see ourselves
Remember the dinner-bell
Reparation due from every white to every black man

Results of art should be free to all
Reviewers
Reward is in the serial and not in the book--19th Century
Rogues in every walk of life
Secret of the man who is universally interesting
Seen through the wrong end of the telescope
Shackles of belief worn so long
Should sin a little more on the side of candid severity
Should be very sorry to do good, as people called it
Shy of his fellow-men, as the scholar seems always to be
So refined, after the gigantic coarseness of California
So many millionaires and so many tramps
So touching that it brought the lump into my own throat
Solution of the problem how and where to spend the summer
Some superstition, usually of a hygienic sort
Some of us may be toys and playthings without reproach
Some of it's good, and most of it isn't
Sometimes they sacrificed the song to the sermon
Sought the things that he could agree with you upon
Spare his years the fatigue of recalling your identity
Standards were their own, and they were satisfied with them
Stoddard
Study in a corner by the porch
Stupidly truthful
Summer folks have no idea how pleasant it is when they are gone
Superiority one likes to feel towards the rich and great
Take our pleasures ungraciously
The ornament of a house is the friends who frequent it
The old and ugly are fastidious as to the looks of others
The world is well lost whenever the world is wrong
Their consciences needed no bossing in the performance
There is small love of pure literature
They are so many and I am so few
Things common to all, however peculiar in each
Thoreau
Those who work too much and those who rest too much
Those who have sorrowed deepest will understand this best
Those who decide their fate are always rebelling against it
Times when a man's city was a man's country
Tired themselves out in trying to catch up with him
Trouble with success is that it is apt to leave life behind
True to an ideal of life rather than to life itself
Truthful
Turn of the talk toward the mystical
Two branches of the novelist's trade: Novelist and Historian
Unfailing American kindness
Used to ingratitude from those he helped
Vacuous vulgarity of its texts
Visited one of the great mills
Visitors of the more inquisitive sex
Wald with the lurch and the sway of the deck in it
Walter-Scotticized, pseudo-chivalry of the Southern ideal
Warner's Backlog Studies

Wasted face, and his gay eyes had the death-look
We who have neither youth nor beauty should always expect it
We have never ended before, and we do not see how we can end
We cannot all be hard-working donkeys
Welcome me, and make the least of my shyness and strangeness
Well, if you are to be lost, I want to be lost with you
What he had done he owned to, good, bad, or indifferent
Whatever choice you make, you are pretty sure to regret it
When to be an agnostic was to be almost an outcast
Whether every human motive was not selfish
Whitman's public use of his privately written praise
Wit that tries its teeth upon everything
Women's rights
Wonder why we hate the past so--"It's so damned humiliating!"
Wonderful to me how it should remain so unintelligible
Work would be twice as good if it were done twice
Work not truly priced in money cannot be truly paid in money
Work gives the impression of an uncommon continuity
Wrote them first and last in the spirit of Dickens

End of this Project Gutenberg Etext "Of Literature", Entire
by William Dean Howells

NOVELS

THE RISE OF SILAS LAPHAM

by William Dean Howells

Prepared by John Hamm <John_Hamm@MindLink.bc.ca>

I.

WHEN Bartley Hubbard went to interview Silas Lapham for the "Solid Men of Boston" series, which he undertook to finish up in The Events, after he replaced their original projector on that newspaper, Lapham received

him in his private office by previous appointment.

"Walk right in!" he called out to the journalist, whom he caught sight of through the door of the counting-room.

He did not rise from the desk at which he was writing, but he gave Bartley his left hand for welcome, and he rolled his large head in the direction of a vacant chair. "Sit down! I'll be with you in just half a minute."

"Take your time," said Bartley, with the ease he instantly felt. "I'm in no hurry." He took a note-book from his pocket, laid it on his knee, and began to sharpen a pencil.

"There!" Lapham pounded with his great hairy fist on the envelope he had been addressing.

"William!" he called out, and he handed the letter to a boy who came to get it. "I want that to go right away. Well, sir," he continued, wheeling round in his leather-cushioned swivel-chair, and facing Bartley, seated so near that their knees almost touched, "so you want my life, death, and Christian sufferings, do you, young man?"

"That's what I'm after," said Bartley. "Your money or your life."

"I guess you wouldn't want my life without the money," said Lapham, as if he were willing to prolong these moments of preparation.

"Take 'em both," Bartley suggested. "Don't want your money without your life, if you come to that. But you're just one million times more interesting to the public than if you hadn't a dollar; and you know that as well as I do, Mr. Lapham. There 's no use beating about the bush."

"No," said Lapham, somewhat absently. He put out his huge foot and pushed the ground-glass door shut between his little den and the book-keepers, in their larger den outside.

"In personal appearance," wrote Bartley in the sketch for which he now studied his subject, while he waited patiently for him to continue, "Silas Lapham is a fine type of the successful American. He has a square, bold chin, only partially concealed by the short reddish-grey beard, growing to the edges of his firmly closing lips. His nose is short and straight; his forehead good, but broad rather than high; his eyes blue, and with a light in them that is kindly or sharp according to his mood. He is of medium height, and fills an average arm-chair with a solid bulk, which on the day of our interview was

unpretentiously clad in a business suit of blue serge. His head droops somewhat from a short neck, which does not trouble itself to rise far from a pair of massive shoulders."

"I don't know as I know just where you want me to begin," said Lapham.

"Might begin with your birth; that's where most of us begin," replied Bartley.

A gleam of humorous appreciation shot into Lapham's blue eyes.

"I didn't know whether you wanted me to go quite so far back as that," he said. "But there's no disgrace in having been born, and I was born in the State of Vermont, pretty well up under the Canada line--so well up, in fact, that I came very near being an adoptive citizen; for I was bound to be an American of SOME sort, from the word Go! That was about--well, let me see!--pretty near sixty years ago: this is '75, and that was '20. Well, say I'm fifty-five years old; and I've LIVED 'em, too; not an hour of waste time about ME, anywheres! I was born on a farm, and----"

"Worked in the fields summers and went to school winters: regulation thing?" Bartley cut in.

"Regulation thing," said Lapham, accepting this irreverent version of his history somewhat dryly.

"Parents poor, of course," suggested the journalist.

"Any barefoot business? Early deprivations of any kind, that would encourage the youthful reader to go and do likewise? Orphan myself, you know," said Bartley, with a smile of cynical good-comradery.

Lapham looked at him silently, and then said with quiet self-respect, "I guess if you see these things as a joke, my life won't interest you."

"Oh yes, it will," returned Bartley, unabashed. "You'll see; it'll come out all right." And in fact it did so, in the interview which Bartley printed.

"Mr. Lapham," he wrote, "passed rapidly over the story of his early life, its poverty and its hardships, sweetened, however, by the recollections of a devoted mother, and a father who, if somewhat her inferior in education, was no less ambitious for the advancement of his children. They were quiet, unpretentious people, religious, after the fashion of that time, and of sterling morality,

and they taught their children the simple virtues of the Old Testament and Poor Richard's Almanac."

Bartley could not deny himself this gibe; but he trusted to Lapham's unliterary habit of mind for his security in making it, and most other people would consider it sincere reporter's rhetoric.

"You know," he explained to Lapham, "that we have to look at all these facts as material, and we get the habit of classifying them. Sometimes a leading question will draw out a whole line of facts that a man himself would never think of." He went on to put several queries, and it was from Lapham's answers that he generalised the history of his childhood. "Mr. Lapham, although he did not dwell on his boyish trials and struggles, spoke of them with deep feeling and an abiding sense of their reality." This was what he added in the interview, and by the time he had got Lapham past the period where risen Americans are all pathetically alike in their narrow circumstances, their sufferings, and their aspirations, he had beguiled him into forgetfulness of the check he had received, and had him talking again in perfect enjoyment of his autobiography.

"Yes, sir," said Lapham, in a strain which Bartley was careful not to interrupt again, "a man never sees all that his mother has been to him till it's too late to let her know that he sees it. Why, my mother--" he stopped. "It gives me a lump in the throat," he said apologetically, with an attempt at a laugh. Then he went on: "She was a little frail thing, not bigger than a good-sized intermediate school-girl; but she did the whole work of a family of boys, and boarded the hired men besides. She cooked, swept, washed, ironed, made and mended from daylight till dark--and from dark till daylight, I was going to say; for I don't know how she got any time for sleep. But I suppose she did. She got time to go to church, and to teach us to read the Bible, and to misunderstand it in the old way. She was GOOD. But it ain't her on her knees in church that comes back to me so much like the sight of an angel as her on her knees before me at night, washing my poor, dirty little feet, that I'd run bare in all day, and making me decent for bed. There were six of us boys; it seems to me we were all of a size; and she was just so careful with all of us. I can feel her hands on my feet yet!" Bartley looked at Lapham's No. 10 boots, and softly whistled through his teeth. "We were patched all over; but we wa'n't ragged. I don't know how she got through it. She didn't seem to think it was anything; and I guess it was no more than my father expected of her. HE worked like a horse in doors and out--up at daylight, feeding the stock, and groaning round all day with his rheumatism, but not

stopping."

Bartley hid a yawn over his note-book, and probably, if he could have spoken his mind, he would have suggested to Lapham that he was not there for the purpose of interviewing his ancestry. But Bartley had learned to practise a patience with his victims which he did not always feel, and to feign an interest in their digressions till he could bring them up with a round turn.

"I tell you," said Lapham, jabbing the point of his penknife into the writing-pad on the desk before him, "when I hear women complaining nowadays that their lives are stunted and empty, I want to tell 'em about my MOTHER'S life. I could paint it out for 'em."

Bartley saw his opportunity at the word paint, and cut in. "And you say, Mr. Lapham, that you discovered this mineral paint on the old farm yourself?"

Lapham acquiesced in the return to business. "I didn't discover it," he said scrupulously. "My father found it one day, in a hole made by a tree blowing down. There it was, lying loose in the pit, and sticking to the roots that had pulled up a big, cake of dirt with 'em. I don't know what give him the idea that there was money in it, but he did think so from the start. I guess, if they'd had the word in those days, they'd considered him pretty much of a crank about it. He was trying as long as he lived to get that paint introduced; but he couldn't make it go. The country was so poor they couldn't paint their houses with anything; and father hadn't any facilities. It got to be a kind of joke with us; and I guess that paint-mine did as much as any one thing to make us boys clear out as soon as we got old enough. All my brothers went West, and took up land; but I hung on to New England and I hung on to the old farm, not because the paint-mine was on it, but because the old house was--and the graves. Well," said Lapham, as if unwilling to give himself too much credit, "there wouldn't been any market for it, anyway. You can go through that part of the State and buy more farms than you can shake a stick at for less money than it cost to build the barns on 'em. Of course, it's turned out a good thing. I keep the old house up in good shape, and we spend a month or so there every summer. M' wife kind of likes it, and the girls. Pretty place; sightly all round it. I've got a force of men at work there the whole time, and I've got a man and his wife in the house. Had a family meeting there last year; the whole connection from out West. There!" Lapham rose from his seat and took down a large warped, unframed photograph from the top of his desk, passing his hand over it, and then blowing

vigorously upon it, to clear it of the dust. "There we are, ALL of us."

"I don't need to look twice at YOU," said Bartley, putting his finger on one of the heads.

"Well, that's Bill," said Lapham, with a gratified laugh. "He's about as brainy as any of us, I guess. He's one of their leading lawyers, out Dubuque way; been judge of the Common Pleas once or twice. That's his son--just graduated at Yale--alongside of my youngest girl. Good-looking chap, ain't he?"

"SHE'S a good-looking chap," said Bartley, with prompt irreverence. He hastened to add, at the frown which gathered between Lapham's eyes, "What a beautiful creature she is! What a lovely, refined, sensitive face! And she looks GOOD, too."

"She is good," said the father, relenting.

"And, after all, that's about the best thing in a woman," said the potential reprobate. "If my wife wasn't good enough to keep both of us straight, I don't know what would become of me." "My other daughter," said Lapham, indicating a girl with eyes that showed large, and a face of singular gravity. "Mis' Lapham," he continued, touching his wife's effigy with his little finger. "My brother Willard and his family--farm at Kankakee. Hazard Lapham and his wife--Baptist preacher in Kansas. Jim and his three girls--milling business at Minneapolis. Ben and his family--practising medicine in Fort Wayne."

The figures were clustered in an irregular group in front of an old farm-house, whose original ugliness had been smartened up with a coat of Lapham's own paint, and heightened with an incongruous piazza. The photographer had not been able to conceal the fact that they were all decent, honest-looking, sensible people, with a very fair share of beauty among the young girls; some of these were extremely pretty, in fact. He had put them into awkward and constrained attitudes, of course; and they all looked as if they had the instrument of torture which photographers call a head-rest under their occiputs. Here and there an elderly lady's face was a mere blur; and some of the younger children had twitched themselves into wavering shadows, and might have passed for spirit-photographs of their own little ghosts. It was the standard family-group photograph, in which most Americans have figured at some time or other; and Lapham exhibited a just satisfaction in it. "I presume," he mused aloud, as he put it back on top of his desk, "that we sha'n't soon get together again, all of us."

"And you say," suggested Bartley, "that you stayed right along on the old place, when the rest cleared out West?"

"No o-o-o," said Lapham, with a long, loud drawl; "I cleared out West too, first off. Went to Texas. Texas was all the cry in those days. But I got enough of the Lone Star in about three months, and I come back with the idea that Vermont was good enough for me."

"Fatted calf business?" queried Bartley, with his pencil poised above his note-book.

"I presume they were glad to see me," said Lapham, with dignity. "Mother," he added gently, "died that winter, and I stayed on with father. I buried him in the spring; and then I came down to a little place called Lumberville, and picked up what jobs I could get. I worked round at the saw-mills, and I was ostler a while at the hotel--I always DID like a good horse. Well, I WA'N'T exactly a college graduate, and I went to school odd times. I got to driving the stage after while, and by and by I BOUGHT the stage and run the business myself. Then I hired the tavern-stand, and--well to make a long story short, then I got married. Yes," said Lapham, with pride, "I married the school-teacher. We did pretty well with the hotel, and my wife she was always at me to paint up. Well, I put it off, and PUT it off, as a man will, till one day I give in, and says I, 'Well, let's paint up. Why, Pert,'--m'wife's name's Persis,--'I've got a whole paint-mine out on the farm. Let's go out and look at it.' So we drove out. I'd let the place for seventy-five dollars a year to a shif'less kind of a Kanuck that had come down that way; and I'd hated to see the house with him in it; but we drove out one Saturday afternoon, and we brought back about a bushel of the stuff in the buggy-seat, and I tried it crude, and I tried it burnt; and I liked it. M'wife she liked it too. There wa'n't any painter by trade in the village, and I mixed it myself. Well, sir, that tavern's got that coat of paint on it yet, and it hain't ever had any other, and I don't know's it ever will. Well, you know, I felt as if it was a kind of harumscarum experiment, all the while; and I presume I shouldn't have tried it but I kind of liked to do it because father'd always set so much store by his paint-mine. And when I'd got the first coat on,"--Lapham called it CUT,--"I presume I must have set as much as half an hour; looking at it and thinking how he would have enjoyed it. I've had my share of luck in this world, and I ain't a-going to complain on my OWN account, but I've noticed that most things get along too late for most people. It made me feel bad, and it took all the pride out my success with the paint, thinking of father. Seemed to me I might 'a taken more

interest in it when he was by to see; but we've got to live and learn. Well, I called my wife out,--I'd tried it on the back of the house, you know,--and she left her dishes,--I can remember she came out with her sleeves rolled up and set down alongside of me on the trestle,--and says I, 'What do you think, Persis?' And says she, 'Well, you hain't got a paint-mine, Silas Lapham; you've got a GOLD-mine.' She always was just so enthusiastic about things. Well, it was just after two or three boats had burnt up out West, and a lot of lives lost, and there was a great cry about non-inflammable paint, and I guess that was what was in her mind. 'Well, I guess it ain't any gold-mine, Persis,' says I; 'but I guess it IS a paint-mine. I'm going to have it analysed, and if it turns out what I think it is, I'm going to work it. And if father hadn't had such a long name, I should call it the Nehemiah Lapham Mineral Paint. But, any rate, every barrel of it, and every keg, and every bottle, and every package, big or little, has got to have the initials and figures N.L.f. 1835, S.L.t. 1855, on it. Father found it in 1835, and I tried it in 1855.'"

"S.T.--1860--X.' business," said Bartley.

"Yes," said Lapham, "but I hadn't heard of Plantation Bitters then, and I hadn't seen any of the fellow's labels. I set to work and I got a man down from Boston; and I carried him out to the farm, and he analysed it--made a regular Job of it. Well, sir, we built a kiln, and we kept a lot of that paint-ore red-hot for forty-eight hours; kept the Kanuck and his family up, firing. The presence of iron in the ore showed with the magnet from the start; and when he came to test it, he found out that it contained about seventy-five per cent. of the peroxide of iron."

Lapham pronounced the scientific phrases with a sort of reverent satisfaction, as if awed through his pride by a little lingering uncertainty as to what peroxide was. He accented it as if it were purr-ox-EYED; and Bartley had to get him to spell it.

"Well, and what then?" he asked, when he had made a note of the percentage.

"What then?" echoed Lapham. "Well, then, the fellow set down and told me, 'You've got a paint here,' says he, 'that's going to drive every other mineral paint out of the market. Why' says he, 'it'll drive 'em right into the Back Bay!' Of course, I didn't know what the Back Bay was then, but I begun to open my eyes; thought I'd had 'em open before, but I guess I hadn't. Says he, 'That paint

has got hydraulic cement in it, and it can stand fire and water and acids;' he named over a lot of things. Says he, 'It'll mix easily with linseed oil, whether you want to use it boiled or raw; and it ain't a-going to crack nor fade any; and it ain't a-going to scale. When you've got your arrangements for burning it properly, you're going to have a paint that will stand like the everlasting hills, in every climate under the sun.' Then he went into a lot of particulars, and I begun to think he was drawing a long-bow, and meant to make his bill accordingly. So I kept pretty cool; but the fellow's bill didn't amount to anything hardly--said I might pay him after I got going; young chap, and pretty easy; but every word he said was gospel. Well, I ain't a-going to brag up my paint; I don't suppose you came here to hear me blow"

"Oh yes, I did," said Bartley. "That's what I want. Tell all there is to tell, and I can boil it down afterward. A man can't make a greater mistake with a reporter than to hold back anything out of modesty. It may be the very thing we want to know. What we want is the whole truth; and more; we've got so much modesty of our own that we can temper almost any statement.

Lapham looked as if he did not quite like this tone, and he resumed a little more quietly. Oh, there isn't really very much more to say about the paint itself. But you can use it for almost anything where a paint is wanted, inside or out. It'll prevent decay, and it'll stop it, after it's begun, in tin or iron. You can paint the inside of a cistern or a bath-tub with it, and water won't hurt it; and you can paint a steam-boiler with it, and heat won't. You can cover a brick wall with it, or a railroad car, or the deck of a steamboat, and you can't do a better thing for either."

"Never tried it on the human conscience, I suppose," suggested Bartley.

"No, sir," replied Lapham gravely. "I guess you want to keep that as free from paint as you can, if you want much use of it. I never cared to try any of it on mine." Lapham suddenly lifted his bulk up out of his swivel-chair, and led the way out into the wareroom beyond the office partitions, where rows and ranks of casks, barrels, and kegs stretched dimly back to the rear of the building, and diffused an honest, clean, wholesome smell of oil and paint. They were labelled and branded as containing each so many pounds of Lapham's Mineral Paint, and each bore the mystic devices, N.L.f. 1835--S.L.t. 1855. "There!" said Lapham, kicking one of the largest casks with the toe of his boot, "that's about our biggest package; and here," he added,

laying his hand affectionately on the head of a very small keg, as if it were the head of a child, which it resembled in size, "this is the smallest. We used to put the paint on the market dry, but now we grind every ounce of it in oil--very best quality of linseed oil--and warrant it. We find it gives more satisfaction. Now, come back to the office, and I'll show you our fancy brands."

It was very cool and pleasant in that dim wareroom, with the rafters showing overhead in a cloudy perspective, and darkening away into the perpetual twilight at the rear of the building; and Bartley had found an agreeable seat on the head of a half-barrel of the paint, which he was reluctant to leave. But he rose and followed the vigorous lead of Lapham back to the office, where the sun of a long summer afternoon was just beginning to glare in at the window. On shelves opposite Lapham's desk were tin cans of various sizes, arranged in tapering cylinders, and showing, in a pattern diminishing toward the top, the same label borne by the casks and barrels in the wareroom. Lapham merely waved his hand toward these; but when Bartley, after a comprehensive glance at them, gave his whole attention to a row of clean, smooth jars, where different tints of the paint showed through flawless glass, Lapham smiled, and waited in pleased expectation.

"Hello!" said Bartley. "That's pretty!"

"Yes," assented Lapham, "it is rather nice. It's our latest thing, and we find it takes with customers first-rate. Look here!" he said, taking down one of the jars, and pointing to the first line of the label.

Bartley read, "THE PERSIS BRAND," and then he looked at Lapham and smiled.

"After HER, of course," said Lapham. "Got it up and put the first of it on the market her last birthday. She was pleased."

"I should think she might have been," said Bartley, while he made a note of the appearance of the jars.

"I don't know about your mentioning it in your interview," said Lapham dubiously.

"That's going into the interview, Mr. Lapham, if nothing else does. Got a wife myself, and I know just how you feel." It was in the dawn of Bartley's prosperity on the Boston Events, before his troubles with Marcia had seriously begun.

"Is that so?" said Lapham, recognising with a smile another of the vast majority of married Americans;

a few underrate their wives, but the rest think them supernal in intelligence and capability. "Well," he added, "we must see about that. Where'd you say you lived?"

"We don't live; we board. Mrs. Nash, 13 Canary Place."

"Well, we've all got to commence that way," suggested Lapham consolingly.

"Yes; but we've about got to the end of our string. I expect to be under a roof of my own on Clover Street before long. I suppose," said Bartley, returning to business, "that you didn't let the grass grow under your feet much after you found out what was in your paint-mine?"

"No, sir," answered Lapham, withdrawing his eyes from a long stare at Bartley, in which he had been seeing himself a young man again, in the first days of his married life. "I went right back to Lumberville and sold out everything, and put all I could rake and scrape together into paint. And Mis' Lapham was with me every time. No hang back about HER. I tell you she was a WOMAN!"

Bartley laughed. "That's the sort most of us marry."

"No, we don't," said Lapham. "Most of us marry silly little girls grown up to LOOK like women."

"Well, I guess that's about so," assented Bartley, as if upon second thought.

"If it hadn't been for her," resumed Lapham, "the paint wouldn't have come to anything. I used to tell her it wa'n't the seventy-five per cent. of purr-ox-eyed of iron in the ORE that made that paint go; it was the seventy-five per cent. of purr-ox-eyed of iron in HER."

"Good!" cried Bartley. "I'll tell Marcia that."

"In less'n six months there wa'n't a board-fence, nor a bridge-girder, nor a dead wall, nor a barn, nor a face of rock in that whole region that didn't have 'Lapham's Mineral Paint--Specimen' on it in the three colours we begun by making." Bartley had taken his seat on the window-sill, and Lapham, standing before him, now put up his huge foot close to Bartley's thigh; neither of them minded that.

"I've heard a good deal of talk about that S.T.--1860--X. man, and the stove-blackening man, and the kidney-cure man, because they advertised in that way; and I've read articles about it in the papers; but I don't see where the joke comes in, exactly. So long as the people that own the barns and fences don't object, I don't see what the public has

got to do with it. And I never saw anything so very sacred about a big rock, along a river or in a pasture, that it wouldn't do to put mineral paint on it in three colours. I wish some of the people that talk about the landscape, and WRITE about it, had to bu'st one of them rocks OUT of the landscape with powder, or dig a hole to bury it in, as we used to have to do up on the farm; I guess they'd sing a little different tune about the profanation of scenery. There ain't any man enjoys a sightly bit of nature--a smooth piece of interval with half a dozen good-sized wine-glass elms in it--more than I do. But I ain't a-going to stand up for every big ugly rock I come across, as if we were all a set of dumn Druids. I say the landscape was made for man, and not man for the landscape."

"Yes," said Bartley carelessly; "it was made for the stove-polish man and the kidney-cure man."

"It was made for any man that knows how to use it," Lapham returned, insensible to Bartley's irony. "Let 'em go and live with nature in the WINTER, up there along the Canada line, and I guess they'll get enough of her for one while. Well--where was I?"

"Decorating the landscape," said Bartley.

"Yes, sir; I started right there at Lumberville, and it give the place a start too. You won't find it on the map now; and you won't find it in the gazetteer. I give a pretty good lump of money to build a town-hall, about five years back, and the first meeting they held in it they voted to change the name,--Lumberville WA'N'T a name,--and it's Lapham now."

"Isn't it somewhere up in that region that they get the old Brandon red?" asked Bartley.

"We're about ninety miles from Brandon. The Brandon's a good paint," said Lapham conscientiously. "Like to show you round up at our place some odd time, if you get off."

"Thanks. I should like it first-rate. WORKS there?"

"Yes; works there. Well, sir, just about the time I got started, the war broke out; and it knocked my paint higher than a kite. The thing dropped perfectly dead. I presume that if I'd had any sort of influence, I might have got it into Government hands, for gun-carriages and army wagons, and may be on board Government vessels. But I hadn't, and we had to face the music. I was about broken-hearted, but m'wife she looked at it another way. 'I guess it's a providence,' says she. 'Silas, I guess

you've got a country that's worth fighting for. Any rate, you better go out and give it a chance.' Well, sir, I went. I knew she meant business. It might kill her to have me go, but it would kill her sure if I stayed.

She was one of that kind. I went. Her last words was, 'I'll look after the paint, Si.' We hadn't but just one little girl then,--boy'd died,--and Mis' Lapham's mother was livin' with us; and I knew if times DID anyways come up again, m'wife'd know just what to do. So I went. I got through; and you can call me Colonel, if you want to. Feel there!" Lapham took Bartley's thumb and forefinger and put them on a bunch in his leg, just above the knee. "Anything hard?"

"Ball?"

Lapham nodded. "Gettysburg. That's my thermometer. If it wa'n't for that, I shouldn't know enough to come in when it rains."

Bartley laughed at a joke which betrayed some evidences of wear. "And when you came back, you took hold of the paint and rushed it."

"I took hold of the paint and rushed it--all I could," said Lapham, with less satisfaction than he had hitherto shown in his autobiography. "But I found that I had got back to another world. The day of small things was past, and I don't suppose it will ever come again in this country. My wife was at me all the time to take a partner--somebody with capital; but I couldn't seem to bear the idea. That paint was like my own blood to me. To have anybody else concerned in it was like--well, I don't know what. I saw it was the thing to do; but I tried to fight it off, and I tried to joke it off. I used to say, 'Why didn't you take a partner yourself, Persis, while I was away?' And she'd say, 'Well, if you hadn't come back, I should, Si.' Always DID like a joke about as well as any woman I ever saw. Well, I had to come to it. I took a partner." Lapham dropped the bold blue eyes with which he had been till now staring into Bartley's face, and the reporter knew that here was a place for asterisks in his interview, if interviews were faithful. "He had money enough," continued Lapham, with a suppressed sigh; "but he didn't know anything about paint. We hung on together for a year or two. And then we quit."

"And he had the experience," suggested Bartley, with companionable ease.

"I had some of the experience too," said Lapham, with a scowl; and Bartley divined, through the freemasonry of all who have sore places in their memories, that this

was a point which he must not touch again.

"And since that, I suppose, you've played it alone."

"I've played it alone."

"You must ship some of this paint of yours to foreign countries, Colonel?" suggested Bartley, putting on a professional air.

"We ship it to all parts of the world. It goes to South America, lots of it. It goes to Australia, and it goes to India, and it goes to China, and it goes to the Cape of Good Hope. It'll stand any climate. Of course, we don't export these fancy brands much. They're for home use. But we're introducing them elsewhere. Here." Lapham pulled open a drawer, and showed Bartley a lot of labels in different languages--Spanish, French, German, and Italian.

"We expect to do a good business in all those countries. We've got our agencies in Cadiz now, and in Paris, and in Hamburg, and in Leghorn. It's a thing that's bound to make its way. Yes, sir. Wherever a man has got a ship, or a bridge, or a lock, or a house, or a car, or a fence, or a pig-pen anywhere in God's universe to paint, that's the paint for him, and he's bound to find it out sooner or later. You pass a ton of that paint dry through a blast-furnace, and you'll get a quarter of a ton of pig-iron. I believe in my paint. I believe it's a blessing to the world. When folks come in, and kind of smell round, and ask me what I mix it with, I always say, 'Well, in the first place, I mix it with FAITH, and after that I grind it up with the best quality of boiled linseed oil that money will buy.'"

Lapham took out his watch and looked at it, and Bartley perceived that his audience was drawing to a close.

"F you ever want to run down and take a look at our works, pass you over the road,"--he called it RUD" and it sha'n't cost you a cent." "Well, may be I shall, sometime," said Bartley. "Good afternoon, Colonel."

"Good afternoon. Or--hold on! My horse down there yet, William?" he called to the young man in the counting-room who had taken his letter at the beginning of the interview. "Oh! All right!" he added, in response to something the young man said.

"Can't I set you down somewhere, Mr. Hubbard? I've got my horse at the door, and I can drop you on my way home. I'm going to take Mis' Lapham to look at a house I'm driving piles for, down on the New Land."

"Don't care if I do," said Bartley.

Lapham put on a straw hat, gathered up some papers lying on his desk, pulled down its rolling cover, turned the key in it, and gave the papers to an extremely handsome young woman at one of the desks in the outer office. She was stylishly dressed, as Bartley saw, and her smooth, yellow hair was sculpturesquely waved over a low, white forehead. "Here," said Lapham, with the same prompt gruff kindness that he had used in addressing the young man, "I want you should put these in shape, and give me a type-writer copy to-morrow."

"What an uncommonly pretty girl!" said Bartley, as they descended the rough stairway and found their way out to the street, past the dangling rope of a block and tackle wandering up into the cavernous darkness overhead.

"She does her work," said Lapham shortly.

Bartley mounted to the left side of the open buggy standing at the curb-stone, and Lapham, gathering up the hitching-weight, slid it under the buggy-seat and mounted beside him.

"No chance to speed a horse here, of course," said Lapham, while the horse with a spirited gentleness picked her way, with a high, long action, over the pavement of the street. The streets were all narrow, and most of them crooked, in that quarter of the town; but at the end of one the spars of a vessel pencilled themselves delicately against the cool blue of the afternoon sky. The air was full of a smell pleasantly compounded of oakum, of leather, and of oil. It was not the busy season, and they met only two or three trucks heavily straggling toward the wharf with their long string teams; but the cobble-stones of the pavement were worn with the dint of ponderous wheels, and discoloured with iron-rust from them; here and there, in wandering streaks over its surface, was the grey stain of the salt water with which the street had been sprinkled.

After an interval of some minutes, which both men spent in looking round the dash-board from opposite sides to watch the stride of the horse, Bartley said, with a light sigh, "I had a colt once down in Maine that stepped just like that mare."

"Well!" said Lapham, sympathetically recognising the bond that this fact created between them. "Well, now, I tell you what you do. You let me come for you 'most any afternoon, now, and take you out over the Milldam, and speed this mare a little. I'd like to show you what this mare can do. Yes, I would."

"All right," answered Bartley; "I'll let you know

my first day off."

"Good," cried Lapham.

"Kentucky?" queried Bartley.

"No, sir. I don't ride behind anything but Vermont; never did. Touch of Morgan, of course; but you can't have much Morgan in a horse if you want speed. Hambletonian mostly. Where'd you say you wanted to get out?"

"I guess you may put me down at the Events Office, just round the corner here. I've got to write up this interview while it's fresh."

"All right," said Lapham, impersonally assenting to Bartley's use of him as material.

He had not much to complain of in Bartley's treatment, unless it was the strain of extravagant compliment which it involved. But the flattery was mainly for the paint, whose virtues Lapham did not believe could be overstated, and himself and his history had been treated with as much respect as Bartley was capable of showing any one. He made a very picturesque thing of the discovery of the paint-mine. "Deep in the heart of the virgin forests of Vermont, far up toward the line of the Canadian snows, on a desolate mountain-side, where an autumnal storm had done its wild work, and the great trees, strewn hither and thither, bore witness to its violence, Nehemiah Lapham discovered, just forty years ago, the mineral which the alchemy of his son's enterprise and energy has transmuted into solid ingots of the most precious of metals. The colossal fortune of Colonel Silas Lapham lay at the bottom of a hole which an uprooted tree had dug for him, and which for many years remained a paint-mine of no more appreciable value than a soap-mine."

Here Bartley had not been able to forego another grin; but he compensated for it by the high reverence with which he spoke of Colonel Lapham's

record during the war of the rebellion, and of the motives which impelled him to turn aside from an enterprise in which his whole heart was engaged, and take part in the struggle. "The Colonel bears embedded in the muscle of his right leg a little memento of the period in the shape of a minie-ball, which he jocularly referred to as his thermometer, and which relieves him from the necessity of reading 'The Probabilities' in his morning paper. This saves him just so much time; and for a man who, as he said, has not a moment of waste time on him anywhere, five minutes a day are something in the course of a year.

Simple, clear, bold, and straightforward in mind and action, Colonel Silas Lapham, with a prompt comprehensiveness and a never-failing business sagacity, is, in the best sense of that much-abused term, one of nature's noblemen, to the last inch of his five eleven and a half. His life affords an example of single-minded application and unwavering perseverance which our young business men would do well to emulate. There is nothing showy or meretricious about the man. He believes in mineral paint, and he puts his heart and soul into it. He makes it a religion; though we would not imply that it IS his religion. Colonel Lapham is a regular attendant at the Rev. Dr. Langworthy's church. He subscribes liberally to the Associated Charities, and no good object or worthy public enterprise fails to receive his support. He is not now actively in politics, and his paint is not partisan; but it is an open secret that he is, and always has been, a staunch Republican. Without violating the sanctities of private life, we cannot speak fully of various details which came out in the free and unembarrassed interview which Colonel Lapham accorded our representative. But we may say that the success of which he is justly proud he is also proud to attribute in great measure to the sympathy and energy of his wife--one of those women who, in whatever walk of life, seem born to honour the name of American Woman, and to redeem it from the national reproach of Daisy Millerism. Of Colonel Lapham's family, we will simply add that it consists of two young lady daughters.

"The subject of this very inadequate sketch is building a house on the water side of Beacon Street, after designs by one of our leading architectural firms, which, when complete, will be one of the finest ornaments of that exclusive avenue. It will, we believe, be ready for the occupancy of the family sometime in the spring."

When Bartley had finished his article, which he did with a good deal of inward derision, he went home to Marcia, still smiling over the thought of Lapham, whose burly simplicity had peculiarly amused him. "He regularly turned himself inside out to me," he said, as he sat describing his interview to Marcia.

"Then I know you could make something nice out of it," said his wife; "and that will please Mr. Witherby."

"Oh yes, I've done pretty well; but I couldn't let myself loose on him the way I wanted to. Confound the limitations of decency, anyway! I should like to have told just what Colonel Lapham thought of landscape advertising in Colonel Lapham's own words. I'll tell you one thing, Marsh: he had a girl there at one of the desks that you wouldn't let ME have within gunshot of MY office.

Pretty? It ain't any name for it!" Marcia's eyes began to blaze, and Bartley broke out into a laugh, in which he arrested himself at sight of a formidable parcel in the corner of the room.

"Hello! What's that?"

"Why, I don't know what it is," replied Marcia tremulously. "A man brought it just before you came in, and I didn't like to open it."

"Think it was some kind of infernal machine?" asked Bartley, getting down on his knees to examine the package. "MRS. B. Hubbard, heigh?" He cut the heavy hemp string with his penknife. "We must look into this thing. I should like to know who's sending packages to Mrs. Hubbard in my absence." He unfolded the wrappings of paper, growing softer and finer inward, and presently pulled out a handsome square glass jar, through which a crimson mass showed richly. "The Persis Brand!" he yelled. "I knew it!"

"Oh, what is it, Bartley?" quavered Marcia. Then, courageously drawing a little nearer: "Is it some kind of jam?" she implored. "Jam? No!" roared Bartley. "It's PAINT! It's mineral paint--Lapham's paint!"

"Paint?" echoed Marcia, as she stood over him while he stripped their wrappings from the jars which showed the dark blue, dark green, light brown, dark brown, and black, with the dark crimson, forming the gamut of colour of the Lapham paint. "Don't TELL me it's paint that I can use, Bartley!"

"Well, I shouldn't advise you to use much of it--all at once," replied her husband. "But it's paint that you can use in moderation."

Marcia cast her arms round his neck and kissed him. "O Bartley, I think I'm the happiest girl in the world! I was just wondering what I should do. There are places in that Clover Street house that need touching up so dreadfully. I shall be very careful. You needn't be afraid I shall overdo. But, this just saves my life. Did you BUY it, Bartley? You know we couldn't afford it, and you oughtn't to have done it! And what does the Persis Brand mean?"

"Buy it?" cried Bartley. "No! The old fool's sent it to you as a present. You'd better wait for the facts before you pitch into me for extravagance, Marcia. Persis is the name of his wife; and he named it after her because it's his finest brand. You'll see it in my interview.

Put it on the market her last birthday for a surprise to her."

"What old fool?" faltered Marcia.

"Why, Lapham--the mineral paint man."

"Oh, what a good man!" sighed Marcia from the bottom of her soul. "Bartley! you WON'T make fun of him as you do of some of those people? WILL you?"

"Nothing that HE'LL ever find out," said Bartley, getting up and brushing off the carpet-lint from his knees.

II.

AFTER dropping Bartley Hubbard at the Events building, Lapham drove on down Washington Street to Nankeen Square at the South End, where he had lived ever since the mistaken movement of society in that direction ceased. He had not built, but had bought very cheap of a terrified gentleman of good extraction who discovered too late that the South End was not the thing, and who in the eagerness of his flight to the Back Bay threw in his carpets and shades for almost nothing. Mrs. Lapham was even better satisfied with their bargain than the Colonel himself, and they had lived in Nankeen Square for twelve years. They had seen the saplings planted in the pretty oval round which the houses were built flourish up into sturdy young trees, and their two little girls in the same period had grown into young ladies; the Colonel's tough frame had expanded into the bulk which Bartley's interview indicated; and Mrs. Lapham, while keeping a more youthful outline, showed the sharp print of the crow's-foot at the corners of her motherly eyes, and certain slight creases in her wholesome cheeks. The fact that they lived in an unfashionable neighbourhood was something that they had never been made to feel to their personal disadvantage, and they had hardly known it till the summer before this story opens, when Mrs. Lapham and her daughter Irene had met some other Bostonians far from Boston, who made it memorable. They were people whom chance had brought for the time under a singular obligation to the Lapham ladies, and they were gratefully recognisant of it. They had ventured--a mother and two daughters--as far as a rather wild little Canadian watering-place on the St. Lawrence, below Quebec, and had arrived some days before their son and brother was expected to join them. Two of their trunks had gone astray, and on the night of their arrival the mother was taken violently ill.

Mrs. Lapham came to their help, with her skill as nurse, and with the abundance of her own and her daughter's wardrobe, and a profuse, single-hearted kindness. When a doctor could be got at, he said that but for Mrs. Lapham's timely care, the lady would hardly have lived. He was a very effusive little Frenchman, and fancied he was saying something very pleasant to everybody.

A certain intimacy inevitably followed, and when the son came he was even more grateful than the others. Mrs. Lapham could not quite understand why he should be as attentive to her as to Irene; but she compared him with other young men about the place, and thought him nicer than any of them. She had not the means of a wider comparison; for in Boston, with all her husband's prosperity, they had not had a social life. Their first years there were given to careful getting on Lapham's part, and careful saving on his wife's. Suddenly the money began to come so abundantly that she need not save; and then they did not know what to do with it. A certain amount could be spent on horses, and Lapham spent it; his wife spent on rich and rather ugly clothes and a luxury of household appointments. Lapham had not yet reached the picture-buying stage of the rich man's development, but they decorated their house with the costliest and most abominable frescoes; they went upon journeys, and lavished upon cars and hotels; they gave with both hands to their church and to all the charities it brought them acquainted with; but they did not know how to spend on society. Up to a certain period Mrs. Lapham had the ladies of her neighbourhood in to tea, as her mother had done in the country in her younger days. Lapham's idea of hospitality was still to bring a heavy-buying customer home to pot-luck; neither of them imagined dinners.

Their two girls had gone to the public schools, where they had not got on as fast as some of the other girls; so that they were a year behind in graduating from the grammar-school, where Lapham thought that they had got education enough. His wife was of a different mind; she would have liked them to go to some private school for their finishing. But Irene did not care for study; she preferred house-keeping, and both the sisters were afraid of being snubbed by the other girls, who were of a different sort from the girls of the grammar-school; these were mostly from the parks and squares, like themselves. It ended in their going part of a year. But the elder had an odd taste of her own for reading, and she took some private lessons, and read books out of the circulating library; the whole family were amazed at the number she read, and rather proud of it.

They were not girls who embroidered or abandoned themselves to needle-work. Irene spent her abundant leisure in shopping for herself and her mother, of whom both daughters made a kind of idol, buying her caps and laces out of their pin-money, and getting her dresses far beyond her capacity to wear. Irene dressed herself very stylishly, and spent hours on her toilet every day. Her sister had a simpler taste, and, if she had done altogether as she liked, might even have slighted dress. They all three took long naps every day, and sat hours together minutely discussing what they saw out of the window. In her self-guided search for self-improvement, the elder sister went to many church lectures on a vast variety of secular subjects, and usually came home with a comic account of them, and that made more matter of talk for the whole family. She could make fun of nearly everything; Irene complained that she scared away the young men whom they got acquainted with at the dancing-school sociables. They were, perhaps, not the wisest young men.

The girls had learned to dance at Papanti's; but they had not belonged to the private classes. They did not even know of them, and a great gulf divided them from those who did. Their father did not like company, except such as came informally in their way; and their mother had remained too rustic to know how to attract it in the sophisticated city fashion. None of them had grasped the idea of European travel; but they had gone about to mountain and sea-side resorts, the mother and the two girls, where they witnessed the spectacle which such resorts present throughout New England, of multitudes of girls, lovely, accomplished, exquisitely dressed, humbly glad of the presence of any sort of young man; but the Laphams had no skill or courage to make themselves noticed, far less courted by the solitary invalid, or clergyman, or artist. They lurked helplessly about in the hotel parlours, looking on and not knowing how to put themselves forward. Perhaps they did not care a great deal to do so. They had not a conceit of themselves, but a sort of content in their own ways that one may notice in certain families. The very strength of their mutual affection was a barrier to worldly knowledge; they dressed for one another; they equipped their house for their own satisfaction; they lived richly to themselves, not because they were selfish, but because they did not know how to do otherwise. The elder daughter did not care for society, apparently. The younger, who was but three years younger, was not yet quite old enough to be ambitious of it. With all her wonderful beauty, she had an innocence almost vegetable. When her beauty, which in its immaturity was crude and harsh, suddenly ripened, she bloomed and glowed with the unconsciousness of a flower; she not merely did not feel herself admired, but hardly knew herself discovered. If she dressed well,

perhaps too well, it was because she had the instinct of dress; but till she met this young man who was so nice to her at Baie St. Paul, she had scarcely lived a detached, individual life, so wholly had she depended on her mother and her sister for her opinions, almost her sensations. She took account of everything he did and said, pondering it, and trying to make out exactly what he meant, to the inflection of a syllable, the slightest movement or gesture. In this way she began for the first time to form ideas which she had not derived from her family, and they were none the less her own because they were often mistaken.

Some of the things that he partly said, partly looked, she reported to her mother, and they talked them over, as they did everything relating to these new acquaintances, and wrought them into the novel point of view which they were acquiring. When Mrs. Lapham returned home, she submitted all the accumulated facts of the case, and all her own conjectures, to her husband, and canvassed them anew.

At first he was disposed to regard the whole affair as of small importance, and she had to insist a little beyond her own convictions in order to counteract his indifference.

"Well, I can tell you," she said, "that if you think they were not the nicest people you ever saw, you're mightily mistaken. They had about the best manners; and they had been everywhere, and knew everything. I declare it made me feel as if we had always lived in the backwoods. I don't know but the mother and the daughters would have let you feel so a little, if they'd showed out all they thought; but they never did; and the son--well, I can't express it, Silas! But that young man had about perfect ways."

"Seem struck up on Irene?" asked the Colonel.

"How can I tell? He seemed just about as much struck up on me. Anyway, he paid me as much attention as he did her. Perhaps it's more the way, now, to notice the mother than it used to be."

Lapham ventured no conjecture, but asked, as he had asked already, who the people were.

Mrs. Lapham repeated their name. Lapham nodded his head.

"Do you know them? What business is he in?"

"I guess he ain't in anything," said Lapham.

"They were very nice," said Mrs. Lapham impartially.

"Well, they'd ought to be," returned the Colonel.

"Never done anything else."

"They didn't seem stuck up," urged his wife.

"They'd no need to--with you. I could buy him and sell him, twice over."

This answer satisfied Mrs. Lapham rather with the fact than with her husband. "Well, I guess I wouldn't brag, Silas," she said.

In the winter the ladies of this family, who returned to town very late, came to call on Mrs. Lapham. They were again very polite. But the mother let drop, in apology for their calling almost at nightfall, that the coachman had not known the way exactly.

"Nearly all our friends are on the New Land or on the Hill."

There was a barb in this that rankled after the ladies had gone; and on comparing notes with her daughter, Mrs. Lapham found that a barb had been left to rankle in her mind also.

"They said they had never been in this part of the town before."

Upon a strict search of her memory, Irene could not report that the fact had been stated with anything like insinuation, but it was that which gave it a more penetrating effect.

"Oh, well, of course," said Lapham, to whom these facts were referred. "Those sort of people haven't got much business up our way, and they don't come. It's a fair thing all round. We don't trouble the Hill or the New Land much."

"We know where they are," suggested his wife thoughtfully.

"Yes," assented the Colonel. "I know where they are. I've got a lot of land over on the Back Bay."

"You have?" eagerly demanded his wife.

"Want me to build on it?" he asked in reply, with a quizzical smile.

"I guess we can get along here for a while."

This was at night. In the morning Mrs. Lapham said--

"I suppose we ought to do the best we can for the children, in every way."

"I supposed we always had," replied her husband.

"Yes, we have, according to our light."

"Have you got some new light?"

"I don't know as it's light. But if the girls are going to keep on living in Boston and marry here, I presume we ought to try to get them into society, some way; or ought to do something."

"Well, who's ever done more for their children than we have?" demanded Lapham, with a pang at the thought that he could possibly have been out-done. "Don't they have everything they want? Don't they dress just as you say? Don't you go everywhere with 'em? Is there ever anything going on that's worth while that they don't see it or hear it? I don't know what you mean. Why don't you get them into society? There's money enough!"

"There's got to be something besides money, I guess," said Mrs. Lapham, with a hopeless sigh. "I presume we didn't go to work just the right way about their schooling. We ought to have got them into some school where they'd have got acquainted with city girls--girls who could help them along.

Nearly everybody at Miss Smillie's was from some where else."

"Well, it's pretty late to think about that now," grumbled Lapham.

"And we've always gone our own way, and not looked out for the future. We ought to have gone out more, and had people come to the house. Nobody comes."

"Well, is that my fault? I guess nobody ever makes people welcomer."

"We ought to have invited company more."

"Why don't you do it now? If it's for the girls, I don't care if you have the house full all the while."

Mrs. Lapham was forced to a confession full of humiliation.

"I don't know who to ask."

"Well, you can't expect me to tell you."

"No; we're both country people, and we've kept our country ways, and we don't, either of us, know what to do. You've had to work so hard, and your luck was so long coming, and then it came with such a rush, that we haven't had any

chance to learn what to do with it. It's just the same with Irene's looks; I didn't expect she was ever going to have any, she WAS such a plain child, and, all at once, she's blazed out this way. As long as it was Pen that didn't seem to care for society, I didn't give much mind to it. But I can see it's going to be different with Irene. I don't believe but what we're in the wrong neighbourhood."

"Well," said the Colonel, "there ain't a prettier lot on the Back Bay than mine. It's on the water side of Beacon, and it's twenty-eight feet wide and a hundred and fifty deep. Let's build on it."

Mrs. Lapham was silent a while. "No," she said finally; "we've always got along well enough here, and I guess we better stay."

At breakfast she said casually: "Girls, how would you like to have your father build on the New Land?"

The girls said they did not know. It was more convenient to the horse-cars where they were.

Mrs. Lapham stole a look of relief at her husband, and nothing more was said of the matter.

The mother of the family who had called upon Mrs. Lapham brought her husband's cards, and when Mrs. Lapham returned the visit she was in some trouble about the proper form of acknowledging the civility. The Colonel had no card but a business card, which advertised the principal depot and the several agencies of the mineral paint; and Mrs. Lapham doubted, till she wished to goodness that she had never seen nor heard of those people, whether to ignore her husband in the transaction altogether, or to write his name on her own card. She decided finally upon this measure, and she had the relief of not finding the family at home. As far as she could judge, Irene seemed to suffer a little disappointment from the fact.

For several months there was no communication between the families. Then there came to Nankeen Square a lithographed circular from the people on the Hill, signed in ink by the mother, and affording Mrs. Lapham an opportunity to subscribe for a charity of undeniable merit and acceptability. She submitted it to her husband, who promptly drew a cheque for five hundred dollars.

She tore it in two. "I will take a cheque for a hundred, Silas," she said.

"Why?" he asked, looking up guiltily at her.

"Because a hundred is enough; and I don't want to show off before them."

"Oh, I thought may be you did. Well, Pert," he added, having satisfied human nature by the preliminary thrust, "I guess you're about right. When do you want I should begin to build on Beacon Street?" He handed her the new cheque, where she stood over him, and then leaned back in his chair and looked up at her.

"I don't want you should begin at all. What do you mean, Silas?" She rested against the side of his desk.

"Well, I don't know as I mean anything. But shouldn't you like to build? Everybody builds, at least once in a lifetime."

"Where is your lot? They say it's unhealthy, over there."

Up to a certain point in their prosperity Mrs. Lapham had kept strict account of all her husband's affairs; but as they expanded, and ceased to be of the retail nature with which women successfully grapple, the intimate knowledge of them made her nervous. There was a period in which she felt that they were being ruined, but the crash had not come; and, since his great success, she had abandoned herself to a blind confidence in her husband's judgment, which she had hitherto felt needed her revision. He came and went, day by day, unquestioned. He bought and sold and got gain. She knew that he would tell her if ever things went wrong, and he knew that she would ask him whenever she was anxious.

"It ain't unhealthy where I've bought," said Lapham, rather enjoying her insinuation. "I looked after that when I was trading; and I guess it's about as healthy on the Back Bay as it is here, anyway. I got that lot for you, Pert; I thought you'd want to build on the Back Bay some day."

"Pshaw!" said Mrs. Lapham, deeply pleased inwardly, but not going to show it, as she would have said. "I guess you want to build there yourself." She insensibly got a little nearer to her husband. They liked to talk to each other in that blunt way; it is the New England way of expressing perfect confidence and tenderness.

"Well, I guess I do," said Lapham, not insisting upon the unselfish view of the matter. "I always did like the water side of Beacon. There ain't a sightlier place in the world for a house. And some day there's bound to be a drive-way all along behind them houses, between them and the water, and then a lot there is going to be worth the gold that will cover it--COIN."

I've had offers for that lot, Pert, twice over what I give for it. Yes, I have. Don't you want to ride over there some afternoon with me and see it?" "I'm satisfied where we be, Si," said Mrs. Lapham, recurring to the parlance of her youth in her pathos at her husband's kindness. She sighed anxiously, for she felt the trouble a woman knows in view of any great change. They had often talked of altering over the house in which they lived, but they had never come to it; and they had often talked of building, but it had always been a house in the country that they had thought of. "I wish you had sold that lot."

"I hain't," said the colonel briefly.

"I don't know as I feel much like changing our way of living."

"Guess we could live there pretty much as we live here. There's all kinds of people on Beacon Street; you mustn't think they're all big-bugs. I know one party that lives in a house he built to sell, and his wife don't keep any girl. You can have just as much style there as you want, or just as little. I guess we live as well as most of 'em now, and set as good a table. And if you come to style, I don't know as anybody has got more of a right to put it on than what we have."

"Well, I don't want to build on Beacon Street, Si," said Mrs. Lapham gently.

"Just as you please, Persis. I ain't in any hurry to leave."

Mrs. Lapham stood flapping the cheque which she held in her right hand against the edge of her left.

The Colonel still sat looking up at her face, and watching the effect of the poison of ambition which he had artfully instilled into her mind.

She sighed again--a yielding sigh. "What are you going to do this afternoon?"

"I'm going to take a turn on the Brighton road," said the Colonel.

"I don't believe but what I should like to go along," said his wife.

"All right. You hain't ever rode behind that mare yet, Pert, and I want you should see me let her out once. They say the snow's all packed down already, and the going is A 1."

At four o'clock in the afternoon, with a cold,

red winter sunset before them, the Colonel and his wife were driving slowly down Beacon Street in the light, high-seated cutter, where, as he said, they were a pretty tight fit. He was holding the mare in till the time came to speed her, and the mare was springily jolting over the snow, looking intelligently from side to side, and cocking this ear and that, while from her nostrils, her head tossing easily, she blew quick, irregular whiffs of steam.

"Gay, ain't she?" proudly suggested the Colonel.

"She IS gay," assented his wife.

They met swiftly dashing sleighs, and let them pass on either hand, down the beautiful avenue narrowing with an admirably even sky-line in the perspective. They were not in a hurry. The mare jounced easily along, and they talked of the different houses on either side of the way. They had a crude taste in architecture, and they admired the worst. There were women's faces at many of the handsome windows, and once in a while a young man on the pavement caught his hat suddenly from his head, and bowed in response to some salutation from within.

"I don't think our girls would look very bad behind one of those big panes," said the Colonel.

"No," said his wife dreamily.

"Where's the YOUNG man? Did he come with them?"

"No; he was to spend the winter with a friend of his that has a ranch in Texas. I guess he's got to do something."

"Yes; gentlemaning as a profession has got to play out in a generation or two."

Neither of them spoke of the lot, though Lapham knew perfectly well what his wife had come with him for, and she was aware that he knew it. The time came when he brought the mare down to a walk, and then slowed up almost to a stop, while they both turned their heads to the right and looked at the vacant lot, through which showed the frozen stretch of the Back Bay, a section of the Long Bridge, and the roofs and smoke-stacks of Charlestown.

"Yes, it's sightly," said Mrs. Lapham, lifting her hand from the reins, on which she had unconsciously laid it.

Lapham said nothing, but he let the mare out a little.

The sleighs and cutters were thickening round them.

On the Milldam it became difficult to restrict the mare to the long, slow trot into which he let her break. The beautiful landscape widened to right and left of them, with the sunset redder and redder, over the low, irregular hills before them. They crossed the Milldam into Longwood; and here, from the crest of the first upland, stretched two endless lines, in which thousands of cutters went and came. Some of the drivers were already speeding their horses, and these shot to and fro on inner lines, between the slowly moving vehicles on either side of the road. Here and there a burly mounted policeman, bulging over the pommel of his M'Clellan saddle, jolted by, silently gesturing and directing the course, and keeping it all under the eye of the law. It was what Bartley Hubbard called "a carnival of fashion and gaiety on the Brighton road," in his account of it. But most of the people in those elegant sleighs and cutters had so little the air of the great world that one knowing it at all must have wondered where they and their money came from; and the gaiety of the men, at least, was expressed, like that of Colonel Lapham, in a grim almost fierce, alertness; the women wore an air of courageous apprehension. At a certain point the Colonel said, "I'm going to let her out, Pert," and he lifted and then dropped the reins lightly on the mare's back.

She understood the signal, and, as an admirer said, "she laid down to her work." Nothing in the immutable iron of Lapham's face betrayed his sense of triumph as the mare left everything behind her on the road. Mrs. Lapham, if she felt fear, was too busy holding her flying wraps about her, and shielding her face from the scud of ice flung from the mare's heels, to betray it; except for the rush of her feet, the mare was as silent as the people behind her; the muscles of her back and thighs worked more and more swiftly, like some mechanism responding to an alien force, and she shot to the end of the course, grazing a hundred encountered and rival sledges in her passage, but unmolested by the policemen, who probably saw that the mare and the Colonel knew what they were about, and, at any rate, were not the sort of men to interfere with trotting like that. At the end of the heat Lapham drew her in, and turned off on a side street into Brookline.

"Tell you what, Pert," he said, as if they had been quietly jogging along, with time for uninterrupted thought since he last spoke, "I've about made up my mind to build on that lot."

"All right, Silas," said Mrs. Lapham; "I suppose you know what you're about. Don't build on it for me, that's all."

When she stood in the hall at home, taking off her things, she said to the girls, who were helping her, "Some day your father will get killed with that mare."

"Did he speed her?" asked Penelope, the elder.

She was named after her grandmother, who had in her turn inherited from another ancestress the name of the Homeric matron whose peculiar merits won her a place even among the Puritan Faiths, Hopes, Temperances, and Prudences. Penelope was the girl whose odd serious face had struck Bartley Hubbard in the photograph of the family group Lapham showed him on the day of the interview. Her large eyes, like her hair, were brown; they had the peculiar look of near-sighted eyes which is called mooning; her complexion was of a dark pallor.

Her mother did not reply to a question which might be considered already answered. "He says he's going to build on that lot of his," she net remarked, unwinding the long veil which she had tied round her neck to hold her bonnet on. She put her hat and cloak on the hall table, to be carried upstairs later, and they all went in to tea: creamed oysters, birds, hot biscuit, two kinds of cake, and dishes of stewed and canned fruit and honey. The women dined alone at one, and the Colonel at the same hour down-town. But he liked a good hot meal when he got home in the evening. The house flared with gas; and the Colonel, before he sat down, went about shutting the registers, through which a welding heat came voluming up from the furnace.

"I'll be the death of that darkey YET," he said, "if he don't stop making on such a fire. The only way to get any comfort out of your furnace is to take care of it yourself."

"Well," answered his wife from behind the teapot, as he sat down at table with this threat, "there's nothing to prevent you, Si. And you can shovel the snow too, if you want to--till you get over to Beacon Street, anyway."

"I guess I can keep my own sidewalk on Beacon Street clean, if I take the notion."

"I should like to see you at it," retorted his wife.

"Well, you keep a sharp lookout, and may be you will."

Their taunts were really expressions of affectionate pride in each other. They liked to have it, give and take, that way, as they would have said, right along.

"A man can be a man on Beacon Street as well as anywhere, I guess."

"Well, I'll do the wash, as I used to in Lumberville," said Mrs. Lapham. "I presume you'll let me have set tubs, Si. You know I ain't so young any more." She passed Irene a cup of Oolong tea,--none of them had a sufficiently cultivated palate for Sou-chong,--and the girl handed it to her father. "Papa," she asked, "you don't really mean that you're going to build over there?"

"Don't I? You wait and see," said the Colonel, stirring his tea.

"I don't believe you do," pursued the girl.

"Is that so? I presume you'd hate to have me. Your mother does." He said DOOS, of course.

Penelope took the word. "I go in for it. I don't see any use in not enjoying money, if you've got it to enjoy. That's what it's for, I suppose; though you mightn't always think so." She had a slow, quaint way of talking, that seemed a pleasant personal modification of some ancestral Yankee drawl, and her voice was low and cozy, and so far from being nasal that it was a little hoarse.

"I guess the ayes has it, Pen," said her father. "How would it do to let Irene and your mother stick in the old place here, and us go into the new house?" At times the Colonel's grammar failed him.

The matter dropped, and the Laphams lived on as before, with joking recurrences to the house on the water side of Beacon. The Colonel seemed less in earnest than any of them about it; but that was his way, his girls said; you never could tell when he really meant a thing.

III.

TOWARD the end of the winter there came a newspaper, addressed to Miss Irene Lapham; it proved to be a Texas newspaper, with a complimentary account of the ranch of the Hon. Loring G. Stanton, which the representative of the journal had visited.

"It must be his friend," said Mrs. Lapham, to whom her daughter brought the paper; "the one he's staying with."

The girl did not say anything, but she carried the paper to her room, where she scanned every line of it

for another name. She did not find it, but she cut the notice out and stuck it into the side of her mirror, where she could read it every morning when she brushed her hair, and the last thing at night when she looked at herself in the glass just before turning off the gas. Her sister often read it aloud, standing behind her and rendering it with elocutionary effects.

"The first time I ever heard of a love-letter in the form of a puff to a cattle-ranch. But perhaps that's the style on the Hill."

Mrs. Lapham told her husband of the arrival of the paper, treating the fact with an importance that he refused to see in it.

"How do you know the fellow sent it, anyway?" he demanded.

"Oh, I know he did."

"I don't see why he couldn't write to 'Rene, if he really meant anything."

"Well, I guess that wouldn't be their way," said Mrs. Lapham; she did not at all know what their way would be.

When the spring opened Colonel Lapham showed that he had been in earnest about building on the New Land. His idea of a house was a brown-stone front, four stories high, and a French roof with an air-chamber above. Inside, there was to be a reception-room on the street and a dining-room back. The parlours were to be on the second floor, and finished in black walnut or party-coloured paint. The chambers were to be on the three floors above, front and rear, with side-rooms over the front door. Black walnut was to be used everywhere except in the attic, which was to be painted and grained to look like black walnut. The whole was to be very high-studded, and there were to be handsome cornices and elaborate centre-pieces throughout, except, again, in the attic.

These ideas he had formed from the inspection of many new buildings which he had seen going up, and which he had a passion for looking into. He was confirmed in his ideas by a master builder who had put up a great many houses on the Back Bay as a speculation, and who told him that if he wanted to have a house in the style, that was the way to have it.

The beginnings of the process by which Lapham escaped from the master builder and ended in the hands of an architect are so obscure that it would be almost impossible to trace them. But it all happened, and Lapham promptly

developed his ideas of black walnut finish, high studding, and cornices. The architect was able to conceal the shudder which they must have sent through him. He was skilful, as nearly all architects are, in playing upon that simple instrument Man. He began to touch Colonel Lapham's stops.

"Oh, certainly, have the parlours high-studded. But you've seen some of those pretty old-fashioned country-houses, haven't you, where the entrance-story is very low-studded?" "Yes," Lapham assented.

"Well, don't you think something of that kind would have a very nice effect? Have the entrance-story low-studded, and your parlours on the next floor as high as you please. Put your little reception-room here beside the door, and get the whole width of your house frontage for a square hall, and an easy low-tread staircase running up three sides of it. I'm sure Mrs. Lapham would find it much pleasanter." The architect caught toward him a scrap of paper lying on the table at which they were sitting and sketched his idea. "Then have your dining-room behind the hall, looking on the water."

He glanced at Mrs. Lapham, who said, "Of course," and the architect went on--

"That gets you rid of one of those long, straight, ugly staircases,"--until that moment Lapham had thought a long, straight staircase the chief ornament of a house,--"and gives you an effect of amplitude and space."

"That's so!" said Mrs. Lapham. Her husband merely made a noise in his throat.

"Then, were you thinking of having your parlours together, connected by folding doors?" asked the architect deferentially.

"Yes, of course," said Lapham. "They're always so, ain't they?"

"Well, nearly," said the architect. "I was wondering how would it do to make one large square room at the front, taking the whole breadth of the house, and, with this hall-space between, have a music-room back for the young ladies?"

Lapham looked helplessly at his wife, whose quicker apprehension had followed the architect's pencil with instant sympathy. "First-rate!" she cried.

The Colonel gave way. "I guess that would do. It'll be kind of odd, won't it?"

"Well, I don't know," said the architect. "Not so odd, I hope, as the other thing will be a few years from now." He went on to plan the rest of the house, and he showed himself such a master in regard to all the practical details that Mrs. Lapham began to feel a motherly affection for the young man, and her husband could not deny in his heart that the fellow seemed to understand his business. He stopped walking about the room, as he had begun to do when the architect and Mrs. Lapham entered into the particulars of closets, drainage, kitchen arrangements, and all that, and came back to the table. "I presume," he said, "you'll have the drawing-room finished in black walnut?"

"Well, yes," replied the architect, "if you like. But some less expensive wood can be made just as effective with paint. Of course you can paint black walnut too."

"Paint it?" gasped the Colonel.

"Yes," said the architect quietly. "White, or a little off white."

Lapham dropped the plan he had picked up from the table. His wife made a little move toward him of consolation or support.

"Of course," resumed the architect, "I know there has been a great craze for black walnut. But it's an ugly wood; and for a drawing-room there is really nothing like white paint. We should want to introduce a little gold here and there. Perhaps we might run a painted frieze round under the cornice--garlands of roses on a gold ground; it would tell wonderfully in a white room."

The Colonel returned less courageously to the charge. "I presume you'll want Eastlake mantel-shelves and tiles?" He meant this for a sarcastic thrust at a prevailing foible of the profession.

"Well, no," gently answered the architect. "I was thinking perhaps a white marble chimney-piece, treated in the refined Empire style, would be the thing for that room."

"White marble!" exclaimed the Colonel. "I thought that had gone out long ago."

"Really beautiful things can't go out. They may disappear for a little while, but they must come back. It's only the ugly things that stay out after they've had their day."

Lapham could only venture very modestly, "Hard-wood floors?"

"In the music-room, of course," consented the architect.

"And in the drawing-room?"

"Carpet. Some sort of moquette, I should say. But I should prefer to consult Mrs. Lapham's taste in that matter."

"And in the other rooms?"

"Oh, carpets, of course."

"And what about the stairs?"

"Carpet. And I should have the rail and banisters white--banisters turned or twisted."

The Colonel said under his breath, "Well, I'm dummed!" but he gave no utterance to his astonishment in the architect's presence. When he went at last,--the session did not end till eleven o'clock,--Lapham said, "Well, Pert, I guess that fellow's fifty years behind, or ten years ahead. I wonder what the Ongpeer style is?"

"I don't know. I hated to ask. But he seemed to understand what he was talking about. I declare, he knows what a woman wants in a house better than she does herself."

"And a man's simply nowhere in comparison," said Lapham. But he respected a fellow who could beat him at every point, and have a reason ready, as this architect had; and when he recovered from the daze into which the complete upheaval of all his preconceived notions had left him, he was in a fit state to swear by the architect. It seemed to him that he had discovered the fellow (as he always called him) and owned him now, and the fellow did nothing to disturb this impression. He entered into that brief but intense intimacy with the Laphams which the sympathetic architect holds with his clients. He was privy to all their differences of opinion and all their disputes about the house. He knew just where to insist upon his own ideas, and where to yield. He was really building several other houses, but he gave the Laphams the impression that he was doing none but theirs.

The work was not begun till the frost was thoroughly out of the ground, which that year was not before the end of April. Even then it did not proceed very rapidly. Lapham said they might as well take their time to it; if they got the walls up and the thing closed in before the snow flew, they could be working at it all winter. It was found necessary to dig for the kitchen; at that

point the original salt-marsh lay near the surface, and before they began to put in the piles for the foundation they had to pump. The neighbourhood smelt like the hold of a ship after a three years' voyage. People who had cast their fortunes with the New Land went by professing not to notice it; people who still "hung on to the Hill" put their handkerchiefs to their noses, and told each other the old terrible stories of the material used in filling up the Back Bay.

Nothing gave Lapham so much satisfaction in the whole construction of his house as the pile-driving. When this began, early in the summer, he took Mrs. Lapham every day in his buggy and drove round to look at it; stopping the mare in front of the lot, and watching the operation with even keener interest than the little loafing Irish boys who superintended it in force. It pleased him to hear the portable engine chuckle out a hundred thin whiffs of steam in carrying the big iron weight to the top of the framework above the pile, then seem to hesitate, and cough once or twice in pressing the weight against the detaching apparatus. There was a moment in which the weight had the effect of poising before it fell; then it dropped with a mighty whack on the iron-bound head of the pile, and drove it a foot into the earth.

"By gracious!" he would say, "there ain't anything like that in THIS world for BUSINESS, Persis!"

Mrs. Lapham suffered him to enjoy the sight twenty or thirty times before she said, "Well, now drive on, Si."

By the time the foundation was in and the brick walls had begun to go up, there were so few people left in the neighbourhood that she might indulge with impunity her husband's passion for having her clamber over the floor-timbers and the skeleton stair-cases with him. Many of the householders had boarded up their front doors before the buds had begun to swell and the assessor to appear in early May; others had followed soon; and Mrs. Lapham was as safe from remark as if she had been in the depth of the country. Ordinarily she and her girls left town early in July, going to one of the hotels at Nantasket, where it was convenient for the Colonel to get to and from his business by the boat. But this summer they were all lingering a few weeks later, under the novel fascination of the new house, as they called it, as if there were no other in the world.

Lapham drove there with his wife after he had set Bartley Hubbard down at the Events office, but on this day something happened that interfered with the solid pleasure they usually took in going over the house.

As the Colonel turned from casting anchor at the mare's head with the hitching-weight, after helping his wife to alight, he encountered a man to whom he could not help speaking, though the man seemed to share his hesitation if not his reluctance at the necessity. He was a tallish, thin man, with a dust-coloured face, and a dead, clerical air, which somehow suggested at once feebleness and tenacity.

Mrs. Lapham held out her hand to him.

"Why, Mr. Rogers!" she exclaimed; and then, turning toward her husband, seemed to refer the two men to each other. They shook hands, but Lapham did not speak. "I didn't know you were in Boston," pursued Mrs. Lapham. "Is Mrs. Rogers with you?"

"No," said Mr. Rogers, with a voice which had the flat, succinct sound of two pieces of wood clapped together. "Mrs. Rogers is still in Chicago"

A little silence followed, and then Mrs Lapham said--

"I presume you are quite settled out there."

"No; we have left Chicago. Mrs. Rogers has merely remained to finish up a little packing."

"Oh, indeed! Are you coming back to Boston?"

"I cannot say as yet. We some think of so doing.

Lapham turned away and looked up at the building. His wife pulled a little at her glove, as if embarrassed, or even pained. She tried to make a diversion.

"We are building a house," she said, with a meaningless laugh.

"Oh, indeed," said Mr. Rogers, looking up at it.

Then no one spoke again, and she said helplessly--

"If you come to Boston, I hope I shall see Mrs. Rogers."

"She will be happy to have you call," said Mr Rogers.

He touched his hat-brim, and made a bow forward rather than in Mrs. Lapham's direction.

She mounted the planking that led into the shelter of the bare brick walls, and her husband slowly followed. When she turned her face toward him her cheeks were burning, and tears that looked hot stood in her eyes.

"You left it all to me!" she cried. "Why couldn't you speak a word?"

"I hadn't anything to say to him," replied Lapham sullenly.

They stood a while, without looking at the work which they had come to enjoy, and without speaking to each other.

"I suppose we might as well go on," said Mrs. Lapham at last, as they returned to the buggy. The Colonel drove recklessly toward the Milldam. His wife kept her veil down and her face turned from him. After a time she put her handkerchief up under her veil and wiped her eyes, and he set his teeth and squared his jaw.

"I don't see how he always manages to appear just at the moment when he seems to have gone fairly out of our lives, and blight everything," she whimpered.

"I supposed he was dead," said Lapham.

"Oh, don't SAY such a thing! It sounds as if you wished it."

"Why do you mind it? What do you let him blight everything for?"

"I can't help it, and I don't believe I ever shall. I don't know as his being dead would help it any. I can't ever see him without feeling just as I did at first."

"I tell you," said Lapham, "it was a perfectly square thing. And I wish, once for all, you would quit bothering about it. My conscience is easy as far as he is concerned, and it always was."

"And I can't look at him without feeling as if you'd ruined him, Silas."

"Don't look at him, then," said her husband, with a scowl.

"I want you should recollect in the first place, Persis, that I never wanted a partner."

"If he hadn't put his money in when he did, you'd 'a' broken down."

"Well, he got his money out again, and more, too," said the Colonel, with a sulky weariness.

"He didn't want to take it out."

"I gave him his choice: buy out or go out."

"You know he couldn't buy out then. It was no choice

at all."

"It was a business chance."

"No; you had better face the truth, Silas. It was no chance at all. You crowded him out. A man that had saved you! No, you had got greedy, Silas. You had made your paint your god, and you couldn't bear to let anybody else share in its blessings."

"I tell you he was a drag and a brake on me from the word go. You say he saved me. Well, if I hadn't got him out he'd 'a' ruined me sooner or later. So it's an even thing, as far forth as that goes."

"No, it ain't an even thing, and you know it, Silas. Oh, if I could only get you once to acknowledge that you did wrong about it, then I should have some hope. I don't say you meant wrong exactly, but you took an advantage. Yes, you took an advantage! You had him where he couldn't help himself, and then you wouldn't show him any mercy."

"I'm sick of this," said Lapham. "If you'll 'tend to the house, I'll manage my business without your help."

"You were very glad of my help once."

"Well, I'm tired of it now. Don't meddle."

"I WILL meddle. When I see you hardening yourself in a wrong thing, it's time for me to meddle, as you call it, and I will. I can't ever get you to own up the least bit about Rogers, and I feel as if it was hurting you all the while."

"What do you want I should own up about a thing for when I don't feel wrong? I tell you Rogers hain't got anything to complain of, and that's what I told you from the start. It's a thing that's done every day. I was loaded up with a partner that didn't know anything, and couldn't do anything, and I unloaded; that's all."

"You unloaded just at the time when you knew that your paint was going to be worth about twice what it ever had been; and you wanted all the advantage for yourself."

"I had a right to it. I made the success."

"Yes, you made it with Rogers's money; and when you'd made it you took his share of it. I guess you thought of that when you saw him, and that's why you couldn't look him in the face."

At these words Lapham lost his temper.

"I guess you don't want to ride with me any more to-day," he said, turning the mare abruptly round.

"I'm as ready to go back as what you are," replied his wife.
"And don't you ask me to go to that house with you any more. You can sell it, for all me. I sha'n't live in it. There's blood on it."

IV.

THE silken texture of the marriage tie bears a daily strain of wrong and insult to which no other human relation can be subjected without lesion; and sometimes the strength that knits society together might appear to the eye of faltering faith the curse of those immediately bound by it. Two people by no means reckless of each other's rights and feelings, but even tender of them for the most part, may tear at each other's heart-strings in this sacred bond with perfect impunity; though if they were any other two they would not speak or look at each other again after the outrages they exchange. It is certainly a curious spectacle, and doubtless it ought to convince an observer of the divinity of the institution. If the husband and wife are blunt, outspoken people like the Laphams, they do not weigh their words; if they are more refined, they weigh them very carefully, and know accurately just how far they will carry, and in what most sensitive spot they may be planted with most effect.

Lapham was proud of his wife, and when he married her it had been a rise in life for him. For a while he stood in awe of his good fortune, but this could not last, and he simply remained supremely satisfied with it. The girl who had taught school with a clear head and a strong hand was not afraid of work; she encouraged and helped him from the first, and bore her full share of the common burden. She had health, and she did not worry his life out with peevish complaints and vagaries; she had sense and principle, and in their simple lot she did what was wise and right. Their marriage was hallowed by an early sorrow: they lost their boy, and it was years before they could look each other in the face and speak of him. No one gave up more than they when they gave up each other and Lapham went to the war. When he came back and began to work, her zeal and courage formed the spring of his enterprise. In that affair of the partnership she had tried to be his conscience, but perhaps she would have defended him if he had accused himself; it was one of those things in this life which seem destined to await justice,

or at least judgment, in the next. As he said, Lapham had dealt fairly by his partner in money; he had let Rogers take more money out of the business than he put into it; he had, as he said, simply forced out of it a timid and inefficient participant in advantages which he had created. But Lapham had not created them all. He had been dependent at one time on his partner's capital. It was a moment of terrible trial. Happy is the man for ever after who can choose the ideal, the unselfish part in such an exigency! Lapham could not rise to it. He did what he could maintain to be perfectly fair. The wrong, if any, seemed to be condoned to him, except when from time to time his wife brought it up. Then all the question stung and burned anew, and had to be reasoned out and put away once more. It seemed to have an inextinguishable vitality. It slept, but it did not die.

His course did not shake Mrs. Lapham's faith in him. It astonished her at first, and it always grieved her that he could not see that he was acting solely in his own interest. But she found excuses for him, which at times she made reproaches. She vaguely perceived that his pain was something more than business to him; it was a sentiment, almost a passion. He could not share its management and its profit with another without a measure of self-sacrifice far beyond that which he must make with something less personal to him. It was the poetry of that nature, otherwise so intensely prosaic; and she understood this, and for the most part forbore. She knew him good and true and blameless in all his life, except for this wrong, if it were a wrong; and it was only when her nerves tingled intolerably with some chance renewal of the pain she had suffered, that she shared her anguish with him in true wifely fashion.

With those two there was never anything like an explicit reconciliation. They simply ignored a quarrel; and Mrs. Lapham had only to say a few days after at breakfast, "I guess the girls would like to go round with you this afternoon, and look at the new house," in order to make her husband grumble out as he looked down into his coffee-cup. "I guess we better all go, hadn't we?"

"Well, I'll see," she said.

There was not really a great deal to look at when Lapham arrived on the ground in his four-seated beach-wagon. But the walls were up, and the studding had already given skeleton shape to the interior. The floors were roughly boarded over, and the stairways were in place, with provisional treads rudely laid. They had not begun to lath and plaster yet, but the clean, fresh smell of the

mortar in the walls mingling with the pungent fragrance of the pine shavings neutralised the Venetian odour that drew in over the water. It was pleasantly shady there, though for the matter of that the heat of the morning had all been washed out of the atmosphere by a tide of east wind setting in at noon, and the thrilling, delicious cool of a Boston summer afternoon bathed every nerve.

The foreman went about with Mrs. Lapham, showing her where the doors were to be; but Lapham soon tired of this, and having found a pine stick of perfect grain, he abandoned himself to the pleasure of whittling it in what was to be the reception-room, where he sat looking out on the street from what was to be the bay-window. Here he was presently joined by his girls, who, after locating their own room on the water side above the music-room, had no more wish to enter into details than their father.

"Come and take a seat in the bay-window, ladies," he called out to them, as they looked in at him through the ribs of the wall. He jocosely made room for them on the trestle on which he sat.

They came gingerly and vaguely forward, as young ladies do when they wish not to seem to be going to do a thing they have made up their minds to do. When they had taken their places on their trestle, they could not help laughing with scorn, open and acceptable to their father; and Irene curled her chin up, in a little way she had, and said, "How ridiculous!" to her sister.

"Well, I can tell you what," said the Colonel, in fond enjoyment of their young ladyishness, "your mother wa'n't ashamed to sit with me on a trestle when I called her out to look at the first coat of my paint that I ever tried on a house."

"Yes; we've heard that story," said Penelope, with easy security of her father's liking what she said.

"We were brought up on that story."

"Well, it's a good story," said her father.

At that moment a young man came suddenly in range, who began to look up at the signs of building as he approached. He dropped his eyes in coming abreast of the bay-window, where Lapham sat with his girls, and then his face lightened, and he took off his hat and bowed to Irene. She rose mechanically from the trestle, and her face lightened too.

She was a very pretty figure of a girl, after our fashion of girls, round and slim and flexible, and her face was admirably regular. But her great beauty--and it was very great--was in her colouring.

This was of an effect for which there is no word but delicious, as we use it of fruit or flowers. She had red hair, like her father in his earlier days, and the tints of her cheeks and temples were such as suggested May-flowers and apple-blossoms and peaches. Instead of the grey that often dulls this complexion, her eyes were of a blue at once intense and tender, and they seemed to burn on what they looked at with a soft, lambent flame. It was well understood by her sister and mother that her eyes always expressed a great deal more than Irene ever thought or felt; but this is not saying that she was not a very sensible girl and very honest.

The young man faltered perceptibly, and Irene came a little forward, and then there gushed from them both a smiling exchange of greeting, of which the sum was that he supposed she was out of town, and that she had not known that he had got back. A pause ensued, and flushing again in her uncertainty as to whether she ought or ought not to do it, she said, "My father, Mr. Corey; and my sister."

The young man took off his hat again, showing his shapely head, with a line of wholesome sunburn ceasing where the recently and closely clipped hair began. He was dressed in a fine summer check, with a blue white-dotted neckerchief, and he had a white hat, in which he looked very well when he put it back on his head. His whole dress seemed very fresh and new, and in fact he had cast aside his Texan habiliments only the day before.

"How do you do, sir?" said the Colonel, stepping to the window, and reaching out of it the hand which the young man advanced to take. "Won't you come in? We're at home here. House I'm building."

"Oh, indeed?" returned the young man; and he came promptly up the steps, and through its ribs into the reception-room.

"Have a trestle?" asked the Colonel, while the girls exchanged little shocks of terror and amusement at the eyes.

"Thank you," said the young man simply, and sat down.

"Mrs. Lapham is upstairs interviewing the carpenter, but she'll be down in a minute."

"I hope she's quite well," said Corey. "I supposed--I was afraid she might be out of town."

"Well, we are off to Nantasket next week. The house kept us in town pretty late."

"It must be very exciting, building a house," said Corey to the elder sister.

"Yes, it is," she assented, loyally refusing in Irene's interest the opportunity of saying anything more.

Corey turned to the latter. "I suppose you've all helped to plan it?"

"Oh no; the architect and mamma did that."

"But they allowed the rest of us to agree, when we were good," said Penelope.

Corey looked at her, and saw that she was shorter than her sister, and had a dark complexion.

"It's very exciting," said Irene.

"Come up," said the Colonel, rising, "and look round if you'd like to."

"I should like to, very much," said the young man. He helped the young ladies over crevasses of carpentry and along narrow paths of planking, on which they had made their way unassisted before. The elder sister left the younger to profit solely by these offices as much as possible. She walked between them and her father, who went before, lecturing on each apartment, and taking the credit of the whole affair more and more as he talked on.

"There!" he said, "we're going to throw out a bay-window here, so as get the water all the way up and down. This is my girls' room," he added, looking proudly at them both.

It seemed terribly intimate. Irene blushed deeply and turned her head away.

But the young man took it all, apparently, as simply as their father. "What a lovely lookout!" he said. The Back Bay spread its glassy sheet before them, empty but for a few small boats and a large schooner, with her sails close-furled and dripping like snow from her spars, which a tug was rapidly towing toward Cambridge. The carpentry of that city, embanked and embowered in foliage, shared the picturesqueness of Charlestown in the distance.

"Yes," said Lapham, "I go in for using the best rooms in your house yourself. If people come to stay with you, they can put up with the second best. Though we don't

intend to have any second best. There ain't going to be an unpleasant room in the whole house, from top to bottom."

"Oh, I wish papa wouldn't brag so!" breathed Irene to her sister, where they stood, a little apart, looking away together.

The Colonel went on. "No, sir," he swelled out, "I have gone in for making a regular job of it. I've got the best architect in Boston, and I'm building a house to suit myself. And if money can do it, guess I'm going to be suited."

"It seems very delightful," said Corey, "and very original."

"Yes, sir. That fellow hadn't talked five minutes before I saw that he knew what he was about every time."

"I wish mamma would come!" breathed Irene again.

"I shall certainly go through the floor if papa says anything more."

"They are making a great many very pretty houses nowadays," said the young man. "It's very different from the old-fashioned building."

"Well," said the Colonel, with a large toleration of tone and a deep breath that expanded his ample chest, "we spend more on our houses nowadays. I started out to build a forty-thousand-dollar house. Well, sir! that fellow has got me in for more than sixty thousand already, and I doubt if I get out of it much under a hundred. You can't have a nice house for nothing. It's just like ordering a picture of a painter. You pay him enough, and he can afford to paint you a first-class picture; and if you don't, he can't. That's all there is of it. Why, they tell me that A. T. Stewart gave one of those French fellows sixty thousand dollars for a little seven-by-nine picture the other day. Yes, sir, give an architect money enough, and he'll give you a nice house every time."

"I've heard that they're sharp at getting money to realise their ideas," assented the young man, with a laugh.

"Well, I should say so!" exclaimed the Colonel.

"They come to you with an improvement that you can't resist. It has good looks and common-sense and everything in its favour, and it's like throwing money away to refuse. And they always manage to get you when your wife is around, and then you're helpless."

The Colonel himself set the example of laughing at this joke, and the young man joined him less obstreperously. The girls turned, and he said, "I don't think I ever saw

this view to better advantage. It's surprising how well the Memorial Hall and the Cambridge spires work up, over there. And the sunsets must be magnificent."

Lapham did not wait for them to reply.

"Yes, sir, it's about the sightliest view I know of. I always did like the water side of Beacon. Long before I owned property here, or ever expected to, my wife and I used to ride down this way, and stop the buggy to get this view over the water. When people talk to me about the Hill, I can understand 'em. It's snug, and it's old-fashioned, and it's where they've always lived. But when they talk about Commonwealth Avenue, I don't know what they mean. It don't hold a candle to the water side of Beacon. You've got just as much wind over there, and you've got just as much dust, and all the view you've got is the view across the street. No, sir! when you come to the Back Bay at all, give me the water side of Beacon."

"Oh, I think you're quite right," said the young man.

"The view here is everything."

Irene looked "I wonder what papa is going to say next!" at her sister, when their mother's voice was heard overhead, approaching the opening in the floor where the stairs were to be; and she presently appeared, with one substantial foot a long way ahead. She was followed by the carpenter, with his rule sticking out of his overalls pocket, and she was still talking to him about some measurements they had been taking, when they reached the bottom, so that Irene had to say, "Mamma, Mr. Corey," before Mrs. Lapham was aware of him.

He came forward with as much grace and speed as the uncertain footing would allow, and Mrs. Lapham gave him a stout squeeze of her comfortable hand.

"Why, Mr. Corey! When did you get back?"

"Yesterday. It hardly seems as if I HAD got back. I didn't expect to find you in a new house."

"Well, you are our first caller. I presume you won't expect I should make excuses for the state you find it in. Has the Colonel been doing the honours?"

"Oh yes. And I've seen more of your house than I ever shall again, I suppose."

"Well, I hope not," said Lapham. "There'll be several chances to see us in the old one yet, before we leave."

He probably thought this a neat, off-hand way of making the invitation, for he looked at his woman-kind as if he might expect their admiration.

"Oh yes, indeed!" said his wife. "We shall be very glad to see Mr. Corey, any time."

"Thank you; I shall be glad to come."

He and the Colonel went before, and helped the ladies down the difficult descent. Irene seemed less sure-footed than the others; she clung to the young man's hand an imperceptible moment longer than need be, or else he detained her. He found opportunity of saying, "It's so pleasant seeing you again," adding, "all of you."

"Thank you," said the girl. "They must all be glad to have you at home again."

Corey laughed.

"Well, I suppose they would be, if they were at home to have me. But the fact is, there's nobody in the house but my father and myself, and I'm only on my way to Bar Harbour."

"Oh! Are they there?"

"Yes; it seems to be the only place where my mother can get just the combination of sea and mountain air that she wants."

"We go to Nantasket--it's convenient for papa; and I don't believe we shall go anywhere else this summer, mamma's so taken up with building. We do nothing but talk house; and Pen says we eat and sleep house. She says it would be a sort of relief to go and live in tents for a while."

"She seems to have a good deal of humour," the young man ventured, upon the slender evidence.

The others had gone to the back of the house a moment, to look at some suggested change. Irene and Corey were left standing in the doorway. A lovely light of happiness played over her face and etherealised its delicious beauty. She had some ado to keep herself from smiling outright, and the effort deepened the dimples in her cheeks; she trembled a little, and the pendants shook in the tips of her pretty ears.

The others came back directly, and they all descended the front steps together. The Colonel was about to renew his invitation, but he caught his wife's eye, and,

without being able to interpret its warning exactly, was able to arrest himself, and went about gathering up the hitching-weight, while the young man handed the ladies into the phaeton. Then he lifted his hat, and the ladies all bowed, and the Laphams drove off, Irene's blue ribbons fluttering backward from her hat, as if they were her clinging thoughts.

"So that's young Corey, is it?" said the Colonel, letting the stately stepping, tall coupe horse make his way homeward at will with the beach-wagon. "Well, he ain't a bad-looking fellow, and he's got a good, fair and square, honest eye. But I don't see how a fellow like that, that's had every advantage in this world, can hang round home and let his father support him. Seems to me, if I had his health and his education, I should want to strike out and do something for myself."

The girls on the back seat had hold of each other's hands, and they exchanged electrical pressures at the different points their father made.

"I presume," said Mrs. Lapham, "that he was down in Texas looking after something"

"He's come back without finding it, I guess."

"Well, if his father has the money to support him, and don't complain of the burden, I don't see why WE should."

"Oh, I know it's none of my business, but I don't like the principle. I like to see a man ACT like a man. I don't like to see him taken care of like a young lady. Now, I suppose that fellow belongs to two or three clubs, and hangs around 'em all day, lookin' out the window,--I've seen 'em,--instead of tryin' to hunt up something to do for an honest livin'."

"If I was a young man," Penelope struck in, "I would belong to twenty clubs, if I could find them and I would hang around them all, and look out the window till I dropped."

"Oh, you would, would you?" demanded her father, delighted with her defiance, and twisting his fat head around over his shoulder to look at her. "Well, you wouldn't do it on my money, if you were a son of MINE, young lady."

"Oh, you wait and see," retorted the girl.

This made them all laugh. But the Colonel recurred seriously to the subject that night, as he was winding up his watch preparatory to putting it under his pillow.

"I could make a man of that fellow, if I had him in the business with me. There's stuff in him. But I spoke up the way I did because I didn't choose Irene should think I would stand any kind of a loafer 'round--I don't care who he is, or how well educated or brought up. And I guess, from the way Pen spoke up, that 'Rene saw what I was driving at."

The girl, apparently, was less anxious about her father's ideas and principles than about the impression which he had made upon the young man. She had talked it over and over with her sister before they went to bed, and she asked in despair, as she stood looking at Penelope brushing out her hair before the glass--

"Do you suppose he'll think papa always talks in that bragging way?"

"He'll be right if he does," answered her sister. "It's the way father always does talk. You never noticed it so much, that's all. And I guess if he can't make allowance for father's bragging, he'll be a little too good. I enjoyed hearing the Colonel go on."

"I know you did," returned Irene in distress. Then she sighed. "Didn't you think he looked very nice?"

"Who? The Colonel?" Penelope had caught up the habit of calling her father so from her mother, and she used his title in all her jocose and perverse moods.

"You know very well I don't mean papa," pouted Irene. "Oh! Mr. Corey! Why didn't you say Mr. Corey if you meant Mr. Corey? If I meant Mr. Corey, I should say Mr. Corey. It isn't swearing! Corey, Corey, Co----"

Her sister clapped her hand over her mouth "Will you HUSH, you wretched thing?" she whimpered. "The whole house can hear you."

"Oh yes, they can hear me all over the square. Well, I think he looked well enough for a plain youth, who hadn't taken his hair out of curl-papers for some time."

"It WAS clipped pretty close," Irene admitted; and they both laughed at the drab effect of Mr. Corey's skull, as they remembered it. "Did you like his nose?" asked Irene timorously.

"Ah, now you're COMING to something," said Penelope. "I don't know whether, if I had so much of a nose, I should want it all Roman."

"I don't see how you can expect to have a nose part one kind and part another," argued Irene.

"Oh, I do. Look at mine!" She turned aside her face, so as to get a three-quarters view of her nose in the glass, and crossing her hands, with the brush in one of them, before her, regarded it judicially. "Now, my nose started Grecian, but changed its mind before it got over the bridge, and concluded to be snub the rest of the way."

"You've got a very pretty nose, Pen," said Irene, joining in the contemplation of its reflex in the glass.

"Don't say that in hopes of getting me to compliment HIS, Mrs."--she stopped, and then added deliberately--"C.!"

Irene also had her hair-brush in her hand, and now she sprang at her sister and beat her very softly on the shoulder with the flat of it. "You mean thing!" she cried, between her shut teeth, blushing hotly.

"Well, D., then," said Penelope. "You've nothing to say against D.? Though I think C. is just as nice an initial."

"Oh!" cried the younger, for all expression of unspeakable things.

"I think he has very good eyes," admitted Penelope.

"Oh, he HAS! And didn't you like the way his sackcoat set? So close to him, and yet free--kind of peeling away at the lapels?"

"Yes, I should say he was a young man of great judgment. He knows how to choose his tailor."

Irene sat down on the edge of a chair. "It was so nice of you, Pen, to come in, that way, about clubs."

"Oh, I didn't mean anything by it except opposition," said Penelope. "I couldn't have father swelling on so, without saying something."

"How he did swell!" sighed Irene. "Wasn't it a relief to have mamma come down, even if she did seem to be all stocking at first?"

The girls broke into a wild giggle, and hid their faces in each other's necks. "I thought I SHOULD die," said Irene.

"It's just like ordering a painting," said Penelope, recalling her father's talk, with an effect of dreamy

absent-mindedness. "You give the painter money enough, and he can afford to paint you a first-class picture. Give an architect money enough, and he'll give you a first-class house, every time."

"Oh, wasn't it awful!" moaned her sister. "No one would ever have supposed that he had fought the very idea of an architect for weeks, before he gave in."

Penelope went on. "I always did like the water side of Beacon,--long before I owned property there. When you come to the Back Bay at all, give me the water side of Beacon."

"Ow-w-w-w!" shrieked Irene. "DO stop!"

The door of their mother's chamber opened below, and the voice of the real Colonel called, "What are you doing up there, girls? Why don't you go to bed?"

This extorted nervous shrieks from both of them. The Colonel heard a sound of scurrying feet, whisking drapery, and slamming doors. Then he heard one of the doors opened again, and Penelope said, "I was only repeating something you said when you talked to Mr. Corey."

"Very well, now," answered the Colonel. "You postpone the rest of it till to-morrow at breakfast, and see that you're up in time to let ME hear it."

V.

AT the same moment young Corey let himself in at his own door with his latch-key, and went to the library, where he found his father turning the last leaves of a story in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. He was a white-moustached old gentleman, who had never been able to abandon his pince-nez for the superior comfort of spectacles, even in the privacy of his own library. He knocked the glasses off as his son came in and looked up at him with lazy fondness, rubbing the two red marks that they always leave on the side of the nose.

"Tom," he said, "where did you get such good clothes?"

"I stopped over a day in New York," replied the son, finding himself a chair. "I'm glad you like them."

"Yes, I always do like your clothes, Tom," returned the father thoughtfully, swinging his glasses, "But I don't see how you can afford 'em, I can't."

"Well, sir," said the son, who dropped the "sir" into his speech with his father, now and then, in an old-fashioned way that was rather charming, "you see, I have an indulgent parent."

"Smoke?" suggested the father, pushing toward his son a box of cigarettes, from which he had taken one.

"No, thank you," said the son. "I've dropped that."

"Ah, is that so?" The father began to feel about on the table for matches, in the purblind fashion of elderly men. His son rose, lighted one, and handed it to him.

"Well,--oh, thank you, Tom!--I believe some statisticians prove that if you will give up smoking you can dress very well on the money your tobacco costs, even if you haven't got an indulgent parent. But I'm too old to try. Though, I confess, I should rather like the clothes. Whom did you find at the club?"

"There were a lot of fellows there," said young Corey, watching the accomplished fumigation of his father in an absent way.

"It's astonishing what a hardy breed the young club-men are," observed his father. "All summer through, in weather that sends the sturdiest female flying to the sea-shore, you find the clubs filled with young men, who don't seem to mind the heat in the least."

"Boston isn't a bad place, at the worst, in summer," said the son, declining to take up the matter in its ironical shape.

"I dare say it isn't, compared with Texas," returned the father, smoking tranquilly on. "But I don't suppose you find many of your friends in town outside of the club."

"No; you're requested to ring at the rear door, all the way down Beacon Street and up Commonwealth Avenue. It's rather a blank reception for the returning prodigal."

"Ah, the prodigal must take his chance if he comes back out of season. But I'm glad to have you back, Tom, even as it is, and I hope you're not going to hurry away. You must give your energies a rest."

"I'm sure you never had to reproach me with abnormal activity," suggested the son, taking his father's jokes in good part.

"No, I don't know that I have," admitted the elder.

"You've always shown a fair degree of moderation, after all."

What do you think of taking up next? I mean after you have embraced your mother and sisters at Mount Desert. Real estate? It seems to me that it is about time for you to open out as a real-estate broker. Or did you ever think of matrimony?"

"Well, not just in that way, sir," said the young man. "I shouldn't quite like to regard it as a career, you know."

"No, no. I understand that. And I quite agree with you. But you know I've always contended that the affections could be made to combine pleasure and profit. I wouldn't have a man marry for money,--that would be rather bad,--but I don't see why, when it comes to falling in love, a man shouldn't fall in love with a rich girl as easily as a poor one. Some of the rich girls are very nice, and I should say that the chances of a quiet life with them were rather greater. They've always had everything, and they wouldn't be so ambitious and uneasy. Don't you think so?"

"It would depend," said the son, "upon whether a girl's people had been rich long enough to have given her position before she married. If they hadn't, I don't see how she would be any better than a poor girl in that respect."

"Yes, there's sense in that. But the suddenly rich are on a level with any of us nowadays. Money buys position at once. I don't say that it isn't all right. The world generally knows what it's about, and knows how to drive a bargain. I dare say it makes the new rich pay too much. But there's no doubt but money is to the fore now. It is the romance, the poetry of our age. It's the thing that chiefly strikes the imagination. The Englishmen who come here are more curious about the great new millionaires than about any one else, and they respect them more. It's all very well. I don't complain of it."

"And you would like a rich daughter-in-law, quite regardless, then?"

"Oh, not quite so bad as that, Tom," said his father. "A little youth, a little beauty, a little good sense and pretty behaviour--one mustn't object to those things; and they go just as often with money as without it. And I suppose I should like her people to be rather grammatical."

"It seems to me that you're exacting, sir," said the son. "How can you expect people who have been strictly devoted to business to be grammatical? Isn't that rather too much?"

"Perhaps it is. Perhaps you're right. But I understood

your mother to say that those benefactors of hers, whom you met last summer, were very passably grammatical."

"The father isn't."

The elder, who had been smoking with his profile toward his son, now turned his face full upon him. "I didn't know you had seen him?"

"I hadn't until to-day," said young Corey, with a little heightening of his colour. "But I was walking down street this afternoon, and happened to look round at a new house some one was putting up, and I saw the whole family in the window. It appears that Mr. Lapham is building the house."

The elder Corey knocked the ash of his cigarette into the holder at his elbow. "I am more and more convinced, the longer I know you, Tom, that we are descended from Giles Corey. The gift of holding one's tongue seems to have skipped me, but you have it in full force. I can't say just how you would behave under *peine forte et dure*, but under ordinary pressure you are certainly able to keep your own counsel. Why didn't you mention this encounter at dinner? You weren't asked to plead to an accusation of witchcraft."

"No, not exactly," said the young man. "But I didn't quite see my way to speaking of it. We had a good many other things before us."

"Yes, that's true. I suppose you wouldn't have mentioned it now if I hadn't led up to it, would you?"

"I don't know, sir. It was rather on my mind to do so. Perhaps it was I who led up to it."

His father laughed. "Perhaps you did, Tom; perhaps you did. Your mother would have known you were leading up to something, but I'll confess that I didn't. What is it?"

"Nothing very definite. But do you know that in spite of his syntax I rather liked him?"

The father looked keenly at the son; but unless the boy's full confidence was offered, Corey was not the man to ask it. "Well?" was all that he said.

"I suppose that in a new country one gets to looking at people a little out of our tradition; and I dare say that if I hadn't passed a winter in Texas I might have found Colonel Lapham rather too much."

"You mean that there are worse things in Texas?"

"Not that exactly. I mean that I saw it wouldn't be quite fair to test him by our standards."

"This comes of the error which I have often deprecated," said the elder Corey. "In fact I am always saying that the Bostonian ought never to leave Boston. Then he knows--and then only--that there can BE no standard but ours. But we are constantly going away, and coming back with our convictions shaken to their foundations. One man goes to England, and returns with the conception of a grander social life; another comes home from Germany with the notion of a more searching intellectual activity; a fellow just back from Paris has the absurdest ideas of art and literature; and you revert to us from the cowboys of Texas, and tell us to our faces that we ought to try Papa Lapham by a jury of his peers. It ought to be stopped--it ought, really. The Bostonian who leaves Boston ought to be condemned to perpetual exile."

The son suffered the father to reach his climax with smiling patience. When he asked finally, "What are the characteristics of Papa Lapham that place him beyond our jurisdiction?" the younger Corey crossed his long legs, and leaned forward to take one of his knees between his hands.

"Well, sir, he bragged, rather."

"Oh, I don't know that bragging should exempt him from the ordinary processes. I've heard other people brag in Boston."

"Ah, not just in that personal way--not about money."

"No, that was certainly different."

"I don't mean," said the young fellow, with the scrupulosity which people could not help observing and liking in him, "that it was more than an indirect expression of satisfaction in the ability to spend."

"No. I should be glad to express something of the kind myself, if the facts would justify me."

The son smiled tolerantly again. "But if he was enjoying his money in that way, I didn't see why he shouldn't show his pleasure in it. It might have been vulgar, but it wasn't sordid. And I don't know that it was vulgar. Perhaps his successful strokes of business were the romance of his life----"

The father interrupted with a laugh. "The girl must

be uncommonly pretty. What did she seem to think of her father's brag?"

"There were two of them," answered the son evasively.

"Oh, two! And is the sister pretty too?"

"Not pretty, but rather interesting. She is like her mother."

"Then the pretty one isn't the father's pet?"

"I can't say, sir. I don't believe," added the young fellow, "that I can make you see Colonel Lapham just as I did. He struck me as very simple-hearted and rather wholesome. Of course he could be tiresome; we all can; and I suppose his range of ideas is limited. But he is a force, and not a bad one. If he hasn't got over being surprised at the effect of rubbing his lamp"

"Oh, one could make out a case. I suppose you know what you are about, Tom. But remember that we are Essex County people, and that in savour we are just a little beyond the salt of the earth. I will tell you plainly that I don't like the notion of a man who has rivalled the hues of nature in her wildest haunts with the tints of his mineral paint; but I don't say there are not worse men. He isn't to my taste, though he might be ever so much to my conscience."

"I suppose," said the son, "that there is nothing really to be ashamed of in mineral paint. People go into all sorts of things."

His father took his cigarette from his mouth and once more looked his son full in the face. "Oh, is THAT it?"

"It has crossed my mind," admitted the son. "I must do something. I've wasted time and money enough. I've seen much younger men all through the West and South-west taking care of themselves. I don't think I was particularly fit for anything out there, but I am ashamed to come back and live upon you, sir."

His father shook his head with an ironical sigh.

"Ah, we shall never have a real aristocracy while this plebeian reluctance to live upon a parent or a wife continues the animating spirit of our youth.

It strikes at the root of the whole feudal system.

I really think you owe me an apology, Tom. I supposed you wished to marry the girl's money, and here you are, basely seeking to go into business with her father."

Young Corey laughed again like a son who perceives that

his father is a little antiquated, but keeps a filial faith in his wit. "I don't know that it's quite so bad as that; but the thing had certainly crossed my mind. I don't know how it's to be approached, and I don't know that it's at all possible. But I confess that I 'took to' Colonel Lapham from the moment I saw him. He looked as if he 'meant business,' and I mean business too."

The father smoked thoughtfully. "Of course people do go into all sorts of things, as you say, and I don't know that one thing is more ignoble than another, if it's decent and large enough. In my time you would have gone into the China trade or the India trade--though I didn't; and a little later cotton would have been your manifest destiny--though it wasn't mine; but now a man may do almost anything. The real-estate business is pretty full. Yes, if you have a deep inward vocation for it, I don't see why mineral paint shouldn't do. I fancy it's easy enough approaching the matter. We will invite Papa Lapham to dinner, and talk it over with him."

"Oh, I don't think that would be exactly the way, sir," said the son, smiling at his father's patrician unworldliness.

"No? Why not?"

"I'm afraid it would be a bad start. I don't think it would strike him as business-like."

"I don't see why he should be punctilious, if we're not."

"Ah, we might say that if he were making the advances."

"Well, perhaps you are right, Tom. What is your idea?"

"I haven't a very clear one. It seems to me I ought to get some business friend of ours, whose judgment he would respect, to speak a good word for me."

"Give you a character?"

"Yes. And of course I must go to Colonel Lapham. My notion would be to inquire pretty thoroughly about him, and then, if I liked the look of things, to go right down to Republic Street and let him see what he could do with me, if anything."

"That sounds tremendously practical to me, Tom, though it may be just the wrong way. When are you going down to Mount Desert?"

"To-morrow, I think, sir," said the young man. "I shall turn it over in my mind while I'm off."

The father rose, showing something more than his son's height, with a very slight stoop, which the son's figure had not.

"Well," he said, whimsically, "I admire your spirit, and I don't deny that it is justified by necessity.

It's a consolation to think that while I've been spending and enjoying, I have been preparing the noblest future for you--a future of industry and self-reliance. You never could draw, but this scheme of going into the mineral-paint business shows that you have inherited something of my feeling for colour."

The son laughed once more, and waiting till his father was well on his way upstairs, turned out the gas and then hurried after him and preceded him into his chamber. He glanced over it to see that everything was there, to his father's hand. Then he said, "Good night, sir," and the elder responded, "Good night, my son," and the son went to his own room.

Over the mantel in the elder Corey's room hung a portrait which he had painted of his own father, and now he stood a moment and looked at this as if struck by something novel in it. The resemblance between his son and the old India merchant, who had followed the trade from Salem to Boston when the larger city drew it away from the smaller, must have been what struck him. Grandfather and grandson had both the Roman nose which appears to have flourished chiefly at the formative period of the republic, and which occurs more rarely in the descendants of the conscript fathers, though it still characterises the profiles of a good many Boston ladies. Bromfield Corey had not inherited it, and he had made his straight nose his defence when the old merchant accused him of a want of energy. He said, "What could a man do whose unnatural father had left his own nose away from him?" This amused but did not satisfy the merchant. "You must do something," he said; "and it's for you to choose. If you don't like the India trade, go into something else. Or, take up law or medicine. No Corey yet ever proposed to do nothing." "Ah, then, it's quite time one of us made a beginning," urged the man who was then young, and who was now old, looking into the somewhat fierce eyes of his father's portrait. He had inherited as little of the fierceness as of the nose, and there was nothing predatory in his son either, though the aquiline beak had come down to him in such force. Bromfield Corey liked his son Tom for the gentleness which tempered his energy.

"Well let us compromise," he seemed to be saying to his father's portrait. "I will travel." "Travel? How long?" the keen eyes demanded. "Oh, indefinitely. I won't be hard with you, father." He could see the eyes soften,

and the smile of yielding come over his father's face; the merchant could not resist a son who was so much like his dead mother. There was some vague understanding between them that Bromfield Corey was to come back and go into business after a time, but he never did so. He travelled about over Europe, and travelled handsomely, frequenting good society everywhere, and getting himself presented at several courts, at a period when it was a distinction to do so. He had always sketched, and with his father's leave he fixed himself at Rome, where he remained studying art and rounding the being inherited from his Yankee progenitors, till there was very little left of the ancestral angularities. After ten years he came home and painted that portrait of his father. It was very good, if a little amateurish, and he might have made himself a name as a painter of portraits if he had not had so much money. But he had plenty of money, though by this time he was married and beginning to have a family. It was absurd for him to paint portraits for pay, and ridiculous to paint them for nothing; so he did not paint them at all. He continued a dilettante, never quite abandoning his art, but working at it fitfully, and talking more about it than working at it. He had his theory of Titian's method; and now and then a Bostonian insisted upon buying a picture of him. After a while he hung it more and more inconspicuously, and said apologetically, "Oh yes! that's one of Bromfield Corey's things. It has nice qualities, but it's amateurish."

In process of time the money seemed less abundant. There were shrinkages of one kind and another, and living had grown much more expensive and luxurious. For many years he talked about going back to Rome, but he never went, and his children grew up in the usual way. Before he knew it his son had him out to his class-day spread at Harvard, and then he had his son on his hands. The son made various unsuccessful provisions for himself, and still continued upon his father's hands, to their common dissatisfaction, though it was chiefly the younger who repined. He had the Roman nose and the energy without the opportunity, and at one of the reversions his father said to him, "You ought not to have that nose, Tom; then you would do very well. You would go and travel, as I did."

LAPHAM and his wife continued talking after he had quelled the disturbance in his daughters' room overhead; and their talk was not altogether of the new house.

"I tell you," he said, "if I had that fellow in the business with me I would make a man of him."

"Well, Silas Lapham," returned his wife, "I do believe you've got mineral paint on the brain. Do you suppose a fellow like young Corey, brought up the way he's been, would touch mineral paint with a ten-foot pole?"

"Why not?" haughtily asked the Colonel.

"Well, if you don't know already, there's no use trying to tell you."

VI.

THE Coreys had always had a house at Nahant, but after letting it for a season or two they found they could get on without it, and sold it at the son's instance, who foresaw that if things went on as they were going, the family would be straitened to the point of changing their mode of life altogether. They began to be of the people of whom it was said that they stayed in town very late; and when the ladies did go away, it was for a brief summering in this place and that. The father remained at home altogether; and the son joined them in the intervals of his enterprises, which occurred only too often.

At Bar Harbour, where he now went to find them, after his winter in Texas, he confessed to his mother that there seemed no very good opening there for him. He might do as well as Loring Stanton, but he doubted if Stanton was doing very well. Then he mentioned the new project which he had been thinking over. She did not deny that there was something in it, but she could not think of any young man who had gone into such a business as that, and it appeared to her that he might as well go into a patent medicine or a stove-polish.

"There was one of his hideous advertisements," she said, "painted on a reef that we saw as we came down."

Corey smiled. "Well, I suppose, if it was in a good state of preservation, that is proof positive of the efficacy of the paint on the hulls of vessels."

"It's very distasteful to me, Tom," said his mother; and if there was something else in her mind, she did not speak more plainly of it than to add: "It's not only the kind of business, but the kind of people you would be mixed up with."

"I thought you didn't find them so very bad," suggested Corey.

"I hadn't seen them in Nankeen Square then."

"You can see them on the water side of Beacon Street when you go back."

Then he told of his encounter with the Lapham family in their new house. At the end his mother merely said, "It is getting very common down there," and she did not try to oppose anything further to his scheme.

The young man went to see Colonel Lapham shortly after his return to Boston. He paid his visit at Lapham's office, and if he had studied simplicity in his summer dress he could not have presented himself in a figure more to the mind of a practical man. His hands and neck still kept the brown of the Texan suns and winds, and he looked as business-like as Lapham himself.

He spoke up promptly and briskly in the outer office, and caused the pretty girl to look away from her copying at him. "Is Mr. Lapham in?" he asked; and after that moment for reflection which an array of book-keepers so addressed likes to give the inquirer, a head was lifted from a ledger and nodded toward the inner office.

Lapham had recognised the voice, and he was standing, in considerable perplexity, to receive Corey, when the young man opened his painted glass door. It was a hot afternoon, and Lapham was in his shirt sleeves. Scarcely a trace of the boastful hospitality with which he had welcomed Corey to his house a few days before lingered in his present address. He looked at the young man's face, as if he expected him to despatch whatever unimaginable affair he had come upon.

"Won't you sit down? How are you? You'll excuse me," he added, in brief allusion to the shirt-sleeves. "I'm about roasted."

Corey laughed. "I wish you'd let me take off MY coat."

"Why, TAKE it off!" cried the Colonel, with instant pleasure. There is something in human nature which causes the man in his shirt-sleeves to wish all other men to appear in the same deshabille.

"I will, if you ask me after I've talked with you two minutes," said the young fellow, companionably pulling up the chair offered him toward the desk where Lapham had again seated himself. "But perhaps you haven't got two minutes to give me?"

"Oh yes, I have," said the Colonel. "I was just going to knock off. I can give you twenty, and then I shall have fifteen minutes to catch the boat."

"All right," said Corey. "I want you to take me into the mineral paint business."

The Colonel sat dumb. He twisted his thick neck, and looked round at the door to see if it was shut. He would not have liked to have any of those fellows outside hear him, but there is no saying what sum of money he would not have given if his wife had been there to hear what Corey had just said.

"I suppose," continued the young man, "I could have got several people whose names you know to back my industry and sobriety, and say a word for my business capacity. But I thought I wouldn't trouble anybody for certificates till I found whether there was a chance, or the ghost of one, of your wanting me. So I came straight to you."

Lapham gathered himself together as well as he could. He had not yet forgiven Corey for Mrs. Lapham's insinuation that he would feel himself too good for the mineral paint business; and though he was dispersed by that astounding shot at first, he was not going to let any one even hypothetically despise his paint with impunity. "How do you think I am going to take you on?" They took on hands at the works; and Lapham put it as if Corey were a hand coming to him for employment. Whether he satisfied himself by this or not, he reddened a little after he had said it.

Corey answered, ignorant of the offence: "I haven't a very clear idea, I'm afraid; but I've been looking a little into the matter from the outside"

"I hope you hain't been paying any attention to that fellow's stuff in the Events?" Lapham interrupted. Since Bartley's interview had appeared, Lapham had regarded it with very mixed feelings. At first it gave him a glow of secret pleasure, blended with doubt as to how his wife would like the use Bartley had made of her in it. But she had not seemed to notice it much, and Lapham had experienced the gratitude of the man who escapes. Then his girls had begun to make fun of it; and though he did not mind Penelope's jokes much, he did not like to see that Irene's gentility was wounded. Business friends met him with the kind of knowing smile about it that implied their sense of the fraudulent character of its praise--the smile of men who had been there and who knew how it was themselves. Lapham had his misgivings as to how his clerks and underlings looked at it;

he treated them with stately severity for a while after it came out, and he ended by feeling rather sore about it. He took it for granted that everybody had read it.

"I don't know what you mean," replied Corey, "I don't see the Events regularly."

"Oh, it was nothing. They sent a fellow down here to interview me, and he got everything about as twisted as he could."

"I believe they always do," said Corey. "I hadn't seen it. Perhaps it came out before I got home."

"Perhaps it did."

"My notion of making myself useful to you was based on a hint I got from one of your own circulars."

Lapham was proud of those circulars; he thought they read very well. "What was that?"

"I could put a little capital into the business," said Corey, with the tentative accent of a man who chances a thing. "I've got a little money, but I didn't imagine you cared for anything of that kind."

"No, sir, I don't," returned the Colonel bluntly. "I've had one partner, and one's enough."

"Yes," assented the young man, who doubtless had his own ideas as to eventualities--or perhaps rather had the vague hopes of youth. "I didn't come to propose a partnership. But I see that you are introducing your paint into the foreign markets, and there I really thought I might be of use to you, and to myself too."

"How?" asked the Colonel scantily.

"Well, I know two or three languages pretty well. I know French, and I know German, and I've got a pretty fair sprinkling of Spanish."

"You mean that you can talk them?" asked the Colonel, with the mingled awe and slight that such a man feels for such accomplishments. "Yes; and I can write an intelligible letter in either of them."

Lapham rubbed his nose. "It's easy enough to get all the letters we want translated."

"Well," pursued Corey, not showing his discouragement if he felt any, "I know the countries where you want

to introduce this paint of yours. I've been there. I've been in Germany and France and I've been in South America and Mexico; I've been in Italy, of course. I believe I could go to any of those countries and place it to advantage."

Lapham had listened with a trace of persuasion in his face, but now he shook his head.

"It's placing itself as fast as there's any call for it. It wouldn't pay us to send anybody out to look after it. Your salary and expenses would eat up about all we should make on it."

"Yes," returned the young man intrepidly, "if you had to pay me any salary and expenses."

"You don't propose to work for nothing?"

"I propose to work for a commission." The Colonel was beginning to shake his head again, but Corey hurried on. "I haven't come to you without making some inquiries about the paint, and I know how it stands with those who know best. I believe in it."

Lapham lifted his head and looked at the young man, deeply moved.

"It's the best paint in God's universe," he said with the solemnity of prayer.

"It's the best in the market," said Corey; and he repeated, "I believe in it."

"You believe in it," began the Colonel, and then he stopped. If there had really been any purchasing power in money, a year's income would have bought Mrs. Lapham's instant presence. He warmed and softened to the young man in every way, not only because he must do so to any one who believed in his paint, but because he had done this innocent person the wrong of listening to a defamation of his instinct and good sense, and had been willing to see him suffer for a purely supposititious offence.

Corey rose.

"You mustn't let me outstay my twenty minutes," he said, taking out his watch. "I don't expect you to give a decided answer on the spot. All that I ask is that you'll consider my proposition."

"Don't hurry," said Lapham. "Sit still! I want to tell you about this paint," he added, in a voice husky

with the feeling that his hearer could not divine.

"I want to tell you ALL about it."

"I could walk with you to the boat," suggested the young man.

"Never mind the boat! I can take the next one. Look here!"

The Colonel pulled open a drawer, as Corey sat down again, and took out a photograph of the locality of the mine.

"Here's where we get it. This photograph don't half do the place justice," he said, as if the imperfect art had slighted the features of a beloved face.

"It's one of the sightliest places in the country, and here's the very spot "--he covered it with his huge forefinger--"where my father found that paint, more than forty--years--ago. Yes, sir!"

He went on, and told the story in unsparing detail, while his chance for the boat passed unheeded, and the clerks in the outer office hung up their linen office coats and put on their seersucker or flannel street coats. The young lady went too, and nobody was left but the porter, who made from time to time a noisy demonstration of fastening a distant blind, or putting something in place. At last the Colonel roused himself from the autobiographical delight of the history of his paint. "Well, sir, that's the story."

"It's an interesting story," said Corey, with a long breath, as they rose together, and Lapham put on his coat.

"That's what it is," said the Colonel. "Well!" he added, "I don't see but what we've got to have another talk about this thing. It's a surprise to me, and I don't see exactly how you're going to make it pay."

"I'm willing to take the chances," answered Corey. "As I said, I believe in it. I should try South America first. I should try Chili."

"Look here!" said Lapham, with his watch in his hand. "I like to get things over. We've just got time for the six o'clock boat. Why don't you come down with me to Nantasket? I can give you a bed as well as not. And then we can finish up."

The impatience of youth in Corey responded to the impatience of temperament in his elder. "Why, I don't see why I shouldn't," he allowed himself to say. "I confess I should like to have it finished up myself, if it could be finished up in the right way."

"Well, we'll see. Dennis!" Lapham called to the remote porter, and the man came. "Want to send any word home?"

he asked Corey.

"No; my father and I go and come as we like, without keeping account of each other. If I don't come home, he knows that I'm not there. That's all."

"Well, that's convenient. You'll find you can't do that when you're married. Never mind, Dennis," said the Colonel.

He had time to buy two newspapers on the wharf before he jumped on board the steam-boat with Corey. "Just made it," he said; "and that's what I like to do. I can't stand it to be aboard much more than a minute before she shoves out." He gave one of the newspapers to Corey as he spoke, and set him the example of catching up a camp-stool on their way to that point on the boat which his experience had taught him was the best. He opened his paper at once and began to run over its news, while the young man watched the spectacular recession of the city, and was vaguely conscious of the people about him, and of the gay life of the water round the boat. The air freshened; the craft thinned in number; they met larger sail, lagging slowly inward in the afternoon light; the islands of the bay waxed and waned as the steamer approached and left them behind.

"I hate to see them stirring up those Southern fellows again," said the Colonel, speaking into the paper on his lap. "Seems to me it's time to let those old issues go."

"Yes," said the young man. "What are they doing now?"

"Oh, stirring up the Confederate brigadiers in Congress. I don't like it. Seems to me, if our party hain't got any other stock-in-trade, we better shut up shop altogether." Lapham went on, as he scanned his newspaper, to give his ideas of public questions, in a fragmentary way, while Corey listened patiently, and waited for him to come back to business. He folded up his paper at last, and stuffed it into his coat pocket. "There's one thing I always make it a rule to do," he said, "and that is to give my mind a complete rest from business while I'm going down on the boat. I like to get the fresh air all through me, soul and body. I believe a man can give his mind a rest, just the same as he can give his legs a rest, or his back. All he's got to do is to use his will-power. Why, I suppose, if I hadn't adopted some such rule, with the strain I've had on me for the last ten years, I should 'a' been a dead man long ago. That's the reason I like a horse. You've got to give your mind to the horse; you can't help it, unless you want to break your neck; but a boat's different, and there you got to use your will-power. You got to take your mind right up and put it where you want it."

I make it a rule to read the paper on the boat----Hold on!" he interrupted himself to prevent Corey from paying his fare to the man who had come round for it. "I've got tickets. And when I get through the paper, I try to get somebody to talk to, or I watch the people. It's an astonishing thing to me where they all come from. I've been riding up and down on these boats for six or seven years, and I don't know but very few of the faces I see on board. Seems to be a perfectly fresh lot every time. Well, of course! Town's full of strangers in the summer season, anyway, and folks keep coming down from the country. They think it's a great thing to get down to the beach, and they've all heard of the electric light on the water, and they want to see it. But you take faces now! The astonishing thing to me is not what a face tells, but what it don't tell. When you think of what a man is, or a woman is, and what most of 'em have been through before they get to be thirty, it seems as if their experience would burn right through. But it don't. I like to watch the couples, and try to make out which are engaged, or going to be, and which are married, or better be. But half the time I can't make any sort of guess. Of course, where they're young and kittenish, you can tell; but where they're anyways on, you can't. Heigh?"

"Yes, I think you're right," said Corey, not perfectly reconciled to philosophy in the place of business, but accepting it as he must.

"Well," said the Colonel, "I don't suppose it was meant we should know what was in each other's minds. It would take a man out of his own hands. As long as he's in his own hands, there's some hopes of his doing something with himself; but if a fellow has been found out--even if he hasn't been found out to be so very bad--it's pretty much all up with him. No, sir. I don't want to know people through and through."

The greater part of the crowd on board--and, of course, the boat was crowded--looked as if they might not only be easily but safely known. There was little style and no distinction among them; they were people who were going down to the beach for the fun or the relief of it, and were able to afford it. In face they were commonplace, with nothing but the American poetry of vivid purpose to light them up, where they did not wholly lack fire. But they were nearly all shrewd and friendly-looking, with an apparent readiness for the humorous intimacy native to us all. The women were dandified in dress, according to their means and taste, and the men differed from each other in degrees of indifference to it. To a straw-hatted population, such as ours is in summer, no sort of personal dignity is possible. We have not even

the power over observers which comes from the fantasticality of an Englishman when he discards the conventional dress. In our straw hats and our serge or flannel sacks we are no more imposing than a crowd of boys.

"Some day," said Lapham, rising as the boat drew near the wharf of the final landing, "there's going to be an awful accident on these boats. Just look at that jam."

He meant the people thickly packed on the pier, and under strong restraint of locks and gates, to prevent them from rushing on board the boat and possessing her for the return trip before she had landed her Nantasket passengers.

"Overload 'em every time," he continued, with a sort of dry, impersonal concern at the impending calamity, as if it could not possibly include him. "They take about twice as many as they ought to carry, and about ten times as many as they could save if anything happened. Yes, sir, it's bound to come. Hello! There's my girl!" He took out his folded newspaper and waved it toward a group of phaetons and barouches drawn up on the pier a little apart from the pack of people, and a lady in one of them answered with a flourish of her parasol.

When he had made his way with his guest through the crowd, she began to speak to her father before she noticed Corey. "Well, Colonel, you've improved your last chance. We've been coming to every boat since four o'clock,--or Jerry has,--and I told mother that I would come myself once, and see if I couldn't fetch you; and if I failed, you could walk next time. You're getting perfectly spoiled."

The Colonel enjoyed letting her scold him to the end before he said, with a twinkle of pride in his guest and satisfaction in her probably being able to hold her own against any discomfiture, "I've brought Mr. Corey down for the night with me, and I was showing him things all the way, and it took time."

The young fellow was at the side of the open beach-wagon, making a quick bow, and Penelope Lapham was cozily drawling, "Oh, how do you do, Mr. Corey?" before the Colonel had finished his explanation.

"Get right in there, alongside of Miss Lapham, Mr. Corey," he said, pulling himself up into the place beside the driver. "No, no," he had added quickly, at some signs of polite protest in the young man, "I don't give up the best place to anybody. Jerry, suppose you let me have hold of the leathers a minute."

This was his way of taking the reins from the driver;

and in half the time he specified, he had skilfully turned the vehicle on the pier, among the crooked lines and groups of foot-passengers, and was spinning up the road toward the stretch of verandaed hotels and restaurants in the sand along the shore. "Pretty gay down here," he said, indicating all this with a turn of his whip, as he left it behind him. "But I've got about sick of hotels; and this summer I made up my mind that I'd take a cottage. Well, Pen, how are the folks?" He looked half-way round for her answer, and with the eye thus brought to bear upon her he was able to give her a wink of supreme content. The Colonel, with no sort of ulterior design, and nothing but his triumph over Mrs. Lapham definitely in his mind, was feeling, as he would have said, about right.

The girl smiled a daughter's amusement at her father's boyishness. "I don't think there's much change since morning. Did Irene have a headache when you left?"

"No," said the Colonel.

"Well, then, there's that to report."

"Pshaw!" said the Colonel with vexation in his tone.

"I'm sorry Miss Irene isn't well," said Corey politely.

"I think she must have got it from walking too long on the beach. The air is so cool here that you forget how hot the sun is."

"Yes, that's true," assented Corey.

"A good night's rest will make it all right," suggested the Colonel, without looking round. "But you girls have got to look out."

"If you're fond of walking," said Corey, "I suppose you find the beach a temptation."

"Oh, it isn't so much that," returned the girl.

"You keep walking on and on because it's so smooth and straight before you. We've been here so often that we know it all by heart--just how it looks at high tide, and how it looks at low tide, and how it looks after a storm. We're as well acquainted with the crabs and stranded jelly-fish as we are with the children digging in the sand and the people sitting under umbrellas. I think they're always the same, all of them."

The Colonel left the talk to the young people. When he spoke next it was to say, "Well, here we are!" and he turned from the highway and drove up in front

of a brown cottage with a vermilion roof, and a group of geraniums clutching the rock that cropped up in the loop formed by the road. It was treeless and bare all round, and the ocean, unnecessarily vast, weltered away a little more than a stone's-cast from the cottage. A hospitable smell of supper filled the air, and Mrs. Lapham was on the veranda, with that demand in her eyes for her belated husband's excuses, which she was obliged to check on her tongue at sight of Corey.

VII.

THE exultant Colonel swung himself lightly down from his seat. "I've brought Mr. Corey with me," he nonchalantly explained.

Mrs. Lapham made their guest welcome, and the Colonel showed him to his room, briefly assuring himself that there was nothing wanting there. Then he went to wash his own hands, carelessly ignoring the eagerness with which his wife pursued him to their chamber.

"What gave Irene a headache?" he asked, making himself a fine lather for his hairy paws.

"Never you mind Irene," promptly retorted his wife. "How came he to come? Did you press him? If you DID, I'll never forgive you, Silas!"

The Colonel laughed, and his wife shook him by the shoulder to make him laugh lower. "'Sh!" she whispered. "Do you want him to hear EVERY thing? DID you urge him?"

The Colonel laughed the more. He was going to get all the good out of this. "No, I didn't urge him. Seemed to want to come."

"I don't believe it. Where did you meet him?"

"At the office."

"What office?"

"Mine."

"Nonsense! What was he doing there?"

"Oh, nothing much."

"What did he come for?" "Come for? Oh! he SAID he wanted to go into the mineral paint business."

Mrs. Lapham dropped into a chair, and watched his bulk shaken with smothered laughter. "Silas Lapham," she gasped, "if you try to get off any more of those things on me----"

The Colonel applied himself to the towel. "Had a notion he could work it in South America. I don't know what he's up to."

"Never mind!" cried his wife. "I'll get even with you YET."

"So I told him he had better come down and talk it over," continued the Colonel, in well-affected simplicity. "I knew he wouldn't touch it with a ten-foot pole."

"Go on!" threatened Mrs. Lapham.

"Right thing to do, wa'n't it?"

A tap was heard at the door, and Mrs. Lapham answered it. A maid announced supper. "Very well," she said, "come to tea now. But I'll make you pay for this, Silas."

Penelope had gone to her sister's room as soon as she entered the house.

"Is your head any better, 'Rene?" she asked.

"Yes, a little," came a voice from the pillows. "But I shall not come to tea. I don't want anything. If I keep still, I shall be all right by morning."

"Well, I'm sorry," said the elder sister. "He's come down with father."

"He hasn't! Who?" cried Irene, starting up in simultaneous denial and demand.

"Oh, well, if you say he hasn't, what's the use of my telling you who?"

"Oh, how can you treat me so!" moaned the sufferer. "What do you mean, Pen?"

"I guess I'd better not tell you," said Penelope, watching her like a cat playing with a mouse. "If you're not coming to tea, it would just excite you for nothing."

The mouse moaned and writhed upon the bed.

"Oh, I wouldn't treat YOU so!"

The cat seated herself across the room, and asked quietly--

"Well, what could you do if it WAS Mr. Corey? You couldn't come to tea, you say. But HE'LL excuse you. I've told him you had a headache. Why, of course you can't come! It would be too barefaced But you needn't be troubled, Irene; I'll do my best to make the time pass pleasantly for him." Here the cat gave a low titter, and the mouse girded itself up with a momentary courage and self-respect.

"I should think you would be ashamed to come here and tease me so."

"I don't see why you shouldn't believe me," argued Penelope. "Why shouldn't he come down with father, if father asked him? and he'd be sure to if he thought of it. I don't see any p'int about that frog that's any better than any other frog."

The sense of her sister's helplessness was too much for the tease; she broke down in a fit of smothered laughter, which convinced her victim that it was nothing but an ill-timed joke.

"Well, Pen, I wouldn't use you so," she whimpered.

Penelope threw herself on the bed beside her.

"Oh, poor Irene! He IS here. It's a solemn fact." And she caressed and soothed her sister, while she choked with laughter. "You must get up and come out. I don't know what brought him here, but here he is."

"It's too late now," said Irene desolately. Then she added, with a wilder despair: "What a fool I was to take that walk!"

"Well," coaxed her sister, "come out and get some tea. The tea will do you good."

"No, no; I can't come. But send me a cup here."

"Yes, and then perhaps you can see him later in the evening."

"I shall not see him at all."

An hour after Penelope came back to her sister's room and found her before her glass. "You might as well have kept still, and been well by morning, 'Rene," she said. "As soon as we were done father said, 'Well, Mr. Corey and I have got to talk over a little matter of business, and we'll excuse you, ladies.' Ho looked at mother in a way that I guess was pretty hard to bear. 'Rene, you

ought to have heard the Colonel swelling at supper. It would have made you feel that all he said the other day was nothing."

Mrs. Lapham suddenly opened the door.

"Now, see here, Pen," she said, as she closed it behind her, "I've had just as much as I can stand from your father, and if you don't tell me this instant what it all means----"

She left the consequences to imagination, and Penelope replied with her mock soberness--

"Well, the Colonel does seem to be on his high horse, ma'am. But you mustn't ask me what his business with Mr. Corey is, for I don't know. All that I know is that I met them at the landing, and that they conversed all the way down--on literary topics."

"Nonsense! What do you think it is?"

"Well, if you want my candid opinion, I think this talk about business is nothing but a blind. It seems a pity Irene shouldn't have been up to receive him," she added.

Irene cast a mute look of imploring at her mother, who was too much preoccupied to afford her the protection it asked.

"Your father said he wanted to go into the business with him."

Irene's look changed to a stare of astonishment and mystification, but Penelope preserved her imperturbability.

"Well, it's a lucrative business, I believe."

"Well, I don't believe a word of it!" cried Mrs. Lapham. "And so I told your father."

"Did it seem to convince him?" inquired Penelope.

Her mother did not reply. "I know one thing," she said. "He's got to tell me every word, or there'll be no sleep for him THIS night."

"Well, ma'am," said Penelope, breaking down in one of her queer laughs, "I shouldn't be a bit surprised if you were right."

"Go on and dress, Irene," ordered her mother, "and then you and Pen come out into the parlour. They can have just

two hours for business, and then we must all be there to receive him. You haven't got headache enough to hurt you."

"Oh, it's all gone now," said the girl.

At the end of the limit she had given the Colonel, Mrs. Lapham looked into the dining-room, which she found blue with his smoke.

"I think you gentlemen will find the parlour pleasanter now, and we can give it up to you."

"Oh no, you needn't," said her husband. "We've got about through." Corey was already standing, and Lapham rose too. "I guess we can join the ladies now. We can leave that little point till to-morrow."

Both of the young ladies were in the parlour when Corey entered with their father, and both were frankly indifferent to the few books and the many newspapers scattered about on the table where the large lamp was placed. But after Corey had greeted Irene he glanced at the novel under his eye, and said, in the dearth that sometimes befalls people at such times: "I see you're reading Middlemarch. Do you like George Eliot?"

"Who?" asked the girl.

Penelope interposed. "I don't believe Irene's read it yet. I've just got it out of the library; I heard so much talk about it. I wish she would let you find out a little about the people for yourself," she added. But here her father struck in--

"I can't get the time for books. It's as much as I can do to keep up with the newspapers; and when night comes, I'm tired, and I'd rather go out to the theatre, or a lecture, if they've got a good stereopticon to give you views of the places. But I guess we all like a play better than 'most anything else. I want something that'll make me laugh. I don't believe in tragedy. I think there's enough of that in real life without putting it on the stage. Seen 'Joshua Whitcomb'?"

The whole family joined in the discussion, and it appeared that they all had their opinions of the plays and actors. Mrs. Lapham brought the talk back to literature. "I guess Penelope does most of our reading."

"Now, mother, you're not going to put it all on me!" said the girl, in comic protest.

Her mother laughed, and then added, with a sigh: "I used

to like to get hold of a good book when I was a girl; but we weren't allowed to read many novels in those days. My mother called them all LIES. And I guess she wasn't so very far wrong about some of them."

"They're certainly fictions," said Corey, smiling.

"Well, we do buy a good many books, first and last," said the Colonel, who probably had in mind the costly volumes which they presented to one another on birthdays and holidays. "But I get about all the reading I want in the newspapers. And when the girls want a novel, I tell 'em to get it out of the library. That's what the library's for. Phew!" he panted, blowing away the whole unprofitable subject. "How close you women-folks like to keep a room! You go down to the sea-side or up to the mountains for a change of air, and then you cork yourselves into a room so tight you don't have any air at all. Here! You girls get on your bonnets, and go and show Mr. Corey the view of the hotels from the rocks."

Corey said that he should be delighted. The girls exchanged looks with each other, and then with their mother. Irene curved her pretty chin in comment upon her father's incorrigibility, and Penelope made a droll mouth, but the Colonel remained serenely content with his finesse. "I got 'em out of the way," he said, as soon as they were gone, and before his wife had time to fall upon him, "because I've got through my talk with him, and now I want to talk with YOU. It's just as I said, Persis; he wants to go into the business with me."

"It's lucky for you," said his wife, meaning that now he would not be made to suffer for attempting to hoax her. But she was too intensely interested to pursue that matter further. "What in the world do you suppose he means by it?"

"Well, I should judge by his talk that he had been trying a good many different things since he left college, and he hain't found just the thing he likes--or the thing that likes him. It ain't so easy. And now he's got an idea that he can take hold of the paint and push it in other countries--push it in Mexico and push it in South America. He's a splendid Spanish scholar,"--this was Lapham's version of Corey's modest claim to a smattering of the language,--"and he's been among the natives enough to know their ways. And he believes in the paint," added the Colonel.

"I guess he believes in something else besides the paint," said Mrs. Lapham.

"What do you mean?"

"Well, Silas Lapham, if you can't see NOW that he's after Irene, I don't know what ever CAN open your eyes. That's all."

The Colonel pretended to give the idea silent consideration, as if it had not occurred to him before. "Well, then, all I've got to say is, that he's going a good way round. I don't say you're wrong, but if it's Irene, I don't see why he should want to go off to South America to get her. And that's what he proposes to do. I guess there's some paint about it too, Persis. He says he believes in it,"--the Colonel devoutly lowered his voice,--"and he's willing to take the agency on his own account down there, and run it for a commission on what he can sell."

"Of course! He isn't going to take hold of it any way so as to feel beholden to you. He's got too much pride for that."

"He ain't going to take hold of it at all, if he don't mean paint in the first place and Irene afterward. I don't object to him, as I know, either way, but the two things won't mix; and I don't propose he shall pull the wool over my eyes--or anybody else. But, as far as heard from, up to date, he means paint first, last, and all the time. At any rate, I'm going to take him on that basis. He's got some pretty good ideas about it, and he's been stirred up by this talk, just now, about getting our manufactures into the foreign markets. There's an overstock in everything, and we've got to get rid of it, or we've got to shut down till the home demand begins again. We've had two or three such flurries before now, and they didn't amount to much. They say we can't extend our commerce under the high tariff system we've got now, because there ain't any sort of reciprocity on our side,--we want to have the other fellows show all the reciprocity,--and the English have got the advantage of us every time. I don't know whether it's so or not; but I don't see why it should apply to my paint. Anyway, he wants to try it, and I've about made up my mind to let him. Of course I ain't going to let him take all the risk. I believe in the paint TOO, and I shall pay his expenses anyway."

"So you want another partner after all?" Mrs. Lapham could not forbear saying.

"Yes, if that's your idea of a partner. It isn't mine," returned her husband dryly.

"Well, if you've made up your mind, Si, I suppose you're ready for advice," said Mrs. Lapham.

The Colonel enjoyed this. "Yes, I am. What have you got to say against it?"

"I don't know as I've got anything. I'm satisfied if you are."

"Well?"

"When is he going to start for South America?"

"I shall take him into the office a while. He'll get off some time in the winter. But he's got to know the business first."

"Oh, indeed! Are you going to take him to board in the family?"

"What are you after, Persis?"

"Oh, nothing! I presume he will feel free to visit in the family, even if he don't board with us."

"I presume he will."

"And if he don't use his privileges, do you think he'll be a fit person to manage your paint in South America?"

The Colonel reddened consciously. "I'm not taking him on that basis."

"Oh yes, you are! You may pretend you ain't to yourself, but you mustn't pretend so to me. Because I know you."

The Colonel laughed. "Pshaw!" he said.

Mrs. Lapham continued: "I don't see any harm in hoping that he'll take a fancy to her. But if you really think it won't do to mix the two things, I advise you not to take Mr. Corey into the business. It will do all very well if he DOES take a fancy to her; but if he don't, you know how you'll feel about it. And I know you well enough, Silas, to know that you can't do him justice if that happens. And I don't think it's right you should take this step unless you're pretty sure. I can see that you've set your heart on this thing"

"I haven't set my heart on it at all," protested Lapham.

"And if you can't bring it about, you're going to feel unhappy over it," pursued his wife, regardless of his protest.

"Oh, very well," he said. "If you know more about what's in my mind than I do, there's no use arguing,

as I can see."

He got up, to carry off his consciousness, and sauntered out of the door on to his piazza. He could see the young people down on the rocks, and his heart swelled in his breast. He had always said that he did not care what a man's family was, but the presence of young Corey as an applicant to him for employment, as his guest, as the possible suitor of his daughter, was one of the sweetest flavours that he had yet tasted in his success. He knew who the Coreys were very well, and, in his simple, brutal way, he had long hated their name as a symbol of splendour which, unless he should live to see at least three generations of his descendants gilded with mineral paint, he could not hope to realise in his own. He was acquainted in a business way with the tradition of old Phillips Corey, and he had heard a great many things about the Corey who had spent his youth abroad and his father's money everywhere, and done nothing but say smart things. Lapham could not see the smartness of some of them which had been repeated to him. Once he had encountered the fellow, and it seemed to Lapham that the tall, slim, white-moustached man, with the slight stoop, was everything that was offensively aristocratic. He had bristled up aggressively at the name when his wife told how she had made the acquaintance of the fellow's family the summer before, and he had treated the notion of young Corey's caring for Irene with the contempt which such a ridiculous superstition deserved. He had made up his mind about young Corey beforehand; yet when he met him he felt an instant liking for him, which he frankly acknowledged, and he had begun to assume the burden of his wife's superstition, of which she seemed now ready to accuse him of being the inventor.

Nothing had moved his thick imagination like this day's events since the girl who taught him spelling and grammar in the school at Lumberville had said she would have him for her husband.

The dark figures, stationary on the rocks, began to move, and he could see that they were coming toward the house. He went indoors, so as not to appear to have been watching them.

VIII.

A WEEK after she had parted with her son at Bar Harbour, Mrs. Corey suddenly walked in upon her husband in their house in Boston. He was at breakfast, and he gave her

the patronising welcome with which the husband who has been staying in town all summer receives his wife when she drops down upon him from the mountains or the sea-side. For a little moment she feels herself strange in the house, and suffers herself to be treated like a guest, before envy of his comfort vexes her back into possession and authority. Mrs. Corey was a lady, and she did not let her envy take the form of open reproach.

"Well, Anna, you find me here in the luxury you left me to. How did you leave the girls?"

"The girls were well," said Mrs. Corey, looking absently at her husband's brown velvet coat, in which he was so handsome. No man had ever grown grey more beautifully. His hair, while not remaining dark enough to form a theatrical contrast with his moustache, was yet some shades darker, and, in becoming a little thinner, it had become a little more gracefully wavy. His skin had the pearly tint which that of elderly men sometimes assumes, and the lines which time had traced upon it were too delicate for the name of wrinkles. He had never had any personal vanity, and there was no consciousness in his good looks now.

"I am glad of that. The boy I have with me," he returned; "that is, when he IS with me."

"Why, where is he?" demanded the mother.

"Probably carousing with the boon Lapham somewhere. He left me yesterday afternoon to go and offer his allegiance to the Mineral Paint King, and I haven't seen him since."

"Bromfield!" cried Mrs. Corey. "Why didn't you stop him?"

"Well, my dear, I'm not sure that it isn't a very good thing."

"A good thing? It's horrid!"

"No, I don't think so. It's decent. Tom had found out--without consulting the landscape, which I believe proclaims it everywhere----"

"Hideous!"

"That it's really a good thing; and he thinks that he has some ideas in regard to its dissemination in the parts beyond seas."

"Why shouldn't he go into something else?" lamented the mother.

"I believe he has gone into nearly everything else

and come out of it. So there is a chance of his coming out of this. But as I had nothing to suggest in place of it, I thought it best not to interfere. In fact, what good would my telling him that mineral paint was nasty have done? I dare say YOU told him it was nasty."

"Yes! I did."

"And you see with what effect, though he values your opinion three times as much as he values mine. Perhaps you came up to tell him again that it was nasty?"

"I feel very unhappy about it. He is throwing himself away. Yes, I should like to prevent it if I could!"

The father shook his head.

"If Lapham hasn't prevented it, I fancy it's too late. But there may be some hopes of Lapham. As for Tom's throwing himself away, I don't know. There's no question but he is one of the best fellows under the sun. He's tremendously energetic, and he has plenty of the kind of sense which we call horse; but he isn't brilliant. No, Tom is not brilliant. I don't think he would get on in a profession, and he's instinctively kept out of everything of the kind. But he has got to do something. What shall he do? He says mineral paint, and really I don't see why he shouldn't. If money is fairly and honestly earned, why should we pretend to care what it comes out of, when we don't really care? That superstition is exploded everywhere."

"Oh, it isn't the paint alone," said Mrs. Corey; and then she perceptibly arrested herself, and made a diversion in continuing: "I wish he had married some one."

"With money?" suggested her husband. "From time to time I have attempted Tom's corruption from that side, but I suspect Tom has a conscience against it, and I rather like him for it. I married for love myself," said Corey, looking across the table at his wife.

She returned his look tolerantly, though she felt it right to say, "What nonsense!"

"Besides," continued her husband, "if you come to money, there is the paint princess. She will have plenty."

"Ah, that's the worst of it," sighed the mother. "I suppose I could get on with the paint----"

"But not with the princess? I thought you said she was a very pretty, well-behaved girl?"

"She is very pretty, and she is well-behaved; but there is nothing of her. She is insipid; she is very insipid."

"But Tom seemed to like her flavour, such as it was?"

"How can I tell? We were under a terrible obligation to them, and I naturally wished him to be polite to them. In fact, I asked him to be so."

"And he was too polite"

"I can't say that he was. But there is no doubt that the child is extremely pretty."

"Tom says there are two of them. Perhaps they will neutralise each other."

"Yes, there is another daughter," assented Mrs. Corey.
"I don't see how you can joke about such things, Bromfield," she added.

"Well, I don't either, my dear, to tell you the truth. My hardihood surprises me. Here is a son of mine whom I see reduced to making his living by a shrinkage in values. It's very odd," interjected Corey, "that some values should have this peculiarity of shrinking. You never hear of values in a picture shrinking; but rents, stocks, real estate--all those values shrink abominably. Perhaps it might be argued that one should put all his values into pictures; I've got a good many of mine there."

"Tom needn't earn his living," said Mrs. Corey, refusing her husband's jest. "There's still enough for all of us."

"That is what I have sometimes urged upon Tom. I have proved to him that with economy, and strict attention to business, he need do nothing as long as he lives. Of course he would be somewhat restricted, and it would cramp the rest of us; but it is a world of sacrifices and compromises. He couldn't agree with me, and he was not in the least moved by the example of persons of quality in Europe, which I alleged in support of the life of idleness. It appears that he wishes to do something--to do something for himself. I am afraid that Tom is selfish."

Mrs. Corey smiled wanly. Thirty years before, she had married the rich young painter in Rome, who said so much better things than he painted--charming things, just the things to please the fancy of a girl who was disposed to take life a little too seriously and practically. She saw him in a different light when she got him home to Boston; but he had kept on saying the charming things,

and he had not done much else. In fact, he had fulfilled the promise of his youth. It was a good trait in him that he was not actively but only passively extravagant. He was not adventurous with his money; his tastes were as simple as an Italian's; he had no expensive habits. In the process of time he had grown to lead a more and more secluded life. It was hard to get him out anywhere, even to dinner. His patience with their narrowing circumstances had a pathos which she felt the more the more she came into charge of their joint life. At times it seemed too bad that the children and their education and pleasures should cost so much. She knew, besides, that if it had not been for them she would have gone back to Rome with him, and lived princely there for less than it took to live respectably in Boston.

"Tom hasn't consulted me," continued his father, "but he has consulted other people. And he has arrived at the conclusion that mineral paint is a good thing to go into. He has found out all about it, and about its founder or inventor. It's quite impressive to hear him talk. And if he must do something for himself, I don't see why his egotism shouldn't as well take that form as another. Combined with the paint princess, it isn't so agreeable; but that's only a remote possibility, for which your principal ground is your motherly solicitude. But even if it were probable and imminent, what could you do? The chief consolation that we American parents have in these matters is that we can do nothing. If we were Europeans, even English, we should take some cognisance of our children's love affairs, and in some measure teach their young affections how to shoot. But it is our custom to ignore them until they have shot, and then they ignore us. We are altogether too delicate to arrange the marriages of our children; and when they have arranged them we don't like to say anything, for fear we should only make bad worse. The right way is for us to school ourselves to indifference. That is what the young people have to do elsewhere, and that is the only logical result of our position here. It is absurd for us to have any feeling about what we don't interfere with."

"Oh, people do interfere with their children's marriages very often," said Mrs. Corey.

"Yes, but only in a half-hearted way, so as not to make it disagreeable for themselves if the marriages go on in spite of them, as they're pretty apt to do. Now, my idea is that I ought to cut Tom off with a shilling. That would be very simple, and it would be economical. But you would never consent, and Tom wouldn't mind it."

"I think our whole conduct in regard to such things is wrong," said Mrs. Corey.

"Oh, very likely. But our whole civilisation is based upon it. And who is going to make a beginning? To which father in our acquaintance shall I go and propose an alliance for Tom with his daughter? I should feel like an ass. And will you go to some mother, and ask her sons in marriage for our daughters? You would feel like a goose. No; the only motto for us is, Hands off altogether."

"I shall certainly speak to Tom when the time comes," said Mrs. Corey.

"And I shall ask leave to be absent from your discomfiture, my dear," answered her husband.

The son returned that afternoon, and confessed his surprise at finding his mother in Boston. He was so frank that she had not quite the courage to confess in turn why she had come, but trumped up an excuse.

"Well, mother," he said promptly, "I have made an engagement with Mr. Lapham."

"Have you, Tom?" she asked faintly.

"Yes. For the present I am going to have charge of his foreign correspondence, and if I see my way to the advantage I expect to find in it, I am going out to manage that side of his business in South America and Mexico. He's behaved very handsomely about it. He says that if it appears for our common interest, he shall pay me a salary as well as a commission. I've talked with Uncle Jim, and he thinks it's a good opening."

"Your Uncle Jim does?" queried Mrs. Corey in amaze.

"Yes; I consulted him the whole way through, and I've acted on his advice."

This seemed an incomprehensible treachery on her brother's part.

"Yes; I thought you would like to have me. And besides, I couldn't possibly have gone to any one so well fitted to advise me."

His mother said nothing. In fact, the mineral paint business, however painful its interest, was, for the moment, superseded by a more poignant anxiety. She began to feel her way cautiously toward this.

"Have you been talking about your business with Mr. Lapham all night?"

"Well, pretty much," said her son, with a guiltless laugh.

"I went to see him yesterday afternoon, after I had gone over the whole ground with Uncle Jim, and Mr. Lapham asked me to go down with him and finish up."

"Down?" repeated Mrs. Corey. "Yes, to Nantasket. He has a cottage down there."

"At Nantasket?" Mrs. Corey knitted her brows a little.

"What in the world can a cottage at Nantasket be like?"

"Oh, very much like a 'cottage' anywhere. It has the usual allowance of red roof and veranda. There are the regulation rocks by the sea; and the big hotels on the beach about a mile off, flaring away with electric lights and roman-candles at night. We didn't have them at Nahant."

"No," said his mother. "Is Mrs. Lapham well? And her daughter?"

"Yes, I think so," said the young man. "The young ladies walked me down to the rocks in the usual way after dinner, and then I came back and talked paint with Mr. Lapham till midnight. We didn't settle anything till this morning coming up on the boat."

"What sort of people do they seem to be at home?"

"What sort? Well, I don't know that I noticed." Mrs. Corey permitted herself the first part of a sigh of relief; and her son laughed, but apparently not at her.

"They're just reading Middlemarch. They say there's so much talk about it. Oh, I suppose they're very good people. They seemed to be on very good terms with each other."

"I suppose it's the plain sister who's reading Middlemarch."

"Plain? Is she plain?" asked the young man, as if searching his consciousness. "Yes, it's the older one who does the reading, apparently. But I don't believe that even she overdoes it. They like to talk better. They reminded me of Southern people in that." The young man smiled, as if amused by some of his impressions of the Lapham family. "The living, as the country people call it, is tremendously good. The Colonel--he's a colonel--talked of the coffee as his wife's coffee, as if she had personally made it in the kitchen, though I believe it was merely inspired by her. And there was everything in the house that money could buy. But money has its limitations."

This was a fact which Mrs. Corey was beginning to realise more and more unpleasantly in her own life; but it seemed to bring her a certain comfort in its application to the Laphams.

"Yes, there is a point where taste has to begin," she said.

"They seemed to want to apologise to me for not having more books," said Corey. "I don't know why they should. The Colonel said they bought a good many books, first and last; but apparently they don't take them to the sea-side."

"I dare say they NEVER buy a NEW book. I've met some of these moneyed people lately, and they lavish on every conceivable luxury, and then borrow books, and get them in the cheap paper editions."

"I fancy that's the way with the Lapham family," said the young man, smilingly. "But they are very good people. The other daughter is humorous."

"Humorous?" Mrs. Corey knitted her brows in some perplexity. "Do you mean like Mrs. Sayre?" she asked, naming the lady whose name must come into every Boston mind when humour is mentioned.

"Oh no; nothing like that. She never says anything that you can remember; nothing in flashes or ripples; nothing the least literary. But it's a sort of droll way of looking at things; or a droll medium through which things present themselves. I don't know. She tells what she's seen, and mimics a little."

"Oh," said Mrs. Corey coldly. After a moment she asked: "And is Miss Irene as pretty as ever?"

"She's a wonderful complexion," said the son unsatisfactorily. "I shall want to be by when father and Colonel Lapham meet," he added, with a smile.

"Ah, yes, your father!" said the mother, in that way in which a wife at once compassionates and censures her husband to their children.

"Do you think it's really going to be a trial to him?" asked the young man quickly.

"No, no, I can't say it is. But I confess I wish it was some other business, Tom."

"Well, mother, I don't see why. The principal thing looked at now is the amount of money; and while I would rather starve than touch a dollar that was dirty with any sort of dishonesty----"

"Of course you would, my son!" interposed his mother proudly.

"I shouldn't at all mind its having a little mineral paint on it. I'll use my influence with Colonel Lapham--if I ever have any--to have his paint scraped off the landscape."

"I suppose you won't begin till the autumn."

"Oh yes, I shall," said the son, laughing at his mother's simple ignorance of business. "I shall begin to-morrow morning."

"To-morrow morning!"

"Yes. I've had my desk appointed already, and I shall be down there at nine in the morning to take possession."

"Tom" cried his mother, "why do you think Mr. Lapham has taken you into business so readily? I've always heard that it was so hard for young men to get in."

"And do you think I found it easy with him? We had about twelve hours' solid talk."

"And you don't suppose it was any sort of--personal consideration?"

"Why, I don't know exactly what you mean, mother. I suppose he likes me."

Mrs. Corey could not say just what she meant. She answered, ineffectually enough--

"Yes. You wouldn't like it to be a favour, would you?"

"I think he's a man who may be trusted to look after his own interest. But I don't mind his beginning by liking me. It'll be my own fault if I don't make myself essential to him."

"Yes," said Mrs. Corey.

"Well, demanded her husband, at their first meeting after her interview with their son, "what did you say to Tom?"

"Very little, if anything. I found him with his mind made up, and it would only have distressed him if I had tried to change it."

"That is precisely what I said, my dear."

"Besides, he had talked the matter over fully with James, and seems to have been advised by him. I can't understand James."

"Oh! it's in regard to the paint, and not the princess, that he's made up his mind. Well, I think you were wise to let him alone, Anna. We represent a faded tradition. We don't really care what business a man is in, so it is large enough, and he doesn't advertise offensively; but we think it fine to affect reluctance."

"Do you really feel so, Bromfield?" asked his wife seriously.

"Certainly I do. There was a long time in my misguided youth when I supposed myself some sort of porcelain; but it's a relief to be of the common clay, after all, and to know it. If I get broken, I can be easily replaced."

"If Tom must go into such a business," said Mrs. Corey, "I'm glad James approves of it."

"I'm afraid it wouldn't matter to Tom if he didn't; and I don't know that I should care," said Corey, betraying the fact that he had perhaps had a good deal of his brother-in-law's judgment in the course of his life. "You had better consult him in regard to Tom's marrying the princess."

"There is no necessity at present for that," said Mrs. Corey, with dignity. After a moment, she asked, "Should you feel quite so easy if it were a question of that, Bromfield?"

"It would be a little more personal."

"You feel about it as I do. Of course, we have both lived too long, and seen too much of the world, to suppose we can control such things. The child is good, I haven't the least doubt, and all those things can be managed so that they wouldn't disgrace us. But she has had a certain sort of bringing up. I should prefer Tom to marry a girl with another sort, and this business venture of his increases the chances that he won't. That's all."

""Tis not so deep as a well, nor so wide as a church door, but 'twill serve."

"I shouldn't like it."

"Well, it hasn't happened yet."

"Ah, you never can realise anything beforehand."

"Perhaps that has saved me some suffering. But you have at least the consolation of two anxieties at once. I always find that a great advantage. You can play one off against the other."

Mrs. Corey drew a long breath as if she did not experience the suggested consolation; and she arranged to quit, the following afternoon, the scene of her defeat, which she had not had the courage to make a battlefield. Her son went down to see her off on the boat, after spending his first day at his desk in Lapham's office. He was in a gay humour, and she departed in a reflected gleam of his good spirits. He told her all about it, as he sat talking with her at the stern of the boat, lingering till the last moment, and then stepping ashore, with as little waste of time as Lapham himself, on the gang-plank which the deck-hands had laid hold of. He touched his hat to her from the wharf to reassure her of his escape from being carried away with her, and the next moment his smiling face hid itself in the crowd.

He walked on smiling up the long wharf, encumbered with trucks and hacks and piles of freight, and, taking his way through the deserted business streets beyond this bustle, made a point of passing the door of Lapham's warehouse, on the jambs of which his name and paint were lettered in black on a square ground of white. The door was still open, and Corey loitered a moment before it, tempted to go upstairs and fetch away some foreign letters which he had left on his desk, and which he thought he might finish up at home. He was in love with his work, and he felt the enthusiasm for it which nothing but the work we can do well inspires in us. He believed that he had found his place in the world, after a good deal of looking, and he had the relief, the repose, of fitting into it. Every little incident of the momentous, uneventful day was a pleasure in his mind, from his sitting down at his desk, to which Lapham's boy brought him the foreign letters, till his rising from it an hour ago. Lapham had been in view within his own office, but he had given Corey no formal reception, and had, in fact, not spoken to him till toward the end of the forenoon, when he suddenly came out of his den with some more letters in his hand, and after a brief "How d'ye do?" had spoken a few words about them, and left them with him. He was in his shirt-sleeves again, and his sanguine person seemed to radiate the heat with which he suffered. He did not go out to lunch, but had it brought to him in his office, where Corey saw him eating it before he left his own desk to go out and perch on a swinging seat before the long counter of a down-town restaurant. He observed that all the others lunched at twelve, and he resolved to anticipate his usual hour. When he returned, the pretty girl who had been clicking away at a type-writer all the morning was neatly putting out of sight the evidences of pie from the table where her machine stood,

and was preparing to go on with her copying. In his office Lapham lay asleep in his arm-chair, with a newspaper over his face.

Now, while Corey lingered at the entrance to the stairway, these two came down the stairs together, and he heard Lapham saying, "Well, then, you better get a divorce."

He looked red and excited, and the girl's face, which she veiled at sight of Corey, showed traces of tears. She slipped round him into the street.

But Lapham stopped, and said, with the show of no feeling but surprise: "Hello, Corey! Did you want to go up?"

"Yes; there were some letters I hadn't quite got through with."

"You'll find Dennis up there. But I guess you better let them go till to-morrow. I always make it a rule to stop work when I'm done."

"Perhaps you're right," said Corey, yielding.

"Come along down as far as the boat with me. There's a little matter I want to talk over with you."

It was a business matter, and related to Corey's proposed connection with the house.

The next day the head book-keeper, who lunched at the long counter of the same restaurant with Corey, began to talk with him about Lapham. Walker had not apparently got his place by seniority; though with his forehead, bald far up toward the crown, and his round smooth face, one might have taken him for a plump elder, if he had not looked equally like a robust infant. The thick drabbish yellow moustache was what arrested decision in either direction, and the prompt vigour of all his movements was that of a young man of thirty, which was really Walker's age. He knew, of course, who Corey was, and he had waited for a man who might look down on him socially to make the overtures toward something more than business acquaintance; but, these made, he was readily responsive, and drew freely on his philosophy of Lapham and his affairs.

"I think about the only difference between people in this world is that some know what they want, and some don't. Well, now," said Walker, beating the bottom of his salt-box to make the salt come out, "the old man knows what he wants every time. And generally he gets it. Yes, sir, he generally gets it. He knows what he's about, but I'll be blessed if the rest of us do half the time. Anyway, we don't till he's ready to let us. You take

my position in most business houses. It's confidential. The head book-keeper knows right along pretty much everything the house has got in hand. I'll give you my word I don't. He may open up to you a little more in your department, but, as far as the rest of us go, he don't open up any more than an oyster on a hot brick. They say he had a partner once; I guess he's dead. I wouldn't like to be the old man's partner. Well, you see, this paint of his is like his heart's blood. Better not try to joke him about it. I've seen people come in occasionally and try it. They didn't get much fun out of it."

While he talked, Walker was plucking up morsels from his plate, tearing off pieces of French bread from the long loaf, and feeding them into his mouth in an impersonal way, as if he were firing up an engine.

"I suppose he thinks," suggested Corey, "that if he doesn't tell, nobody else will."

Walker took a draught of beer from his glass, and wiped the foam from his moustache.

"Oh, but he carries it too far! It's a weakness with him. He's just so about everything. Look at the way he keeps it up about that type-writer girl of his. You'd think she was some princess travelling incognito. There isn't one of us knows who she is, or where she came from, or who she belongs to. He brought her and her machine into the office one morning, and set 'em down at a table, and that's all there is about it, as far as we're concerned. It's pretty hard on the girl, for I guess she'd like to talk; and to any one that didn't know the old man----" Walker broke off and drained his glass of what was left in it.

Corey thought of the words he had overheard from Lapham to the girl. But he said, "She seems to be kept pretty busy."

"Oh yes," said Walker; "there ain't much loafing round the place, in any of the departments, from the old man's down. That's just what I say. He's got to work just twice as hard, if he wants to keep everything in his own mind. But he ain't afraid of work. That's one good thing about him. And Miss Dewey has to keep step with the rest of us. But she don't look like one that would take to it naturally. Such a pretty girl as that generally thinks she does enough when she looks her prettiest."

"She's a pretty girl," said Corey, non-committally. "But I suppose a great many pretty girls have to earn their living."

"Don't any of 'em like to do it," returned the book-keeper.
"They think it's a hardship, and I don't blame 'em. They have got a right to get married, and they ought to have the chance. And Miss Dewey's smart, too. She's as bright as a biscuit. I guess she's had trouble. I shouldn't be much more than half surprised if Miss Dewey wasn't Miss Dewey, or hadn't always been. Yes, sir," continued the book-keeper, who prolonged the talk as they walked back to Lapham's warehouse together, "I don't know exactly what it is,--it isn't any one thing in particular,--but I should say that girl had been married. I wouldn't speak so freely to any of the rest, Mr. Corey,--I want you to understand that,--and it isn't any of my business, anyway; but that's my opinion."

Corey made no reply, as he walked beside the book-keeper, who continued--

"It's curious what a difference marriage makes in people. Now, I know that I don't look any more like a bachelor of my age than I do like the man in the moon, and yet I couldn't say where the difference came in, to save me. And it's just so with a woman. The minute you catch sight of her face, there's something in it that tells you whether she's married or not. What do you suppose it is?"

"I'm sure I don't know," said Corey, willing to laugh away the topic. "And from what I read occasionally of some people who go about repeating their happiness, I shouldn't say that the intangible evidences were always unmistakable."

"Oh, of course," admitted Walker, easily surrendering his position. "All signs fail in dry weather. Hello! What's that?" He caught Corey by the arm, and they both stopped.

At a corner, half a block ahead of them, the summer noon solitude of the place was broken by a bit of drama. A man and woman issued from the intersecting street, and at the moment of coming into sight the man, who looked like a sailor, caught the woman by the arm, as if to detain her. A brief struggle ensued, the woman trying to free herself, and the man half coaxing, half scolding. The spectators could now see that he was drunk; but before they could decide whether it was a case for their interference or not, the woman suddenly set both hands against the man's breast and gave him a quick push. He lost his footing and tumbled into a heap in the gutter. The woman faltered an instant, as if to see whether he was seriously hurt, and then turned and ran.

When Corey and the book-keeper re-entered the office, Miss Dewey had finished her lunch, and was putting a sheet

of paper into her type-writer. She looked up at them with her eyes of turquoise blue, under her low white forehead, with the hair neatly rippled over it, and then began to beat the keys of her machine.

IX.

LAPHAM had the pride which comes of self-making, and he would not openly lower his crest to the young fellow he had taken into his business. He was going to be obviously master in his own place to every one; and during the hours of business he did nothing to distinguish Corey from the half-dozen other clerks and book-keepers in the outer office, but he was not silent about the fact that Bromfield Corey's son had taken a fancy to come to him. "Did you notice that fellow at the desk facing my type-writer girl? Well, sir, that's the son of Bromfield Corey--old Phillips Corey's grandson. And I'll say this for him, that there isn't a man in the office that looks after his work better. There isn't anything he's too good for. He's right here at nine every morning, before the clock gets in the word. I guess it's his grandfather coming out in him. He's got charge of the foreign correspondence. We're pushing the paint everywhere." He flattered himself that he did not lug the matter in. He had been warned against that by his wife, but he had the right to do Corey justice, and his brag took the form of illustration. "Talk about training for business--I tell you it's all in the man himself! I used to believe in what old Horace Greeley said about college graduates being the poorest kind of horned cattle; but I've changed my mind a little. You take that fellow Corey. He's been through Harvard, and he's had about every advantage that a fellow could have. Been everywhere, and talks half a dozen languages like English. I suppose he's got money enough to live without lifting a hand, any more than his father does; son of Bromfield Corey, you know. But the thing was in him. He's a natural-born business man; and I've had many a fellow with me that had come up out of the street, and worked hard all his life, without ever losing his original opposition to the thing. But Corey likes it. I believe the fellow would like to stick at that desk of his night and day. I don't know where he got it. I guess it must be his grandfather, old Phillips Corey; it often skips a generation, you know. But what I say is, a thing has got to be born in a man; and if it ain't born in him, all the privations in the world won't put it there, and if it is, all the college training won't take it out."

Sometimes Lapham advanced these ideas at his own table, to a guest whom he had brought to Nantasket for the night. Then he suffered exposure and ridicule at the hands of his wife, when opportunity offered. She would not let him bring Corey down to Nantasket at all.

"No, indeed!" she said. "I am not going to have them think we're running after him. If he wants to see Irene, he can find out ways of doing it for himself."

"Who wants him to see Irene?" retorted the Colonel angrily.

"I do," said Mrs. Lapham. "And I want him to see her without any of your connivance, Silas. I'm not going to have it said that I put my girls at anybody. Why don't you invite some of your other clerks?"

"He ain't just like the other clerks. He's going to take charge of a part of the business. It's quite another thing."

"Oh, indeed!" said Mrs. Lapham vexatiously. "Then you ARE going to take a partner."

"I shall ask him down if I choose!" returned the Colonel, disdaining her insinuation.

His wife laughed with the fearlessness of a woman who knows her husband.

"But you won't choose when you've thought it over, Si." Then she applied an emollient to his chafed surface. "Don't you suppose I feel as you do about it? I know just how proud you are, and I'm not going to have you do anything that will make you feel meeching afterward. You just let things take their course. If he wants Irene, he's going to find out some way of seeing her; and if he don't, all the plotting and planning in the world isn't going to make him."

"Who's plotting?" again retorted the Colonel, shuddering at the utterance of hopes and ambitions which a man hides with shame, but a woman talks over as freely and coolly as if they were items of a milliner's bill.

"Oh, not you!" exulted his wife. "I understand what you want. You want to get this fellow, who is neither partner nor clerk, down here to talk business with him. Well, now, you just talk business with him at the office."

The only social attention which Lapham succeeded in offering Corey was to take him in his buggy, now and then, for a spin out over the Mill-dam. He kept the mare in town, and on a pleasant afternoon he liked to knock off early,

as he phrased it, and let the mare out a little. Corey understood something about horses, though in a passionless way, and he would have preferred to talk business when obliged to talk horse. But he deferred to his business superior with the sense of discipline which is innate in the apparently insubordinate American nature. If Corey could hardly have helped feeling the social difference between Lapham and himself, in his presence he silenced his traditions, and showed him all the respect that he could have exacted from any of his clerks. He talked horse with him, and when the Colonel wished he talked house. Besides himself and his paint Lapham had not many other topics; and if he had a choice between the mare and the edifice on the water side of Beacon Street, it was just now the latter. Sometimes, in driving in or out, he stopped at the house, and made Corey his guest there, if he might not at Nantasket; and one day it happened that the young man met Irene there again. She had come up with her mother alone, and they were in the house, interviewing the carpenter as before, when the Colonel jumped out of his buggy and cast anchor at the pavement. More exactly, Mrs. Lapham was interviewing the carpenter, and Irene was sitting in the bow-window on a trestle, and looking out at the driving. She saw him come up with her father, and bowed and blushed. Her father went on up-stairs to find her mother, and Corey pulled up another trestle which he found in the back part of the room. The first floorings had been laid throughout the house, and the partitions had been lathed so that one could realise the shape of the interior.

"I suppose you will sit at this window a good deal," said the young man.

"Yes, I think it will be very nice. There's so much more going on than there is in the Square."

"It must be very interesting to you to see the house grow."

"It is. Only it doesn't seem to grow so fast as I expected."

"Why, I'm amazed at the progress your carpenter has made every time I come."

The girl looked down, and then lifting her eyes she said, with a sort of timorous appeal--

"I've been reading that book since you were down at Nantasket."

"Book?" repeated Corey, while she reddened with disappointment. "Oh yes. Middlemarch. Did you like it?"

"I haven't got through with it yet. Pen has finished it."

"What does she think of it?"

"Oh, I think she likes it very well. I haven't heard her talk about it much. Do you like it?"

"Yes; I liked it immensely. But it's several years since I read it."

"I didn't know it was so old. It's just got into the Seaside Library," she urged, with a little sense of injury in her tone.

"Oh, it hasn't been out such a very great while," said Corey politely. "It came a little before DANIEL DERONDA."

The girl was again silent. She followed the curl of a shaving on the floor with the point of her parasol.

"Do you like that Rosamond Vincy?" she asked, without looking up.

Corey smiled in his kind way.

"I didn't suppose she was expected to have any friends. I can't say I liked her. But I don't think I disliked her so much as the author does. She's pretty hard on her good-looking"--he was going to say girls, but as if that might have been rather personal, he said--"people."

"Yes, that's what Pen says. She says she doesn't give her any chance to be good. She says she should have been just as bad as Rosamond if she had been in her place."

The young man laughed. "Your sister is very satirical, isn't she?"

"I don't know," said Irene, still intent upon the convolutions of the shaving. "She keeps us laughing. Papa thinks there's nobody that can talk like her." She gave the shaving a little toss from her, and took the parasol up across her lap. The unworldliness of the Lapham girls did not extend to their dress; Irene's costume was very stylish, and she governed her head and shoulders stylishly. "We are going to have the back room upstairs for a music-room and library," she said abruptly.

"Yes?" returned Corey. "I should think that would be charming."

"We expected to have book-cases, but the architect wants to build the shelves in."

The fact seemed to be referred to Corey for his comment.

"It seems to me that would be the best way. They'll look like part of the room then. You can make them low, and hang your pictures above them."

"Yes, that's what he said." The girl looked out of the window in adding, "I presume with nice bindings it will look very well."

"Oh, nothing furnishes a room like books."

"No. There will have to be a good many of them."

"That depends upon the size of your room and the number of your shelves."

"Oh, of course! I presume," said Irene, thoughtfully, "we shall have to have Gibbon."

"If you want to read him," said Corey, with a laugh of sympathy for an imaginable joke.

"We had a great deal about him at school. I believe we had one of his books. Mine's lost, but Pen will remember."

The young man looked at her, and then said, seriously, "You'll want Greene, of course, and Motley, and Parkman."

"Yes. What kind of writers are they?"

"They're historians too."

"Oh yes; I remember now. That's what Gibbon was. Is it Gibbon or Gibbons?"

The young man decided the point with apparently superfluous delicacy. "Gibbon, I think."

"There used to be so many of them," said Irene gaily. "I used to get them mixed up with each other, and I couldn't tell them from the poets. Should you want to have poetry?"

"Yes; I suppose some edition of the English poets."

"We don't any of us like poetry. Do you like it?"

"I'm afraid I don't very much," Corey owned.

"But, of course, there was a time when Tennyson was a great deal more to me than he is now."

"We had something about him at school too. I think I remember

the name. I think we ought to have ALL the American poets."

"Well, not all. Five or six of the best: you want Longfellow and Bryant and Whittier and Holmes and Emerson and Lowell."

The girl listened attentively, as if making mental note of the names.

"And Shakespeare," she added. "Don't you like Shakespeare's plays?"

"Oh yes, very much."

"I used to be perfectly crazy about his plays. Don't you think 'Hamlet' is splendid? We had ever so much about Shakespeare. Weren't you perfectly astonished when you found out how many other plays of his there were? I always thought there was nothing but 'Hamlet' and 'Romeo and Juliet' and 'Macbeth' and 'Richard III.' and 'King Lear,' and that one that Robeson and Crane have--oh yes! 'Comedy of Errors.'"

"Those are the ones they usually play," said Corey.

"I presume we shall have to have Scott's works," said Irene, returning to the question of books.

"Oh yes."

"One of the girls used to think he was GREAT. She was always talking about Scott." Irene made a pretty little amiably contemptuous mouth. "He isn't American, though?" she suggested.

"No," said Corey; "he's Scotch, I believe."

Irene passed her glove over her forehead. "I always get him mixed up with Cooper. Well, papa has got to get them. If we have a library, we have got to have books in it. Pen says it's perfectly ridiculous having one. But papa thinks whatever the architect says is right. He fought him hard enough at first. I don't see how any one can keep the poets and the historians and novelists separate in their mind. Of course papa will buy them if we say so. But I don't see how I'm ever going to tell him which ones." The joyous light faded out of her face and left it pensive.

"Why, if you like," said the young man, taking out his pencil, "I'll put down the names we've been talking about."

He clapped himself on his breast pockets to detect some lurking scrap of paper.

"Will you?" she cried delightedly. "Here! take one of my cards," and she pulled out her card-case. "The carpenter writes on a three-cornered block and puts it into his pocket, and it's so uncomfortable he can't help remembering it. Pen says she's going to adopt the three-cornered-block plan with papa."

"Thank you," said Corey. "I believe I'll use your card." He crossed over to her, and after a moment sat down on the trestle beside her. She looked over the card as he wrote. "Those are the ones we mentioned, but perhaps I'd better add a few others."

"Oh, thank you," she said, when he had written the card full on both sides. "He has got to get them in the nicest binding, too. I shall tell him about their helping to furnish the room, and then he can't object." She remained with the card, looking at it rather wistfully.

Perhaps Corey divined her trouble of mind. "If he will take that to any bookseller, and tell him what bindings he wants, he will fill the order for him." jdh - spell-checked to this point "Oh, thank you very much," she said, and put the card back into her card-case with great apparent relief. Then she turned her lovely face toward the young man, beaming with the triumph a woman feels in any bit of successful manoeuvring, and began to talk with recovered gaiety of other things, as if, having got rid of a matter annoying out of all proportion to its importance, she was now going to indemnify herself.

Corey did not return to his own trestle. She found another shaving within reach of her parasol, and began poking that with it, and trying to follow it through its folds. Corey watched her a while.

"You seem to have a great passion for playing with shavings," he said. "Is it a new one?"

"New what?"

"Passion."

"I don't know," she said, dropping her eyelids, and keeping on with her effort. She looked shyly aslant at him.

"Perhaps you don't approve of playing with shavings?"

"Oh yes, I do. I admire it very much. But it seems rather difficult. I've a great ambition to put my foot on the shaving's tail and hold it for you."

"Well," said the girl.

"Thank you," said the young man. He did so, and now she ran her parasol point easily through it. They looked at each other and laughed. "That was wonderful. Would you like to try another?" he asked.

"No, I thank you," she replied. "I think one will do."

They both laughed again, for whatever reason or no reason, and then the young girl became sober. To a girl everything a young man does is of significance; and if he holds a shaving down with his foot while she pokes through it with her parasol, she must ask herself what he means by it.

"They seem to be having rather a long interview with the carpenter to-day," said Irene, looking vaguely toward the ceiling. She turned with polite ceremony to Corey. "I'm afraid you're letting them keep you. You mustn't."

"Oh no. You're letting me stay," he returned.

She bridled and bit her lip for pleasure. "I presume they will be down before a great while. Don't you like the smell of the wood and the mortar? It's so fresh."

"Yes, it's delicious." He bent forward and picked up from the floor the shaving with which they had been playing, and put it to his nose. "It's like a flower. May I offer it to you?" he asked, as if it had been one.

"Oh, thank you, thank you!" She took it from him and put it into her belt, and then they both laughed once more.

Steps were heard descending. When the elder people reached the floor where they were sitting, Corey rose and presently took his leave.

"What makes you so solemn, 'Rene?" asked Mrs. Lapham.

"Solemn?" echoed the girl. "I'm not a BIT solemn. What CAN you mean?"

Corey dined at home that evening, and as he sat looking across the table at his father, he said, "I wonder what the average literature of non-cultivated people is."

"Ah," said the elder, "I suspect the average is pretty low even with cultivated people. You don't read a great many books yourself, Tom."

"No, I don't," the young man confessed. "I read more books when I was with Stanton, last winter, than I had since I was a boy. But I read them because I must--there was nothing

else to do. It wasn't because I was fond of reading. Still I think I read with some sense of literature and the difference between authors. I don't suppose that people generally do that; I have met people who had read books without troubling themselves to find out even the author's name, much less trying to decide upon his quality. I suppose that's the way the vast majority of people read."

"Yes. If authors were not almost necessarily recluses, and ignorant of the ignorance about them, I don't see how they could endure it. Of course they are fated to be overwhelmed by oblivion at last, poor fellows; but to see it weltering all round them while they are in the very act of achieving immortality must be tremendously discouraging. I don't suppose that we who have the habit of reading, and at least a nodding acquaintance with literature, can imagine the bestial darkness of the great mass of people--even people whose houses are rich and whose linen is purple and fine. But occasionally we get glimpses of it. I suppose you found the latest publications lying all about in Lapham cottage when you were down there?"

Young Corey laughed. "It wasn't exactly cumbered with them."

"No?"

"To tell the truth, I don't suppose they ever buy books. The young ladies get novels that they hear talked of out of the circulating library."

"Had they knowledge enough to be ashamed of their ignorance?"

"Yes, in certain ways--to a certain degree."

"It's a curious thing, this thing we call civilisation," said the elder musingly. "We think it is an affair of epochs and of nations. It's really an affair of individuals. One brother will be civilised and the other a barbarian. I've occasionally met young girls who were so brutally, insolently, wilfully indifferent to the arts which make civilisation that they ought to have been clothed in the skins of wild beasts and gone about barefoot with clubs over their shoulders. Yet they were of polite origin, and their parents were at least respectful of the things that these young animals despised."

"I don't think that is exactly the case with the Lapham family," said the son, smiling. "The father and mother rather apologised about not getting time to read, and the young ladies by no means scorned it."

"They are quite advanced!"

"They are going to have a library in their Beacon Street house."

"Oh, poor things! How are they ever going to get the books together?"

"Well, sir," said the son, colouring a little, "I have been indirectly applied to for help."

"You, Tom!" His father dropped back in his chair and laughed.

"I recommended the standard authors," said the son.

"Oh, I never supposed your PRUDENCE would be at fault, Tom!"

"But seriously," said the young man, generously smiling in sympathy with his father's enjoyment, "they're not unintelligent people. They are very quick, and they are shrewd and sensible."

"I have no doubt that some of the Sioux are so. But that is not saying that they are civilised. All civilisation comes through literature now, especially in our country. A Greek got his civilisation by talking and looking, and in some measure a Parisian may still do it. But we, who live remote from history and monuments, we must read or we must barbarise. Once we were softened, if not polished, by religion; but I suspect that the pulpit counts for much less now in civilising."

"They're enormous devourers of newspapers, and theatre-goers; and they go a great deal to lectures. The Colonel prefers them with the stereopticon."

"They might get a something in that way," said the elder thoughtfully. "Yes, I suppose one must take those things into account--especially the newspapers and the lectures. I doubt if the theatre is a factor in civilisation among us. I dare say it doesn't deprave a great deal, but from what I've seen of it I should say that it was intellectually degrading. Perhaps they might get some sort of lift from it; I don't know. Tom!" he added, after a moment's reflection. "I really think I ought to see this patron of yours. Don't you think it would be rather decent in me to make his acquaintance?"

"Well, if you have the fancy, sir," said the young man.

"But there's no sort of obligation. Colonel Lapham would be the last man in the world to want to give our relation any sort of social character. The meeting will come about in the natural course of things."

"Ah, I didn't intend to propose anything immediate,"

said the father. "One can't do anything in the summer, and I should prefer your mother's superintendence. Still, I can't rid myself of the idea of a dinner. It appears to me that there ought to be a dinner."

"Oh, pray don't feel that there's any necessity."

"Well," said the elder, with easy resignation, "there's at least no hurry."

"There is one thing I don't like," said Lapham, in the course of one of those talks which came up between his wife and himself concerning Corey, "or at least I don't understand it; and that's the way his father behaves. I don't want to force myself on any man; but it seems to me pretty queer the way he holds off. I should think he would take enough interest in his son to want to know something about his business. What is he afraid of?" demanded Lapham angrily. "Does he think I'm going to jump at a chance to get in with him, if he gives me one? He's mightily mistaken if he does. I don't want to know him."

"Silas," said his wife, making a wife's free version of her husband's words, and replying to their spirit rather than their letter, "I hope you never said a word to Mr. Corey to let him know the way you feel."

"I never mentioned his father to him!" roared the Colonel. "That's the way I feel about it!"

"Because it would spoil everything. I wouldn't have them think we cared the least thing in the world for their acquaintance. We shouldn't be a bit better off. We don't know the same people they do, and we don't care for the same kind of things."

Lapham was breathless with resentment of his wife's implication. "Don't I tell you," he gasped, "that I don't want to know them? Who began it? They're friends of yours if they're anybody's."

"They're distant acquaintances of mine," returned Mrs. Lapham quietly; "and this young Corey is a clerk of yours. And I want we should hold ourselves so that when they get ready to make the advances we can meet them half-way or not, just as we choose."

"That's what grinds me," cried her husband. "Why should we wait for them to make the advances? Why shouldn't we make 'em? Are they any better than we are? My note of hand would be worth ten times what Bromfield Corey's is on the street to-day. And I made MY money."

I haven't loafed my life away."

"Oh, it isn't what you've got, and it isn't what you've done exactly. It's what you are."

"Well, then, what's the difference?"

"None that really amounts to anything, or that need give you any trouble, if you don't think of it. But he's been all his life in society, and he knows just what to say and what to do, and he can talk about the things that society people like to talk about, and you--can't."

Lapham gave a furious snort. "And does that make him any better?"

"No. But it puts him where he can make the advances without demeaning himself, and it puts you where you can't. Now, look here, Silas Lapham! You understand this thing as well as I do. You know that I appreciate you, and that I'd sooner die than have you humble yourself to a living soul. But I'm not going to have you coming to me, and pretending that you can meet Bromfield Corey as an equal on his own ground. You can't. He's got a better education than you, and if he hasn't got more brains than you, he's got different. And he and his wife, and their fathers and grandfathers before 'em, have always had a high position, and you can't help it. If you want to know them, you've got to let them make the advances. If you don't, all well and good."

"I guess," said the chafed and vanquished Colonel, after a moment for swallowing the pill, "that they'd have been in a pretty fix if you'd waited to let them make the advances last summer."

"That was a different thing altogether. I didn't know who they were, or may be I should have waited. But all I say now is that if you've got young Corey into business with you, in hopes of our getting into society with his father, you better ship him at once. For I ain't going to have it on that basis."

"Who wants to have it on that basis?" retorted her husband.

"Nobody, if you don't," said Mrs. Lapham tranquilly.

Irene had come home with the shaving in her belt, unnoticed by her father, and unquestioned by her mother. But her sister saw it at once, and asked her what she was doing with it.

"Oh, nothing," said Irene, with a joyful smile

of self-betrayal, taking the shaving carefully out,
and laying it among the laces and ribbons in her drawer.

"Hadn't you better put it in water, 'Rene? It'll be all
wilted by morning," said Pen.

"You mean thing!" cried the happy girl. "It isn't a flower!"

"Oh, I thought it was a whole bouquet. Who gave it to you?"

"I shan't tell you," said Irene saucily.

"Oh, well, never mind. Did you know Mr. Corey had been
down here this afternoon, walking on the beach with me?"

"He wasn't--he wasn't at all! He was at the house with ME.
There! I've caught you fairly."

"Is that so?" drawled Penelope. "Then I never could
guess who gave you that precious shaving."

"No, you couldn't!" said Irene, flushing beautifully.

"And you may guess, and you may guess, and you may guess!"

With her lovely eyes she coaxed her sister to keep on
teasing her, and Penelope continued the comedy with the
patience that women have for such things.

"Well, I'm not going to try, if it's no use. But I
didn't know it had got to be the fashion to give shavings
instead of flowers. But there's some sense in it.
They can be used for kindlings when they get old, and you
can't do anything with old flowers. Perhaps he'll get
to sending 'em by the barrel."

Irene laughed for pleasure in this tormenting. "O Pen,
I want to tell you how it all happened."

"Oh, he DID give it to you, then? Well, I guess I don't
care to hear."

"You shall, and you've got to!" Irene ran and caught
her sister, who feigned to be going out of the room,
and pushed her into a chair. "There, now!" She pulled up
another chair, and hemmed her in with it. "He came over,
and sat down on the trestle alongside of me----"

"What? As close as you are to me now?"

"You wretch! I will GIVE it to you! No, at a proper distance.
And here was this shaving on the floor, that I'd been
poking with my parasol----"

"To hide your embarrassment."

"Pshaw! I wasn't a bit embarrassed. I was just as much at my ease! And then he asked me to let him hold the shaving down with his foot, while I went on with my poking. And I said yes he might----"

"What a bold girl! You said he might hold a shaving down for you?"

"And then--and then----" continued Irene, lifting her eyes absently, and losing herself in the beatific recollection, "and then----Oh yes! Then I asked him if he didn't like the smell of pine shavings. And then he picked it up, and said it smelt like a flower. And then he asked if he might offer it to me--just for a joke, you know. And I took it, and stuck it in my belt. And we had such a laugh! We got into a regular gale. And O Pen, what do you suppose he meant by it?" She suddenly caught herself to her sister's breast, and hid her burning face on her shoulder.

"Well, there used to be a book about the language of flowers. But I never knew much about the language of shavings, and I can't say exactly----"

"Oh, don't--DON'T, Pen!" and here Irene gave over laughing, and began to sob in her sister's arms.

"Why, 'Rene!" cried the elder girl.

"You KNOW he didn't mean anything. He doesn't care a bit about me. He hates me! He despises me! Oh, what shall I do?"

A trouble passed over the face of the sister as she silently comforted the child in her arms; then the drolling light came back into her eyes. "Well, 'Rene, YOU haven't got to do ANYthing. That's one advantage girls have got--if it IS an advantage. I'm not always sure."

Irene's tears turned to laughing again. When she lifted her head it was to look into the mirror confronting them, where her beauty showed all the more brilliant for the shower that had passed over it. She seemed to gather courage from the sight.

"It must be awful to have to DO," she said, smiling into her own face. "I don't see how they ever can."

"Some of 'em can't--especially when there's such a tearing beauty around."

"Oh, pshaw, Pen! you know that isn't so. You've got

a real pretty mouth, Pen," she added thoughtfully, surveying the feature in the glass, and then pouting her own lips for the sake of that effect on them.

"It's a useful mouth," Penelope admitted; "I don't believe I could get along without it now, I've had it so long."

"It's got such a funny expression--just the mate of the look in your eyes; as if you were just going to say something ridiculous. He said, the very first time he saw you, that he knew you were humorous."

"Is it possible?" must be so, if the Grand Mogul said it. Why didn't you tell me so before, and not let me keep on going round just like a common person?"

Irene laughed as if she liked to have her sister take his praises in that way rather than another.

"I've got such a stiff, prim kind of mouth," she said, drawing it down, and then looking anxiously at it.

"I hope you didn't put on that expression when he offered you the shaving. If you did, I don't believe he'll ever give you another splinter."

The severe mouth broke into a lovely laugh, and then pressed itself in a kiss against Penelope's cheek.

"There! Be done, you silly thing! I'm not going to have you accepting ME before I've offered myself, ANYWAY." She freed herself from her sister's embrace, and ran from her round the room.

Irene pursued her, in the need of hiding her face against her shoulder again. "O Pen! O Pen!" she cried.

The next day, at the first moment of finding herself alone with her eldest daughter, Mrs. Lapham asked, as if knowing that Penelope must have already made it subject of inquiry: "What was Irene doing with that shaving in her belt yesterday?"

"Oh, just some nonsense of hers with Mr. Corey. He gave it to her at the new house." Penelope did not choose to look up and meet her mother's grave glance.

"What do you think he meant by it?"

Penelope repeated Irene's account of the affair, and her mother listened without seeming to derive much encouragement from it.

"He doesn't seem like one to flirt with her," she said at last. Then, after a thoughtful pause: "Irene is as good a girl as ever breathed, and she's a perfect beauty. But I should hate the day when a daughter of mine was married for her beauty."

"You're safe as far as I'm concerned, mother."

Mrs. Lapham smiled ruefully. "She isn't really equal to him, Pen. I misdoubted that from the first, and it's been borne in upon me more and more ever since. She hasn't mind enough." "I didn't know that a man fell in love with a girl's intellect," said Penelope quietly.

"Oh no. He hasn't fallen in love with Irene at all. If he had, it wouldn't matter about the intellect."

Penelope let the self-contradiction pass.

"Perhaps he has, after all."

"No," said Mrs. Lapham. "She pleases him when he sees her. But he doesn't try to see her."

"He has no chance. You won't let father bring him here."

"He would find excuses to come without being brought, if he wished to come," said the mother. "But she isn't in his mind enough to make him. He goes away and doesn't think anything more about her. She's a child. She's a good child, and I shall always say it; but she's nothing but a child. No, she's got to forget him."

"Perhaps that won't be so easy."

"No, I presume not. And now your father has got the notion in his head, and he will move heaven and earth to bring it to pass. I can see that he's always thinking about it."

"The Colonel has a will of his own," observed the girl, rocking to and fro where she sat looking at her mother.

"I wish we had never met them!" cried Mrs. Lapham. "I wish we had never thought of building! I wish he had kept away from your father's business!"

"Well, it's too late now, mother," said the girl.

"Perhaps it isn't so bad as you think."

"Well, we must stand it, anyway," said Mrs. Lapham, with the grim antique Yankee submission.

"Oh yes, we've got to stand it," said Penelope,

with the quaint modern American fatalism.

X.

IT was late June, almost July, when Corey took up his life in Boston again, where the summer slips away so easily. If you go out of town early, it seems a very long summer when you come back in October; but if you stay, it passes swiftly, and, seen foreshortened in its flight, seems scarcely a month's length. It has its days of heat, when it is very hot, but for the most part it is cool, with baths of the east wind that seem to saturate the soul with delicious freshness. Then there are stretches of grey westerly weather, when the air is full of the sentiment of early autumn, and the frying, of the grasshopper in the blossomed weed of the vacant lots on the Back Bay is intershot with the carol of crickets; and the yellowing leaf on the long slope of Mt. Vernon Street smites the sauntering observer with tender melancholy. The caterpillar, gorged with the spoil of the lindens on Chestnut, and weaving his own shroud about him in his lodgment on the brick-work, records the passing of summer by mid-July; and if after that comes August, its breath is thick and short, and September is upon the sojourner before he has fairly had time to philosophise the character of the town out of season.

But it must have appeared that its most characteristic feature was the absence of everybody he knew. This was one of the things that commended Boston to Bromfield Corey during the summer; and if his son had any qualms about the life he had entered upon with such vigour, it must have been a relief to him that there was scarcely a soul left to wonder or pity. By the time people got back to town the fact of his connection with the mineral paint man would be an old story, heard afar off with different degrees of surprise, and considered with different degrees of indifference. A man has not reached the age of twenty-six in any community where he was born and reared without having had his capacity pretty well ascertained; and in Boston the analysis is conducted with an unsparing thoroughness which may fitly impress the un-Bostonian mind, darkened by the popular superstition that the Bostonians blindly admire one another. A man's qualities are sifted as closely in Boston as they doubtless were in Florence or Athens; and, if final mercy was shown in those cities because a man was, with all his limitations, an Athenian or Florentine, some abatement might as justly be made in Boston for like reason. Corey's powers had been gauged in college, and he had not given his world reason to think

very differently of him since he came out of college. He was rated as an energetic fellow, a little indefinite in aim, with the smallest amount of inspiration that can save a man from being commonplace. If he was not commonplace, it was through nothing remarkable in his mind, which was simply clear and practical, but through some combination of qualities of the heart that made men trust him, and women call him sweet--a word of theirs which conveys otherwise indefinable excellences. Some of the more nervous and excitable said that Tom Corey was as sweet as he could live; but this perhaps meant no more than the word alone. No man ever had a son less like him than Bromfield Corey. If Tom Corey had ever said a witty thing, no one could remember it; and yet the father had never said a witty thing to a more sympathetic listener than his own son. The clear mind which produced nothing but practical results reflected everything with charming lucidity; and it must have been this which endeared Tom Corey to every one who spoke ten words with him. In a city where people have good reason for liking to shine, a man who did not care to shine must be little short of universally acceptable without any other effort for popularity; and those who admired and enjoyed Bromfield Corey loved his son. Yet, when it came to accounting for Tom Corey, as it often did in a community where every one's generation is known to the remotest degrees of cousinship, they could not trace his sweetness to his mother, for neither Anna Bellingham nor any of her family, though they were so many blocks of Wenham ice for purity and rectangularity, had ever had any such savour; and, in fact, it was to his father, whose habit of talk wronged it in himself, that they had to turn for this quality of the son's. They traced to the mother the traits of practicality and common-sense in which he bordered upon the commonplace, and which, when they had dwelt upon them, made him seem hardly worth the close inquiry they had given him.

While the summer wore away he came and went methodically about his business, as if it had been the business of his life, sharing his father's bachelor liberty and solitude, and expecting with equal patience the return of his mother and sisters in the autumn. Once or twice he found time to run down to Mt. Desert and see them; and then he heard how the Philadelphia and New York people were getting in everywhere, and was given reason to regret the house at Nahant which he had urged to be sold. He came back and applied himself to his desk with a devotion that was exemplary rather than necessary; for Lapham made no difficulty about the brief absences which he asked, and set no term to the apprenticeship that Corey was serving in the office before setting off upon that mission to South America in the early winter, for which no date had yet been fixed.

The summer was a dull season for the paint as well as for everything else. Till things should brisk up, as Lapham said, in the fall, he was letting the new house take a great deal of his time. Aesthetic ideas had never been intelligibly presented to him before, and he found a delight in apprehending them that was very grateful to his imaginative architect. At the beginning, the architect had foreboded a series of mortifying defeats and disastrous victories in his encounters with his client; but he had never had a client who could be more reasonably led on from one outlay to another. It appeared that Lapham required but to understand or feel the beautiful effect intended, and he was ready to pay for it. His bull-headed pride was concerned in a thing which the architect made him see, and then he believed that he had seen it himself, perhaps conceived it. In some measure the architect seemed to share his delusion, and freely said that Lapham was very suggestive. Together they blocked out windows here, and bricked them up there; they changed doors and passages; pulled down cornices and replaced them with others of different design; experimented with costly devices of decoration, and went to extravagant lengths in novelties of finish. Mrs. Lapham, beginning with a woman's adventurousness in the unknown region, took fright at the reckless outlay at last, and refused to let her husband pass a certain limit. He tried to make her believe that a far-seeing economy dictated the expense; and that if he put the money into the house, he could get it out any time by selling it. She would not be persuaded.

"I don't want you should sell it. And you've put more money into it now than you'll ever get out again, unless you can find as big a goose to buy it, and that isn't likely. No, sir! You just stop at a hundred thousand, and don't you let him get you a cent beyond. Why, you're perfectly bewitched with that fellow! You've lost your head, Silas Lapham, and if you don't look out you'll lose your money too."

The Colonel laughed; he liked her to talk that way, and promised he would hold up a while.

"But there's no call to feel anxious, Pert. It's only a question what to do with the money. I can reinvest it; but I never had so much of it to spend before."

"Spend it, then," said his wife; "don't throw it away! And how came you to have so much more money than you know what to do with, Silas Lapham?" she added.

"Oh, I've made a very good thing in stocks lately."

"In stocks? When did you take up gambling for a living?"

"Gambling? Stuff! What gambling? Who said it was gambling?"

"You have; many a time."

"Oh yes, buying and selling on a margin. But this was a bona fide transaction. I bought at forty-three for an investment, and I sold at a hundred and seven; and the money passed both times."

"Well, you better let stocks alone," said his wife, with the conservatism of her sex. "Next time you'll buy at a hundred and seven and sell at forty three. Then where'll you be?"

"Left," admitted the Colonel.

"You better stick to paint a while yet." The Colonel enjoyed this too, and laughed again with the ease of a man who knows what he is about. A few days after that he came down to Nantasket with the radiant air which he wore when he had done a good thing in business and wanted his wife's sympathy. He did not say anything of what had happened till he was alone with her in their own room; but he was very gay the whole evening, and made several jokes which Penelope said nothing but very great prosperity could excuse: they all understood these moods of his.

"Well, what is it, Silas?" asked his wife when the time came. "Any more big-bugs wanting to go into the mineral paint business with you?"

"Something better than that."

"I could think of a good many better things," said his wife, with a sigh of latent bitterness. "What's this one?"

"I've had a visitor."

"Who?"

"Can't you guess?"

"I don't want to try. Who was it?"

"Rogers."

Mrs. Lapham sat down with her hands in her lap, and stared at the smile on her husband's face, where he sat facing her.

"I guess you wouldn't want to joke on that subject, Si," she said, a little hoarsely, "and you wouldn't grin

about it unless you had some good news. I don't know what the miracle is, but if you could tell quick----"

She stopped like one who can say no more.

"I will, Persis," said her husband, and with that awed tone in which he rarely spoke of anything but the virtues of his paint. "He came to borrow money of me, and I lent him it. That's the short of it. The long----"

"Go on," said his wife, with gentle patience.

"Well, Pert, I was never so much astonished in my life as I was to see that man come into my office. You might have knocked me down with--I don't know what."

"I don't wonder. Go on!"

"And he was as much embarrassed as I was. There we stood, gaping at each other, and I hadn't hardly sense enough to ask him to take a chair. I don't know just how we got at it. And I don't remember just how it was that he said he came to come to me. But he had got hold of a patent right that he wanted to go into on a large scale, and there he was wanting me to supply him the funds."

"Go on!" said Mrs. Lapham, with her voice further in her throat.

"I never felt the way you did about Rogers, but I know how you always did feel, and I guess I surprised him with my answer. He had brought along a lot of stock as security----"

"You didn't take it, Silas!" his wife flashed out.

"Yes, I did, though," said Lapham. "You wait. We settled our business, and then we went into the old thing, from the very start. And we talked it all over. And when we got through we shook hands. Well, I don't know when it's done me so much good to shake hands with anybody."

"And you told him--you owned up to him that you were in the wrong, Silas?"

"No, I didn't," returned the Colonel promptly; "for I wasn't. And before we got through, I guess he saw it the same as I did."

"Oh, no matter! so you had the chance to show how you felt."

"But I never felt that way," persisted the Colonel.

"I've lent him the money, and I've kept his stocks. And he got what he wanted out of me."

"Give him back his stocks!"

"No, I shan't. Rogers came to borrow. He didn't come to beg. You needn't be troubled about his stocks. They're going to come up in time; but just now they're so low down that no bank would take them as security, and I've got to hold them till they do rise. I hope you're satisfied now, Persis," said her husband; and he looked at her with the willingness to receive the reward of a good action which we all feel when we have performed one. "I lent him the money you kept me from spending on the house."

"Truly, Si? Well, I'm satisfied," said Mrs. Lapham, with a deep tremulous breath. "The Lord has been good to you, Silas," she continued solemnly. "You may laugh if you choose, and I don't know as I believe in his interfering a great deal; but I believe he's interfered this time; and I tell you, Silas, it ain't always he gives people a chance to make it up to others in this life. I've been afraid you'd die, Silas, before you got the chance; but he's let you live to make it up to Rogers."

"I'm glad to be let live," said Lapham stubbornly, "but I hadn't anything to make up to Milton K. Rogers. And if God has let me live for that----"

"Oh, say what you please, Si! Say what you please, now you've done it! I shan't stop you. You've taken the one spot--the one SPECK--off you that was ever there, and I'm satisfied."

"There wa'n't ever any speck there," Lapham held out, lapsing more and more into his vernacular; "and what I done I done for you, Persis."

"And I thank you for your own soul's sake, Silas."

"I guess my soul's all right," said Lapham.

"And I want you should promise me one thing more."

"Thought you said you were satisfied?"

"I am. But I want you should promise me this: that you won't let anything tempt you--anything!--to ever trouble Rogers for that money you lent him. No matter what happens--no matter if you lose it all. Do you promise?"

"Why, I don't ever EXPECT to press him for it. That's what I said to myself when I lent it. And of course I'm glad to have that old trouble healed up. I don't THINK

I ever did Rogers any wrong, and I never did think so; but if I DID do it--IF I did--I'm willing to call it square, if I never see a cent of my money back again."

"Well, that's all," said his wife.

They did not celebrate his reconciliation with his old enemy--for such they had always felt him to be since he ceased to be an ally--by any show of joy or affection. It was not in their tradition, as stoical for the woman as for the man, that they should kiss or embrace each other at such a moment. She was content to have told him that he had done his duty, and he was content with her saying that. But before she slept she found words to add that she always feared the selfish part he had acted toward Rogers had weakened him, and left him less able to overcome any temptation that might beset him; and that was one reason why she could never be easy about it. Now she should never fear for him again.

This time he did not explicitly deny her forgiving impeachment. "Well, it's all past and gone now, anyway; and I don't want you should think anything more about it."

He was man enough to take advantage of the high favour in which he stood when he went up to town, and to abuse it by bringing Corey down to supper. His wife could not help condoning the sin of disobedience in him at such a time. Penelope said that between the admiration she felt for the Colonel's boldness and her mother's forbearance, she was hardly in a state to entertain company that evening; but she did what she could.

Irene liked being talked to better than talking, and when her sister was by she was always, tacitly or explicitly, referring to her for confirmation of what she said. She was content to sit and look pretty as she looked at the young man and listened to her sister's drolling. She laughed and kept glancing at Corey to make sure that he was understanding her. When they went out on the veranda to see the moon on the water, Penelope led the way and Irene followed.

They did not look at the moonlight long. The young man perched on the rail of the veranda, and Irene took one of the red-painted rocking-chairs where she could conveniently look at him and at her sister, who sat leaning forward lazily and running on, as the phrase is. That low, crooning note of hers was delicious; her face, glimpsed now and then in the moonlight as she turned it or lifted it a little, had a fascination which kept his eye. Her talk was very unliterary, and its effect seemed hardly conscious. She was far from epigram in her funning.

She told of this trifle and that; she sketched the characters and looks of people who had interested her, and nothing seemed to have escaped her notice; she mimicked a little, but not much; she suggested, and then the affair represented itself as if without her agency. She did not laugh; when Corey stopped she made a soft cluck in her throat, as if she liked his being amused, and went on again.

The Colonel, left alone with his wife for the first time since he had come from town, made haste to take the word. "Well, Pert, I've arranged the whole thing with Rogers, and I hope you'll be satisfied to know that he owes me twenty thousand dollars, and that I've got security from him to the amount of a fourth of that, if I was to force his stocks to a sale."

"How came he to come down with you?" asked Mrs. Lapham.

"Who? Rogers?"

"Mr. Corey."

"Corey? Oh!" said Lapham, affecting not to have thought she could mean Corey. "He proposed it."

"Likely!" jeered his wife, but with perfect amiability.

"It's so," protested the Colonel. "We got talking about a matter just before I left, and he walked down to the boat with me; and then he said if I didn't mind he guessed he'd come along down and go back on the return boat. Of course I couldn't let him do that."

"It's well for you you couldn't."

"And I couldn't do less than bring him here to tea."

"Oh, certainly not."

"But he ain't going to stay the night--unless," faltered Lapham, "you want him to."

"Oh, of course, I want him to! I guess he'll stay, probably."

"Well, you know how crowded that last boat always is, and he can't get any other now."

Mrs. Lapham laughed at the simple wile. "I hope you'll be just as well satisfied, Si, if it turns out he doesn't want Irene after all."

"Pshaw, Persis! What are you always bringing that up for?"

pleaded the Colonel. Then he fell silent, and presently his rude, strong face was clouded with an unconscious frown.

"There!" cried his wife, startling him from his abstraction. "I see how you'd feel; and I hope that you'll remember who you've got to blame."

"I'll risk it," said Lapham, with the confidence of a man used to success.

From the veranda the sound of Penelope's lazy tone came through the closed windows, with joyous laughter from Irene and peals from Corey.

"Listen to that!" said her father within, swelling up with inexpressible satisfaction. "That girl can talk for twenty, right straight along. She's better than a circus any day. I wonder what she's up to now."

"Oh, she's probably getting off some of those yarns of hers, or telling about some people. She can't step out of the house without coming back with more things to talk about than most folks would bring back from Japan. There ain't a ridiculous person she's ever seen but what she's got something from them to make you laugh at; and I don't believe we've ever had anybody in the house since the girl could talk that she hain't got some saying from, or some trick that'll paint 'em out so't you can see 'em and hear 'em. Sometimes I want to stop her; but when she gets into one of her gales there ain't any standing up against her. I guess it 's lucky for Irene that she's got Pen there to help entertain her company. I can't ever feel down where Pen is."

"That's so," said the Colonel. "And I guess she's got about as much culture as any of them. Don't you?"

"She reads a great deal," admitted her mother. "She seems to be at it the whole while. I don't want she should injure her health, and sometimes I feel like snatchin' the books away from her. I don't know as it's good for a girl to read so much, anyway, especially novels. I don't want she should get notions."

"Oh, I guess Pen'll know how to take care of herself," said Lapham.

"She's got sense enough. But she ain't so practical as Irene. She's more up in the clouds--more of what you may call a dreamer. Irene's wide-awake every minute; and I declare, any one to see these two together when there's anything to be done, or any lead to be taken, would say Irene was the oldest, nine times out of ten.

It's only when they get to talking that you can see Pen's got twice as much brains."

"Well," said Lapham, tacitly granting this point, and leaning back in his chair in supreme content.

"Did you ever see much nicer girls anywhere?"

His wife laughed at his pride. "I presume they're as much swans as anybody's geese."

"No; but honestly, now!"

"Oh, they'll do; but don't you be silly, if you can help it, Si."

The young people came in, and Corey said it was time for his boat. Mrs. Lapham pressed him to stay, but he persisted, and he would not let the Colonel send him to the boat; he said he would rather walk. Outside, he pushed along toward the boat, which presently he could see lying at her landing in the bay, across the sandy tract to the left of the hotels. From time to time he almost stopped in his rapid walk, as a man does whose mind is in a pleasant tumult; and then he went forward at a swifter pace. "She's charming!" he said, and he thought he had spoken aloud. He found himself floundering about in the deep sand, wide of the path; he got back to it, and reached the boat just before she started. The clerk came to take his fare, and Corey looked radiantly up at him in his lantern-light, with a smile that he must have been wearing a long time; his cheek was stiff with it. Once some people who stood near him edged suddenly and fearfully away, and then he suspected himself of having laughed outright.

XI.

COREY put off his set smile with the help of a frown, of which he first became aware after reaching home, when his father asked--

"Anything gone wrong with your department of the fine arts to-day, Tom?"

"Oh no--no, sir," said the son, instantly relieving his brows from the strain upon them, and beaming again.

"But I was thinking whether you were not perhaps right in your impression that it might be well for you to make Colonel Lapham's acquaintance before a great while."

"Has he been suggesting it in any way?" asked Bromfield Corey,

laying aside his book and taking his lean knee between his clasped hands.

"Oh, not at all!" the young man hastened to reply.

"I was merely thinking whether it might not begin to seem intentional, your not doing it."

"Well, Tom, you know I have been leaving it altogether to you----"

"Oh, I understand, of course, and I didn't mean to urge anything of the kind----"

"You are so very much more of a Bostonian than I am, you know, that I've been waiting your motion in entire confidence that you would know just what to do, and when to do it. If I had been left quite to my own lawless impulses, I think I should have called upon your padrone at once. It seems to me that my father would have found some way of showing that he expected as much as that from people placed in the relation to him that we hold to Colonel Lapham."

"Do you think so?" asked the young man.

"Yes. But you know I don't pretend to be an authority in such matters. As far as they go, I am always in the hands of your mother and you children."

"I'm very sorry, sir. I had no idea I was over-ruling your judgment. I only wanted to spare you a formality that didn't seem quite a necessity yet. I'm very sorry," he said again, and this time with more comprehensive regret. "I shouldn't like to have seemed remiss with a man who has been so considerate of me. They are all very good-natured."

"I dare say," said Bromfield Corey, with the satisfaction which no elder can help feeling in disabling the judgment of a younger man, "that it won't be too late if I go down to your office with you to-morrow."

"No, no. I didn't imagine your doing it at once, sir."

"Ah, but nothing can prevent me from doing a thing when once I take the bit in my teeth," said the father, with the pleasure which men of weak will sometimes take in recognising their weakness. "How does their new house get on?"

"I believe they expect to be in it before New Year."

"Will they be a great addition to society?" asked Bromfield Corey, with unimpeachable seriousness.

"I don't quite know what you mean," returned the son, a little uneasily.

"Ah, I see that you do, Tom."

"No one can help feeling that they are all people of good sense and--right ideas."

"Oh, that won't do. If society took in all the people of right ideas and good sense, it would expand beyond the calling capacity of its most active members. Even your mother's social conscientiousness could not compass it. Society is a very different sort of thing from good sense and right ideas. It is based upon them, of course, but the airy, graceful, winning superstructure which we all know demands different qualities. Have your friends got these qualities,--which may be felt, but not defined?"

The son laughed. "To tell you the truth, sir, I don't think they have the most elemental ideas of society, as we understand it. I don't believe Mrs. Lapham ever gave a dinner."

"And with all that money!" sighed the father.

"I don't believe they have the habit of wine at table. I suspect that when they don't drink tea and coffee with their dinner, they drink ice-water."

"Horrible!" said Bromfield Corey.

"It appears to me that this defines them."

"Oh yes. There are people who give dinners, and who are not cognoscible. But people who have never yet given a dinner, how is society to assimilate them?"

"It digests a great many people," suggested the young man.

"Yes; but they have always brought some sort of sauce piquante with them. Now, as I understand you, these friends of yours have no such sauce."

"Oh, I don't know about that!" cried the son.

"Oh, rude, native flavours, I dare say. But that isn't what I mean. Well, then, they must spend. There is no other way for them to win their way to general regard. We must have the Colonel elected to the Ten O'clock Club, and he must put himself down in the list of those willing to entertain. Any one can manage a large supper. Yes, I see a gleam of hope for him in that direction."

In the morning Bromfield Corey asked his son whether he should find Lapham at his place as early as eleven.

"I think you might find him even earlier. I've never been there before him. I doubt if the porter is there much sooner."

"Well, suppose I go with you, then?"

"Why, if you like, sir," said the son, with some deprecation.

"Oh, the question is, will HE like?"

"I think he will, sir;" and the father could see that his son was very much pleased.

Lapham was reading an impatient course through the morning's news when they appeared at the door of his inner room. He looked up from the newspaper spread on the desk before him, and then he stood up, making an indifferent feint of not knowing that he knew Bromfield Corey by sight.

"Good morning, Colonel Lapham," said the son, and Lapham waited for him to say further, "I wish to introduce my father." Then he answered, "Good morning," and added rather sternly for the elder Corey, "How do you do, sir? Will you take a chair?" and he pushed him one.

They shook hands and sat down, and Lapham said to his subordinate, "Have a seat;" but young Corey remained standing, watching them in their observance of each other with an amusement which was a little uneasy. Lapham made his visitor speak first by waiting for him to do so.

"I'm glad to make your acquaintance, Colonel Lapham, and I ought to have come sooner to do so. My father in your place would have expected it of a man in my place at once, I believe. But I can't feel myself altogether a stranger as it is. I hope Mrs. Lapham is well? And your daughter?"

"Thank you," said Lapham, "they're quite well."

"They were very kind to my wife----"

"Oh, that was nothing!" cried Lapham. "There's nothing Mrs. Lapham likes better than a chance of that sort. Mrs. Corey and the young ladies well?"

"Very well, when I heard from them. They're out of town."

"Yes, so I understood," said Lapham, with a nod toward

the son. "I believe Mr. Corey, here, told Mrs. Lapham."
He leaned back in his chair, stiffly resolute to show that he was not incommoded by the exchange of these civilities.

"Yes," said Bromfield Corey. "Tom has had the pleasure which I hope for of seeing you all. I hope you're able to make him useful to you here?" Corey looked round Lapham's room vaguely, and then out at the clerks in their railed enclosure, where his eye finally rested on an extremely pretty girl, who was operating a type-writer.

"Well, sir," replied Lapham, softening for the first time with this approach to business, "I guess it will be our own fault if we don't. By the way, Corey," he added, to the younger man, as he gathered up some letters from his desk, "here's something in your line. Spanish or French, I guess."

"I'll run them over," said Corey, taking them to his desk.

His father made an offer to rise.

"Don't go," said Lapham, gesturing him down again.
"I just wanted to get him away a minute. I don't care to say it to his face,--I don't like the principle,--but since you ask me about it, I'd just as lief say that I've never had any young man take hold here equal to your son. I don't know as you care"

"You make me very happy," said Bromfield Corey.
"Very happy indeed. I've always had the idea that there was something in my son, if he could only find the way to work it out. And he seems to have gone into your business for the love of it."

"He went to work in the right way, sir! He told me about it. He looked into it. And that paint is a thing that will bear looking into."

"Oh yes. You might think he had invented it, if you heard him celebrating it."

"Is that so?" demanded Lapham, pleased through and through. "Well, there ain't any other way. You've got to believe in a thing before you can put any heart in it. Why, I had a partner in this thing once, along back just after the war, and he used to be always wanting to tinker with something else. 'Why,' says I, 'you've got the best thing in God's universe now. Why ain't you satisfied?' I had to get rid of him at last. I stuck to my paint, and that fellow's drifted round pretty much all over the whole country, whittling his capital down all the while, till here the other day I had to lend

him some money to start him new. No, sir, you've got to believe in a thing. And I believe in your son. And I don't mind telling you that, so far as he's gone, he's a success."

"That's very kind of you."

"No kindness about it. As I was saying the other day to a friend of mine, I've had many a fellow right out of the street that had to work hard all his life, and didn't begin to take hold like this son of yours."

Lapham expanded with profound self-satisfaction. As he probably conceived it, he had succeeded in praising, in a perfectly casual way, the supreme excellence of his paint, and his own sagacity and benevolence; and here he was sitting face to face with Bromfield Corey, praising his son to him, and receiving his grateful acknowledgments as if he were the father of some office-boy whom Lapham had given a place half but of charity.

"Yes, sir, when your son proposed to take hold here, I didn't have much faith in his ideas, that's the truth. But I had faith in him, and I saw that he meant business from the start. I could see it was born in him. Any one could."

"I'm afraid he didn't inherit it directly from me," said Bromfield Corey; "but it's in the blood, on both sides." "Well, sir, we can't help those things," said Lapham compassionately. "Some of us have got it, and some of us haven't. The idea is to make the most of what we HAVE got."

"Oh yes; that is the idea. By all means."

"And you can't ever tell what's in you till you try. Why, when I started this thing, I didn't more than half understand my own strength. I wouldn't have said, looking back, that I could have stood the wear and tear of what I've been through. But I developed as I went along. It's just like exercising your muscles in a gymnasium. You can lift twice or three times as much after you've been in training a month as you could before. And I can see that it's going to be just so with your son. His going through college won't hurt him,--he'll soon slough all that off,--and his bringing up won't; don't be anxious about it. I noticed in the army that some of the fellows that had the most go-ahead were fellows that hadn't ever had much more to do than girls before the war broke out. Your son will get along."

"Thank you," said Bromfield Corey, and smiled--whether

because his spirit was safe in the humility he sometimes boasted, or because it was triply armed in pride against anything the Colonel's kindness could do.

"He'll get along. He's a good business man, and he's a fine fellow. MUST you go?" asked Lapham, as Bromfield Corey now rose more resolutely. "Well, glad to see you. It was natural you should want to come and see what he was about, and I'm glad you did. I should have felt just so about it. Here is some of our stuff," he said, pointing out the various packages in his office, including the Persis Brand.

"Ah, that's very nice, very nice indeed," said his visitor. "That colour through the jar--very rich--delicious. Is Persis Brand a name?"

Lapham blushed.

"Well, Persis is. I don't know as you saw an interview that fellow published in the Events a while back?"

"What is the Events?"

"Well, it's that new paper Witherby's started."

"No," said Bromfield Corey, "I haven't seen it. I read The Daily," he explained; by which he meant The Daily Advertiser, the only daily there is in the old-fashioned Bostonian sense.

"He put a lot of stuff in my mouth that I never said," resumed Lapham; "but that's neither here nor there, so long as you haven't seen it. Here's the department your son's in," and he showed him the foreign labels. Then he took him out into the warehouse to see the large packages. At the head of the stairs, where his guest stopped to nod to his son and say "Good-bye, Tom," Lapham insisted upon going down to the lower door with him. "Well, call again," he said in hospitable dismissal. "I shall always be glad to see you. There ain't a great deal doing at this season." Bromfield Corey thanked him, and let his hand remain perforce in Lapham's lingering grasp. "If you ever like to ride after a good horse----" the Colonel began.

"Oh, no, no, no; thank you! The better the horse, the more I should be scared. Tom has told me of your driving!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the Colonel. "Well! every one to his taste. Well, good morning, sir!" and he suffered him to go.

"Who is the old man blowing to this morning?" asked Walker, the book-keeper, making an errand to Corey's desk.

"My father."

"Oh! That your father? I thought he must be one of your Italian correspondents that you'd been showing round, or Spanish."

In fact, as Bromfield Corey found his way at his leisurely pace up through the streets on which the prosperity of his native city was founded, hardly any figure could have looked more alien to its life. He glanced up and down the facades and through the crooked vistas like a stranger, and the swarthy fruiterer of whom he bought an apple, apparently for the pleasure of holding it in his hand, was not surprised that the purchase should be transacted in his own tongue.

Lapham walked back through the outer office to his own room without looking at Corey, and during the day he spoke to him only of business matters. That must have been his way of letting Corey see that he was not overcome by the honour of his father's visit. But he presented himself at Nantasket with the event so perceptibly on his mind that his wife asked: "Well, Silas, has Rogers been borrowing any more money of you? I don't want you should let that thing go too far. You've done enough."

"You needn't be afraid. I've seen the last of Rogers for one while." He hesitated, to give the fact an effect of no importance. "Corey's father called this morning."

"Did he?" said Mrs. Lapham, willing to humour his feint of indifference. "Did HE want to borrow some money too?" "Not as I understood." Lapham was smoking at great ease, and his wife had some crocheting on the other side of the lamp from him.

The girls were on the piazza looking at the moon on the water again. "There's no man in it to-night," Penelope said, and Irene laughed forlornly.

"What DID he want, then?" asked Mrs. Lapham.

"Oh, I don't know. Seemed to be just a friendly call. Said he ought to have come before."

Mrs. Lapham was silent a while. Then she said: "Well, I hope you're satisfied now."

Lapham rejected the sympathy too openly offered. "I don't know about being satisfied. I wa'n't in any

hurry to see him."

His wife permitted him this pretence also. "What sort of a person is he, anyway I"

"Well, not much like his son. There's no sort of business about him. I don't know just how you'd describe him. He's tall; and he's got white hair and a moustache; and his fingers are very long and limber. I couldn't help noticing them as he sat there with his hands on the top of his cane. Didn't seem to be dressed very much, and acted just like anybody. Didn't talk much. Guess I did most of the talking. Said he was glad I seemed to be getting along so well with his son. He asked after you and Irene; and he said he couldn't feel just like a stranger. Said you had been very kind to his wife. Of course I turned it off. Yes," said Lapham thoughtfully, with his hands resting on his knees, and his cigar between the fingers of his left hand, "I guess he meant to do the right thing, every way. Don't know as I ever saw a much pleasanter man. Dunno but what he's about the pleasantest man I ever did see." He was not letting his wife see in his averted face the struggle that revealed itself there--the struggle of stalwart achievement not to feel flattered at the notice of sterile elegance, not to be sneakingly glad of its amiability, but to stand up and look at it with eyes on the same level. God, who made us so much like himself, but out of the dust, alone knows when that struggle will end. The time had been when Lapham could not have imagined any worldly splendour which his dollars could not buy if he chose to spend them for it; but his wife's half discoveries, taking form again in his ignorance of the world, filled him with helpless misgiving. A cloudy vision of something unpurchasable, where he had supposed there was nothing, had cowed him in spite of the burly resistance of his pride.

"I don't see why he shouldn't be pleasant," said Mrs. Lapham. "He's never done anything else."

Lapham looked up consciously, with an uneasy laugh. "Pshaw, Persis! you never forget anything?"

"Oh, I've got more than that to remember. I suppose you asked him to ride after the mare?"

"Well," said Lapham, reddening guiltily, "he said he was afraid of a good horse."

"Then, of course, you hadn't asked him." Mrs. Lapham crocheted in silence, and her husband leaned back in his chair and smoked.

At last he said, "I'm going to push that house forward. They're loafing on it. There's no reason why we shouldn't be in it by Thanksgiving. I don't believe in moving in the dead of winter."

"We can wait till spring. We're very comfortable in the old place," answered his wife. Then she broke out on him: "What are you in such a hurry to get into that house for? Do you want to invite the Coreys to a house-warming?"

Lapham looked at her without speaking.

"Don't you suppose I can see through you I declare, Silas Lapham, if I didn't know different, I should say you were about the biggest fool! Don't you know ANYthing? Don't you know that it wouldn't do to ask those people to our house before they've asked us to theirs? They'd laugh in our faces!"

"I don't believe they'd laugh in our faces. What's the difference between our asking them and their asking us?" demanded the Colonel sulkily.

"Oh, well! If you don't see!"

"Well, I DON'T see. But I don't want to ask them to the house. I suppose, if I want to, I can invite him down to a fish dinner at Taft's."

Mrs. Lapham fell back in her chair, and let her work drop in her lap with that "Tckk!" in which her sex knows how to express utter contempt and despair.

"What's the matter?"

"Well, if you DO such a thing, Silas, I'll never speak to you again! It's no USE! It's NO use! I did think, after you'd behaved so well about Rogers, I might trust you a little. But I see I can't. I presume as long as you live you'll have to be nosed about like a perfect--I don't know what!"

"What are you making such a fuss about?" demanded Lapham, terribly crestfallen, but trying to pluck up a spirit.

"I haven't done anything yet. I can't ask your advice about anything any more without having you fly out. Confound it! I shall do as I please after this."

But as if he could not endure that contemptuous atmosphere, he got up, and his wife heard him in the dining-room pouring himself out a glass of ice-water, and then heard him mount the stairs to their room, and slam its door after him.

"Do you know what your father's wanting to do now?"
Mrs. Lapham asked her eldest daughter, who lounged into the parlour a moment with her wrap stringing from her arm, while the younger went straight to bed.
"He wants to invite Mr. Corey's father to a fish dinner at Taft's!"

Penelope was yawning with her hand on her mouth; she stopped, and, with a laugh of amused expectance, sank into a chair, her shoulders shrugged forward.

"Why! what in the world has put the Colonel up to that?"

"Put him up to it! There's that fellow, who ought have come to see him long ago, drops into his office this morning, and talks five minutes with him, and your father is flattered out of his five senses. He's crazy to get in with those people, and I shall have a perfect battle to keep him within bounds."

"Well, Persis, ma'am, you can't say but what you began it," said Penelope.

"Oh yes, I began it," confessed Mrs. Lapham. "Pen," she broke out, "what do you suppose he means by it?"

"Who? Mr. Corey's father? What does the Colonel think?"

"Oh, the Colonel!" cried Mrs. Lapham. She added tremulously: "Perhaps he IS right. He DID seem to take a fancy to her last summer, and now if he's called in that way "She left her daughter to distribute the pronouns aright, and resumed: "Of course, I should have said once that there wasn't any question about it. I should have said so last year; and I don't know what it is keeps me from saying so now. I suppose I know a little more about things than I did; and your father's being so bent on it sets me all in a twitter. He thinks his money can do everything. Well, I don't say but what it can, a good many. And 'Rene is as good a child as ever there was; and I don't see but what she's pretty-appearing enough to suit any one. She's pretty-behaved, too; and she IS the most capable girl. I presume young men don't care very much for such things nowadays; but there ain't a great many girls can go right into the kitchen, and make such a custard as she did yesterday. And look at the way she does, through the whole house! She can't seem to go into a room without the things fly right into their places. And if she had to do it to-morrow, she could make all her own dresses a great deal better than them we pay to do it. I don't say but what he's about as nice a fellow as ever stepped. But there! I'm ashamed of going on so."

"Well, mother," said the girl after a pause, in which she looked as if a little weary of the subject, "why do you worry about it? If it's to be it'll be, and if it isn't----"

"Yes, that's what I tell your father. But when it comes to myself, I see how hard it is for him to rest quiet. I'm afraid we shall all do something we'll repent of afterwards."

"Well, ma'am," said Penelope, "I don't intend to do anything wrong; but if I do, I promise not to be sorry for it. I'll go that far. And I think I wouldn't be sorry for it beforehand, if I were in your place, mother. Let the Colonel go on! He likes to manoeuvre, and he isn't going to hurt any one. The Corey family can take care of themselves, I guess."

She laughed in her throat, drawing down the corners of her mouth, and enjoying the resolution with which her mother tried to fling off the burden of her anxieties.

"Pen! I believe you're right. You always do see things in such a light! There! I don't care if he brings him down every day."

"Well, ma'am," said Pen, "I don't believe Rene would, either. She's just so indifferent!"

The Colonel slept badly that night, and in the morning Mrs. Lapham came to breakfast without him.

"Your father ain't well," she reported. "He's had one of his turns."

"I should have thought he had two or three of them," said Penelope, "by the stamping round I heard. Isn't he coming to breakfast?"

"Not just yet," said her mother. "He's asleep, and he'll be all right if he gets his nap out. I don't want you girls should make any great noise."

"Oh, we'll be quiet enough," returned Penelope.

"Well, I'm glad the Colonel isn't sojering. At first I thought he might be sojering." She broke into a laugh, and, struggling indolently with it, looked at her sister.

"You don't think it'll be necessary for anybody to come down from the office and take orders from him while he's laid up, do you, mother?" she inquired

"Pen!" cried Irene.

"He'll be well enough to go up on the ten o'clock boat," said the mother sharply.

"I think papa works too hard all through the summer.
Why don't you make him take a rest, mamma?" asked Irene.

"Oh, take a rest! The man slaves harder every year.
It used to be so that he'd take a little time off now and then;
but I declare, he hardly ever seems to breathe now away from
his office. And this year he says he doesn't intend to go
down to Lapham, except to see after the works for a few days.
I don't know what to do with the man any more! Seems
as if the more money he got, the more he wanted to get.
It scares me to think what would happen to him if he
lost it. I know one thing," concluded Mrs. Lapham.
"He shall not go back to the office to-day."

"Then he won't go up on the ten o'clock boat,"
Pen reminded her.

"No, he won't. You can just drive over to the hotel as soon
as you're through, girls, and telegraph that he's not well,
and won't be at the office till to-morrow. I'm not going
to have them send anybody down here to bother him."

"That's a blow," said Pen. "I didn't know but they
might send----" she looked demurely at her sister--"Dennis!"

"Mamma!" cried Irene.

"Well, I declare, there's no living with this family
any more," said Penelope.

"There, Pen, be done!" commanded her mother. But perhaps she
did not intend to forbid her teasing. It gave a pleasant
sort of reality to the affair that was in her mind,
and made what she wished appear not only possible but probable.

Lapham got up and lounged about, fretting and rebelling
as each boat departed without him, through the day;
before night he became very cross, in spite of the efforts
of the family to soothe him, and grumbled that he had been
kept from going up to town. "I might as well have gone
as not," he repeated, till his wife lost her patience.

"Well, you shall go to-morrow, Silas, if you have to be
carried to the boat."

"I declare," said Penelope, "the Colonel don't pet worth
a cent."

The six o'clock boat brought Corey. The girls were
sitting on the piazza, and Irene saw him first.

"O Pen!" she whispered, with her heart in her face;
and Penelope had no time for mockery before he was at

the steps.

"I hope Colonel Lapham isn't ill," he said, and they could hear their mother engaged in a moral contest with their father indoors.

"Go and put on your coat! I say you shall! It don't matter HOW he sees you at the office, shirt-sleeves or not. You're in a gentleman's house now--or you ought to be--and you shan't see company in your dressing-gown."

Penelope hurried in to subdue her mother's anger.

"Oh, he's very much better, thank you!" said Irene, speaking up loudly to drown the noise of the controversy.

"I'm glad of that," said Corey, and when she led him indoors the vanquished Colonel met his visitor in a double-breasted frock-coat, which he was still buttoning up. He could not persuade himself at once that Corey had not come upon some urgent business matter, and when he was clear that he had come out of civility, surprise mingled with his gratification that he should be the object of solicitude to the young man. In Lapham's circle of acquaintance they complained when they were sick, but they made no womanish inquiries after one another's health, and certainly paid no visits of sympathy till matters were serious. He would have enlarged upon the particulars of his indisposition if he had been allowed to do so; and after tea, which Corey took with them, he would have remained to entertain him if his wife had not sent him to bed. She followed him to see that he took some medicine she had prescribed for him, but she went first to Penelope's room, where she found the girl with a book in her hand, which she was not reading.

"You better go down," said the mother. "I've got to go to your father, and Irene is all alone with Mr. Corey; and I know she'll be on pins and needles without you're there to help make it go off."

"She'd better try to get along without me, mother," said Penelope soberly. "I can't always be with them."

"Well," replied Mrs. Lapham, "then I must. There'll be a perfect Quaker meeting down there."

"Oh, I guess 'Rene will find something to say if you leave her to herself. Or if she don't, HE must. It'll be all right for you to go down when you get ready; but I shan't go till toward the last. If he's coming here to see Irene--and I don't believe he's come on father's account--he wants to see her and not me.

If she can't interest him alone, perhaps he'd as well find it out now as any time. At any rate, I guess you'd better make the experiment. You'll know whether it's a success if he comes again."

"Well," said the mother, "may be you're right. I'll go down directly. It does seem as if he did mean something, after all."

Mrs. Lapham did not hasten to return to her guest. In her own girlhood it was supposed that if a young man seemed to be coming to see a girl, it was only common-sense to suppose that he wished to see her alone; and her life in town had left Mrs. Lapham's simple traditions in this respect unchanged. She did with her daughter as her mother would have done with her.

Where Penelope sat with her book, she heard the continuous murmur of voices below, and after a long interval she heard her mother descend. She did not read the open book that lay in her lap, though she kept her eyes fast on the print. Once she rose and almost shut the door, so that she could scarcely hear; then she opened it wide again with a self-disdainful air, and resolutely went back to her book, which again she did not read. But she remained in her room till it was nearly time for Corey to return to his boat.

When they were alone again, Irene made a feint of scolding her for leaving her to entertain Mr. Corey.

"Why! didn't you have a pleasant call?" asked Penelope.

Irene threw her arms round her. "Oh, it was a **SPLENDID** call! I didn't suppose I could make it go off so well. We talked nearly the whole time about you!"

"I don't think **THAT** was a very interesting subject."

"He kept asking about you. He asked everything. You don't know how much he thinks of you, Pen. O Pen! what do you think made him come? Do you think he really did come to see how papa was?" Irene buried her face in her sister's neck.

Penelope stood with her arms at her side, submitting. "Well," she said, "I don't think he did, altogether."

Irene, all glowing, released her. "Don't you--don't you **REALLY?** O Pen! don't you think he **IS** nice? Don't you think he's handsome? Don't you think I behaved horridly when we first met him this evening, not thanking him for coming? I know he thinks I've no manners. But it seemed

as if it would be thanking him for coming to see me. Ought I to have asked him to come again, when he said good-night? I didn't; I couldn't. Do you believe he'll think I don't want him to? You don't believe he would keep coming if he didn't--want to----"

"He hasn't kept coming a great deal, yet," suggested Penelope.

"No; I know he hasn't. But if he--if he should?"

"Then I should think he wanted to."

"Oh, would you--WOULD you? Oh, how good you always are, Pen! And you always say what you think. I wish there was some one coming to see you too. That's all that I don't like about it. Perhaps----He was telling about his friend there in Texas----"

"Well," said Penelope, "his friend couldn't call often from Texas. You needn't ask Mr. Corey to trouble about me, 'Rene. I think I can manage to worry along, if you're satisfied."

"Oh, I AM, Pen. When do you suppose he'll come again?" Irene pushed some of Penelope's things aside on the dressing-case, to rest her elbow and talk at ease. Penelope came up and put them back.

"Well, not to-night," she said; "and if that's what you're sitting up for----"

Irene caught her round the neck again, and ran out of the room.

The Colonel was packed off on the eight o'clock boat the next morning; but his recovery did not prevent Corey from repeating his visit in a week. This time Irene came radiantly up to Penelope's room, where she had again withdrawn herself. "You must come down, Pen," she said. "He's asked if you're not well, and mamma says you've got to come."

After that Penelope helped Irene through with her calls, and talked them over with her far into the night after Corey was gone. But when the impatient curiosity of her mother pressed her for some opinion of the affair, she said, "You know as much as I do, mother."

"Don't he ever say anything to you about her--praise her up, any?"

"He's never mentioned Irene to me."

"He hasn't to me, either," said Mrs. Lapham, with a sigh of trouble. "Then what makes him keep coming?"

"I can't tell you. One thing, he says there isn't a house open in Boston where he's acquainted. Wait till some of his friends get back, and then if he keeps coming, it'll be time to inquire."

"Well!" said the mother; but as the weeks passed she was less and less able to attribute Corey's visits to his loneliness in town, and turned to her husband for comfort.

"Silas, I don't know as we ought to let young Corey keep coming so. I don't quite like it, with all his family away."

"He's of age," said the Colonel. "He can go where he pleases. It don't matter whether his family's here or not."

"Yes, but if they don't want he should come? Should you feel just right about letting him?"

"How're you going to stop him? I swear, Persis, I don't know what's got over you! What is it? You didn't use to be so. But to hear you talk, you'd think those Coreys were too good for this world, and we wa'n't fit for 'em to walk on."

"I'm not going to have 'em say we took an advantage of their being away and tolled him on."

"I should like to HEAR 'em say it!" cried Lapham.
"Or anybody!"

"Well," said his wife, relinquishing this point of anxiety, "I can't make out whether he cares anything for her or not. And Pen can't tell either; or else she won't."

"Oh, I guess he cares for her, fast enough," said the Colonel.

"I can't make out that he's said or done the first thing to show it."

"Well, I was better than a year getting my courage up."

"Oh, that was different," said Mrs. Lapham, in contemptuous dismissal of the comparison, and yet with a certain fondness. "I guess, if he cared for her, a fellow in his position wouldn't be long getting up his courage to speak to Irene."

Lapham brought his fist down on the table between them.

"Look here, Persis! Once for all, now, don't you ever let me hear you say anything like that again! I'm worth nigh on to a million, and I've made it every cent myself;

and my girls are the equals of anybody, I don't care who it is. He ain't the fellow to take on any airs; but if he ever tries it with me, I'll send him to the right about mighty quick. I'll have a talk with him, if----"

"No, no; don't do that!" implored his wife. "I didn't mean anything. I don't know as I meant ANYthing. He's just as unassuming as he can be, and I think Irene's a match for anybody. You just let things go on. It'll be all right. You never can tell how it is with young people. Perhaps SHE'S offish. Now you ain't--you ain't going to say anything?"

Lapham suffered himself to be persuaded, the more easily, no doubt, because after his explosion he must have perceived that his pride itself stood in the way of what his pride had threatened. He contented himself with his wife's promise that she would never again present that offensive view of the case, and she did not remain without a certain support in his sturdy self-assertion.

XII.

MRS. COREY returned with her daughters in the early days of October, having passed three or four weeks at Intervale after leaving Bar Harbour. They were somewhat browner than they were when they left town in June, but they were not otherwise changed. Lily, the elder of the girls, had brought back a number of studies of kelp and toadstools, with accessory rocks and rotten logs, which she would never finish up and never show any one, knowing the slightness of their merit. Nanny, the younger, had read a great many novels with a keen sense of their inaccuracy as representations of life, and had seen a great deal of life with a sad regret for its difference from fiction. They were both nice girls, accomplished, well-dressed of course, and well enough looking; but they had met no one at the seaside or the mountains whom their taste would allow to influence their fate, and they had come home to the occupations they had left, with no hopes and no fears to distract them.

In the absence of these they were fitted to take the more vivid interest in their brother's affairs, which they could see weighed upon their mother's mind after the first hours of greeting.

"Oh, it seems to have been going on, and your father has never written a word about it," she said, shaking her head.

"What good would it have done?" asked Nanny, who was little and fair, with rings of light hair that filled a bonnet-front very prettily; she looked best in a bonnet. "It would only have worried you. He could not have stopped Tom; you couldn't, when you came home to do it."

"I dare say papa didn't know much about it," suggested Lily. She was a tall, lean, dark girl, who looked as if she were not quite warm enough, and whom you always associated with wraps of different aesthetic effect after you had once seen her.

It is a serious matter always to the women of his family when a young man gives them cause to suspect that he is interested in some other woman. A son-in-law or brother-in-law does not enter the family; he need not be caressed or made anything of; but the son's or brother's wife has a claim upon his mother and sisters which they cannot deny. Some convention of their sex obliges them to show her affection, to like or to seem to like her, to take her to their intimacy, however odious she may be to them. With the Coreys it was something more than an affair of sentiment. They were by no means poor, and they were not dependent money-wise upon Tom Corey; but the mother had come, without knowing it, to rely upon his sense, his advice in everything, and the sisters, seeing him hitherto so indifferent to girls, had insensibly grown to regard him as altogether their own till he should be released, not by his marriage, but by theirs, an event which had not approached with the lapse of time. Some kinds of girls--they believed that they could readily have chosen a kind--might have taken him without taking him from them; but this generosity could not be hoped for in such a girl as Miss Lapham.

"Perhaps," urged their mother, "it would not be so bad. She seemed an affectionate little thing with her mother, without a great deal of character though she was so capable about some things."

"Oh, she'll be an affectionate little thing with Tom too, you may be sure," said Nanny. "And that characterless capability becomes the most in tense narrow-mindedness. She'll think we were against her from the beginning."

"She has no cause for that," Lily interposed, "and we shall not give her any."

"Yes, we shall," retorted Nanny. "We can't help it; and if we can't, her own ignorance would be cause enough."

"I can't feel that she's altogether ignorant," said Mrs. Corey justly.

"Of course she can read and write," admitted Nanny.

"I can't imagine what he finds to talk about with her," said Lily.

"Oh, THAT'S very simple," returned her sister.

"They talk about themselves, with occasional references to each other. I have heard people 'going on' on the hotel piazzas. She's embroidering, or knitting, or tatting, or something of that kind; and he says she seems quite devoted to needlework, and she says, yes, she has a perfect passion for it, and everybody laughs at her for it; but she can't help it, she always was so from a child, and supposes she always shall be,--with remote and minute particulars. And she ends by saying that perhaps he does not like people to tat, or knit, or embroider, or whatever. And he says, oh, yes, he does; what could make her think such a thing? but for his part he likes boating rather better, or if you're in the woods camping. Then she lets him take up one corner of her work, and perhaps touch her fingers; and that encourages him to say that he supposes nothing could induce her to drop her work long enough to go down on the rocks, or out among the huckleberry bushes; and she puts her head on one side, and says she doesn't know really. And then they go, and he lies at her feet on the rocks, or picks huckleberries and drops them in her lap, and they go on talking about themselves, and comparing notes to see how they differ from each other. And----"

"That will do, Nanny," said her mother.

Lily smiled autumnally. "Oh, disgusting!"

"Disgusting? Not at all!" protested her sister.

"It's very amusing when you see it, and when you do it----"

"It's always a mystery what people see in each other," observed Mrs. Corey severely.

"Yes," Nanny admitted, "but I don't know that there is much comfort for us in the application." "No, there isn't," said her mother.

"The most that we can do is to hope for the best till we know the worst. Of course we shall make the best of the worst when it comes."

"Yes, and perhaps it would not be so very bad.

I was saying to your father when I was here in July that those things can always be managed. You must face

them as if they were nothing out of the way, and try not to give any cause for bitterness among ourselves."

"That's true. But I don't believe in too much resignation beforehand. It amounts to concession," said Nanny.

"Of course we should oppose it in all proper ways," returned her mother.

Lily had ceased to discuss the matter. In virtue of her artistic temperament, she was expected not to be very practical. It was her mother and her sister who managed, submitting to the advice and consent of Corey what they intended to do.

"Your father wrote me that he had called on Colonel Lapham at his place of business," said Mrs. Corey, seizing her first chance of approaching the subject with her son.

"Yes," said Corey. "A dinner was father's idea, but he came down to a call, at my suggestion."

"Oh," said Mrs. Corey, in a tone of relief, as if the statement threw a new light on the fact that Corey had suggested the visit. "He said so little about it in his letter that I didn't know just how it came about."

"I thought it was right they should meet," explained the son, "and so did father. I was glad that I suggested it, afterward; it was extremely gratifying to Colonel Lapham."

"Oh, it was quite right in every way. I suppose you have seen something of the family during the summer."

"Yes, a good deal. I've been down at Nantasket rather often."

Mrs. Corey let her eyes droop. Then she asked: "Are they well?"

"Yes, except Lapham himself, now and then. I went down once or twice to see him. He hasn't given himself any vacation this summer; he has such a passion for his business that I fancy he finds it hard being away from it at any time, and he's made his new house an excuse for staying" "Oh yes, his house! Is it to be something fine?"

"Yes; it's a beautiful house. Seymour is doing it."

"Then, of course, it will be very handsome. I suppose the young ladies are very much taken up with it; and Mrs. Lapham."

"Mrs. Lapham, yes. I don't think the young ladies care so much about it."

"It must be for them. Aren't they ambitious?"
asked Mrs. Corey, delicately feeling her way.

Her son thought a while. Then he answered with a smile--

"No, I don't really think they are. They are unambitious,
I should say." Mrs. Corey permitted herself a long breath.
But her son added, "It's the parents who are ambitious
for them," and her respiration became shorter again.

"Yes," she said.

"They're very simple, nice girls," pursued Corey.
"I think you'll like the elder, when you come to know her."

When you come to know her. The words implied an expectation
that the two families were to be better acquainted.

"Then she is more intellectual than her sister?"
Mrs. Corey ventured.

"Intellectual?" repeated her son. "No; that isn't
the word, quite. Though she certainly has more mind."

"The younger seemed very sensible."

"Oh, sensible, yes. And as practical as she's pretty.
She can do all sorts of things, and likes to be doing them.
Don't you think she's an extraordinary beauty?"

"Yes--yes, she is," said Mrs. Corey, at some cost.

"She's good, too," said Corey, "and perfectly innocent
and transparent. I think you will like her the better
the more you know her."

"I thought her very nice from the beginning," said the
mother heroically; and then nature asserted itself in her.
"But I should be afraid that she might perhaps be a
little bit tiresome at last; her range of ideas seemed
so extremely limited."

"Yes, that's what I was afraid of. But, as a matter of fact,
she isn't. She interests you by her very limitations.
You can see the working of her mind, like that of a child.
She isn't at all conscious even of her beauty."

"I don't believe young men can tell whether girls
are conscious or not," said Mrs. Corey. "But I am not
saying the Miss Laphams are not----" Her son sat musing,
with an inattentive smile on his face. "What is it?"

"Oh! nothing. I was thinking of Miss Lapham and something she was saying. She's very droll, you know."

"The elder sister? Yes, you told me that. Can you see the workings of her mind too?"

"No; she's everything that's unexpected." Corey fell into another reverie, and smiled again; but he did not offer to explain what amused him, and his mother would not ask.

"I don't know what to make of his admiring the girl so frankly," she said afterward to her husband. "That couldn't come naturally till after he had spoken to her, and I feel sure that he hasn't yet."

"You women haven't risen yet--it's an evidence of the backwardness of your sex--to a conception of the Bismarck idea in diplomacy. If a man praises one woman, you still think he's in love with another. Do you mean that because Tom didn't praise the elder sister so much, he HAS spoken to HER?"

Mrs. Corey refused the consequence, saying that it did not follow. "Besides, he did praise her."

"You ought to be glad that matters are in such good shape, then. At any rate, you can do absolutely nothing."

"Oh! I know it," sighed Mrs. Corey. "I wish Tom would be a little opener with me."

"He's as open as it's in the nature of an American-born son to be with his parents. I dare say if you'd asked him plumply what he meant in regard to the young lady, he would have told you--if he knew."

"Why, don't you think he does know, Bromfield?"

"I'm not at all sure he does. You women think that because a young man dangles after a girl, or girls, he's attached to them. It doesn't at all follow. He dangles because he must, and doesn't know what to do with his time, and because they seem to like it. I dare say that Tom has dangled a good deal in this instance because there was nobody else in town."

"Do you really think so?"

"I throw out the suggestion. And it strikes me that a young lady couldn't do better than stay in or near Boston during the summer. Most of the young men are here, kept by business through the week, with evenings available only on the spot, or a few miles off. What was the

proportion of the sexes at the seashore and the mountains?"

"Oh, twenty girls at least for even an excuse of a man.
It's shameful."

"You see, I am right in one part of my theory.
Why shouldn't I be right in the rest?"

"I wish you were. And yet I can't say that I do.
Those things are very serious with girls. I shouldn't
like Tom to have been going to see those people if he
meant nothing by it."

"And you wouldn't like it if he did. You are difficult,
my dear." Her husband pulled an open newspaper toward him
from the table.

"I feel that it wouldn't be at all like him to do so,"
said Mrs. Corey, going on to entangle herself in her words,
as women often do when their ideas are perfectly clear.
"Don't go to reading, please, Bromfield! I am really
worried about this matter I must know how much it means.
I can't let it go on so. I don't see how you can rest easy
without knowing."

"I don't in the least know what's going to become of me
when I die; and yet I sleep well," replied Bromfield Corey,
putting his newspaper aside.

"Ah! but this is a very different thing."

"So much more serious? Well, what can you do? We had this
out when you were here in the summer, and you agreed
with me then that we could do nothing. The situation
hasn't changed at all."

"Yes, it has; it has continued the same," said Mrs. Corey,
again expressing the fact by a contradiction in terms.
"I think I must ask Tom outright."

"You know you can't do that, my dear."

"Then why doesn't he tell us?"

"Ah, that's what HE can't do, if he's making love to Miss
Irene--that's her name, I believe--on the American plan.
He will tell us after he has told HER. That was the way I did.
Don't ignore our own youth, Anna. It was a long while ago,
I'll admit."

"It was very different," said Mrs. Corey, a little shaken.

"I don't see how. I dare say Mamma Lapham knows whether

Tom is in love with her daughter or not; and no doubt Papa Lapham knows it at second hand. But we shall not know it until the girl herself does. Depend upon that. Your mother knew, and she told your father; but my poor father knew nothing about it till we were engaged; and I had been hanging about--dangling, as you call it---"

"No, no; YOU called it that."

"Was it I?--for a year or more."

The wife could not refuse to be a little consoled by the image of her young love which the words conjured up, however little she liked its relation to her son's interest in Irene Lapham. She smiled pensively. "Then you think it hasn't come to an understanding with them yet?"

"An understanding? Oh, probably."

"An explanation, then?"

"The only logical inference from what we've been saying is that it hasn't. But I don't ask you to accept it on that account. May I read now, my dear?"

"Yes, you may read now," said Mrs. Corey, with one of those sighs which perhaps express a feminine sense of the unsatisfactoriness of husbands in general, rather than a personal discontent with her own.

"Thank you, my dear; then I think I'll smoke too," said Bromfield Corey, lighting a cigar.

She left him in peace, and she made no further attempt upon her son's confidence. But she was not inactive for that reason. She did not, of course, admit to herself, and far less to others, the motive with which she went to pay an early visit to the Laphams, who had now come up from Nantasket to Nankeen Square. She said to her daughters that she had always been a little ashamed of using her acquaintance with them to get money for her charity, and then seeming to drop it. Besides, it seemed to her that she ought somehow to recognise the business relation that Tom had formed with the father; they must not think that his family disapproved of what he had done. "Yes, business is business," said Nanny, with a laugh. "Do you wish us to go with you again?"

"No; I will go alone this time," replied the mother with dignity.

Her coupe now found its way to Nankeen Square without difficulty, and she sent up a card, which Mrs. Lapham

received in the presence of her daughter Penelope.

"I presume I've got to see her," she gasped.

"Well, don't look so guilty, mother," joked the girl;
"you haven't been doing anything so VERY wrong."

"It seems as if I HAD. I don't know what's come over me. I wasn't afraid of the woman before, but now I don't seem to feel as if I could look her in the face. He's been coming here of his own accord, and I fought against his coming long enough, goodness knows. I didn't want him to come. And as far forth as that goes, we're as respectable as they are; and your father's got twice their money, any day. We've no need to go begging for their favour. I guess they were glad enough to get him in with your father."

"Yes, those are all good points, mother," said the girl;
"and if you keep saying them over, and count a hundred every time before you speak, I guess you'll worry through."

Mrs. Lapham had been fussing distractedly with her hair and ribbons, in preparation for her encounter with Mrs. Corey. She now drew in a long quivering breath, stared at her daughter without seeing her, and hurried downstairs. It was true that when she met Mrs. Corey before she had not been awed by her; but since then she had learned at least her own ignorance of the world, and she had talked over the things she had misconceived and the things she had shrewdly guessed so much that she could not meet her on the former footing of equality. In spite of as brave a spirit and as good a conscience as woman need have, Mrs. Lapham cringed inwardly, and tremulously wondered what her visitor had come for. She turned from pale to red, and was hardly coherent in her greetings; she did not know how they got to where Mrs. Corey was saying exactly the right things about her son's interest and satisfaction in his new business, and keeping her eyes fixed on Mrs. Lapham's, reading her uneasiness there, and making her feel, in spite of her indignant innocence, that she had taken a base advantage of her in her absence to get her son away from her and marry him to Irene. Then, presently, while this was painfully revolving itself in Mrs. Lapham's mind, she was aware of Mrs. Corey's asking if she was not to have the pleasure of seeing Miss Irene.

"No; she's out, just now," said Mrs. Lapham. "I don't know just when she'll be in. She went to get a book." And here she turned red again, knowing that Irene had gone to get the book because it was one that Corey had spoken of.

"Oh! I'm sorry," said Mrs. Corey. "I had hoped to see her. And your other daughter, whom I never met?"

"Penelope?" asked Mrs. Lapham, eased a little. "She is at home. I will go and call her." The Laphams had not yet thought of spending their superfluity on servants who could be rung for; they kept two girls and a man to look after the furnace, as they had for the last ten years. If Mrs. Lapham had rung in the parlour, her second girl would have gone to the street door to see who was there. She went upstairs for Penelope herself, and the girl, after some rebellious derision, returned with her.

Mrs. Corey took account of her, as Penelope withdrew to the other side of the room after their introduction, and sat down, indolently submissive on the surface to the tests to be applied, and following Mrs. Corey's lead of the conversation in her odd drawl.

"You young ladies will be glad to be getting into your new house," she said politely.

"I don't know," said Penelope. "We're so used to this one."

Mrs. Corey looked a little baffled, but she said sympathetically, "Of course, you will be sorry to leave your old home."

Mrs. Lapham could not help putting in on behalf of her daughters: "I guess if it was left to the girls to say, we shouldn't leave it at all."

"Oh, indeed!" said Mrs. Corey; "are they so much attached? But I can quite understand it. My children would be heart-broken too if we were to leave the old place." She turned to Penelope. "But you must think of the lovely new house, and the beautiful position."

"Yes, I suppose we shall get used to them too," said Penelope, in response to this didactic consolation.

"Oh, I could even imagine your getting very fond of them," pursued Mrs. Corey patronisingly. "My son has told me of the lovely outlook you're to have over the water. He thinks you have such a beautiful house. I believe he had the pleasure of meeting you all there when he first came home."

"Yes, I think he was our first visitor."

"He is a great admirer of your house," said Mrs. Corey, keeping her eyes very sharply, however politely, on Penelope's face, as if to surprise there the secret of any other great admiration of her son's that might

helplessly show itself.

"Yes," said the girl, "he's been there several times with father; and he wouldn't be allowed to overlook any of its good points."

Her mother took a little more courage from her daughter's tranquillity.

"The girls make such fun of their father's excitement about his building, and the way he talks it into everybody."

"Oh, indeed!" said Mrs. Corey, with civil misunderstanding and inquiry.

Penelope flushed, and her mother went on: "I tell him he's more of a child about it than any of them."

"Young people are very philosophical nowadays," remarked Mrs. Corey.

"Yes, indeed," said Mrs. Lapham. "I tell them they've always had everything, so that nothing's a surprise to them. It was different with us in our young days."

"Yes," said Mrs. Corey, without assenting.

"I mean the Colonel and myself," explained Mrs. Lapham.

"Oh yes--yes!" said Mrs. Corey.

"I'm sure," the former went on, rather helplessly, "we had to work hard enough for everything we got. And so we appreciated it."

"So many things were not done for young people then," said Mrs. Corey, not recognising the early-hardships standpoint of Mrs. Lapham. "But I don't know that they are always the better for it now," she added vaguely, but with the satisfaction we all feel in uttering a just commonplace.

"It's rather hard living up to blessings that you've always had," said Penelope.

"Yes," replied Mrs. Corey distractedly, and coming back to her slowly from the virtuous distance to which she had absented herself. She looked at the girl searchingly again, as if to determine whether this were a touch of the drolling her son had spoken of. But she only added: "You will enjoy the sunsets on the Back Bay so much."
"Well, not unless they're new ones," said Penelope.
"I don't believe I could promise to enjoy any sunsets that I was used to, a great deal."

Mrs. Corey looked at her with misgiving, hardening into dislike. "No," she breathed vaguely. "My son spoke of the fine effect of the lights about the hotel from your cottage at Nantasket," she said to Mrs. Lapham.

"Yes, they're splendid!" exclaimed that lady. "I guess the girls went down every night with him to see them from the rocks."

"Yes," said Mrs. Corey, a little dryly; and she permitted herself to add: "He spoke of those rocks. I suppose both you young ladies spend a great deal of your time on them when you're there. At Nahant my children were constantly on them."

"Irene likes the rocks," said Penelope. "I don't care much about them,--especially at night."

"Oh, indeed! I suppose you find it quite as well looking at the lights comfortably from the veranda."

"No; you can't see them from the house."

"Oh," said Mrs. Corey. After a perceptible pause, she turned to Mrs. Lapham. "I don't know what my son would have done for a breath of sea air this summer, if you had not allowed him to come to Nantasket. He wasn't willing to leave his business long enough to go anywhere else."

"Yes, he's a born business man," responded Mrs. Lapham enthusiastically. "If it's born in you, it's bound to come out. That's what the Colonel is always saying about Mr. Corey. He says it's born in him to be a business man, and he can't help it." She recurred to Corey gladly because she felt that she had not said enough of him when his mother first spoke of his connection with the business. "I don't believe," she went on excitedly, "that Colonel Lapham has ever had anybody with him that he thought more of."

"You have all been very kind to my son," said Mrs. Corey in acknowledgment, and stiffly bowing a little, "and we feel greatly indebted to you. Very much so." At these grateful expressions Mrs. Lapham reddened once more, and murmured that it had been very pleasant to them, she was sure. She glanced at her daughter for support, but Penelope was looking at Mrs. Corey, who doubtless saw her from the corner of her eyes, though she went on speaking to her mother.

"I was sorry to hear from him that Mr.--Colonel?--Lapham had not been quite well this summer. I hope he's better now?"

"Oh yes, indeed," replied Mrs. Lapham; "he's all right now. He's hardly ever been sick, and he don't know how to take care of himself. That's all. We don't any of us; we're all so well."

"Health is a great blessing," sighed Mrs. Corey.

"Yes, so it is. How is your oldest daughter?" inquired Mrs. Lapham. "Is she as delicate as ever?"

"She seems to be rather better since we returned." And now Mrs. Corey, as if forced to the point, said bunglingly that the young ladies had wished to come with her, but had been detained. She based her statement upon Nanny's sarcastic demand; and, perhaps seeing it topple a little, she rose hastily, to get away from its fall.

"But we shall hope for some--some other occasion," she said vaguely, and she put on a parting smile, and shook hands with Mrs. Lapham and Penelope, and then, after some lingering commonplaces, got herself out of the house.

Penelope and her mother were still looking at each other, and trying to grapple with the effect or purport of the visit, when Irene burst in upon them from the outside.

"O mamma! wasn't that Mrs. Corey's carriage just drove away?"

Penelope answered with her laugh. "Yes! You've just missed the most delightful call, 'Rene. So easy and pleasant every way. Not a bit stiff! Mrs. Corey was so friendly! She didn't make one feel at all as if she'd bought me, and thought she'd given too much; and mother held up her head as if she were all wool and a yard wide, and she would just like to have anybody deny it."

In a few touches of mimicry she dashed off a sketch of the scene: her mother's trepidation, and Mrs. Corey's well-bred repose and polite scrutiny of them both. She ended by showing how she herself had sat huddled up in a dark corner, mute with fear.

"If she came to make us say and do the wrong thing, she must have gone away happy; and it's a pity you weren't here to help, Irene. I don't know that I aimed to make a bad impression, but I guess I succeeded--even beyond my deserts." She laughed; then suddenly she flashed out in fierce earnest. "If I missed doing anything that could make me as hateful to her as she made herself to me----" She checked herself, and began to laugh. Her laugh broke, and the tears started into her eyes; she ran out of the room, and up the stairs.

"What--what does it mean?" asked Irene in a daze.

Mrs. Lapham was still in the chilly torpor to which Mrs. Corey's call had reduced her. Penelope's vehemence did not rouse her. She only shook her head absently, and said, "I don't know."

"Why should Pen care what impression she made? I didn't suppose it would make any difference to her whether Mrs. Corey liked her or not."

"I didn't, either. But I could see that she was just as nervous as she could be, every minute of the time. I guess she didn't like Mrs. Corey any too well from the start, and she couldn't seem to act like herself."

"Tell me about it, mamma," said Irene, dropping into a chair.

Mrs. Corey described the interview to her husband on her return home. "Well, and what are your inferences?" he asked.

"They were extremely embarrassed and excited--that is, the mother. I don't wish to do her injustice, but she certainly behaved consciously."

"You made her feel so, I dare say, Anna. I can imagine how terrible you must have been in the character of an accusing spirit, too lady-like to say anything. What did you hint?"

"I hinted nothing," said Mrs. Corey, descending to the weakness of defending herself. "But I saw quite enough to convince me that the girl is in love with Tom, and the mother knows it."

"That was very unsatisfactory. I supposed you went to find out whether Tom was in love with the girl. Was she as pretty as ever?"

"I didn't see her; she was not at home; I saw her sister."

"I don't know that I follow you quite, Anna. But no matter. What was the sister like?"

"A thoroughly disagreeable young woman."

"What did she do?"

"Nothing. She's far too sly for that. But that was the impression."

"Then you didn't find her so amusing as Tom does?"

"I found her pert. There's no other word for it. She says things to puzzle you and put you out."

"Ah, that was worse than pert, Anna; that was criminal. Well, let us thank heaven the younger one is so pretty."

Mrs. Corey did not reply directly. "Bromfield," she said, after a moment of troubled silence, "I have been thinking over your plan, and I don't see why it isn't the right thing."

"What is my plan?" inquired Bromfield Corey.

"A dinner."

Her husband began to laugh. "Ah, you overdid the accusing-spirit business, and this is reparation." But Mrs. Corey hurried on, with combined dignity and anxiety--

"We can't ignore Tom's intimacy with them--it amounts to that; it will probably continue even if it's merely a fancy, and we must seem to know it; whatever comes of it, we can't disown it. They are very simple, unfashionable people, and unworldly; but I can't say that they are offensive, unless--unless," she added, in propitiation of her husband's smile, "unless the father--how did you find the father?" she implored.

"He will be very entertaining," said Corey, "if you start him on his point. What was the disagreeable daughter like? Shall you have her?"

"She's little and dark. We must have them all," Mrs. Corey sighed. "Then you don't think a dinner would do?"

"Oh yes, I do. As you say, we can't disown Tom's relation to them, whatever it is. We had much better recognise it, and make the best of the inevitable. I think a Lapham dinner would be delightful." He looked at her with delicate irony in his voice and smile, and she fetched another sigh, so deep and sore now that he laughed outright. "Perhaps," he suggested, "it would be the best way of curing Tom of his fancy, if he has one. He has been seeing her with the dangerous advantages which a mother knows how to give her daughter in the family circle, and with no means of comparing her with other girls. You must invite several other very pretty girls."

"Do you really think so, Bromfield?" asked Mrs. Corey, taking courage a little. "That might do," But her spirits visibly sank again. "I don't know any other girl half

so pretty."

"Well, then, better bred."

"She is very lady-like, very modest, and pleasing."

"Well, more cultivated."

"Tom doesn't get on with such people."

"Oh, you wish him to marry her, I see."

"No, no"

"Then you'd better give the dinner to bring them together, to promote the affair."

"You know I don't want to do that, Bromfield. But I feel that we must do something. If we don't, it has a clandestine appearance. It isn't just to them. A dinner won't leave us in any worse position, and may leave us in a better. Yes," said Mrs. Corey, after another thoughtful interval, "we must have them--have them all. It could be very simple."

"Ah, you can't give a dinner under a bushel, if I take your meaning, my dear. If we do this at all, we mustn't do it as if we were ashamed of it. We must ask people to meet them."

"Yes," sighed Mrs. Corey. "There are not many people in town yet," she added, with relief that caused her husband another smile. "There really seems a sort of fatality about it," she concluded religiously.

"Then you had better not struggle against it. Go and reconcile Lily and Nanny to it as soon as possible."

Mrs. Corey blanched a little. "But don't you think it will be the best thing, Bromfield?"

"I do indeed, my dear. The only thing that shakes my faith in the scheme is the fact that I first suggested it. But if you have adopted it, it must be all right, Anna. I can't say that I expected it."

"No," said his wife, "it wouldn't do."

XIII.

HAVING distinctly given up the project of asking the Laphams to dinner, Mrs. Corey was able to carry it out with the courage of sinners who have sacrificed to virtue by frankly acknowledging its superiority to their intended transgression. She did not question but the Laphams would come; and she only doubted as to the people whom she should invite to meet them. She opened the matter with some trepidation to her daughters, but neither of them opposed her; they rather looked at the scheme from her own point of view, and agreed with her that nothing had really yet been done to wipe out the obligation to the Laphams helplessly contracted the summer before, and strengthened by that ill-advised application to Mrs. Lapham for charity. Not only the principal of their debt of gratitude remained, but the accruing interest. They said, What harm could giving the dinner possibly do them? They might ask any or all of their acquaintance without disadvantage to themselves; but it would be perfectly easy to give the dinner just the character they chose, and still flatter the ignorance of the Laphams. The trouble would be with Tom, if he were really interested in the girl; but he could not say anything if they made it a family dinner; he could not feel anything. They had each turned in her own mind, as it appeared from a comparison of ideas, to one of the most comprehensive of those cousinships which form the admiration and terror of the adventurer in Boston society. He finds himself hemmed in and left out at every turn by ramifications that forbid him all hope of safe personality in his comments on people; he is never less secure than when he hears some given Bostonian denouncing or ridiculing another. If he will be advised, he will guard himself from concurring in these criticisms, however just they appear, for the probability is that their object is a cousin of not more than one remove from the censor. When the alien hears a group of Boston ladies calling one another, and speaking of all their gentlemen friends, by the familiar abbreviations of their Christian names, he must feel keenly the exile to which he was born; but he is then, at least, in comparatively little danger; while these latent and tacit cousinships open pitfalls at every step around him, in a society where Middlesexes have married Essexes and produced Suffolks for two hundred and fifty years.

These conditions, however, so perilous to the foreigner, are a source of strength and security to those native to them. An uncertain acquaintance may be so effectually involved in the meshes of such a cousinship, as never to be heard of outside of it and tremendous stories are told of people who have spent a whole winter in Boston, in a whirl of gaiety, and who, the original guests of the Suffolks, discover upon reflection that they have met no one but Essexes and Middlesexes.

Mrs. Corey's brother James came first into her mind, and she thought with uncommon toleration of the easy-going, uncritical, good-nature of his wife. James Bellingham had been the adviser of her son throughout, and might be said to have actively promoted his connection with Lapham. She thought next of the widow of her cousin, Henry Bellingham, who had let her daughter marry that Western steamboat man, and was fond of her son-in-law; she might be expected at least to endure the paint-king and his family. The daughters insisted so strongly upon Mrs. Bellingham's son Charles, that Mrs. Corey put him down--if he were in town; he might be in Central America; he got on with all sorts of people. It seemed to her that she might stop at this: four Laphams, five Coreys, and four Bellinghams were enough.

"That makes thirteen," said Nanny. "You can have Mr. and Mrs. Sewell."

"Yes, that is a good idea," assented Mrs. Corey. "He is our minister, and it is very proper."

"I don't see why you don't have Robert Chase. It is a pity he shouldn't see her--for the colour."

"I don't quite like the idea of that," said Mrs. Corey; "but we can have him too, if it won't make too many." The painter had married into a poorer branch of the Coreys, and his wife was dead. "Is there any one else?"

"There is Miss Kingsbury."

"We have had her so much. She will begin to think we are using her."

"She won't mind; she's so good-natured."

"Well, then," the mother summed up, "there are four Laphams, five Coreys, four Bellinghams, one Chase, and one Kingsbury--fifteen. Oh! and two Sewells. Seventeen. Ten ladies and seven gentlemen. It doesn't balance very well, and it's too large."

"Perhaps some of the ladies won't come," suggested Lily.

"Oh, the ladies always come," said Nanny.

Their mother reflected. "Well, I will ask them. The ladies will refuse in time to let us pick up some gentlemen somewhere; some more artists. Why! we must have Mr. Seymour, the architect; he's a bachelor, and he's building their house, Tom says."

Her voice fell a little when she mentioned her son's name, and she told him of her plan, when he came home in the evening, with evident misgiving.

"What are you doing it for, mother?" he asked, looking at her with his honest eyes.

She dropped her own in a little confusion. "I won't do it at all, my dear," she said, "if you don't approve. But I thought--You know we have never made any proper acknowledgment of their kindness to us at Baie St. Paul. Then in the winter, I'm ashamed to say, I got money from her for a charity I was interested in; and I hate the idea of merely USING people in that way. And now your having been at their house this summer--we can't seem to disapprove of that; and your business relations to him----"

"Yes, I see," said Corey. "Do you think it amounts to a dinner?"

"Why, I don't know," returned his mother. "We shall have hardly any one out of our family connection."

"Well," Corey assented, "it might do. I suppose what you wish is to give them a pleasure."

"Why, certainly. Don't you think they'd like to come?"

"Oh, they'd like to come; but whether it would be a pleasure after they were here is another thing. I should have said that if you wanted to have them, they would enjoy better being simply asked to meet our own immediate family."

"That's what I thought of in the first place, but your father seemed to think it implied a social distrust of them; and we couldn't afford to have that appearance, even to ourselves."

"Perhaps he was right."

"And besides, it might seem a little significant."

Corey seemed inattentive to this consideration. "Whom did you think of asking?" His mother repeated the names.

"Yes, that would do," he said, with a vague dissatisfaction.

"I won't have it at all, if you don't wish, Tom."

"Oh yes, have it; perhaps you ought. Yes, I dare say it's right. What did you mean by a family dinner seeming significant?"

His mother hesitated. When it came to that, she did not like to recognise in his presence the anxieties that had troubled her. But "I don't know," she said, since she must. "I shouldn't want to give that young girl, or her mother, the idea that we wished to make more of the acquaintance than--than you did, Tom."

He looked at her absent-mindedly, as if he did not take her meaning. But he said, "Oh yes, of course," and Mrs. Corey, in the uncertainty in which she seemed destined to remain concerning this affair, went off and wrote her invitation to Mrs. Lapham. Later in the evening, when they again found themselves alone, her son said, "I don't think I understood you, mother, in regard to the Laphams. I think I do now. I certainly don't wish you to make more of the acquaintance than I have done. It wouldn't be right; it might be very unfortunate. Don't give the dinner!"

"It's too late now, my son," said Mrs. Corey. "I sent my note to Mrs. Lapham an hour ago." Her courage rose at the trouble which showed in Corey's face. "But don't be annoyed by it, Tom. It isn't a family dinner, you know, and everything can be managed without embarrassment. If we take up the affair at this point, you will seem to have been merely acting for us; and they can't possibly understand anything more."

"Well, well! Let it go! I dare say it's all right At any rate, it can't be helped now."

"I don't wish to help it, Tom," said Mrs. Corey, with a cheerfulness which the thought of the Laphams had never brought her before. "I am sure it is quite fit and proper, and we can make them have a very pleasant time. They are good, inoffensive people, and we owe it to ourselves not to be afraid to show that we have felt their kindness to us, and his appreciation of you."

"Well," consented Corey. The trouble that his mother had suddenly cast off was in his tone; but she was not sorry. It was quite time that he should think seriously of his attitude toward these people if he had not thought of it before, but, according to his father's theory, had been merely dangling.

It was a view of her son's character that could hardly have pleased her in different circumstances, yet it was now unquestionably a consolation if not wholly a pleasure. If she considered the Laphams at all, it was with the resignation which we feel at the evils of others, even when they have not brought them on themselves.

Mrs. Lapham, for her part, had spent the hours between Mrs. Corey's visit and her husband's coming home from business in reaching the same conclusion with regard to Corey; and her spirits were at the lowest when they sat down to supper. Irene was downcast with her; Penelope was purposely gay; and the Colonel was beginning, after his first plate of the boiled ham,--which, bristling with cloves, rounded its bulk on a wide platter before him,--to take note of the surrounding mood, when the door-bell jingled peremptorily, and the girl left waiting on the table to go and answer it. She returned at once with a note for Mrs. Lapham, which she read, and then, after a helpless survey of her family, read again.

"Why, what IS it, mamma?" asked Irene, while the Colonel, who had taken up his carving-knife for another attack on the ham, held it drawn half across it.

"Why, I don't know what it does mean," answered Mrs. Lapham tremulously, and she let the girl take the note from her.

Irene ran it over, and then turned to the name at the end with a joyful cry and a flush that burned to the top of her forehead. Then she began to read it once more.

The Colonel dropped his knife and frowned impatiently, and Mrs. Lapham said, "You read it out loud, if you know what to make of it, Irene." But Irene, with a nervous scream of protest, handed it to her father, who performed the office.

"DEAR MRS. LAPHAM:

"Will you and General Lapham----"

"I didn't know I was a general," grumbled Lapham.

"I guess I shall have to be looking up my back pay.

Who is it writes this, anyway?" he asked, turning the letter over for the signature.

"Oh, never mind. Read it through!" cried his wife, with a kindling glance of triumph at Penelope, and he resumed--

"--and your daughters give us the pleasure of your company at dinner on Thursday, the 28th, at half-past six.

"Yours sincerely,

"ANNA B. COREY."

The brief invitation had been spread over two pages,

and the Colonel had difficulties with the signature which he did not instantly surmount. When he had made out the name and pronounced it, he looked across at his wife for an explanation.

"I don't know what it all means," she said, shaking her head and speaking with a pleased flutter. "She was here this afternoon, and I should have said she had come to see how bad she could make us feel. I declare I never felt so put down in my life by anybody."

"Why, what did she do? What did she say?" Lapham was ready, in his dense pride, to resent any affront to his blood, but doubtful, with the evidence of this invitation to the contrary, if any affront had been offered. Mrs. Lapham tried to tell him, but there was really nothing tangible; and when she came to put it into words, she could not make out a case. Her husband listened to her excited attempt, and then he said, with judicial superiority, "I guess nobody's been trying to make you feel bad, Persis. What would she go right home and invite you to dinner for, if she'd acted the way you say?"

In this view it did seem improbable, and Mrs. Lapham was shaken. She could only say, "Penelope felt just the way I did about it."

Lapham looked at the girl, who said, "Oh, I can't prove it! I begin to think it never happened. I guess it didn't."

"Humph!" said her father, and he sat frowning thoughtfully a while--ignoring her mocking irony, or choosing to take her seriously. "You can't really put your finger on anything," he said to his wife, "and it ain't likely there is anything. Anyway, she's done the proper thing by you now."

Mrs. Lapham faltered between her lingering resentment and the appeals of her flattered vanity. She looked from Penelope's impassive face to the eager eyes of Irene. "Well--just as you say, Silas. I don't know as she WAS so very bad. I guess may be she was embarrassed some----"

"That's what I told you, mamma, from the start," interrupted Irene. "Didn't I tell you she didn't mean anything by it? It's just the way she acted at Baie St. Paul, when she got well enough to realise what you'd done for her!"

Penelope broke into a laugh. "Is that her way of showing her gratitude? I'm sorry I didn't understand that before."

Irene made no effort to reply. She merely looked from her mother to her father with a grieved face for their protection, and Lapham said, "When we've done supper,

you answer her, Persis. Say we'll come."

"With one exception," said Penelope.

"What do you mean?" demanded her father, with a mouth full of ham. "Oh, nothing of importance. Merely that I'm not going."

Lapham gave himself time to swallow his morsel, and his rising wrath went down with it. "I guess you'll change your mind when the time comes," he said. "Anyway, Persis, you say we'll all come, and then, if Penelope don't want to go, you can excuse her after we get there. That's the best way."

None of them, apparently, saw any reason why the affair should not be left in this way, or had a sense of the awful and binding nature of a dinner engagement. If she believed that Penelope would not finally change her mind and go, no doubt Mrs. Lapham thought that Mrs. Corey would easily excuse her absence. She did not find it so simple a matter to accept the invitation. Mrs. Corey had said "Dear Mrs. Lapham," but Mrs. Lapham had her doubts whether it would not be a servile imitation to say "Dear Mrs. Corey" in return; and she was tormented as to the proper phrasing throughout and the precise temperature which she should impart to her politeness. She wrote an unpractised, uncharacteristic round hand, the same in which she used to set the children's copies at school, and she subscribed herself, after some hesitation between her husband's given name and her own, "Yours truly, Mrs. S. Lapham."

Penelope had gone to her room, without waiting to be asked to advise or criticise; but Irene had decided upon the paper, and on the whole, Mrs. Lapham's note made a very decent appearance on the page.

"When the furnace-man came, the Colonel sent him out to post it in the box at the corner of the square. He had determined not to say anything more about the matter before the girls, not choosing to let them see that he was elated; he tried to give the effect of its being an everyday sort of thing, abruptly closing the discussion with his order to Mrs. Lapham to accept; but he had remained swelling behind his newspaper during her prolonged struggle with her note, and he could no longer hide his elation when Irene followed her sister upstairs.

"Well, Pers," he demanded, "what do you say now?"

Mrs. Lapham had been sobered into something of her former misgiving by her difficulties with her note.

"Well, I don't know what TO say. I declare, I'm all mixed up about it, and I don't know as we've begun as we can carry out in promising to go. I presume," she sighed, "that we can all send some excuse at the last moment, if we don't want to go."

"I guess we can carry out, and I guess we shan't want to send any excuse," bragged the Colonel. "If we're ever going to be anybody at all, we've got to go and see how it's done. I presume we've got to give some sort of party when we get into the new house, and this gives the chance to ask 'em back again. You can't complain now but what they've made the advances, Persis?"

"No," said Mrs. Lapham lifelessly; "I wonder why they wanted to do it. Oh, I suppose it's all right," she added in deprecation of the anger with her humility which she saw rising in her husband's face; "but if it's all going to be as much trouble as that letter, I'd rather be whipped. I don't know what I'm going to wear; or the girls either. I do wonder--I've heard that people go to dinner in low-necks. Do you suppose it's the custom?"

"How should I know?" demanded the Colonel. "I guess you've got clothes enough. Any rate, you needn't fret about it. You just go round to White's or Jordan & Marsh's, and ask for a dinner dress. I guess that'll settle it; they'll know. Get some of them imported dresses. I see 'em in the window every time I pass; lots of 'em"

"Oh, it ain't the dress!" said Mrs. Lapham. "I don't suppose but what we could get along with that; and I want to do the best we can for the children; but I don't know what we're going to talk about to those people when we get there. We haven't got anything in common with them. Oh, I don't say they're any better," she again made haste to say in arrest of her husband's resentment. "I don't believe they are; and I don't see why they should be. And there ain't anybody has got a better right to hold up their head than you have, Silas. You've got plenty of money, and you've made every cent of it."

"I guess I shouldn't amounted to much without you, Persis," interposed Lapham, moved to this justice by her praise.

"Oh, don't talk about ME!" protested the wife. "Now that you've made it all right about Rogers, there ain't a thing in this world against you. But still, for all that, I can see--and I can feel it when I can't see it--that we're different from those people. They're well-meaning enough, and they'd excuse it, I presume, but we're too old to learn to be like them."

"The children ain't," said Lapham shrewdly.

"No, the children ain't," admitted his wife, "and that's the only thing that reconciles me to it."

"You see how pleased Irene looked when I read it?"

"Yes, she was pleased."

"And I guess Penelope'll think better of it before the time comes."

"Oh yes, we do it for them. But whether we're doing the best thing for 'em, goodness knows. I'm not saying anything against HIM. Irene'll be a lucky girl to get him, if she wants him. But there! I'd ten times rather she was going to marry such a fellow as you were, Si, that had to make every inch of his own way, and she had to help him. It's in her!"

Lapham laughed aloud for pleasure in his wife's fondness; but neither of them wished that he should respond directly to it. "I guess, if it wa'n't for me, he wouldn't have a much easier time. But don't you fret! It's all coming out right. That dinner ain't a thing for you to be uneasy about. It'll pass off perfectly easy and natural."

Lapham did not keep his courageous mind quite to the end of the week that followed. It was his theory not to let Corey see that he was set up about the invitation, and when the young man said politely that his mother was glad they were able to come, Lapham was very short with him. He said yes, he believed that Mrs. Lapham and the girls were going. Afterward he was afraid Corey might not understand that he was coming too; but he did not know how to approach the subject again, and Corey did not, so he let it pass. It worried him to see all the preparation that his wife and Irene were making, and he tried to laugh at them for it; and it worried him to find that Penelope was making no preparation at all for herself, but only helping the others. He asked her what should she do if she changed her mind at the last moment and concluded to go, and she said she guessed she should not change her mind, but if she did, she would go to White's with him and get him to choose her an imported dress, he seemed to like them so much. He was too proud to mention the subject again to her.

Finally, all that dress-making in the house began to scare him with vague apprehensions in regard to his own dress. As soon as he had determined to go, an ideal of the figure in which he should go presented itself to his mind. He should not wear any dress-coat, because, for one thing, he considered that a man looked like a fool in a dress-coat, and,

for another thing, he had none--had none on principle. He would go in a frock-coat and black pantaloons, and perhaps a white waistcoat, but a black cravat anyway. But as soon as he developed this ideal to his family, which he did in pompous disdain of their anxieties about their own dress, they said he should not go so. Irene reminded him that he was the only person without a dress-coat at a corps reunion dinner which he had taken her to some years before, and she remembered feeling awfully about it at the time. Mrs. Lapham, who would perhaps have agreed of herself, shook her head with misgiving. "I don't see but what you'll have to get you one, Si," she said. "I don't believe they ever go without 'em to a private house."

He held out openly, but on his way home the next day, in a sudden panic, he cast anchor before his tailor's door and got measured for a dress-coat. After that he began to be afflicted about his waist-coat, concerning which he had hitherto been airily indifferent. He tried to get opinion out of his family, but they were not so clear about it as they were about the frock. It ended in their buying a book of etiquette, which settled the question adversely to a white waistcoat. The author, however, after being very explicit in telling them not to eat with their knives, and above all not to pick their teeth with their forks,--a thing which he said no lady or gentleman ever did,--was still far from decided as to the kind of cravat Colonel Lapham ought to wear: shaken on other points, Lapham had begun to waver also concerning the black cravat. As to the question of gloves for the Colonel, which suddenly flashed upon him one evening, it appeared never to have entered the thoughts of the etiquette man, as Lapham called him. Other authors on the same subject were equally silent, and Irene could only remember having heard, in some vague sort of way, that gentlemen did not wear gloves so much any more.

Drops of perspiration gathered on Lapham's forehead in the anxiety of the debate; he groaned, and he swore a little in the compromise profanity which he used.

"I declare," said Penelope, where she sat purblindly sewing on a bit of dress for Irene, "the Colonel's clothes are as much trouble as anybody's. Why don't you go to Jordan & Marsh's and order one of the imported dresses for yourself, father?" That gave them all the relief of a laugh over it, the Colonel joining in piteously.

He had an awful longing to find out from Corey how he ought to go. He formulated and repeated over to himself an apparently careless question, such as, "Oh, by

the way, Corey, where do you get your gloves?" This would naturally lead to some talk on the subject, which would, if properly managed, clear up the whole trouble. But Lapham found that he would rather die than ask this question, or any question that would bring up the dinner again. Corey did not recur to it, and Lapham avoided the matter with positive fierceness. He shunned talking with Corey at all, and suffered in grim silence.

One night, before they fell asleep, his wife said to him, "I was reading in one of those books to-day, and I don't believe but what we've made a mistake if Pen holds out that she won't go."

"Why?" demanded Lapham, in the dismay which beset him at every fresh recurrence to the subject.

"The book says that it's very impolite not to answer a dinner invitation promptly. Well, we've done that all right,--at first I didn't know but what we had been a little too quick, may be,--but then it says if you're not going, that it's the height of rudeness not to let them know at once, so that they can fill your place at the table."

The Colonel was silent for a while. "Well, I'm dummed," he said finally, "if there seems to be any end to this thing. If it was to do over again, I'd say no for all of us."

"I've wished a hundred times they hadn't asked us; but it's too late to think about that now. The question is, what are we going to do about Penelope?"

"Oh, I guess she'll go, at the last moment."

"She says she won't. She took a prejudice against Mrs. Corey that day, and she can't seem to get over it."

"Well, then, hadn't you better write in the morning, as soon as you're up, that she ain't coming?"

Mrs. Lapham sighed helplessly. "I shouldn't know how to get it in. It's so late now; I don't see how I could have the face."

"Well, then, she's got to go, that's all."

"She's set she won't."

"And I'm set she shall," said Lapham with the loud obstinacy of a man whose women always have their way.

Mrs. Lapham was not supported by the sturdiness of his proclamation.

But she did not know how to do what she knew she ought to do about Penelope, and she let matters drift. After all, the child had a right to stay at home if she did not wish to go. That was what Mrs. Lapham felt, and what she said to her husband next morning, bidding him let Penelope alone, unless she chose herself to go. She said it was too late now to do anything, and she must make the best excuse she could when she saw Mrs. Corey. She began to wish that Irene and her father would go and excuse her too. She could not help saying this, and then she and Lapham had some unpleasant words.

"Look here!" he cried. "Who wanted to go in for these people in the first place? Didn't you come home full of 'em last year, and want me to sell out here and move somewheres else because it didn't seem to suit 'em? And now you want to put it all on me! I ain't going to stand it."

"Hush!" said his wife. "Do you want to raise the house? I didn't put it on you, as you say. You took it on yourself. Ever since that fellow happened to come into the new house that day, you've been perfectly crazy to get in with them. And now you're so afraid you shall do something wrong before 'em, you don't hardly dare to say your life's your own. I declare, if you pester me any more about those gloves, Silas Lapham, I won't go."

"Do you suppose I want to go on my own account?" he demanded furiously.

"No," she admitted. "Of course I don't. I know very well that you're doing it for Irene; but, for goodness gracious' sake, don't worry our lives out, and make yourself a perfect laughing-stock before the children."

With this modified concession from her, the quarrel closed in sullen silence on Lapham's part. The night before the dinner came, and the question of his gloves was still unsettled, and in a fair way to remain so. He had bought a pair, so as to be on the safe side, perspiring in company with the young lady who sold them, and who helped him try them on at the shop; his nails were still full of the powder which she had plentifully peppered into them in order to overcome the resistance of his blunt fingers. But he was uncertain whether he should wear them. They had found a book at last that said the ladies removed their gloves on sitting down at table, but it said nothing about gentlemen's gloves. He left his wife where she stood half hook-and-eyed at her glass in her new dress, and went down to his own den beyond the parlour. Before he shut his door he caught a glimpse of Irene trailing up and down before the long mirror in HER new dress, followed by the seamstress on her knees; the woman had her

mouth full of pins, and from time to time she made Irene stop till she could put one of the pins into her train; Penelope sat in a corner criticising and counselling. It made Lapham sick, and he despised himself and all his brood for the trouble they were taking. But another glance gave him a sight of the young girl's face in the mirror, beautiful and radiant with happiness, and his heart melted again with paternal tenderness and pride. It was going to be a great pleasure to Irene, and Lapham felt that she was bound to cut out anything there. He was vexed with Penelope that she was not going too; he would have liked to have those people hear her talk. He held his door a little open, and listened to the things she was "getting off" there to Irene. He showed that he felt really hurt and disappointed about Penelope, and the girl's mother made her console him the next evening before they all drove away without her. "You try to look on the bright side of it, father. I guess you'll see that it's best I didn't go when you get there. Irene needn't open her lips, and they can all see how pretty she is; but they wouldn't know how smart I was unless I talked, and maybe then they wouldn't."

This thrust at her father's simple vanity in her made him laugh; and then they drove away, and Penelope shut the door, and went upstairs with her lips firmly shutting in a sob.

XIV.

THE Coreys were one of the few old families who lingered in Bellingham Place, the handsome, quiet old street which the sympathetic observer must grieve to see abandoned to boarding-houses. The dwellings are stately and tall, and the whole place wears an air of aristocratic seclusion, which Mrs. Corey's father might well have thought assured when he left her his house there at his death. It is one of two evidently designed by the same architect who built some houses in a characteristic taste on Beacon Street opposite the Common. It has a wooden portico, with slender fluted columns, which have always been painted white, and which, with the delicate mouldings of the cornice, form the sole and sufficient decoration of the street front; nothing could be simpler, and nothing could be better. Within, the architect has again indulged his preference for the classic; the roof of the vestibule, wide and low, rests on marble columns, slim and fluted like the wooden columns without, and an ample staircase climbs in a graceful, easy curve from the tessellated pavement. Some carved Venetian scignì stretched along the wall;

a rug lay at the foot of the stairs; but otherwise the simple adequacy of the architectural intention had been respected, and the place looked bare to the eyes of the Laphams when they entered. The Coreys had once kept a man, but when young Corey began his retrenchments the man had yielded to the neat maid who showed the Colonel into the reception-room and asked the ladies to walk up two flights.

He had his charges from Irene not to enter the drawing-room without her mother, and he spent five minutes in getting on his gloves, for he had desperately resolved to wear them at last. When he had them on, and let his large fists hang down on either side, they looked, in the saffron tint which the shop-girl said his gloves should be of, like canvased hams. He perspired with doubt as he climbed the stairs, and while he waited on the landing for Mrs. Lapham and Irene to come down from above before going into the drawing-room, he stood staring at his hands, now open and now shut, and breathing hard. He heard quiet talking beyond the portiere within, and presently Tom Corey came out.

"Ah, Colonel Lapham! Very glad to see you."

Lapham shook hands with him and gasped, "Waiting for Mis' Lapham," to account for his presence. He had not been able to button his right glove, and he now began, with as much indifference as he could assume, to pull them both off, for he saw that Corey wore none. By the time he had stuffed them into the pocket of his coat-skirt his wife and daughter descended.

Corey welcomed them very cordially too, but looked a little mystified. Mrs. Lapham knew that he was silently inquiring for Penelope, and she did not know whether she ought to excuse her to him first or not. She said nothing, and after a glance toward the regions where Penelope might conjecturably be lingering, he held aside the portiere for the Laphams to pass, and entered the room with them.

Mrs. Lapham had decided against low-necks on her own responsibility, and had entrenched herself in the safety of a black silk, in which she looked very handsome. Irene wore a dress of one of those shades which only a woman or an artist can decide to be green or blue, and which to other eyes looks both or neither, according to their degrees of ignorance. If it was more like a ball dress than a dinner dress, that might be excused to the exquisite effect. She trailed, a delicate splendour, across the carpet in her mother's sombre wake, and the consciousness of success brought a vivid smile to her face. Lapham, pallid with anxiety lest he should somehow disgrace himself, giving thanks

to God that he should have been spared the shame of wearing gloves where no one else did, but at the same time despairing that Corey should have seen him in them, had an unwonted aspect of almost pathetic refinement.

Mrs. Corey exchanged a quick glance of surprise and relief with her husband as she started across the room to meet her guests, and in her gratitude to them for being so irreproachable, she threw into her manner a warmth that people did not always find there. "General Lapham?" she said, shaking hands in quick succession with Mrs. Lapham and Irene, and now addressing herself to him.

"No, ma'am, only Colonel," said the honest man, but the lady did not hear him. She was introducing her husband to Lapham's wife and daughter, and Bromfield Corey was already shaking his hand and saying he was very glad to see him again, while he kept his artistic eye on Irene, and apparently could not take it off. Lily Corey gave the Lapham ladies a greeting which was physically rather than socially cold, and Nanny stood holding Irene's hand in both of hers a moment, and taking in her beauty and her style with a generous admiration which she could afford, for she was herself faultlessly dressed in the quiet taste of her city, and looking very pretty. The interval was long enough to let every man present confide his sense of Irene's beauty to every other; and then, as the party was small, Mrs. Corey made everybody acquainted. When Lapham had not quite understood, he held the person's hand, and, leaning urbanely forward, inquired, "What name?" He did that because a great man to whom he had been presented on the platform at a public meeting had done so to him, and he knew it must be right.

A little lull ensued upon the introductions, and Mrs. Corey said quietly to Mrs. Lapham, "Can I send any one to be of use to Miss Lapham?" as if Penelope must be in the dressing-room.

Mrs. Lapham turned fire-red, and the graceful forms in which she had been intending to excuse her daughter's absence went out of her head. "She isn't upstairs," she said, at her bluntest, as country people are when embarrassed. "She didn't feel just like coming to-night. I don't know as she's feeling very well."

Mrs. Corey emitted a very small "O!"--very small, very cold,--which began to grow larger and hotter and to burn into Mrs. Lapham's soul before Mrs. Corey could add, "I'm very sorry. It's nothing serious, I hope?"

Robert Chase, the painter, had not come, and Mrs. James Bellingham was not there, so that the table really balanced better without Penelope; but Mrs. Lapham could not know this,

and did not deserve to know it. Mrs. Corey glanced round the room, as if to take account of her guests, and said to her husband, "I think we are all here, then," and he came forward and gave his arm to Mrs. Lapham. She perceived then that in their determination not to be the first to come they had been the last, and must have kept the others waiting for them.

Lapham had never seen people go down to dinner arm-in-arm before, but he knew that his wife was distinguished in being taken out by the host, and he waited in jealous impatience to see if Tom Corey would offer his arm to Irene. He gave it to that big girl they called Miss Kingsbury, and the handsome old fellow whom Mrs. Corey had introduced as her cousin took Irene out. Lapham was startled from the misgiving in which this left him by Mrs. Corey's passing her hand through his arm, and he made a sudden movement forward, but felt himself gently restrained. They went out the last of all; he did not know why, but he submitted, and when they sat down he saw that Irene, although she had come in with that Mr. Bellingham, was seated beside young Corey, after all.

He fetched a long sigh of relief when he sank into his chair and felt himself safe from error if he kept a sharp lookout and did only what the others did. Bellingham had certain habits which he permitted himself, and one of these was tucking the corner of his napkin into his collar; he confessed himself an uncertain shot with a spoon, and defended his practice on the ground of neatness and common-sense. Lapham put his napkin into his collar too, and then, seeing that no one but Bellingham did it, became alarmed and took it out again slyly. He never had wine on his table at home, and on principle he was a prohibitionist; but now he did not know just what to do about the glasses at the right of his plate. He had a notion to turn them all down, as he had read of a well-known politician's doing at a public dinner, to show that he did not take wine; but, after twiddling with one of them a moment, he let them be, for it seemed to him that would be a little too conspicuous, and he felt that every one was looking. He let the servant fill them all, and he drank out of each, not to appear odd. Later, he observed that the young ladies were not taking wine, and he was glad to see that Irene had refused it, and that Mrs. Lapham was letting it stand untasted. He did not know but he ought to decline some of the dishes, or at least leave most of some on his plate, but he was not able to decide; he took everything and ate everything.

He noticed that Mrs. Corey seemed to take no more trouble about the dinner than anybody, and Mr. Corey rather less; he was talking busily to Mrs. Lapham, and Lapham caught

a word here and there that convinced him she was holding her own. He was getting on famously himself with Mrs. Corey, who had begun with him about his new house; he was telling her all about it, and giving her his ideas. Their conversation naturally included his architect across the table; Lapham had been delighted and secretly surprised to find the fellow there; and at something Seymour said the talk spread suddenly, and the pretty house he was building for Colonel Lapham became the general theme. Young Corey testified to its loveliness, and the architect said laughingly that if he had been able to make a nice thing of it, he owed it to the practical sympathy of his client.

"Practical sympathy is good," said Bromfield Corey; and, slanting his head confidentially to Mrs. Lapham, he added, "Does he bleed your husband, Mrs. Lapham? He's a terrible fellow for appropriations!"

Mrs. Lapham laughed, reddening consciously, and said she guessed the Colonel knew how to take care of himself. This struck Lapham, then draining his glass of sauterne, as wonderfully discreet in his wife. Bromfield Corey leaned back in his chair a moment. "Well, after all, you can't say, with all your modern fuss about it, that you do much better now than the old fellows who built such houses as this."

"Ah," said the architect, "nobody can do better than well. Your house is in perfect taste; you know I've always admired it; and I don't think it 's at all the worse for being old-fashioned. What we've done is largely to go back of the hideous style that raged after they forgot how to make this sort of house. But I think we may claim a better feeling for structure. We use better material, and more wisely; and by and by we shall work out something more characteristic and original."

"With your chocolates and olives, and your clutter of bric-a-brac?"

"All that's bad, of course, but I don't mean that. I don't wish to make you envious of Colonel Lapham, and modesty prevents my saying, that his house is prettier,--though I may have my convictions,--but it's better built. All the new houses are better built. Now, your house----"

"Mrs. Corey's house," interrupted the host, with a burlesque haste in disclaiming responsibility for it that made them all laugh. "My ancestral halls are in Salem, and I'm told you couldn't drive a nail into their timbers; in fact, I don't know that you would want to do it."

"I should consider it a species of sacrilege," answered Seymour, "and I shall be far from pressing the point I was going to make against a house of Mrs. Corey's."

This won Seymour the easy laugh, and Lapham silently wondered that the fellow never got off any of those things to him.

"Well," said Corey, "you architects and the musicians are the true and only artistic creators. All the rest of us, sculptors, painters, novelists, and tailors, deal with forms that we have before us; we try to imitate, we try to represent. But you two sorts of artists create form. If you represent, you fail. Somehow or other you do evolve the camel out of your inner consciousness"

"I will not deny the soft impeachment," said the architect, with a modest air.

"I dare say. And you'll own that it's very handsome of me to say this, after your unjustifiable attack on Mrs. Corey's property."

Bromfield Corey addressed himself again to Mrs. Lapham, and the talk subdivided itself as before. It lapsed so entirely away from the subject just in hand, that Lapham was left with rather a good idea, as he thought it, to perish in his mind, for want of a chance to express it. The only thing like a recurrence to what they had been saying was Bromfield Corey's warning Mrs. Lapham, in some connection that Lapham lost, against Miss Kingsbury. "She's worse," he was saying, "when it comes to appropriations than Seymour himself. Depend upon it, Mrs. Lapham, she will give you no peace of your mind, now she's met you, from this out. Her tender mercies are cruel; and I leave you to supply the content from your own scriptural knowledge. Beware of her, and all her works. She calls them works of charity; but heaven knows whether they are. It don't stand to reason that she gives the poor ALL the money she gets out of people. I have my own belief"--he gave it in a whisper for the whole table to hear--"that she spends it for champagne and cigars."

Lapham did not know about that kind of talking; but Miss Kingsbury seemed to enjoy the fun as much as anybody, and he laughed with the rest.

"You shall be asked to the very next debauch of the committee, Mr. Corey; then you won't dare expose us," said Miss Kingsbury.

"I wonder you haven't been down upon Corey to go to the

Chardon Street home and talk with your indigent Italians in their native tongue," said Charles Bellingham.

"I saw in the Transcript the other night that you wanted some one for the work."

"We did think of Mr. Corey," replied Miss Kingsbury; "but we reflected that he probably wouldn't talk with them at all; he would make them keep still to be sketched, and forget all about their wants."

Upon the theory that this was a fair return for Corey's pleasantry, the others laughed again.

"There is one charity," said Corey, pretending superiority to Miss Kingsbury's point, "that is so difficult, I wonder it hasn't occurred to a lady of your courageous invention."

"Yes?" said Miss Kingsbury. "What is that?"

"The occupation, by deserving poor of neat habits, of all the beautiful, airy, wholesome houses that stand empty the whole summer long, while their owners are away in their lowly cots beside the sea."

"Yes, that is terrible," replied Miss Kingsbury, with quick earnestness, while her eyes grew moist. "I have often thought of our great, cool houses standing useless here, and the thousands of poor creatures stifling in their holes and dens, and the little children dying for wholesome shelter. How cruelly selfish we are!"

"That is a very comfortable sentiment, Miss Kingsbury," said Corey, "and must make you feel almost as if you had thrown open No. 31 to the whole North End. But I am serious about this matter. I spend my summers in town, and I occupy my own house, so that I can speak impartially and intelligently; and I tell you that in some of my walks on the Hill and down on the Back Bay, nothing but the surveillance of the local policeman prevents my offering personal violence to those long rows of close-shuttered, handsome, brutally insensible houses. If I were a poor man, with a sick child pining in some garret or cellar at the North End, I should break into one of them, and camp out on the grand piano."

"Surely, Bromfield," said his wife, "you don't consider what havoc such people would make with the furniture of a nice house!"

"That is true," answered Corey, with meek conviction. "I never thought of that."

"And if you were a poor man with a sick child, I doubt

if you'd have so much heart for burglary as you have now," said James Bellingham.

"It's wonderful how patient they are," said the minister.
"The spectacle of the hopeless comfort the hard-working poor man sees must be hard to bear."

Lapham wanted to speak up and say that he had been there himself, and knew how such a man felt. He wanted to tell them that generally a poor man was satisfied if he could make both ends meet; that he didn't envy any one his good luck, if he had earned it, so long as he wasn't running under himself. But before he could get the courage to address the whole table, Sewell added, "I suppose he don't always think of it."

"But some day he WILL think about it," said Corey.
"In fact, we rather invite him to think about it, in this country."

"My brother-in-law," said Charles Bellingham, with the pride a man feels in a mentionably remarkable brother-in-law, "has no end of fellows at work under him out there at Omaha, and he says it's the fellows from countries where they've been kept from thinking about it that are discontented. The Americans never make any trouble. They seem to understand that so long as we give unlimited opportunity, nobody has a right to complain."

"What do you hear from Leslie?" asked Mrs. Corey, turning from these profitless abstractions to Mrs. Bellingham.

"You know," said that lady in a lower tone, "that there is another baby?"

"No! I hadn't heard of it!"

"Yes; a boy. They have named him after his uncle."

"Yes," said Charles Bellingham, joining in. "He is said to be a noble boy, and to resemble me."

"All boys of that tender age are noble," said Corey, "and look like anybody you wish them to resemble. Is Leslie still home-sick for the bean-pots of her native Boston?"

"She is getting over it, I fancy," replied Mrs. Bellingham.
"She's very much taken up with Mr. Blake's enterprises, and leads a very exciting life. She says she's like people who have been home from Europe three years; she's past the most poignant stage of regret, and hasn't reached the second, when they feel that they must go again."

Lapham leaned a little toward Mrs. Corey, and said of a picture which he saw on the wall opposite, "Picture of your daughter, I presume?"

"No; my daughter's grandmother. It's a Stewart Newton; he painted a great many Salem beauties. She was a Miss Polly Burroughs. My daughter IS like her, don't you think?" They both looked at Nanny Corey and then at the portrait. "Those pretty old-fashioned dresses are coming in again. I'm not surprised you took it for her. The others"--she referred to the other portraits more or less darkling on the walls--"are my people; mostly Copleys."

These names, unknown to Lapham, went to his head like the wine he was drinking; they seemed to carry light for the moment, but a film of deeper darkness followed. He heard Charles Bellingham telling funny stories to Irene and trying to amuse the girl; she was laughing, and seemed very happy. From time to time Bellingham took part in the general talk between the host and James Bellingham and Miss Kingsbury and that minister, Mr. Sewell. They talked of people mostly; it astonished Lapham to hear with what freedom they talked. They discussed these persons unsparingly; James Bellingham spoke of a man known to Lapham for his business success and great wealth as not a gentleman; his cousin Charles said he was surprised that the fellow had kept from being governor so long.

When the latter turned from Irene to make one of these excursions into the general talk, young Corey talked to her; and Lapham caught some words from which it seemed that they were speaking of Penelope. It vexed him to think she had not come; she could have talked as well as any of them; she was just as bright; and Lapham was aware that Irene was not as bright, though when he looked at her face, triumphant in its young beauty and fondness, he said to himself that it did not make any difference. He felt that he was not holding up his end of the line, however. When some one spoke to him he could only summon a few words of reply, that seemed to lead to nothing; things often came into his mind appropriate to what they were saying, but before he could get them out they were off on something else; they jumped about so, he could not keep up; but he felt, all the same, that he was not doing himself justice.

At one time the talk ran off upon a subject that Lapham had never heard talked of before; but again he was vexed that Penelope was not there, to have her say; he believed that her say would have been worth hearing.

Miss Kingsbury leaned forward and asked Charles Bellingham if he had read Tears, Idle Tears, the novel that was

making such a sensation; and when he said no, she said she wondered at him. "It's perfectly heart-breaking, as you'll imagine from the name; but there's such a dear old-fashioned hero and heroine in it, who keep dying for each other all the way through, and making the most wildly satisfactory and unnecessary sacrifices for each other. You feel as if you'd done them yourself."

"Ah, that's the secret of its success," said Bromfield Corey. "It flatters the reader by painting the characters colossal, but with his limp and stoop, so that he feels himself of their supernatural proportions. You've read it, Nanny?"

"Yes," said his daughter. "It ought to have been called Slop, Silly Slop."

"Oh, not quite SLOP, Nanny," pleaded Miss Kingsbury.

"It's astonishing," said Charles Bellingham, "how we do like the books that go for our heart-strings. And I really suppose that you can't put a more popular thing than self-sacrifice into a novel. We do like to see people suffering sublimely."

"There was talk some years ago," said James Bellingham, "about novels going out." "They're just coming in!" cried Miss Kingsbury.

"Yes," said Mr. Sewell, the minister. "And I don't think there ever was a time when they formed the whole intellectual experience of more people. They do greater mischief than ever."

"Don't be envious, parson," said the host.

"No," answered Sewell. "I should be glad of their help. But those novels with old-fashioned heroes and heroines in them--excuse me, Miss Kingsbury--are ruinous!"

"Don't you feel like a moral wreck, Miss Kingsbury?" asked the host.

But Sewell went on: "The novelists might be the greatest possible help to us if they painted life as it is, and human feelings in their true proportion and relation, but for the most part they have been and are altogether noxious."

This seemed sense to Lapham; but Bromfield Corey asked: "But what if life as it is isn't amusing? Aren't we to be amused?"

"Not to our hurt," sturdily answered the minister. "And the self-sacrifice painted in most novels like this----"

"Slop, Silly Slop?" suggested the proud father of the inventor of the phrase.

"Yes--is nothing but psychical suicide, and is as wholly immoral as the spectacle of a man falling upon his sword."

"Well, I don't know but you're right, parson," said the host; and the minister, who had apparently got upon a battle-horse of his, careered onward in spite of some tacit attempts of his wife to seize the bridle.

"Right? To be sure I am right. The whole business of love, and love-making and marrying, is painted by the novelists in a monstrous disproportion to the other relations of life. Love is very sweet, very pretty----"

"Oh, THANK you, Mr. Sewell," said Nanny Corey, in a way that set them all laughing.

"But it's the affair, commonly, of very young people, who have not yet character and experience enough to make them interesting. In novels it's treated, not only as if it were the chief interest of life, but the sole interest of the lives of two ridiculous young persons; and it is taught that love is perpetual, that the glow of a true passion lasts for ever; and that it is sacrilege to think or act otherwise." "Well, but isn't that true, Mr. Sewell?" pleaded Miss Kingsbury.

"I have known some most estimable people who had married a second time," said the minister, and then he had the applause with him. Lapham wanted to make some open recognition of his good sense, but could not.

"I suppose the passion itself has been a good deal changed," said Bromfield Corey, "since the poets began to idealise it in the days of chivalry."

"Yes; and it ought to be changed again," said Mr. Sewell.

"What! Back?"

"I don't say that. But it ought to be recognised as something natural and mortal, and divine honours, which belong to righteousness alone, ought not to be paid it."

"Oh, you ask too much, parson," laughed his host, and the talk wandered away to something else.

It was not an elaborate dinner; but Lapham was used to having everything on the table at once, and this succession of dishes bewildered him; he was afraid

perhaps he was eating too much. He now no longer made any pretence of not drinking his wine, for he was thirsty, and there was no more water, and he hated to ask for any. The ice-cream came, and then the fruit. Suddenly Mrs. Corey rose, and said across the table to her husband, "I suppose you will want your coffee here." And he replied, "Yes; we'll join you at tea."

The ladies all rose, and the gentlemen got up with them. Lapham started to follow Mrs. Corey, but the other men merely stood in their places, except young Corey, who ran and opened the door for his mother. Lapham thought with shame that it was he who ought to have done that; but no one seemed to notice, and he sat down again gladly, after kicking out one of his legs which had gone to sleep.

They brought in cigars with coffee, and Bromfield Corey advised Lapham to take one that he chose for him. Lapham confessed that he liked a good cigar about as well as anybody, and Corey said: "These are new. I had an Englishman here the other day who was smoking old cigars in the superstition that tobacco improved with age, like wine."

"Ah," said Lapham, "anybody who had ever lived off a tobacco country could tell him better than that." With the fuming cigar between his lips he felt more at home than he had before. He turned sidewise in his chair and, resting one arm on the back, intertwined the fingers of both hands, and smoked at large ease. James Bellingham came and sat down by him. "Colonel Lapham, weren't you with the 96th Vermont when they charged across the river in front of Pickensburg, and the rebel battery opened fire on them in the water?"

Lapham slowly shut his eyes and slowly dropped his head for assent, letting out a white volume of smoke from the corner of his mouth.

"I thought so," said Bellingham. "I was with the 85th Massachusetts, and I sha'n't forget that slaughter. We were all new to it still. Perhaps that's why it made such an impression."

"I don't know," suggested Charles Bellingham. "Was there anything much more impressive afterward? I read of it out in Missouri, where I was stationed at the time, and I recollect the talk of some old army men about it. They said that death-rate couldn't be beaten. I don't know that it ever was."

"About one in five of us got out safe," said Lapham,

breaking his cigar-ash off on the edge of a plate.
James Bellingham reached him a bottle of Apollinaris.
He drank a glass, and then went on smoking.

They all waited, as if expecting him to speak, and then
Corey said: "How incredible those things seem already!
You gentlemen KNOW that they happened; but are you still
able to believe it?"

"Ah, nobody FEELS that anything happened," said Charles
Bellingham. "The past of one's experience doesn't
differ a great deal from the past of one's knowledge.
It isn't much more probable; it's really a great deal
less vivid than some scenes in a novel that one read when a boy."

"I'm not sure of that," said James Bellingham.

"Well, James, neither am I," consented his cousin,
helping himself from Lapham's Apollinaris bottle.
"There would be very little talking at dinner if one only
said the things that one was sure of."

The others laughed, and Bromfield Corey remarked thoughtfully,
"What astonishes the craven civilian in all these things
is the abundance--the superabundance--of heroism.
The cowards were the exception; the men that were ready
to die, the rule."

"The woods were full of them," said Lapham, without taking
his cigar from his mouth.

"That's a nice little touch in School," interposed Charles
Bellingham, "where the girl says to the fellow who was
at Inkerman, 'I should think you would be so proud of it,'
and he reflects a while, and says, 'Well, the fact is,
you know, there were so many of us.'"

"Yes, I remember that," said James Bellingham,
smiling for pleasure in it. "But I don't see why you
claim the credit of being a craven civilian, Bromfield,"
he added, with a friendly glance at his brother-in-law,
and with the willingness Boston men often show to turn
one another's good points to the light in company;
bred so intimately together at school and college
and in society, they all know these points. "A man
who was out with Garibaldi in '48," continued James Bellingham.

"Oh, a little amateur red-shirting," Corey interrupted
in deprecation. "But even if you choose to dispute
my claim, what has become of all the heroism? Tom,
how many club men do you know who would think it sweet
and fitting to die for their country?"

"I can't think of a great many at the moment, sir,"
replied the son, with the modesty of his generation.

"And I couldn't in '61," said his uncle. "Nevertheless they
were there."

"Then your theory is that it's the occasion that is wanting,"
said Bromfield Corey. "But why shouldn't civil service reform,
and the resumption of specie payment, and a tariff
for revenue only, inspire heroes? They are all good causes."

"It's the occasion that's wanting," said James Bellingham,
ignoring the persiflage. "And I'm very glad of it."

"So am I," said Lapham, with a depth of feeling that
expressed itself in spite of the haze in which his brain
seemed to float. There was a great deal of the talk
that he could not follow; it was too quick for him;
but here was something he was clear of. "I don't want
to see any more men killed in my time." Something serious,
something sombre must lurk behind these words, and they
waited for Lapham to say more; but the haze closed round
him again, and he remained silent, drinking Apollinaris.

"We non-combatants were notoriously reluctant to give
up fighting," said Mr. Sewell, the minister; "but I incline
to think Colonel Lapham and Mr. Bellingham may be right.
I dare say we shall have the heroism again if we have
the occasion. Till it comes, we must content ourselves
with the every-day generousities and sacrifices. They make
up in quantity what they lack in quality, perhaps."

"They're not so picturesque," said Bromfield Corey.
"You can paint a man dying for his country, but you
can't express on canvas a man fulfilling the duties
of a good citizen."

"Perhaps the novelists will get at him by and by,"
suggested Charles Bellingham. "If I were one of these fellows,
I shouldn't propose to myself anything short of that."

"What? the commonplace?" asked his cousin.

"Commonplace? The commonplace is just that light,
impalpable, aerial essence which they've never got into
their confounded books yet. The novelist who could
interpret the common feelings of commonplace people would
have the answer to 'the riddle of the painful earth' on his tongue."

"Oh, not so bad as that, I hope," said the host;
and Lapham looked from one to the other, trying to make
out what they were at. He had never been so up a tree before.

"I suppose it isn't well for us to see human nature

at white heat habitually," continued Bromfield Corey, after a while. "It would make us vain of our species. Many a poor fellow in that war and in many another has gone into battle simply and purely for his country's sake, not knowing whether, if he laid down his life, he should ever find it again, or whether, if he took it up hereafter, he should take it up in heaven or hell. Come, parson!" he said, turning to the minister, "what has ever been conceived of omnipotence, of omniscience, so sublime, so divine as that?"

"Nothing," answered the minister quietly. "God has never been imagined at all. But if you suppose such a man as that was Authorised, I think it will help you to imagine what God must be."

"There's sense in that," said Lapham. He took his cigar out of his mouth, and pulled his chair a little toward the table, on which he placed his ponderous fore-arms. "I want to tell you about a fellow I had in my own company when we first went out. We were all privates to begin with; after a while they elected me captain--I'd had the tavern stand, and most of 'em knew me. But Jim Millon never got to be anything more than corporal; corporal when he was killed." The others arrested themselves in various attitudes of attention, and remained listening to Lapham with an interest that profoundly flattered him. Now, at last, he felt that he was holding up his end of the rope. "I can't say he went into the thing from the highest motives, altogether; our motives are always pretty badly mixed, and when there's such a hurrah-boys as there was then, you can't tell which is which. I suppose Jim Millon's wife was enough to account for his going, herself. She was a pretty bad assortment," said Lapham, lowering his voice and glancing round at the door to make sure that it was shut, "and she used to lead Jim ONE kind of life. Well, sir," continued Lapham, synthesising his auditors in that form of address, "that fellow used to save every cent of his pay and send it to that woman. Used to get me to do it for him. I tried to stop him. 'Why, Jim,' said I, 'you know what she'll do with it.' 'That's so, Cap,' says he, 'but I don't know what she'll do without it.' And it did keep her straight--straight as a string--as long as Jim lasted. Seemed as it there was something mysterious about it. They had a little girl,--about as old as my oldest girl,--and Jim used to talk to me about her. Guess he done it as much for her as for the mother; and he said to me before the last action we went into, 'I should like to turn tail and run, Cap. I ain't comin' out o' this one. But I don't suppose it would do.' 'Well, not for you, Jim,' said I. 'I want to live,' he says; and he bust out crying right there in my tent. 'I want to live for poor Molly and Zerrilla'--that's what they

called the little one; I dunno where they got the name. 'I ain't ever had half a chance; and now she's doing better, and I believe we should get along after this.' He set there cryin' like a baby. But he wa'n't no baby when he went into action. I hated to look at him after it was over, not so much because he'd got a ball that was meant for me by a sharpshooter--he saw the devil takin' aim, and he jumped to warn me--as because he didn't look like Jim; he looked like--fun; all desperate and savage. I guess he died hard."

The story made its impression, and Lapham saw it. "Now I say," he resumed, as if he felt that he was going to do himself justice, and say something to heighten the effect his story had produced. At the same time he was aware of a certain want of clearness. He had the idea, but it floated vague, elusive, in his brain. He looked about as if for something to precipitate it in tangible shape.

"Apollinaris?" asked Charles Bellingham, handing the bottle from the other side. He had drawn his chair closer than the rest to Lapham's, and was listening with great interest. When Mrs. Corey asked him to meet Lapham, he accepted gladly. "You know I go in for that sort of thing, Anna. Since Leslie's affair we're rather bound to do it. And I think we meet these practical fellows too little. There's always something original about them." He might naturally have believed that the reward of his faith was coming.

"Thanks, I will take some of this wine," said Lapham, pouring himself a glass of Madeira from a black and dusty bottle caressed by a label bearing the date of the vintage. He tossed off the wine, unconscious of its preciousness, and waited for the result. That cloudiness in his brain disappeared before it, but a mere blank remained. He not only could not remember what he was going to say, but he could not recall what they had been talking about. They waited, looking at him, and he stared at them in return. After a while he heard the host saying, "Shall we join the ladies?"

Lapham went, trying to think what had happened. It seemed to him a long time since he had drunk that wine.

Miss Corey gave him a cup of tea, where he stood aloof from his wife, who was talking with Miss Kingsbury and Mrs. Sewell; Irene was with Miss Nanny Corey. He could not hear what they were talking about; but if Penelope had come, he knew that she would have done them all credit. He meant to let her know how he felt about her behaviour when he got home. It was a shame for her to miss such a chance.

Irene was looking beautiful, as pretty as all the rest of them put together, but she was not talking, and Lapham perceived that at a dinner-party you ought to talk. He was himself conscious of having, talked very well. He now wore an air of great dignity, and, in conversing with the other gentlemen, he used a grave and weighty deliberation. Some of them wanted him to go into the library. There he gave his ideas of books. He said he had not much time for anything but the papers; but he was going to have a complete library in his new place. He made an elaborate acknowledgment to Bromfield Corey of his son's kindness in suggesting books for his library; he said that he had ordered them all, and that he meant to have pictures. He asked Mr. Corey who was about the best American painter going now. "I don't set up to be a judge of pictures, but I know what I like," he said. He lost the reserve which he had maintained earlier, and began to boast. He himself introduced the subject of his paint, in a natural transition from pictures; he said Mr. Corey must take a run up to Lapham with him some day, and see the Works; they would interest him, and he would drive him round the country; he kept most of his horses up there, and he could show Mr. Corey some of the finest Jersey grades in the country. He told about his brother William, the judge at Dubuque; and a farm he had out there that paid for itself every year in wheat. As he cast off all fear, his voice rose, and he hammered his arm-chair with the thick of his hand for emphasis. Mr. Corey seemed impressed; he sat perfectly quiet, listening, and Lapham saw the other gentlemen stop in their talk every now and then to listen. After this proof of his ability to interest them, he would have liked to have Mrs. Lapham suggest again that he was unequal to their society, or to the society of anybody else. He surprised himself by his ease among men whose names had hitherto overawed him. He got to calling Bromfield Corey by his surname alone. He did not understand why young Corey seemed so preoccupied, and he took occasion to tell the company how he had said to his wife the first time he saw that fellow that he could make a man of him if he had him in the business; and he guessed he was not mistaken. He began to tell stories of the different young men he had had in his employ. At last he had the talk altogether to himself; no one else talked, and he talked unceasingly. It was a great time; it was a triumph.

He was in this successful mood when word came to him that Mrs. Lapham was going; Tom Corey seemed to have brought it, but he was not sure. Anyway, he was not going to hurry. He made cordial invitations to each of the gentlemen to drop in and see him at his office, and would not be satisfied till he had exacted a promise from each.

He told Charles Bellingham that he liked him, and assured James Bellingham that it had always been his ambition to know him, and that if any one had said when he first came to Boston that in less than ten years he should be hobnobbing with Jim Bellingham, he should have told that person he lied. He would have told anybody he lied that had told him ten years ago that a son of Bromfield Corey would have come and asked him to take him into the business. Ten years ago he, Silas Lapham, had come to Boston a little worse off than nothing at all, for he was in debt for half the money that he had bought out his partner with, and here he was now worth a million, and meeting you gentlemen like one of you. And every cent of that was honest money,--no speculation,--every copper of it for value received. And here, only the other day, his old partner, who had been going to the dogs ever since he went out of the business, came and borrowed twenty thousand dollars of him! Lapham lent it because his wife wanted him to: she had always felt bad about the fellow's having to go out of the business.

He took leave of Mr. Sewell with patronising affection, and bade him come to him if he ever got into a tight place with his parish work; he would let him have all the money he wanted; he had more money than he knew what to do with. "Why, when your wife sent to mine last fall," he said, turning to Mr. Corey, "I drew my cheque for five hundred dollars, but my wife wouldn't take more than one hundred; said she wasn't going to show off before Mrs. Corey. I call that a pretty good joke on Mrs. Corey. I must tell her how Mrs. Lapham done her out of a cool four hundred dollars."

He started toward the door of the drawing-room to take leave of the ladies; but Tom Corey was at his elbow, saying, "I think Mrs. Lapham is waiting for you below, sir," and in obeying the direction Corey gave him toward another door he forgot all about his purpose, and came away without saying good-night to his hostess.

Mrs. Lapham had not known how soon she ought to go, and had no idea that in her quality of chief guest she was keeping the others. She stayed till eleven o'clock, and was a little frightened when she found what time it was; but Mrs. Corey, without pressing her to stay longer, had said it was not at all late. She and Irene had had a perfect time. Everybody had been very polite, on the way home they celebrated the amiability of both the Miss Coreys and of Miss Kingsbury. Mrs. Lapham thought that Mrs. Bellingham was about the pleasantest person she ever saw; she had told her all about her married daughter who had married an inventor and gone to live in Omaha--a Mrs. Blake.

"If it's that car-wheel Blake," said Lapham proudly,
"I know all about him. I've sold him tons of the paint."

"Pooh, papa! How you do smell of smoking!" cried Irene.

"Pretty strong, eh?" laughed Lapham, letting down a window of the carriage. His heart was throbbing wildly in the close air, and he was glad of the rush of cold that came in, though it stopped his tongue, and he listened more and more drowsily to the rejoicings that his wife and daughter exchanged. He meant to have them wake Penelope up and tell her what she had lost; but when he reached home he was too sleepy to suggest it. He fell asleep as soon as his head touched the pillow, full of supreme triumph.

But in the morning his skull was sore with the unconscious, night-long ache; and he rose cross and taciturn.

They had a silent breakfast. In the cold grey light of the morning the glories of the night before showed poorer. Here and there a painful doubt obtruded itself and marred them with its awkward shadow. Penelope sent down word that she was not well, and was not coming to breakfast, and Lapham was glad to go to his office without seeing her.

He was severe and silent all day with his clerks, and peremptory with customers. Of Corey he was slyly observant, and as the day wore away he grew more restively conscious. He sent out word by his office-boy that he would like to see Mr. Corey for a few minutes after closing. The type-writer girl had lingered too, as if she wished to speak with him, and Corey stood in abeyance as she went toward Lapham's door.

"Can't see you to-night, Zerrilla," he said bluffly, but not unkindly. "Perhaps I'll call at the house, if it's important."

"It is," said the girl, with a spoiled air of insistence.

"Well," said Lapham, and, nodding to Corey to enter, he closed the door upon her. Then he turned to the young man and demanded: "Was I drunk last night?"

XV.

LAPHAM'S strenuous face was broken up with the emotions that had forced him to this question: shame, fear of the things that must have been thought of him,

mixed with a faint hope that he might be mistaken,
which died out at the shocked and pitying look in Corey's eyes.

"Was I drunk?" he repeated. "I ask you, because I was never
touched by drink in my life before, and I don't know."
He stood with his huge hands trembling on the back of
his chair, and his dry lips apart, as he stared at Corey.

"That is what every one understood, Colonel Lapham,"
said the young man. "Every one saw how it was.
Don't----"

"Did they talk it over after I left?" asked Lapham vulgarly.

"Excuse me," said Corey, blushing, "my father doesn't
talk his guests over with one another." He added,
with youthful superfluity, "You were among gentlemen."

"I was the only one that wasn't a gentleman there!"
lamented Lapham. "I disgraced you! I disgraced my family! I
mortified your father before his friends!" His head dropped.
"I showed that I wasn't fit to go with you. I'm not fit
for any decent place. What did I say? What did I do?"
he asked, suddenly lifting his head and confronting Corey.
"Out with it! If you could bear to see it and hear it,
I had ought to bear to know it!"

"There was nothing--really nothing," said Corey.
"Beyond the fact that you were not quite yourself,
there was nothing whatever. My father DID speak of it
to me," he confessed, "when we were alone. He said
that he was afraid we had not been thoughtful of you,
if you were in the habit of taking only water; I told
him I had not seen wine at your table. The others said
nothing about you."

"Ah, but what did they think?"

"Probably what we did: that it was purely a misfortune--
an accident."

"I wasn't fit to be there," persisted Lapham. "Do you
want to leave?" he asked, with savage abruptness.

"Leave?" faltered the young man.

"Yes; quit the business? Cut the whole connection?"

"I haven't the remotest idea of it!" cried Corey in amazement.
"Why in the world should I?" "Because you're a gentleman,
and I'm not, and it ain't right I should be over you.
If you want to go, I know some parties that would be
glad to get you. I will give you up if you want to go

before anything worse happens, and I shan't blame you. I can help you to something better than I can offer you here, and I will."

"There's no question of my going, unless you wish it," said Corey. "If you do----"

"Will you tell your father," interrupted Lapham, "that I had a notion all the time that I was acting the drunken blackguard, and that I've suffered for it all day? Will you tell him I don't want him to notice me if we ever meet, and that I know I'm not fit to associate with gentlemen in anything but a business way, if I am that?"

"Certainly I shall do nothing of the kind," retorted Corey. "I can't listen to you any longer. What you say is shocking to me--shocking in a way you can't think."

"Why, man!" exclaimed Lapham, with astonishment; "if I can stand it, YOU can!"

"No," said Corey, with a sick look, "that doesn't follow. You may denounce yourself, if you will; but I have my reasons for refusing to hear you--my reasons why I CAN'T hear you. If you say another word I must go away."

"I don't understand you," faltered Lapham, in bewilderment, which absorbed even his shame.

"You exaggerate the effect of what has happened," said the young man. "It's enough, more than enough, for you to have mentioned the matter to me, and I think it's unbecoming in me to hear you."

He made a movement toward the door, but Lapham stopped him with the tragic humility of his appeal. "Don't go yet! I can't let you. I've disgusted you,--I see that; but I didn't mean to. I--I take it back."

"Oh, there's nothing to take back," said Corey, with a repressed shudder for the abasement which he had seen. "But let us say no more about it--think no more. There wasn't one of the gentlemen present last night who didn't understand the matter precisely as my father and I did, and that fact must end it between us two."

He went out into the larger office beyond, leaving Lapham helpless to prevent his going. It had become a vital necessity with him to think the best of Lapham, but his mind was in a whirl of whatever thoughts were most injurious. He thought of him the night before in the company of those ladies and gentlemen, and he quivered in resentment of his vulgar, braggart, uncouth nature. He recognised

his own allegiance to the exclusiveness to which he was born and bred, as a man perceives his duty to his country when her rights are invaded. His eye fell on the porter going about in his shirt-sleeves to make the place fast for the night, and he said to himself that Dennis was not more plebeian than his master; that the gross appetites, the blunt sense, the purblind ambition, the stupid arrogance were the same in both, and the difference was in a brute will that probably left the porter the gentler man of the two. The very innocence of Lapham's life in the direction in which he had erred wrought against him in the young man's mood: it contained the insult of clownish inexperience. Amidst the stings and flashes of his wounded pride, all the social traditions, all the habits of feeling, which he had silenced more and more by force of will during the past months, asserted their natural sway, and he rioted in his contempt of the offensive boor, who was even more offensive in his shame than in his trespass. He said to himself that he was a Corey, as if that were somewhat; yet he knew that at the bottom of his heart all the time was that which must control him at last, and which seemed sweetly to be suffering his rebellion, secure of his submission in the end. It was almost with the girl's voice that it seemed to plead with him, to undo in him, effect by effect, the work of his indignant resentment, to set all things in another and fairer light, to give him hopes, to suggest palliations, to protest against injustices. It WAS in Lapham's favour that he was so guiltless in the past, and now Corey asked himself if it were the first time he could have wished a guest at his father's table to have taken less wine; whether Lapham was not rather to be honoured for not knowing how to contain his folly where a veteran transgressor might have held his tongue. He asked himself, with a thrill of sudden remorse, whether, when Lapham humbled himself in the dust so shockingly, he had shown him the sympathy to which such ABANDON had the right; and he had to own that he had met him on the gentlemanly ground, sparing himself and asserting the superiority of his sort, and not recognising that Lapham's humiliation came from the sense of wrong, which he had helped to accumulate upon him by superfinely standing aloof and refusing to touch him.

He shut his desk and hurried out into the early night, not to go anywhere, but to walk up and down, to try to find his way out of the chaos, which now seemed ruin, and now the materials out of which fine actions and a happy life might be shaped. Three hours later he stood at Lapham's door.

At times what he now wished to do had seemed for ever impossible, and again it had seemed as if he could not wait a moment longer. He had not been careless, but very mindful of what he

knew must be the feelings of his own family in regard to the Laphams, and he had not concealed from himself that his family had great reason and justice on their side in not wishing him to alienate himself from their common life and associations. The most that he could urge to himself was that they had not all the reason and justice; but he had hesitated and delayed because they had so much. Often he could not make it appear right that he should merely please himself in what chiefly concerned himself. He perceived how far apart in all their experiences and ideals the Lapham girls and his sisters were; how different Mrs. Lapham was from his mother; how grotesquely unlike were his father and Lapham; and the disparity had not always amused him.

He had often taken it very seriously, and sometimes he said that he must forego the hope on which his heart was set. There had been many times in the past months when he had said that he must go no further, and as often as he had taken this stand he had yielded it, upon this or that excuse, which he was aware of trumping up. It was part of the complication that he should be unconscious of the injury he might be doing to some one besides his family and himself; this was the defect of his diffidence; and it had come to him in a pang for the first time when his mother said that she would not have the Laphams think she wished to make more of the acquaintance than he did; and then it had come too late. Since that he had suffered quite as much from the fear that it might not be as that it might be so; and now, in the mood, romantic and exalted, in which he found himself concerning Lapham, he was as far as might be from vain confidence. He ended the question in his own mind by affirming to himself that he was there, first of all, to see Lapham and give him an ultimate proof of his own perfect faith and unabated respect, and to offer him what reparation this involved for that want of sympathy--of humanity--which he had shown.

XVI.

THE Nova Scotia second-girl who answered Corey's ring said that Lapham had not come home yet.

"Oh," said the young man, hesitating on the outer step.

"I guess you better come in," said the girl, "I'll go and see when they're expecting him."

Corey was in the mood to be swayed by any chance. He obeyed the suggestion of the second-girl's patronising

friendliness, and let her shut him into the drawing-room, while she went upstairs to announce him to Penelope. "Did you tell him father wasn't at home?"

"Yes. He seemed so kind of disappointed, I told him to come in, and I'd see when he WOULD be in," said the girl, with the human interest which sometimes replaces in the American domestic the servile deference of other countries.

A gleam of amusement passed over Penelope's face, as she glanced at herself in the glass. "Well," she cried finally, dropping from her shoulders the light shawl in which she had been huddled over a book when Corey rang, "I will go down."

"All right," said the girl, and Penelope began hastily to amend the disarray of her hair, which she tumbled into a mass on the top of her little head, setting off the pale dark of her complexion with a flash of crimson ribbon at her throat. She moved across the carpet once or twice with the quaint grace that belonged to her small figure, made a dissatisfied grimace at it in the glass, caught a handkerchief out of a drawer and slid it into her pocket, and then descended to Corey.

The Lapham drawing-room in Nankeen Square was in the parti-coloured paint which the Colonel had hoped to repeat in his new house: the trim of the doors and windows was in light green and the panels in salmon; the walls were a plain tint of French grey paper, divided by gilt mouldings into broad panels with a wide stripe of red velvet paper running up the corners; the chandelier was of massive imitation bronze; the mirror over the mantel rested on a fringed mantel-cover of green reps, and heavy curtains of that stuff hung from gilt lambrequin frames at the window; the carpet was of a small pattern in crude green, which, at the time Mrs. Lapham bought it, covered half the new floors in Boston. In the panelled spaces on the walls were some stone-coloured landscapes, representing the mountains and canyons of the West, which the Colonel and his wife had visited on one of the early official railroad excursions. In front of the long windows looking into the Square were statues, kneeling figures which turned their backs upon the company within-doors, and represented allegories of Faith and Prayer to people without. A white marble group of several figures, expressing an Italian conception of Lincoln Freeing the Slaves,--a Latin negro and his wife,--with our Eagle flapping his wings in approval, at Lincoln's feet, occupied one corner, and balanced the what-not of an earlier period in another. These phantasms added their chill to that imparted by the tone of the walls, the landscapes, and the carpets, and contributed to the

violence of the contrast when the chandelier was lighted up full glare, and the heat of the whole furnace welled up from the registers into the quivering atmosphere on one of the rare occasions when the Laphams invited company.

Corey had not been in this room before; the family had always received him in what they called the sitting-room. Penelope looked into this first, and then she looked into the parlour, with a smile that broke into a laugh as she discovered him standing under the single burner which the second-girl had lighted for him in the chandelier.

"I don't understand how you came to be put in there," she said, as she led the way to the cozier place, "unless it was because Alice thought you were only here on probation, anyway. Father hasn't got home yet, but I'm expecting him every moment; I don't know what's keeping him. Did the girl tell you that mother and Irene were out?"

"No, she didn't say. It's very good of you to see me." She had not seen the exaltation which he had been feeling, he perceived with half a sigh; it must all be upon this lower level; perhaps it was best so. "There was something I wished to say to your father----I hope," he broke off, "you're better to-night."

"Oh yes, thank you," said Penelope, remembering that she had not been well enough to go to dinner the night before.

"We all missed you very much."

"Oh, thank you! I'm afraid you wouldn't have missed me if I had been there."

"Oh yes, we should," said Corey, "I assure you."

They looked at each other.

"I really think I believed I was saying something," said the girl.

"And so did I," replied the young man. They laughed rather wildly, and then they both became rather grave.

He took the chair she gave him, and looked across at her, where she sat on the other side of the hearth, in a chair lower than his, with her hands dropped in her lap, and the back of her head on her shoulders as she looked up at him. The soft-coal fire in the grate purred and flickered; the drop-light cast a mellow radiance on her face. She let her eyes fall, and then lifted them for an irrelevant glance at the clock on the mantel.

"Mother and Irene have gone to the Spanish Students' concert."

"Oh, have they?" asked Corey; and he put his hat, which he had been holding in his hand, on the floor beside his chair.

She looked down at it for no reason, and then looked up at his face for no other, and turned a little red. Corey turned a little red himself. She who had always been so easy with him now became a little constrained.

"Do you know how warm it is out-of-doors?" he asked.

"No, is it warm? I haven't been out all day."

"It's like a summer night."

She turned her face towards the fire, and then started abruptly. "Perhaps it's too warm for you here?"

"Oh no, it's very comfortable."

"I suppose it's the cold of the last few days that's still in the house. I was reading with a shawl on when you came."

"I interrupted you."

"Oh no. I had finished the book. I was just looking over it again."

"Do you like to read books over?"

"Yes; books that I like at all."

"That was it?" asked Corey.

The girl hesitated. "It has rather a sentimental name. Did you ever read it?--Tears, Idle Tears."

"Oh yes; they were talking of that last night; it's a famous book with ladies. They break their hearts over it. Did it make you cry?"

"Oh, it's pretty easy to cry over a book," said Penelope, laughing; "and that one is very natural till you come to the main point. Then the naturalness of all the rest makes that seem natural too; but I guess it's rather forced."

"Her giving him up to the other one?"

"Yes; simply because she happened to know that the other one had cared for him first. Why should she have done

it? What right had she?"

"I don't know. I suppose that the self-sacrifice----"

"But it WASN'T self-sacrifice--or not self-sacrifice alone. She was sacrificing him too; and for some one who couldn't appreciate him half as much as she could. I'm provoked with myself when I think how I cried over that book--for I did cry. It's silly--it's wicked for any one to do what that girl did. Why can't they let people have a chance to behave reasonably in stories?"

"Perhaps they couldn't make it so attractive," suggested Corey, with a smile.

"It would be novel, at any rate," said the girl.

"But so it would in real life, I suppose," she added.

"I don't know. Why shouldn't people in love behave sensibly?"

"That's a very serious question," said Penelope gravely.

"I couldn't answer it," and she left him the embarrassment of supporting an inquiry which she had certainly instigated herself. She seemed to have finally recovered her own ease in doing this. "Do you admire our autumnal display, Mr. Corey?"

"Your display?"

"The trees in the Square. WE think it's quite equal to an opening at Jordan & Marsh's."

"Ah, I'm afraid you wouldn't let me be serious even about your maples."

"Oh yes, I should--if you like to be serious."

"Don't you?"

"Well not about serious matters. That's the reason that book made me cry."

"You make fun of everything. Miss Irene was telling me last night about you."

"Then it's no use for me to deny it so soon. I must give Irene a talking to."

"I hope you won't forbid her to talk about you!"

She had taken up a fan from the table, and held it, now between her face and the fire, and now between her face and him. Her little visage, with that arch, lazy look in it, topped by its mass of dusky hair,

and dwindling from the full cheeks to the small chin, had a Japanese effect in the subdued light, and it had the charm which comes to any woman with happiness. It would be hard to say how much of this she perceived that he felt. They talked about other things a while, and then she came back to what he had said. She glanced at him obliquely round her fan, and stopped moving it. "Does Irene talk about me?" she asked. "I think so--yes. Perhaps it's only I who talk about you. You must blame me if it's wrong," he returned.

"Oh, I didn't say it was wrong," she replied. "But I hope if you said anything very bad of me you'll let me know what it was, so that I can reform----"

"No, don't change, please!" cried the young man.

Penelope caught her breath, but went on resolutely,-- "or rebuke you for speaking evil of dignities." She looked down at the fan, now flat in her lap, and tried to govern her head, but it trembled, and she remained looking down. Again they let the talk stray, and then it was he who brought it back to themselves, as if it had not left them.

"I have to talk OF you," said Corey, "because I get to talk TO you so seldom."

"You mean that I do all the talking when we're--together?" She glanced sidewise at him; but she reddened after speaking the last word.

"We're so seldom together," he pursued.

"I don't know what you mean----"

"Sometimes I've thought--I've been afraid that you avoided me."

"Avoided you?"

"Yes! Tried not to be alone with me."

She might have told him that there was no reason why she should be alone with him, and that it was very strange he should make this complaint of her. But she did not. She kept looking down at the fan, and then she lifted her burning face and looked at the clock again. "Mother and Irene will be sorry to miss you," she gasped.

He instantly rose and came towards her. She rose too, and mechanically put out her hand. He took it as if to say good-night. "I didn't mean to send you away,"

she besought him.

"Oh, I'm not going," he answered simply. "I wanted to say--to say that it's I who make her talk about you. To say I---There is something I want to say to you; I've said it so often to myself that I feel as if you must know it." She stood quite still, letting him keep her hand, and questioning his face with a bewildered gaze. "You MUST know--she must have told you--she must have guessed----" Penelope turned white, but outwardly quelled the panic that sent the blood to her heart. "I--I didn't expect--I hoped to have seen your father--but I must speak now, whatever---I love you!"

She freed her hand from both of those he had closed upon it, and went back from him across the room with a sinuous spring. "ME!" Whatever potential complicity had lurked in her heart, his words brought her only immeasurable dismay.

He came towards her again. "Yes, you. Who else?"

She fended him off with an imploring gesture. "I thought--I--it was----"

She shut her lips tight, and stood looking at him where he remained in silent amaze. Then her words came again, shudderingly. "Oh, what have you done?"

"Upon my soul," he said, with a vague smile, "I don't know. I hope no harm?"

"Oh, don't laugh!" she cried, laughing hysterically herself. "Unless you want me to think you the greatest wretch in the world!"

"I?" he responded. "For heaven's sake tell me what you mean!"

"You know I can't tell you. Can you say--can you put your hand on your heart and say that--you--say you never meant--that you meant me--all along?"

"Yes!--yes! Who else? I came here to see your father, and to tell him that I wished to tell you this--to ask him----But what does it matter? You must have known it--you must have seen--and it's for you to answer me. I've been abrupt, I know, and I've startled you; but if you love me, you can forgive that to my loving you so long before I spoke."

She gazed at him with parted lips.

"Oh, mercy! What shall I do? If it's true--what you say--you must go!" she said. "And you must never come any more."

Do you promise that?"

"Certainly not," said the young man. "Why should I promise such a thing--so abominably wrong? I could obey if you didn't love me----"

"Oh, I don't! Indeed I don't! Now will you obey."

"No. I don't believe you." "Oh!"

He possessed himself of her hand again.

"My love--my dearest! What is this trouble, that you can't tell it? It can't be anything about yourself. If it is anything about any one else, it wouldn't make the least difference in the world, no matter what it was. I would be only too glad to show by any act or deed I could that nothing could change me towards you."

"Oh, you don't understand!"

"No, I don't. You must tell me."

"I will never do that."

"Then I will stay here till your mother comes, and ask her what it is."

"Ask HER?"

"Yes! Do you think I will give you up till I know why I must?"

"You force me to it! Will you go if I tell you, and never let any human creature know what you have said to me?"

"Not unless you give me leave."

"That will be never. Well, then----" She stopped, and made two or three ineffectual efforts to begin again.

"No, no! I can't. You must go!"

"I will not go!"

"You said you--loved me. If you do, you will go."

He dropped the hands he had stretched towards her, and she hid her face in her own.

"There!" she said, turning it suddenly upon him.

"Sit down there. And will you promise me--on your honour--not to speak--not to try to persuade me--not to--touch me? You won't touch me?"

"I will obey you, Penelope."

"As if you were never to see me again? As if I were dying?"

"I will do what you say. But I shall see you again;
and don't talk of dying. This is the beginning of life----"

"No. It's the end," said the girl, resuming at last something of the hoarse drawl which the tumult of her feeling had broken into those half-articulate appeals. She sat down too, and lifted her face towards him. "It's the end of life for me, because I know now that I must have been playing false from the beginning. You don't know what I mean, and I can never tell you. It isn't my secret--it's some one else's. You--you must never come here again. I can't tell you why, and you must never try to know. Do you promise?"

"You can forbid me. I must do what you say."

"I do forbid you, then. And you shall not think I am cruel----"

"How could I think that?"

"Oh, how hard you make it!"

Corey laughed for very despair. "Can I make it easier by disobeying you?"

"I know I am talking crazily. But I 'm not crazy."

"No, no," he said, with some wild notion of comforting her;
"but try to tell me this trouble! There is nothing under heaven--no calamity, no sorrow--that I wouldn't gladly share with you, or take all upon myself if I could!"

"I know! But this you can't. Oh, my----"

"Dearest! Wait! Think! Let me ask your mother--your father----"

She gave a cry.

"No! If you do that, you will make me hate you! Will you----"

The rattling of a latch-key was heard in the outer door.

"Promise!" cried Penelope.

"Oh, I promise!"

"Good-bye!" She suddenly flung her arms round his neck,

and, pressing her cheek tight against his, flashed out of the room by one door as her father entered it by another.

Corey turned to him in a daze. "I--I called to speak with you--about a matter---But it's so late now. I'll--I'll see you to-morrow."

"No time like the present," said Lapham, with a fierceness that did not seem referable to Corey. He had his hat still on, and he glared at the young man out of his blue eyes with a fire that something else must have kindled there.

"I really can't now," said Corey weakly. "It will do quite as well to-morrow. Good night, sir."

"Good night," answered Lapham abruptly, following him to the door, and shutting it after him. "I think the devil must have got into pretty much everybody to-night," he muttered, coming back to the room, where he put down his hat. Then he went to the kitchen-stairs and called down, "Hello, Alice! I want something to eat!"

XVII.

"WHAT's the reason the girls never get down to breakfast any more?" asked Lapham, when he met his wife at the table in the morning. He had been up an hour and a half, and he spoke with the severity of a hungry man.

"It seems to me they don't amount to ANYthing. Here I am, at my time of life, up the first one in the house. I ring the bell for the cook at quarter-past six every morning, and the breakfast is on the table at half-past seven right along, like clockwork, but I never see anybody but you till I go to the office."

"Oh yes, you do, Si," said his wife soothingly.

"The girls are nearly always down. But they're young, and it tires them more than it does us to get up early."

"They can rest afterwards. They don't do anything after they ARE up," grumbled Lapham.

"Well, that's your fault, ain't it?" You oughtn't to have made so much money, and then they'd have had to work." She laughed at Lapham's Spartan mood, and went on to excuse the young people. "Irene's been up two nights hand running, and Penelope says she ain't well. What makes you so cross about the girls? Been doing something you're ashamed of?"

"I'll tell you when I've been doing anything to be

ashamed of," growled Lapham.

"Oh no, you won't!" said his wife jollily. "You'll only be hard on the rest of us. Come now, Si; what is it?"

Lapham frowned into his coffee with sulky dignity, and said, without looking up, "I wonder what that fellow wanted here last night?" "What fellow?"

"Corey. I found him here when I came home, and he said he wanted to see me; but he wouldn't stop."

"Where was he?"

"In the sitting-room."

"Was Pen there?"

"I didn't see her."

Mrs. Lapham paused, with her hand on the cream-jug. "Why, what in the land did he want? Did he say he wanted you?"

"That's what he said."

"And then he wouldn't stay?"

"Well, then, I'll tell you just what it is, Silas Lapham. He came here"--she looked about the room and lowered her voice--"to see you about Irene, and then he hadn't the courage."

"I guess he's got courage enough to do pretty much what he wants to," said Lapham glumly. "All I know is, he was here. You better ask Pen about it, if she ever gets down."

"I guess I shan't wait for her," said Mrs. Lapham; and, as her husband closed the front door after him, she opened that of her daughter's room and entered abruptly.

The girl sat at the window, fully dressed, and as if she had been sitting there a long time. Without rising, she turned her face towards her mother. It merely showed black against the light, and revealed nothing till her mother came close to her with successive questions. "Why, how long have you been up, Pen? Why don't you come to your breakfast? Did you see Mr. Corey when he called last night? Why, what's the matter with you? What have you been crying about?"

"Have I been crying?"

"Yes! Your cheeks are all wet!"

"I thought they were on fire. Well, I'll tell you what's happened." She rose, and then fell back in her chair. "Lock the door!" she ordered, and her mother mechanically obeyed. "I don't want Irene in here. There's nothing the matter. Only, Mr. Corey offered himself to me last night."

Her mother remained looking at her, helpless, not so much with amaze, perhaps, as dismay. "Oh, I'm not a ghost! I wish I was! You had better sit down, mother. You have got to know all about it."

Mrs. Lapham dropped nervelessly into the chair at the other window, and while the girl went slowly but briefly on, touching only the vital points of the story, and breaking at times into a bitter drollery, she sat as if without the power to speak or stir.

"Well, that's all, mother. I should say I had dreamt, it, if I had slept any last night; but I guess it really happened."

The mother glanced round at the bed, and said, glad to occupy herself delayingly with the minor care: "Why, you have been sitting up all night! You will kill yourself."

"I don't know about killing myself, but I've been sitting up all night," answered the girl. Then, seeing that her mother remained blankly silent again, she demanded, "Why don't you blame me, mother?" Why don't you say that I led him on, and tried to get him away from her? Don't you believe I did?"

Her mother made her no answer, as if these ravings of self-accusal needed none. "Do you think," she asked simply, "that he got the idea you cared for him?"

"He knew it! How could I keep it from him? I said I didn't--at first!"

"It was no use," sighed the mother. "You might as well said you did. It couldn't help Irene any, if you didn't."

"I always tried to help her with him, even when I----"

"Yes, I know. But she never was equal to him. I saw that from the start; but I tried to blind myself to it. And when he kept coming----"

"You never thought of me!" cried the girl, with a bitterness that reached her mother's heart. "I was nobody! I couldn't feel! No one could care for me!" The turmoil of despair, of triumph, of remorse and resentment, which filled

her soul, tried to express itself in the words.

"No," said the mother humbly. "I didn't think of you. Or I didn't think of you enough. It did come across me sometimes that may be----But it didn't seem as if----And your going on so for Irene----"

"You let me go on. You made me always go and talk with him for her, and you didn't think I would talk to him for myself. Well, I didn't!"

"I'm punished for it. When did you--begin to care for him!"

"How do I know? What difference does it make? It's all over now, no matter when it began. He won't come here any more, unless I let him." She could not help betraying her pride in this authority of hers, but she went on anxiously enough, "What will you say to Irene? She's safe as far as I'm concerned; but if he don't care for her, what will you do?"

"I don't know what to do," said Mrs. Lapham. She sat in an apathy from which she apparently could not rouse herself. "I don't see as anything can be done."

Penelope laughed in a pitying derision.

"Well, let things go on then. But they won't go on."

"No, they won't go on," echoed her mother. "She's pretty enough, and she's capable; and your father's got the money--I don't know what I'm saying! She ain't equal to him, and she never was. I kept feeling it all the time, and yet I kept blinding myself."

"If he had ever cared for her," said Penelope, "it wouldn't have mattered whether she was equal to him or not. I'M not equal to him either."

Her mother went on: "I might have thought it was you; but I had got set---Well! I can see it all clear enough, now it's too late. I don't know what to do."

"And what do you expect me to do?" demanded the girl. "Do you want ME to go to Irene and tell her that I've got him away from her?"

"O good Lord!" cried Mrs. Lapham. "What shall I do? What do you want I should do, Pen?"

"Nothing for me," said Penelope. "I've had it out with myself. Now do the best you can for Irene."

"I couldn't say you had done wrong, if you was to marry him to-day."

"Mother!"

"No, I couldn't. I couldn't say but what you had been good and faithfull all through, and you had a perfect right to do it. There ain't any one to blame. He's behaved like a gentleman, and I can see now that he never thought of her, and that it was you all the while. Well, marry him, then! He's got the right, and so have you."

"What about Irene? I don't want you to talk about me. I can take care of myself"

"She's nothing but a child. It's only a fancy with her. She'll get over it. She hain't really got her heart set on him."

"She's got her heart set on him, mother. She's got her whole life set on him. You know that."

"Yes, that's so," said the mother, as promptly as if she had been arguing to that rather than the contrary effect.

"If I could give him to her, I would. But he isn't mine to give." She added in a burst of despair, "He isn't mine to keep!"

"Well," said Mrs. Lapham, "she has got to bear it. I don't know what's to come of it all. But she's got to bear her share of it." She rose and went toward the door.

Penelope ran after her in a sort of terror. "You're not going to tell Irene?" she gasped, seizing her mother by either shoulder.

"Yes, I am," said Mrs. Lapham. "If she's a woman grown, she can bear a woman's burden."

"I can't let you tell Irene," said the girl, letting fall her face on her mother's neck. "Not Irene," she moaned. "I'm afraid to let you. How can I ever look at her again?"

"Why, you haven't done anything, Pen," said her mother soothingly.

"I wanted to! Yes, I must have done something. How could I help it? I did care for him from the first, and I must have tried to make him like me. Do you think I did? No, no! You mustn't tell Irene! Not--not--yet! Mother! Yes! I did try to get him from her!" she cried, lifting her head, and suddenly looking her

mother in the face with those large dim eyes of hers.
"What do you think? Even last night! It was the first time
I ever had him all to myself, for myself, and I know
now that I tried to make him think that I was pretty
and--funny. And I didn't try to make him think of her.
I knew that I pleased him, and I tried to please him more.
Perhaps I could have kept him from saying that he cared for me;
but when I saw he did--I must have seen it--I couldn't.
I had never had him to myself, and for myself before.
I needn't have seen him at all, but I wanted to see him;
and when I was sitting there alone with him, how do I know
what I did to let him feel that I cared for him? Now,
will you tell Irene? I never thought he did care for me,
and never expected him to. But I liked him. Yes--I did like
him! Tell her that! Or else I will."

"If it was to tell her he was dead," began Mrs. Lapham absently.

"How easy it would be!" cried the girl in self-mockery.
"But he's worse than dead to her; and so am I. I've turned
it over a million ways, mother; I've looked at it in every
light you can put it in, and I can't make anything but misery
out of it. You can see the misery at the first glance,
and you can't see more or less if you spend your life
looking at it." She laughed again, as if the hopelessness
of the thing amused her. Then she flew to the extreme
of self-assertion. "Well, I HAVE a right to him, and he
has a right to me. If he's never done anything to make
her think he cared for her,--and I know he hasn't;
it's all been our doing, then he's free and I'm free.
We can't make her happy whatever we do; and why shouldn't
I---No, that won't do! I reached that point before!"
She broke again into her desperate laugh. "You may
try now, mother!"

"I'd best speak to your father first---"

Penelope smiled a little more forlornly than she had laughed.

"Well, yes; the Colonel will have to know. It isn't
a trouble that I can keep to myself exactly. It seems
to belong to too many other people."

Her mother took a crazy encouragement from her return
to her old way of saying things. "Perhaps he can think
of something."

"Oh, I don't doubt but the Colonel will know just what
to do!"

"You mustn't be too down-hearted about it. It--it'll all
come right---"

"You tell Irene that, mother."

Mrs. Lapham had put her hand on the door-key; she dropped it, and looked at the girl with a sort of beseeching appeal for the comfort she could not imagine herself.

"Don't look at me, mother," said Penelope, shaking her head.

"You know that if Irene were to die without knowing it, it wouldn't come right for me."

"Pen!"

"I've read of cases where a girl gives up the man that loves her so as to make some other girl happy that the man doesn't love. That might be done."

"Your father would think you were a fool," said Mrs. Lapham, finding a sort of refuge in her strong disgust for the pseudo heroism. "No! If there's to be any giving up, let it be by the one that shan't make anybody but herself suffer. There's trouble and sorrow enough in the world, without MAKING it on purpose!"

She unlocked the door, but Penelope slipped round and set herself against it. "Irene shall not give up!"

"I will see your father about it," said the mother.

"Let me out now----"

"Don't let Irene come here!"

"No. I will tell her that you haven't slept. Go to bed now, and try to get some rest. She isn't up herself yet. You must have some breakfast."

"No; let me sleep if I can. I can get something when I wake up. I'll come down if I can't sleep. Life has got to go on. It does when there's a death in the house, and this is only a little worse."

"Don't you talk nonsense!" cried Mrs. Lapham, with angry authority.

"Well, a little better, then," said Penelope, with meek concession.

Mrs. Lapham attempted to say something, and could not. She went out and opened Irene's door. The girl lifted her head drowsily from her pillow "Don't disturb your sister when you get up, Irene. She hasn't slept well---"

."

"PLEASE don't talk! I'm almost DEAD with sleep!" returned Irene. "Do go, mamma! I shan't disturb her."

She turned her face down in the pillow, and pulled the covering up over her ears.

The mother slowly closed the door and went downstairs, feeling bewildered and baffled almost beyond the power to move. The time had been when she would have tried to find out why this judgment had been sent upon her. But now she could not feel that the innocent suffering of others was inflicted for her fault; she shrank instinctively from that cruel and egotistic misinterpretation of the mystery of pain and loss. She saw her two children, equally if differently dear to her, destined to trouble that nothing could avert, and she could not blame either of them; she could not blame the means of this misery to them; he was as innocent as they, and though her heart was sore against him in this first moment, she could still be just to him in it. She was a woman who had been used to seek the light by striving; she had hitherto literally worked to it. But it is the curse of prosperity that it takes work away from us, and shuts that door to hope and health of spirit. In this house, where everything had come to be done for her, she had no tasks to interpose between her and her despair. She sat down in her own room and let her hands fall in her lap,--the hands that had once been so helpful and busy,--and tried to think it all out. She had never heard of the fate that was once supposed to appoint the sorrows of men irrespective of their blamelessness or blame, before the time when it came to be believed that sorrows were penalties; but in her simple way she recognised something like that mythic power when she rose from her struggle with the problem, and said aloud to herself, "Well, the witch is in it." Turn which way she would, she saw no escape from the misery to come--the misery which had come already to Penelope and herself, and that must come to Irene and her father. She started when she definitely thought of her husband, and thought with what violence it would work in every fibre of his rude strength. She feared that, and she feared something worse--the effect which his pride and ambition might seek to give it; and it was with terror of this, as well as the natural trust with which a woman must turn to her husband in any anxiety at last, that she felt she could not wait for evening to take counsel with him. When she considered how wrongly he might take it all, it seemed as if it were already known to him, and she was impatient to prevent his error.

She sent out for a messenger, whom she despatched with a note to his place of business: "Silas, I should like to ride with you this afternoon. Can't you come home early? Persis." And she was at dinner with Irene, evading her questions about Penelope, when answer came that he would be at the

house with the buggy at half-past two. It is easy to put off a girl who has but one thing in her head; but though Mrs. Lapham could escape without telling anything of Penelope, she could not escape seeing how wholly Irene was engrossed with hopes now turned so vain and impossible. She was still talking of that dinner, of nothing but that dinner, and begging for flattery of herself and praise of him, which her mother had till now been so ready to give.

"Seems to me you don't take very much interest, mamma!" she said, laughing and blushing at one point.

"Yes,--yes, I do," protested Mrs. Lapham, and then the girl prattled on.

"I guess I shall get one of those pins that Nanny Corey had in her hair. I think it would become me, don't you?"

"Yes; but Irene--I don't like to have you go on so, till--unless he's said something to show--You oughtn't to give yourself up to thinking----" But at this the girl turned so white, and looked such reproach at her, that she added frantically: "Yes, get the pin. It is just the thing for you! But don't disturb Penelope. Let her alone till I get back. I'm going out to ride with your father. He'll be here in half an hour. Are you through? Ring, then. Get yourself that fan you saw the other day. Your father won't say anything; he likes to have you look well. I could see his eyes on you half the time the other night."

"I should have liked to have Pen go with me," said Irene, restored to her normal state of innocent selfishness by these flatteries. "Don't you suppose she'll be up in time? What's the matter with her that she didn't sleep?"

"I don't know. Better let her alone."

"Well," submitted Irene.

XVIII.

MRS. LAPHAM went away to put on her bonnet and cloak, and she was waiting at the window when her husband drove up. She opened the door and ran down the steps. "Don't get out; I can help myself in," and she clambered to his side, while he kept the fidgeting mare still with voice and touch.

"Where do you want I should go?" he asked, turning the buggy.

"Oh, I don't care. Out Brookline way, I guess. I wish you hadn't brought this fool of a horse," she gave way petulantly. "I wanted to have a talk."

"When I can't drive this mare and talk too, I'll sell out altogether," said Lapham. "She'll be quiet enough when she's had her spin."

"Well," said his wife; and while they were making their way across the city to the Milldam she answered certain questions he asked about some points in the new house.

"I should have liked to have you stop there," he began; but she answered so quickly, "Not to-day," that he gave it up and turned his horse's head westward when they struck Beacon Street.

He let the mare out, and he did not pull her in till he left the Brighton road and struck off under the low boughs that met above one of the quiet streets of Brookline, where the stone cottages, with here and there a patch of determined ivy on their northern walls, did what they could to look English amid the glare of the autumnal foliage. The smooth earthen track under the mare's hoofs was scattered with flakes of the red and yellow gold that made the air luminous around them, and the perspective was gay with innumerable tints and tones.

"Pretty sightly," said Lapham, with a long sign, letting the reins lie loose in his vigilant hand, to which he seemed to relegate the whole charge of the mare. "I want to talk with you about Rogers, Persis. He's been getting in deeper and deeper with me; and last night he pestered me half to death to go in with him in one of his schemes. I ain't going to blame anybody, but I hain't got very much confidence in Rogers. And I told him so last night."

"Oh, don't talk to me about Rogers!" his wife broke in. "There's something a good deal more important than Rogers in the world, and more important than your business. It seems as if you couldn't think of anything else--that and the new house. Did you suppose I wanted to ride so as to talk Rogers with you?" she demanded, yielding to the necessity a wife feels of making her husband pay for her suffering, even if he has not inflicted it. "I declare----"

"Well, hold on, now!" said Lapham. "What DO you want to talk about? I'm listening."

His wife began, "Why, it's just this, Silas Lapham!" and then she broke off to say, "Well, you may wait, now--starting me wrong, when it's hard enough anyway."

Lapham silently turned his whip over and over in his hand and waited.

"Did you suppose," she asked at last, "that that young Corey had been coming to see Irene?"

"I don't know what I supposed," replied Lapham sullenly. "You always said so." He looked sharply at her under his lowering brows.

"Well, he hasn't," said Mrs. Lapham; and she replied to the frown that blackened on her husband's face.

"And I can tell you what, if you take it in that way I shan't speak another word."

"Who's takin' it what way?" retorted Lapham savagely.

"What are you drivin' at?"

"I want you should promise that you'll hear me out quietly."

"I'll hear you out if you'll give me a chance. I haven't said a word yet."

"Well, I'm not going to have you flying into forty furies, and looking like a perfect thunder-cloud at the very start. I've had to bear it, and you've got to bear it too."

"Well, let me have a chance at it, then."

"It's nothing to blame anybody about, as I can see, and the only question is, what's the best thing to do about it. There's only one thing we can do; for if he don't care for the child, nobody wants to make him. If he hasn't been coming to see her, he hasn't, and that's all there is to it."

"No, it ain't!" exclaimed Lapham.

"There!" protested his wife.

"If he hasn't been coming to see her, what HAS he been coming for?"

"He's been coming to see Pen!" cried the wife. "NOW are you satisfied?" Her tone implied that he had brought it all upon them; but at the sight of the swift passions working in his face to a perfect comprehension of the whole trouble, she fell to trembling, and her broken voice lost all the spurious indignation she had put into it.

"O Silas! what are we going to do about it? I'm afraid it'll kill Irene."

Lapham pulled off the loose driving-glove from his right hand with the fingers of his left, in which the reins lay. He passed it over his forehead, and then flicked from it the moisture it had gathered there. He caught his breath once or twice, like a man who meditates a struggle with superior force and then remains passive in its grasp.

His wife felt the need of comforting him, as she had felt the need of afflicting him. "I don't say but what it can be made to come out all right in the end. All I say is, I don't see my way clear yet."

"What makes you think he likes Pen?" he asked quietly.

"He told her so last night, and she told me this morning. Was he at the office to-day?"

"Yes, he was there. I haven't been there much myself. He didn't say anything to me. Does Irene know?"

"No; I left her getting ready to go out shopping. She wants to get a pin like the one Nanny Corey had on."
"O my Lord!" groaned Lapham.

"It's been Pen from the start, I guess, or almost from the start. I don't say but what he was attracted some by Irene at the very first; but I guess it's been Pen ever since he saw her; and we've taken up with a notion, and blinded ourselves with it. Time and again I've had my doubts whether he cared for Irene any; but I declare to goodness, when he kept coming, I never hardly thought of Pen, and I couldn't help believing at last he DID care for Irene. Did it ever strike you he might be after Pen?"

"No. I took what you said. I supposed you knew."

"Do you blame me, Silas?" she asked timidly.

"No. What's the use of blaming? We don't either of us want anything but the children's good. What's it all of it for, if it ain't for that? That's what we've both slaved for all our lives."

"Yes, I know. Plenty of people LOSE their children," she suggested.

"Yes, but that don't comfort me any. I never was one to feel good because another man felt bad. How would you have liked it if some one had taken comfort because his boy lived when ours died? No, I can't do it. And this is worse than death, someways. That comes and it goes; but this looks as if it was one of those things that had come to stay. The way I look at it, there ain't any hope for anybody.

Suppose we don't want Pen to have him; will that help Irene any, if he don't want her? Suppose we don't want to let him have either; does that help either!"

"You talk," exclaimed Mrs. Lapham, "as if our say was going to settle it. Do you suppose that Penelope Lapham is a girl to take up with a fellow that her sister is in love with, and that she always thought was in love with her sister, and go off and be happy with him? Don't you believe but what it would come back to her, as long as she breathed the breath of life, how she'd teased her about him, as I've heard Pen tease Irene, and helped to make her think he was in love with her, by showing that she thought so herself? It's ridiculous!"

Lapham seemed quite beaten down by this argument. His huge head hung forward over his breast; the reins lay loose in his moveless hand; the mare took her own way. At last he lifted his face and shut his heavy jaws.

"Well?" quavered his wife.

"Well," he answered, "if he wants her, and she wants him, I don't see what that's got to do with it." He looked straight forward, and not at his wife.

She laid her hands on the reins. "Now, you stop right here, Silas Lapham! If I thought that--if I really believed you could be willing to break that poor child's heart, and let Pen disgrace herself by marrying a man that had as good as killed her sister, just because you wanted Bromfield Corey's son for a son-in-law----"

Lapham turned his face now, and gave her a look. "You had better NOT believe that, Persis! Get up!" he called to the mare, without glancing at her, and she sprang forward. "I see you've got past being any use to yourself on this subject."

"Hello!" shouted a voice in front of him. "Where the devil you goin' to?"

"Do you want to KILL somebody!" shrieked his wife.

There was a light crash, and the mare recoiled her length, and separated their wheels from those of the open buggy in front which Lapham had driven into. He made his excuses to the occupant; and the accident relieved the tension of their feelings, and left them far from the point of mutual injury which they had reached in their common trouble and their unselfish will for their children's good.

It was Lapham who resumed the talk. "I'm afraid we

can't either of us see this thing in the right light.
We're too near to it. I wish to the Lord there was somebody
to talk to about it."

"Yes," said his wife; "but there ain't anybody."

"Well, I dunno," suggested Lapham, after a moment;
"why not talk to the minister of your church? May be he
could see some way out of it."

Mrs. Lapham shook her head hopelessly. "It wouldn't do.
I've never taken up my connection with the church, and I
don't feel as if I'd got any claim on him."

"If he's anything of a man, or anything of a preacher,
you HAVE got a claim on him," urged Lapham; and he spoiled
his argument by adding, "I've contributed enough MONEY
to his church."

"Oh, that's nothing," said Mrs. Lapham. "I ain't well
enough acquainted with Dr. Langworthy, or else I'm
TOO well. No; if I was to ask any one, I should want
to ask a total stranger. But what's the use, Si? Nobody
could make us see it any different from what it is,
and I don't know as I should want they should."

It blotted out the tender beauty of the day, and weighed
down their hearts ever more heavily within them.
They ceased to talk of it a hundred times, and still came
back to it. They drove on and on. It began to be late.
"I guess we better go back, Si," said his wife;
and as he turned without speaking, she pulled her veil
down and began to cry softly behind it, with low little
broken sobs.

Lapham started the mare up and drove swiftly homeward.
At last his wife stopped crying and began trying to find
her pocket. "Here, take mine, Persis," he said kindly,
offering her his handkerchief, and she took it and dried
her eyes with it. "There was one of those fellows there
the other night," he spoke again, when his wife leaned
back against the cushions in peaceful despair, "that I
liked the looks of about as well as any man I ever saw.
I guess he was a pretty good man. It was that Mr. Sewell."

He looked at his wife, but she did not say anything.
"Persis," he resumed, "I can't bear to go back with nothing
settled in our minds. I can't bear to let you."

"We must, Si," returned his wife, with gentle gratitude.
Lapham groaned. "Where does he live?" she asked.

"On Bolingbroke Street. He gave me his number."

"Well, it wouldn't do any good. What could he say to us?"

"Oh, I don't know as he could say anything," said Lapham hopelessly; and neither of them said anything more till they crossed the Milldam and found themselves between the rows of city houses."

"Don't drive past the new house, Si," pleaded his wife.
"I couldn't bear to see it. Drive--drive up Bolingbroke Street. We might as well see where he DOES live."

"Well," said Lapham. He drove along slowly.
"That's the place," he said finally, stopping the mare and pointing with his whip.

"It wouldn't do any good," said his wife, in a tone which he understood as well as he understood her words. He turned the mare up to the curbstone .

"You take the reins a minute," he said, handing them to his wife.

He got down and rang the bell, and waited till the door opened; then he came back and lifted his wife out. "He's in," he said.

He got the hitching-weight from under the buggy-seat and made it fast to the mare's bit.

"Do you think she'll stand with that?" asked Mrs. Lapham.

"I guess so. If she don't, no matter."

"Ain't you afraid she'll take cold," she persisted, trying to make delay.

"Let her!" said Lapham. He took his wife's trembling hand under his arm, and drew her to the door.

"He'll think we're crazy," she murmured in her broken pride.

"Well, we ARE," said Lapham. "Tell him we'd like to see him alone a while," he said to the girl who was holding the door ajar for him, and she showed him into the reception-room, which had been the Protestant confessional for many burdened souls before their time, coming, as they did, with the belief that they were bowed down with the only misery like theirs in the universe; for each one of us must suffer long to himself before he can learn that he is but one in a great community of wretchedness which has been pitilessly repeating itself from the foundation of the world.

They were as loath to touch their trouble when the minister

came in as if it were their disgrace; but Lapham did so at last, and, with a simple dignity which he had wanted in his bungling and apologetic approaches, he laid the affair clearly before the minister's compassionate and reverent eye. He spared Corey's name, but he did not pretend that it was not himself and his wife and their daughters who were concerned.

"I don't know as I've got any right to trouble you with this thing," he said, in the moment while Sewell sat pondering the case, "and I don't know as I've got any warrant for doing it. But, as I told my wife here, there was something about you--I don't know whether it was anything you SAID exactly--that made me feel as if you could help us. I guess I didn't say so much as that to her; but that's the way I felt. And here we are. And if it ain't all right"

"Surely," said Sewell, "it's all right. I thank you for coming--for trusting your trouble to me. A time comes to every one of us when we can't help ourselves, and then we must get others to help us. If people turn to me at such a time, I feel sure that I was put into the world for something--if nothing more than to give my pity, my sympathy."

The brotherly words, so plain, so sincere, had a welcome in them that these poor outcasts of sorrow could not doubt.

"Yes," said Lapham huskily, and his wife began to wipe the tears again under her veil.

Sewell remained silent, and they waited till he should speak. "We can be of use to one another here, because we can always be wiser for some one else than we can for ourselves. We can see another's sins and errors in a more merciful light--and that is always a fairer light--than we can our own; and we can look more sanely at others' afflictions." He had addressed these words to Lapham; now he turned to his wife. "If some one had come to you, Mrs. Lapham, in just this perplexity, what would you have thought?"

"I don't know as I understand you," faltered Mrs. Lapham.

Sewell repeated his words, and added, "I mean, what do you think some one else ought to do in your place?"

"Was there ever any poor creatures in such a strait before?" she asked, with pathetic incredulity.

"There's no new trouble under the sun," said the minister.

"Oh, if it was any one else, I should say--I should say--Why, of course! I should say that their duty was to let----"

She paused.

"One suffer instead of three, if none is to blame?" suggested Sewell. "That's sense, and that's justice. It's the economy of pain which naturally suggests itself, and which would insist upon itself, if we were not all perverted by traditions which are the figment of the shallowest sentimentality. Tell me, Mrs. Lapham, didn't this come into your mind when you first learned how matters stood?"

"Why, yes, it flashed across me. But I didn't think it could be right."

"And how was it with you, Mr. Lapham?"

"Why, that's what I thought, of course. But I didn't see my way----"

"No," cried the minister, "we are all blinded, we are all weakened by a false ideal of self-sacrifice. It wraps us round with its meshes, and we can't fight our way out of it. Mrs. Lapham, what made you feel that it might be better for three to suffer than one?"

"Why, she did herself. I know she would die sooner than take him away from her."

"I supposed so!" cried the minister bitterly. "And yet she is a sensible girl, your daughter?"

"She has more common-sense----"

"Of course! But in such a case we somehow think it must be wrong to use our common-sense. I don't know where this false ideal comes from, unless it comes from the novels that befool and debauch almost every intelligence in some degree. It certainly doesn't come from Christianity, which instantly repudiates it when confronted with it. Your daughter believes, in spite of her common-sense, that she ought to make herself and the man who loves her unhappy, in order to assure the life-long wretchedness of her sister, whom he doesn't love, simply because her sister saw him and fancied him first! And I'm sorry to say that ninety-nine young people out of a hundred--oh, nine hundred and ninety-nine out of a thousand!--would consider that noble and beautiful and heroic; whereas you know at the bottom of your hearts that it would be foolish and cruel and revolting. You know what marriage is! And what it must be without love on both sides."

The minister had grown quite heated and red in the face.

"I lose all patience!" he went on vehemently. "This poor child of yours has somehow been brought to believe that it will kill her sister if her sister does not have what does not belong to her, and what it is not in the power of all the world, or any soul in the world, to give her. Her sister will suffer--yes, keenly!--in heart and in pride; but she will not die. You will suffer too, in your tenderness for her; but you must do your duty. You must help her to give up. You would be guilty if you did less. Keep clearly in mind that you are doing right, and the only possible good. And God be with you!"

XIX.

HE talked sense, Persis," said Lapham gently, as he mounted to his wife's side in the buggy and drove slowly homeward through the dusk.

"Yes, he talked sense," she admitted. But she added bitterly, "I guess, if he had it to DO! Oh, he's right, and it's got to be done. There ain't any other way for it. It's sense; and, yes, it's justice." They walked to their door after they left the horse at the livery stable around the corner, where Lapham kept it. "I want you should send Irene up to our room as soon as we get in, Silas."

"Why, ain't you going to have any supper first?" faltered Lapham with his latch-key in the lock.

"No. I can't lose a minute. If I do, I shan't do it at all."

"Look here, Persis," said her husband tenderly, "let me do this thing."

"Oh, YOU!" said his wife, with a woman's compassionate scorn for a man's helplessness in such a case. "Send her right up. And I shall feel----" She stopped to spare him.

Then she opened the door, and ran up to her room without waiting to speak to Irene, who had come into the hall at the sound of her father's key in the door.

"I guess your mother wants to see you upstairs," said Lapham, looking away.

Her mother turned round and faced the girl's wondering look as Irene entered the chamber, so close upon her that she had not yet had time to lay off her bonnet; she stood with her wraps still on her arm.

"Irene!" she said harshly, "there is something you have got to bear. It's a mistake we've all made. He don't care anything for you. He never did. He told Pen so last night. He cares for her."

The sentences had fallen like blows. But the girl had taken them without flinching. She stood up immovable, but the delicate rose-light of her complexion went out and left her colourless. She did not offer to speak.

"Why don't you say something?" cried her mother.
"Do you want to kill me, Irene?"

"Why should I want to hurt you, mamma?" the girl replied steadily, but in an alien voice. "There's nothing to say. I want to see Pen a minute."

She turned and left the room. As she mounted the stairs that led to her own and her sister's rooms on the floor above, her mother helplessly followed. Irene went first to her own room at the front of the house, and then came out leaving the door open and the gas flaring behind her. The mother could see that she had tumbled many things out of the drawers of her bureau upon the marble top.

She passed her mother, where she stood in the entry.
"You can come too, if you want to, mamma," she said.

She opened Penelope's door without knocking, and went in. Penelope sat at the window, as in the morning. Irene did not go to her; but she went and laid a gold hair-pin on her bureau, and said, without looking at her, "There's a pin that I got to-day, because it was like his sister's. It won't become a dark person so well, but you can have it."

She stuck a scrap of paper in the side of Penelope's mirror.
"There's that account of Mr. Stanton's ranch. You'll want to read it, I presume."

She laid a withered boutonniere on the bureau beside the pin.
"There's his button-hole bouquet. He left it by his plate, and I stole it."

She had a pine-shaving fantastically tied up with a knot of ribbon, in her hand. She held it a moment; then, looking deliberately at Penelope, she went up to her, and dropped it in her lap without a word. She turned, and, advancing a few steps, tottered and seemed about to fall.

Her mother sprang forward with an imploring cry, "O 'Rene, 'Rene, 'Rene!"

Irene recovered herself before her mother could reach her. "Don't touch me," she said icily. "Mamma, I'm going to put on my things. I want papa to walk with me. I'm choking here."

"I--I can't let you go out, Irene, child," began her mother.

"You've got to," replied the girl. "Tell papa to hurry his supper."

"O poor soul! He doesn't want any supper. HE knows it too."

"I don't want to talk about that. Tell him to get ready."

She left them once more.

Mrs. Lapham turned a hapless glance upon Penelope.

"Go and tell him, mother," said the girl. "I would, if I could. If she can walk, let her. It's the only thing for her." She sat still; she did not even brush to the floor the fantastic thing that lay in her lap, and that sent up faintly the odour of the sachet powder with which Irene liked to perfume her boxes.

Lapham went out with the unhappy child, and began to talk with her, crazily, incoherently, enough.

She mercifully stopped him. "Don't talk, papa. I don't want any one should talk with me."

He obeyed, and they walked silently on and on. In their aimless course they reached the new house on the water side of Beacon, and she made him stop, and stood looking up at it. The scaffolding which had so long defaced the front was gone, and in the light of the gas-lamp before it all the architectural beauty of the facade was suggested, and much of the finely felt detail was revealed. Seymour had pretty nearly satisfied himself in that rich facade; certainly Lapham had not stinted him of the means.

"Well," said the girl, "I shall never live in it," and she began to walk on.

Lapham's sore heart went down, as he lumbered heavily after her. "Oh yes, you will, Irene. You'll have lots of good times there yet."

"No," she answered, and said nothing more about it. They had not talked of their trouble at all, and they did not speak of it now. Lapham understood that she was trying to walk herself weary, and he was glad to hold his peace

and let her have her way. She halted him once more before the red and yellow lights of an apothecary's window.

"Isn't there something they give you to make you sleep?" she asked vaguely. "I've got to sleep to-night!"

Lapham trembled. "I guess you don't want anything, Irene."

"Yes, I do! Get me something!" she retorted wilfully. "If you don't, I shall die. I MUST sleep."

They went in, and Lapham asked for something to make a nervous person sleep. Irene stood poring over the show-case full of brushes and trinkets, while the apothecary put up the bromide, which he guessed would be about the best thing. She did not show any emotion; her face was like a stone, while her father's expressed the anguish of his sympathy. He looked as if he had not slept for a week; his fat eyelids drooped over his glassy eyes, and his cheeks and throat hung flaccid. He started as the apothecary's cat stole smoothly up and rubbed itself against his leg; and it was to him that the man said, "You want to take a table-spoonful of that, as long as you're awake. I guess it won't take a great many to fetch you." "All right," said Lapham, and paid and went out. "I don't know but I SHALL want some of it," he said, with a joyless laugh.

Irene came closer up to him and took his arm. He laid his heavy paw on her gloved fingers. After a while she said, "I want you should let me go up to Lapham to-morrow."

"To Lapham? Why, to-morrow's Sunday, Irene! You can't go to-morrow."

"Well, Monday, then. I can live through one day here."

"Well," said the father passively. He made no pretence of asking her why she wished to go, nor any attempt to dissuade her.

"Give me that bottle," she said, when he opened the door at home for her, and she ran up to her own room.

The next morning Irene came to breakfast with her mother; the Colonel and Penelope did not appear, and Mrs. Lapham looked sleep-broken and careworn.

The girl glanced at her. "Don't you fret about me, mamma," she said. "I shall get along." She seemed herself as steady and strong as rock.

"I don't like to see you keeping up so, Irene,"

replied her mother. "It'll be all the worse for you when you do break. Better give way a little at the start"

"I shan't break, and I've given way all I'm going to. I'm going to Lapham to-morrow,--I want you should go with me, mamma,--and I guess I can keep up one day here. All about it is, I don't want you should say anything, or LOOK anything. And, whatever I do, I don't want you should try to stop me. And, the first thing, I'm going to take her breakfast up to her. Don't!" she cried, intercepting the protest on her mother's lips. "I shall not let it hurt Pen, if I can help it. She's never done a thing nor thought a thing to wrong me. I had to fly out at her last night; but that's all over now, and I know just what I've got to bear."

She had her way unmolested. She carried Penelope's breakfast to her, and omitted no care or attention that could make the sacrifice complete, with an heroic pretence that she was performing no unusual service. They did not speak, beyond her saying, in a clear dry note, "Here's your breakfast, Pen," and her sister's answering, hoarsely and tremulously, "Oh, thank you, Irene." And, though two or three times they turned their faces toward each other while Irene remained in the room, mechanically putting its confusion to rights, their eyes did not meet. Then Irene descended upon the other rooms, which she set in order, and some of which she fiercely swept and dusted. She made the beds; and she sent the two servants away to church as soon as they had eaten their breakfast, telling them that she would wash their dishes. Throughout the morning her father and mother heard her about the work of getting dinner, with certain silences which represented the moments when she stopped and stood stock-still, and then, readjusting her burden, forced herself forward under it again.

They sat alone in the family room, out of which their two girls seemed to have died. Lapham could not read his Sunday papers, and she had no heart to go to church, as she would have done earlier in life when in trouble. Just then she was obscurely feeling that the church was somehow to blame for that counsel of Mr. Sewell's on which they had acted.

"I should like to know," she said, having brought the matter up, "whether he would have thought it was such a light matter if it had been his own children. Do you suppose he'd have been so ready to act on his own advice if it HAD been?"

"He told us the right thing to do, Persis,--the only thing. We couldn't let it go on," urged her husband gently.

"Well, it makes me despise Pen! Irene's showing twice the character that she is, this very minute."

The mother said this so that the father might defend her daughter to her. He did not fail. "Irene's got the easiest part, the way I look at it. And you'll see that Pen'll know how to behave when the time comes."

"What do you want she should do?"

"I haven't got so far as that yet. What are we going to do about Irene?"

"What do you want Pen should do," repeated Mrs. Lapham, "when it comes to it?"

"Well, I don't want she should take him, for ONE thing," said Lapham.

This seemed to satisfy Mrs. Lapham as to her husband, and she said in defence of Corey, "Why, I don't see what HE'S done. It's all been our doing."

"Never mind that now. What about Irene?"

"She says she's going to Lapham to-morrow. She feels that she's got to get away somewhere. It's natural she should."

"Yes, and I presume it will be about the best thing FOR her. Shall you go with her?"

"Yes."

"Well." He comfortlessly took up a newspaper again, and she rose with a sigh, and went to her room to pack some things for the morrow's journey.

After dinner, when Irene had cleared away the last trace of it in kitchen and dining-room with unsparing punctilio, she came downstairs, dressed to go out, and bade her father come to walk with her again. It was a repetition of the aimlessness of the last night's wanderings. They came back, and she got tea for them, and after that they heard her stirring about in her own room, as if she were busy about many things; but they did not dare to look in upon her, even after all the noises had ceased, and they knew she had gone to bed.

"Yes; it's a thing she's got to fight out by herself," said Mrs Lapham.

"I guess she'll get along," said Lapham. "But I don't want

you should misjudge Pen either. She's all right too.
She ain't to blame."

"Yes, I know. But I can't work round to it all at once.
I shan't misjudge her, but you can't expect me to get over
it right away."

"Mamma," said Irene, when she was hurrying their departure
the next morning, "what did she tell him when he asked her?"

"Tell him?" echoed the mother; and after a while she added,
"She didn't tell him anything."

"Did she say anything, about me?"

"She said he mustn't come here any more."

Irene turned and went into her sister's room.
"Good-bye, Pen," she said, kissing her with an effect
of not seeing or touching her. "I want you should tell him
all about it. If he's half a man, he won't give up till
he knows why you won't have him; and he has a right to know."

"It wouldn't make any difference. I couldn't have
him after----"

"That's for you to say. But if you don't tell him about me,
I will."

"Rene!" "Yes! You needn't say I cared for him.
But you can say that you all thought he--cared for--me."

"O Irene----"

"Don't!" Irene escaped from the arms that tried to cast
themselves about her. "You are all right, Pen. You haven't
done anything. You've helped me all you could.
But I can't--yet."

She went out of the room and summoned Mrs. Lapham with a
sharp "Now, mamma!" and went on putting the last things
into her trunks.

The Colonel went to the station with them, and put
them on the train. He got them a little compartment
to themselves in the Pullman car; and as he stood leaning
with his lifted hands against the sides of the doorway,
he tried to say something consoling and hopeful: "I guess
you'll have an easy ride, Irene. I don't believe it'll
be dusty, any, after the rain last night."

"Don't you stay till the train starts, papa," returned the girl,
in rigid rejection of his futilities. "Get off, now."

"Well, if you want I should," he said, glad to be able to please her in anything. He remained on the platform till the cars started. He saw Irene bustling about in the compartment, making her mother comfortable for the journey; but Mrs. Lapham did not lift her head. The train moved off, and he went heavily back to his business.

From time to time during the day, when he caught a glimpse of him, Corey tried to make out from his face whether he knew what had taken place between him and Penelope. When Rogers came in about time of closing, and shut himself up with Lapham in his room, the young man remained till the two came out together and parted in their salutationless fashion.

Lapham showed no surprise at seeing Corey still there, and merely answered, "Well!" when the young man said that he wished to speak with him, and led the way back to his room.

Corey shut the door behind them. "I only wish to speak to you in case you know of the matter already; for otherwise I'm bound by a promise."

"I guess I know what you mean. It's about Penelope."

"Yes, it's about Miss Lapham. I am greatly attached to her--you'll excuse my saying it; I couldn't excuse myself if I were not."

"Perfectly excusable," said Lapham. "It's all right."

"Oh, I'm glad to hear you say that!" cried the young fellow joyfully. "I want you to believe that this isn't a new thing or an unconsidered thing with me--though it seemed so unexpected to her."

Lapham fetched a deep sigh. "It's all right as far as I'm concerned--or her mother. We've both liked you first-rate."

"Yes?"

"But there seems to be something in Penelope's mind--I don't know " The Colonel consciously dropped his eyes.

"She referred to something--I couldn't make out what--but I hoped--I hoped--that with your leave I might overcome it--the barrier--whatever it was. Miss Lapham--Penelope--gave me the hope--that I was--wasn't--indifferent to her----"

"Yes, I guess that's so," said Lapham. He suddenly lifted his head, and confronted the young fellow's honest

face with his own face, so different in its honesty.

"Sure you never made up to any one else at the same time?"

"NEVER! Who could imagine such a thing? If that's all, I can easily"

"I don't say that's all, nor that that's it. I don't want you should go upon that idea. I just thought, may be--you hadn't thought of it."

"No, I certainly hadn't thought of it! Such a thing would have been so impossible to me that I couldn't have thought of it; and it's so shocking to me now that I don't know what to say to it."

"Well, don't take it too much to heart," said Lapham, alarmed at the feeling he had excited; "I don't say she thought so. I was trying to guess--trying to----"

"If there is anything I can say or do to convince you---

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"Oh, it ain't necessary to say anything. I'm all right."

"But Miss Lapham! I may see her again? I may try to convince her that----"

He stopped in distress, and Lapham afterwards told his wife that he kept seeing the face of Irene as it looked when he parted with her in the car; and whenever he was going to say yes, he could not open his lips. At the same time he could not help feeling that Penelope had a right to what was her own, and Sewell's words came back to him. Besides, they had already put Irene to the worst suffering. Lapham compromised, as he imagined. "You can come round to-night and see ME, if you want to," he said; and he bore grimly the gratitude that the young man poured out upon him.

Penelope came down to supper and took her mother's place at the head of the table.

Lapham sat silent in her presence as long as he could bear it. Then he asked, "How do you feel to-night, Pen?"

"Oh, like a thief," said the girl. "A thief that hasn't been arrested yet."

Lapham waited a while before he said, "Well, now, your mother and I want you should hold up on that a while."

"It isn't for you to say. It's something I can't hold

up on."

"Yes, I guess you can. If I know what's happened, then what's happened is a thing that nobody is to blame for. And we want you should make the best of it and not the worst. Heigh? It aint going to help Irene any for you to hurt yourself--or anybody else; and I don't want you should take up with any such crazy notion. As far as heard from, you haven't stolen anything, and whatever you've got belongs to you."

"Has he been speaking to you, father?"

"Your mother's been speaking to me."

"Has HE been speaking to you?"

"That's neither here nor there."

"Then he's broken his word, and I will never speak to him again!"

"If he was any such fool as to promise that he wouldn't talk to me on a subject"--Lapham drew a deep breath, and then made the plunge--"that I brought up----"

"Did you bring it up?"

"The same as brought up--the quicker he broke his word the better; and I want you should act upon that idea. Recollect that it's my business, and your mother's business, as well as yours, and we're going to have our say. He hain't done anything wrong, Pen, nor anything that he's going to be punished for. Understand that. He's got to have a reason, if you're not going to have him. I don't say you've got to have him; I want you should feel perfectly free about that; but I DO say you've got to give him a reason."

"Is he coming here?"

"I don't know as you'd call it COMING----"

"Yes, you do, father!" said the girl, in forlorn amusement at his shuffling.

"He's coming here to see ME----"

"When's he coming?"

"I don't know but he's coming to-night."

"And you want I should see him I"

"I don't know but you'd better."

"All right. I'll see him."

Lapham drew a long deep breath of suspicion inspired by this acquiescence. "What you going to do?" he asked presently.

"I don't know yet," answered the girl sadly. "It depends a good deal upon what he does."

"Well," said Lapham, with the hungriness of unsatisfied anxiety in his tone. When Corey's card was brought into the family-room where he and Penelope were sitting, he went into the parlour to find him. "I guess Penelope wants to see you," he said; and, indicating the family-room, he added, "She's in there," and did not go back himself.

Corey made his way to the girl's presence with open trepidation, which was not allayed by her silence and languor. She sat in the chair where she had sat the other night, but she was not playing with a fan now.

He came toward her, and then stood faltering. A faint smile quivered over her face at the spectacle of his subjection. "Sit down, Mr. Corey," she said. "There's no reason why we shouldn't talk it over quietly; for I know you will think I'm right."

"I'm sure of that," he answered hopefully. "When I saw that your father knew of it to-day, I asked him to let me see you again. I'm afraid that I broke my promise to you--technically----"

"It had to be broken." He took more courage at her words. "But I've only come to do whatever you say, and not to be an--annoyance to you----"

"Yes, you have to know; but I couldn't tell you before. Now they all think I should."

A tremor of anxiety passed over the young man's face, on which she kept her eyes steadily fixed.

"We supposed it--it was--Irene----"

He remained blank a moment, and then he said with a smile of relief, of deprecation, of protest, of amazement, of compassion--

"OH! Never! Never for an instant! How could you think such a thing? It was impossible! I never thought of her."

But I see--I see! I can explain--no, there's nothing to explain! I have never knowingly done or said a thing from first to last to make you think that. I see how terrible it is!" he said; but he still smiled, as if he could not take it seriously. "I admired her beauty--who could help doing that?--and I thought her very good and sensible. Why, last winter in Texas, I told Stanton about our meeting in Canada, and we agreed--I only tell you to show you how far I always was from what you thought--that he must come North and try to see her, and--and--of course, it all sounds very silly!--and he sent her a newspaper with an account of his ranch in it----"

"She thought it came from you."

"Oh, good heavens! He didn't tell me till after he'd done it. But he did it for a part of our foolish joke. And when I met your sister again, I only admired her as before. I can see, now, how I must have seemed to be seeking her out; but it was to talk of you with her--I never talked of anything else if I could help it, except when I changed the subject because I was ashamed to be always talking of you. I see how distressing it is for all of you. But tell me that you believe me!"

"Yes, I must. It's all been our mistake----"

"It has indeed! But there's no mistake about my loving you, Penelope," he said; and the old-fashioned name, at which she had often mocked, was sweet to her from his lips.

"That only makes it worse!" she answered.

"Oh no!" he gently protested. "It makes it better. It makes it right. How is it worse? How is it wrong?"

"Can't you see? You must understand all now! Don't you see that if she believed so too, and if she----" She could not go on.

"Did she--did your sister--think that too?" gasped Corey.

"She used to talk with me about you; and when you say you care for me now, it makes me feel like the vilest hypocrite in the world. That day you gave her the list of books, and she came down to Nantasket, and went on about you, I helped her to flatter herself--oh! I don't see how she can forgive me. But she knows I can never forgive myself! That's the reason she can do it. I can see now," she went on, "how I must have been trying to get you from her. I can't endure it! The only way is for me never to see you or speak to you again!" She laughed forlornly. "That would be pretty hard on you,

if you cared."

"I do care--all the world!"

"Well, then, it would if you were going to keep on caring. You won't long, if you stop coming now."

"Is this all, then? Is it the end?"

"It's--whatever it is. I can't get over the thought of her. Once I thought I could, but now I see that I can't. It seems to grow worse. Sometimes I feel as if it would drive me crazy."

He sat looking at her with lacklustre eyes. The light suddenly came back into them. "Do you think I could love you if you had been false to her? I know you have been true to her, and truer still to yourself. I never tried to see her, except with the hope of seeing you too. I supposed she must know that I was in love with you. From the first time I saw you there that afternoon, you filled my fancy. Do you think I was flirting with the child, or--no, you don't think that! We have not done wrong. We have not harmed any one knowingly. We have a right to each other----"

"No! no! you must never speak to me of this again. If you do, I shall know that you despise me."

"But how will that help her? I don't love HER."

"Don't say that to me! I have said that to myself too much."

"If you forbid me to love you, it won't make me love her," he persisted.

She was about to speak, but she caught her breath without doing so, and merely stared at him. "I must do what you say," he continued. "But what good will it do her? You can't make her happy by making yourself unhappy."

"Do you ask me to profit by a wrong?"

"Not for the world. But there is no wrong!"

"There is something--I don't know what. There's a wall between us. I shall dash myself against it as long as I live; but that won't break it."

"Oh!" he groaned. "We have done no wrong. Why should we suffer from another's mistake as if it were our sin?"

"I don't know. But we must suffer."

"Well, then, I WILL not, for my part, and I will not let you.
If you care for me----"

"You had no right to know it."

"You make it my privilege to keep you from doing wrong for
the right's sake. I'm sorry, with all my heart and soul,
for this error; but I can't blame myself, and I won't deny
myself the happiness I haven't done anything to forfeit.
I will never give you up. I will wait as long as you please
for the time when you shall feel free from this mistake;
but you shall be mine at last. Remember that. I might go
away for months--a year, even; but that seems a cowardly
and guilty thing, and I'm not afraid, and I'm not guilty,
and I'm going to stay here and try to see you."

She shook her head. "It won't change anything? Don't
you see that there's no hope for us?"

"When is she coming back?" he asked.

"I don't know. Mother wants father to come and take
her out West for a while."

"She's up there in the country with your mother yet?"

"Yes."

He was silent; then he said desperately--

"Penelope, she is very young; and perhaps--perhaps she
might meet----"

"It would make no difference. It wouldn't change it
for me."

"You are cruel--cruel to yourself, if you love me,
and cruel to me. Don't you remember that night--before
I spoke--you were talking of that book; and you said it
was foolish and wicked to do as that girl did. Why is
it different with you, except that you give me nothing,
and can never give me anything when you take yourself away?
If it were anybody else, I am sure you would say----"

"But it isn't anybody else, and that makes it impossible.
Sometimes I think it might be if I would only say
so to myself, and then all that I said to her about you
comes up----"

"I will wait. It can't always come up. I won't urge
you any longer now. But you will see it differently--
more clearly. Good-bye--no! Good night! I shall come again

to-morrow. It will surely come right, and, whatever happens, you have done no wrong. Try to keep that in mind. I am so happy, in spite of all!"

He tried to take her hand, but she put it behind her. "No, no! I can't let you--yet!"

XX.

AFTER a week Mrs. Lapham returned, leaving Irene alone at the old homestead in Vermont. "She's comfortable there--as comfortable as she can be anywheres, I guess," she said to her husband as they drove together from the station, where he had met her in obedience to her telegraphic summons. "She keeps herself busy helping about the house; and she goes round amongst the hands in their houses. There's sickness, and you know how helpful she is where there's sickness. She don't complain any. I don't know as I've heard a word out of her mouth since we left home; but I'm afraid it'll wear on her, Silas."

"You don't look over and above well yourself, Persis," said her husband kindly.

"Oh, don't talk about me. What I want to know is whether you can't get the time to run off with her somewhere. I wrote to you about Dubuque. She'll work herself down, I'm afraid; and THEN I don't know as she'll be over it. But if she could go off, and be amused--see new people----"

"I could MAKE the time," said Lapham, "if I had to. But, as it happens, I've got to go out West on business,--I'll tell you about it,--and I'll take Irene along."

"Good!" said his wife. "That's about the best thing I've heard yet. Where you going?"

"Out Dubuque way."

"Anything the matter with Bill's folks?"

"No. It's business."

"How's Pen?"

"I guess she ain't much better than Irene."

"He been about any?"

"Yes. But I can't see as it helps matters much."

"Tchk!" Mrs. Lapham fell back against the carriage cushions.
"I declare, to see her willing to take the man that we all thought wanted her sister! I can't make it seem right."

"It's right," said Lapham stoutly; "but I guess she ain't willing; I wish she was. But there don't seem to be any way out of the thing, anywhere. It's a perfect snarl. But I don't want you should be anyways ha'sh with Pen."

Mrs. Lapham answered nothing; but when she met Penelope she gave the girl's wan face a sharp look, and began to whimper on her neck.

Penelope's tears were all spent. "Well, mother," she said, "you come back almost as cheerful as you went away. I needn't ask if 'Rene's in good spirits. We all seem to be overflowing with them. I suppose this is one way of congratulating me. Mrs. Corey hasn't been round to do it yet."

"Are you--are you engaged to him, Pen?" gasped her mother.

"Judging by my feelings, I should say not. I feel as if it was a last will and testament. But you'd better ask him when he comes."

"I can't bear to look at him."

"I guess he's used to that. He don't seem to expect to be looked at. Well! we're all just where we started. I wonder how long it will keep up."

Mrs. Lapham reported to her husband when he came home at night--he had left his business to go and meet her, and then, after a desolate dinner at the house, had returned to the office again--that Penelope was fully as bad as Irene. "And she don't know how to work it off. Irene keeps doing; but Pen just sits in her room and mopes. She don't even read. I went up this afternoon to scold her about the state the house was in--you can see that Irene's away by the perfect mess; but when I saw her through the crack of the door I hadn't the heart. She sat there with her hands in her lap, just staring. And, my goodness! she JUMPED so when she saw me; and then she fell back, and began to laugh, and said she, 'I thought it was my ghost, mother!' I felt as if I should give way."

Lapham listened jadedly, and answered far from the point.
"I guess I've got to start out there pretty soon, Persis."

"How soon?"

"Well, to-morrow morning."

Mrs. Lapham sat silent. Then, "All right," she said.

"I'll get you ready."

"I shall run up to Lapham for Irene, and then I'll push on through Canada. I can get there about as quick."

"Is it anything you can tell me about, Silas?"

"Yes," said Lapham. "But it's a long story, and I guess you've got your hands pretty full as it is.

I've been throwing good money after bad,--the usual way,-- and now I've got to see if I can save the pieces."

After a moment Mrs. Lapham asked, "Is it--Rogers?"

"It's Rogers."

"I didn't want you should get in any deeper with him."

"No. You didn't want I should press him either; and I had to do one or the other. And so I got in deeper."

"Silas," said his wife, "I'm afraid I made you!"

"It's all right, Persis, as far forth as that goes.

I was glad to make it up with him--I jumped at the chance.

I guess Rogers saw that he had a soft thing in me, and he's worked it for all it was worth. But it'll all come out right in the end."

Lapham said this as if he did not care to talk any more about it. He added casually, "Pretty near everybody but the fellows that owe ME seem to expect me to do a cash business, all of a sudden."

"Do you mean that you've got payments to make, and that people are not paying YOU?"

Lapham winced a little. "Something like that," he said, and he lighted a cigar. "But when I tell you it's all right, I mean it, Persis. I ain't going to let the grass grow under my feet, though,--especially while Rogers digs the ground away from the roots."

"What are you going to do?"

"If it has to come to that, I'm going to squeeze him."

Lapham's countenance lighted up with greater joy than had yet visited it since the day they had driven out to Brookline.

"Milton K. Rogers is a rascal, if you want to know;

or else all the signs fail. But I guess he'll find he's got his come-uppance." Lapham shut his lips so that the short, reddish-grey beard stuck straight out on them.

"What's he done?"

"What's he done? Well, now, I'll tell you what he's done, Persis, since you think Rogers is such a saint, and that I used him so badly in getting him out of the business. He's been dabbling in every sort of fool thing you can lay your tongue to,--wild-cat stocks, patent-rights, land speculations, oil claims,--till he's run through about everything. But he did have a big milling property out on the line of the P. Y. & X.,--saw-mills and grist-mills and lands,--and for the last eight years he's been doing a land-office business with 'em--business that would have made anybody else rich. But you can't make Milton K. Rogers rich, any more than you can fat a hide-bound colt. It ain't in him. He'd run through Vanderbilt, Jay Gould, and Tom Scott rolled into one in less than six months, give him a chance, and come out and want to borrow money of you. Well, he won't borrow any more money of ME; and if he thinks I don't know as much about that milling property as he does he's mistaken. I've taken his mills, but I guess I've got the inside track; Bill's kept me posted; and now I'm going out there to see how I can unload; and I shan't mind a great deal if Rogers is under the load when it's off once."

"I don't understand you, Silas."

"Why, it's just this. The Great Lacustrine & Polar Railroad has leased the P. Y. & X. for ninety-nine years,--bought it, practically,--and it's going to build car-works right by those mills, and it may want them. And Milton K. Rogers knew it when he turned 'em in on me."

"Well, if the road wants them, don't that make the mills valuable? You can get what you ask for them!"

"Can I?" The P. Y. & X. is the only road that runs within fifty miles of the mills, and you can't get a foot of lumber nor a pound of flour to market any other way. As long as he had a little local road like the P. Y. & X. to deal with, Rogers could manage; but when it come to a big through line like the G. L. & P., he couldn't stand any chance at all. If such a road as that took a fancy to his mills, do you think it would pay what he asked? No, sir! He would take what the road offered, or else the road would tell him to carry his flour and lumber to market himself."

"And do you suppose he knew the G. L. & P. wanted the mills

when he turned them in on you?" asked Mrs. Lapham aghast, and falling helplessly into his alphabetical parlance.

The Colonel laughed scoffingly. "Well, when Milton K. Rogers don't know which side his bread's buttered on! I don't understand," he added thoughtfully, "how he's always letting it fall on the buttered side. But such a man as that is sure to have a screw loose in him somewhere." Mrs. Lapham sat discomfited. All that she could say was, "Well, I want you should ask yourself whether Rogers would ever have gone wrong, or got into these ways of his, if it hadn't been for your forcing him out of the business when you did. I want you should think whether you're not responsible for everything he's done since."

"You go and get that bag of mine ready," said Lapham sullenly. "I guess I can take care of myself. And Milton K. Rogers too," he added.

That evening Corey spent the time after dinner in his own room, with restless excursions to the library, where his mother sat with his father and sisters, and showed no signs of leaving them. At last, in coming down, he encountered her on the stairs, going up. They both stopped consciously.

"I would like to speak with you, mother. I have been waiting to see you alone."

"Come to my room," she said.

"I have a feeling that you know what I want to say," he began there.

She looked up at him where he stood by the chimney-piece, and tried to put a cheerful note into her questioning "Yes?"

"Yes; and I have a feeling that you won't like it--that you won't approve of it. I wish you did--I wish you could!"

"I'm used to liking and approving everything you do, Tom. If I don't like this at once, I shall try to like it--you know that--for your sake, whatever it is."

"I'd better be short," he said, with a quick sigh. "It's about Miss Lapham." He hastened to add, "I hope it isn't surprising to you. I'd have told you before, if I could."

"No, it isn't surprising. I was afraid--I suspected something of the kind."

They were both silent in a painful silence.

"Well, mother?" he asked at last.

"If it's something you've quite made up mind to----"

"It is!"

"And if you've already spoken to her----"

"I had to do that first, of course."

"There would be no use of my saying anything, even if I disliked it."

"You do dislike it!"

"No--no! I can't say that. Of course I should have preferred it if you had chosen some nice girl among those that you had been brought up with--some friend or associate of your sisters, whose people we had known----"

"Yes, I understand that, and I can assure you that I haven't been indifferent to your feelings. I have tried to consider them from the first, and it kept me hesitating in a way that I'm ashamed to think of; for it wasn't quite right towards--others. But your feelings and my sisters' have been in my mind, and if I couldn't yield to what I supposed they must be, entirely----"

Even so good a son and brother as this, when it came to his love affair, appeared to think that he had yielded much in considering the feelings of his family at all.

His mother hastened to comfort him. "I know--I know. I've seen for some time that this might happen, Tom, and I have prepared myself for it. I have talked it over with your father, and we both agreed from the beginning that you were not to be hampered by our feeling. Still--it is a surprise. It must be."

"I know it. I can understand your feeling. But I'm sure that it's one that will last only while you don't know her well."

"Oh, I'm sure of that, Tom. I'm sure that we shall all be fond of her,--for your sake at first, even--and I hope she'll like us."

"I am quite certain of that," said Corey, with that confidence which experience does not always confirm in such cases. "And your taking it as you do lifts a tremendous load off me."

But he sighed so heavily, and looked so troubled, that his mother said, "Well, now, you mustn't think of that any more. We wish what is for your happiness, my son, and we will gladly reconcile ourselves to anything that might have been disagreeable. I suppose we needn't speak of the family. We must both think alike about them. They have their--drawbacks, but they are thoroughly good people, and I satisfied myself the other night that they were not to be dreaded." She rose, and put her arm round his neck. "And I wish you joy, Tom! If she's half as good as you are, you will both be very happy." She was going to kiss him, but something in his looks stopped her--an absence, a trouble, which broke out in his words.

"I must tell you, mother! There's been a complication--a mistake--that's a blight on me yet, and that it sometimes seems as if we couldn't escape from. I wonder if you can help us! They all thought I meant--the other sister."

"O Tom! But how COULD they?"

"I don't know. It seemed so glaringly plain--I was ashamed of making it so outright from the beginning. But they did. Even she did, herself!"

"But where could they have thought your eyes were--your taste? It wouldn't be surprising if any one were taken with that wonderful beauty; and I'm sure she's good too. But I'm astonished at them! To think you could prefer that little, black, odd creature, with her joking and----"

"MOTHER!" cried the young man, turning a ghastly face of warning upon her.

"What do you mean, Tom?"

"Did you--did--did you think so too--that it was IRENE I meant?"

"Why, of course!"

He stared at her hopelessly.

"O my son!" she said, for all comment on the situation.

"Don't reproach me, mother! I couldn't stand it."

"No. I didn't mean to do that. But how--HOW could it happen?"

"I don't know. When she first told me that they had understood it so, I laughed--almost--it was so far from me. But now when you seem to have had the same idea--Did you

all think so?"

"Yes."

They remained looking at each other. Then Mrs. Corey began: "It did pass through my mind once--that day I went to call upon them--that it might not be as we thought; but I knew so little of--of----"

"Penelope," Corey mechanically supplied.

"Is that her name?--I forgot--that I only thought of you in relation to her long enough to reject the idea; and it was natural after our seeing something of the other one last year, that I might suppose you had formed some--attachment----"

"Yes; that's what they thought too. But I never thought of her as anything but a pretty child. I was civil to her because you wished it; and when I met her here again, I only tried to see her so that I could talk with her about her sister."

"You needn't defend yourself to ME, Tom," said his mother, proud to say it to him in his trouble. "It's a terrible business for them, poor things," she added. "I don't know how they could get over it. But, of course, sensible people must see----"

"They haven't got over it. At least she hasn't. Since it's happened, there's been nothing that hasn't made me prouder and fonder of her! At first I WAS charmed with her--my fancy was taken; she delighted me--I don't know how; but she was simply the most fascinating person I ever saw. Now I never think of that. I only think how good she is--how patient she is with me, and how unsparing she is of herself. If she were concerned alone--if I were not concerned too--it would soon end. She's never had a thought for anything but her sister's feeling and mine from the beginning. I go there,--I know that I oughtn't, but I can't help it,--and she suffers it, and tries not to let me see that she is suffering it. There never was any one like her--so brave, so true, so noble. I won't give her up--I can't. But it breaks my heart when she accuses herself of what was all MY doing. We spend our time trying to reason out of it, but we always come back to it at last, and I have to hear her morbidly blaming herself. Oh!"

Doubtless Mrs. Corey imagined some reliefs to this suffering, some qualifications of this sublimity in a girl she had disliked so distinctly; but she saw none in her son's behaviour, and she gave him her further sympathy. She tried to praise Penelope, and said that it was

not to be expected that she could reconcile herself at once to everything. "I shouldn't have liked it in her if she had. But time will bring it all right. And if she really cares for you----"

"I extorted that from her."

"Well, then, you must look at it in the best light you can. There is no blame anywhere, and the mortification and pain is something that must be lived down. That's all. And don't let what I said grieve you, Tom. You know I scarcely knew her, and I--I shall be sure to like any one you like, after all."

"Yes, I know," said the young man drearily. "Will you tell father?"

"If you wish."

"He must know. And I couldn't stand any more of this, just yet--any more mistake."

"I will tell him," said Mrs. Corey; and it was naturally the next thing for a woman who dwelt so much on decencies to propose: "We must go to call on her--your sisters and I. They have never seen her even; and she mustn't be allowed to think we're indifferent to her, especially under the circumstances."

"Oh no! Don't go--not yet," cried Corey, with an instinctive perception that nothing could be worse for him.

"We must wait--we must be patient. I'm afraid it would be painful to her now."

He turned away without speaking further; and his mother's eyes followed him wistfully to the door. There were some questions that she would have liked to ask him; but she had to content herself with trying to answer them when her husband put them to her.

There was this comfort for her always in Bromfield Corey, that he never was much surprised at anything, however shocking or painful. His standpoint in regard to most matters was that of the sympathetic humorist who would be glad to have the victim of circumstance laugh with him, but was not too much vexed when the victim could not. He laughed now when his wife, with careful preparation, got the facts of his son's predicament fully under his eye.

"Really, Bromfield," she said, "I don't see how you can laugh. Do you see any way out of it?"

"It seems to me that the way has been found already. Tom has told his love to the right one, and the wrong one knows it. Time will do the rest."

"If I had so low an opinion of them all as that, it would make me very unhappy. It's shocking to think of it."

"It is upon the theory of ladies and all young people," said her husband, with a shrug, feeling his way to the matches on the mantel, and then dropping them with a sign, as if recollecting that he must not smoke there.

"I've no doubt Tom feels himself an awful sinner. But apparently he's resigned to his sin; he isn't going to give her up."

"I'm glad to say, for the sake of human nature, that SHE isn't resigned--little as I like her," cried Mrs. Corey.

Her husband shrugged again. "Oh, there mustn't be any indecent haste. She will instinctively observe the proprieties. But come, now, Anna! you mustn't pretend to me here, in the sanctuary of home, that practically the human affections don't reconcile themselves to any situation that the human sentiments condemn. Suppose the wrong sister had died: would the right one have had any scruple in marrying Tom, after they had both 'waited a proper time,' as the phrase is?"

"Bromfield, you're shocking!"

"Not more shocking than reality. You may regard this as a second marriage." He looked at her with twinkling eyes, full of the triumph the spectator of his species feels in signal exhibitions of human nature. "Depend upon it, the right sister will be reconciled; the wrong one will be consoled; and all will go merry as a marriage bell--a second marriage bell. Why, it's quite like a romance!" Here he laughed outright again.

"Well," sighed the wife, "I could almost wish the right one, as you call her, would reject Tom, I dislike her so much."

"Ah, now you're talking business, Anna," said her husband, with his hands spread behind the back he turned comfortably to the fire. "The whole Lapham tribe is distasteful to me. As I don't happen to have seen our daughter-in-law elect, I have still the hope--which you're disposed to forbid me--that she may not be quite so unacceptable as the others."

"Do you really feel so, Bromfield?" anxiously inquired his wife.

"Yes--I think I do; "and he sat down, and stretched

out his long legs toward the fire.

"But it's very inconsistent of you to oppose the matter now, when you've shown so much indifference up to this time. You've told me, all along, that it was of no use to oppose it."

"So I have. I was convinced of that at the beginning, or my reason was. You know very well that I am equal to any trial, any sacrifice, day after to-morrow; but when it comes to-day it's another thing. As long as this crisis decently kept its distance, I could look at it with an impartial eye; but now that it seems at hand, I find that, while my reason is still acquiescent, my nerves are disposed to--excuse the phrase--kick. I ask myself, what have I done nothing for, all my life, and lived as a gentleman should, upon the earnings of somebody else, in the possession of every polite taste and feeling that adorns leisure, if I'm to come to this at last? And I find no satisfactory answer. I say to myself that I might as well have yielded to the pressure all round me, and gone to work, as Tom has.

Mrs. Corey looked at him forlornly, divining the core of real repugnance that existed in his self-satire.

"I assure you, my dear," he continued, "that the recollection of what I suffered from the Laphams at that dinner of yours is an anguish still. It wasn't their behaviour,--they behaved well enough--or ill enough; but their conversation was terrible. Mrs. Lapham's range was strictly domestic; and when the Colonel got me in the library, he poured mineral paint all over me, till I could have been safely warranted not to crack or scale in any climate. I suppose we shall have to see a good deal of them. They will probably come here every Sunday night to tea. It's a perspective without a vanishing-point."

"It may not be so bad, after all," said his wife; and she suggested for his consolation that he knew very little about the Laphams yet.

He assented to the fact. "I know very little about them, and about my other fellow-beings. I dare say that I should like the Laphams better if I knew them better. But in any case, I resign myself. And we must keep in view the fact that this is mainly Tom's affair, and if his affections have regulated it to his satisfaction, we must be content."

"Oh yes," sighed Mrs. Corey. "And perhaps it won't turn out so badly. It's a great comfort to know that you feel just as I do about it."

"I do," said her husband, "and more too."

It was she and her daughters who would be chiefly annoyed by the Lapham connection; she knew that. But she had to begin to bear the burden by helping her husband to bear his light share of it. To see him so depressed dismayed her, and she might well have reproached him more sharply than she did for showing so much indifference, when she was so anxious, at first. But that would not have served any good end now. She even answered him patiently when he asked her, "What did you say to Tom when he told you it was the other one?"

"What could I say? I could do nothing, but try to take back what I had said against her."

"Yes, you had quite enough to do, I suppose. It's an awkward business. If it had been the pretty one, her beauty would have been our excuse. But the plain one--what do you suppose attracted him in her?"

Mrs. Corey sighed at the futility of the question. "Perhaps I did her injustice. I only saw her a few moments. Perhaps I got a false impression. I don't think she's lacking in sense, and that's a great thing. She'll be quick to see that we don't mean unkindness, and can't, by anything we say or do, when she's Tom's wife." She pronounced the distasteful word with courage, and went on: "The pretty one might not have been able to see that. She might have got it into her head that we were looking down on her; and those insipid people are terribly stubborn. We can come to some understanding with this one; I'm sure of that." She ended by declaring that it was now their duty to help Tom out of his terrible predicament.

"Oh, even the Lapham cloud has a silver lining," said Corey. "In fact, it seems really to have all turned out for the best, Anna; though it's rather curious to find you the champion of the Lapham side, at last. Confess, now, that the right girl has secretly been your choice all along, and that while you sympathise with the wrong one, you rejoice in the tenacity with which the right one is clinging to her own!" He added with final seriousness, "It's just that she should, and, so far as I understand the case, I respect her for it."

"Oh yes," sighed Mrs. Corey. "It's natural, and it's right." But she added, "I suppose they're glad of him on any terms."

"That is what I have been taught to believe," said her husband. "When shall we see our daughter-in-law elect? I find myself rather impatient to have that part of it over."

Mrs. Corey hesitated. "Tom thinks we had better not call, just yet."

"She has told him of your terrible behaviour when you called before?"

"No, Bromfield! She couldn't be so vulgar as that?"

"But anything short of it?"

XXI.

LAPHAM was gone a fortnight. He was in a sullen humour when he came back, and kept himself shut close within his own den at the office the first day. He entered it in the morning without a word to his clerks as he passed through the outer room, and he made no sign throughout the forenoon, except to strike savagely on his desk-bell from time to time, and send out to Walker for some book of accounts or a letter-file. His boy confidentially reported to Walker that the old man seemed to have got a lot of papers round; and at lunch the book-keeper said to Corey, at the little table which they had taken in a corner together, in default of seats at the counter, "Well, sir, I guess there's a cold wave coming."

Corey looked up innocently, and said, "I haven't read the weather report."

"Yes, sir," Walker continued, "it's coming. Areas of rain along the whole coast, and increased pressure in the region of the private office. Storm-signals up at the old man's door now."

Corey perceived that he was speaking figuratively, and that his meteorology was entirely personal to Lapham. "What do you mean?" he asked, without vivid interest in the allegory, his mind being full of his own tragi-comedy.

"Why, just this: I guess the old man's takin' in sail. And I guess he's got to. As I told you the first time we talked about him, there don't any one know one-quarter as much about the old man's business as the old man does himself; and I ain't betraying any confidence when I say that I guess that old partner of his has got pretty deep into his books. I guess he's over head and ears in 'em, and the old man's gone in after him, and he's got a drownin' man's grip round his neck. There seems to be a kind of a lull--kind of a dead calm,

I call it--in the paint market just now; and then again a ten-hundred-thousand-dollar man don't build a hundred-thousand-dollar house without feeling the drain, unless there's a regular boom. And just now there ain't any boom at all. Oh, I don't say but what the old man's got anchors to windward; guess he HAS; but if he's GOIN' to leave me his money, I wish he'd left it six weeks ago. Yes, sir, I guess there's a cold wave comin'; but you can't generally 'most always tell, as a usual thing, where the old man's concerned, and it's ONLY a guess." Walker began to feed in his breaded chop with the same nervous excitement with which he abandoned himself to the slangy and figurative excesses of his talks. Corey had listened with a miserable curiosity and compassion up to a certain moment, when a broad light of hope flashed upon him. It came from Lapham's potential ruin; and the way out of the labyrinth that had hitherto seemed so hopeless was clear enough, if another's disaster would befriend him, and give him the opportunity to prove the unselfishness of his constancy. He thought of the sum of money that was his own, and that he might offer to lend, or practically give, if the time came; and with his crude hopes and purposes formlessly exulting in his heart, he kept on listening with an unchanged countenance.

Walker could not rest till he had developed the whole situation, so far as he knew it. "Look at the stock we've got on hand. There's going to be an awful shrinkage on that, now! And when everybody is shutting down, or running half-time, the works up at Lapham are going full chip, just the same as ever. Well, it's his pride. I don't say but what it's a good sort of pride, but he likes to make his brags that the fire's never been out in the works since they started, and that no man's work or wages has ever been cut down yet at Lapham, it don't matter WHAT the times are. Of course," explained Walker, "I shouldn't talk so to everybody; don't know as I should talk so to anybody but you, Mr. Corey."

"Of course," assented Corey.

"Little off your feed to-day," said Walker, glancing at Corey's plate.

"I got up with a headache."

"Well, sir, if you're like me you'll carry it round all day, then. I don't know a much meaner thing than a headache--unless it's earache, or toothache, or some other kind of ache I'm pretty hard to suit, when it comes to diseases. Notice how yellow the old man looked when he came in this morning? I don't like to see a man of his build look yellow--much." About the middle

of the afternoon the dust-coloured face of Rogers, now familiar to Lapham's clerks, showed itself among them. "Has Colonel Lapham returned yet?" he asked, in his dry, wooden tones, of Lapham's boy.

"Yes, he's in his office," said the boy; and as Rogers advanced, he rose and added, "I don't know as you can see him to-day. His orders are not to let anybody in."

"Oh, indeed!" said Rogers; "I think he will see ME!" and he pressed forward.

"Well, I'll have to ask," returned the boy; and hastily preceding Rogers, he put his head in at Lapham's door, and then withdrew it. "Please to sit down," he said; "he'll see you pretty soon;" and, with an air of some surprise, Rogers obeyed. His sere, dull-brown whiskers and the moustache closing over both lips were incongruously and illogically clerical in effect, and the effect was heightened for no reason by the parchment texture of his skin; the baldness extending to the crown of his head was like a baldness made up for the stage. What his face expressed chiefly was a bland and beneficent caution. Here, you must have said to yourself, is a man of just, sober, and prudent views, fixed purposes, and the good citizenship that avoids debt and hazard of every kind.

"What do you want?" asked Lapham, wheeling round in his swivel-chair as Rogers entered his room, and pushing the door shut with his foot, without rising.

Rogers took the chair that was not offered him, and sat with his hat-brim on his knees, and its crown pointed towards Lapham. "I want to know what you are going to do," he answered with sufficient self-possession.

"I'll tell you, first, what I've done," said Lapham. "I've been to Dubuque, and I've found out all about that milling property you turned in on me. Did you know that the G. L. & P. had leased the P. Y. & X.?"

"I some suspected that it might."

"Did you know it when you turned the property in on me? Did you know that the G. L. & P. wanted to buy the mills?"

"I presumed the road would give a fair price for them," said Rogers, winking his eyes in outward expression of inwardly blinking the point.

"You lie," said Lapham, as quietly as if correcting him in a slight error; and Rogers took the word with equal sang froid. "You knew the road wouldn't give a fair price

for the mills. You knew it would give what it chose, and that I couldn't help myself, when you let me take them. You're a thief, Milton K. Rogers, and you stole money I lent you." Rogers sat listening, as if respectfully considering the statements. "You knew how I felt about that old matter--or my wife did; and that I wanted to make it up to you, if you felt anyway badly used. And you took advantage of it. You've got money out of me, in the first place, on securities that wa'n't worth thirty-five cents on the dollar, and you've let me in for this thing, and that thing, and you've bled me every time. And all I've got to show for it is a milling property on a line of road that can squeeze me, whenever it wants to, as dry as it pleases. And you want to know what I'm going to do? I'm going to squeeze YOU. I'm going to sell these collaterals of yours,"--he touched a bundle of papers among others that littered his desk,--"and I'm going to let the mills go for what they'll fetch. I ain't going to fight the G. L. & P."

Lapham wheeled about in his chair and turned his burly back on his visitor, who sat wholly unmoved.

"There are some parties," he began, with a dry tranquillity ignoring Lapham's words, as if they had been an outburst against some third person, who probably merited them, but in whom he was so little interested that he had been obliged to use patience in listening to his condemnation,--"there are some English parties who have been making inquiries in regard to those mills."

"I guess you're lying, Rogers," said Lapham, without looking round.

"Well, all that I have to ask is that you will not act hastily."

"I see you don't think I'm in earnest!" cried Lapham, facing fiercely about. "You think I'm fooling, do you?" He struck his bell, and "William," he ordered the boy who answered it, and who stood waiting while he dashed off a note to the brokers and enclosed it with the bundle of securities in a large envelope, "take these down to Gallop & Paddock's, in State Street, right away. Now go!" he said to Rogers, when the boy had closed the door after him; and he turned once more to his desk.

Rogers rose from his chair, and stood with his hat in his hand. He was not merely dispassionate in his attitude and expression, he was impartial. He wore the air of a man who was ready to return to business whenever the wayward mood of his interlocutor permitted. "Then I understand," he said, "that you will take no action in regard to the mills till I have seen the parties I speak of."

Lapham faced about once more, and sat looking up into the visage of Rogers in silence. "I wonder what you're up to," he said at last; "I should like to know." But as Rogers made no sign of gratifying his curiosity, and treated this last remark of Lapham's as of the irrelevance of all the rest, he said, frowning, "You bring me a party that will give me enough for those mills to clear me of you, and I'll talk to you. But don't you come here with any man of straw. And I'll give you just twenty-four hours to prove yourself a swindler again."

Once more Lapham turned his back, and Rogers, after looking thoughtfully into his hat a moment, cleared his throat, and quietly withdrew, maintaining to the last his unprejudiced demeanour.

Lapham was not again heard from, as Walker phrased it, during the afternoon, except when the last mail was taken in to him; then the sound of rending envelopes, mixed with that of what seemed suppressed swearing, penetrated to the outer office. Somewhat earlier than the usual hour for closing, he appeared there with his hat on and his overcoat buttoned about him. He said briefly to his boy, "William, I shan't be back again this afternoon," and then went to Miss Dewey and left a number of letters on her table to be copied, and went out. Nothing had been said, but a sense of trouble subtly diffused itself through those who saw him go out.

That evening as he sat down with his wife alone at tea, he asked, "Ain't Pen coming to supper?"

"No, she ain't," said his wife. "I don't know as I like the way she's going on, any too well. I'm afraid, if she keeps on, she'll be down sick. She's got deeper feelings than Irene."

Lapham said nothing, but having helped himself to the abundance of his table in his usual fashion, he sat and looked at his plate with an indifference that did not escape the notice of his wife. "What's the matter with YOU?" she asked.

"Nothing. I haven't got any appetite."

"What's the matter?" she persisted.

"Trouble's the matter; bad luck and lots of it's the matter," said Lapham. "I haven't ever hid anything from you, Persis, well you asked me, and it's too late to begin now. I'm in a fix. I'll tell you what kind of a fix, if you think it'll do you any good; but I guess you'll

be satisfied to know that it's a fix."

"How much of a one?" she asked with a look of grave, steady courage in her eyes.

"Well, I don't know as I can tell, just yet," said Lapham, avoiding this look. "Things have been dull all the fall, but I thought they'd brisk up come winter. They haven't. There have been a lot of failures, and some of 'em owed me, and some of 'em had me on their paper; and----" Lapham stopped.

"And what?" prompted his wife.

He hesitated before he added, "And then--Rogers."

"I'm to blame for that," said Mrs. Lapham. "I forced you to it."

"No; I was as willing to go into it as what you were," answered Lapham. "I don't want to blame anybody."

Mrs. Lapham had a woman's passion for fixing responsibility; she could not help saying, as soon as acquitted, "I warned you against him, Silas. I told you not to let him get in any deeper with you."

"Oh yes. I had to help him to try to get my money back. I might as well poured water into a sieve. And now--" Lapham stopped.

"Don't be afraid to speak out to me, Silas Lapham. If it comes to the worst, I want to know it--I've got to know it. What did I ever care for the money? I've had a happy home with you ever since we were married, and I guess I shall have as long as you live, whether we go on to the Back Bay, or go back to the old house at Lapham. I know who's to blame, and I blame myself. It was my forcing Rogers on to you." She came back to this with her helpless longing, inbred in all Puritan souls, to have some one specifically suffer for the evil in the world, even if it must be herself.

"It hasn't come to the worst yet, Persis," said her husband. "But I shall have to hold up on the new house a little while, till I can see where I am."

"I shouldn't care if we had to sell it," cried his wife, in passionate self-condemnation. "I should be GLAD if we had to, as far as I'm concerned."

"I shouldn't," said Lapham.

"I know!" said his wife; and she remembered ruefully

how his heart was set on it.

He sat musing. "Well, I guess it's going to come out all right in the end. Or, if it ain't," he sighed, "we can't help it. May be Pen needn't worry so much about Corey, after all," he continued, with a bitter irony new to him. "It's an ill wind that blows nobody good. And there's a chance," he ended, with a still bitterer laugh, "that Rogers will come to time, after all."

"I don't believe it!" exclaimed Mrs. Lapham, with a gleam of hope in her eyes. "What chance?"

"One in ten million," said Lapham; and her face fell again. "He says there are some English parties after him to buy these mills."

"Well?"

"Well, I gave him twenty-four hours to prove himself a liar."

"You don't believe there are any such parties?"

"Not in THIS world."

"But if there were?"

"Well, if there were, Persis----But pshaw!"

"No, no!" she pleaded eagerly. "It don't seem as if he COULD be such a villain. What would be the use of his pretending? If he brought the parties to you"

"Well," said Lapham scornfully, "I'd let them have the mills at the price Rogers turned 'em in on me at. I don't want to make anything on 'em. But guess I shall hear from the G. L. & P. first. And when they make their offer, I guess I'll have to accept it, whatever it is. I don't think they'll have a great many competitors."

Mrs. Lapham could not give up her hope. "If you could get your price from those English parties before they knew that the G. L. & P. wanted to buy the mills, would it let you out with Rogers?"

"Just about," said Lapham.

"Then I know he'll move heaven and earth to bring it about. I KNOW you won't be allowed to suffer for doing him a kindness, Silas. He CAN'T be so ungrateful! Why, why SHOULD he pretend to have any such parties in view when he hasn't? Don't you be down-hearted, Si. You'll see

that he'll be round with them to-morrow."

Lapham laughed, but she urged so many reasons for her belief in Rogers that Lapham began to rekindle his own faith a little.

He ended by asking for a hot cup of tea; and Mrs. Lapham sent the pot out and had a fresh one steeped for him.

After that he made a hearty supper in the revulsion from his entire despair; and they fell asleep that night talking hopefully of his affairs, which he laid before her fully, as he used to do when he first started in business.

That brought the old times back, and he said: "If this had happened then, I shouldn't have cared much.

I was young then, and I wasn't afraid of anything.

But I noticed that after I passed fifty I began to get scared easier. I don't believe I could pick up, now, from a regular knock-down."

"Pshaw! YOU scared, Silas Lapham?" cried his wife proudly.

"I should like to see the thing that ever scared you; or the knockdown that YOU couldn't pick up from!"

"Is that so, Persis?" he asked, with the joy her courage gave him.

In the middle of the night she called to him, in a voice which the darkness rendered still more deeply troubled: "Are you awake, Silas?"

"Yes; I'm awake."

"I've been thinking about those English parties, Si----"

"So've I."

"And I can't make it out but what you'd be just as bad as Rogers, every bit and grain, if you were to let them have the mills----"

"And not tell 'em what the chances were with the G. L. & P.? I thought of that, and you needn't be afraid."

She began to bewail herself, and to sob convulsively: "O Silas! O Silas!" Heaven knows in what measure the passion of her soul was mired with pride in her husband's honesty, relief from an apprehended struggle, and pity for him.

"Hush, hush, Persis!" he besought her. "You'll wake Pen if you keep on that way. Don't cry any more! You mustn't."

"Oh, let me cry, Silas! It'll help me. I shall be all right in a minute. Don't you mind." She sobbed herself quiet.

"It does seem too hard," she said, when she could speak again, "that you have to give up this chance when Providence

had fairly raised it up for you."

"I guess it wa'n't Providence raised it up," said Lapham.
"Any rate, it's got to go. Most likely Rogers was lyin',
and there ain't any such parties; but if there were,
they couldn't have the mills from me without the whole story.
Don't you be troubled, Persis. I'm going to pull
through all right." "Oh, I ain't afraid. I don't suppose
but what there's plenty would help you, if they knew you
needed it, Si."

"They would if they knew I DIDN'T need it,"
said Lapham sardonically.

"Did you tell Bill how you stood?"

"No, I couldn't bear to. I've been the rich one so long,
that I couldn't bring myself to own up that I was in danger."

"Yes."

"Besides, it didn't look so ugly till to-day. But I guess
we shan't let ugly looks scare us."

"No."

XXII.

THE morning postman brought Mrs. Lapham a letter from Irene,
which was chiefly significant because it made no
reference whatever to the writer or her state of mind.
It gave the news of her uncle's family; it told of their
kindness to her; her cousin Will was going to take her
and his sisters ice-boating on the river, when it froze.

By the time this letter came, Lapham had gone to his business,
and the mother carried it to Penelope to talk over.

"What do you make out of it?" she asked; and without
waiting to be answered she said, "I don't know as I
believe in cousins marrying, a great deal; but if Irene
and Will were to fix it up between 'em----" She looked
vaguely at Penelope.

"It wouldn't make any difference as far as I was concerned,"
replied the girl listlessly.

Mrs. Lapham lost her patience.

"Well, then, I'll tell you what, Penelope!" she exclaimed.
"Perhaps it'll make a difference to you if you know that

your father's in REAL trouble. He's harassed to death, and he was awake half the night, talking about it. That abominable Rogers has got a lot of money away from him; and he's lost by others that he's helped,"--Mrs. Lapham put it in this way because she had no time to be explicit,"--and I want you should come out of your room now, and try to be of some help and comfort to him when he comes home to-night. I guess Irene wouldn't mope round much, if she was here," she could not help adding.

The girl lifted herself on her elbow. "What's that you say about father?" she demanded eagerly. "Is he in trouble? Is he going to lose his money? Shall we have to stay in this house?"

"We may be very GLAD to stay in this house," said Mrs. Lapham, half angry with herself for having given cause for the girl's conjectures, and half with the habit of prosperity in her child, which could conceive no better of what adversity was. "And I want you should get up and show that you've got some feeling for somebody in the world besides yourself."

"Oh, I'll get UP!" said the girl promptly, almost cheerfully.

"I don't say it's as bad now as it looked a little while ago," said her mother, conscientiously hedging a little from the statement which she had based rather upon her feelings than her facts. "Your father thinks he'll pull through all right, and I don't know but what he will. But I want you should see if you can't do something to cheer him up and keep him from getting so perfectly down-hearted as he seems to get, under the load he's got to carry. And stop thinking about yourself a while, and behave yourself like a sensible girl."

"Yes, yes," said the girl; "I will. You needn't be troubled about me any more."

Before she left her room she wrote a note, and when she came down she was dressed to go out-of-doors and post it herself. The note was to Corey:--

"Do not come to see me any more till you hear from me. I have a reason which I cannot give you now; and you must not ask what it is."

All day she went about in a buoyant desperation, and she came down to meet her father at supper.

"Well, Persis," he said scornfully, as he sat down, "we might as well save our good resolutions till they were wanted. I guess those English parties have gone back on Rogers."

"Do you mean he didn't come?"

"He hadn't come up to half-past five," said Lapham.

"Tchk!" uttered his wife. "But I guess I shall pull through without Mr. Rogers," continued Lapham. "A firm that I didn't think COULD weather it is still afloat, and so far forth as the danger goes of being dragged under with it, I'm all right." Penelope came in. "Hello, Pen!" cried her father. "It ain't often I meet YOU nowadays." He put up his hand as she passed his chair, and pulled her down and kissed her.

"No," she said; "but I thought I'd come down to-night and cheer you up a little. I shall not talk; the sight of me will be enough."

Her father laughed out. "Mother been telling you? Well, I WAS pretty blue last night; but I guess I was more scared than hurt. How'd you like to go to the theatre to-night? Sellers at the Park. Heigh?"

"Well, I don't know. Don't you think they could get along without me there?"

"No; couldn't work it at all," cried the Colonel.

"Let's all go. Unless," he added inquiringly, "there's somebody coming here?"

"There's nobody coming," said Penelope.

"Good! Then we'll go. Mother, don't you be late now."

"Oh, I shan't keep you waiting," said Mrs. Lapham. She had thought of telling what a cheerful letter she had got from Irene; but upon the whole it seemed better not to speak of Irene at all just then. After they returned from the theatre, where the Colonel roared through the comedy, with continual reference of his pleasure to Penelope, to make sure that she was enjoying it too, his wife said, as if the whole affair had been for the girl's distraction rather than his, "I don't believe but what it's going to come out all right about the children;" and then she told him of the letter, and the hopes she had founded upon it.

"Well, perhaps you're right, Persis," he consented.

"I haven't seen Pen so much like herself since it happened. I declare, when I see the way she came out to-night, just to please you, I don't know as I want you should get over all your troubles right away."

"I guess there'll be enough to keep Pen going for a while yet," said the Colonel, winding up his watch.

But for a time there was a relief, which Walker noted, in the atmosphere at the office, and then came another cold wave, slighter than the first, but distinctly felt there, and succeeded by another relief. It was like the winter which was wearing on to the end of the year, with alternations of freezing weather, and mild days stretching to weeks, in which the snow and ice wholly disappeared. It was none the less winter, and none the less harassing for these fluctuations, and Lapham showed in his face and temper the effect of like fluctuations in his affairs. He grew thin and old, and both at home and at his office he was irascible to the point of offence. In these days Penelope shared with her mother the burden of their troubled home, and united with her in supporting the silence or the petulance of the gloomy, secret man who replaced the presence of jolly prosperity there. Lapham had now ceased to talk of his troubles, and savagely resented his wife's interference. "You mind your own business, Persis," he said one day, "if you've got any;" and after that she left him mainly to Penelope, who did not think of asking him questions.

"It's pretty hard on you, Pen," she said.

"That makes it easier for me," returned the girl, who did not otherwise refer to her own trouble.

In her heart she had wondered a little at the absolute obedience of Corey, who had made no sign since receiving her note. She would have liked to ask her father if Corey was sick; she would have liked him to ask her why Corey did not come any more. Her mother went on--

"I don't believe your father knows WHERE he stands. He works away at those papers he brings home here at night, as if he didn't half know what he was about. He always did have that close streak in him, and I don't suppose but what he's been going into things he don't want anybody else to know about, and he's kept these accounts of his own."

Sometimes he gave Penelope figures to work at, which he would not submit to his wife's nimbler arithmetic. Then she went to bed and left them sitting up till midnight, struggling with problems in which they were both weak. But she could see that the girl was a comfort to her father, and that his troubles were a defence and shelter to her. Some nights she could hear them going out together, and then she lay awake for their return from their long walk. When the hour or day of respite came again, the home felt

it first. Lapham wanted to know what the news from Irene was; he joined his wife in all her cheerful speculations, and tried to make her amends for his sullen reticence and irritability. Irene was staying on at Dubuque. There came a letter from her, saying that her uncle's people wanted her to spend the winter there. "Well, let her," said Lapham. "It'll be the best thing for her."

Lapham himself had letters from his brother at frequent intervals. His brother was watching the G. L. & P., which as yet had made no offer for the mills. Once, when one of these letters came, he submitted to his wife whether, in the absence of any positive information that the road wanted the property, he might not, with a good conscience, dispose of it to the best advantage to anybody who came along.

She looked wistfully at him; it was on the rise from a season of deep depression with him. "No, Si," she said; "I don't see how you could do that."

He did not assent and submit, as he had done at first, but began to rail at the unpracticality of women; and then he shut some papers he had been looking over into his desk, and flung out of the room.

One of the papers had slipped through the crevice of the lid, and lay upon the floor. Mrs. Lapham kept on at her sewing, but after a while she picked the paper up to lay it on the desk. Then she glanced at it, and saw that it was a long column of dates and figures, recording successive sums, never large ones, paid regularly to "Wm. M." The dates covered a year, and the sum amounted at least to several hundreds.

Mrs. Lapham laid the paper down on the desk, and then she took it up again and put it into her work-basket, meaning to give it to him. When he came in she saw him looking absent-mindedly about for something, and then going to work upon his papers, apparently without it. She thought she would wait till he missed it definitely, and then give him the scrap she had picked up. It lay in her basket, and after some days it found its way under the work in it, and she forgot it.

XXIII.

SINCE New Year's there had scarcely been a mild day, and the streets were full of snow, growing foul under the city feet and hoofs, and renewing its purity from the skies with repeated falls, which in turn lost their whiteness,

beaten down, and beaten black and hard into a solid bed like iron. The sleighing was incomparable, and the air was full of the din of bells; but Lapham's turnout was not of those that thronged the Brighton road every afternoon; the man at the livery-stable sent him word that the mare's legs were swelling.

He and Corey had little to do with each other. He did not know how Penelope had arranged it with Corey; his wife said she knew no more than he did, and he did not like to ask the girl herself, especially as Corey no longer came to the house. He saw that she was cheerfuller than she had been, and helpfuller with him and her mother. Now and then Lapham opened his troubled soul to her a little, letting his thought break into speech without preamble or conclusion. Once he said--

"Pen, I presume you know I'm in trouble."

"We all seem to be there," said the girl.

"Yes, but there's a difference between being there by your own fault and being there by somebody else's."

"I don't call it his fault," she said.

"I call it mine," said the Colonel.

The girl laughed. Her thought was of her own care, and her father's wholly of his. She must come to his ground.

"What have you been doing wrong?"

"I don't know as you'd call it wrong. It's what people do all the time. But I wish I'd let stocks alone. It's what I always promised your mother I would do. But there's no use cryin' over spilt milk; or watered stock, either."

"I don't think there's much use crying about anything. If it could have been cried straight, it would have been all right from the start," said the girl, going back to her own affair; and if Lapham had not been so deeply engrossed in his, he might have seen how little she cared for all that money could do or undo. He did not observe her enough to see how variable her moods were in those days, and how often she sank from some wild gaiety into abject melancholy; how at times she was fiercely defiant of nothing at all, and at others inexplicably humble and patient. But no doubt none of these signs had passed unnoticed by his wife, to whom Lapham said one day, when he came home, "Persis, what's the reason Pen don't marry Corey?"

"You know as well as I do, Silas," said Mrs. Lapham,

with an inquiring look at him for what lay behind his words.

"Well, I think it's all tomfoolery, the way she's going on. There ain't any rhyme nor reason to it." He stopped, and his wife waited. "If she said the word, I could have some help from them." He hung his head, and would not meet his wife's eye.

"I guess you're in a pretty bad way, Si," she said pityingly, "or you wouldn't have come to that."

"I'm in a hole," said Lapham, "and I don't know where to turn. You won't let me do anything about those mills----"

"Yes, I'll let you," said his wife sadly.

He gave a miserable cry. "You know I can't do anything, if you do. O my Lord!"

She had not seen him so low as that before. She did not know what to say. She was frightened, and could only ask, "Has it come to the worst?"

"The new house has got to go," he answered evasively.

She did not say anything. She knew that the work on the house had been stopped since the beginning of the year. Lapham had told the architect that he preferred to leave it unfinished till the spring, as there was no prospect of their being able to get into it that winter; and the architect had agreed with him that it would not hurt it to stand. Her heart was heavy for him, though she could not say so. They sat together at the table, where she had come to be with him at his belated meal. She saw that he did not eat, and she waited for him to speak again, without urging him to take anything. They were past that.

"And I've sent orders to shut down at the Works," he added.

"Shut down at the Works!" she echoed with dismay. She could not take it in. The fire at the Works had never been out before since it was first kindled. She knew how he had prided himself upon that; how he had bragged of it to every listener, and had always lugged the fact in as the last expression of his sense of success. "O Silas!"

"What's the use?" he retorted. "I saw it was coming a month ago. There are some fellows out in West Virginia that have been running the paint as hard as they could. They couldn't do much; they used to put it on the market raw.

But lately they got to baking it, and now they've struck a vein of natural gas right by their works, and they pay ten cents for fuel, where I pay a dollar, and they make as good a paint. Anybody can see where it's going to end. Besides, the market's over-stocked. It's glutted. There wa'n't anything to do but to shut DOWN, and I've SHUT down."

"I don't know what's going to become of the hands in the middle of the winter, this way," said Mrs. Lapham, laying hold of one definite thought which she could grasp in the turmoil of ruin that whirled before her eyes.

"I don't care what becomes of the hands," cried Lapham. "They've shared my luck; now let 'em share the other thing. And if you're so very sorry for the hands, I wish you'd keep a little of your pity for ME. Don't you know what shutting down the Works means?"

"Yes, indeed I do, Silas," said his wife tenderly.

"Well, then!" He rose, leaving his supper untasted, and went into the sitting-room, where she presently found him, with that everlasting confusion of papers before him on the desk. That made her think of the paper in her work-basket, and she decided not to make the careworn, distracted man ask her for it, after all. She brought it to him.

He glanced blankly at it and then caught it from her, turning red and looking foolish. "Where'd you get that?"

"You dropped it on the floor the other night, and I picked it up. Who is 'Wm. M.'?"

"'Wm. M.!' he repeated, looking confusedly at her, and then at the paper. "Oh,--it's nothing." He tore the paper into small pieces, and went and dropped them into the fire. When Mrs. Lapham came into the room in the morning, before he was down, she found a scrap of the paper, which must have fluttered to the hearth; and glancing at it she saw that the words were "Mrs. M." She wondered what dealings with a woman her husband could have, and she remembered the confusion he had shown about the paper, and which she had thought was because she had surprised one of his business secrets. She was still thinking of it when he came down to breakfast, heavy-eyed, tremulous, with deep seams and wrinkles in his face.

After a silence which he did not seem inclined to break, "Silas," she asked, "who is 'Mrs. M.'?"

He stared at her. "I don't know what you're talking about."

"Don't you?" she returned mockingly. "When you do, you tell me. Do you want any more coffee?"

"No."

"Well, then, you can ring for Alice when you've finished. I've got some things to attend to." She rose abruptly, and left the room. Lapham looked after her in a dull way, and then went on with his breakfast. While he still sat at his coffee, she flung into the room again, and dashed some papers down beside his plate. "Here are some more things of yours, and I'll thank you to lock them up in your desk and not litter my room with them, if you please." Now he saw that she was angry, and it must be with him. It enraged him that in such a time of trouble she should fly out at him in that way. He left the house without trying to speak to her. That day Corey came just before closing, and, knocking at Lapham's door, asked if he could speak with him a few moments.

"Yes," said Lapham, wheeling round in his swivel-chair and kicking another towards Corey. "Sit down. I want to talk to you. I'd ought to tell you you're wasting your time here. I spoke the other day about your placin' yourself better, and I can help you to do it, yet. There ain't going to be the out-come for the paint in the foreign markets that we expected, and I guess you better give it up."

"I don't wish to give it up," said the young fellow, setting his lips. "I've as much faith in it as ever; and I want to propose now what I hinted at in the first place. I want to put some money into the business."

"Some money!" Lapham leaned towards him, and frowned as if he had not quite understood, while he clutched the arms of his chair.

"I've got about thirty thousand dollars that I could put in, and if you don't want to consider me a partner--I remember that you objected to a partner--you can let me regard it as an investment. But I think I see the way to doing something at once in Mexico, and I should like to feel that I had something more than a drummer's interest in the venture."

The men sat looking into each other's eyes. Then Lapham leaned back in his chair, and rubbed his hand hard and slowly over his face. His features were still twisted with some strong emotion when he took it away. "Your family know about this?"

"My Uncle James knows."

"He thinks it would be a good plan for you?"

"He thought that by this time I ought to be able to trust my own judgment."

"Do you suppose I could see your uncle at his office?"

"I imagine he's there."

"Well, I want to have a talk with him, one of these days."
He sat pondering a while, and then rose, and went with Corey to his door. "I guess I shan't change my mind about taking you into the business in that way," he said coldly.
"If there was any reason why I shouldn't at first, there's more now."

"Very well, sir," answered the young man, and went to close his desk. The outer office was empty; but while Corey was putting his papers in order it was suddenly invaded by two women, who pushed by the protesting porter on the stairs and made their way towards Lapham's room. One of them was Miss Dewey, the type-writer girl, and the other was a woman whom she would resemble in face and figure twenty years hence, if she led a life of hard work varied by paroxysms of hard drinking.

"That his room, Z'rilla?" asked this woman, pointing towards Lapham's door with a hand that had not freed itself from the fringe of dirty shawl under which it had hung. She went forward without waiting for the answer, but before she could reach it the door opened, and Lapham stood filling its space.

"Look here, Colonel Lapham!" began the woman, in a high key of challenge. "I want to know if this is the way you're goin' back on me and Z'rilla?"

"What do you want?" asked Lapham.

"What do I want? What do you s'pose I want? I want the money to pay my month's rent; there ain't a bite to eat in the house; and I want some money to market."

Lapham bent a frown on the woman, under which she shrank back a step. "You've taken the wrong way to get it. Clear out!"

"I WON'T clear out!" said the woman, beginning to whimper.

"Corey!" said Lapham, in the peremptory voice of a master,--he had seemed so indifferent to Corey's presence that the young man

thought he must have forgotten he was there,--"Is Dennis anywhere round?"

"Yissor," said Dennis, answering for himself from the head of the stairs, and appearing in the ware-room.

Lapham spoke to the woman again. "Do you want I should call a hack, or do you want I should call an officer?"

The woman began to cry into an end of her shawl.
"I don't know what we're goin' to do."

"You're going to clear out," said Lapham. "Call a hack, Dennis. If you ever come here again, I'll have you arrested. Mind that! Zerrilla, I shall want you early to-morrow morning."

"Yes, sir," said the girl meekly; she and her mother shrank out after the porter.

Lapham shut his door without a word.

At lunch the next day Walker made himself amends for Corey's reticence by talking a great deal. He talked about Lapham, who seemed to have, more than ever since his apparent difficulties began, the fascination of an enigma for his book-keeper, and he ended by asking, "Did you see that little circus last night?"

"What little circus?" asked Corey in his turn.

"Those two women and the old man. Dennis told me about it. I told him if he liked his place he'd better keep his mouth shut."

"That was very good advice," said Corey.

"Oh, all right, if you don't want to talk. Don't know as I should in your place," returned Walker, in the easy security he had long felt that Corey had no intention of putting on airs with him. "But I'll tell you what: the old man can't expect it of everybody. If he keeps this thing up much longer, it's going to be talked about. You can't have a woman walking into your place of business, and trying to bulldoze you before your porter, without setting your porter to thinking. And the last thing you want a porter to do is to think; for when a porter thinks, he thinks wrong."

"I don't see why even a porter couldn't think right about that affair," replied Corey. "I don't know who the woman was, though I believe she was Miss Dewey's mother; but I couldn't see that Colonel Lapham showed anything but a natural resentment of her coming to him in that way. I should have said she was some rather worthless person

whom he'd been befriending, and that she had presumed upon his kindness."

"Is that so? What do you think of his never letting Miss Dewey's name go on the books?"

"That it's another proof it's a sort of charity of his. That's the only way to look at it."

"Oh, I'm all right." Walker lighted a cigar and began to smoke, with his eyes closed to a fine straight line. "It won't do for a book-keeper to think wrong, any more than a porter, I suppose. But I guess you and I don't think very different about this thing."

"Not if you think as I do," replied Corey steadily; "and I know you would do that if you had seen the 'circus' yourself. A man doesn't treat people who have a disgraceful hold upon him as he treated them."

"It depends upon who he is," said Walker, taking his cigar from his mouth. "I never said the old man was afraid of anything."

"And character," continued Corey, disdainingly to touch the matter further, except in generalities, "must go for something. If it's to be the prey of mere accident and appearance, then it goes for nothing."

"Accidents will happen in the best regulated families," said Walker, with vulgar, good-humoured obtuseness that filled Corey with indignation. Nothing, perhaps, removed his matter-of-fact nature further from the commonplace than a certain generosity of instinct, which I should not be ready to say was always infallible.

That evening it was Miss Dewey's turn to wait for speech with Lapham after the others were gone. He opened his door at her knock, and stood looking at her with a worried air. "Well, what do you want, Zerrilla?" he asked, with a sort of rough kindness.

"I want to know what I'm going to do about Hen. He's back again; and he and mother have made it up, and they both got to drinking last night after I went home, and carried on so that the neighbours came in."

Lapham passed his hand over his red and heated face. "I don't know what I'm going to do. You're twice the trouble that my own family is, now. But I know what I'd do, mighty quick, if it wasn't for you, Zerrilla," he went on relentingly. "I'd shut your mother up somewheres, and if I could get that fellow off for a three years'

voyage----"

"I declare," said Miss Dewey, beginning to whimper,
"it seems as if he came back just so often to spite me.
He's never gone more than a year at the furthest, and you
can't make it out habitual drunkenness, either, when it's
just sprees. I'm at my wit's end."

"Oh, well, you mustn't cry around here," said Lapham soothingly.

"I know it," said Miss Dewey. "If I could get rid
of Hen, I could manage well enough with mother.
Mr. Wemmel would marry me if I could get the divorce.
He's said so over and over again."

"I don't know as I like that very well," said Lapham, frowning.

"I don't know as I want you should get married in any hurry again.
I don't know as I like your going with anybody else just yet."

"Oh, you needn't be afraid but what it'll be all right.
It'll be the best thing all round, if I can marry him."

"Well!" said Lapham impatiently; "I can't think about it now.
I suppose they've cleaned everything out again?"

"Yes, they have," said Zerrilla; "there isn't a cent left."

"You're a pretty expensive lot," said Lapham. "Well, here!"
He took out his pocket-book and gave her a note.
"I'll be round to-night and see what can be done."

He shut himself into his room again, and Zerrilla dried
her tears, put the note into her bosom, and went her way.

Lapham kept the porter nearly an hour later. It was
then six o'clock, the hour at which the Laphams usually
had tea; but all custom had been broken up with him
during the past months, and he did not go home now.
He determined, perhaps in the extremity in which a man
finds relief in combating one care with another, to keep
his promise to Miss Dewey, and at the moment when he might
otherwise have been sitting down at his own table he was
climbing the stairs to her lodging in the old-fashioned
dwelling which had been portioned off into flats.
It was in a region of depots, and of the cheap hotels,
and "ladies' and gents'" dining-rooms, and restaurants
with bars, which abound near depots; and Lapham followed
to Miss Dewey's door a waiter from one of these, who bore
on a salver before him a supper covered with a napkin.
Zerrilla had admitted them, and at her greeting
a young fellow in the shabby shore-suit of a sailor,
buttoning imperfectly over the nautical blue flannel
of his shirt, got up from where he had been sitting,

on one side of the stove, and stood infirmly on his feet, in token of receiving the visitor. The woman who sat on the other side did not rise, but began a shrill, defiant apology.

"Well, I don't suppose but what you'll think we're livin' on the fat o' the land, right straight along, all the while. But it's just like this. When that child came in from her work, she didn't seem to have the spirit to go to cookin' anything, and I had such a bad night last night I was feelin' all broke up, and s'd I, what's the use, anyway? By the time the butcher's heaved in a lot o' bone, and made you pay for the suet he cuts away, it comes to the same thing, and why not GIT it from the rest'rant first off, and save the cost o' your fire? s'd I."

"What have you got there under your apron? A bottle?" demanded Lapham, who stood with his hat on and his hands in his pockets, indifferent alike to the ineffective reception of the sailor and the chair Zerrilla had set him.

"Well, yes, it's a bottle," said the woman, with an assumption of virtuous frankness. "It's whisky; I got to have something to rub my rheumatism with."

"Humph!" grumbled Lapham. "You've been rubbing HIS rheumatism too, I see."

He twisted his head in the direction of the sailor, now softly and rhythmically waving to and fro on his feet.

"He hain't had a drop to-day in THIS house!" cried the woman.

"What are you doing around here?" said Lapham, turning fiercely upon him. "You've got no business ashore. Where's your ship? Do you think I'm going to let you come here and eat your wife out of house and home, and then give money to keep the concern going?"

"Just the very words I said when he first showed his face here, yist'day. Didn't I, Z'rilla?" said the woman, eagerly joining in the rebuke of her late boon companion. "You got no business here, Hen, s'd I. You can't come here to live on me and Z'rilla, s'd I. You want to go back to your ship, s'd I. That's what I said."

The sailor mumbled, with a smile of tipsy amiability for Lapham, something about the crew being discharged.

"Yes," the woman broke in, "that's always the way with these coasters. Why don't you go off on some them long v'y'ges? s'd I. It's pretty hard when Mr. Wemmel stands ready to marry Z'rilla and provide a comfortable home

for us both--I hain't got a great many years more to live,
and I SHOULD like to get some satisfaction out of 'em,
and not be beholden and dependent all my days,--to have Hen,
here, blockin' the way. I tell him there'd be more money
for him in the end; but he can't seem to make up his mind to it."

"Well, now, look here," said Lapham. "I don't care anything
about all that. It's your own business, and I'm not going
to meddle with it. But it's my business who lives off me;
and so I tell you all three, I'm willing to take care
of Zerrilla, and I'm willing to take care of her mother----"

"I guess if it hadn't been for that child's father,"
the mother interpolated, "you wouldn't been here to tell
the tale, Colonel Lapham."

"I know all about that," said Lapham. "But I'll tell
you what, Mr. Dewey, I'm not going to support YOU."

"I don't see what Hen's done," said the old woman impartially.

"He hasn't done anything, and I'm going to stop it.
He's got to get a ship, and he's got to get out of this.
And Zerrilla needn't come back to work till he does.
I'm done with you all."

"Well, I vow," said the mother, "if I ever heard anything
like it! Didn't that child's father lay down his life
for you? Hain't you said it yourself a hundred times?
And don't she work for her money, and slave for it
mornin', noon, and night? You talk as if we was beholden
to you for the very bread in our mouths. I guess if it
hadn't been for Jim, you wouldn't been here crowin'
over us."

"You mind what I say. I mean business this time,"
said Lapham, turning to the door.

The woman rose and followed him, with her bottle in her hand.

"Say, Colonel! what should you advise Z'rilla to do about
Mr. Wemmel? I tell her there ain't any use goin' to the
trouble to git a divorce without she's sure about him.
Don't you think we'd ought to git him to sign a paper,
or something, that he'll marry her if she gits it? I don't
like to have things going at loose ends the way they are.
It ain't sense. It ain't right."

Lapham made no answer to the mother anxious for her child's
future, and concerned for the moral questions involved.
He went out and down the stairs, and on the pavement at
the lower door he almost struck against Rogers, who had
a bag in his hand, and seemed to be hurrying towards
one of the depots. He halted a little, as if to speak

to Lapham; but Lapham turned his back abruptly upon him, and took the other direction.

The days were going by in a monotony of adversity to him, from which he could no longer escape, even at home. He attempted once or twice to talk of his troubles to his wife, but she repulsed him sharply; she seemed to despise and hate him; but he set himself doggedly to make a confession to her, and he stopped her one night, as she came into the room where he sat--hastily upon some errand that was to take her directly away again.

"Persis, there's something I've got to tell you."

She stood still, as if fixed against her will, to listen.

"I guess you know something about it already, and I guess it set you against me."

"Oh, I guess not, Colonel Lapham. You go your way, and I go mine. That's all."

She waited for him to speak, listening with a cold, hard smile on her face.

"I don't say it to make favour with you, because I don't want you to spare me, and I don't ask you; but I got into it through Milton K. Rogers."

"Oh!" said Mrs. Lapham contemptuously.

"I always felt the way I said about it--that it wa'n't any better than gambling, and I say so now. It's like betting on the turn of a card; and I give you my word of honour, Persis, that I never was in it at all till that scoundrel began to load me up with those wild-cat securities of his. Then it seemed to me as if I ought to try to do something to get somewhere even. I know it's no excuse; but watching the market to see what the infernal things were worth from day to day, and seeing it go up, and seeing it go down, was too much for me; and, to make a long story short, I began to buy and sell on a margin--just what I told you I never would do. I seemed to make something--I did make something; and I'd have stopped, I do believe, if I could have reached the figure I'd set in my own mind to start with; but I couldn't fetch it. I began to lose, and then I began to throw good money after bad, just as I always did with everything that Rogers ever came within a mile of. Well, what's the use? I lost the money that would have carried me out of this, and I shouldn't have had to shut down the Works, or sell the house, or----"

Lapham stopped. His wife, who at first had listened with mystification, and then dawning incredulity, changing into a look of relief that was almost triumph, lapsed again into severity. "Silas Lapham, if you was to die the next minute, is this what you started to tell me?"

"Why, of course it is. What did you suppose I started to tell you?"

"And--look me in the eyes!--you haven't got anything else on your mind now?"

"No! There's trouble enough, the Lord knows; but there's nothing else to tell you. I suppose Pen gave you a hint about it. I dropped something to her. I've been feeling bad about it, Persis, a good while, but I hain't had the heart to speak of it. I can't expect you to say you like it. I've been a fool, I'll allow, and I've been something worse, if you choose to say so; but that's all. I haven't hurt anybody but myself--and you and the children."

Mrs. Lapham rose and said, with her face from him, as she turned towards the door, "It's all right, Silas. I shan't ever bring it up against you."

She fled out of the room, but all that evening she was very sweet with him, and seemed to wish in all tacit ways to atone for her past unkindness.

She made him talk of his business, and he told her of Corey's offer, and what he had done about it. She did not seem to care for his part in it, however; at which Lapham was silently disappointed a little, for he would have liked her to praise him.

"He did it on account of Pen!"

"Well, he didn't insist upon it, anyway," said Lapham, who must have obscurely expected that Corey would recognise his own magnanimity by repeating his offer. If the doubt that follows a self-devoted action--the question whether it was not after all a needless folly--is mixed, as it was in Lapham's case, with the vague belief that we might have done ourselves a good turn without great risk of hurting any one else by being a little less unselfish, it becomes a regret that is hard to bear. Since Corey spoke to him, some things had happened that gave Lapham hope again.

"I'm going to tell her about it," said his wife, and she showed herself impatient to make up for the time she had lost. "Why didn't you tell me before, Silas?"

"I didn't know we were on speaking terms before," said Lapham sadly.

"Yes, that's true," she admitted, with a conscious flush.

"I hope he won't think Pen's known about it all this while."

XXIV.

THAT evening James Bellingham came to see Corey after dinner, and went to find him in his own room.

"I've come at the instance of Colonel Lapham," said the uncle.

"He was at my office to-day, and I had a long talk with him.

Did you know that he was in difficulties?"

"I fancied that he was in some sort of trouble.

And I had the book-keeper's conjectures--he doesn't really know much about it."

"Well, he thinks it time--on all accounts--that you should know how he stands, and why he declined that proposition of yours. I must say he has behaved very well--like a gentleman."

"I'm not surprised."

"I am. It's hard to behave like a gentleman where your interest is vitally concerned. And Lapham doesn't strike me as a man who's in the habit of acting from the best in him always."

"Do any of us?" asked Corey.

"Not all of us, at any rate," said Bellingham. "It must have cost him something to say no to you, for he's just in that state when he believes that this or that chance, however small, would save him."

Corey was silent. "Is he really in such a bad way?"

"It's hard to tell just where he stands. I suspect that a hopeful temperament and fondness for round numbers have always caused him to set his figures beyond his actual worth. I don't say that he's been dishonest about it, but he's had a loose way of estimating his assets; he's reckoned his wealth on the basis of his capital, and some of his capital is borrowed. He's lost heavily by some of the recent failures, and there's been a terrible shrinkage in his values.

I don't mean merely in the stock of paint on hand, but in a kind of competition which has become very threatening. You know about that West Virginian paint?"

Corey nodded.

"Well, he tells me that they've struck a vein of natural gas out there which will enable them to make as good a paint as his own at a cost of manufacturing so low that they can undersell him everywhere. If this proves to be the case, it will not only drive his paint out of the market, but will reduce the value of his Works--the whole plant--at Lapham to a merely nominal figure."

"I see," said Corey dejectedly. "I've understood that he had put a great deal of money into his Works."

"Yes, and he estimated his mine there at a high figure. Of course it will be worth little or nothing if the West Virginia paint drives his out. Then, besides, Lapham has been into several things outside of his own business, and, like a good many other men who try outside things, he's kept account of them himself; and he's all mixed up about them. He's asked me to look into his affairs with him, and I've promised to do so. Whether he can be tided over his difficulties remains to be seen. I'm afraid it will take a good deal of money to do it--a great deal more than he thinks, at least. He believes comparatively little would do it. I think differently. I think that anything less than a great deal would be thrown away on him. If it were merely a question of a certain sum--even a large sum--to keep him going, it might be managed; but it's much more complicated. And, as I say, it must have been a trial to him to refuse your offer."

This did not seem to be the way in which Bellingham had meant to conclude. But he said no more; and Corey made him no response.

He remained pondering the case, now hopefully, now doubtfully, and wondering, whatever his mood was, whether Penelope knew anything of the fact with which her mother went nearly at the same moment to acquaint her.

"Of course, he's done it on your account," Mrs. Lapham could not help saying.

"Then he was very silly. Does he think I would let him give father money? And if father lost it for him, does he suppose it would make it any easier for me? I think father acted twice as well. It was very silly."

In repeating the censure, her look was not so severe as her tone; she even smiled a little, and her mother reported to her father that she acted more like herself than she had yet since Corey's offer.

"I think, if he was to repeat his offer, she would have him now," said Mrs. Lapham.

"Well, I'll let her know if he does," said the Colonel.

"I guess he won't do it to you!" she cried.

"Who else will he do it to?" he demanded.

They perceived that they had each been talking of a different offer.

After Lapham went to his business in the morning the postman brought another letter from Irene, which was full of pleasant things that were happening to her; there was a great deal about her cousin Will, as she called him. At the end she had written, "Tell Pen I don't want she should be foolish." "There!" said Mrs. Lapham. "I guess it's going to come out right, all round;" and it seemed as if even the Colonel's difficulties were past. "When your father gets through this, Pen," she asked impulsively, "what shall you do?"

"What have you been telling Irene about me?"

"Nothing much. What should you do?"

"It would be a good deal easier to say what I should do if father didn't," said the girl.

"I know you think it was nice in him to make your father that offer," urged the mother.

"It was nice, yes; but it was silly," said the girl.

"Most nice things are silly, I suppose," she added.

She went to her room and wrote a letter. It was very long, and very carefully written; and when she read it over, she tore it into small pieces. She wrote another one, short and hurried, and tore that up too. Then she went back to her mother, in the family room, and asked to see Irene's letter, and read it over to herself.

"Yes, she seems to be having a good time," she sighed.

"Mother, do you think I ought to let Mr. Corey know that I know about it?"

"Well, I should think it would be a pleasure to him," said Mrs. Lapham judicially.

"I'm not so sure of that the way I should have to tell him. I should begin by giving him a scolding. Of course, he meant well by it, but can't you see that it wasn't very flattering! How did he expect it would change me?"

"I don't believe he ever thought of that."

"Don't you? Why?"

"Because you can see that he isn't one of that kind. He might want to please you without wanting to change you by what he did."

"Yes. He must have known that nothing would change me,--at least, nothing that he could do. I thought of that. I shouldn't like him to feel that I couldn't appreciate it, even if I did think it was silly. Should you write to him?"

"I don't see why not."

"It would be too pointed. No, I shall just let it go. I wish he hadn't done it."

"Well, he has done it." "And I've tried to write to him about it--two letters: one so humble and grateful that it couldn't stand up on its edge, and the other so pert and flippant. Mother, I wish you could have seen those two letters! I wish I had kept them to look at if I ever got to thinking I had any sense again. They would take the conceit out of me."

"What's the reason he don't come here any more?"

"Doesn't he come?" asked Penelope in turn, as if it were something she had not noticed particularly.

"You'd ought to know."

"Yes." She sat silent a while. "If he doesn't come, I suppose it's because he's offended at something I did."

"What did you do?"

"Nothing. I--wrote to him--a little while ago. I suppose it was very blunt, but I didn't believe he would be angry at it. But this--this that he's done shows he was angry, and that he wasn't just seizing the first chance to get out of it."

"What have you done, Pen?" demanded her mother sharply.

"Oh, I don't know. All the mischief in the world, I suppose."

I'll tell you. When you first told me that father was in trouble with his business, I wrote to him not to come any more till I let him. I said I couldn't tell him why, and he hasn't been here since. I'm sure I don't know what it means."

Her mother looked at her with angry severity. "Well, Penelope Lapham! For a sensible child, you ARE the greatest goose I ever saw. Did you think he would come here and SEE if you wouldn't let him come?"

"He might have written," urged the girl.

Her mother made that despairing "Tchk!" with her tongue, and fell back in her chair. "I should have DESPISED him if he had written. He's acted just exactly right, and you--you've acted--I don't know HOW you've acted. I'm ashamed of you. A girl that could be so sensible for her sister, and always say and do just the right thing, and then when it comes to herself to be such a DISGUSTING simpleton!"

"I thought I ought to break with him at once, and not let him suppose that there was any hope for him or me if father was poor. It was my one chance, in this whole business, to do anything heroic, and I jumped at it. You mustn't think, because I can laugh at it now, that I wasn't in earnest, mother! I WAS--dead! But the Colonel has gone to ruin so gradually, that he's spoilt everything. I expected that he would be bankrupt the next day, and that then HE would understand what I meant. But to have it drag along for a fortnight seems to take all the heroism out of it, and leave it as flat!" She looked at her mother with a smile that shone through her tears, and a pathos that quivered round her jesting lips. "It's easy enough to be sensible for other people. But when it comes to myself, there I am! Especially, when I want to do what I oughtn't so much that it seems as if doing what I didn't want to do MUST be doing what I ought! But it's been a great success one way, mother. It's helped me to keep up before the Colonel. If it hadn't been for Mr. Corey's staying away, and my feeling so indignant with him for having been badly treated by me, I shouldn't have been worth anything at all."

The tears started down her cheeks, but her mother said, "Well, now, go along, and write to him. It don't matter what you say, much; and don't be so very particular."

Her third attempt at a letter pleased her scarcely better than the rest, but she sent it, though it seemed so blunt and awkward. She wrote:--

DEAR FRIEND,--I expected when I sent you that note, that you would understand, almost the next day, why I could not see you any more. You must know now, and you must not think that if anything happened to my father, I should wish you to help him. But that is no reason why I should not thank you, and I do thank you, for offering. It was like you, I will say that.

Yours sincerely, PENELOPE LAPHAM.

She posted her letter, and he sent his reply in the evening, by hand:--

DEAREST,--What I did was nothing, till you praised it. Everything I have and am is yours. Won't you send a line by the bearer, to say that I may come to see you? I know how you feel; but I am sure that I can make you think differently. You must consider that I loved you without a thought of your father's circumstances, and always shall.

T. C.

The generous words were blurred to her eyes by the tears that sprang into them. But she could only write in answer:--

"Please do not come; I have made up my mind. As long as this trouble is hanging over us, I cannot see you. And if father is unfortunate, all is over between us."

She brought his letter to her mother, and told her what she had written in reply. Her mother was thoughtful a while before she said, with a sigh, "Well, I hope you've begun as you can carry out, Pen."

"Oh, I shall not have to carry out at all. I shall not have to do anything. That's one comfort--the only comfort." She went away to her own room, and when Mrs. Lapham told her husband of the affair, he was silent at first, as she had been. Then he said, "I don't know as I should have wanted her to done differently; I don't know as she could. If I ever come right again, she won't have anything to feel meeched about; and if I don't, I don't want she should be beholden to anybody. And I guess that's the way she feels."

The Coreys in their turn sat in judgment on the fact

which their son felt bound to bring to their knowledge.

"She has behaved very well," said Mrs. Corey, to whom her son had spoken.

"My dear," said her husband, with his laugh, "she has behaved TOO well. If she had studied the whole situation with the most artful eye to its mastery, she could not possibly have behaved better."

The process of Lapham's financial disintegration was like the course of some chronic disorder, which has fastened itself upon the constitution, but advances with continual reliefs, with apparent amelioration, and at times seems not to advance at all, when it gives hope of final recovery not only to the sufferer, but to the eye of science itself. There were moments when James Bellingham, seeing Lapham pass this crisis and that, began to fancy that he might pull through altogether; and at these moments, when his adviser could not oppose anything but experience and probability to the evidence of the fact, Lapham was buoyant with courage, and imparted his hopefulness to his household. Our theory of disaster, of sorrow, of affliction, borrowed from the poets and novelists, is that it is incessant; but every passage in our own lives and in the lives of others, so far as we have witnessed them, teaches us that this is false. The house of mourning is decorously darkened to the world, but within itself it is also the house of laughing. Bursts of gaiety, as heartfelt as its grief, relieve the gloom, and the stricken survivors have their jests together, in which the thought of the dead is tenderly involved, and a fond sense, not crazier than many others, of sympathy and enjoyment beyond the silence, justifies the sunnier mood before sorrow rushes back, deploring and despairing, and making it all up again with the conventional fitness of things. Lapham's adversity had this quality in common with bereavement. It was not always like the adversity we figure in allegory; it had its moments of being like prosperity, and if upon the whole it was continual, it was not incessant. Sometimes there was a week of repeated reverses, when he had to keep his teeth set and to hold on hard to all his hopefulness; and then days came of negative result or slight success, when he was full of his jokes at the tea-table, and wanted to go to the theatre, or to do something to cheer Penelope up. In some miraculous way, by some enormous stroke of success which should eclipse the brightest of his past prosperity, he expected to do what would reconcile all difficulties, not only in his own affairs, but in hers too. "You'll see," he said to his wife; "it's going to come out all right. Irene'll fix it up with Bill's boy, and then she'll be off Pen's mind; and if things go on as they've been going

for the last two days, I'm going to be in a position to do the favours myself, and Pen can feel that SHE'S makin' a sacrifice, and then I guess may be she'll do it. If things turn out as I expect now, and times ever go get any better generally, I can show Corey that I appreciate his offer. I can offer him the partnership myself then."

Even in the other moods, which came when everything had been going wrong, and there seemed no way out of the net, there were points of consolation to Lapham and his wife. They rejoiced that Irene was safe beyond the range of their anxieties, and they had a proud satisfaction that there had been no engagement between Corey and Penelope, and that it was she who had forbidden it. In the closeness of interest and sympathy in which their troubles had reunited them, they confessed to each other that nothing would have been more galling to their pride than the idea that Lapham should not have been able to do everything for his daughter that the Coreys might have expected. Whatever happened now, the Coreys could not have it to say that the Laphams had tried to bring any such thing about.

Bellingham had lately suggested an assignment to Lapham, as the best way out of his difficulties. It was evident that he had not the money to meet his liabilities at present, and that he could not raise it without ruinous sacrifices, that might still end in ruin after all. If he made the assignment, Bellingham argued, he could gain time and make terms; the state of things generally would probably improve, since it could not be worse, and the market, which he had glutted with his paint, might recover and he could start again. Lapham had not agreed with him. When his reverses first began it had seemed easy for him to give up everything, to let the people he owed take all, so only they would let him go out with clean hands; and he had dramatised this feeling in his talk with his wife, when they spoke together of the mills on the G. L. & P. But ever since then it had been growing harder, and he could not consent even to seem to do it now in the proposed assignment. He had not found other men so very liberal or faithful with him; a good many of them appeared to have combined to hunt him down; a sense of enmity towards all his creditors asserted itself in him; he asked himself why they should not suffer a little too. Above all, he shrank from the publicity of the assignment. It was open confession that he had been a fool in some way; he could not bear to have his family--his brother the judge, especially, to whom he had always appeared the soul of business wisdom--think him imprudent or stupid. He would make any sacrifice before it came to that. He determined in parting with Bellingham to make the sacrifice which he had oftenest in his mind,

because it was the hardest, and to sell his new house. That would cause the least comment. Most people would simply think that he had got a splendid offer, and with his usual luck had made a very good thing of it; others who knew a little more about him would say that he was hauling in his horns, but they could not blame him; a great many other men were doing the same in those hard times--the shrewdest and safest men: it might even have a good effect. He went straight from Bellingham's office to the real-estate broker in whose hands he meant to put his house, for he was not the sort of man to shilly-shally when he had once made up his mind. But he found it hard to get his voice up out of his throat, when he said he guessed he would get the broker to sell that new house of his on the water side of Beacon. The broker answered cheerfully, yes; he supposed Colonel Lapham knew it was a pretty dull time in real estate? and Lapham said yes, he knew that, but he should not sell at a sacrifice, and he did not care to have the broker name him or describe the house definitely unless parties meant business. Again the broker said yes; and he added, as a joke Lapham would appreciate, that he had half a dozen houses on the water side of Beacon, on the same terms; that nobody wanted to be named or to have his property described.

It did, in fact, comfort Lapham a little to find himself in the same boat with so many others; he smiled grimly, and said in his turn, yes, he guessed that was about the size of it with a good many people. But he had not the heart to tell his wife what he had done, and he sat taciturn that whole evening, without even going over his accounts, and went early to bed, where he lay tossing half the night before he fell asleep. He slept at last only upon the promise he made himself that he would withdraw the house from the broker's hands; but he went heavily to his own business in the morning without doing so. There was no such rush, anyhow, he reflected bitterly; there would be time to do that a month later, probably.

It struck him with a sort of dismay when a boy came with a note from a broker, saying that a party who had been over the house in the fall had come to him to know whether it could be bought, and was willing to pay the cost of the house up to the time he had seen it. Lapham took refuge in trying to think who the party could be; he concluded that it must have been somebody who had gone over it with the architect, and he did not like that; but he was aware that this was not an answer to the broker, and he wrote that he would give him an answer in the morning.

Now that it had come to the point, it did not seem to him that he could part with the house. So much of his hope

for himself and his children had gone into it that the thought of selling it made him tremulous and sick. He could not keep about his work steadily, and with his nerves shaken by want of sleep, and the shock of this sudden and unexpected question, he left his office early, and went over to look at the house and try to bring himself to some conclusion here. The long procession of lamps on the beautiful street was flaring in the clear red of the sunset towards which it marched, and Lapham, with a lump in his throat, stopped in front of his house and looked at their multitude. They were not merely a part of the landscape; they were a part of his pride and glory, his success, his triumphant life's work which was fading into failure in his helpless hands. He ground his teeth to keep down that lump, but the moisture in his eyes blurred the lamps, and the keen pale crimson against which it made them flicker. He turned and looked up, as he had so often done, at the window-spaces, neatly glazed for the winter with white linen, and recalled the night when he had stopped with Irene before the house, and she had said that she should never live there, and he had tried to coax her into courage about it. There was no such facade as that on the whole street, to his thinking. Through his long talks with the architect, he had come to feel almost as intimately and fondly as the architect himself the satisfying simplicity of the whole design and the delicacy of its detail. It appealed to him as an exquisite bit of harmony appeals to the unlearned ear, and he recognised the difference between this fine work and the obstreperous pretentiousness of the many overloaded house-fronts which Seymour had made him notice for his instruction elsewhere on the Back Bay. Now, in the depths of his gloom, he tried to think what Italian city it was where Seymour said he had first got the notion of treating brick-work in that way.

He unlocked the temporary door with the key he always carried, so that he could let himself in and out whenever he liked, and entered the house, dim and very cold with the accumulated frigidity of the whole winter in it, and looking as if the arrest of work upon it had taken place a thousand years before. It smelt of the unpainted woods and the clean, hard surfaces of the plaster, where the experiments in decoration had left it untouched; and mingled with these odours was that of some rank pigments and metallic compositions which Seymour had used in trying to realise a certain daring novelty of finish, which had not proved successful. Above all, Lapham detected the peculiar odour of his own paint, with which the architect had been greatly interested one day, when Lapham showed it to him at the office. He had asked Lapham to let him try the Persis Brand in realising a

little idea he had for the finish of Mrs. Lapham's room.
If it succeeded they could tell her what it was, for a surprise.

Lapham glanced at the bay-window in the reception-room, where he sat with his girls on the trestles when Corey first came by; and then he explored the whole house to the attic, in the light faintly admitted through the linen sashes. The floors were strewn with shavings and chips which the carpenters had left, and in the music-room these had been blown into long irregular windrows by the draughts through a wide rent in the linen sash. Lapham tried to pin it up, but failed, and stood looking out of it over the water. The ice had left the river, and the low tide lay smooth and red in the light of the sunset. The Cambridge flats showed the sad, sodden yellow of meadows stripped bare after a long sleep under snow; the hills, the naked trees, the spires and roofs had a black outline, as if they were objects in a landscape of the French school.

The whim seized Lapham to test the chimney in the music-room; it had been tried in the dining-room below, and in his girls' fireplaces above, but here the hearth was still clean. He gathered some shavings and blocks together, and kindled them, and as the flame mounted gaily from them, he pulled up a nail-keg which he found there and sat down to watch it. Nothing could have been better; the chimney was a perfect success; and as Lapham glanced out of the torn linen sash he said to himself that that party, whoever he was, who had offered to buy his house might go to the devil; he would never sell it as long as he had a dollar. He said that he should pull through yet; and it suddenly came into his mind that, if he could raise the money to buy out those West Virginia fellows, he should be all right, and would have the whole game in his own hand. He slapped himself on the thigh, and wondered that he had never thought of that before; and then, lighting a cigar with a splinter from the fire, he sat down again to work the scheme out in his own mind. He did not hear the feet heavily stamping up the stairs, and coming towards the room where he sat; and the policeman to whom the feet belonged had to call out to him, smoking at his chimney-corner, with his back turned to the door, "Hello! what are you doing here?"

"What's that to you?" retorted Lapham, wheeling half round on his nail-keg.

"I'll show you," said the officer, advancing upon him, and then stopping short as he recognised him. "Why, Colonel Lapham! I thought it was some tramp got in here!"

"Have a cigar?" said Lapham hospitably. "Sorry there ain't another nail-keg."

The officer took the cigar. "I'll smoke it outside. I've just come on, and I can't stop. Tryin' your chimney?"

"Yes, I thought I'd see how it would draw, in here. It seems to go first-rate."

The policeman looked about him with an eye of inspection. "You want to get that linen window, there, mended up."

"Yes, I'll speak to the builder about that. It can go for one night."

The policeman went to the window and failed to pin the linen together where Lapham had failed before. "I can't fix it." He looked round once more, and saying, "Well, good night," went out and down the stairs.

Lapham remained by the fire till he had smoked his cigar; then he rose and stamped upon the embers that still burned with his heavy boots, and went home. He was very cheerful at supper. He told his wife that he guessed he had a sure thing of it now, and in another twenty-four hours he should tell her just how. He made Penelope go to the theatre with him, and when they came out, after the play, the night was so fine that he said they must walk round by the new house and take a look at it in the starlight. He said he had been there before he came home, and tried Seymour's chimney in the music-room, and it worked like a charm.

As they drew near Beacon Street they were aware of unwonted stir and tumult, and presently the still air transmitted a turmoil of sound, through which a powerful and incessant throbbing made itself felt. The sky had reddened above them, and turning the corner at the Public Garden, they saw a black mass of people obstructing the perspective of the brightly-lighted street, and out of this mass a half-dozen engines, whose strong heart-beats had already reached them, sent up volumes of fire-tinged smoke and steam from their funnels. Ladders were planted against the facade of a building, from the roof of which a mass of flame burnt smoothly upward, except where here and there it seemed to pull contemptuously away from the heavy streams of water which the firemen, clinging like great beetles to their ladders, poured in upon it.

Lapham had no need to walk down through the crowd, gazing and gossiping, with shouts and cries and hysterical laughter, before the burning house, to make sure that it was his.

"I guess I done it, Pen," was all he said.

Among the people who were looking at it were a party who seemed to have run out from dinner in some neighbouring house; the ladies were fantastically wrapped up, as if they had flung on the first things they could seize.

"Isn't it perfectly magnificent!" cried a pretty girl.
"I wouldn't have missed it on any account. Thank you so much, Mr. Symington, for bringing us out!"

"Ah, I thought you'd like it," said this Mr. Symington, who must have been the host; "and you can enjoy it without the least compunction, Miss Delano, for I happen to know that the house belongs to a man who could afford to burn one up for you once a year."

"Oh, do you think he would, if I came again?"

"I haven't the least doubt of it. We don't do things by halves in Boston."

"He ought to have had a coat of his noncombustible paint on it," said another gentleman of the party.

Penelope pulled her father away toward the first carriage she could reach of a number that had driven up.
"Here, father! get into this."

"No, no; I couldn't ride," he answered heavily, and he walked home in silence. He greeted his wife with, "Well, Persis, our house is gone! And I guess I set it on fire myself;" and while he rummaged among the papers in his desk, still with his coat and hat on, his wife got the facts as she could from Penelope. She did not reproach him. Here was a case in which his self-reproach must be sufficiently sharp without any edge from her. Besides, her mind was full of a terrible thought.

"O Silas," she faltered, "they'll think you set it on fire to get the insurance!"

Lapham was staring at a paper which he held in his hand.
"I had a builder's risk on it, but it expired last week. It's a dead loss."

"Oh, thank the merciful Lord!" cried his wife.

"Merciful!" said Lapham. "Well, it's a queer way of showing it."

He went to bed, and fell into the deep sleep which sometimes follows a great moral shock. It was perhaps rather a torpor than a sleep.

XXV.

LAPHAM awoke confused, and in a kind of remoteness from the loss of the night before, through which it loomed mistily. But before he lifted his head from the pillow, it gathered substance and weight against which it needed all his will to bear up and live. In that moment he wished that he had not wakened, that he might never have wakened; but he rose, and faced the day and its cares.

The morning papers brought the report of the fire, and the conjectured loss. The reporters somehow had found out the fact that the loss fell entirely upon Lapham; they lighted up the hackneyed character of their statements with the picturesque interest OF the coincidence that the policy had expired only the week before; heaven knows how they knew it. They said that nothing remained of the building but the walls; and Lapham, on his way to business, walked up past the smoke-stained shell. The windows looked like the eye-sockets of a skull down upon the blackened and trampled snow of the street; the pavement was a sheet of ice, and the water from the engines had frozen, like streams of tears, down the face of the house, and hung in icy tags from the window-sills and copings.

He gathered himself up as well as he could, and went on to his office. The chance of retrieval that had flashed upon him, as he sat smoking by that ruined hearth the evening before, stood him in such stead now as a sole hope may; and he said to himself that, having resolved not to sell his house, he was no more crippled by its loss than he would have been by letting his money lie idle in it; what he might have raised by mortgage on it could be made up in some other way; and if they would sell he could still buy out the whole business of that West Virginia company, mines, plant, stock on hand, good-will, and everything, and unite it with his own. He went early in the afternoon to see Bellingham, whose expressions of condolence for his loss he cut short with as much politeness as he knew how to throw into his impatience. Bellingham seemed at first a little dazzled with the splendid courage of his scheme; it was certainly fine in its way; but then he began to have his misgivings.

"I happen to know that they haven't got much money behind them," urged Lapham. "They'll jump at an offer."

Bellingham shook his head. "If they can show profit

on the old manufacture, and prove they can make their paint still cheaper and better hereafter, they can have all the money they want. And it will be very difficult for you to raise it if you're threatened by them.

With that competition, you know what your plant at Lapham would be worth, and what the shrinkage on your manufactured stock would be. Better sell out to them," he concluded, "if they will buy."

"There ain't money enough in this country to buy out my paint," said Lapham, buttoning up his coat in a quiver of resentment. "Good afternoon, sir." Men are but grown-up boys after all. Bellingham watched this perversely proud and obstinate child fling petulantly out of his door, and felt a sympathy for him which was as truly kind as it was helpless.

But Lapham was beginning to see through Bellingham, as he believed. Bellingham was, in his way, part of that conspiracy by which Lapham's creditors were trying to drive him to the wall. More than ever now he was glad that he had nothing to do with that cold-hearted, self-conceited race, and that the favours so far were all from his side. He was more than ever determined to show them, every one of them, high and low, that he and his children could get along without them, and prosper and triumph without them. He said to himself that if Penelope were engaged to Corey that very minute, he would make her break with him.

He knew what he should do now, and he was going to do it without loss of time. He was going on to New York to see those West Virginia people; they had their principal office there, and he intended to get at their ideas, and then he intended to make them an offer. He managed this business better than could possibly have been expected of a man in his impassioned mood. But when it came really to business, his practical instincts, alert and wary, came to his aid against the passions that lay in wait to betray after they ceased to dominate him. He found the West Virginians full of zeal and hope, but in ten minutes he knew that they had not yet tested their strength in the money market, and had not ascertained how much or how little capital they could command. Lapham himself, if he had had so much, would not have hesitated to put a million dollars into their business. He saw, as they did not see, that they had the game in their own hands, and that if they could raise the money to extend their business, they could ruin him. It was only a question of time, and he was on the ground first. He frankly proposed a union of their interests. He admitted that they had a good thing, and that he should have to fight them hard; but he meant to fight them to the death unless they could come to some sort of terms. Now, the question was whether they had better

go on and make a heavy loss for both sides by competition, or whether they had better form a partnership to run both paints and command the whole market. Lapham made them three propositions, each of which was fair and open: to sell out to them altogether; to buy them out altogether; to join facilities and forces with them, and go on in an invulnerable alliance. Let them name a figure at which they would buy, a figure at which they would sell, a figure at which they would combine,--or, in other words, the amount of capital they needed.

They talked all day, going out to lunch together at the Astor House, and sitting with their knees against the counter on a row of stools before it for fifteen minutes of reflection and deglutition, with their hats on, and then returning to the basement from which they emerged. The West Virginia company's name was lettered in gilt on the wide low window, and its paint, in the form of ore, burnt, and mixed, formed a display on the window shelf Lapham examined it and praised it; from time to time they all recurred to it together; they sent out for some of Lapham's paint and compared it, the West Virginians admitting its former superiority. They were young fellows, and country persons, like Lapham, by origin, and they looked out with the same amused, undaunted provincial eyes at the myriad metropolitan legs passing on the pavement above the level of their window. He got on well with them. At last, they said what they would do. They said it was nonsense to talk of buying Lapham out, for they had not the money; and as for selling out, they would not do it, for they knew they had a big thing. But they would as soon use his capital to develop it as anybody else's, and if he could put in a certain sum for this purpose, they would go in with him. He should run the works at Lapham and manage the business in Boston, and they would run the works at Kanawha Falls and manage the business in New York. The two brothers with whom Lapham talked named their figure, subject to the approval of another brother at Kanawha Falls, to whom they would write, and who would telegraph his answer, so that Lapham could have it inside of three days. But they felt perfectly sure that he would approve; and Lapham started back on the eleven o'clock train with an elation that gradually left him as he drew near Boston, where the difficulties of raising this sum were to be overcome. It seemed to him, then, that those fellows had put it up on him pretty steep, but he owned to himself that they had a sure thing, and that they were right in believing they could raise the same sum elsewhere; it would take all OF it, he admitted, to make their paint pay on the scale they had the right to expect. At their age, he would not have done differently; but when he emerged, old, sore, and sleep-broken,

from the sleeping-car in the Albany depot at Boston, he wished with a pathetic self-pity that they knew how a man felt at his age. A year ago, six months ago, he would have laughed at the notion that it would be hard to raise the money. But he thought ruefully of that immense stock of paint on hand, which was now a drug in the market, of his losses by Rogers and by the failures of other men, of the fire that had licked up so many thousands in a few hours; he thought with bitterness of the tens of thousands that he had gambled away in stocks, and of the commissions that the brokers had pocketed whether he won or lost; and he could not think of any securities on which he could borrow, except his house in Nankeen Square, or the mine and works at Lapham. He set his teeth in helpless rage when he thought of that property out on the G. L. & P., that ought to be worth so much, and was worth so little if the Road chose to say so.

He did not go home, but spent most of the day shining round, as he would have expressed it, and trying to see if he could raise the money. But he found that people of whom he hoped to get it were in the conspiracy which had been formed to drive him to the wall. Somehow, there seemed a sense of his embarrassments abroad. Nobody wanted to lend money on the plant at Lapham without taking time to look into the state of the business; but Lapham had no time to give, and he knew that the state of the business would not bear looking into. He could raise fifteen thousand on his Nankeen Square house, and another fifteen on his Beacon Street lot, and this was all that a man who was worth a million by rights could do! He said a million, and he said it in defiance of Bellingham, who had subjected his figures to an analysis which wounded Lapham more than he chose to show at the time, for it proved that he was not so rich and not so wise as he had seemed. His hurt vanity forbade him to go to Bellingham now for help or advice; and if he could have brought himself to ask his brothers for money, it would have been useless; they were simply well-to-do Western people, but not capitalists on the scale he required.

Lapham stood in the isolation to which adversity so often seems to bring men. When its test was applied, practically or theoretically, to all those who had seemed his friends, there was none who bore it; and he thought with bitter self-contempt of the people whom he had befriended in their time of need. He said to himself that he had been a fool for that; and he scorned himself for certain acts of scrupulosity by which he had lost money in the past. Seeing the moral forces all arrayed against him, Lapham said that he would like to have the chance offered him to get even with them again;

he thought he should know how to look out for himself. As he understood it, he had several days to turn about in, and he did not let one day's failure dishearten him. The morning after his return he had, in fact, a gleam of luck that gave him the greatest encouragement for the moment. A man came in to inquire about one of Rogers's wild-cat patents, as Lapham called them, and ended by buying it. He got it, of course, for less than Lapham took it for, but Lapham was glad to be rid of it for something, when he had thought it worth nothing; and when the transaction was closed, he asked the purchaser rather eagerly if he knew where Rogers was; it was Lapham's secret belief that Rogers had found there was money in the thing, and had sent the man to buy it. But it appeared that this was a mistake; the man had not come from Rogers, but had heard of the patent in another way; and Lapham was astonished in the afternoon, when his boy came to tell him that Rogers was in the outer office, and wished to speak with him.

"All right," said Lapham, and he could not command at once the severity for the reception of Rogers which he would have liked to use. He found himself, in fact, so much relaxed towards him by the morning's touch of prosperity that he asked him to sit down, gruffly, of course, but distinctly; and when Rogers said in his lifeless way, and with the effect of keeping his appointment of a month before, "Those English parties are in town, and would like to talk with you in reference to the mills," Lapham did not turn him out-of-doors.

He sat looking at him, and trying to make out what Rogers was after; for he did not believe that the English parties, if they existed, had any notion of buying his mills.

"What if they are not for sale?" he asked. "You know that I've been expecting an offer from the G. L. & P."

"I've kept watch of that. They haven't made you any offer," said Rogers quietly.

"And did you think," demanded Lapham, firing up, "that I would turn them in on somebody else as you turned them in on me, when the chances are that they won't be worth ten cents on the dollar six months from now?"

"I didn't know what you would do," said Rogers non-committally.

"I've come here to tell you that these parties stand ready to take the mills off your hands at a fair valuation--at the value I put upon them when I turned them in."

"I don't believe you!" cried Lapham brutally, but a wild predatory hope made his heart leap so that it seemed

to turn over in his breast. "I don't believe there are any such parties to begin with; and in the next place, I don't believe they would buy at any such figure; unless--unless you've lied to them, as you've lied to me. Did you tell them about the G. L. & P.?"

Rogers looked compassionately at him, but he answered, with unvaried dryness, "I did not think that necessary."

Lapham had expected this answer, and he had expected or intended to break out in furious denunciation of Rogers when he got it; but he only found himself saying, in a sort of baffled gasp, "I wonder what your game is!"

Rogers did not reply categorically, but he answered, with his impartial calm, and as if Lapham had said nothing to indicate that he differed at all with him as to disposing of the property in the way he had suggested: "If we should succeed in selling, I should be able to repay you your loans, and should have a little capital for a scheme that I think of going into."

"And do you think that I am going to steal these men's money to help you plunder somebody in a new scheme?" answered Lapham. The sneer was on behalf of virtue, but it was still a sneer

"I suppose the money would be useful to you too, just now."

"Why?"

"Because I know that you have been trying to borrow."

At this proof of wicked omniscience in Rogers, the question whether he had better not regard the affair as a fatality, and yield to his destiny, flashed upon Lapham; but he answered, "I shall want money a great deal worse than I've ever wanted it yet, before I go into such rascally business with you. Don't you know that we might as well knock these parties down on the street, and take the money out of their pockets?"

"They have come on," answered Rogers, "from Portland to see you. I expected them some weeks ago, but they disappointed me. They arrived on the Circassian last night; they expected to have got in five days ago, but the passage was very stormy."

"Where are they?" asked Lapham, with helpless irrelevance, and feeling himself somehow drifted from his moorings by Rogers's shipping intelligence.

"They are at Young's. I told them we would call upon them after dinner this evening; they dine late."

"Oh, you did, did you?" asked Lapham, trying to drop another anchor for a fresh clutch on his underlying principles.

"Well, now, you go and tell them that I said I wouldn't come."

"Their stay is limited," remarked Rogers. "I mentioned this evening because they were not certain they could remain over another night. But if to-morrow would suit you better----"

"Tell 'em I shan't come at all," roared Lapham, as much in terror as defiance, for he felt his anchor dragging.

"Tell 'em I shan't come at all! Do you understand that?"

"I don't see why you should stickle as to the matter of going to them," said Rogers; "but if you think it will be better to have them approach you, I suppose I can bring them to you."

"No, you can't! I shan't let you! I shan't see them! I shan't have anything to do with them. NOW do you understand?"

"I inferred from our last interview," persisted Rogers, unmoved by all this violent demonstration of Lapham's, "that you wished to meet these parties. You told me that you would give me time to produce them; and I have promised them that you would meet them; I have committed myself."

It was true that Lapham had defied Rogers to bring on his men, and had implied his willingness to negotiate with them. That was before he had talked the matter over with his wife, and perceived his moral responsibility in it; even she had not seen this at once. He could not enter into this explanation with Rogers; he could only say, "I said I'd give you twenty-four hours to prove yourself a liar, and you did it. I didn't say twenty-four days."

"I don't see the difference," returned Rogers. "The parties are here now, and that proves that I was acting in good faith at the time. There has been no change in the posture of affairs. You don't know now any more than you knew then that the G. L. & P. is going to want the property. If there's any difference, it's in favour of the Road's having changed its mind."

There was some sense in this, and Lapham felt it--felt it only too eagerly, as he recognised the next instant.

Rogers went on quietly: "You're not obliged to sell to these parties when you meet them; but you've allowed me to commit myself to them by the promise that you would talk with them."

"Twan't a promise," said Lapham.

"It was the same thing; they have come out from England on my guaranty that there was such and such an opening for their capital; and now what am I to say to them? It places me in a ridiculous position." Rogers urged his grievance calmly, almost impersonally, making his appeal to Lapham's sense of justice. "I CAN'T go back to those parties and tell them you won't see them. It's no answer to make. They've got a right to know why you won't see them."

"Very well, then!" cried Lapham; "I'll come and TELL them why. Who shall I ask for? When shall I be there?"

"At eight o'clock, please," said Rogers, rising, without apparent alarm at his threat, if it was a threat. "And ask for me; I've taken a room at the hotel for the present."

"I won't keep you five minutes when I get there," said Lapham; but he did not come away till ten o'clock.

It appeared to him as if the very devil was in it. The Englishmen treated his downright refusal to sell as a piece of bluff, and talked on as though it were merely the opening of the negotiation. When he became plain with them in his anger, and told them why he would not sell, they seemed to have been prepared for this as a stroke of business, and were ready to meet it.

"Has this fellow," he demanded, twisting his head in the direction of Rogers, but disdainingly to notice him otherwise, "been telling you that it's part of my game to say this? Well, sir, I can tell you, on my side, that there isn't a slipperier rascal unhung in America than Milton K. Rogers!"

The Englishmen treated this as a piece of genuine American humour, and returned to the charge with unabated courage. They owned now, that a person interested with them had been out to look at the property, and that they were satisfied with the appearance of things. They developed further the fact that they were not acting solely, or even principally, in their own behalf, but were the agents of people in England who had projected the colonisation of a sort of community on the spot, somewhat after the plan of other English dreamers, and that they were satisfied, from a careful inspection, that the resources and facilities were those best calculated to develop the energy and enterprise of the proposed community. They were prepared to meet Mr. Lapham--Colonel, they begged his pardon, at the instance of Rogers--at any reasonable figure, and were quite willing to assume the risks he had

pointed out. Something in the eyes of these men, something that lurked at an infinite depth below their speech, and was not really in their eyes when Lapham looked again, had flashed through him a sense of treachery in them. He had thought them the dupes of Rogers; but in that brief instant he had seen them--or thought he had seen them--his accomplices, ready to betray the interests of which they went on to speak with a certain comfortable jocosity, and a certain incredulous slight of his show of integrity. It was a deeper game than Lapham was used to, and he sat looking with a sort of admiration from one Englishman to the other, and then to Rogers, who maintained an exterior of modest neutrality, and whose air said, "I have brought you gentlemen together as the friend of all parties, and I now leave you to settle it among yourselves. I ask nothing, and expect nothing, except the small sum which shall accrue to me after the discharge of my obligations to Colonel Lapham."

While Rogers's presence expressed this, one of the Englishmen was saying, "And if you have any scruple in allowin' us to assume this risk, Colonel Lapham, perhaps you can console yourself with the fact that the loss, if there is to be any, will fall upon people who are able to bear it--upon an association of rich and charitable people. But we're quite satisfied there will be no loss," he added savingly. "All you have to do is to name your price, and we will do our best to meet it."

There was nothing in the Englishman's sophistry very shocking to Lapham. It addressed itself in him to that easy-going, not evilly intentioned, potential immorality which regards common property as common prey, and gives us the most corrupt municipal governments under the sun--which makes the poorest voter, when he has tricked into place, as unscrupulous in regard to others' money as an hereditary prince. Lapham met the Englishman's eye, and with difficulty kept himself from winking. Then he looked away, and tried to find out where he stood, or what he wanted to do. He could hardly tell. He had expected to come into that room and unmask Rogers, and have it over. But he had unmasked Rogers without any effect whatever, and the play had only begun. He had a whimsical and sarcastic sense of its being very different from the plays at the theatre. He could not get up and go away in silent contempt; he could not tell the Englishmen that he believed them a pair of scoundrels and should have nothing to do with them; he could no longer treat them as innocent dupes. He remained baffled and perplexed, and the one who had not spoken hitherto remarked--

"Of course we shan't 'aggle about a few pound, more or less. If Colonel Lapham's figure should be a little larger

than ours, I've no doubt 'e'll not be too 'ard upon us
in the end."

Lapham appreciated all the intent of this subtle suggestion,
and understood as plainly as if it had been said in so
many words, that if they paid him a larger price, it was
to be expected that a certain portion of the purchase-money
was to return to their own hands. Still he could not move;
and it seemed to him that he could not speak.

"Ring that bell, Mr. Rogers," said the Englishman
who had last spoken, glancing at the annunciator button
in the wall near Rogers's head, "and 'ave up something
'of, can't you? I should like TO wet me w'istle, as you
say 'ere, and Colonel Lapham seems to find it rather dry work."

Lapham jumped to his feet, and buttoned his overcoat
about him. He remembered with terror the dinner at Corey's
where he had disgraced and betrayed himself, and if he
went into this thing at all, he was going into it sober.
"I can't stop," he said, "I must be going."

"But you haven't given us an answer yet, Mr. Lapham,"
said the first Englishman with a successful show of
dignified surprise.

"The only answer I can give you now is, NO," said Lapham.
"If you want another, you must let me have time to think
it over."

"But 'ow much time?" said the other Englishman.
"We're pressed for time ourselves, and we hoped for an
answer--'oped for a hanswer," he corrected himself,
"at once. That was our understandin' with Mr. Rogers."

"I can't let you know till morning, anyway," said Lapham,
and he went out, as his custom often was, without any
parting salutation. He thought Rogers might try to
detain him; but Rogers had remained seated when the others
got to their feet, and paid no attention to his departure.

He walked out into the night air, every pulse throbbing
with the strong temptation. He knew very well those
men would wait, and gladly wait, till the morning,
and that the whole affair was in his hands. It made him
groan in spirit to think that it was. If he had hoped
that some chance might take the decision from him,
there was no such chance, in the present or future,
that he could see. It was for him alone to commit this
rascality--if it was a rascality--or not.

He walked all the way home, letting one car after another
pass him on the street, now so empty of other passing,

and it was almost eleven o'clock when he reached home. A carriage stood before his house, and when he let himself in with his key, he heard talking in the family-room. It came into his head that Irene had got back unexpectedly, and that the sight of her was somehow going to make it harder for him; then he thought it might be Corey, come upon some desperate pretext to see Penelope; but when he opened the door he saw, with a certain absence of surprise, that it was Rogers. He was standing with his back to the fireplace, talking to Mrs. Lapham, and he had been shedding tears; dry tears they seemed, and they had left a sort of sandy, glistening trace on his cheeks. Apparently he was not ashamed of them, for the expression with which he met Lapham was that of a man making a desperate appeal in his own cause, which was identical with that of humanity, if not that of justice.

"I some expected," began Rogers, "to find you here----"

"No, you didn't," interrupted Lapham; "you wanted to come here and make a poor mouth to Mrs. Lapham before I got home."

"I knew that Mrs. Lapham would know what was going on," said Rogers more candidly, but not more virtuously, for that he could not, "and I wished her to understand a point that I hadn't put to you at the hotel, and that I want you should consider. And I want you should consider me a little in this business too; you're not the only one that's concerned, I tell you, and I've been telling Mrs. Lapham that it's my one chance; that if you don't meet me on it, my wife and children will be reduced to beggary."

"So will mine," said Lapham, "or the next thing to it."

"Well, then, I want you to give me this chance to get on my feet again. You've no right to deprive me of it; it's unchristian. In our dealings with each other we should be guided by the Golden Rule, as I was saying to Mrs. Lapham before you came in. I told her that if I knew myself, I should in your place consider the circumstances of a man in mine, who had honourably endeavoured to discharge his obligations to me, and had patiently borne my undeserved suspicions. I should consider that man's family, I told Mrs. Lapham."

"Did you tell her that if I went in with you and those fellows, I should be robbing the people who trusted them?"

"I don't see what you've got to do with the people that sent them here. They are rich people, and could bear it if it came to the worst. But there's no likelihood, now, that it will come to the worst;

you can see yourself that the Road has changed its mind about buying. And here am I without a cent in the world; and my wife is an invalid. She needs comforts, she needs little luxuries, and she hasn't even the necessaries; and you want to sacrifice her to a mere idea! You don't know in the first place that the Road will ever want to buy; and if it does, the probability is that with a colony like that planted on its line, it would make very different terms from what it would with you or me. These agents are not afraid, and their principals are rich people; and if there was any loss, it would be divided up amongst them so that they wouldn't any of them feel it."

Lapham stole a troubled glance at his wife, and saw that there was no help in her. Whether she was daunted and confused in her own conscience by the outcome, so evil and disastrous, of the reparation to Rogers which she had forced her husband to make, or whether her perceptions had been blunted and darkened by the appeals which Rogers had now used, it would be difficult to say. Probably there was a mixture of both causes in the effect which her husband felt in her, and from which he turned, girding himself anew, to Rogers.

"I have no wish to recur to the past," continued Rogers, with growing superiority. "You have shown a proper spirit in regard to that, and you have done what you could to wipe it out."

"I should think I had," said Lapham. "I've used up about a hundred and fifty thousand dollars trying."

"Some of my enterprises," Rogers admitted, "have been unfortunate, seemingly; but I have hopes that they will yet turn out well--in time. I can't understand why you should be so mindful of others now, when you showed so little regard for me then. I had come to your aid at a time when you needed help, and when you got on your feet you kicked me out of the business. I don't complain, but that is the fact; and I had to begin again, after I had supposed myself settled in life, and establish myself elsewhere."

Lapham glanced again at his wife; her head had fallen; he could see that she was so rooted in her old remorse for that questionable act of his, amply and more than fully atoned for since, that she was helpless, now in the crucial moment, when he had the utmost need of her insight. He had counted upon her; he perceived now that when he had thought it was for him alone to decide, he had counted upon her just spirit to stay his own in its struggle to be just. He had not forgotten how she held out against him only a little while ago, when he asked her whether he might not rightfully sell in some such contingency as this;

and it was not now that she said or even looked anything in favour of Rogers, but that she was silent against him, which dismayed Lapham. He swallowed the lump that rose in his throat, the self-pity, the pity for her, the despair, and said gently, "I guess you better go to bed, Persis. It's pretty late."

She turned towards the door, when Rogers said, with the obvious intention of detaining her through her curiosity--

"But I let that pass. And I don't ask now that you should sell to these men."

Mrs. Lapham paused, irresolute.

"What are you making this bother for, then?" demanded Lapham.
"What DO you want?"

"What I've been telling your wife here. I want you should sell to me. I don't say what I'm going to do with the property, and you will not have an iota of responsibility, whatever happens."

Lapham was staggered, and he saw his wife's face light up with eager question.

"I want that property," continued Rogers, "and I've got the money to buy it. What will you take for it? If it's the price you're standing out for----"

"Persis," said Lapham, "go to bed," and he gave her a look that meant obedience for her. She went out of the door, and left him with his tempter.

"If you think I'm going to help you whip the devil round the stump, you're mistaken in your man, Milton Rogers," said Lapham, lighting a cigar. "As soon as I sold to you, you would sell to that other pair of rascals. I smelt 'em out in half a minute."

"They are Christian gentlemen," said Rogers. "But I don't purpose defending them; and I don't purpose telling you what I shall or shall not do with the property when it is in my hands again. The question is, Will you sell, and, if so, what is your figure? You have got nothing whatever to do with it after you've sold."

It was perfectly true. Any lawyer would have told him the same. He could not help admiring Rogers for his ingenuity, and every selfish interest of his nature joined with many obvious duties to urge him to consent. He did not see why he should refuse. There was no longer a reason. He was standing out alone for nothing, any one else would say. He smoked on as if Rogers were not there,

and Rogers remained before the fire as patient as the clock ticking behind his head on the mantel, and showing the gleam of its pendulum beyond his face on either side. But at last he said, "Well?"

"Well," answered Lapham, "you can't expect me to give you an answer to-night, any more than before. You know that what you've said now hasn't changed the thing a bit. I wish it had. The Lord knows, I want to be rid of the property fast enough." "Then why don't you sell to me? Can't you see that you will not be responsible for what happens after you have sold?"

"No, I can't see that; but if I can by morning, I'll sell."

"Why do you expect to know any better by morning? You're wasting time for nothing!" cried Rogers, in his disappointment. "Why are you so particular? When you drove me out of the business you were not so very particular."

Lapham winced. It was certainly ridiculous for man who had once so selfishly consulted his own interests to be stickling now about the rights of others.

"I guess nothing's going to happen overnight," he answered sullenly. "Anyway, I shan't say what I shall do till morning."

"What time can I see you in the morning?"

"Half-past nine."

Rogers buttoned his coat, and went out of the room without another word. Lapham followed him to close the street-door after him.

His wife called down to him from above as he approached the room again, "Well?"

"I've told him I'd let him know in the morning."

"Want I should come down and talk with you?"

"No," answered Lapham, in the proud bitterness which his isolation brought, "you couldn't do any good." He went in and shut the door, and by and by his wife heard him begin walking up and down; and then the rest of the night she lay awake and listened to him walking up and down. But when the first light whitened the window, the words of the Scripture came into her mind: "And there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day.... And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me."

She could not ask him anything when they met, but he raised his dull eyes after the first silence, and said, "I don't know what I'm going to say to Rogers."

She could not speak; she did not know what to say, and she saw her husband when she followed him with her eyes from the window, drag heavily down toward the corner, where he was to take, the horse-car.

He arrived rather later than usual at his office, and he found his letters already on his table. There was one, long and official-looking, with a printed letter-heading on the outside, and Lapham had no need to open it in order to know that it was the offer of the Great Lacustrine & Polar Railroad for his mills. But he went mechanically through the verification of his prophetic fear, which was also his sole hope, and then sat looking blankly at it.

Rogers came promptly at the appointed time, and Lapham handed him the letter. He must have taken it all in at a glance, and seen the impossibility of negotiating any further now, even with victims so pliant and willing as those Englishmen.

"You've ruined me!" Rogers broke out. "I haven't a cent left in the world! God help my poor wife!"

He went out, and Lapham remained staring at the door which closed upon him. This was his reward for standing firm for right and justice to his own destruction: to feel like a thief and a murderer.

XXVI.

LATER in the forenoon came the despatch from the West Virginians in New York, saying their brother assented to their agreement; and it now remained for Lapham to fulfil his part of it. He was ludicrously far from able to do this; and unless he could get some extension of time from them, he must lose this chance, his only chance, to retrieve himself. He spent the time in a desperate endeavour to raise the money, but he had not raised the half of it when the banks closed. With shame in his heart he went to Bellingham, from whom he had parted so haughtily, and laid his plan before him. He could not bring himself to ask Bellingham's help, but he told him what he proposed to do. Bellingham pointed out that the whole thing was an experiment, and that the price asked was enormous, unless a great success were morally certain. He advised delay, he advised prudence; he insisted that Lapham ought at least to go out to Kanawha Falls, and see the mines and works before he put

any such sum into the development of the enterprise.

"That's all well enough," cried Lapham; "but if I don't clinch this offer within twenty-four hours, they'll withdraw it, and go into the market; and then where am I?"

"Go on and see them again," said Bellingham. "They can't be so peremptory as that with you. They must give you time to look at what they want to sell. If it turns out what you hope, then--I'll see what can be done. But look into it thoroughly."

"Well!" cried Lapham, helplessly submitting. He took out his watch, and saw that he had forty minutes to catch the four o'clock train. He hurried back to his office, and put together some papers preparatory to going, and despatched a note by his boy to Mrs. Lapham saying that he was starting for New York, and did not know just when he should get back.

The early spring day was raw and cold. As he went out through the office he saw the clerks at work with their street-coats and hats on; Miss Dewey had her jacket dragged up on her shoulders, and looked particularly comfortless as she operated her machine with her red fingers. "What's up?" asked Lapham, stopping a moment.

"Seems to be something the matter with the steam," she answered, with the air of unmerited wrong habitual with so many pretty women who have to work for a living.

"Well, take your writer into my room. There's a fire in the stove there," said Lapham, passing out.

Half an hour later his wife came into the outer office. She had passed the day in a passion of self-reproach, gradually mounting from the mental numbness in which he had left her, and now she could wait no longer to tell him that she saw how she had forsaken him in his hour of trial and left him to bear it alone. She wondered at herself in shame and dismay; she wondered that she could have been so confused as to the real point by that old wretch of a Rogers, that she could have let him hoodwink her so, even for a moment. It astounded her that such a thing should have happened, for if there was any virtue upon which this good woman prided herself, in which she thought herself superior to her husband, it was her instant and steadfast perception of right and wrong, and the ability to choose the right to her own hurt. But she had now to confess, as each of us has had likewise to confess in his own case, that the very virtue on which she had prided herself was the thing that had played her false; that she had kept her mind so long upon that old wrong

which she believed her husband had done this man that she could not detach it, but clung to the thought of reparation for it when she ought to have seen that he was proposing a piece of roguery as the means. The suffering which Lapham must inflict on him if he decided against him had been more to her apprehension than the harm he might do if he decided for him. But now she owned her limitations to herself, and above everything in the world she wished the man whom her conscience had roused and driven on whither her intelligence had not followed, to do right, to do what he felt to be right, and nothing else. She admired and revered him for going beyond her, and she wished to tell him that she did not know what he had determined to do about Rogers, but that she knew it was right, and would gladly abide the consequences with him, whatever they were.

She had not been near his place of business for nearly a year, and her heart smote her tenderly as she looked about her there, and thought of the early days when she knew as much about the paint as he did; she wished that those days were back again. She saw Corey at his desk, and she could not bear to speak to him; she dropped her veil that she need not recognise him, and pushed on to Lapham's room, and opening the door without knocking, shut it behind her.

Then she became aware with intolerable disappointment that her husband was not there. Instead, a very pretty girl sat at his desk, operating a typewriter. She seemed quite at home, and she paid Mrs. Lapham the scant attention which such young women often bestow upon people not personally interesting to them. It vexed the wife that any one else should seem to be helping her husband about business that she had once been so intimate with; and she did not at all like the girl's indifference to her presence. Her hat and sack hung on a nail in one corner, and Lapham's office coat, looking intensely like him to his wife's familiar eye, hung on a nail in the other corner; and Mrs. Lapham liked even less than the girl's good looks this domestication of her garments in her husband's office. She began to ask herself excitedly why he should be away from his office when she happened to come; and she had not the strength at the moment to reason herself out of her unreasonableness.

"When will Colonel Lapham be in, do you suppose?" she sharply asked of the girl.

"I couldn't say exactly," replied the girl, without looking round.

"Has he been out long?"

"I don't know as I noticed," said the girl, looking up at the clock, without looking at Mrs. Lapham. She went on working her machine.

"Well, I can't wait any longer," said the wife abruptly.
"When Colonel Lapham comes in, you please tell him Mrs. Lapham wants to see him."

The girl started to her feet and turned toward Mrs. Lapham with a red and startled face, which she did not lift to confront her. "Yes--yes--I will," she faltered.

The wife went home with a sense of defeat mixed with an irritation about this girl which she could not quell or account for. She found her husband's message, and it seemed intolerable that he should have gone to New York without seeing her; she asked herself in vain what the mysterious business could be that took him away so suddenly. She said to herself that he was neglecting her; he was leaving her out a little too much; and in demanding of herself why he had never mentioned that girl there in his office, she forgot how much she had left herself out of his business life. That was another curse of their prosperity. Well, she was glad the prosperity was going; it had never been happiness. After this she was going to know everything as she used.

She tried to dismiss the whole matter till Lapham returned; and if there had been anything for her to do in that miserable house, as she called it in her thought, she might have succeeded. But again the curse was on her; there was nothing to do; and the looks of that girl kept coming back to her vacancy, her disoccupation. She tried to make herself something to do, but that beauty, which she had not liked, followed her amid the work of overhauling the summer clothing, which Irene had seen to putting away in the fall. Who was the thing, anyway? It was very strange, her being there; why did she jump up in that frightened way when Mrs. Lapham had named herself?

After dark, that evening, when the question had worn away its poignancy from mere iteration, a note for Mrs. Lapham was left at the door by a messenger who said there was no answer. "A note for me?" she said, staring at the unknown, and somehow artificial-looking, handwriting of the superscription. Then she opened it and read: "Ask your husband about his lady copying-clerk. A Friend and Well-wisher," who signed the note, gave no other name.

Mrs. Lapham sat helpless with it in her hand. Her brain reeled; she tried to fight the madness off; but before Lapham came back the second morning, it had

become, with lessening intervals of sanity and release, a demoniacal possession. She passed the night without sleep, without rest, in the frenzy of the cruellest of the passions, which covers with shame the unhappy soul it possesses, and murderously lusts for the misery of its object.

If she had known where to find her husband in New York, she would have followed him; she waited his return in an ecstasy of impatience. In the morning he came back, looking spent and haggard. She saw him drive up to the door, and she ran to let him in herself

"Who is that girl you've got in your office, Silas Lapham?" she demanded, when her husband entered.

"Girl in my office?"

"Yes! Who is she? What is she doing there?" "Why, what have you heard about her?"

"Never you mind what I've heard. Who is she? IS IT MRS. M. THAT YOU GAVE THAT MONEY TO? I want to know who she is! I want to know what a respectable man, with grown-up girls of his own, is doing with such a looking thing as that in his office? I want to know how long she's been there? I want to know what she's there at all for?"

He had mechanically pushed her before him into the long, darkened parlour, and he shut himself in there with her now, to keep the household from hearing her lifted voice. For a while he stood bewildered, and could not have answered if he would, and then he would not. He merely asked, "Have I ever accused you of anything wrong, Persis?"

"You no need to!" she answered furiously, placing herself against the closed door.

"Did you ever know me to do anything out of the way?"

"That isn't what I asked you."

"Well, I guess you may find out about that girl yourself. Get away from the door."

"I won't get away from the door."

She felt herself set lightly aside, and her husband opened the door and went out. "I WILL find out about her," she screamed after him. "I'll find out, and I'll disgrace you. I'll teach you how to treat me----"

The air blackened round her: she reeled to the sofa and then she found herself waking from a faint. She did not know how long she had lain there, she did

not care. In a moment her madness came whirling back upon her. She rushed up to his room; it was empty; the closet-doors stood ajar and the drawers were open; he must have packed a bag hastily and fled. She went out and wandered crazily up and down till she found a hack. She gave the driver her husband's business address, and told him to drive there as fast as he could; and three times she lowered the window to put her head out and ask him if he could not hurry. A thousand things thronged into her mind to support her in her evil will. She remembered how glad and proud that man had been to marry her, and how everybody said she was marrying beneath her when she took him. She remembered how good she had always been to him, how perfectly devoted, slaving early and late to advance him, and looking out for his interests in all things, and sparing herself in nothing. If it had not been for her, he might have been driving stage yet; and since their troubles had begun, the troubles which his own folly and imprudence had brought on them, her conduct had been that of a true and faithful wife. Was HE the sort of man to be allowed to play her false with impunity? She set her teeth and drew her breath sharply through them when she thought how willingly she had let him befool her, and delude her about that memorandum of payments to Mrs. M., because she loved him so much, and pitied him for his cares and anxieties. She recalled his confusion, his guilty looks.

She plunged out of the carriage so hastily when she reached the office that she did not think of paying the driver; and he had to call after her when she had got half-way up the stairs. Then she went straight to Lapham's room, with outrage in her heart. There was again no one there but that type-writer girl; she jumped to her feet in a fright, as Mrs. Lapham dashed the door to behind her and flung up her veil.

The two women confronted each other.

"Why, the good land!" cried Mrs. Lapham, "ain't you Zerrilla Millon?"

"I--I'm married," faltered the girl "My name's Dewey, now."

"You're Jim Millon's daughter, anyway. How long have you been here?"

"I haven't been here regularly; I've been here off and on ever since last May."

"Where's your mother?"

"She's here--in Boston."

Mrs. Lapham kept her eyes on the girl, but she dropped, trembling, into her husband's chair, and a sort of amaze and curiosity were in her voice instead of the fury she had meant to put there.

"The Colonel," continued Zerrilla, "he's been helping us, and he's got me a type-writer, so that I can help myself a little. Mother's doing pretty well now; and when Hen isn't around we can get along."

"That your husband?"

"I never wanted to marry him; but he promised to try to get something to do on shore; and mother was all for it, because he had a little property then, and I thought may be I'd better. But it's turned out just as I said and if he don't stay away long enough this time to let me get the divorce,--he's agreed to it, time and again,--I don't know what we're going to do." Zerrilla's voice fell, and the trouble which she could keep out of her face usually, when she was comfortably warmed and fed and prettily dressed, clouded it in the presence of a sympathetic listener.

"I saw it was you, when you came in the other day," she went on; "but you didn't seem to know me. I suppose the Colonel's told you that there's a gentleman going to marry me--Mr. Wemmel's his name--as soon as I get the divorce; but sometimes I'm completely discouraged; it don't seem as if I ever could get it."

Mrs. Lapham would not let her know that she was ignorant of the fact attributed to her knowledge. She remained listening to Zerrilla, and piecing out the whole history of her presence there from the facts of the past, and the traits of her husband's character. One of the things she had always had to fight him about was that idea of his that he was bound to take care of Jim Millon's worthless wife and her child because Millon had got the bullet that was meant for him. It was a perfect superstition of his; she could not beat it out of him; but she had made him promise the last time he had done anything for that woman that it should BE the last time. He had then got her a little house in one of the fishing ports, where she could take the sailors to board and wash for, and earn an honest living if she would keep straight. That was five or six years ago, and Mrs. Lapham had heard nothing of Mrs. Millon since; she had heard quite enough of her before; and had known her idle and baddish ever since she was the worst little girl at school in Lumberville, and all through her shameful girlhood, and the married days which she had made so miserable to the poor fellow who had given her his decent name and a chance to behave herself. Mrs. Lapham had no mercy on Moll Millon, and she had

quarrelled often enough with her husband for befriending her. As for the child, if the mother would put Zerrilla out with some respectable family, that would be ONE thing; but as long as she kept Zerrilla with her, she was against letting her husband do anything for either of them. He had done ten times as much for them now as he had any need to, and she had made him give her his solemn word that he would do no more. She saw now that she was wrong to make him give it, and that he must have broken it again and again for the reason that he had given when she once scolded him for throwing away his money on that hussy--

"When I think of Jim Millon, I've got to; that 's all."

She recalled now that whenever she had brought up the subject of Mrs. Millon and her daughter, he had seemed shy of it, and had dropped it with some guess that they were getting along now. She wondered that she had not thought at once of Mrs. Millon when she saw that memorandum about Mrs. M.; but the woman had passed so entirely out of her life, that she had never dreamt of her in connection with it. Her husband had deceived her, yet her heart was no longer hot against him, but rather tenderly grateful that his deceit was in this sort, and not in that other. All cruel and shameful doubt of him went out of it. She looked at this beautiful girl, who had blossomed out of her knowledge since she saw her last, and she knew that she was only a blossomed weed, of the same worthless root as her mother, and saved, if saved, from the same evil destiny, by the good of her father in her; but so far as the girl and her mother were concerned, Mrs. Lapham knew that her husband was to blame for nothing but his wilful, wrong-headed, kind-heartedness, which her own exactions had turned into deceit. She remained a while, questioning the girl quietly about herself and her mother, and then, with a better mind towards Zerrilla, at least, than she had ever had before, she rose up and went out. There must have been some outer hint of the exhaustion in which the subsidence of her excitement had left her within, for before she had reached the head of the stairs, Corey came towards her.

"Can I be of any use to you, Mrs. Lapham? The Colonel was here just before you came in, on his way to the train."

"Yes,--yes. I didn't know--I thought perhaps I could catch him here. But it don't matter. I wish you would let some one go with me to get a carriage," she begged feebly.

"I'll go with you myself," said the young fellow, ignoring the strangeness in her manner. He offered her his arm in the twilight of the staircase, and she was glad

to put her trembling hand through it, and keep it there till he helped her into a hack which he found for her. He gave the driver her direction, and stood looking a little anxiously at her.

"I thank you; I am all right now," she said, and he bade the man drive on.

When she reached home she went to bed, spent with the tumult of her emotions and sick with shame and self-reproach. She understood now, as clearly as if he had told her in as many words, that if he had befriended those worthless jades--the Millons characterised themselves so, even to Mrs. Lapham's remorse--secretly and in defiance of her, it was because he dreaded her blame, which was so sharp and bitter, for what he could not help doing. It consoled her that he had defied her, deceived her; when he came back she should tell him that; and then it flashed upon her that she did not know where he was gone, or whether he would ever come again. If he never came, it would be no more than she deserved; but she sent for Penelope, and tried to give herself hopes of escape from this just penalty.

Lapham had not told his daughter where he was going; she had heard him packing his bag, and had offered to help him; but he had said he could do it best, and had gone off, as he usually did, without taking leave of any one.

"What were you talking about so loud, down in the parlour," she asked her mother, "just before he came up --Is there any new trouble?"

"No; it was nothing."

"I couldn't tell. Once I thought you were laughing." She went about, closing the curtains on account of her mother's headache, and doing awkwardly and imperfectly the things that Irene would have done so skilfully for her comfort.

The day wore away to nightfall, and then Mrs. Lapham said she MUST know. Penelope said there was no one to ask; the clerks would all be gone home, and her mother said yes, there was Mr. Corey; they could send and ask him; he would know.

The girl hesitated. "Very well," she said, then, scarcely above a whisper, and she presently laughed huskily. "Mr. Corey seems fated to come in, somewhere. I guess it's a Providence, mother."

She sent off a note, inquiring whether he could tell

her just where her father had expected to be that night; and the answer came quickly back that Corey did not know, but would look up the book-keeper and inquire. This office brought him in person, an hour later, to tell Penelope that the Colonel was to be at Lapham that night and next day.

"He came in from New York, in a great hurry, and rushed off as soon as he could pack his bag," Penelope explained, "and we hadn't a chance to ask him where he was to be to-night. And mother wasn't very well, and----"

"I thought she wasn't looking well when she was at the office to-day. And so I thought I would come rather than send," Corey explained in his turn.

"Oh, thank you!"

"If there is anything I can do--telegraph Colonel Lapham, or anything?"

"Oh no, thank you; mother's better now. She merely wanted to be sure where he was."

He did not offer to go, upon this conclusion of his business, but hoped he was not keeping her from her mother. She thanked him once again, and said no, that her mother was much better since she had had a cup of tea; and then they looked at each other, and without any apparent exchange of intelligence he remained, and at eleven o'clock he was still there. He was honest in saying he did not know it was so late; but he made no pretence of being sorry, and she took the blame to herself.

"I oughtn't to have let you stay," she said. "But with father gone, and all that trouble hanging over us----"

She was allowing him to hold her hand a moment at the door, to which she had followed him.

"I'm so glad you could let me!" he said, "and I want to ask you now when I may come again. But if you need me, you'll----"

A sharp pull at the door-bell outside made them start asunder, and at a sign from Penelope, who knew that the maids were abed by this time, he opened it.

"Why, Irene!" shrieked the girl.

Irene entered with the hackman, who had driven her unheard to the door, following with her small bags, and kissed her sister with resolute composure. "That's all," she said to the hackman. "I gave my checks to the expressman,"

she explained to Penelope.

Corey stood helpless. Irene turned upon him, and gave him her hand. "How do you do, Mr. Corey?" she said, with a courage that sent a thrill of admiring gratitude through him. "Where's mamma, Pen? Papa gone to bed?"

Penelope faltered out some reply embodying the facts, and Irene ran up the stairs to her mother's room. Mrs. Lapham started up in bed at her apparition.

"Irene Lapham"

"Uncle William thought he ought to tell me the trouble papa was in; and did you think I was going to stay off there junketing, while you were going through all this at home, and Pen acting so silly, too? You ought to have been ashamed to let me stay so long! I started just as soon as I could pack. Did you get my despatch? I telegraphed from Springfield. But it don't matter, now. Here I am. And I don't think I need have hurried on Pen's account," she added, with an accent prophetic of the sort of old maid she would become, if she happened not to marry.

"Did you see him?" asked her mother. "It's the first time he's been here since she told him he mustn't come."

"I guess it isn't the last time, by the looks," said Irene, and before she took off her bonnet she began to undo some of Penelope's mistaken arrangements of the room.

At breakfast, where Corey and his mother met the next morning before his father and sisters came down, he told her, with embarrassment which told much more, that he wished now that she would go and call upon the Laphams.

Mrs. Corey turned a little pale, but shut her lips tight and mourned in silence whatever hopes she had lately permitted herself. She answered with Roman fortitude: "Of course, if there's anything between you and Miss Lapham, your family ought to recognise it."

"Yes," said Corey.

"You were reluctant to have me call at first, but now if the affair is going on----"

"It is! I hope--yes, it is!"

"Then I ought to go and see her, with your sisters; and she ought to come here and--we ought all to see her and make the matter public. We can't do so too soon. It will seem as if we were ashamed if we don't."

"Yes, you are quite right, mother," said the young man gratefully, "and I feel how kind and good you are. I have tried to consider you in this matter, though I don't seem to have done so; I know what your rights are, and I wish with all my heart that I were meeting even your tastes perfectly. But I know you will like her when you come to know her. It's been very hard for her every way--about her sister,--and she's made a great sacrifice for me. She's acted nobly."

Mrs. Corey, whose thoughts cannot always be reported, said she was sure of it, and that all she desired was her son's happiness.

"She's been very unwilling to consider it an engagement on that account, and on account of Colonel Lapham's difficulties. I should like to have you go, now, for that very reason. I don't know just how serious the trouble is; but it isn't a time when we can seem indifferent."

The logic of this was not perhaps so apparent to the glasses of fifty as to the eyes of twenty-six; but Mrs. Corey, however she viewed it, could not allow herself to blench before the son whom she had taught that to want magnanimity was to be less than gentlemanly. She answered, with what composure she could, "I will take your sisters," and then she made some natural inquiries about Lapham's affairs. "Oh, I hope it will come out all right," Corey said, with a lover's vague smile, and left her. When his father came down, rubbing his long hands together, and looking aloof from all the cares of the practical world, in an artistic withdrawal, from which his eye ranged over the breakfast-table before he sat down, Mrs. Corey told him what she and their son had been saying.

He laughed, with a delicate impersonal appreciation of the predicament. "Well, Anna, you can't say but if you ever were guilty of supposing yourself porcelain, this is a just punishment of your arrogance. Here you are bound by the very quality on which you've prided yourself to behave well to a bit of earthenware who is apparently in danger of losing the gilding that rendered her tolerable."

"We never cared for the money," said Mrs. Corey.
"You know that."

"No; and now we can't seem to care for the loss of it. That would be still worse. Either horn of the dilemma gores us. Well, we still have the comfort we had in the beginning; we can't help ourselves; and we should only make bad worse by trying. Unless we can look to Tom's

inamorata herself for help."

Mrs. Corey shook her head so gloomily that her husband broke off with another laugh. But at the continued trouble of her face, he said, sympathetically: "My dear, I know it's a very disagreeable affair; and I don't think either of us has failed to see that it was so from the beginning. I have had my way of expressing my sense of it, and you yours, but we have always been of the same mind about it. We would both have preferred to have Tom marry in his own set; the Laphams are about the last set we could have wished him to marry into. They ARE uncultivated people, and so far as I have seen them, I'm not able to believe that poverty will improve them. Still, it may. Let us hope for the best, and let us behave as well as we know how. I'm sure YOU will behave well, and I shall try. I'm going with you to call on Miss Lapham. This is a thing that can't be done by halves!"

He cut his orange in the Neapolitan manner, and ate it in quarters.

XXVII.

IRENE did not leave her mother in any illusion concerning her cousin Will and herself. She said they had all been as nice to her as they could be, and when Mrs. Lapham hinted at what had been in her thoughts,--or her hopes, rather,--Irene severely snubbed the notion. She said that he was as good as engaged to a girl out there, and that he had never dreamt of her. Her mother wondered at her severity; in these few months the girl had toughened and hardened; she had lost all her babyish dependence and pliability; she was like iron; and here and there she was sharpened to a cutting edge. It had been a life and death struggle with her; she had conquered, but she had also necessarily lost much. Perhaps what she had lost was not worth keeping; but at any rate she had lost it.

She required from her mother a strict and accurate account of her father's affairs, so far as Mrs Lapham knew them; and she showed a business-like quickness in comprehending them that Penelope had never pretended to. With her sister she ignored the past as completely as it was possible to do; and she treated both Corey and Penelope with the justice which their innocence of voluntary offence deserved. It was a difficult part, and she kept away from them as much as she could. She had been easily excused, on a plea of fatigue from her journey, when Mr. and Mrs. Corey had called the day after her arrival,

and Mrs. Lapham being still unwell, Penelope received them alone.

The girl had instinctively judged best that they should know the worst at once, and she let them have the full brunt of the drawing-room, while she was screwing her courage up to come down and see them. She was afterwards--months afterwards--able to report to Corey that when she entered the room his father was sitting with his hat on his knees, a little tilted away from the Emancipation group, as if he expected the Lincoln to hit him, with that lifted hand of benediction; and that Mrs. Corey looked as if she were not sure but the Eagle pecked. But for the time being Penelope was as nearly crazed as might be by the complications of her position, and received her visitors with a piteous distraction which could not fail of touching Bromfield Corey's Italianised sympatheticism. He was very polite and tender with her at first, and ended by making a joke with her, to which Penelope responded, in her sort. He said he hoped they parted friends, if not quite acquaintances; and she said she hoped they would be able to recognise each other if they ever met again.

"That is what I meant by her pertness," said Mrs Corey, when they were driving away.

"Was it very pert?" he queried. "The child had to answer something."

"I would much rather she had answered nothing, under the circumstances," said Mrs. Corey. "However!" she added hopelessly. "Oh, she's a merry little grig, you can see that, and there's no harm in her. I can understand a little why a formal fellow like Tom should be taken with her. She hasn't the least reverence, I suppose, and joked with the young man from the beginning. You must remember, Anna, that there was a time when you liked my joking."

"It was a very different thing!"

"But that drawing-room," pursued Corey; "really, I don't see how Tom stands that. Anna, a terrible thought occurs to me! Fancy Tom being married in front of that group, with a floral horse-shoe in tuberose coming down on either side of it!"

"Bromfield!" cried his wife, "you are unmerciful."

"No, no, my dear," he argued; "merely imaginative. And I can even imagine that little thing finding Tom just the least bit slow, at times, if it were not for his goodness. Tom is so kind that I'm convinced he sometimes feels your joke in his heart when his head

isn't quite clear about it. Well, we will not despond, my dear."

"Your father seemed actually to like her," Mrs. Corey reported to her daughters, very much shaken in her own prejudices by the fact. If the girl were not so offensive to his fastidiousness, there might be some hope that she was not so offensive as Mrs. Corey had thought. "I wonder how she will strike YOU," she concluded, looking from one daughter to another, as if trying to decide which of them would like Penelope least.

Irene's return and the visit of the Coreys formed a distraction for the Laphams in which their impending troubles seemed to hang further aloof; but it was only one of those reliefs which mark the course of adversity, and it was not one of the cheerful reliefs. At any other time, either incident would have been an anxiety and care for Mrs. Lapham which she would have found hard to bear; but now she almost welcomed them. At the end of three days Lapham returned, and his wife met him as if nothing unusual had marked their parting; she reserved her atonement for a fitter time; he would know now from the way she acted that she felt all right towards him. He took very little note of her manner, but met his family with an austere quiet that puzzled her, and a sort of pensive dignity that refined his rudeness to an effect that sometimes comes to such natures after long sickness, when the animal strength has been taxed and lowered. He sat silent with her at the table after their girls had left them alone, and seeing that he did not mean to speak, she began to explain why Irene had come home, and to praise her.

"Yes, she done right," said Lapham. "It was time for her to come," he added gently.

Then he was silent again, and his wife told him of Corey's having been there, and of his father's and mother's calling. "I guess Pen's concluded to make it up," she said.

"Well, we'll see about that," said Lapham; and now she could no longer forbear to ask him about his affairs.

"I don't know as I've got any right to know anything about it," she said humbly, with remote allusion to her treatment of him. "But I can't help wanting to know. How ARE things going, Si?"

"Bad," he said, pushing his plate from him, and tilting himself back in his chair. "Or they ain't going at all. They've stopped."

"What do you mean, Si?" she persisted, tenderly.

"I've got to the end of my string. To-morrow I shall call a meeting of my creditors, and put myself in their hands. If there's enough left to satisfy them, I'm satisfied." His voice dropped in his throat; he swallowed once or twice, and then did not speak.

"Do you mean that it's all over with you?" she asked fearfully.

He bowed his big head, wrinkled and grizzled; and after awhile he said, "It's hard to realise it; but I guess there ain't any doubt about it." He drew a long breath, and then he explained to her about the West Virginia people, and how he had got an extension of the first time they had given him, and had got a man to go up to Lapham with him and look at the works,--a man that had turned up in New York, and wanted to put money in the business. His money would have enabled Lapham to close with the West Virginians. "The devil was in it, right straight along," said Lapham. "All I had to do was to keep quiet about that other company. It was Rogers and his property right over again. He liked the look of things, and he wanted to go into the business, and he had the money--plenty; it would have saved me with those West Virginia folks. But I had to tell him how I stood. I had to tell him all about it, and what I wanted to do. He began to back water in a minute, and the next morning I saw that it was up with him. He's gone back to New York. I've lost my last chance. Now all I've got to do is to save the pieces."

"Will--will--everything go?" she asked.

"I can't tell, yet. But they shall have a chance at everything--every dollar, every cent. I'm sorry for you, Persis--and the girls."

"Oh, don't talk of US!" She was trying to realise that the simple, rude soul to which her heart clove in her youth, but which she had put to such cruel proof, with her unsparing conscience and her unsparing tongue, had been equal to its ordeals, and had come out unscathed and unstained. He was able in his talk to make so little of them; he hardly seemed to see what they were; he was apparently not proud of them, and certainly not glad; if they were victories of any sort, he bore them with the patience of defeat. His wife wished to praise him, but she did not know how; so she offered him a little reproach, in which alone she touched the cause of her behaviour at parting. "Silas," she asked, after a long gaze at him, "why didn't you tell me you had Jim Millon's girl there?"

"I didn't suppose you'd like it, Persis," he answered.

"I did intend to tell you at first, but then I put--I put it off. I thought you'd come round some day, and find it out for yourself."

"I'm punished," said his wife, "for not taking enough interest in your business to even come near it. If we're brought back to the day of small things, I guess it's a lesson for me, Silas."

"Oh, I don't know about the lesson," he said wearily.

That night she showed him the anonymous scrawl which had kindled her fury against him. He turned it listlessly over in his hand. "I guess I know who it's from," he said, giving it back to her, "and I guess you do too, Persis."

"But how--how could he----"

"Mebbe he believed it," said Lapham, with patience that cut her more keenly than any reproach. "YOU did."

Perhaps because the process of his ruin had been so gradual, perhaps because the excitement of preceding events had exhausted their capacity for emotion, the actual consummation of his bankruptcy brought a relief, a repose to Lapham and his family, rather than a fresh sensation of calamity. In the shadow of his disaster they returned to something like their old, united life; they were at least all together again; and it will be intelligible to those whom life has blessed with vicissitude, that Lapham should come home the evening after he had given up everything, to his creditors, and should sit down to his supper so cheerful that Penelope could joke him in the old way, and tell him that she thought from his looks they had concluded to pay him a hundred cents on every dollar he owed them.

As James Bellingham had taken so much interest in his troubles from the first, Lapham thought he ought to tell him, before taking the final step, just how things stood with him, and what he meant to do. Bellingham made some futile inquiries about his negotiations with the West Virginians, and Lapham told him they had come to nothing. He spoke of the New York man, and the chance that he might have sold out half his business to him. "But, of course, I had to let him know how it was about those fellows."

"Of course," said Bellingham, not seeing till afterwards the full significance of Lapham's action.

Lapham said nothing about Rogers and the Englishmen. He believed that he had acted right in that matter, and he was satisfied; but he did not care to have Bellingham, or anybody, perhaps, think he had been a fool.

All those who were concerned in his affairs said he behaved well, and even more than well, when it came to the worst.

The prudence, the good sense, which he had shown in the first years of his success, and of which his great prosperity seemed to have bereft him, came back, and these qualities, used in his own behalf, commended him as much to his creditors as the anxiety he showed that no one should suffer by him; this even made some of them doubtful of his sincerity.

They gave him time, and there would have been no trouble in his resuming on the old basis, if the ground had not been cut from under him by the competition of the West Virginia company. He saw himself that it was useless to try to go on in the old way, and he preferred to go back and begin the world anew where he had first begun it, in the hills at Lapham. He put the house at Nankeen Square, with everything else he had, into the payment of his debts, and Mrs. Lapham found it easier to leave it for the old farmstead in Vermont than it would have been to go from that home of many years to the new house on the water side of Beacon. This thing and that is embittered to us, so that we may be willing to relinquish it; the world, life itself, is embittered to most of us, so that we are glad to have done with them at last; and this home was haunted with such memories to each of those who abandoned it that to go was less exile than escape.

Mrs. Lapham could not look into Irene's room without seeing the girl there before her glass, tearing the poor little keep-sakes of her hapless fancy from their hiding-places to take them and fling them in passionate renunciation upon her sister; she could not come into the sitting-room, where her little ones had grown up, without starting at the thought of her husband sitting so many weary nights at his desk there, trying to fight his way back to hope out of the ruin into which he was slipping. When she remembered that night when Rogers came, she hated the place. Irene accepted her release from the house eagerly, and was glad to go before and prepare for the family at Lapham. Penelope was always ashamed of her engagement there; it must seem better somewhere else and she was glad to go too.

No one but Lapham in fact, felt the pang of parting in all its keenness. Whatever regret the others had was softened to them by the likeness of their flitting to many of those removals for the summer which they made in the late spring when they left Nankeen Square; they were going directly into the country instead of to the seaside first; but Lapham, who usually remained in town long after they had gone, knew all the difference. For his nerves there was no mechanical sense of coming back; this was as much the end of his proud, prosperous life as death itself could have been. He was returning to begin life anew, but he knew as well as he knew that he should not find his vanished youth in his native hills,

that it could never again be the triumph that it had been. That was impossible, not only in his stiffened and weakened forces, but in the very nature of things. He was going back, by grace of the man whom he owed money, to make what he could out of the one chance which his successful rivals had left him.

In one phase his paint had held its own against bad times and ruinous competition, and it was with the hope of doing still more with the Persis Brand that he now set himself to work. The West Virginia people confessed that they could not produce those fine grades, and they willingly left the field to him. A strange, not ignoble friendliness existed between Lapham and the three brothers; they had used him fairly; it was their facilities that had conquered him, not their ill-will; and he recognised in them without enmity the necessity to which he had yielded. If he succeeded in his efforts to develop his paint in this direction, it must be for a long time on a small scale compared with his former business, which it could never equal, and he brought to them the flagging energies of an elderly man. He was more broken than he knew by his failure; it did not kill, as it often does, but it weakened the spring once so strong and elastic. He lapsed more and more into acquiescence with his changed condition, and that bragging note of his was rarely sounded. He worked faithfully enough in his enterprise, but sometimes he failed to seize occasions that in his younger days he would have turned to golden account. His wife saw in him a daunted look that made her heart ache for him.

One result of his friendly relations with the West Virginia people was that Corey went in with them, and the fact that he did so solely upon Lapham's advice, and by means of his recommendation, was perhaps the Colonel's proudest consolation. Corey knew the business thoroughly, and after half a year at Kanawha Falls and in the office at New York, he went out to Mexico and Central America, to see what could be done for them upon the ground which he had theoretically studied with Lapham.

Before he went he came up to Vermont, and urged Penelope to go with him. He was to be first in the city of Mexico, and if his mission was successful he was to be kept there and in South America several years, watching the new railroad enterprises and the development of mechanical agriculture and whatever other undertakings offered an opening for the introduction of the paint. They were all young men together, and Corey, who had put his money into the company, had a proprietary interest in the success which they were eager to achieve.

"There's no more reason now and no less than ever there was,"

mused Penelope, in counsel with her mother, "why I should say Yes, or why I should say No. Everything else changes, but this is just where it was a year ago. It don't go backward, and it don't go forward. Mother, I believe I shall take the bit in my teeth--if anybody will put it there!"

"It isn't the same as it was," suggested her mother.
"You can see that Irene's all over it."

"That's no credit to me," said Penelope. "I ought to be just as much ashamed as ever."

"You no need ever to be ashamed."

"That's true, too," said the girl. "And I can sneak off to Mexico with a good conscience if I could make up my mind to it. "She laughed. "Well, if I could be SENTENCED to be married, or somebody would up and forbid the banns! I don't know what to do about it."

Her mother left her to carry her hesitation back to Corey, and she said now, they had better go all over it and try to reason it out. "And I hope that whatever I do, it won't be for my own sake, but for--others!"

Corey said he was sure of that, and looked at her with eyes of patient tenderness.

"I don't say it is wrong," she proceeded, rather aimlessly, "but I can't make it seem right. I don't know whether I can make you understand, but the idea of being happy, when everybody else is so miserable, is more than I can endure. It makes me wretched."

"Then perhaps that's your share of the common suffering," suggested Corey, smiling.

"Oh, you know it isn't! You know it's nothing. Oh! One of the reasons is what I told you once before, that as long as father is in trouble I can't let you think of me. Now that he's lost everything--?" She bent her eyes inquiringly upon him, as if for the effect of this argument.

"I don't think that's a very good reason," he answered seriously, but smiling still. "Do you believe me when I tell you that I love you?"

"Why, I suppose I must," she said, dropping her eyes.

"Then why shouldn't I think all the more of you on account of your father's loss? You didn't suppose I cared for you because he was prosperous?"

There was a shade of reproach, ever so delicate and gentle, in his smiling question, which she felt.

"No, I couldn't think such a thing of you. I--I don't know what I meant. I meant that----" She could not go on and say that she had felt herself more worthy of him because of her father's money; it would not have been true; yet there was no other explanation. She stopped, and cast a helpless glance at him.

He came to her aid. "I understand why you shouldn't wish me to suffer by your father's misfortunes."

"Yes, that was it; and there is too great a difference every way. We ought to look at that again. You mustn't pretend that you don't know it, for that wouldn't be true. Your mother will never like me, and perhaps--perhaps I shall not like her."

"Well," said Corey, a little daunted, "you won't have to marry my family."

"Ah, that isn't the point!"

"I know it," he admitted. "I won't pretend that I don't see what you mean; but I'm sure that all the differences would disappear when you came to know my family better. I'm not afraid but you and my mother will like each other--she can't help it!" he exclaimed, less judicially than he had hitherto spoken, and he went on to urge some points of doubtful tenability. "We have our ways, and you have yours; and while I don't say but what you and my mother and sisters would be a little strange together at first, it would soon wear off, on both sides. There can't be anything hopelessly different in you all, and if there were it wouldn't be any difference to me."

"Do you think it would be pleasant to have you on my side against your mother?"

"There won't be any sides. Tell me just what it is you're afraid of."

"Afraid?"

"Thinking of, then."

"I don't know. It isn't anything they say or do," she explained, with her eyes intent on his. "It's what they are. I couldn't be natural with them, and if I can't be natural with people, I'm disagreeable."

"Can you be natural with me?"

"Oh, I'm not afraid of you. I never was. That was the trouble, from the beginning."

"Well, then, that's all that's necessary. And it never was the least trouble to me!"

"It made me untrue to Irene."

"You mustn't say that! You were always true to her."

"She cared for you first."

"Well, but I never cared for her at all!" he besought her.

"She thought you did."

"That was nobody's fault, and I can't let you make it yours. My dear----"

"Wait. We must understand each other," said Penelope, rising from her seat to prevent an advance he was making from his; "I want you to realise the whole affair. Should you want a girl who hadn't a cent in the world, and felt different in your mother's company, and had cheated and betrayed her own sister?"

"I want you!"

"Very well, then, you can't have me. I should always despise myself. I ought to give you up for all these reasons. Yes, I must." She looked at him intently, and there was a tentative quality in her affirmations.

"Is this your answer?" he said. "I must submit. If I asked too much of you, I was wrong. And--good-bye."

He held out his hand, and she put hers in it.

"You think I'm capricious and fickle!" she said.

"I can't help it--I don't know myself. I can't keep to one thing for half a day at a time. But it's right for us to part--yes, it must be. It must be," she repeated; "and I shall try to remember that. Good-bye! I will try to keep that in my mind, and you will too--you won't care, very soon! I didn't mean THAT--no; I know how true you are; but you will soon look at me differently; and see that even IF there hadn't been this about Irene, I was not the one for you. You do think so, don't you?" she pleaded, clinging to his hand. "I am not at all what they would like--your family; I felt that. I am little, and black, and homely, and they don't understand my way of talking, and now that we've lost everything--No, I'm not fit."

Good-bye. You're quite right, not to have patience with me any longer. I've tried you enough. I ought to be willing to marry you against their wishes if you want me to, but I can't make the sacrifice--I'm too selfish for that----" All at once she flung herself on his breast. "I can't even give you up! I shall never dare look any one in the face again. Go, go! But take me with you! I tried to do without you! I gave it a fair trial, and it was a dead failure. O poor Irene! How could she give you up?"

Corey went back to Boston immediately, and left Penelope, as he must, to tell her sister that they were to be married. She was spared from the first advance toward this by an accident or a misunderstanding. Irene came straight to her after Corey was gone, and demanded, "Penelope Lapham, have you been such a ninny as to send that man away on my account?"

Penelope recoiled from this terrible courage; she did not answer directly, and Irene went on, "Because if you did, I'll thank you to bring him back again. I'm not going to have him thinking that I'm dying for a man that never cared for me. It's insulting, and I'm not going to stand it. Now, you just send for him!"

"Oh, I will, 'Rene," gasped Penelope. And then she added, shamed out of her prevarication by Irene's haughty magnanimity, "I have. That is--he's coming back----"

Irene looked at her a moment, and then, whatever thought was in her mind, said fiercely, "Well!" and left her to her dismay--her dismay and her relief, for they both knew that this was the last time they should ever speak of that again.

The marriage came after so much sorrow and trouble, and the fact was received with so much misgiving for the past and future, that it brought Lapham none of the triumph in which he had once exulted at the thought of an alliance with the Coreys. Adversity had so far been his friend that it had taken from him all hope of the social success for which people crawl and truckle, and restored him, through failure and doubt and heartache, the manhood which his prosperity had so nearly stolen from him. Neither he nor his wife thought now that their daughter was marrying a Corey; they thought only that she was giving herself to the man who loved her, and their acquiescence was sobered still further by the presence of Irene. Their hearts were far more with her.

Again and again Mrs. Lapham said she did not see how she could go through it. "I can't make it seem right," she said.

"It IS right," steadily answered the Colonel.

"Yes, I know. But it don't SEEM so."

It would be easy to point out traits in Penelope's character which finally reconciled all her husband's family and endeared her to them. These things continually happen in novels; and the Coreys, as they had always promised themselves to do, made the best, and not the worst of Tom's marriage.

They were people who could value Lapham's behaviour as Tom reported it to them. They were proud of him, and Bromfield Corey, who found a delicate, aesthetic pleasure in the heroism with which Lapham had withstood Rogers and his temptations--something finely dramatic and unconsciously effective,--wrote him a letter which would once have flattered the rough soul almost to ecstasy, though now he affected to slight it in showing it. "It's all right if it makes it more comfortable for Pen," he said to his wife.

But the differences remained uneffaced, if not uneffaceable, between the Coreys and Tom Corey's wife. "If he had only married the Colonel!" subtly suggested Nanny Corey.

There was a brief season of civility and forbearance on both sides, when he brought her home before starting for Mexico, and her father-in-law made a sympathetic feint of liking Penelope's way of talking, but it is questionable if even he found it so delightful as her husband did. Lily Corey made a little, ineffectual sketch of her, which she put by with other studies to finish up, sometime, and found her rather picturesque in some ways. Nanny got on with her better than the rest, and saw possibilities for her in the country to which she was going. "As she's quite unformed, socially," she explained to her mother, "there is a chance that she will form herself on the Spanish manner, if she stays there long enough, and that when she comes back she will have the charm of, not olives, perhaps, but tortillas, whatever they are: something strange and foreign, even if it's borrowed. I'm glad she's going to Mexico. At that distance we can--correspond."

Her mother sighed, and said bravely that she was sure they all got on very pleasantly as it was, and that she was perfectly satisfied if Tom was.

There was, in fact, much truth in what she said of their harmony with Penelope. Having resolved, from the beginning, to make the best of the worst, it might almost be said

that they were supported and consoled in their good intentions by a higher power. This marriage had not, thanks to an over-ruling Providence, brought the succession of Lapham teas upon Bromfield Corey which he had dreaded; the Laphams were far off in their native fastnesses, and neither Lily nor Nanny Corey was obliged to sacrifice herself to the conversation of Irene; they were not even called upon to make a social demonstration for Penelope at a time when, most people being still out of town, it would have been so easy; she and Tom had both begged that there might be nothing of that kind; and though none of the Coreys learned to know her very well in the week she spent with them, they did not find it hard to get on with her. There were even moments when Nanny Corey, like her father, had glimpses of what Tom had called her humour, but it was perhaps too unlike their own to be easily recognisable.

Whether Penelope, on her side, found it more difficult to harmonise, I cannot say. She had much more of the harmonising to do, since they were four to one; but then she had gone through so much greater trials before. When the door of their carriage closed and it drove off with her and her husband to the station, she fetched a long sigh.

"What is it?" asked Corey, who ought to have known better.

"Oh, nothing. I don't think I shall feel strange amongst the Mexicans now."

He looked at her with a puzzled smile, which grew a little graver, and then he put his arm round her and drew her closer to him. This made her cry on his shoulder. "I only meant that I should have you all to myself." There is no proof that she meant more, but it is certain that our manners and customs go for more in life than our qualities. The price that we pay for civilisation is the fine yet impassable differentiation of these. Perhaps we pay too much; but it will not be possible to persuade those who have the difference in their favour that this is so. They may be right; and at any rate, the blank misgiving, the recurring sense of disappointment to which the young people's departure left the Coreys is to be considered. That was the end of their son and brother for them; they felt that; and they were not mean or unamiable people.

He remained three years away. Some changes took place in that time. One of these was the purchase by the Kanawha Falls Company of the mines and works at Lapham. The transfer relieved Lapham of the load of debt which he was still labouring under, and gave him an interest

in the vaster enterprise of the younger men, which he had once vainly hoped to grasp all in his own hand. He began to tell of this coincidence as something very striking; and pushing on more actively the special branch of the business left to him, he bragged, quite in his old way, of its enormous extension. His son-in-law, he said, was pushing it in Mexico and Central America: an idea that they had originally had in common. Well, young blood was what was wanted in a thing of that kind. Now, those fellows out in West Virginia: all young, and a perfect team!

For himself, he owned that he had made mistakes; he could see just where the mistakes were--put his finger right on them. But one thing he could say: he had been no man's enemy but his own; every dollar, every cent had gone to pay his debts; he had come out with clean hands. He said all this, and much more, to Mr. Sewell the summer after he sold out, when the minister and his wife stopped at Lapham on their way across from the White Mountains to Lake Champlain; Lapham had found them on the cars, and pressed them to stop off.

There were times when Mrs. Lapham had as great pride in the clean-handedness with which Lapham had come out as he had himself, but her satisfaction was not so constant. At those times, knowing the temptations he had resisted, she thought him the noblest and grandest of men; but no woman could endure to live in the same house with a perfect hero, and there were other times when she reminded him that if he had kept his word to her about speculating in stocks, and had looked after the insurance of his property half as carefully as he had looked after a couple of worthless women who had no earthly claim on him, they would not be where they were now. He humbly admitted it all, and left her to think of Rogers herself. She did not fail to do so, and the thought did not fail to restore him to her tenderness again.

I do not know how it is that clergymen and physicians keep from telling their wives the secrets confided to them; perhaps they can trust their wives to find them out for themselves whenever they wish. Sewell had laid before his wife the case of the Laphams after they came to consult with him about Corey's proposal to Penelope, for he wished to be confirmed in his belief that he had advised them soundly; but he had not given her their names, and he had not known Corey's himself. Now he had no compunctions in talking the affair over with her without the veil of ignorance which she had hitherto assumed, for she declared that as soon as she heard of Corey's engagement to Penelope, the whole thing had flashed upon her. "And that night at dinner I could have told the child

that he was in love with her sister by the way he talked about her; I heard him; and if she had not been so blindly in love with him herself, she would have known it too. I must say, I can't help feeling a sort of contempt for her sister."

"Oh, but you must not!" cried Sewell. "That is wrong, cruelly wrong. I'm sure that's out of your novel-reading, my dear, and not out of your heart. Come! It grieves me to hear you say such a thing as that."

"Oh, I dare say this pretty thing has got over it--how much character she has got!--and I suppose she'll see somebody else."

Sewell had to content himself with this partial concession. As a matter of fact, unless it was the young West Virginian who had come on to arrange the purchase of the Works, Irene had not yet seen any one, and whether there was ever anything between them is a fact that would need a separate inquiry. It is certain that at the end of five years after the disappointment which she met so bravely, she was still unmarried. But she was even then still very young, and her life at Lapham had been varied by visits to the West. It had also been varied by an invitation, made with the politest resolution by Mrs. Corey, to visit in Boston, which the girl was equal to refusing in the same spirit.

Sewell was intensely interested in the moral spectacle which Lapham presented under his changed conditions. The Colonel, who was more the Colonel in those hills than he could ever have been on the Back Bay, kept him and Mrs. Sewell over night at his house; and he showed the minister minutely round the Works and drove him all over his farm. For this expedition he employed a lively colt which had not yet come of age, and an open buggy long past its prime, and was no more ashamed of his turnout than of the finest he had ever driven on the Milldam. He was rather shabby and slovenly in dress, and he had fallen unkempt, after the country fashion, as to his hair and beard and boots. The house was plain, and was furnished with the simpler moveables out of the house in Nankeen Square. There were certainly all the necessaries, but no luxuries unless the statues of Prayer and Faith might be so considered. The Laphams now burned kerosene, of course, and they had no furnace in the winter; these were the only hardships the Colonel complained of; but he said that as soon as the company got to paying dividends again,--he was evidently proud of the outlays that for the present prevented this,--he should put in steam heat and naphtha-gas. He spoke freely of his failure, and with a confidence that seemed inspired by his former trust

in Sewell, whom, indeed, he treated like an intimate friend, rather than an acquaintance of two or three meetings. He went back to his first connection with Rogers, and he put before Sewell hypothetically his own conclusions in regard to the matter.

"Sometimes," he said, "I get to thinking it all over, and it seems to me I done wrong about Rogers in the first place; that the whole trouble came from that. It was just like starting a row of bricks. I tried to catch up and stop 'em from going, but they all tumbled, one after another. It wa'n't in the nature of things that they could be stopped till the last brick went. I don't talk much with my wife, any more about it; but I should like to know how it strikes you."

"We can trace the operation of evil in the physical world," replied the minister, "but I'm more and more puzzled about it in the moral world. There its course is often so very obscure; and often it seems to involve, so far as we can see, no penalty whatever. And in your own case, as I understand, you don't admit--you don't feel sure--that you ever actually did wrong this man----"

"Well, no; I don't. That is to say----"

He did not continue, and after a while Sewell said, with that subtle kindness of his, "I should be inclined to think--nothing can be thrown quite away; and it can't be that our sins only weaken us--that your fear of having possibly behaved selfishly toward this man kept you on your guard, and strengthened you when you were brought face to face with a greater"--he was going to say temptation, but he saved Lapham's pride, and said--"emergency."

"Do you think so?"

"I think that there may be truth in what I suggest."

"Well, I don't know what it was," said Lapham; "all I know is that when it came to the point, although I could see that I'd got to go under unless I did it--that I couldn't sell out to those Englishmen, and I couldn't let that man put his money into my business without I told him just how things stood."

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AN OPEN-EYED CONSPIRACY--AN IDYL OF SARATOGA

By William Dean Howells

This etext was prepared from the 1898 David Douglas edition
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CHAPTER I

The day had been very hot under the tall trees which everywhere embower and stifle Saratoga, for they shut out the air as well as the sun; and after tea (they still have an early dinner at all the hotels in Saratoga, and tea is the last meal of the day) I strolled over to the pretty Congress Park, in the hope of getting a breath of coolness there. Mrs. March preferred to take the chances on the verandah of our pleasant little hotel, where I left her with the other ladies, forty fanning like one, as they rocked to and fro under the roof lifted to the third story by those lofty shafts peculiar to the Saratoga architecture. As far as coolness was concerned, I thought she was wise after I reached the park, for I found none of it there. I tried first a chair in the arabesque pavilion (I call it arabesque in despair; it might very well be Swiss; it is charming, at all events), and studied to deceive myself with the fresh-looking ebullition of the spring in the vast glass bowls your goblets are served from (people say it is pumped, and artificially aerated); but after a few moments this would not do, and I went out to a bench, of the rows beside the gravelled walks. It was no better there; but I fancied it would be better on the little isle in the little lake, where the fountain was flinging a sheaf of spray into the dull air. This looked even cooler than the bubbling spring in the glass vases, and it sounded vastly cooler. There would be mosquitoes there, of course, I admitted in the debate I had with myself before I decided to make experiment of the place, and the event proved me right. There were certainly some mosquitoes in the Grecian temple (if it is not a Turkish kiosk; perhaps we had better compromise, and call it a Grecian kiosk), which you reach by a foot-bridge from the mainland, and there was a damp in the air which might pass for coolness. There were three or four people standing vaguely about in the kiosk; but my idle mind fixed itself upon a young French-Canadian mother of low degree, who sat, with her small boy, on the verge of the pavement near the water. She scolded him in their parlance for having got himself so dirty, and then she smacked his poor, filthy little hands, with a frown of superior virtue, though I did not find her so very much cleaner herself. I cannot see children beaten without a heartache, and I continued to suffer for this small wretch even after he had avenged himself by eating a handful of peanut shells, which would be sure to disagree with him and make his mother more trouble. In fact, I experienced

no relief till his mother, having spent her insensate passion, gathered him up with sufficient tenderness, and carried him away. Then, for the first time, I noticed a girl sitting in a chair just outside the kiosk, and showing a graceful young figure as she partly turned to look after the departing mother and her child. When she turned again and glanced in my direction, at the noise I made in placing my chair, I could see two things--that she had as much beauty as grace, and that she was disappointed in me. The latter fact did not wound me, for I felt its profound impersonality. I was not wrong in myself; I was simply wrong in being an elderly man with a grey beard instead of the handsome shape and phase of youth which her own young beauty had a right to in my place. I was not only not wounded, but I was not sorry not to be that shape and phase of youth, except as I hate to disappoint any one.

Her face was very beautiful; it was quite perfectly beautiful, and of such classic mould that she might well have been the tutelary goddess of that temple (if it was a temple, and not a kiosk), in the white duck costume which the goddesses were wearing that summer. Her features were Greek, but her looks were American; and she was none the less a goddess, I decided, because of that air of something exacting, of not quite satisfied, which made me more and more willing to be elderly and grey-bearded. I at least should not be expected to supply the worship necessary to keep such a goddess in good humour.

I do not know just how I can account for a strain of compassion which mingled with this sense of irresponsibility in me; perhaps it was my feeling of security that attuned me to pity; but certainly I did not look at this young girl long without beginning to grieve for her, and to weave about her a web of possibilities, which grew closer and firmer in texture when she was joined by a couple who had apparently not left her a great while before, and who spoke, without otherwise saluting her, as they sat down on either side of her. I instantly interpreted her friends to be the young wife and middle-aged husband of a second marriage; for they were evidently man and wife, and he must have been nearly twice as old as she. In person he tended to the weight which expresses settled prosperity, and a certain solidification of temperament and character; as to his face, it was kind, and it was rather humorous, in spite of being a little slow in the cast of mind it suggested. He wore an iron-grey beard on his cheeks and chin, but he had his strong upper lip clean shaven; some drops of perspiration stood upon it, and upon his forehead, which showed itself well up toward his crown under the damp strings of his scanty hair. He looked at the young goddess in white duck with a sort of trouble in his friendly countenance, and his wife (if it was his wife) seemed to share his concern, though she smiled, while he let the corners of his straight mouth droop. She was smaller than the young girl, and I thought almost as young; and she had the air of being somehow responsible for her, and cowed by her, though the word says rather more than I mean. She was not so well dressed; that is, not so stylishly, though doubtless her costume was more expensive. It seemed the inspiration of a village

dressmaker; and her husband's low-cut waistcoat, and his expanse of plaited shirt-front, betrayed a provincial ideal which she would never decry--which she would perhaps never find different from the most worldly. He had probably, I swiftly imagined, been wearing just that kind of clothes for twenty years, and telling his tailor to make each new suit like the last; he had been buying for the same period the same shape of Panama hat, regardless of the continually changing type of straw hats on other heads. I cannot say just why, as he tilted his chair back on its hind-legs, I felt that he was either the cashier of the village bank at home, or one of the principal business men of the place. Village people I was quite resolute to have them all; but I left them free to have come from some small manufacturing centre in western Massachusetts or southern Vermont or central New York. It was easy to see that they were not in the habit of coming away from their place, wherever it was; and I wondered whether they were finding their account in the present excursion.

I myself think Saratoga one of the most delightful spectacles in the world, and Mrs. March is of the same mind about it. We like all the waters, and drink them without regard to their different properties; but we rather prefer the Congress spring, because it is such a pleasant place to listen to the Troy military band in the afternoon, and the more or less vocal concert in the evening. All the Saratoga world comes and goes before us, as we sit there by day and by night, and we find a perpetual interest in it. We go and look at the deer (a herd of two, I think) behind their wire netting in the southward valley of the park, and we would feed the trout in their blue tank if we did not see them suffering with surfeit, and hanging in motionless misery amid the clear water under a cloud of bread crumbs. We are such devotees of the special attractions offered from time to time that we do not miss a single balloon ascension or pyrotechnic display. In fact, it happened to me one summer that I studied so earnestly and so closely the countenance of the lady who went up (in trunk-hose), in order to make out just what were the emotions of a lady who went up every afternoon in a balloon, that when we met near the end of the season in Broadway I thought I must have seen her somewhere in society, and took off my hat to her (she was not at the moment in trunk-hose). We like going about to the great hotels, and sponging on them for the music in the forenoon; we like the gaudy shops of modes kept by artists whose addresses are French and whose surnames are Irish; and the bazaars of the Armenians and Japanese, whose rugs and bric-a-brac are not such bargains as you would think. We even go to the races sometimes; we are not sure it is quite right, but as we do not bet, and are never decided as to which horse has won, it is perhaps not so wrong as it might be.

Somehow I could not predicate these simple joys of the people I have been talking of, for the very reason, that they were themselves so simple. It was our sophistication which enabled us to taste pleasures which would have been insipidities to them. Their palates would have demanded other flavours--social excitements, balls,

flirtations, almost escapades. I speak of the two women; the man, doubtless, like most other Americans of his age, wanted nothing but to get back to business in the small town where he was important; and still more I speak of the young girl; for the young wife I fancied very willing to go back to her house-keeping, and to be staying on in Saratoga only on her friend's account.

CHAPTER II

I had already made up my mind that they had been the closest friends before one of them married, and that the young wife still thought the young girl worthy of the most splendid fate that marriage could have in store for any of her sex. Women often make each other the idols of such worship; but I could not have justified this lady's adoration so far as it concerned the mental and moral qualities of her friend, though I fully shared it in regard to her beauty. To me she looked a little dull and a little selfish, and I chose to think the husband modestly found her selfish, if he were too modest to find her dull.

Yet, after all, I tacitly argued with him, why should we call her selfish? It was perfectly right and fit that, as a young girl with such great personal advantages, she should wish to see the world--even to show herself to the world,--and find in it some agreeable youth who should admire her, and desire to make her his own for ever. Compare this simple and natural longing with the insatiate greed and ambition of one of our own sex, I urged him, and then talk to me, if you can, of this poor girl's selfishness! A young man has more egoism in an hour than a young girl has in her whole life. She thinks she wishes some one to be devoted to her, but she really wishes some one to let her be devoted to him; and how passively, how negatively, she must manage to accomplish her self-sacrifice! He, on the contrary, means to go conquering and enslaving forward; to be in and out of love right and left, and to end, after many years of triumph, in the possession of the best and wisest and fairest of her sex. I know the breed, my dear sir; I have been a young man myself. We men have liberty, we have initiative; we are not chaperoned; we can go to this one and that one freely and fearlessly. But women must sit still, and be come to or shied off from. They cannot cast the bold eye of interest; they can at most bridle under it, and furtively respond from the corner of the eye of weak hope and gentle deprecation. Be patient, then, with this poor child if she darkles a little under the disappointment of not finding Saratoga so personally gay as she supposed it would be, and takes it out of you and your wife, as if you were to blame for it, in something like sulks.

He remained silent under these tacit appeals, but at the end he heaved a deep sigh, as he might if he were acknowledging their

justice, and were promising to do his very best in the circumstances. His wife looked round at him, but did not speak. In fact, they none of them spoke after the first words of greeting to the girl, as I can very well testify; for I sat eavesdropping with all my might, resolved not to lose a syllable, and I am sure I lost none.

The young girl did not look round at that deep-drawn sigh of the man's; she did not lift her head even when he cleared his throat: but I was intent upon him, for I thought that these sounds preluded an overture (I am not sure of the figure) to my acquaintance, and in fact he actually asked, "Do you know just when the concert begins?"

I was overjoyed at his question, for I was poignantly interested in the little situation I had created, and I made haste to answer: "Well, nominally at eight o'clock; but the first half-hour is usually taken up in tuning the instruments. If you get into the pavilion at a quarter to nine you won't lose much. It isn't so bad when it really begins."

The man permitted himself a smile of the pleasure we Americans all feel at having a thing understated in that way. His wife asked timidly, "Do we have to engage our seats in the--pavilion?"

"Oh, no," I laughed; "there's no such rush as that. Haven't you been at the concerts before?"

The man answered for her: "We haven't been here but a few days. I should think," he added to her, "it would be about as comfortable outside of the house." I perceived that he maintained his independence of my superior knowledge by refusing to say "pavilion"; and in fact I do not know whether that is the right name for the building myself.

"It will be hot enough anywhere," I assented, as if the remark had been made to me; but here I drew the line out of self-respect, and resolved that he should make the next advances.

The young girl looked up at the first sound of my voice, and verified me as the elderly man whom she had seen before; and then she looked down at the water again. I understood, and I freely forgave her. If my beard had been brown instead of grey I should have been an adventure; but to the eye of girlhood adventure can never wear a grey beard. I was truly sorry for her; I could read in the pensive droop of her averted face that I was again a disappointment.

They all three sat, without speaking again, in the mannerless silence of Americans. The man was not going to feel bound in further civility to me because I had civilly answered a question of his. I divined that he would be glad to withdraw from the overture he had made; he may have thought from my readiness to meet him half way that I might be one of those sharpers in whom Saratoga probably

abounded. This did not offend me; it amused me; I fancied his confusion if he could suddenly know how helplessly and irreparably honest I was.

"I don't know but it's a little too damp here, Rufus," said the wife.

"I don't know but it is," he answered; but none of them moved, and none of them spoke again for some minutes. Then the wife said again, but this time to the friend, "I don't know but it's a little too damp here, Julia," and the friend answered, as the husband had -

"I don't know but it is."

I had two surprises in this slight event. I could never have imagined that the girl had so brunette a name as Julia, or anything less blond in sound than, say, Evadne, at the very darkest; and I had made up my mind--Heaven knows why--that her voice would be harsh. Perhaps I thought it unfair that she should have a sweet voice added to all that beauty and grace of hers; but she had a sweet voice, very tender and melodious, with a plangent note in it that touched me and charmed me. Beautiful and graceful as she was, she had lacked atmosphere before, and now suddenly she had atmosphere. I resolved to keep as near to these people as I could, and not to leave the place as long as they stayed; but I did not think it well to let them feel that I was aesthetically shadowing them, and I got up and strolled away toward the pavilion, keeping an eye in the back of my head upon them.

I sat down in a commanding position, and watched the people gathering for the concert; and in the drama of a group of Cubans, or of South Americans, I almost forgot for a moment the pale idyl of my compatriots at the kiosk. There was a short, stout little Spanish woman speaking in the shapely sentences which the Latin race everywhere delights in, and around her was an increasing number of serious Spanish men, listening as if to important things, and paying her that respectful attention which always amuses and puzzles me. In view of what we think their low estimate of women, I cannot make out whether it is a personal tribute to some specific woman whom they regard differently from all the rest of her sex, or whether they choose to know in her for the nouce the abstract woman who is better than woman in the concrete. I am sure I have never seen men of any other race abandon themselves to such a luxury of respect as these black and grey bearded Spaniards of leaden complexion showed this dumpy personification of womanhood, with their prominent eyes bent in homage upon her, and their hands trembling with readiness to seize their hats off in reverence. It appeared presently that the matter they were all canvassing so devoutly was the question of where she should sit. It seemed to be decided that she could not do better than sit just at that point. When she actually took a chair the stately convocation ended, and its members, with low obeisances, dispersed themselves in different directions. They had probably all been sitting with her the whole afternoon on the verandah of the

Everett House, where their race chiefly resorts in Saratoga, and they were availing themselves of this occasion to appear to be meeting her, after a long interval, in society.

I said to myself that of course they believed Saratoga was still that centre of American fashion which it once was, and that they came and went every summer, probably in the belief that they saw a great deal of social gaiety there. This made me think, by a natural series of transitions, of the persons of my American idyl, and I looked about the pavilion everywhere for them without discovering, till the last, that they were just behind me.

I found the fact touching. They had not wished to be in any wise beholden to me, and had even tried to reject my friendly readiness to know them better; but they had probably sought my vicinity in a sense of their loneliness and helplessness, which they hoped I would not divine, but which I divined instantly. Still, I thought it best not to show any consciousness of them, and we sat through the first part of the concert without taking notice of one another. Then the man leaned forward and touched me on the shoulder.

"Will you let me take your programme a minute?"

"Why, certainly," said I.

He took it, and after a vague glance at it he passed it to his wife, who gave it in turn to the young girl. She studied it very briefly, and then, after a questioning look, offered it back to me.

"Won't you keep it?" I entreated. "I've quite done with it."

"Oh, thank you," she answered in her tender voice, and she and the wife looked hard at the man, whom they seemed to unite in pushing forward by that means.

He hemmed, and asked, "Have you been in Saratoga much?"

"Why, yes," I said; "rather a good deal. My wife and I have been here three or four summers."

At the confession of my married state, which this statement implicated, the women exchanged a glance, I fancied, of triumph, as if they had been talking about me, and I had now confirmed the ground they had taken concerning me. Then they joined in goading the man on again with their eyes.

"Which hotel," he asked, "should you say had the most going on?"

The young girl and the wife transferred their gaze to me, with an intensified appeal in it. The man looked away with a certain shame-the shame of a man who feels that his wife has made him make an ass of himself. I tried to treat his question, by the quantity and quality of my answer, as one of the most natural things in the

world; and I probably deceived them all by this effort, though I am sure that I was most truthful and just concerning the claims of the different hotels to be the centre of excitement. I thought I had earned the right to ask at the end, "Are you stopping at the Grand Union?"

"No," he said; and he mentioned one of the smaller hotels, which depend upon the great houses for the entertainment of their guests. "Are you there?" he asked, meaning the Grand Union.

"Oh no," I said; "we couldn't do that sort of thing, even if we wanted." And in my turn I named the modest hotel where we were, and said that I thought it by all odds the pleasantest place in Saratoga. "But I can't say," I added, "that there is a great deal going on there, either. If you want that sort of thing you will have to go to some of the great hotels. We have our little amusements, but they're all rather mild." I kept talking to the man, but really addressing myself to the women. "There's something nearly every evening: prestidigitating, or elocutioning, or a little concert, or charades, or impromptu theatricals, or something of that sort. I can't say there's dancing, though really, I suppose, if any one wanted to dance there would be dancing."

I was aware that the women listened intelligently, even if the man did not. The wife drew a long breath, and said, "It must be very pleasant."

The girl said--rather more hungrily, I fancied--"Yes, indeed."

I don't know why their interest should have prompted me to go on and paint the lily a little, but I certainly did so. I did not stop till the music began again, and I had to stop. By the time the piece was finished I had begun to have my misgivings, and I profited by the brief interval of silence to say to the young girl, "I wouldn't have you think we are a whirl of gaiety exactly."

"Oh no," she answered pathetically, as if she were quite past expecting that or anything like it.

We were silent again. At the end of the next piece they all rose, and the wife said timidly to me, "Well, good-evening," as if she might be venturing too far; and her husband came to her rescue with "Well, good-evening, sir." The young girl merely bowed.

I did not stay much longer, for I was eager to get home and tell my wife about my adventure, which seemed to me of a very rare and thrilling kind. I believed that if I could present it to her duly, it would interest her as much as it had interested me. But somehow, as I went on with it in the lamplight of her room, it seemed to lose colour and specific character.

"You are always making up these romances about young girls being off and disappointed of a good time ever since we saw that poor little

Kitty Ellison with her cousins at Niagara," said Mrs. March. "You seem to have it on the brain."

"Because it's the most tragical thing in the world, and the commonest in our transition state," I retorted. I was somewhat exasperated to have my romance treated as so stale a situation, though I was conscious now that it did want perfect novelty. "It's precisely for that reason that I like to break my heart over it. I see it every summer, and it keeps me in a passion of pity. Something ought to be done about it."

"Well, don't YOU try to do anything, Basil, unless you write to the newspapers."

"I suppose," I said, "that if the newspapers could be got to take hold of it, perhaps something might be done." The notion amused me; I went on to play with it, and imagined Saratoga, by a joint effort of the leading journals, recolonised with the social life that once made it the paradise of young people.

"I have been writing to the children," said my wife, "and telling them to stay on at York Harbour if the Herricks want them so much. They would hate it here. You say the girl looked cross. I can't exactly imagine a cross goddess."

"There were lots of cross goddesses," I said rather crossly myself; for I saw that, after having trodden my romance in the dust, she was willing I should pick it up again and shake it off, and I wished to show her that I was not to be so lightly appeased.

"Perhaps I was thinking of angels," she murmured.

"I distinctly didn't say she was an angel," I returned.

"Now, come, Basil; I see you're keeping something back. What did you try to do for those people? Did you tell them where you were stopping?"

"Yes, I did. They asked me, and I told them."

"Did you brag the place up?"

"On the contrary, I understated its merits."

"Oh, very well, then," she said, quite as if I had confessed my guilt; "they will come here, and you will have your romance on your hands for the rest of the month. I'm thankful we're going away the first of August."

The next afternoon, while we were sitting in the park waiting for the Troy band to begin playing, and I was wondering just when they would reach the "Washington Post March," which I like because I can always be sure of it, my unknown friends came strolling our way. The man looked bewildered and bored, with something of desperation in his troubled eye, and his wife looked tired and disheartened. The young girl, still in white duck, wore the same air of passive injury I had noted in her the night before. Their faces all three lighted up at sight of me; but they faded again at the cold and meagre response I made to their smiles under correction of my wife's fears of them. I own it was base of me; but I had begun to feel myself that it might be too large a contract to attempt their consolation, and, in fact, after one is fifty scarcely any romance will keep overnight.

My wife glanced from them to me, and read my cowardly mind; but she waited till they passed, as they did after an involuntary faltering in front of us, and were keeping on down the path, looking at the benches, which were filled on either hand. She said, "Weren't those your friends?"

"They were the persons of my romance."

"No matter. Go after them instantly and bring them back here, poor things. We can make room for them."

I rose. "Isn't this a little too idyllic? Aren't you rather overdoing it?"

"Don't speak to me, Basil! I never heard of anything so atrocious. Go on your knees to them if they refuse! They can sit here with me, and you and he can stand. Fly!"

I knew she was punishing me for her own reluctance; but I flew, in that sense of the term, and easily overhauled them in the tangle of people coming and going in the path, and the nursemaids pushing their perambulators in either direction. Hat in hand I delivered my message. I could see that it gave the women great pleasure and the man some doubt. His mouth fell open a little; their cheeks flushed and their eyes shone.

"I don't know as we better," the wife hesitated; "I'm afraid we'll crowd you." And she looked wistfully toward my wife. The young girl looked at her.

"Not at all!" I cried. "There's an abundance of room. My wife's keeping the places for you,"--in fact, I saw her putting her arm out along the bench, and explaining to a couple who had halted in front of her that the seats were taken--"and she'll be disappointed."

"Well," the woman consented, with a little sigh of triumph that

touched me, and reanimated all my interest in her and in her friend. She said, with a sort of shy, instinctive politeness, "I don't know as you and Mr. Deering got acquainted last night."

"My name is March," I said, and I shook the hand of Mr. Deering. It was rather thick.

"And this--is our friend," Mrs. Peering went on, in presentation of me to the young lady, "Miss Gage, that's come with us."

I was delighted that I had guessed their relative qualities so perfectly, and when we arrived at Mrs. March I glibly presented them. My wife was all that I could have wished her to be of sympathetic and intelligent. She did not overdo it by shaking hands, but she made places for the ladies, smiling cordially; and Mrs. Deering made Miss Gage take the seat between them. Her husband and I stood awhile in front of them, and then I said we would go off and find chairs somewhere.

We did not find any till we had climbed to the upland at the south-east of the park, and then only two iron ones, which it was useless to think of transporting. But there was no reason why we should not sit in them where they were: we could keep the ladies in plain sight, and I could not mistake "Washington Post" when the band came to it. Mr. Deering sank into one of the chairs with a sigh of satisfaction which seemed to complete itself when he discovered in the thick grass at his feet a twig from one of the tall, slim pines above us. He bent over for it, and then, as he took out his penknife and clicked open a blade to begin whittling, he cast up a critical glance at the trees.

"Pretty nice pines," he said; and he put his hand on the one next to us with a sort of appreciation that interested me.

"Yes; the trees of Saratoga are the glory of the place," I returned. "I never saw them grow anywhere else so tall and slim. It doesn't seem the effect of crowding either. It's as if there was some chemical force in the soil that shot them up. They're like rockets that haven't left the ground yet."

"It's the crowding," he said seriously, as if the subject were not to be trifled with. "It's the habit of all these trees--pines and oaks and maples, I don't care what they are--to spread, and that's what we tell our customers. Give the trees plenty of room; don't plant 'em too thick if you want to get all the good out of 'em." As if he saw a question in my eye, he went on: "We do a forest-tree business exclusively; these shade-trees, and walnuts, hickories, chestnuts, and all kinds. It's a big trade, getting to be, and growing all the time. Folks have begun to find out what fools they were to destroy the forests, and the children want to buy back what the fathers threw away."

I scarcely needed to prompt him; he was only too glad to talk on

about his business, and he spoke with a sort of homesick fondness. He told me that he had his nurseries at De Witt Point, up on the St. Lawrence, where he could raise stock hardy enough for any climate, and ship by land or water.

"I've got to be getting home right away now," he said finally, clicking his knife-blade half shut and open with his thumb.

"It's about time for our evergreen trade, and I don't want the trees to stay a minute in the ground after the middle of the month."

"Won't the ladies find it hard to tear themselves away from the gaieties of Saratoga?" I asked with apparent vagueness.

"Well, that's it," said Mr. Deering; and he shut his knife and slipped it into his pocket, in order to take his knee between his clasped hands and lift his leg from the ground. I have noticed that this is a philosophical attitude with some people, and I was prepared by it for some thoughtful generalising from my companion.

"Women would be willing to stay on in a place for a year to see if something wouldn't happen; and if you take 'em away before anything happens, they'll always think that if they'd stayed something would have happened the next day, or maybe the day they left."

He stared upward into the pine boughs, and I said: "Yes, that's so. I suppose we should be like them if we had the same conditions. Their whole life is an expectation of something to happen. Men have the privilege of making things happen--or trying to."

"Oh, I don't know as I want to criticise 'em. As you say, I guess WE should be just so." He dropped his leg, and bent over as if to examine the grass; he ended by taking a blade of it between his teeth before he spoke again, with his head still down. "I don't want to hurry 'em; I want to give 'em a fair show now we're here, and I'll let the stock go as long as I can. But I don't see very much gaiety around."

I laughed. "Why, it's all gaiety, in one way. Saratoga is a perpetual Fourth of July, we think."

"Oh yes; there's enough going on, and my wife and me we could enjoy it first rate."

"If the young lady could?" I ventured, with a smile of sympathetic intelligence.

"Well, yes. You see, we don't know anybody, and I suppose we didn't take that into account. Well, I suppose it's like this: they thought it would be easy to get acquainted in the hotel, and commence having a good time right away. I don't know; my wife had the idea when they cooked it up amongst 'em that she was to come with us. But I SWEAR _I_ don't know how to go about it. I can't seem to make up my mouth to speak to folks first; and then you can't

tell whether a man ain't a gambler, or on for the horse-races anyway. So we've been here a week now, and you're the first ones we've spoken to besides the waiters since we came."

I couldn't help laughing, their experience was so exactly as I had imagined it when I first saw this disconsolate party. In my triumph at my own penetration, I would not have had their suffering in the past one pang the less; but the simple frankness of his confession fixed me in the wish that the future might be brighter for them. I thought myself warranted by my wife's imprudence in taking a step toward their further intimacy on my own account, and I said:

"Well, perhaps I ought to tell you that I haven't been inside the Saratoga Club or bet on the races since I've been here. That's my name in full,--and I gave him my card,--"and I'm in the literary line; that is, I'm the editor of a magazine in New York--the Every Other Week."

"Oh yes; I know who you are," said my companion, with my card in his hand. "Fact is, I was round at your place this morning trying to get rooms, and the clerk told me all about you from my description. I felt as mean as pu'sley goin'; seemed to be takin' kind of an advantage of you."

"Not at all; it's a public house," I interrupted; but I thought I should be stronger with Mrs. March if I did not give the fact away to her, and I resolved to keep it.

"But they couldn't rest easy till I tried, and I was more than half glad there wasn't any rooms."

"Oh, I'm very sorry," I said; and I indulged a real regret from the vantage I had. "It would have been very pleasant to have you there. Perhaps later--we shall be giving up our rooms at the end of the month."

"No," he said, with a long breath. "If I've got to leave 'em, I guess it'll be just as well to leave 'em where they're acquainted with the house anyway." His remark betrayed a point in his thinking which had not perhaps been reached in his talk with the ladies. "It's a quiet place, and they're used to it; and I guess they wouldn't want to stay through the rest of the month, quite. I don't believe my wife would, anyway."

He did not say this very confidently, but hopefully rather, and I thought it afforded me an opening to find out something yet more definite about the ladies.

"Miss Gage is remarkably fine-looking," I began.

"Think so?" he answered. "Well, so does my wife. I don't know as I like her style exactly," he said, with a kind of latent grudge.

"Her style is magnificent," I insisted.

"Well, maybe so. I guess she's good enough looking, if that's what you mean. But I think it's always a kind of a mistake for three persons to come off together, I don't care who they are. Then there's three opinions. She's a nice girl, and a good girl, and she don't put herself forward. But when you've got a young lady on your hands, you've GOT her, and you feel bound to keep doin' something for her all the time; and if you don't know what to do yourself, and your wife can't tell--"

I added intelligently, "Yes."

"Well, that's just where it is. Sometimes I wish the whole dumb town would burn up." I laughed and laughed; and my friend, having begun to unpack his heart, went on to ease it of the rest of its load. I had not waited for this before making some reflections concerning him, but I now formulated them to myself. He really had none of that reserve I had attributed to him the night before; it was merely caution and this is the case with most country people. They are cautious, but not reserved; if they think they can trust you, they keep back none of their affairs; and this is the American character, for we are nearly all country people. I understood him perfectly when he said, "I ruther break stone than go through what I have been through the last week! You understand how it is. 'Tain't as if she said anything; I wish she would; but you feel all the while that it ain't what she expected it to be, and you feel as if it was you that was to blame for the failure. By George! if any man was to come along and make an offer for my contract I would sell out cheap. It's worse because my wife asked her to come, and thought she was doin' her all kinds of a favour to let her. They've always been together, and when we talked of coming to Saratoga this summer, nothing would do my wife but Julia must come with us. Her and her father usually take a trip off somewhere in the hot weather, but this time he couldn't leave; president of our National Bank, and president of the village, too." He threw in the fact of these dignities explanatorily, but with a willingness, I could see, that it should affect me. He went on: "They're kind of connections of my first wife's. Well, she's a nice girl; too nice, I guess, to get along very fast. I see girls all the way along down gettin' acquainted on the cars and boats--we come east on the Ogdensburg road to Rouse's Point, and then took the boat down Lake Champlain and Lake George--but she always seemed to hold back. I don't know's she's proud either; I can't make it out. It balls my wife all up, too. I tell her she's fretted off all the good her trip's goin' to do her before she got it."

He laughed ruefully, and just then the band began to play the "Washington Post."

"What tune's that?" he demanded.

"Washington Post," I said, proud of knowing it.

"By George! that tune goes right to a fellow's legs, don't it?"

"It's the new march," I said.

He listened with a simple joy in it, and his pleasure strengthened the mystic bond which had formed itself between us through the confidences he had made me, so flatteringly corroborative of all my guesses concerning him and his party.

CHAPTER IV

I longed to have the chance of bragging to my wife; but this chance did not come till the concert was quite over, after I rejoined her with my companion, and she could take leave of them all without seeming to abandon them. Then I judged it best to let her have the word; for I knew by the way she ran her hand through my arm, and began pushing me along out of earshot, that she was full of it.

"Well, Basil, I think that is the sweetest and simplest and kindest creature in the world, and I'm perfectly in love with her."

I did not believe somehow that she meant the girl, but I thought it best merely to suggest, "There are two."

"You know very well which I mean, and I would do anything I could for her. She's got a difficult problem before her, and I pity her. The girl's very well, and she IS a beauty; and I suppose she HAS been having a dull time, and of course you couldn't please Mrs. Deering half so well as by doing something for her friend. I suppose you're feeling very proud that they're just what you divined."

"Not at all; I'm so used to divining people. How did you know I knew it?"

"I saw you talking to him, and I knew you were pumping him."

"Pumping? He asked nothing better than to flow. He would put to shame the provoked spontaneity of any spring in Saratoga."

"Well, did he say that he was going to leave them here?"

"He would like to do it--yes. He was very sweet and simple and kind, too, Isabel. He complained bitterly of the goddess, and all but said she sulked."

"Why, I don't know," said my wife. "I think, considering, that she is rather amiable. She brightened up more and more."

"That was prosperity, or the hope of it, my dear. Nothing illumines us like the prospect of pleasant things. She took you for society smiling upon her, and of course she smiled back. But it's only the first smile of prosperity that cheers. If it keeps on smiling it ends by making us dissatisfied again. When people are getting into society they are very glad; when they have got in they seem to be rather gloomy. We mustn't let these things go too far. Now that you've got your friends in good humour, the right way is to drop them--to cut them dead when you meet them, to look the other way. That will send them home perfectly radiant."

"Nonsense! I am going to do all I can for them. What do you think we can do? They haven't the first idea how to amuse themselves here. It's a miracle they ever got that dress the girl is wearing. They just made a bold dash because they saw it in a dressmaker's window the first day, and she had to have something. It's killingly becoming to her; but I don't believe they know it, and they don't begin to know how cheap it was: it was simply THROWN away. I'm going shopping with them in the morning."

"Oh!"

"But now the question is, what we can do to give them some little glimpse of social gaiety. That's what they've come for."

We were passing the corner of a large enclosure which seems devoted in Saratoga to the most distracting of its pleasures, and I said:

"Well, we might give them a turn on the circular railway or the switchback; or we could take them to the Punch and Judy drama, or get their fortunes told in the seeress's tent, or let them fire in the shooting-gallery, or buy some sweet-grass baskets of the Indians; and there is the pop-corn and the lemonade."

"I will tell you what," said Mrs March, who had not been listening to a word I said; for if she had heard me she would not have had patience with my ironical suggestions.

"Well, what?"

"Or, no; that wouldn't do, either."

"I'm glad you don't approve of the notion, on second thoughts. I didn't like it from the beginning, and I didn't even know what it was."

"We could have them up to the house this evening, and introduce them to some of our friends,--only there isn't a young man in the whole place,--and have them stay to the charades."

"What do you think," I said, "of their having come up this morning and tried to get rooms at our house?"

"Yes; they told me."

"And don't you call that rather forth-putting? It seems to me that it was taking a mean advantage of my brags."

"It was perfectly innocent in them. But now, dearest, don't be tiresome. I know that you like them as well as I do, and I will take all your little teasing affectations for granted. The question is, what can we do for them?"

"And the answer is, I don't in the least know. There isn't any society life at Saratoga that I can see; and if there is, we are not in it. How could we get any one else in? I see that's what you're aiming at. Those public socialities at the big hotels they could get into as well as we could; but they wouldn't be anywhere when they got there, and they wouldn't know what to do. You know what hollow mockeries those things are. Don't you remember that hop we went to with the young Braceys the first summer? If those girls hadn't waltzed with each other they wouldn't have danced a step the whole evening."

"I know, I know," sighed my wife; "it was terrible. But these people are so very unworldly that don't you think they could be deluded into the belief that they were seeing society if we took a little trouble? You used to be so inventive! You could think up something now if you tried."

"My dear, a girl knows beyond all the arts of hoodwinking whether she's having a good time, and your little scheme of passing off one of those hotel hops for a festivity would never work in the world."

"Well, I think it is too bad! What has become of all the easy gaiety there used to be in the world?"

"It has been starched and ironed out of it, apparently. Saratoga is still trying to do the good old American act, with its big hotels and its heterogeneous hops, and I don't suppose there's ever such a thing as a society person at any of them. That wouldn't be so bad. But the unsociety people seem to be afraid of one another. They feel that there is something in the air--something they don't and can't understand; something alien, that judges their old-fashioned American impulse to be sociable, and contemns it. No; we can't do anything for our hapless friends--I can hardly call them our acquaintances. We must avoid them, and keep them merely as a pensive colour in our own vivid memories of Saratoga. If we made them have a good time, and sent them on their way rejoicing, I confess that I should feel myself distinctly a loser. As it is, they're a strain of melancholy poetry in my life, of music in the minor key. I shall always associate their pathos with this hot summer weather, and I shall think of them whenever the thermometer registers eighty-nine. Don't you see the advantage of that? I believe I can ultimately get some literature out of them. If I can think of a fitting fable for them Fulkerson will feature it in Every

Other Week. He'll get out a Saratoga number, and come up here and strike the hotels and springs for ad's."

"Well," said Mrs. March, "I wish I had never seen them; and it's all your fault, Basil. Of course, when you played upon my sympathies so about them, I couldn't help feeling interested in them. We are a couple of romantic old geese, my dear."

"Not at all, or at least I'm not. I simply used these people conjecturally to give myself an agreeable pang. I didn't want to know anything more about them than I imagined, and I certainly didn't dream of doing anything for them. You'll spoil everything if you turn them from fiction into fact, and try to manipulate their destiny. Let them alone; they will work it out for themselves."

"You know I can't let them alone now," she lamented. "I am not one of those who can give themselves an agreeable pang with the unhappiness of their fellow-creatures. I'm not satisfied to study them; I want to relieve them."

She went on to praise herself to my disadvantage, as I notice wives will with their husbands, and I did not attempt to deny her this source of consolation. But when she ended by saying, "I believe I shall send you alone," and explained that she had promised Mrs. Deering we would come to their hotel for them after tea, and go with them to hear the music at the United States and the Grand Union, I protested. I said that I always felt too sneaking when I was prowling round those hotels listening to their proprietary concerts, and I was aware of looking so sneaking that I expected every moment to be ordered off their piazzas. As for convoying a party of three strangers about alone, I should certainly not do it.

"Not if I've a headache?"

"Not if you've a headache."

"Oh, very well, then."

"What are you two quarrelling about?" cried a gay voice behind us, and we looked round into the laughing eyes of Miss Dale. She was the one cottager we knew in Saratoga, but when we were with her we felt that we knew everybody, so hospitable was the sense of world which her kindness exhaled.

"It was Mrs. March who was quarrelling," I said. "I was only trying to convince her that she was wrong, and of course one has to lift one's voice. I hope I hadn't the effect of halloaing."

"Well, I merely heard you above the steam harmonicon at the switchback," said Miss Dale. "I don't know whether you call THAT halloaing."

"Oh, Miss Dale," said my wife, "we are in such a fatal--"

"Pickle," I suggested, and she instantly adopted the word in her extremity.

"--pickle with some people that Providence has thrown in our way, and that we want to do something for"; and in a labyrinth of parentheses that no man could have found his way into or out of, she possessed Miss Dale of the whole romantic fact. "It was Mr. March, of course, who first discovered them," she concluded, in plaintive accusation.

"Poor Mr. March!" cried Miss Dale. "Well, it is a pathetic case, but it isn't the only one, if that's any comfort. Saratoga is reeking with just such forlornities the whole summer long; but I can quite understand how you feel about it, Mrs. March." We came to a corner, and she said abruptly: "Excuse my interrupting your quarrel! Not quite so LOUD, Mr. March!" and she flashed back a mocking look at me as she skurried off down the street with astonishing rapidity.

"How perfectly heartless!" cried my wife. "I certainly thought she would suggest something--offer to do something."

"I relied upon her, too," I said; "but now I have my doubts whether she was really going down that street till she saw that it was the best way to escape. We're certainly in trouble, my dear, if people avoid us in this manner."

CHAPTER V

"I am doing it entirely on Mrs. Deering's I account," said my wife that evening after tea, as we walked down the side-street that descended from our place to Broadway. "She has that girl on her hands, and I know she must be at her wits' end."

"And I do it entirely on Deering's account," I retorted. "He has both of those women on HIS hands."

We emerged into the glistening thoroughfare in front of the vast hotels, and I was struck, as I never fail to be, with its futile and unmeaning splendour. I think there is nothing in our dun-coloured civilisation prettier than that habit the ladies have in Saratoga of going out on the street after dark in their bare heads. When I first saw them wandering about so in the glitter of the shop-windows and the fitful glare of the electrics everywhere, I thought they must be some of those Spanish-Americans mistaking the warm, dry air of the Northern night for that of their own latitudes; but when I came up with them I could hear, if I could not see, that they were of our own race. Those flat and shapeless tones could come through

the noses of no other. The beauty and the elegance were also ours, and the fearless trust of circumstance. They sauntered up and down before the gaunt, high porticoes of the hotels, as much at home as they could have been in their own houses, and in much the same dress as if they had been receiving there. The effect is one of incomparable cheer, and is a promise of social brilliancy which Saratoga no more keeps than she does that of her other characteristic aspects; say the forenoon effect of the same thoroughfare, with the piazzas banked with the hotel guests, and the street full of the light equipages which seem peculiar to the place passing and repassing, in the joyous sunlight and out of it, on the leaf-flecked street. Even the public carriages of Saratoga have a fresh, unjaded air; and to issue from the railway station in the midst of those buoyant top-phaetons and surreys, with their light-limbed horses, is to be thrilled by some such insensate expectation of pleasure as fills the heart of a boy at his first sally into the world. I always expect to find my lost youth waiting for me around the corner of the United States Hotel, and I accuse myself of some fault if it disappoints me, as it always does. I can imagine what gaudy hopes by day and by night the bright staging of the potential drama must awaken in the breast of a young girl when she first sees it, and how blank she must feel when the curtain goes down and there has been no play. It was a real anguish to me when that young girl with the Deerings welcomed my wife and me with a hopeful smile, as if we were the dramatis personae, and now the performance must be going to begin. I could see how much our chance acquaintance had brightened the perspective for her, and how eagerly she had repaired all her illusions; and I thought how much better it would have been if she had been left to the dull and spiritless resignation in which I had first seen her. From that there could no fall, at least, and now she had risen from it only to sink again.

But, in fact, the whole party seemed falsely cheered by the event of the afternoon; and in the few moments that we sat with them on their verandah, before going to the music at the Grand Union, I could hear the ladies laughing together, while Deering joyously unfolded to me his plan of going home the next morning and leaving his wife and Miss Gage behind him. "They will stay in this hotel--they might as well--and I guess they can get along. My wife feels more acquainted since she met Mrs. March, and I shan't feel so much like leavin' her among strangers here I don't know when she's taken such a fancy to any one as she has to your wife, or Miss Gage either. I guess she'll want to ask her about the stores."

I said that I believed the fancy was mutual, and that there was nothing my wife liked better than telling people about stores. I added, in generalisation, that when a woman had spent all her own money on dress, it did her quite as much good to see other women spending theirs; and Deering said he guessed that was about so. He gave me a push on the shoulder to make me understand how keenly he appreciated the joke, and I perceived that we had won his heart too.

We joined the ladies, and I thought that my sufferings for her

authorised me to attach myself more especially to Miss Gage, and to find out all I could about her. We walked ahead of the others, and I was aware of her making believe that it was quite the same as if she were going to the music with a young man. Not that she seemed disposed to trifle with my grey hairs; I quickly saw that this would not be in character with her; but some sort of illusion was essential to her youth, and she could not help rejuvenating me. This was quite like the goddess she looked, I reflected, but otherwise she was not formidably divine; and, in fact, I suppose the goddesses were, after all, only nice girls at heart. This one, at any rate, I decided, was a very nice girl when she was not sulking; and she was so brightened by her little adventure, which was really no adventure, that I could not believe I had ever seen her sulking.

The hotel people did not keep us from going into the court of the hotel, as I was afraid they might, and we all easily found places. In the pauses of the music I pointed out such notables and characters as I saw about us, and tried to possess her of as much of the Saratoga world as I knew. It was largely there in that bold evidence it loves, and in that social solitude to which the Saratoga of the hotels condemns the denizens of her world. I do not mean that the Saratoga crowd is at all a fast-looking crowd. There are sporting people and gamblers; but the great mass of the frequenters are plain, honest Americans, out upon a holiday from all parts of the country, and of an innocence too inveterate to have grasped the fact that there is no fashion in Saratoga now but the fashion of the ladies' dresses. These, I must say, are of the newest and prettiest; the dressing of the women always strikes me there. My companion was eager to recognise the splendours which she had heard of, and I pointed out an old lady by the door, who sat there displaying upon her vast person an assortment of gems and jewels which she seemed as personally indifferent to as if she were a show-window, and I was glad to have the girl shrink from the spectacle in a kind of mute alarm. I tried to make her share my pleasure in a group of Cubans--fat father, fat mother, fat daughter--who came down the walk toward us in the halo of tropical tradition; but she had not the taste for olives, and I saw that I failed to persuade her of the aesthetic value of this alien element among us. She apparently could do almost as little with some old figures of bygone beaux spectrally revisiting the hotel haunts of their youth; but she was charmed with the sylvan loveliness of that incomparable court. It is, in fact, a park of the tall, slim Saratoga trees enclosed by the quadrangle of the hotel, exquisitely kept, and with its acres of greensward now showing their colour vividly in the light of the electrics, which shone from all sides on the fountain flashing and plashing in the midst. I said that here was that union of the sylvan and the urban which was always the dream of art, and which formed the delicate charm of pastoral poetry; and although I do not think she quite grasped the notion, I saw that she had a pleasure in the visible fact, and that was much better. Besides, she listened very respectfully, and with no signs of being bored.

In the wait between the two parts of the concert I invited her to

walk around the court with me, and under the approving eye of Mrs. March we made this expedition. It seemed to me that I could not do a wiser thing, both for the satisfaction of my own curiosity and for the gratification of the autobiographical passion we all feel, than to lead her on to speak of herself. But she had little or nothing to say of herself, and what she said of other things was marked by a straightforward good sense, if not a wide intelligence. I think we make a mistake when we suppose that a beautiful woman must always be vain or conscious.

I fancy that a beauty is quite as often a solid and sensible person, with no inordinate wish to be worshipped, and this young lady struck me as wholly unspoiled by flattery. I decided that she was not the type that would take the fancy of De Witt Point, and that she had grown up without local attention for that reason, or possibly because a certain coldness in her overawed the free spirit of rustic love-making. No doubt she knew that she was beautiful, and I began to think that it was not so much disappointment at finding Saratoga as indifferent as De Witt Point which gave her the effect of disgust I had first noted in her the night before. That might rather have come from the sense of feeling herself a helpless burden on her friends, and from that young longing for companionship which is as far as may be from the desire of conquest, of triumph. Finding her now so gratefully content with the poor efforts to amuse her which an old fellow like me could make, I perceived that the society of other girls would suffice to make Saratoga quite another thing for her, and I cast about in my mind to contrive this somehow.

I confess that I liked her better and better, and before the evening was out I had quite transferred my compassion from the Deerings to her. It WAS forlorn and dreary for her to be attached to this good couple, whose interests were primarily in each other, and who had not the first of those arts which could provide her with other company. She willingly told about their journey to Saratoga, and her story did not differ materially from the account Deering had already given me; but even the outward form of adventure had fallen from their experience since they had come to Saratoga. They had formed the habit of Congress Park by accident; but they had not been to the lake, or the races, or the House of Pansa, or Mount M'Gregor, or Hilton Park, or even the outlying springs. It was the first time they had been inside of the Grand Union. "Then you have never seen the parlour?" I asked; and after the concert I boldly led the way into the parlour, and lavished its magnificence upon them as if I had been the host, or one of the hotel guests at the very least. I enjoyed the breathlessness of the Deerings so much, as we walked up and down the vast drawing-rooms accompanied by our images in the mirrors, that I insisted upon sitting down with them all upon some of the richest pieces of furniture; and I was so flown with my success as cicerone that I made them come with me to the United States. I showed them through the parlours there, and then led them through to the inner verandah, which commanded another wooded court like that of the Grand Union. I tried to make them feel the statelier sentiment of the older hotel, and to stir their

imaginations with a picture of the old times, when the Southern planters used to throng the place, and all that was gay and brilliant in fashionable society was to be seen there some time during the summer. I think that I failed in this, but apparently I succeeded in giving them an evening of dazzling splendour.

"Well, sir, this has been a great treat," said Mr. Deering, when he bade us goodbye as well as good-night; he was going early in the morning.

The ladies murmured their gratitude, Mrs. Deering with an emotion that suited her thanks, and Miss Gage with a touch of something daughterly toward me that I thought pretty.

CHAPTER VI

"Well, what DID you make of her, my dear?" Mrs. March demanded the instant she was beyond their hearing. "I must say, you didn't spare yourself in the cause; you did bravely. What is she like?"

"Really, I don't know," I answered, after a moment's reflection. "I should say she was almost purely potential. She's not so much this or that kind of girl; she's merely a radiant image of girlhood."

"Now, your chicquing it, you're faking it," said Mrs. March, borrowing the verbs severally from the art editor and the publisher of Every Other Week. "You have got to tell me just how much and how little there really is of her before I go any further with them. Is she stupid?"

"No--no; I shouldn't say stupid exactly. She is--what shall I say?--extremely plain-minded. I suppose the goddesses were plain-minded. I'm a little puzzled by her attitude toward her own beauty. She doesn't live her beauty any more than a poet lives his poetry or a painter his painting; though I've no doubt she knows her gift is hers just as they do."

"I think I understand. You mean she isn't conscious."

"No. Conscious isn't quite the word," I said fastidiously. "Isn't there some word that says less, or more, in the same direction?"

"No, there isn't; and I shall think you don't mean anything at all if you keep on. Now, tell me how she really impressed you. Does she know anything? Has she read anything? Has she any ideas?"

"Really, I can't say whether they were ideas or not. She knew what Every Other Week was; she had read the stories in it; but I'm not sure she valued it at its true worth. She is very plain-minded."

"Don't keep repeating that! What do you mean by plain-minded?"

"Well, honest, single, common-sense, coherent, arithmetical."

"Horrors! Do you mean that she is MANNISH?"

"No, not mannish. And yet she gave me the notion that, when it came to companionship, she would be just as well satisfied with a lot of girls as young men."

Mrs. March pulled her hand out of my arm, and stopped short under one of those tall Saratoga shade-trees to dramatise her inference.

"Then she is the slyest of all possible pusses! Did she give you the notion that she would be just as well satisfied with you as with a young man!"

"She couldn't deceive me so far as THAT, my dear."

"Very well; I shall take her in hand myself to-morrow, and find out what she really is."

Mrs. March went shopping the next forenoon with what was left of the Deering party; Deering had taken the early train north, and she seemed to have found the ladies livelier without him. She formed the impression from their more joyous behaviour that he kept his wife from spending as much money as she would naturally have done, and that, while he was not perhaps exactly selfish, he was forgetful of her youth, of the difference in years between them, and of her capacity for pleasures which he could not care for. She said that Mrs. Deering and Miss Gage now acted like two girls together, and, if anything, Miss Gage seemed the elder of the two.

"And what did you decide about her?" I inquired.

"Well, I helped her buy a hat and a jacket at one of those nice shops just below the hotel where they're stopping, and we've started an evening dress for her. She can't wear that white duck morning, noon, and night."

"But her character--her nature?"

"Oh! Well, she is rather plain-minded, as you call it. I think she shows out her real feelings too much for a woman."

"Why do you prefer dissimulation in your sex, my dear?"

"I don't call it dissimulation. But of course a girl ought to hide her feelings. Don't you think it would have been better for her not to have looked so obviously out of humour when you first saw her the other night?"

"She wouldn't have interested me so much, then, and she probably

wouldn't have had your acquaintance now."

"Oh, I don't mean to say that even that kind of girl won't get on, if she gives her mind to it; but I think I should prefer a little less plain-mindedness, as you call it, if I were a man."

I did not know exactly what to say to this, and I let Mrs. March go on.

"It's so in the smallest thing. If you're choosing a thing for her, and she likes another, she lets you feel it at once. I don't mean that she's rude about it, but she seems to set herself so square across the way, and you come up with a kind of bump against her. I don't think that's very feminine. That's what I mean by mannish. You always know where to find her."

I don't know why this criticism should have amused me so much, but I began to laugh quite uncontrollably, and I laughed on and on. Mrs. March kept her temper with me admirably. When I was quiet again, she said -

"Mrs. Deering is a person that wins your heart at once; she has that appealing quality. You can see that she's cowed by her husband, though he means to be kind to her; and yet you may be sure she gets round him, and has her own way all the time. I know it was her idea to have him go home and leave them here, and of course she made him think it was his. She saw that as long as he was here, and anxious to get back to his 'stock,' there was no hope of giving Miss Gage the sort of chance she came for, and so she determined to manage it. At the same time, you can see that she is true as steel, and would abhor anything like deceit worse than the pest."

"I see; and that is why you dislike Miss Gage?"

"Dislike her? No, I don't dislike her; but she is disappointing. If she were a plain girl her plain-mindedness would be all right; it would be amusing; she would turn it to account and make it seem humorous. But it doesn't seem to go with her beauty; it takes away from that--I don't know how to express it exactly."

"You mean that she has no charm."

"No; I don't mean that at all. She has a great deal of charm of a certain kind, but it's a very peculiar kind. After all, the truth is the truth, Basil, isn't it?"

"It is sometimes, my dear," I assented.

"And the truth has its charm, even when it's too blunt."

"Ah, I'm not so sure of that."

"Yes--yes, it has. You mustn't say so, Basil, or I shall lose all

my faith in you. If I couldn't trust you, I don't know what I should do."

"What are you after now, Isabel?"

"I am not after anything. I want you to go round to all the hotels and see if there is not some young man you know at one of them. There surely must be."

"Would one young man be enough?"

"If he were attentive enough, he would be. One young man is as good as a thousand if the girl is the right kind."

"But you have just been implying that Miss Gage is cold and selfish and greedy. Shall I go round exploring hotel registers for a victim to such a divinity as that?"

"No; you needn't go till I have had a talk with her. I am not sure she is worth it; I am not sure that I want to do a single thing for her."

CHAPTER VII

The next day, after another forenoon's shopping with her friends, Mrs. March announced: "Well, now, it has all come out, Basil, and I wonder you didn't get the secret at once from your Mr. Deering. Have you been supposing that Miss Gage was a poor girl whom the Deerings had done the favour of bringing with them?"

"Why, what of it?" I asked provisionally.

"She is very well off. Her father is not only the president, as they call it, of the village, but he's the president of the bank."

"Yes; I told you that Deering told me so--"

"But he is very queer. He has kept her very close from the other young people, and Mrs. Deering is the only girl friend she's ever had, and she's grown up without having been anywhere without him. They had to plead with him to let her come with them--or Mrs. Deering had,--but when he once consented, he consented handsomely. He gave her a lot of money, and told them he wanted her to have the best time that money could buy; and of course you can understand how such a man would think that money would buy a good time anywhere. But the Deerings didn't know how to go about it. She confessed as much when we were talking the girl over. I could see that she stood in awe of her somehow from the beginning, and that she felt more than the usual responsibility for her. That was the reason she was

so eager to get her husband off home; as long as he was with them she would have to work everything through him, and that would be double labour, because he is so hopelessly villaginous, don't you know, that he never could rise to the conception of anything else. He took them to a cheap, second-class hotel, and he was afraid to go with them anywhere because he never was sure that it was the right thing to do; and he was too proud to ask, and they had to keep prodding him all the time."

"That's delightful!"

"Oh, I dare say you think so; but if you knew how it wounded a woman's self-respect you would feel differently; or you wouldn't, rather. But now, thank goodness; they've got him off their hands, and they can begin to breathe freely. That is, Mrs. Deering could, if she hadn't her heart in her mouth all the time, wondering what she can do for the girl, and bullying herself with the notion that she is to blame if she doesn't have a good time. You can understand just how it was with them always. Mrs. Deering is one of those meek little things that a great, splendid, lonely creature like Miss Gage would take to in a small place, and perfectly crush under the weight of her confidence; and she would want to make her husband live up to her ideal of the girl, and would be miserable because he wouldn't or couldn't."

"I believe the good Deering didn't even think her handsome."

"That's it. And he thought anything that was good enough for his wife was good enough for Miss Gage, and he'd be stubborn about doing things on her account, even to please his wife."

"Such conduct is imaginable of the good Deering. I don't think he liked her."

"Nor she him. Mrs. Deering helplessly hinted as much. She said he didn't like to have her worrying so much about Miss Gage's not having a good time, and she couldn't make him feel as she did about it, and she was half glad for his own sake that he had to go home."

"Did she say that?"

"Not exactly; but you could see that she meant it. Do you think it would do for them to change from their hotel, and go to the Grand Union or the States or Congress Hall?"

"Have you been putting them up to that, Isabel?"

"I knew you would suspect me, and I wouldn't have asked for your opinion if I had cared anything for it, really. What would be the harm of their doing it?"

"None whatever, if you really want my worthless opinion. But what could they do there?"

"They could see something if they couldn't do anything, and as soon as Miss Gage has got her new gowns I'm going to tell them you thought they could do it. It was their own idea, at any rate."

"Miss Gage's?"

"Mrs. Deering's. She has the courage of a--I don't know what. She sees that it's a desperate case, and she wouldn't stop at anything."

"Now that her husband has gone home."

"Well, which hotel shall they go to?"

"Oh, that requires reflection."

"Very well, then, when you've reflected I want you to go to the hotel you've chosen, and introduce yourself to the clerk, and tell him your wife has two friends coming, and you want something very pleasant for them. Tell him all about yourself and Every Other Week."

"He'll think I want them deadheaded."

"No matter, if your conscience is clear; and don't be so shamefully modest as you always are, but speak up boldly. Now, will you? Promise me you will!"

"I will try, as the good little boy says. But, Isabel, we don't know these people except from their own account."

"And that is quite enough."

"It will be quite enough for the hotel-keeper if they run their board. I shall have to pay it."

"Now, Basil dear, don't be disgusting, and go and do as you're bid."

It was amusing, but it was perfectly safe, and there was no reason why I should not engage rooms for the ladies at another hotel. I had not the least question of them, and I had failed to worry my wife with a pretended doubt. So I decided that I would go up at once and inquire at the Grand Union. I chose this hotel because, though it lacked the fine flower of the more ancient respectability and the legendary charm of the States, it was so spectacular that it would be in itself a perpetual excitement for those ladies, and would form an effect of society which, with some help from us, might very well deceive them. This was what I said to myself, though in my heart I knew better. Whatever Mrs. Deering might think, that girl was not going to be taken in with any such simple device, and I must count upon the daily chances in the place to afford her the good time she had come for.

As I mounted the steps to the portico of the Grand Union with my head down, and lost in a calculation of these chances, I heard my name gaily called, and I looked up to see young Kendricks, formerly of our staff on Every Other Week, and still a frequent contributor, and a great favourite of my wife's and my own. My heart gave a great joyful bound at sight of him.

"My dear boy, when in the world did you come?"

"This morning by the steamboat train, and I am never, never going away!"

"You like it, then?"

"Like it! It's the most delightful thing in the universe. Why, I'm simply wild about it, Mr. March. I go round saying to myself, Why have I thrown away my life? Why have I never come to Saratoga before? It's simply supreme, and it's American down to the ground. Yes; that's what makes it so delightful. No other people could have invented it, and it doesn't try to be anything but what we made it."

"I'm so glad you look at it in that way. WE like it. We discovered it three or four years ago, and we never let a summer slip, if we can help it, without coming here for a week or a month. The place," I enlarged, "has the charm of ruin, though it's in such obvious repair; it has a past; it's so completely gone by in a society sense. The cottage life here hasn't killed the hotel life, as it has at Newport and Bar Harbour; but the ideal of cottage life everywhere else has made hotel life at Saratoga ungenteeel. The hotels are full, but at the same time they are society solitudes."

"How gay it is!" said the young fellow, as he gazed with a pensive smile into the street, where all those festive vehicles were coming and going, dappled by the leaf-shadows from the tall trees overhead. "What air! what a sky!" The one was indeed sparkling, and the other without a cloud, for it had rained in the night, and it seemed as if the weather could never be hot and close again.

I forgot how I had been sweltering about, and said: "Yes; it is a Saratoga day. It's supposed that the sparkle of the air comes from the healthful gases thrown off by the springs. Some people say the springs are doctored; that's what makes their gases so healthful."

"Why, anything might happen here," Kendricks mused, unheeding of me. "What a scene! what a stage! Why has nobody done a story about Saratoga?" he asked, with a literary turn I knew his thoughts would be taking. All Gerald Kendricks's thoughts were of literature, but sometimes they were not of immediate literary effect, though that was never for long.

"Because," I suggested, "one probably couldn't get his young lady characters to come here if they were at all in society. But of course there must be charming presences here accidentally. Some

young girl, say, might come here from a country place, expecting to see social gaiety--"

"Ah, but that would be too heart-breaking!"

"Not at all. Not if she met some young fellow accidentally--don't you see?"

"It would be difficult to manage; and hasn't it been done?"

"Everything has been done, my dear fellow. Or, you might suppose a young lady who comes on here with her father, a veteran politician, delegate to the Republican or Democratic convention--all the conventions meet in Saratoga,--and some ardent young delegate falls in love with her. That would be new ground. There you would have the political novel, which they wonder every now and then some of us don't write." The smile faded from Kendricks's lips, and I laughed.

"Well, then, there's nothing for it but the Social Science Congress. Have a brilliant professor win the heart of a lovely sister-in-law of another member by a paper he reads before the Congress. No? You're difficult. Are you stopping here?"

"Yes; are you?"

"I try to give myself the air of it when I am feeling very proud. But really, we live at a most charming little hotel on a back street, out of the whirl and rush that we should prefer to be in if we could afford it." He said it must be delightful, and he made the proper inquiries about Mrs. March. Kendricks never forgot the gentleman in the artist, and he was as true to the conveniences as if they had been principles. That was what made Mrs. March like his stories so much more than the stories of some people who wrote better. He said he would drop in during the afternoon, and I went indoors on the pretext of buying a newspaper. Then, without engaging rooms for Mrs. Deering and Miss Gage, I hurried home.

CHAPTER VIII

"Well, did you get the rooms?" asked my wife as soon as she saw me.

She did not quite call it across the street to me as I came up from where she sat on the piazza.

"No, I didn't," I said boldly, if somewhat breathlessly.

"Why didn't you? You ought to have gone to the States if they were full at the Grand Union."

"They were not full, unless Kendricks got their last room."

"Do you mean that HE was there? Mr. Kendricks? If you are hoaxing me, Basil!"

"I am not, my dear; indeed I'm not," said I, beginning to laugh, and this made her doubt me the more.

"Because if you are I shall simply never forgive you. And I'm in earnest this time," she replied.

"Why should I want to hoax you about such a vital thing as that. Couldn't Kendricks come to Saratoga as well as we? He's here looking up the ground of a story I should think from what he said."

"No matter what he's here for; he's here, and that's enough. I never knew of anything so perfectly providential. Did you TELL him, Basil? Did you dare?"

"Tell him what?"

"You know; about Miss Gage."

"Well, I came very near it. I dangled the fact before his eyes once, but I caught it away again in time. He never saw it. I thought I'd better let you tell him."

"Is he coming here to see us?"

"He asked if he might."

"He's always nice. I don't know that I shall ask him to do anything for them, after all; I'm not sure that she's worth it. I wish some commoner person had happened along. Kendricks is too precious. I shall have to think about it; and don't you tease me, Basil, will you?"

"I don't know. If I'm not allowed to have any voice in the matter, I'm afraid I shall take it out in teasing. I don't see why Miss Gage isn't quite as good as Kendricks. I believe she's taller, and though he's pretty good-looking, I prefer her style of beauty. I dare say his family is better, but I fancy she's richer; and his family isn't good beyond New York city, and her money will go anywhere. It's a pretty even thing."

"Good gracious, Basil! you talk as if it were a question of marriage."

"And you THINK it is."

"Now I see that you're bent upon teasing, and we won't talk any more, please. What time did he say he would call?"

"If I mayn't talk, I can't tell."

"You may talk that much."

"Well, then, he didn't say."

"Basil," said my wife, after a moment, "if you could be serious, I should like very much to talk with you. I know that you're excited by meeting Mr. Kendricks, and I know what you thought the instant you saw him. But, indeed, it won't do, my dear. It's more than we've any right to ask, and I shall not ask it, and I shall not let you. She is a stiff, awkward village person, and I don't believe she's amiable or intelligent; and to let a graceful, refined, superior man like Mr. Kendricks throw away his time upon her would be wicked, simply wicked. Let those people manage for themselves from this out. Of course you mustn't get them rooms at the Grand Union now, for he'd be seeing us there with them, and feel bound to pay her attention. You must try for them at the States, since the matter's been spoken of, or at Congress Hall. But there's no hurry. We must have time to think whether we shall use Mr. Kendricks with them. I suppose it will do no harm to introduce him. If he stays we can't very well avoid it; and I confess I should like to see how she impresses him! Of course we shall introduce him! But I insist I shall just do it merely as one human being to another; and don't you come in with any of your romantic nonsense, Basil, about her social disappointment. Just how much did you give the situation away?"

I told as well as I could remember. "Well, that's nothing. He'll never think of it, and you mustn't hint anything of the kind again."

I promised devoutly, and she went on -

"It wouldn't be nice--it wouldn't be delicate to let him into the conspiracy. That must be entirely our affair, don't you see? And I don't want you to take a single step without me. I don't want you even to discuss her with him. Will you? Because that will tempt you further."

That afternoon Kendricks came promptly to call, like the little gentleman he was, and he was more satisfactory about Saratoga than he had been in the morning even. Mrs. March catechised him, and she didn't leave an emotion of his unsearched by her vivid sympathy. She ended by saying -

"You must write a story about Saratoga. And I have got just the heroine for you."

I started, but she ignored my start.

Kendricks laughed, delighted, and asked, "Is she pretty?"

"Must a heroine be pretty?"

"She had better be. Otherwise she will have to be tremendously clever and say all sorts of brilliant things, and that puts a great burden on the author. If you proclaim boldly at the start that she's a beauty, the illustrator has got to look after her, and the author has a comparative sinecure."

Mrs. March thought a moment, and then she said: "Well, she is a beauty. I don't want to make it too hard for you."

"When shall I see her?" Kendricks demanded, and he feigned an amusing anxiety.

"Well, that depends upon how you behave, Mr. Kendricks. If you are very, very good, perhaps I may let you see her this evening. We will take you to call upon her."

"Is it possible? Do you mean business? Then she is--in society?"

"MR. Kendricks!" cried Mrs. March, with burlesque severity. "Do you think that I would offer you a heroine who was NOT in society? You forget that I am from Boston!"

"Of course, of course! I understand that any heroine of your acquaintance must be in society. But I thought--I didn't know--but for the moment--Saratoga seems to be so tremendously mixed; and Mr. March says there is no society here: But if she is from Boston--"

"I didn't say she was from Boston, Mr. Kendricks."

"Oh, I beg your pardon!"

"She is from De Witt Point," said Mrs. March, and she apparently enjoyed his confusion, no less than my bewilderment at the course she was taking.

I was not going to be left behind, though, and I said: "I discovered this heroine myself, Kendricks, and if there is to be any giving away--"

"Now, Basil!"

"I am going to do it. Mrs. March would never have cared anything about her if it hadn't been for me. I can't let her impose on you. This heroine is no more in society than she is from Boston. That is the trouble with her. She has come here for society, and she can't find any."

"Oh, that was what you were hinting at this morning," said Kendricks. "I thought it a pure figment of the imagination."

"One doesn't imagine such things as that, my dear fellow. One imagines a heroine coming here, and having the most magnificent kind of social career--lawn-parties, lunches, teas, dinners, picnics,

hops--and going back to De Witt Point with a dozen offers of marriage. That's the kind of work the imagination does. But this simple and appealing situation--this beautiful young girl, with her poor little illusions, her secret hopes half hidden from herself, her ignorant past, her visionary future--"

"Now, I am going to tell you all about her, Mr. Kendricks," Mrs. March broke in upon me, with defiance in her eye; and she flung out the whole fact with a rapidity of utterance that would have left far behind any attempt of mine. But I made no attempt to compete with her; I contented myself with a sarcastic silence which I could see daunted her a little at last.

"And all that we've done, my dear fellow"--I took in irony the word she left to me--"is to load ourselves up with these two impossible people, to go their security to destiny, and answer for their having a good time. We're in luck."

"Why, I don't know," said Kendricks, and I could see that his fancy was beginning to play with the situation; "I don't see why it isn't a charming scheme."

"Of course it is," cried Mrs. March, taking a little heart from his courage.

"We can't make out yet whether the girl is interesting," I put in maliciously.

"That is what YOU say," said my wife. "She is very shy, and of course she wouldn't show out her real nature to you. I found her VERY interesting."

"Now, Isabel!" I protested.

"She is fascinating," the perverse woman persisted. "She has a fascinating dulness."

Kendricks laughed and I jeered at this complex characterisation.

"You make me impatient to judge for myself," he said.

"Will you go with me to call upon them this evening?" asked Mrs. March.

"I shall be delighted. And you can count upon me to aid and abet you in your generous conspiracy, Mrs. March, to the best of my ability. There's nothing I should like better than to help you--"

"Throw 'dust in her beautiful eyes," I quoted.

"Not at all," said my wife. "But to spread a beatific haze over everything, so that as long as she stays in Saratoga she shall see life rose-colour. Of course you may say that it's a kind of

deception--"

"Not at all!" cried the young fellow in his turn. "We will make it reality. Then there will be no harm in it."

"What a jesuitical casuist! You had better read what Cardinal Newman says in his Apologia about lying, young man."

Neither of them minded me, for just then there was a stir of drapery round the corner of the piazza from where we were sitting, and the next moment Mrs. Deering and Miss Gage showed themselves.

"We were just talking of you," said Mrs. March. "May I present our friend Mr. Kendricks, Mrs. Deering? And Miss Gage?"

At sight of the young man, so well dressed and good-looking, who bowed so prettily to her, and then bustled to place chairs for them, a certain cloud seemed to lift from Miss Gage's beautiful face, and to be at least partly broken on Mrs. Deering's visage. I began to talk to the girl, and she answered in good spirits, and with more apparent interest in my conversation than she had yet shown, while Kendricks very properly devoted himself to the other ladies. Both his eyes were on them, but I felt that he had a third somehow upon her, and that the smallest fact of her beauty and grace was not lost upon him. I knew that her rich, tender voice was doing its work, too, through the commonplaces she vouchsafed to me. There was a moment when I saw him lift a questioning eyebrow upon Mrs. March, and saw her answer with a fleeting frown of affirmation. I cannot tell just how it was that, before he left us, his chair was on the other side of Miss Gage's, and I was eliminated from the dialogue.

He did not stay too long. There was another tableau of him on foot, taking leave of Mrs. March, with a high hand-shake, which had then lately come in, and which I saw the girl note, and then bowing to her and to Mrs. Deering.

"Don't forget," my wife called after him, with a ready invention not lost on his quick intelligence, "that you're going to the concert with us after tea. Eight o'clock, remember."

"You may be sure I shall remember THAT," he returned gaily.

CHAPTER IX

The countenances of the ladies fell instantly when he was gone. "Mrs. March," said Mrs. Deering, with a nervous tremor, "did Mr. March get us those rooms at the Grand Union?"

"No--no," my wife began, and she made a little pause, as if to

gather plausibility. "The Grand Union was very full, and he thought that at the States--"

"Because," said Mrs. Deering, "I don't know as we shall trouble him, after all. Mr. Deering isn't very well, and I guess we have got to go home--"

"GO HOME!" Mrs. March echoed, and her voice was a tone-scene of a toppling hope and a widespread desolation. "Why, you mustn't!"

"We must, I guess. It had begun to be very pleasant, and--I guess I have got to go. I can't feel easy about him."

"Why, of course," Mrs. March now assented, and she waved her fan thoughtfully before her face. I knew what she was thinking of, and I looked at Miss Gage, who had involuntarily taken the pose and expression of the moment when I first saw her at the kiosk in Congress Park. "And Miss Gage?"

"Oh yes; I must go too," said the girl wistfully, forlornly. She had tears in her voice, tears of despair and vexation, I should have said.

"That's too bad," said Mrs. March, and, as she did not offer any solution of the matter, I thought it rather heartless of her to go on and rub it in. "And we were just planning some things we could do together."

"It can't be helped now," returned the girl.

"But we shall see you again before you go?" Mrs. March asked of both.

"Well, I don't know," said the girl, with a look at Mrs. Deering, who now said -

"I guess so. We'll let you know when we're going." And they got away rather stiffly.

"Why in the world, my dear," I asked, "if you weren't going to promote their stay, need you prolong the agony of their acquaintance?"

"Did you feel that about it too? Well, I wanted to ask you first if you thought it would do."

"What do?"

"You know; get her a room here. Because if we do we shall have her literally on our hands as long as we are here. We shall have to have the whole care and responsibility of her, and I wanted you to feel just what you were going in for. You know very well I can't do things by halves, and that if I undertake to chaperon this girl I

shall chaperon her--"

"To the bitter end. Yes; I understand the conditions of your uncompromising conscience. But I don't believe it will be any such killing matter. There are other semi-detached girls in the house; she could go round with them."

We talked on, and, as sometimes happens, we convinced each other so thoroughly that she came to my ground and I went to hers. Then it was easier for us to come together, and after making me go to the clerk and find out that he had a vacant room, Mrs. March agreed with me that it would not do at all to have Miss Gage stay with us; the fact that there was a vacant room seemed to settle the question.

We were still congratulating ourselves on our escape when Mrs. Deering suddenly reappeared round our corner of the verandah. She was alone, and she looked excited.

"Oh, it isn't anything," she said in answer to the alarm that showed itself in Mrs. March's face at sight of her. "I hope you won't think it's too presuming, Mrs. March, and I want you to believe that it's something I have thought of by myself, and that Julia wouldn't have let me come if she had dreamed of such a thing. I do hate so to take her back with me, now that she's begun to have a good time, and I was wondering--wondering whether it would be asking too much if I tried to get her a room here. I shouldn't exactly like to leave her in the hotel alone, though I suppose it would be perfectly proper; but Mr. Deering found out when he was trying to get rooms before that there were some young ladies staying by themselves here, and I didn't want to ask the clerk for a room unless you felt just right about it."

"Why, of course, Mrs. Deering. It's a public house, like any other, and you have as much right--"

"But I didn't want you to think that I would do it without asking you, and if it is going to be the least bit of trouble to you." The poor thing while she talked stood leaning anxiously over toward Mrs. March, who had risen, and pressing the points of her fingers nervously together.

"It won't, Mrs. Deering. It will be nothing but pleasure. Why, certainly. I shall be delighted to have Miss Gage here, and anything that Mr. March and I can do--Why, we had just been talking of it, and Mr. March has this minute got back from seeing the clerk, and she can have a very nice room. We had been intending to speak to you about it as soon as we saw you."

I do not know whether this was quite true or not, but I was glad Mrs. March said it, from the effect it had upon Mrs. Deering. Tears of relief came into her eyes, and she said: "Then I can go home in the morning. I was going to stay on a day or two longer, on Julia's account, but I didn't feel just right about Mr. Deering, and now I

won't have to."

There followed a flutter of polite offers and refusals, acknowledgments and disavowals, and an understanding that I would arrange it all, and that we would come to Mrs. Deering's hotel after supper and see Miss Gage about the when and the how of her coming to us."

"Well, Isabel," I said, after it was all over, and Mrs. Deering had vanished in a mist of happy tears, "I suppose this is what you call perfectly providential. Do you really believe that Miss Gage didn't send her back?"

"I know she didn't. But I know that she HAD to do it just the same as if Miss Gage had driven her at the point of the bayonet."

I laughed at this tragical image. "Can she be such a terror?"

"She is an ideal. And Mrs. Deering is as afraid as death of her. Of course she has to live up to her. It's probably been the struggle of her life, and I can quite imagine her letting her husband die before she would take Miss Gage back, unless she went back satisfied."

"I don't believe I can imagine so much as that exactly, but I can imagine her being afraid of Miss Gage's taking it out of her somehow. Now she will take it out of us. I hope you realise that you've done it now, my dear. To be sure, you will have all your life to repent of your rashness."

"I shall never repent," Mrs. March retorted hardily. "It was the right thing, the only thing. We couldn't have let that poor creature stay on, when she was so anxious to get back to her husband."

"No."

"And I confess, Basil, that I feel a little pity for that poor girl, too. It would have been cruel, it would have been fairly wicked, to let her go home so soon, and especially now."

"Oh! And I suppose that by ESPECIALLY NOW, you mean Kendricks," I said, and I laughed mockingly, as the novelists say. "How sick I am of this stale old love-business between young people! We ought to know better--we're old enough; at least YOU are."

She seemed not to feel the gibe. "Why, Basil," she asked dreamily, "haven't you any romance left in you?"

"Romance? Bah! It's the most ridiculous unreality in the world. If you had so much sympathy for that stupid girl, in that poor woman in her anxiety about her disappointment, why hadn't you a little for her sick husband? But a husband is nothing--when you have got him."

"I did sympathise with her."

"You didn't say so."

"Well, she is only his second wife, and I don't suppose it's anything serious. Didn't I really say anything to her?"

"Not a word. It is curious," I went on, "how we let this idiotic love-passion absorb us to the very last. It is wholly unimportant who marries who, or whether anybody marries at all. And yet we no sooner have the making of a love-affair within reach than we revert to the folly of our own youth, and abandon ourselves to it as if it were one of the great interests of life."

"Who is talking about love? It isn't a question of that. It's a question of making a girl have a pleasant time for a few days; and what is the harm of it? Girls have a dull enough time at the very best. My heart aches for them, and I shall never let a chance slip to help them, I don't care what you say."

"Now, Isabel," I returned, "don't you be a humbug. This is a perfectly plain case, and you are going in for a very risky affair with your eyes open. You shall not pretend you're not."

"Very well, then, if I am going into it with my eyes open, I shall look out that nothing happens."

"And you think prevision will avail! I wish," I said, "that instead of coming home that night and telling you about this girl, I had confined my sentimentalising to that young French-Canadian mother, and her dirty little boy who ate the pea-nut shells. I've no doubt it was really a more tragical case. They looked dreadfully poor and squalid. Why couldn't I have amused my idle fancy with their fortunes--the sort of husband and father they had, their shabby home, the struggle of their life? That is the appeal that a genuine person listens to. Nothing does more to stamp me a poseur than the fact that I preferred to bemoan myself for a sulky girl who seemed not to be having a good time."

There was truth in my joking, but the truth did not save me; it lost me rather. "Yes," said my wife; "it was your fault. I should never have seen anything in her if it had not been for you. It was your coming back and working me up about her that began the whole thing, and now if anything goes wrong you will have yourself to thank for it."

She seized the opportunity of my having jestingly taken up this load to buckle it on me tight and fast, clasping it here, tying it there, and giving a final pull to the knots that left me scarcely the power to draw my breath, much less the breath to protest. I was forced to hear her say again that all her concern from the beginning was for Mrs. Deering, and that now, if she had offered to do something for

Miss Gage, it was not because she cared anything for her, but because she cared everything for Mrs. Deering, who could never lift up her head again at De Witt Point if she went back so completely defeated in all the purposes she had in asking Miss Gage to come with her to Saratoga.

I did not observe that this wave of compassion carried Mrs. March so far as to leave her stranded with Mrs. Deering that evening when we called with Kendricks, and asked her and Miss Gage to go with us to the Congress Park concert. Mrs. Deering said that she had to pack, that she did not feel just exactly like going; and my tender heart ached with a knowledge of her distress. Miss Gage made a faint, false pretence of refusing to come with us, too; but Mrs. Deering urged her to go, and put on the new dress, which had just come home, so that Mrs. March could see it. The girl came back looking radiant, divine, and--"Will it do?" she palpitated under my wife's critical glance.

"Do? It will OUTdo! I never saw anything like it!" The connoisseur patted it a little this way and a little that. "It is a dream! Did the hat come too?"

It appeared that the hat had come too. Miss Gage rematerialised with it on, after a moment's evanescence, and looked at my wife with the expression of being something impersonal with a hat on.

"Simply, there is nothing to say!" cried Mrs. March. The girl put up her hands to it. "Good gracious! You mustn't take it off! Your costume is perfect for the concert."

"Is it, really?" asked the girl joyfully; and she seemed to find this the first fitting moment to say, for sole recognition of our self-sacrifice, "I'm much obliged to you, Mr. March, for getting me that room."

I begged her not to speak of it, and turned an ironical eye upon my wife; but she was lost in admiration of the hat.

"Yes," she sighed; "it's much better than the one I wanted you to get at first." And she afterward explained that the girl seemed to have a perfect instinct for what went with her style.

Kendricks kept himself discreetly in the background, and, with his unflinching right feeling, was talking to Mrs. Deering, in spite of her not paying much attention to him. I must own that I too was absorbed in the spectacle of Miss Gage.

She went off with us, and did not say another word to Mrs. Deering about helping her to pack. Perhaps this was best, though it seemed heartless; it may not have been so heartless as it seemed. I dare say it would have been more suffering to the woman if the girl had missed this chance.

CHAPTER X

We had undertaken rather a queer affair but it was not so queer after all, when Miss Gage was fairly settled with us. There were other young girls in that pleasant house who had only one another's protection and the general safety of the social atmosphere. We could not conceal from ourselves, of course, that we had done a rather romantic thing, and, in the light of Europe, which we had more or less upon our actions, rather an absurd thing; but it was a comfort to find that Miss Gage thought it neither romantic nor absurd. She took the affair with an apparent ignorance of anything unusual in it--with so much ignorance, indeed, that Mrs. March had her occasional question whether she was duly impressed with what was being done for her. Whether this was so or not, it is certain that she was as docile and as biddable as need be. She did not always ask what she should do; that would not have been in the tradition of village independence; but she always did what she was told, and did not vary from her instructions a hair's-breadth. I do not suppose she always knew why she might do this and might not do that; and I do not suppose that young girls often understand the reasons of the proprieties. They are told that they must, and that they must not, and this in an astonishing degree suffices them if they are nice girls.

Of course there was pretty constant question of Kendricks in the management of Miss Gage's amusement, for that was really what our enterprise resolved itself into. He showed from the first the sweetest disposition to forward all our plans in regard to her, and, in fact, he even anticipated our wishes. I do not mean to give the notion that he behaved from an interested motive in going to the station the morning Mrs. Deering left, and getting her ticket for her, and checking her baggage, and posting her in the changes she would have to make. This was something I ought to have thought of myself, but I did not think of it, and I am willing that he should have all the credit.

I know that he did it out of the lovely generosity of nature which always took me in him. Miss Gage was there with her, and she remained to be consoled after Mrs. Deering departed. They came straight to us from the train, and then, when he had consigned Miss Gage to Mrs. March's care, he offered to go and see that her things were transferred from her hotel to ours; they were all ready, she said, and the bill was paid.

He did not come back that day, and, in fact, he delicately waited for some sign from us that his help was wanted. But when he did come he had formulated Saratoga very completely, and had a better conception of doing it than I had, after my repeated sojourns.

We went very early in our explorations to the House of Pansa, which you find in very much better repair at Saratoga than you do at Pompeii, and we contrived to pass a whole afternoon there. My wife and I had been there before more than once; but it always pleasantly recalled our wander-years, when we first met in Europe, and we suffered round after those young things with a patience which I hope will not be forgotten at the day of judgment. When we came to a seat we sat down, and let them go off by themselves; but my recollection is that there is not much furniture in the House of Pansa that you can sit down on, and for the most part we all kept together.

Kendricks and I thought alike about the Pompeian house as a model of something that might be done in the way of a seaside cottage in our own country, and we talked up a little paper that might be done for Every Other Week, with pretty architectural drawings, giving an account of our imaginary realisation of the notion.

"Have somebody," he said, "visit people who had been boring him to come down, or up, or out, and see them, and find them in a Pompeian house, with the sea in front and a blue-green grove of low pines behind. Might have a thread of story, but mostly talk about how they came to do it, and how delightfully livable they found it. You could work it up with some architect, who would help you to 'keep off the grass' in the way of technical blunders. With all this tendency to the classic in public architecture, I don't see why the Pompeian villa shouldn't be the next word for summer cottages."

"Well, we'll see what Fulkerson says. He may see an ad. in it. Would you like to do it?"

"Why not do it yourself? Nobody else could do it so well."

"Thanks for the taffy; but the idea was yours."

"I'll do it," said Kendricks after a moment, "if you won't."

"We'll see."

Miss Gage stared, and Mrs. March said -

"I didn't suppose the House of Pansa would lead to shop with you two."

"You never can tell which way copy lies," I returned; and I asked the girl, "What should YOU think, Miss Gage, of a little paper with a thread of story, but mostly talk, on a supposititious Pompeian cottage?"

"I don't believe I understand," said she, far too remote from our literary interests, as I saw, to be ashamed of her ignorance.

"There!" I said to Kendricks. "Do you think the general public

would?"

"Miss Gage isn't the general public," said my wife, who had followed the course of my thought; her tone implied that Miss Gage was wiser and better.

"Would you allow yourself to be drawn," I asked, "dreamily issuing from an aisle of the pine grove as the tutelary goddess of a Pompeian cottage?"

The girl cast a bewildered glance at my wife, who said, "You needn't pay any attention to him, Miss Gage. He has an idea that he is making a joke."

We felt that we had done enough for one afternoon, when we had done the House of Panza, and I proposed that we should go and sit down in Congress Park and listen to the Troy band. I was not without the hope that it would play "Washington Post."

My wife contrived that we should fall in behind the young people as we went, and she asked, "What DO you suppose she made of it all?"

"Probably she thought it was the house of Sancho Panza."

"No; she hasn't read enough to be so ignorant even as that. It's astonishing how much she doesn't know. What can her home life have been like?"

"Philistine to the last degree. We people who are near to literature have no conception how far from it most people are. The immense majority of 'homes,' as the newspapers call them, have no books in them except the Bible and a semi-religious volume or two--things you never see out of such 'homes'--and the State business directory. I was astonished when it came out that she knew about Every Other Week. It must have been by accident. The sordidness of her home life must be something unimaginable. The daughter of a village capitalist, who's put together his money dollar by dollar, as they do in such places, from the necessities and follies of his neighbours, and has half the farmers of the region by the throat through his mortgages--I don't think that she's 'one to be desired' any more than 'the daughter of a hundred earls,' if so much."

"She doesn't seem sordid herself."

"Oh, the taint doesn't show itself at once--

'If nature put not forth her power
About the opening of the flower,
Who is it that would live an hour?'

and she is a flower, beautiful, exquisite"

"Yes, and she had a mother as well as this father of hers. Why shouldn't she be like her mother?"

I laughed. "That is true! I wonder why we always leave the mother out of the count when we sum up the hereditary tendencies? I suppose the mother is as much a parent as the father."

"Quite. And there is no reason why this girl shouldn't have her mother's nature."

"We don't actually KNOW anything against her father's nature yet," I suggested; "but if her mother lived a starved and stunted life with him, it may account for that effect of disappointed greed which I fancied in her when I first saw her."

"I don't call it greed in a young girl to want to see something of the world."

"What do you call it?"

Kendricks and the girl were stopping at the gate of the pavilion, and looking round at us. "Ah, he's got enough for one day! He's going to leave her to us now."

When we came up he said, "I'm going to run off a moment; I'm going up to the book-store there," and he pointed toward one that had spread across the sidewalk just below the Congress Hall verandah, with banks and shelves of novels, and a cry of bargains in them on signs sticking up from their rows. "I want to see if they have the Last Days of Pompeii."

"We will find the ladies inside the park," I said. "I will go with you--"

"Mr. March wants to see if they have the last number of Every Other Week," my wife mocked after us. This was, indeed, commonly a foible of mine. I had newly become one of the owners of the periodical as well as the editor, and I was all the time looking out for it at the news-stands and book-stores, and judging their enterprise by its presence or absence. But this time I had another motive, though I did not allege it.

"I suppose it's for Miss Gage?" I ventured to say, by way of prefacing what I wished to say. "Kendricks, I'm afraid we're abusing your good nature. I know you're up here to look about, and you're letting us use all your time. You mustn't do it. Women have no conscience about these things, and you can't expect a woman who has a young lady on her hands to spare you. I give you the hint. Don't count upon Mrs. March in this matter."

"Oh, I think you are very good to allow me to bother round," said the young fellow, with that indefatigable politeness of his. He

added vaguely, "It's very interesting."

"Seeing it through such a fresh mind?" I suggested. "Well, I'll own that I don't think you could have found a much fresher one. Has she read the Last Days of Pompeii?"

"She thought she had at first, but it was the Fall of Granada."

"How delightful! Don't you wish we could read books with that utterly unliterary sense of them?"

"Don't you think women generally do?" he asked evasively.

"I daresay they do at De Witt Point."

He did not answer; I saw that he was not willing to talk the young lady over, and I could not help praising his taste to myself at the cost of my own. His delicacy forbade him the indulgence which my own protested against in vain. He showed his taste again in buying a cheap copy of the book, which he meant to give her, and of course he had to be all the more attentive to her because of my deprecating his self-devotion.

CHAPTER XI

In the intimacy that grew up between my wife and Miss Gage I found myself less and less included. It seemed to me at times that I might have gone away from Saratoga and not been seriously missed by any one, but perhaps this was not taking sufficient account of my value as a spectator, by whom Mrs. March could verify her own impressions.

The girl had never known a mother's care, and it was affecting to see how willing she was to be mothered by the chance kindness of a stranger. She probably felt more and more her ignorance of the world as it unfolded itself to her in terms so altogether strange to the life of De Witt Point. I was not sure that she would have been so grateful for the efforts made for her enjoyment if they had failed, but as the case stood she was certainly grateful; my wife said that, and I saw it. She seemed to have written home about us to her father, for she read my wife part of a letter from him conveying his "respects," and asking her to thank us for him. She came to me with the cheque it enclosed, and asked me to get it cashed for her; it was for a handsome amount. But she continued to go about at our cost, quite unconsciously, till one day she happened to witness a contest of civility between Kendricks and myself as to which should pay the carriage we were dismissing. That night she came to Mrs. March, and, with many blushes, asked to be allowed to pay for the past and future her full share of the expense of our

joint pleasures. She said that she had never thought of it before, and she felt so much ashamed. She could not be consoled till she was promised that she should be indulged for the future, and that I should be obliged to average the outlay already made and let her pay a fourth. When she had gained her point, Mrs. March said that she seemed a little scared, and said, "I haven't offended you, Mrs. March, have I? Because if it isn't right for me to pay--"

"It's quite right, my dear," said my wife, "and it's very nice of you to think of it."

"You know," the girl explained, "I've never been out a great deal at home even; and it's always the custom there for the gentlemen to pay for a ride--or dance--or anything; but this is different."

Mrs March said "Yes," and, in the interest of civilisation, she did a little missionary work. She told her that in Boston the young ladies paid for their tickets to the Harvard assemblies, and preferred to do it, because it left them without even a tacit obligation.

Miss Gage said she had never heard of such a thing before, but she could see how much better it was.

I do not think she got on with the Last Days of Pompeii very rapidly; its immediate interest was superseded by other things. But she always had the book about with her, and I fancied that she tried to read it in those moments of relaxation from our pleasuring when she might better have been day-dreaming, though I dare say she did enough of that too.

What amused me in the affair was the celerity with which it took itself out of our hands. In an incredibly short time we had no longer the trouble of thinking what we should do for Miss Gage; that was provided for by the forethought of Kendricks, and our concern was how each could make the other go with the young people on their excursions and expeditions. We had seen and done all the things that they were doing, and it presently bored us to chaperon them. After a good deal of talking we arrived at a rough division of duty, and I went with them walking and eating and drinking, and for anything involving late hours, and Mrs. March presided at such things as carriage exercise, concerts, and shopping.

There are not many public entertainments at Saratoga, except such as the hotels supply; but a series of Salvation Army meetings did duty as amusements, and there was one theatrical performance--a performance of East Lynne entirely by people of colour. The sentiments and incidents of the heart-breaking melodrama, as the coloured mind interpreted them, were of very curious effect. It was as if the version were dyed with the same pigment that darkened the players' skins: it all came out negro. Yet they had tried to make it white; I could perceive how they aimed not at the imitation of our nature, but at the imitation of our convention; it was like the

play of children in that. I should have said that nothing could be more false than the motives and emotions of the drama as the author imagined them, but I had to own that their rendition by these sincere souls was yet more artificial. There was nothing traditional, nothing archaic, nothing autochthonic in their poor art. If the scene could at any moment have resolved myself into a walk-round, with an interspersion of spirituals, it would have had the charm of these; it would have consoled and edified; but as it was I have seldom been so bored. I began to make some sad reflections, as that our American society, in its endeavour for the effect of European society, was of no truer ideal than these coloured comedians, and I accused myself of a final absurdity in having come there with these young people, who, according to our good native usage, could have come perfectly well without me. At the end of the first act I broke into their talk with my conclusion that we must not count the histrionic talent among the gifts of the African race just yet. We could concede them music, I supposed, and there seemed to be hope for them, from what they had some of them done, in the region of the plastic arts; but apparently the stage was not for them, and this was all the stranger because they were so imitative. Perhaps, I said, it was an excess of self-consciousness which prevented their giving themselves wholly to the art, and I began to speak of the subjective and the objective, of the real and the ideal; and whether it was that I became unintelligible as I became metaphysical, I found Kendricks obviously not following me in the incoherent replies he gave. Miss Gage had honestly made no attempt to follow me. He asked, Why, didn't I think it was pretty well done? They had enjoyed it very much, he said. I could only stare in answer, and wonder what had become of the man's tastes or his principles; he was either humbugging himself or he was humbugging me. After that I left them alone, and suffered through the rest of the play with what relief I could get from laughing when the pathetic emotions of the drama became too poignant. I decided that Kendricks was absorbed in the study of his companion's mind, which must be open to his contemporaneous eye as it could never have been to my old-sighted glasses, and I envied him the knowledge he was gaining of that type of American girl. It suddenly came to me that he must be finding his account in this, and I felt a little less regret for the waste of civilities, of attentions, which sometimes seemed to me beyond her appreciation.

I, for my part, gave myself to the study of the types about me, and I dwelt long and luxuriously upon the vision of a florid and massive matron in diaphanous evening dress, whom I imagined to be revisiting the glimpses of her girlhood in the ancient watering-place, and to be getting all the gaiety she could out of it. These are the figures one mostly sees at Saratoga; there is very little youth of the present day there, but the youth of the past abounds, with the belated yellow hair and the purple moustaches, which gave a notion of greater wickedness in a former generation.

I made my observation that the dress, even in extreme cases of elderly prime, was very good--in the case of the women, I mean; the

men there, as everywhere with us, were mostly slovens; and I was glad to find that the good taste and the correct fashion were without a colour-line; there were some mulatto ladies present as stylish as their white sisters, or step-sisters.

The most amiable of the human race is in great force at Saratoga, where the vast hotel service is wholly in its hands, and it had honoured the effort of the comedians that night with a full house of their own complexion. We who were not of it showed strangely enough in the dark mass, who let us lead the applause, however, as if doubtful themselves where it ought to come in, and whom I found willing even to share some misplaced laughter of mine. They formed two-thirds of the audience on the floor, and they were a cloud in the gallery, scarcely broken by a gleam of white.

I entertained myself with them a good deal, and I thought how much more delightful they were in their own kindly character than in their assumption of white character, and I tried to define my suffering from the performance as an effect from my tormented sympathies rather than from my offended tastes. When the long stress was over, and we rose and stood to let the crowd get out, I asked Miss Gage if she did not think this must be the case. I do not suppose she was really much more experienced in the theatre than the people on the stage, some of whom I doubted to have ever seen a play till they took part in East Lynne. But I thought I would ask her that in order to hear what she would say; and she said very simply that she had seen so few plays she did not know what to think of it, and I could see that she was abashed by the fact. Kendricks must have seen it too, for he began at once to save her from herself, with all his subtle generosity, and to turn her shame to praise. My heart, which remained sufficiently cold to her, warmed more than ever to him, and I should have liked to tell her that here was the finest and rarest human porcelain using itself like common clay in her behalf, and to demand whether she thought she was worth it.

I did not think she was, and I had a lurid moment when I was tempted to push on and make her show herself somehow at her worst. We had undertaken a preposterous thing in befriending her as we had done, and our course in bringing Kendricks in was wholly unjustifiable. How could I lead her on to some betrayal of her essential Philistinism, and make her so impossible in his eyes that even he, with all his sweetness and goodness, must take the first train from Saratoga in the morning?

We had of course joined the crowd in pushing forward; people always do, though they promise themselves to wait till the last one is out. I got caught in a dark eddy on the first stair-landing; but I could see them farther down, and I knew they would wait for me outside the door.

When I reached it at last they were nowhere to be seen; I looked up this street and down that, but they were not in sight.

CHAPTER XII

I did not afflict myself very much, nor pretend to do so. They knew the way home, and after I had blundered about in search of them through the lampshot darkness, I settled myself to walk back at my leisure, comfortably sure that I should find them on the verandah waiting for me when I reached the hotel. It was quite a thick night, and I almost ran into a couple at a corner of our quieter street when I had got to it out of Broadway. They seemed to be standing and looking about, and when the man said, "He must have thought we took the first turn," and the woman, "Yes, that must have been the way," I recognised my estrays.

I thought I would not discover myself to them, but follow on, and surprise them by arriving at our steps at the same moment they did, and I prepared myself to hurry after them. But they seemed in no hurry, and I had even some difficulty in accommodating my pace to the slowness of theirs.

"Won't you take my arm, Miss Gage?" he asked as they moved on.

"It's so VERY dark," she answered, and I knew she had taken it. "I can hardly see a step, and poor Mr. March with his glasses--I don't know what he'll do."

"Oh, he only uses them to read with; he can see as well as we can in the dark."

"He's very young in his feelings," said the girl; "he puts me in mind of my own father."

"He's very young in his thoughts," said Kendricks; "and that's much more to the purpose for a magazine editor. There are very few men of his age who keep in touch with the times as he does."

"Still, Mrs. March seems a good deal younger, don't you think? I wonder how soon they begin to feel old?"

"Oh, not till along in the forties, I should say. It's a good deal in temperament. I don't suppose that either of them realises yet that they're old, and they must be nearly fifty."

"How strange it must be," said the girl, "fifty years old! Twenty seems old enough, goodness knows."

"How should you like to be a dotard of twenty-seven?" Kendricks asked, and she laughed at his joke.

"I don't suppose I should mind it so much if I were a man."

I had promised myself that if the talk became at all confidential I would drop behind out of earshot; but though it was curiously intimate for me to be put apart in the minds of these young people on account of my years as not of the same race or fate as themselves, there was nothing in what they said that I might not innocently overhear, as far as they were concerned, and I listened on.

But they had apparently given me quite enough attention. After some mutual laughter at what she said last, they were silent a moment, and then he said soberly, "There's something fine in this isolation the dark gives you, isn't there? You're as remote in it from our own time and place as if you were wandering in interplanetary space."

"I suppose we ARE doing that all the time--on the earth," she suggested.

"Yes; but how hard it is to realise that we are on the earth now. Sometimes I have a sense of it, though, when the moon breaks from one flying cloud to another. Then it seems as if I were a passenger on some vast, shapeless ship sailing through the air. What," he asked, with no relevancy that I could perceive, "was the strangest feeling YOU ever had?" I remembered asking girls such questions when I was young, and their not apparently thinking it at all odd.

"I don't know," she returned thoughtfully. "There was one time when I was little, and it had sleeted, and the sun came out just before it set, and seemed to set all the woods on fire. I thought the world was burning up."

"It must have been very weird," said Kendricks; and I thought, "Oh, good heavens! Has he got to talking of weird things?"

"It's strange," he added, "how we all have that belief when we are children that the world is going to burn up! I don't suppose any child escapes it. Do you remember that poem of Thompson's--the City of Dreadful Night man--where he describes the end of the world?"

"No, I never read it."

"Well, merely, he says when the conflagration began the little flames looked like crocuses breaking through the sod. If it ever happened I fancy it would be quite as simple as that. But perhaps you don't like gloomy poetry?"

'Yes, yes, I do. It's the only kind that I care about."

"Then you hate funny poetry?"

"I think it's disgusting. Papa is always cutting it out of the

papers and wanting to send it to me, and we have the greatest TIMES!"

"I suppose," said Kendricks, "it expresses some moods, though."

"Oh yes; it expresses some moods; and sometimes it makes me laugh in spite of myself, and ashamed of anything serious."

"That's always the effect of a farce with me."

"But then I'm ashamed of being ashamed afterward," said the girl.

"I suppose you go to the theatre a great deal in New York."

"It's a school of life," said Kendricks. "I mean the audience."

"I would like to go to the opera once. I am going to make papa take me in the winter." She laughed with a gay sense of power, and he said -

"You seem to be great friends with your father."

"Yes, we're always together. I always went everywhere with him; this is the first time I've been away without him. But I thought I'd come with Mrs. Deering and see what Saratoga was like; I had never been here."

"And is it like what you thought?"

"No. The first week we didn't do anything. Then we got acquainted with Mr. and Mrs. March, and I began to really see something. But I supposed it was all balls and gaiety."

"We must get up a few if you're so fond of them," Kendricks playfully suggested.

"Oh, I don't know as I am. I never went much at home. Papa didn't care to have me."

"Ah, do you think it was right for him to keep you all to himself?"

The girl did not answer, and they had both halted so abruptly that I almost ran into them. "I don't quite make out where we are."

Kendricks seemed to be peering about. I plunged across the street lest he should ask me. I heard him add, "Oh yes; I know now," and then they pressed forward.

We were quite near our hotel, but I thought it best to walk round the square and let them arrive first. On the way I amused myself thinking how different the girl had shown herself to him from what she had ever shown herself to my wife or me. She had really, this plain-minded goddess, a vein of poetic feeling, some inner beauty of soul answering to the outer beauty of body. She had a romantic attachment to her father, and this shed a sort of light on both of them, though I knew that it was not always a revelation of

character.

CHAPTER XIII

When I reached the hotel I found Miss Gage at the door, and Kendricks coming out of the office toward her.

"Oh, here he is!" she called to him at sight of me.

"Where in the world have you been?" he demanded. "I had just found out from the clerk that you hadn't come in yet, and I was going back for you with a searchlight."

"Oh, I wasn't so badly lost as all that," I returned. "I missed you in the crowd at the door, but I knew you'd get home somehow, and so I came on without you. But my aged steps are not so quick as yours."

The words, mechanically uttered, suggested something, and I thought that if they were in for weirdness I would give them as much weirdness as they could ask for. "When you get along toward fifty you'll find that the foot you've still got out of the grave doesn't work so lively as it used. Besides, I was interested in the night effect. It's so gloriously dark; and I had a fine sense of isolation as I came along, as if I were altogether out of my epoch and my environment. I felt as if the earth was a sort of Flying Dutchman, and I was the only passenger. It was about the weirdest sensation I ever had. It reminded me, I don't know how, exactly of the feeling I had when I was young, and I saw the sunset one evening through the woods after a sleet-storm."

They stared at each other as I went on, and I could see Kendricks's fine eyes kindle with an imaginative appreciation of the literary quality of the coincidence. But when I added, "Did you ever read a poem about the end of the world by that City of Dreadful Night man?" Miss Gage impulsively caught me by the coat lapel and shook me.

"Ah, it was you all the time! I knew there was somebody following us, and I might have KNOWN who it was!"

We all gave way in a gale of laughter, and sat down on the verandah and had our joke out in full recognition of the fact. When Kendricks rose to go at last, I said, "We won't say anything about this little incident to Mrs. March, hey?" And then they laughed again as if it were the finest wit in the world, and Miss Gage bade me a joyful good-night at the head of the stairs as she went off to her room and I to mine.

I found Mrs. March waiting up with a book; and as soon as I shut

myself in with her she said, awfully, "What WERE you laughing so about?"

"Laughing? Did you hear me laughing?"

"The whole house heard you, I'm afraid. You certainly ought to have known better, Basil. It was very inconsiderate of you." And as I saw she was going on with more of that sort of thing, to divert her thoughts from my crime I told her the whole story. It had quite the effect I intended up to a certain point. She even smiled a little, as much as a woman could be expected to smile who was not originally in the joke.

"And they had got to comparing weird experiences?" she asked.

"Yes; the staleness of the thing almost made me sick. Do you remember when we first compared our weird experiences? But I suppose they will go on doing it to the end of time, and it will have as great a charm for the last man and woman as it had for Adam and Eve when they compared THEIR weird experiences."

"And was that what you were laughing at?"

"We were laughing at the wonderful case of telepathy I put up on them."

Mrs. March faced her open book down on the table before her, and looked at me with profound solemnity. "Well, then, I can tell you, my dear, it is no laughing matter. If they have got to the weird it is very serious; and her talking to him about her family, and his wanting to know about her father, that's serious too--far more serious than either of them can understand. I don't like it, Basil; we have got a terrible affair on our hands."

"Terrible?"

"Yes, terrible. As long as he was interested in her simply from a literary point of view, though I didn't like that either, I could put up with it; but now that he's got to telling her about himself, and exchanging weird experiences with her, it's another thing altogether. Oh, I never wanted Kendricks brought into the affair at all."

"Come now, Isabel! Stick to the facts, please."

"No matter! It was you that discovered the girl, and then something had to be done. I was perfectly shocked when you told me that Mr. Kendricks was in town, because I saw at once that he would have to be got in for it; and now we have to think what we shall do."

"Couldn't we think better in the morning?"

"No; we must think at once. I shall not sleep to-night anyhow. My

peace is gone. I shall have to watch them every instant."

"Beginning at this instant. Why not wait till you can see them?"

"Oh, you can't joke it away, my dear. If I find they are really interested in each other I shall have to speak. I am responsible."

"The young lady," I said, more to gain time than anything else, "seems quite capable of taking care of herself."

"That makes it all the worse. Do you think I care for her only? It's Kendricks too that I care for. I don't know that I care for her at all."

"Oh, then I think we may fairly leave Kendricks to his own devices; and I'm not alarmed for Miss Gage either, though I do care for her a great deal."

"I don't understand how you can be so heartless about it, Basil," said Mrs. March, plaintively. "She is a young girl, and she has never seen anything of the world, and of course if he keeps on paying her attention in this way she can't help thinking that he is interested in her. Men never can see such things as women do. They think that, until a man has actually asked a girl to marry him, he hasn't done anything to warrant her in supposing that he is in love with her, or that she has any right to be in love with him."

"That is true; we can't imagine that she would be so indelicate."

"I see that you're determined to tease, my dear," said Mrs. March, and she took up her book with an air of offence and dismissal. "If you won't talk seriously, I hope you will think seriously, and try to realise what we've got in for. Such a girl couldn't imagine that we had simply got Mr Kendricks to go about with her from a romantic wish to make her have a good time, and that he was doing it to oblige us, and wasn't at all interested in her."

"It does look a little preposterous, even to the outsider," I admitted.

"I am glad you are beginning to see it in that light, my dear, and if you can think of anything to do by morning I shall be humbly thankful. _I_ don't expect to."

"Perhaps I shall dream of something," I said more lightly than I felt. "How would it do for you to have a little talk with her--a little motherly talk--and hint round, and warn her not to let her feelings run away with her in Kendricks's direction?" Mrs. March faced her book down in her lap, and listened as if there might be some reason in the nonsense I was talking. "You might say that he was a society man, and was in great request, and then intimate that there was a prior attachment, or that he was the kind of man who would never marry, but was really cold-hearted with all his

sweetness, and merely had a passion for studying character."

"Do you think that would do, Basil?" she asked.

"Well, I thought perhaps you might think so."

"I'm afraid it wouldn't," she sighed.

"All that we can do now is to watch them, and act promptly, if we see that they are really in love, either of them."

"I don't believe," I said, "that I should know that they were in love even if I saw it. I have forgotten the outward signs, if I ever knew them. Should he give her flowers? He's done it from the start; he's brought her boxes of Huyler candy, and lent her books; but I dare say he's been merely complying with our wishes in doing it. I doubt if lovers sigh nowadays. I didn't sigh myself, even in my time; and I don't believe any passion could make Kendricks neglect his dress. He keeps his eyes on her all the time, but that may be merely an effort to divine her character. I don't believe I should know, indeed I don't."

"I shall," said Mrs. March.

CHAPTER XIV

We were to go the next day to the races, and I woke with more anxiety about the weather than about the lovers, or potential lovers. But after realising that the day was beautiful, on that large scale of loveliness which seems characteristic of the summer days at Saratoga, where they have them almost the size of the summer days I knew when I was a boy, I was sensible of a secondary worry in my mind, which presently related itself to Kendricks and Miss Gage. It was a haze of trouble merely, however, such as burns off, like a morning fog, when the sun gets higher, and it was chiefly on my wife's account.

I suppose that the great difference between her conscience and one originating outside of New England (if any conscience can originate outside of New England) is that it cannot leave the moral government of the universe in the hands of divine Providence. I was willing to leave so many things which I could not control to the Deity, who probably could that she accused me of fatalism, and I was held to be little better than one of the wicked because I would not forecast the effects of what I did in the lives of others. I insisted that others were also probably in the hands of the *somma sapienza e il primo amore*, and that I was so little aware of the influence of other lives upon my own, even where there had been a direct and strenuous effort to affect me, that I could not readily believe

others had swerved from the line of their destiny because of me. Especially I protested that I could not hold myself guilty of misfortunes I had not intended, even though my faulty conduct had caused them. As to this business of Kendricks and Miss Gage, I denied in the dispute I now began tacitly to hold with Mrs. March's conscience that my conduct had been faulty. I said that there was no earthly harm in my having been interested by the girl's forlornness when I first saw her; that I did not do wrong to interest Mrs. March in her; that she did not sin in going shopping with Miss Gage and Mrs. Deering; that we had not sinned, either of us, in rejoicing that Kendricks had come to Saratoga, or in letting Mrs. Deering go home to her sick husband and leave Miss Gage on our hands; that we were not wicked in permitting the young fellow to help us make her have a good time. In this colloquy I did all the reasoning, and Mrs. March's conscience was completely silenced; but it rose triumphant in my miserable soul when I met Miss Gage at breakfast, looking radiantly happy, and disposed to fellowship me in an unusual confidence because, as I clearly perceived, of our last night's adventure. I said to myself bitterly that happiness did not become her style, and I hoped that she would get away with her confounded rapture before Mrs. March came down. I resolved not to tell Mrs. March if it fell out so, but at the same time, as a sort of atonement, I decided to begin keeping the sharpest kind of watch upon Miss Gage for the outward signs and tokens of love.

She said, "When you began to talk that way last night, Mr. March, it almost took my breath, and if you hadn't gone so far, and mentioned about the sunset through the sleety trees, I never should have suspected you."

"Ah, that's the trouble with men, Miss Gage." And when I said "men" I fancied she flushed a little. "We never know when to stop; we always overdo it; if it were not for that we should be as perfect as women. Perhaps you'll give me another chance, though."

"No; we shall be on our guard after this." She corrected herself and said, "I shall always be looking out for you now," and she certainly showed herself conscious in the bridling glance that met my keen gaze.

"Good heavens!" I thought. "Has it really gone so far?" and more than ever I resolved not to tell Mrs. March.

I went out to engage a carriage to take us to the races, and to agree with the driver that he should wait for us at a certain corner some blocks distant from our hotel, where we were to walk and find him. We always did this, because there were a number of clergymen in our house, and Mrs. March could not make it seem right to start for the races direct from the door, though she held that it was perfectly right for us to go. For the same reason she made the driver stop short of our destination on our return, and walked home the rest of the way. Almost the first time we practised this deception I was met at the door by the sweetest and dearest of these

old divines, who said, "Have you ever seen the races here? I'm told the spectacle is something very fine," and I was obliged to own that I had once had a glimpse of them. But it was in vain that I pleaded this fact with Mrs. March; she insisted that the appearance of not going to the races was something that we owed the cloth, and no connivance on their part could dispense us from it.

As I now went looking up and down the street for the driver who was usually on the watch for me about eleven o'clock on a fair day of the races, I turned over in my mind the several accidents which are employed in novels to bring young people to a realising sense of their feelings toward each other, and wondered which of them I might most safely invoke. I was not anxious to have Kendricks and Miss Gage lovers; it would be altogether simpler for us if they were not; but if they were, the sooner they knew it and we knew it the better. I thought of a carriage accident, in which he should seize her and leap with her from the flying vehicle, while the horses plunged madly on, but I did not know what in this case would become of Mrs. March and me. Besides, I could think of nothing that would frighten our driver's horses, and I dismissed the fleeting notion of getting any others because Mrs. March liked their being so safe, and she had, besides, interested herself particularly in the driver, who had a family and counted upon our custom. The poor fellow came in sight presently, and smilingly made the usual arrangement with me, and an hour later he delivered us all sound in wind and limb at the racecourse.

I watched in vain for signs of uncommon tenderness in the two young people. If anything they were rather stiff and distant with each other, and I asked myself whether this might not be from an access of consciousness. Kendricks was particularly devoted to Mrs. March, who, in the airy detachment with which she responded to his attentions, gave me the impression that she had absolutely dismissed her suspicions of the night before, or else had heartlessly abandoned the affair to me altogether. If she had really done this, then I saw no way out of it for me but by an accident which should reveal them to each other. Perhaps some one might insult Miss Gage--some ruffian--and Kendricks might strike the fellow; but this seemed too squalid. There might be a terrible jam, and he interpose his person between her and the danger of her being crushed to death; or the floor of the grand stand might give way, and everybody be precipitated into the space beneath, and he fight his way, with her senseless form on his arm, over the bodies of the mangled and dying. Any of these things would have availed in a novel, and something of the kind would have happened, too. But, to tell the truth, nothing whatever happened, and if it had not been for that anxiety on my mind I should have thought it much pleasanter so.

Even as it was I felt a measure of the hilarity which commonly fills me at a running race, and I began to lose in the charm of the gay scene the sense of my responsibility, and little by little to abate the vigilance apparently left all to me. The day was beautiful; the long heat had burned itself out, and there was a clear sparkle in

the sunshine, which seemed blown across the wide space within the loop of the track by the delicate breeze. A vague, remote smell of horses haunted the air, with now and then a breath of the pines from the grove shutting the race-ground from the highway. We got excellent places, as one always may, the grand stand is so vast, and the young people disposed themselves on the bench in front of us, but so near that we were not tempted to talk them over. The newsboys came round with papers, and the boys who sold programmes of the races; from the bar below there appeared from time to time shining negroes in white linen jackets, with trays bearing tall glasses of lemonade, and straws tilted in the glasses. Bookmakers from the pool-rooms took the bets of the ladies, who formed by far the greater part of the spectators on the grand stand, and contributed, with their summer hats and gowns, to the gaiety of the ensemble. They were of all types, city and country both, and of the Southern dark as well as the Northern fair complexion, with so thick a sprinkling of South Americans that the Spanish gutturals made themselves almost as much heard as the Yankee nasals. Among them moved two nuns of some mendicant order, receiving charity from the fair gamblers, who gave for luck without distinction of race or religion.

I leaned forward and called Kendricks's attention to the nuns, and to the admirable literary quality of the whole situation. He was talking to Miss Gage, and he said as impatiently as he ever suffered himself to speak, "Yes, yes; tremendously picturesque."

"You ought to get something out of it, my dear fellow. Don't you feel copy in it?"

"Oh, splendid, of course; but it's your ground, Mr. March. I shouldn't feel it right to do anything with Saratoga after you had discovered it," and he turned eagerly again to Miss Gage.

My wife put her hand on my sleeve and frowned, and I had so far lost myself in my appreciation of the scene that I was going to ask her what the matter was, when a general sensation about me made me look at the track, where the horses for the first race had already appeared, with their jockeys in vivid silk jackets of various dyes. They began to form for the start with the usual tricks and feints, till I became very indignant with them, though I had no bets pending, and did not care in the least which horse won. What I wanted was to see the race, the flight, and all this miserable manoeuvring was retarding it. Now and then a jockey rode his horse far off on the track and came back between the false starts; now and then one kept stubbornly behind the rest and would not start with them. How their several schemes and ambitions were finally reconciled I never could tell, but at last the starter's flag swept down and they were really off. Everybody could have seen perfectly well as they sat, but everybody rose and watched the swift swoop of the horses, bunched together in the distance, and scarcely distinguishable by the colours of their riders. The supreme moment came for me when they were exactly opposite the grand stand, full

half a mile away--the moment that I remembered from year to year as one of exquisite illusion--for then the horses seemed to lift from the earth as with wings, and to skim over the track like a covey of low-flying birds. The finish was tame to this. Mrs. March and I had our wonted difference of opinion as to which horse had won, and we were rather uncommonly controversial because we had both decided upon the same horse, as we found, only she was talking of the jockey's colours, and I was talking of the horse's. We appealed to Kendricks, who said that another horse altogether had won the race, and this compromise pacified us.

We were all on foot, and he suggested, "We could see better, couldn't we, if we went farther down in front?" And Mrs. March answered -

"No, we prefer to stay here; but you two can go." And when they had promptly availed themselves of her leave, she said to me, "This is killing me dead, Basil, and if it keeps up much longer I don't believe I can live through it. I don't care now, and I believe I shall throw them together all I can from this out. The quicker they decide whether they're in love or not the better. I have some rights too."

Her whirling words expressed the feeling in my own mind. I had the same sense of being trifled with by these young people, who would not behave so conclusively toward each other as to justify our interference on the ground that they were in love, nor yet treat each other so indifferently as to relieve us of the strain of apprehension. I had lost all faith in accident by this time, and I was quite willing to leave them to their own devices; I was so desperate that I said I hoped they would get lost from us, as they had from me the night before, and never come back, but just keep on wandering round for ever. All sorts of vengeful thoughts went through my mind as I saw them leaning toward each other to say something, and then drawing apart to laugh in what seemed an indefinite comradeship instead of an irrepressible passion. Did they think we were going to let this sort of thing go on? What did they suppose our nerves were made of? Had they no mercy, no consideration? It was quite like the selfishness of youth to wish to continue in that fool's paradise, but they would find out that middle age had its rights too. I felt capable of asking them bluntly what they meant by it. But when they docilely rejoined us at the end of the races, hurrying up with some joke about not letting me get lost this time, and Miss Gage put herself at my wife's side and Kendricks dropped into step with me, all I had been thinking seemed absurd. They were just two young people who were enjoying a holiday-time together, and we were in no wise culpable concerning them.

I suggested this to Mrs. March when we got home, and, in the need of some relief from the tension she had been in, she was fain to accept the theory provisionally, though I knew that her later rejection of it would be all the more violent for this respite.

CHAPTER XV

There was to be a hop at the Grand Union that night, and I had got tickets for it in virtue of my relation to Every Other Week. I must say the clerk who gave them me was very civil about it; he said they were really only for the hotel guests, but he was glad to give them to outsiders who applied with proper credentials; and he even offered me more tickets than I asked for.

Miss Gage was getting a dress for the hop, and it was to be finished that day. I think women really like the scare of thinking their dresses will not be done for a given occasion, and so arrange to have them at the last moment. Mrs. March went with the girl early in the afternoon to have it tried on for the last time, and they came home reporting that it was a poem. My wife confided to me that it was not half done--merely begun, in fact--and would never be finished in time in the world. She also assured Miss Gage that she need not be the least uneasy; that there was not an hour's work on the dress; and that the dress-maker's reputation was at stake, and she would not dare to fail her. I knew she was perfectly sincere in both these declarations, which were, indeed, merely the expression of two mental attitudes, and had no relation to the facts.

She added to me that she was completely worn out with anxiety and worry, and I must not think of her going to the hop. I would have to do the chaperoning for her, and she did hope that I would not forget what I was sent for, or get talking with somebody, and leave Miss Gage altogether to Kendricks. She said that quite likely there might be friends or acquaintances of his at the hop--such a large affair--whom he would want to show some attention, and I must take charge of Miss Gage myself, and try to find her other partners. She drilled me in the duties of my position until I believed that I was letter-perfect, and then she said that she supposed I would commit some terrible blunder that would ruin everything.

I thought that this was very likely, too, but I would not admit it.

The dress came home at nine o'clock, and operated a happy diversion from my imaginable shortcomings; for it appeared from Mrs. March's asides to me that it was a perfect horror in the set, and that everybody could see that it had been simply SLUNG together at the last moment, and she would never, as long as the world stood, go to that woman for anything again.

I must say I could not myself see anything wrong about the dress. I thought it exquisite in tint and texture; a delicate, pale-greenish film that clung and floated, and set off the girl's beauty as the leafage of a flower heightens the loveliness of a flower. I did not

dare to say this in the face of Mrs. March's private despair, and I was silent while the girl submitted to be twirled about for my inspection like a statue on a revolving pedestal. Kendricks, however, had no such restrictions upon him, and I could see him start with delight in the splendid vision before he spoke.

"ISN'T it a poem?" demanded Mrs. March. "Isn't it a perfect LYRIC?"

"Why should you have allowed her to be transported altogether into the ideal? Wasn't she far enough from us before?" he asked; and I found myself wishing that he would be either less or more articulate. He ought to have been mute with passion, or else he ought to have been frankly voluble about the girl's gown, and gone on about it longer. But he simply left the matter there, and though I kept him carefully under my eye, I could not see that he was concealing any further emotion. She, on her part, neither blushed nor frowned at his compliment; she did nothing by look or gesture to provoke more praise; she took it very much as the beautiful evening might, so undeniably fine, so perfect in its way.

She and the evening were equally fitted for the event to which they seemed equally dedicated. The dancing was to be out of doors on a vast planking, or platform, set up in the heart of that bosky court which the hotel incloses. Around this platform drooped the slim, tall Saratogan trees, and over it hung the Saratogan sky, of a nocturnal blue very rare in our latitude, with the stars faint in its depths, and by and by a white moon that permitted itself a modest competition with the electric lights effulgent everywhere. There was a great crowd of people in the portico, the vestibule, and the inner piazzas, and on the lawn around the platform, where "the trodden weed" sent up the sweet scent of bruised grass in the cool night air. My foolish old heart bounded with a pulse of youth at the thought of all the gay and tender possibilities of such a scene.

But the young people under my care seemed in no haste to mingle in it. We oldsters are always fancying youth impatient, but there is no time of life which has so much patience. It behaves as if it had eternity before it--an eternity of youth--instead of a few days and years, and then the frosty poll. We who are young no longer think we would do so and so if we were young, as women think they would do so and so if they were men; but if we were really young again, we should not do at all what we think. We should not hurry to experience our emotions; we should not press forward to discharge our duties or repair our mistakes; we should not seize the occasion to make a friend or reconcile an enemy; we should let weeks and months go by in the realisation of a passion, and trust all sorts of contingencies and accidents to help us out with its confession. The thoughts of youth are very long, and its conclusions are deliberate and delayed, and often withheld altogether. It is age which is tremulously eager in these matters, and cannot wait with the fine patience of nature in her growing moods.

As soon, even, as I was in the hotel I was impatient to press

through to the place where the dancing was, and where I already heard the band playing. I knew very well that when we got there I should have to sit down somewhere on the edge of the platform with the other frumps and fogies, and begin taking cold in my dress-coat, and want to doze off without being able to, while my young people were waltzing together, or else promenading up and down ignoring me, or recognising me by the offer of a fan, and the question whether I was not simply melting; I have seen how the poor chaperon fares at such times. But they, secure of their fun, were by no means desirous to have it over, or even to have it begin. They dawdled through the thronged hotel office, where other irresponsible pairs were coming and going under the admiring eyes of the hotel loungers, and they wandered up and down the waste parlours, and sat on tete-a-tetes just to try them, apparently; and Miss Gage verified in the mirrors the beauty which was reflected in all eyes. They amused themselves with the extent of the richly-carpeted and upholstered desolation around them, where only a few lonely and aging women lurked about on sofas and ottomans; and they fell to playing with their compassion for the plebeian spectators at the long verandah windows trying to penetrate with their forbidden eyes to the hop going on in the court far beyond the intermediary desert of the parlours.

When they signified at last that they were ready for me to lead them on to the dance, I would so much rather have gone to bed that there are no words for the comparison. Then, when we got to the place, which I should never have been able to reach in the world if it had not been for the young energy and inspiration of Kendricks, and they had put me in a certain seat with Miss Gage's wraps beside me where they could find me, they went off and danced for hours and hours. For hours and hours? For ages and ages! while I withered away amid mouldering mothers, and saw my charges through the dreadful half-dreams of such a state whirling in the waltz, hopping in the polka, sliding in the galop, and then endlessly walking up and down between the dances, and eating and drinking the chill refreshments that it made my teeth chatter to think of. I suppose they decently came to me from time to time, though they seemed to be always dancing, for I could afterward remember Miss Gage taking a wrap from me now and then, and quickly coming back to shed it upon my lap again. I got so chilled that if they had not been unmistakably women's wraps I should have bundled them all about my shoulders, which I could almost hear creak with rheumatism. I must have fallen into a sort of drowse at last; for I was having a dispute with some sort of authority, which turned out to be Mrs. March, and upbraiding her with the fact that there were no women's wraps which would also do for a man, when the young people stood arm in arm before me, and Miss Gage said that she was tired to death now, and they were going.

But it appeared that they were only going as far as the parlours for the present; for when they re-entered the hotel, they turned into them, and sat down there quite as if that had been the understanding. When I arrived with the wraps, I was reminded of something, and I said, "Have you two been dancing together the whole

evening?"

They looked at each other as if for the first time they now realised the fact, and Kendricks said, "Why, of course we have! We didn't know anybody."

"Very well, then," I said; "you have got me into a scrape."

"Oh, poor Mr. March!" cried the girl. "How have we done it?"

"Why, Mrs. March said that Mr. Kendricks would be sure to know numbers of people, and I must get you other partners, for it wouldn't do for you to dance the whole evening together."

She threw herself back in the chair she had taken, and laughed as if this were the best joke in the world.

He said hardily, "You see it HAS done."

"And if it wouldn't do," she gasped, "why didn't you bring me the other partners?"

"Because I didn't know any," I said; and this seemed to amuse them both so much that I was afraid they would never get their breath.

She looked by and by at her dancing-card, and as soon as she could wipe the tears from her eyes she said, "No; there is no other name there"; and this seemed even a better joke than the other from the way they joined in laughing at it.

"Well, now," I said, when they were quiet again, "this won't do, my young friends. It's all very well for you, and you seem to like it; but I am responsible for your having passed a proper evening under my chaperonage, and something has got to be done to prove it." They saw the reasonableness of this, and they immediately became sober. "Kendricks," I asked, "can't you think of something?"

No, he said, he couldn't; and then he began to laugh again.

I applied to her in the same terms; but she only answered, "Oh, don't ask ME," and she went off laughing too.

"Very well, then," I said; "I shall have to do something desperate, and I shall expect you both to bear me out in it, and I don't want any miserable subterfuges when it comes to the point with Mrs. March. Will you let me have your dancing-card Miss Gage?" She detached it, and handed it to me. "It's very fortunate that Mr. Kendricks wrote his name for the first dance only, and didn't go on and fill it up."

"Why, we didn't think it was worth while!" she innocently explained.

"And that's what makes it so perfectly providential, as Mrs. March

says. Now then," I went on, as I wrote in the name of a rising young politician, who happened just then to have been announced as arriving in Saratoga to join some other leaders in arranging the slate of his party for the convention to meet a month later, "we will begin with a good American."

I handed the card to Kendricks. "Do you happen to remember the name of the young French nobleman who danced the third dance with Miss Gage?"

"No," he said; "but I think I could invent it." And he dashed down an extremely probable marquis, while Miss Gage clapped her hands for joy.

"Oh, how glorious! how splendid!"

I asked, "Will you ever give me away the longest day you live?"

"Never," she promised; and I added the name of a South American doctor, one of those doctors who seem to be always becoming the presidents of their republics, and ordering all their patients of opposite politics to be shot in the plaza.

Kendricks entered a younger son of an English duke, and I contributed the hyphenated surname of a New York swell, and between us we soon had all the dances on Miss Gage's card taken by the most distinguished people. We really studied probability in the forgery, and we were proud of the air of reality it wore in the carefully differenced handwritings, with national traits nicely accented in each.

CHAPTER XVI

The fun of it all was that Mrs. March was not deceived for an instant. "Oh, nonsense!" she said, when she glanced at our pretty deception, which we presented with perhaps too perfect seriousness. "Then you danced only the first dance?"

"No, no!" Miss Gage protested. "I danced every dance as long as I stayed." She laughed with her handkerchief to her mouth and her eyes shining above.

"Yes; I can testify to that, Mrs. March," said Kendricks, and he laughed wildly, too. I must say their laughter throughout was far beyond the mirthfulness of the facts. They both protested that they had had the best time in the world, and the gayest time; that I had been a mirror of chaperons, and followed them round with my eyes wherever they went like a family portrait; and that they were the most exemplary young couple at the hop in their behaviour. Mrs.

March asked them all about it, and she joined in their fun with a hilarity which I knew from long experience boded me no good.

When Kendricks had gone away, and Miss Gage had left us for the night with an embrace, whose fondness I wondered at, from Mrs. March, an awful silence fell upon us in the deserted parlour where she had waited up.

I knew that when she broke the silence she would begin with, "Well, my dear!" and this was what she did. She added, "I hope you're convinced NOW!"

I did not even pretend not to understand. "You mean that they are in love? I suppose that their we-ing and us-ing so much would indicate something of the kind."

"It isn't that alone; everything indicates it. She would hardly let go of him with her eyes. I wish," sighed Mrs. March, and she let her head droop upon her hand a moment, "I could be as sure of him as I am of her."

"Wouldn't that double the difficulty?" I ventured to suggest, though till she spoke I had not doubted that it was the case.

"I should make you speak to him if I were sure of him; but as it is I shall speak to her, and the sooner the better."

"To-night?" I quaked.

"No; I shall let the poor thing have her sleep to-night. But the first thing in the morning I shall speak, and I want you to send her up to me as soon as she's had her breakfast. Tell her I'm not well, and shall not be down; I shall not close my eyes the whole night. And now," she added, "I want you to tell me everything that happened this evening. Don't omit a word, or a look, or a motion. I wish to proceed intelligently."

I hope I was accurate in the history of the hop which I gave Mrs. March; I am sure I was full. I think my account may be justly described as having a creative truthfulness, if no other merit. I had really no wish to conceal anything except the fact that I had not, in my utter helplessness, even tried to get Miss Gage any other partners. But in the larger interest of the present situation, Mrs. March seemed to have lost the sense of my dereliction in this respect. She merely asked, "And it was after you went back to the parlour, just before you came home, that you wrote those names on her card?"

"Kendricks wrote half of them," I said.

"I dare say. Well, it was very amusing, and if the circumstances were different, I could have entered into the spirit of it too. But you see yourself, Basil, that we can't let this affair go any

further without dealing frankly with her. YOU can't speak to her, and _I_ MUST. Don't you see?"

I said that I saw, but I had suddenly a wild wish that it were practicable for me to speak to Miss Gage. I should have liked to have a peep into a girl's heart at just such a moment, when it must be quivering with the unconfessed sense of love, and the confident hope of being loved, but while as yet nothing was assured, nothing was ascertained. If it would not have been shocking, if it would not have been sacrilegious, it would have been infinitely interesting, and from an aesthetic point of view infinitely important. I thought that I should have been willing to undergo all the embarrassment of such an inquiry for the sake of its precious results, if it had been at all possible; but I acquiesced that it would not be possible. I felt that I was getting off pretty lightly not to have it brought home to me again that I was the cause of all this trouble, and that if it had not been for me there would have been, as far as Mrs. March was concerned, no Miss Gage, and no love-affair of hers to deal with. I debated in my mind a moment whether I had better urge her to let me speak to Kendricks after all; but I forbore, and in the morning I waited about in much perturbation, after I had sent Miss Gage to her, until I could know the result of their interview. When I saw the girl come away from her room, which she did rather trippingly, I went to her, and found her by no means the wreck I had expected the ordeal to leave her.

"Did you meet Miss Gage?" she asked.

"Yes," I returned, with tremulous expectation.

"Well, don't you think she looks perfectly divine in that gown? It's one of Mme. Cody's, and we got it for thirty dollars. It would have been fifty in New York, and it was, here, earlier in the season. I shall always come here for some of my things; as soon as the season's a little past they simply FLING them away. Well, my dear!"

"Well, what?"

"I didn't speak to her after all."

"You didn't! Don't you think she's in love with him, then?"

"Dead."

"Well?"

"Well, I couldn't somehow seem to approach the subject as I had expected to. She was so happy, and so good, and so perfectly obedient, that I couldn't get anything to take hold of. You see, I didn't know but she might be a little rebellious, or resentful of my interference; but in the little gingerly attempts I did make she was so submissive, don't you understand? And she was very modest about

Mr. Kendricks' attentions, and so self-depreciatory that, well--"

"Look here, Isabel," I broke in, "this is pretty shameless of you. You pretend to be in the greatest kind of fidge about this girl; and you make me lie awake all night thinking what you're going to say to her; and now you as much as tell me you were so fascinated with the modest way she was in love that you couldn't say anything to her against being in love on our hands in any sort of way. Do you call this business?"

"Well, I don't care if I DID encourage her--"

"Oh, you even encouraged her!"

"I DIDN'T encourage her. I merely praised Mr. Kendricks, and said how much you thought of him as a writer."

"Oh! then you gave the subject a literary cast. I see! Do you think Miss Gage was able to follow you?"

"That doesn't matter."

"And what do you propose to do now?"

"I propose to do nothing. I think that I have done all my duty requires, and that now I can leave the whole affair to you. It was your affair in the beginning. I don't see why I should worry myself about it."

"It seems to me that this is a very strange position for a lady to take who was not going to close an eye last night in view of a situation which has not changed in the least, except for the worse. Don't you think you are rather culpably light-hearted all of a sudden?"

"I am light-hearted, but if there is any culpability it is yours, Basil."

I reflected, but I failed to find any novelty in the fact. "Very well, then; what do you propose that I should do?"

"I leave that entirely to your own conscience."

"And if my conscience has no suggestion to make?"

"That's your affair."

I reflected again, and then I said, more than anything to make her uncomfortable, I'm afraid: "I feel perfectly easy in my conscience, personally, but I have a social duty in the matter, and I hope I shall perform it with more fidelity and courage than you have shown. I shall speak to Kendricks."

She said: "That is just what you ought to do. I'm quite surprised." After this touch of irony she added earnestly, "And I do hope, my dear, you will use judgment in speaking to him, and tact. You mustn't go at it bluntly. Remember that Mr. Kendricks is not at all to blame. He began to show her attention to oblige us, and if she has fallen in love with him it is our fault."

"I shall handle him without gloves," I said. "I shall tell him he had better go away."

I was joking, but she said seriously, "Yes; he must go away. And I don't envy you having to tell him. I suppose you will bungle it, of course."

"Well, then, you must advise me," I said; and we really began to consider the question. We could hardly exaggerate the difficulty and delicacy of the duty before me. We recognised that before I made any explicit demand of him I must first ascertain the nature of the whole ground and then be governed by the facts. It would be simple enough if I had merely to say that we thought the girl's affections were becoming engaged, and then appeal to his eager generosity, his delicate magnanimity; but there were possible complications on his side which must be regarded. I was to ascertain, we concluded, the exact nature of the situation before I ventured to say anything openly. I was to make my approaches by a series of ambushes before I unmasked my purpose, and perhaps I must not unmask it at all. As I set off on my mission, which must begin with finding Kendricks at his hotel, Mrs. March said she pitied me. She called me back to ask whether I thought I had really better do anything. Then, as I showed signs of weakening, she drove me from her with, "Yes, yes! You must! You must!"

CHAPTER XVII

It was still so early that I had my doubts whether I should find Kendricks up after the last night's revelry, but he met me half-way between our hotel and his. He said he was coming to see how Mrs. March was bearing Miss Gage's immense success at the ball; but perhaps this was not his sole motive. He asked frankly how the young lady was, and whether I thought Mrs. March would consider a lunch at a restaurant by the lake a good notion. When I said I had very little doubt she would, and proposed taking a turn in the park before I went back with him, he looked at his watch and laughed, and said he supposed it WAS rather early yet, and came very willingly with me.

We had the pretty place almost to ourselves at that hour. There were a half-dozen or so nursemaids, pushing their perambulators about, or standing the vehicles across the walk in front of the

benches where they sat, in the simple belief of all people who have to do with babies that the rest of the world may be fitly discommoded in their behalf. But they did not actively molest us, and they scarcely circumscribed our choice of seats. We were by no means driven to the little kiosk in the lake for them, and I should rather say that we were fatefully led there, so apt were the associations of the place to my purpose. Nothing could have been more natural than that I should say, as we sat down there, "This was where I first saw Miss Gage with her friends"; and it was by a perfectly natural transition that I should go on to speak, in a semi-humorous strain, of the responsibility which Mrs. March and myself had incurred by letting our sympathy for her run away with us. I said I supposed that if we had not been willing from the first to try to realise for her some of the expectations we imagined she had in coming to Saratoga, she never would have fallen to our charge; that people really brought a great many more things upon themselves than they were willing to own; and that fate was perhaps more the fulfilment of our tacit ambitions than our overt acts. This bit of philosophy, which I confess I thought fine, did not seem to impress Kendricks. He merely said that it must be great fun to have the chance of baffling the malice of circumstance in a case like that, and I perceived that he felt nothing complex in the situation. In fact, I doubt whether youth perceives anything complex in life. To the young, life is a very plain case. To be sure, they are much more alarmed than their elders at getting tangled up in its web at times, but that is because they have not had our experience in getting untangled, and think they are never going to get out alive. When they do, they think that it is the only tangle they are ever going to be in, and do not know that they are simply going on from one to another as long as there is enough of them left to be caught in a mesh. To Kendricks we Marches were simply two amiable people, who had fancied doing a pleasant thing for a beautiful girl that accident had thrown it in our power to befriend, and were by no means the trembling arbiters of her destiny we felt ourselves to be. The difference between his objective sense and my subjective sense was the difference between his twenty-seven years and my fifty-two, and while this remained I saw that it would be useless to try to get on common ground with him, or to give him our point of view. If I were to speak to him at all, it must be with authority, with the right of one who stood in the place of the girl's parents, and had her happiness at heart. That is, it was something like that; but my words say it too bluntly. I found myself beginning, "I have rather had a notion that her father might come on, and take the enterprise off our hands," though, to tell the truth, I had never imagined such a thing, which came into my head at that moment through an association with the thought of parents.

"Have you any idea what sort of man he is?" asked Kendricks.

"Oh, some little local magnate, president of the village and president of the village bank; I fancy the chief figure in the place, but probably as ignorant of our world as a Cherokee."

"Well, I don't know," said the young fellow. "Do you think that follows because he doesn't live in it?" I could see that he did not quite like what I had said. "I suppose ours is rather a small world."

"The smallest of all worlds," I answered. "And in the eyes of Papa Gage, if they could once be focused upon it, our world would shrivel to an atom."

"Do you think," he asked, with a manifest anxiety, "that it would in hers?"

"No; she is not the American people, and her father is, as I fancy him. I make out from the vague hints that Brother Deering (as Fulkerson would call him) dropped when he talked about him that Papa Gage is a shrewd, practical, home-keeping business man, with an eye single to the main chance, lavish, but not generous, Philistine to the backbone, blindly devoted to his daughter, and contemptuous of all the myriad mysteries of civilisation that he doesn't understand. I don't know why I should be authorised to imagine him personally long and lank, with possibly a tobacco habit of some sort. His natural history, upon no better authority, is that of a hard-headed farmer, who found out that farming could never be more than a livelihood, and came into the village, and began to lend money, and get gain, till he was in a position to help found the De Witt Point National Bank, and then, by weight of his moneyed solidity, imposed himself upon the free and independent voters of the village--a majority of them under mortgage to him--and became its president. It isn't a pleasant type, but it's ideally American."

"Yes," said Kendrick ruefully.

"But his daughter," I continued, "is probably altogether different. There is something fine about her--really fine. Our world wouldn't shrivel in her eye; it would probably swell up and fill the universe," I added by an impulse that came from nowhere irresistibly upon me: "that is, if she could see YOU in it."

"What do you mean?" he asked with a start.

"Oh, now I must tell you what I mean," I said desperately. "It's you that have complicated this case so dreadfully for us. Can't you think why?"

"No, I can't," he said; but he had to say that.

His fine, sensitive face flamed at once so fire-red that it could only turn pale for a change when I plunged on: "I'm afraid we've trifled with her happiness"; and this formulation of the case disgusted me so much that I laughed wildly, and added, "unless we've trifled with yours, too."

"I don't know why you call it trifling with happiness," he returned

with dignity, but without offence. "If you will leave her out of the question, I will say that you have given me the greatest happiness of my life in introducing me to Miss Gage."

"Now," I demanded, "may I ask what YOU mean? You know I wouldn't if I didn't feel bound for her sake, and if you hadn't said just what you have said. You needn't answer me unless you like! It's pleasant to know that you've not been bored, and Mrs. March and I are infinitely obliged to you for helping us out."

Kendricks made as if he were going to say something, and then he did not. He hung his head lower and lower in the silence which I had to break for him--"I hope I haven't been intrusive, my dear fellow. This is something I felt bound to speak of. You know we couldn't let it go on. Mrs. March and I have blamed ourselves a good deal, and we couldn't let it go on. But I'm afraid I haven't been as delicate with you--"

"Oh! delicate!" He lifted his head and flashed a face of generous self-reproach upon me. "It's _I_ that haven't been delicate with YOU. I've been monstrously indelicate. But I never meant to be, and--and--I was coming to see you just now when we met--to see you--Miss Gage--and ask her--tell her that we--I--must tell you and Mrs. March--Mr. March! At the hop last night I asked her to be my wife, and as soon as she can hear from her father--But the first thing when I woke this morning, I saw that I must tell Mrs. March and you. And you--you must forgive us--or me, rather; for it was my fault--for not telling you last night--at once--oh, thank you! thank you!"

I had seized his hand, and was wringing it vehemently in expression of my pleasure in what he had told me. In that first moment I felt nothing but pure joy and an immeasurable relief. I drew my breath, a very deep and full one, in a sudden, absolute freedom from anxieties which had been none the less real and constant because so often burlesqued. Afterward considerations presented themselves to alloy my rapture, but for that moment, as I say, it was nothing but rapture. There was no question in it of the lovers' fitness for each other, of their acceptability to their respective families, of their general conduct, or of their especial behaviour toward us. All that I could realise was that it was a great escape for both of us, and a great triumph for me. I had been afraid that I should not have the courage to speak to Kendricks of the matter at all, much less ask him to go away; and here I had actually spoken to him, with the splendid result that I need only congratulate him on his engagement to the lady whose unrequited affections I had been wishing him to spare. I don't remember just the terms I used in doing this, but they seemed satisfactory to Kendricks; probably a repetition of the letters of the alphabet would have been equally acceptable. At last I said, "Well, now I must go and tell the great news to Mrs. March," and I shook hands with him again; we had been shaking hands at half-minutely intervals ever since the first time.

CHAPTER XVIII

I saw Mrs. March waiting for me on the hotel verandah. She wore her bonnet, and she warned me not to approach, and then ran down to meet me.

"Well, my dear," she said, as she pushed her hand through my arm and began to propel me away from the sight and hearing of people on the piazza, "I hope you didn't make a fool of yourself with Kendricks. They're engaged!"

She apparently expected me to be prostrated by this stroke. "Yes," I said very coolly; "I was just coming to tell you."

"How did you know it? Who told you? Did Kendricks? I don't believe it!" she cried in an excitement not unmixed with resentment.

"No one told me," I said. "I simply divined it."

She didn't mind that for a moment. "Well, I'm glad he had the grace to do so, and I hope he did it before you asked him any leading questions." Without waiting to hear whether this was so or not, she went on, with an emphasis on the next word that almost blotted it out of the language, "SHE came back to me almost the instant you were gone, and told me everything. She said she wanted to tell me last night, but she hadn't the courage, and this morning, when she saw that I was beginning to hint up to Mr. Kendricks a little, she hadn't the courage at all. I sent her straight off to telegraph for her father. She is behaving splendidly. And now, what are we going to do?"

"What the rest of the world is--nothing. It seems to me that we are out of the story, my dear. At any rate, I shan't attempt to compete with Miss Gage in splendid behaviour, and I hope you won't. It would be so easy for us. I wonder what Papa Gage is going to be like."

I felt my thrill of apprehension impart itself to her. "Yes!" she gasped; "what if he shouldn't like it?"

"Well, then, that's his affair." But I did not feel so lightly about it as I spoke, and from time to time during the day I was overtaken with a cold dismay at the thought of the unknown quantity in the problem.

When we returned to the hotel after a tour of the block, we saw Kendricks in our corner of the verandah with Miss Gage. They were both laughing convulsively, and they ran down to meet us in yet wilder throes of merriment.

"We've just been comparing notes," he said, "and at the very moment when I was telling you, Mr. March, Julia was telling Mrs. March."

"Wonderful case of telepathy," I mocked.

"Give it to the Psychological Research."

They both seemed a little daunted, and Miss Gage said, "I know Mr. March doesn't like the way we've done."

"Like it!" cried Mrs. March, contriving to shake me a little with the hand she still had in my arm. "Of course he likes it. He was just saying you had behaved splendidly. He said HE wouldn't attempt to compete with you. But you mustn't regard him in the least."

I admired the skill with which Isabel saved her conscience in this statement too much to dispute it; and I suppose that whatever she had said, Miss Gage would have been reassured. I cannot particularly praise the wisdom of her behaviour during that day, or, for the matter of that, the behaviour of Kendricks either. The ideal thing would have been for him to keep away now till her father came, but it seemed to me that he was about under our feet all the while, and that she, so far from making him remain at his own hotel, encouraged him to pass the time at ours. Without consulting me, Mrs. March asked him to stay to dinner after he had stayed all the forenoon, and he made this a pretext for spending the afternoon in our corner of the verandah. She made me give it up to him and Miss Gage, so that they could be alone together, though I must say they did not seem to mind us a great deal when we were present; he was always leaning on the back of her chair, or sitting next her with his hand dangling over it in a manner that made me sick. I wondered if I was ever such an ass as that, and I quite lost the respect for Kendricks's good sense and good taste which had been the ground of my liking for him.

I felt myself withdrawn from the affair farther and farther in sympathy, since it had now passed beyond my control; and I resented the strain of the responsibility which I had thrown off, I found, only for a moment, and must continue to suffer until the girl's father appeared and finally relieved me. The worst was that I had to bear it alone. It was impossible to detach Mrs. March's interest from Miss Gage, as a girl who had been made love to, long enough to enable her to realise her as a daughter with filial ties and duties. She did try in a perfunctory way to do it, but I could see that she never gave her mind to it. I could not even make her share my sense of my own culpability, a thing she was only too willing to do in most matters. She admitted that it was absurd for me to have let my fancy play about the girl when I first saw her until we felt that I must do something for her; but I could not get her to own that we had both acted preposterously in letting Mrs. Deering leave Miss Gage in our charge. In the first place, she denied that she had been left in our charge. She had simply been left in the hotel where we were staying, and we should have been perfectly free to do

nothing for her. But when Kendricks turned up so unexpectedly, it was quite natural we should ask him to be polite to her. Mrs. March saw nothing strange in all that. What was I worrying about? What she had been afraid of was that he had not been in love with the girl when she was so clearly in love with him. But now!

"And suppose her father doesn't like it!"

"Not like Mr. Kendricks!" She stared at me, and I could see how infatuated she was.

I was myself always charmed with the young fellow. He was not only good and generous and handsome, and clever--I never thought him a first-class talent--but he was beautifully well bred, and he was very well born, as those things go with us. That is, he came of people who had not done much of anything for a generation, and had acquired merit with themselves for it. They were not very rich, but they had a right to think that he might have done nothing, or done something better than literature; and I wish I could set forth exactly the terms, tacit and explicit, in which his mother and sisters condoned his dereliction to me at a reception where he presented me to them. In virtue of his wish to do something, he had become a human being, and they could not quite follow him; but they were very polite in tolerating me, and trying to make me feel that I was not at all odd, though he was so queer in being proud of writing for my paper, as they called it. He was so unlike them all that I liked him more than ever after meeting them. Still, I could imagine a fond father, as I imagined Miss Gage's father to be, objecting to him, on some grounds at least, till he knew him, and Mrs. March apparently could not imagine even this.

I do not know why I should have prefigured Miss Gage's father as tall and lank. She was not herself so very tall, though she was rather tall than short, and though she was rather of the Diana or girlish type of goddess, she was by no means lank. Yet it was in this shape that I had always thought of him, perhaps through an obscure association with his fellow-villager, Deering. I had fancied him saturnine of spirit, slovenly of dress, and lounging of habit, upon no authority that I could allege, and I was wholly unprepared for the neat, small figure of a man, very precise of manner and scrupulous of aspect, who said, "How do you do, sir? I hope I see you well, sir," when his daughter presented us to each other, the morning after the eventful day described, and he shook my hand with his very small, dry hand.

I could not make out from their manner with each other whether they had been speaking of the great matter in hand or not. I am rather at a loss about people of that Philistine make as to what their procedure will be in circumstances where I know just what people of my own sort of sophistication would do. These would come straight at the trouble, but I fancy that with the other sort the convention is a preliminary reserve. I found Mr. Gage disposed to prolong, with me at least, a discussion of the weather, and the aspects of

Saratoga, the events of his journey from De Witt Point, and the hardship of having to ride all the way to Mooer's Junction in a stage-coach. I felt more and more, while we bandied these futilities, as if Mr. Gage had an overdue note of mine, and was waiting for me, since I could not pay it, to make some proposition toward its renewal; and he did really tire me out at last, so that I said, "Well, Mr. Gage, I suppose Miss Gage has told you something of the tremendous situation that has developed itself here?"

I thought I had better give the affair such smiling character as a jocose treatment might impart, and the dry little man twinkled up responsively so far as manner was concerned. "Well, yes, yes. There has been some talk of it between us," and again he left the word to me.

"Mrs. March urged your daughter to send for you at once because that was the right and fit thing to do, and because we felt that the affair had now quite transcended our powers, such as they were, and nobody could really cope with it but yourself. I hope you were not unduly alarmed by the summons?"

"Not at all. She said in the despatch that she was not sick. I had been anticipating a short visit to Saratoga for some days, and my business was in a shape so that I could leave."

"Oh!" I said vaguely, "I am very glad. Mrs. March felt, as I did, that circumstances had given us a certain obligation in regard to Miss Gage, and we were anxious to discharge it faithfully and to the utmost. We should have written to you, summoned you, before, if we could have supposed--or been sure; but you know these things go on so obscurely, and we acted at the very first possible moment. I wish you to understand that. We talked it over a great deal, and I hope you will believe that we studied throughout--that we were most solicitous from beginning to end for Miss Gage's happiness, and that if we could have foreseen or imagined--if we could have taken any steps--I trust you will believe--" I was furious at myself for being so confoundedly apologetic, for I was thinking all the time of the bother and affliction we had had with the girl; and there sat that little wooden image accepting my self-inculpations, and apparently demanding more of me; but I could not help going on in the same strain: "We felt especially bound in the matter, from the fact that Mr. Kendricks was a personal friend of ours, whom we are very fond of, and we both are very anxious that you should not suppose that we promoted, or that we were not most vigilant--that we were for a moment forgetful of your rights in such an affair--"

I stopped, and Mr. Gage passed his hand across his little meagre, smiling mouth.

"Then he is not a connection of yours, Mr. March?"

"Bless me, no!" I said in great relief; "we are not so swell as that." And I tried to give him some notion of Kendricks's local

quality, repeating a list of agglutinated New York surnames to which his was more or less affiliated. They always amuse me, those names, which more than any in the world give the notion of social straining; but I doubt if they affected the imagination of Mr. Gage, either in this way or in the way I meanly meant them to affect him.

"And what did you say his business was?" he asked, with that implication of a previous statement on your part which some people think it so clever to make when they question you.

I always hate it, and I avenged myself by answering simply, "Bless my soul, he has no business!" and letting him take up the word now or not, as he liked.

"Then he is a man of independent means?"

I could not resist answering, "Independent means? Kendricks has no means whatever." But having dealt this blow, I could add, "I believe his mother has some money. They are people who live comfortably"

"Then he has no profession?" asked Mr. Gage, with a little more stringency in his smile.

"I don't know whether you will call it a profession. He is a writer."

"Ah!" Mr. Gage softly breathed. "Does he write for your--paper?"

I noted that as to the literary technicalities he seemed not to be much more ignorant than Kendricks's own family, and I said, tolerantly, "Yes; he writes for our magazine."

"Magazine--yes; I beg your pardon," he interrupted.

"And for any others where he can place his material."

This apparently did not convey any very luminous idea to Mr. Gage's mind, and he asked after a moment, "What kind of things does he write?"

"Oh, stories, sketches, poems, reviews, essays--almost anything, in fact."

The light left his face, and I perceived that I had carried my revenge too far, at least for Kendricks's advantage, and I determined to take a new departure at the first chance. The chance did not come immediately.

"And can a man support a wife by that kind of writing?" asked Mr. Gage.

I laughed uneasily. "Some people do. It depends upon how much of

it he can sell. It depends upon how handsomely a wife wishes to be supported. The result isn't usually beyond the dreams of avarice," I said, with a desperate levity.

"Excuse me," returned the little man. "Do you live in that way? By your writings?"

"No," I said with some state, which I tried to subdue; "I am the editor of Every Other Week, and part owner. Mr. Kendricks is merely a contributor."

"Ah," he breathed again. "And if he were successful in selling his writings, how much would he probably make in a year?"

"In a year?" I repeated, to gain time. "Mr. Kendricks is comparatively a beginner. Say fifteen hundred--two thousand--twenty-five hundred."

"And that would not go very far in New York."

"No; that would not go far in New York." I was beginning to find a certain pleasure in dealing so frankly with this hard little man. I liked to see him suffer, and I could see that he did suffer; he suffered as a father must who learns that from a pecuniary point of view his daughter is imprudently in love. Why should we always regard such a sufferer as a comic figure? He is, if we think of it rightly, a most serious, even tragical figure, and at all events a most respectable figure. He loves her, and his heart is torn between the wish to indulge her and the wish to do what will be finally best for her. Why should our sympathies, in such a case, be all for the foolish young lovers? They ought in great measure to be for the father, too. Something like a smote me, and I was ashamed in my pleasure.

"Then I should say, Mr. March, that this seems a most undesirable engagement for my daughter. What should you say? I ask you to make the case your own."

"Excuse me," I answered; "I would much rather not make the case my own, Mr. Gage, and I must decline to have you consult me. I think that in this matter I have done all that I was called upon to do. I have told you what I know of Mr. Kendricks's circumstances and connections. As to his character, I can truly say that he is one of the best men I ever knew. I believe in his absolute purity of heart, and he is the most unselfish, the most generous--"

Mr. Gage waved the facts aside with his hand. "I don't undervalue those things. If I could be master, no one should have my girl without them. But they do not constitute a livelihood. From what you tell me of Mr. Kendricks's prospects, I am not prepared to say that I think the outlook is brilliant. If he has counted upon my supplying a deficiency--"

"Oh, excuse me, Mr. Gage! Your insinuation--"

"Excuse ME!" he retorted. "I am making no insinuation. I merely wish to say that, while my means are such as to enable me to live in comfort at De Witt Point, I am well aware that much more would be needed in New York to enable my daughter to live in the same comfort. I'm not willing she should live in less. I think it is my duty to say that I am not at all a rich man, and if there has been any supposition that I am so, it is a mistake that cannot be corrected too soon."

This time I could not resent his insinuation, for since he had begun to speak I had become guiltily aware of having felt a sort of ease in regard to Kendricks's modesty of competence from a belief, given me, I suspect, by the talk of Deering, that Mr. Gage had plenty of money, and could come to the rescue in any amount needed. I could only say, "Mr. Gage, all this is so far beyond my control that I ought not to allow you to say it to me. It is something that you must say to Mr. Kendricks."

As I spoke I saw the young fellow come round the corner of the street, and mount the hotel steps. He did not see me, for he did not look toward the little corner of lawn where Mr. Gage and I had put our chairs for the sake of the morning shade, and for the seclusion that the spot afforded us. It was at the angle of the house farthest from our peculiar corner of the piazza, whither I had the belief that the girl had withdrawn when she left me to her father. I was sure that Kendricks would seek her there, far enough beyond eyeshot or earshot of us, and I had no doubt that she was expecting him.

"You are Mr. Kendricks's friend--"

"I have tried much more to be Miss Gage's friend; and Mrs. March--" It came into my mind that she was most selfishly and shamelessly keeping out of the way, and I could not go on and celebrate her magnanimous impartiality, her eager and sleepless vigilance.

"I have no doubt of that," said the little man, "and I am very much obliged to you for all the trouble you have taken on my daughter's account. But you are his friend, and I can speak to you much more fully and frankly than I could to him."

I did not know just what to say to this, and he went on: "In point of fact, I don't think that I shall speak to him at all."

"That is quite your affair, my dear sir," I said dryly. "It isn't to be supposed that you would seek an interview with him."

"And if he seeks an interview with me, I shall decline it." He looked at me defiantly and yet interrogatively. I could see that he was very angry, and yet uncertain.

"I must say, then, Mr. Gage, that I don't think you would be right."

"How, not right?"

"I should say that in equity he had a full and perfect right to meet you, and to talk this matter over with you. He has done you no wrong whatever in admiring your daughter, and wishing to marry her. It's for you and her to decide whether you will let him. But as far as his wish goes, and his expression of it to her, he is quite within his rights. You must see that yourself."

"I consider," he answered, "that he has done me a wrong in that very thing. A man without means, or any stated occupation, he had no business to speak to my daughter without speaking to me. He took advantage of the circumstances. What does he think? Does he suppose I am MADE of money? Does he suppose I want to support a son-in-law? I can tell you that if I were possessed of unlimited means, I should not do it." I began to suspect that Deering was nearer right, after all, in his representations of the man's financial ability; I fancied something of the anxiety, the tremor of avarice, in his resentment of poor Kendricks's possible, or rather impossible, designs upon his pocket. "If he had any profession, or any kind of business, I should feel differently, and I should be willing to assist him to a reasonable degree; or if he had a business training, I might take him in with me; but as it is, I should have a helpless burden on my hands, and I can tell you I am not going in for that sort of thing. I shall make short work of it. I shall decline to meet Mr. Hendricks, or Kendricks, and I shall ask you to say as much to him from me."

"And I shall decline to be the bearer of any such message from you, Mr. Gage," I answered, and I saw, not without pleasure, the bewilderment that began to mix with his arrogance.

"Very well, then, sir," he answered, after a moment; "I shall simply take my daughter away with me, and that will end it."

The prim little, grim little man looked at me with his hard eyes, and set his lips so close that the beard on the lower one stuck out at me with a sort of additional menace I felt that he was too capable of doing what he said, and I lost myself in a sense of his sordidness, a sense which was almost without a trace of compassion.

It seemed as if I were a long time under the spell of this, and the sight of his repugnant face; but it could really have been merely a moment, when I heard a stir of drapery on the grass near us, and the soft, rich voice of Miss Gage saying, "Papa!"

We both started to our feet. I do not know whether she had heard what he said or not. We had spoken low, and in the utmost vehemence of his speech he did not lift his voice. In any case, she did not heed what he said.

"Papa," she repeated, "I want you to come up and see Mrs. March on the piazza. And--Mr. Kendricks is there."

I had a wild desire to laugh at what followed, and yet it was not without its pathos. "I--I--hm! hm! I--cannot see Mr. Kendricks just at present. I--the fact is, I do not want to see him. It is better--not. I think you had better get ready to go home with me at once, daughter. I--hm!--cannot approve of any engagement to Mr. Kendricks, and I--prefer not to meet him." He stopped.

Miss Gage said nothing, and I cannot say that she looked anything. She simply CLOUDED UP, if I may so express the effect that came and remained upon her countenance, which was now the countenance she had shown me the first evening I saw her, when I saw the Deerings cowering in its shadow. I had no need to look at the adamantine little man before her to know that he was softening into wax, and, in fact, I felt a sort of indecency in beholding his inteneration, for I knew that it came from his heart, and had its consecration through his love for her.

That is why I turned away, and do not know to this moment just how the change she desired in him was brought about. I will not say that I did not look back from a discreet distance, and continue looking until I saw them start away together and move in the direction of that corner of the piazza where Kendricks was waiting with Mrs. March.

It appeared, from her account, that Mr. Gage, with no uncommon show of ill-will, but with merely a natural dryness, suffered Kendricks to be presented to him, and entered upon some preliminary banalities with him, such as he had used in opening a conversation with me. Before these came to a close Mrs. March had thought it well to leave the three together.

Afterward, when we knew the only result that the affair could have, she said, "The girl has a powerful will. I wonder what the mother was like."

"Yes; evidently she didn't get that will from her father. I have still a sense of exhaustion from it in our own case. What do you think it portends for poor Kendricks!"

"Poor Kendricks!" she repeated thoughtfully. "Yes; in that sense I suppose you might call him poor. It isn't an equal thing as far as nature, as character, goes. But isn't it always dreadful to see two people who have made up their minds to get married?"

"It's very common," I suggested.

"That doesn't change the fact, or lessen the risk. She is very beautiful, and now he is in love with her beautiful girlhood. But after a while the girlhood will go."

"And the girl will remain," I said.

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THE LANDLORD AT LION'S HEAD

By William Dean Howells

Part I.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL

In those dim recesses of the consciousness where things have their beginning, if ever things have a beginning, I suppose the origin of this novel may be traced to a fact of a fortnight's sojourn on the western shore of lake Champlain in the summer of 1891. Across the water in the State of Vermont I had constantly before my eyes a majestic mountain form which the earlier French pioneers had named "Le Lion Couchant," but which their plainer-minded Yankee successors preferred to call "The Camel's Hump." It really looked like a sleeping lion; the head was especially definite; and when, in the course of some ten years, I found the scheme for a story about a summer hotel which I had long meant to write, this image suggested the name of 'The Landlord at Lion's Head.' I gave the title to my unwritten novel at once and never wished to change it, but rejoiced in the certainty that, whatever the novel turned out to be, the title could not be better.

I began to write the story four years later, when we were settled for the winter in our flat on Central Park, and as I was a year in doing it, with other things, I must have taken the unfinished manuscript to and from Magnolia, Massachusetts, and Long Beach, Long Island, where I spent the following summer. It was first serialized in Harper's Weekly and in the London Illustrated News, as well as in an Australian newspaper--I forget which one; and it was published as a completed book in 1896.

I remember concerning it a very becoming despair when, at a certain moment in it, I began to wonder what I was driving at. I have always had such moments in my work, and if I cannot fitly boast of them, I can at least own to them in freedom from the pride that goes before a fall. My only resource at such times was to keep working; keep beating harder and harder at the wall which seemed to close me in, till at last I broke through into the daylight beyond. In this case, I had really such a very good grip of my characters that I need not have had the usual fear of their failure to work out their destiny. But even when the thing was done and I carried the completed manuscript to my dear old friend, the

late Henry Loomis Nelson, then editor of the Weekly, it was in more fear of his judgment than I cared to show. As often happened with my manuscript in such exigencies, it seemed to go all to a handful of shrivelled leaves. When we met again and he accepted it for the Weekly, with a handclasp of hearty welcome, I could scarcely gasp out my unfeigned relief. We had talked the scheme of it over together; he had liked the notion, and he easily made me believe, after my first dismay, that he liked the result even better.

I myself liked the hero of the tale more than I have liked worthier men, perhaps because I thought I had achieved in him a true rustic New England type in contact with urban life under entirely modern conditions. What seemed to me my esthetic success in him possibly softened me to his ethical shortcomings; but I do not expect others to share my weakness for Jeff Durgin, whose strong, rough surname had been waiting for his personality ever since I had got it off the side of an ice-cart many years before.

At the time the story was imagined Harvard had been for four years much in the direct knowledge of the author, and I pleased myself in realizing the hero's experience there from even more intimacy with the university moods and manners than had supported me in the studies of an earlier fiction dealing with them. I had not lived twelve years in Cambridge without acquaintance such as even an elder man must make with the undergraduate life; but it is only from its own level that this can be truly learned, and I have always been ready to stand corrected by undergraduate experience. Still, I have my belief that as a jay--the word may now be obsolete--Jeff Durgin is not altogether out of drawing; though this is, of course, the phase of his character which is one of the least important. What I most prize in him, if I may go to the bottom of the inkhorn, is the realization of that anti-Puritan quality which was always vexing the heart of Puritanism, and which I had constantly felt one of the most interesting facts in my observation of New England.

As for the sort of summer hotel portrayed in these pages, it was materialized from an acquaintance with summer hotels extending over quarter of a century, and scarcely to be surpassed if paralleled. I had a passion for knowing about them and understanding their operation which I indulged at every opportunity, and which I remember was satisfied as to every reasonable detail at one of the pleasantest seaside hostelries by one of the most intelligent and obliging of landlords. Yet, hotels for hotels, I was interested in those of the hills rather than those of the shores.

I worked steadily if not rapidly at the story. Often I went back over it, and tore it to pieces and put it together again. It made me feel at times as if I should never learn my trade, but so did every novel I have written; every novel, in fact, has been a new trade. In the case of this one the publishers were hurrying me in the revision for copy to give the illustrator, who was hurrying his pictures for the English and Australian serializations.

KITTERY POINT, MAINE, July, 1909.

THE LANDLORD AT LION'S HEAD

I.

If you looked at the mountain from the west, the line of the summit was wandering and uncertain, like that of most mountain-tops; but, seen from the east, the mass of granite showing above the dense forests of the lower slopes had the form of a sleeping lion. The flanks and haunches were vaguely distinguished from the mass; but the mighty head, resting with its tossed mane upon the vast paws stretched before it, was boldly sculptured against the sky. The likeness could not have been more perfect, when you had it in profile, if it had been a definite intention of art; and you could travel far north and far south before the illusion vanished. In winter the head was blotted by the snows; and sometimes the vagrant clouds caught upon it and deformed it, or hid it, at other seasons; but commonly, after the last snow went in the spring until the first snow came in the fall, the Lion's Head was a part of the landscape, as imperative and importunate as the Great Stone Face itself.

Long after other parts of the hill country were opened to summer sojourn, the region of Lion's Head remained almost primitively solitary and savage. A stony mountain road followed the bed of the torrent that brawled through the valley at its base, and at a certain point a still rougher lane climbed from the road along the side of the opposite height to a lonely farm-house pushed back on a narrow shelf of land, with a meagre acreage of field and pasture broken out of the woods that clothed all the neighboring steeps. The farm-house level commanded the best view of Lion's Head, and the visitors always mounted to it, whether they came on foot, or arrived on buckboards or in buggies, or drove up in the Concord stages from the farther and nearer hotels. The drivers of the coaches rested their horses there, and watered them from the spring that dripped into the green log at the barn; the passengers scattered about the door-yard to look at the Lion's Head, to wonder at it and mock at it, according to their several makes and moods. They could scarcely have felt that they ever had a welcome from the stalwart, handsome woman who sold them milk, if they wanted it, and small cakes of maple sugar if they were very strenuous for something else. The ladies were not able to make much of her from the first; but some of them asked her if it were not rather lonely there, and she said that when you heard the catamounts scream at night, and the bears growl in the spring, it did seem lonesome. When one of them declared that if she should hear a catamount scream or a bear growl she should die, the woman answered, Well, she presumed we must all die some time. But the ladies were not sure of a covert slant in her words, for they were spoken with the same look she wore when she told them that the milk was five cents a glass, and the black maple sugar three cents a cake. She did not change when she owned upon their urgency that the gaunt man whom they glimpsed around the corners of the house was

her husband, and the three lank boys with him were her sons; that the children whose faces watched them through the writhing window panes were her two little girls; that the urchin who stood shyly twisted, all but his white head and sunburned face, into her dress and glanced at them with a mocking blue eye, was her youngest, and that he was three years old. With like coldness of voice and face, she assented to their conjecture that the space walled off in the farther corner of the orchard was the family burial ground; and she said, with no more feeling than the ladies could see than she had shown concerning the other facts, that the graves they saw were those of her husband's family and of the children she had lost there had been ten children, and she had lost four. She did not visibly shrink from the pursuit of the sympathy which expressed itself in curiosity as to the sickness they had died of; the ladies left her with the belief that they had met a character, and she remained with the conviction, briefly imparted to her husband, that they were tonguey.

The summer folks came more and more, every year, with little variance in the impression on either side. When they told her that her maple sugar would sell better if the cake had an image of Lion's Head stamped on it, she answered that she got enough of Lion's Head without wanting to see it on all the sugar she made. But the next year the cakes bore a rude effigy of Lion's Head, and she said that one of her boys had cut the stamp out with his knife; she now charged five cents a cake for the sugar, but her manner remained the same. It did not change when the excursionists drove away, and the deep silence native to the place fell after their chatter. When a cock crew, or a cow lowed, or a horse neighed, or one of the boys shouted to the cattle, an echo retorted from the granite base of Lion's Head, and then she had all the noise she wanted, or, at any rate, all the noise there was most of the time. Now and then a wagon passed on the stony road by the brook in the valley, and sent up its clatter to the farm-house on its high shelf, but there was scarcely another break from the silence except when the coaching-parties came.

The continuous clash and rush of the brook was like a part of the silence, as the red of the farm-house and the barn was like a part of the green of the fields and woods all round them: the black-green of pines and spruces, the yellow-green of maples and birches, dense to the tops of the dreary hills, and breaking like a bated sea around the Lion's Head. The farmer stooped at his work, with a thin, inward-curving chest, but his wife stood straight at hers; and she had a massive beauty of figure and a heavily moulded regularity of feature that impressed such as had eyes to see her grandeur among the summer folks. She was forty when they began to come, and an ashen gray was creeping over the reddish heaps of her hair, like the pallor that overlies the crimson of the autumnal oak. She showed her age earlier than most fair people, but since her marriage at eighteen she had lived long in the deaths of the children she had lost. They were born with the taint of their father's family, and they withered from their cradles. The youngest boy alone; of all her brood, seemed to have inherited her health and strength. The rest as they grew up began to cough, as she had heard her husband's brothers and sisters cough, and then she waited in hapless patience the fulfilment of their doom. The two little girls whose faces the ladies of the first

coaching-party saw at the farm-house windows had died away from them; two of the lank boys had escaped, and in the perpetual exile of California and Colorado had saved themselves alive. Their father talked of going, too, but ten years later he still dragged himself spectrally about the labors of the farm, with the same cough at sixty which made his oldest son at twenty-nine look scarcely younger than himself.

II.

One soft noon in the middle of August the farmer came in from the corn-field that an early frost had blighted, and told his wife that they must give it up. He said, in his weak, hoarse voice, with the catarrhal catching in it, that it was no use trying to make a living on the farm any longer. The oats had hardly been worth cutting, and now the corn was gone, and there was not hay enough without it to winter the stock; if they got through themselves they would have to live on potatoes. Have a vendue, and sell out everything before the snow flew, and let the State take the farm and get what it could for it, and turn over the balance that was left after the taxes; the interest of the savings-bank mortgage would soon eat that up.

The long, loose cough took him, and another cough answered it like an echo from the barn, where his son was giving the horses their feed. The mild, wan-eyed young man came round the corner presently toward the porch where his father and mother were sitting, and at the same moment a boy came up the lane to the other corner; there were sixteen years between the ages of the brothers, who alone were left of the children born into and borne out of the house. The young man waited till they were within whispering distance of each other, and then he gasped: "Where you been?"

The boy answered, promptly, "None your business," and went up the steps before the young man, with a lop-eared, liver-colored mongrel at his heels. He pulled off his ragged straw hat and flung it on the floor of the porch. "Dinner over?" he demanded.

His father made no answer; his mother looked at the boy's hands and face, all of much the same earthen cast, up to the eaves of his thatch of yellow hair, and said: "You go and wash yourself." At a certain light in his mother's eye, which he caught as he passed into the house with his dog, the boy turned and cut a defiant caper. The oldest son sat down on the bench beside his father, and they all looked in silence at the mountain before them. They heard the boy whistling behind the house, with sputtering and blubbery noises, as if he were washing his face while he whistled; and then they heard him singing, with a muffled sound, and sharp breaks from the muffled sound, as if he were singing into the towel; he shouted to his dog and threatened him, and the scuffling of his feet came to them through all as if he were dancing.

"Been after them woodchucks ag'in," his father huskily suggested.

"I guess so," said the mother. The brother did not speak; he coughed vaguely, and let his head sink forward.

The father began a statement of his affairs.

The mother said: "You don't want to go into that; we been all over it before. If it's come to the pinch, now, it's come. But you want to be sure."

The man did not answer directly. "If we could sell off now and get out to where Jim is in Californy, and get a piece of land--" He stopped, as if confronted with some difficulty which he had met before, but had hoped he might not find in his way this time.

His wife laughed grimly. "I guess, if the truth was known, we're too poor to get away."

"We're poor," he whispered back. He added, with a weak obstinacy: "I d'know as we're as poor as that comes to. The things would fetch something."

"Enough to get us out there, and then we should be on Jim's hands," said the woman.

"We should till spring, maybe. I d'know as I want to face another winter here, and I d'know as Jackson does."

The young man gasped back, courageously: "I guess I can get along here well enough."

"It's made Jim ten years younger. That's what he said," urged the father.

The mother smiled as grimly as she had laughed. "I don't believe it 'll make you ten years richer, and that's what you want."

"I don't believe but what we should ha' done something with the place by spring. Or the State would," the father said, lifelessly.

The voice of the boy broke in upon them from behind. "Say, mother, a'n't you never goin' to have dinner?" He was standing in the doorway, with a startling cleanness of the hands and face, and a strange, wet sleekness of the hair. His clothes were bedrabbled down the front with soap and water.

His mother rose and went toward him; his father and brother rose like apparitions, and slanted after her at one angle.

"Say," the boy called again to his mother, "there comes a peddler." He pointed down the road at the figure of a man briskly ascending the lane toward the house, with a pack on his back and some strange appendages dangling from it.

The woman did not look round; neither of the men looked round; they all kept on in-doors, and she said to the boy, as she passed him: "I got no time to waste on peddlers. You tell him we don't want anything."

The boy waited for the figure on the lane to approach. It was the figure of a young man, who slung his burden lightly from his shoulders when he arrived, and then stood looking at the boy, with his foot planted on the lowermost tread of the steps climbing from the ground to the porch.

III.

The boy must have permitted these advances that he might inflict the greater disappointment when he spoke. "We don't want anything," he said, insolently.

"Don't you?" the stranger returned. "I do. I want dinner. Go in and tell your mother, and then show me where I can wash my hands."

The bold ease of the stranger seemed to daunt the boy, and he stood irresolute. His dog came round the corner of the house at the first word of the parley, and, while his master was making up his mind what to do, he smelled at the stranger's legs. "Well, you can't have any dinner," said the boy, tentatively. The dog raised the bristles on his neck, and showed his teeth with a snarl. The stranger promptly kicked him in the jaw, and the dog ran off howling. "Come here, sir!" the boy called to him, but the dog vanished round the house with a fading yelp.

"Now, young man," said the stranger, "will you go and do as you're bid? I'm ready to pay for my dinner, and you can say so." The boy stared at him, slowly taking in the facts of his costume, with eyes that climbed from the heavy shoes up the legs of his thick-ribbed stockings and his knickerbockers, past the pleats and belt of his Norfolk jacket, to the red neckcloth tied under the loose collar of his flannel outing-shirt, and so by his face, with its soft, young beard and its quiet eyes, to the top of his braidless, bandless slouch hat of soft felt. It was one of the earliest costumes of the kind that had shown itself in the hill country, and it was altogether new to the boy. "Come," said the wearer of it, "don't stand on the order of your going, but go at once," and he sat down on the steps with his back to the boy, who heard these strange terms of command with a face of vague envy.

The noonday sunshine lay in a thin, silvery glister on the slopes of the mountain before them, and in the brilliant light the colossal forms of the Lion's Head were prismatically outlined against the speckless sky. Through the silvery veil there burned here and there on the densely wooded acclivities the crimson torch of a maple, kindled before its time, but everywhere else there was the unbroken green of the forest, subdued to one tone of gray. The boy heard the stranger fetch his breath deeply, and then expel it in a long sigh, before he could bring himself to obey an order that seemed to leave him without the choice of disobedience. He

came back and found the stranger as he had left him. "Come on, if you want your dinner," he said; and the stranger rose and looked at him.

"What's your name?" he asked.

"Thomas Jefferson Durgin."

"Well, Thomas Jefferson Durgin, will you show me the way to the pump and bring a towel along?"

"Want to wash?"

"I haven't changed my mind."

"Come along, then." The boy made a movement as if to lead the way indoors; the stranger arrested him.

"Here. Take hold of this and put it out of the rush of travel somewhere." He lifted his burden from where he had dropped it in the road and swung it toward the boy, who ran down the steps and embraced it. As he carried it toward a corner of the porch he felt of the various shapes and materials in it.

Then he said, "Come on!" again, and went before the guest through the dim hall running midway of the house to the door at the rear. He left him on a narrow space of stone flagging there, and ran with a tin basin to the spring at the barn and brought it back to him full of the cold water.

"Towel," he said, pulling at the family roller inside the little porch at the door; and he watched the stranger wash his hands and face, and then search for a fresh place on the towel.

Before the stranger had finished the father and the elder brother came out, and, after an ineffectual attempt to salute him, slanted away to the barn together. The woman, in-doors, was more successful, when he found her in the dining-room, where the boy showed him. The table was set for him alone, and it affected him as if the family had been hurried away from it that he might have it to himself. Everything was very simple: the iron forks had two prongs; the knives bone handles; the dull glass was pressed; the heavy plates and cups were white, but so was the cloth, and all were clean. The woman brought in a good boiled dinner of corned-beef, potatoes, turnips, and carrots from the kitchen, and a teapot, and said something about having kept them hot on the stove for him; she brought him a plate of biscuit fresh from the oven; then she said to the boy, "You come out and have your dinner with me, Jeff," and left the guest to make his meal unmolested.

The room was square, with two north windows that looked down the lane he had climbed to the house. An open door led into the kitchen in an ell, and a closed door opposite probably gave access to a parlor or a ground-floor chamber. The windows were darkened down to the lower sash by green paper shades; the walls were papered in a pattern of brown roses; over

the chimney hung a large picture, a life-size pencil-drawing of two little girls, one slightly older and slightly larger than the other, each with round eyes and precise ringlets, and with her hand clasped in the other's hand.

The guest seemed helpless to take his gaze from it, and he sat fallen back in his chair at it when the woman came in with a pie.

"Thank you, I believe I don't want any dessert," he said. "The fact is, the dinner was so good that I haven't left any room for pie. Are those your children?"

"Yes," said the woman, looking up at the picture with the pie in her hand. "They're the last two I lost."

"Oh, excuse me--" the guest began.

"It's the way they appear in the spirit life. It's a spirit picture."

"Oh, I thought there was something strange about it."

"Well, it's a good deal like the photograph we had taken about a year before they died. It's a good likeness. They say they don't change a great deal at first."

She seemed to refer the point to him for his judgment, but he answered wide of it:

"I came up here to paint your mountain, if you don't mind, Mrs. Durgin-Lion's Head, I mean."

"Oh yes. Well, I don't know as we could stop you if you wanted to take it away." A spare glimmer lighted up her face.

The painter rejoined in kind: "The town might have something to say, I suppose."

"Not if you was to leave a good piece of interval in place of it. We've got mountains to spare."

"Well, then, that's arranged. What about a week's board?"

"I guess you can stay if you're satisfied."

"I'll be satisfied if I can stay. How much do you want?"

The woman looked down, probably with an inward anxiety between the fear of asking too much and the folly of asking too little. She said, tentatively: "Some of the folks that come over from the hotels say they pay as much as twenty dollars a week."

"But you don't expect hotel prices?"

"I don't know as I do. We've never had anybody before."

The stranger relaxed the frown he had put on at the greed of her suggestion; it might have come from ignorance or mere innocence. "I'm in the habit of paying five dollars for farm board, where I stay several weeks. What do you say to seven for a single week?"

"I guess that 'll do," said the woman, and she went out with the pie, which she had kept in her hand.

IV.

The painter went round to the front of the house and walked up and down before it for different points of view. He ran down the lane some way, and then came back and climbed to the sloping field behind the barn, where he could look at Lion's Head over the roof of the house. He tried an open space in the orchard, where he backed against the wall enclosing the little burial-ground. He looked round at it without seeming to see it, and then went back to the level where the house stood. "This is the place," he said to himself. But the boy, who had been lurking after him, with the dog lurking at, his own heels in turn, took the words as a proffer of conversation.

"I thought you'd come to it," he sneered.

"Did you?" asked the painter, with a smile for the unsatisfied grudge in the boy's tone. "Why didn't you tell me sooner?"

The boy looked down, and apparently made up his mind to wait until something sufficiently severe should come to him for a retort. "Want I should help you get your things?" he asked, presently.

"Why, yes," said the painter, with a glance of surprise. "I shall be much obliged for a lift." He started toward the porch where his burden lay, and the boy ran before him. They jointly separated the knapsack from the things tied to it, and the painter let the boy carry the easel and campstool which developed themselves from their folds and hinges, and brought the colors and canvas himself to the spot he had chosen. The boy looked at the tag on the easel after it was placed, and read the name on it--Jere Westover. "That's a funny name."

"I'm glad it amuses you," said the owner of it.

Again the boy cast down his eyes discomfited, and seemed again resolving silently to bide his time and watch for another chance.

Westover forgot him in the fidget he fell into, trying this and that effect, with his head slanted one way and then slanted the other, his hand held up to shut out the mountain below the granite mass of Lion's Head, and then changed to cut off the sky above; and then both hands

lifted in parallel to confine the picture. He made some tentative scrawls on his canvas in charcoal, and he wasted so much time that the light on the mountain-side began to take the rich tone of the afternoon deepening to evening. A soft flush stole into it; the sun dipped behind the top south of the mountain, and Lion's Head stood out against the intense clearness of the west, which began to be flushed with exquisite suggestions of violet and crimson.

"Good Lord!" said Westover; and he flew at his colors and began to paint. He had got his canvas into such a state that he alone could have found it much more intelligible than his palette, when he heard the boy saying, over his shoulder: "I don't think that looks very much like it." He had last been aware of the boy sitting at the grassy edge of the lane, tossing small bits of earth and pebble across to his dog, which sat at the other edge and snapped at them. Then he lost consciousness of him. He answered, dreamily, while he found a tint he was trying for with his brush: "Perhaps you don't know." He was so sure of his effect that the popular censure speaking in the boy's opinion only made him happier in it.

"I know what I see," said the boy.

"I doubt it," said Westover, and then he lost consciousness of him again. He was rapt deep and far into the joy of his work, and had no thought but for that, and for the dim question whether it would be such another day to-morrow, with that light again on Lion's Head, when he was at last sensible of a noise that he felt he must have been hearing some time without noting it. It was a lamentable, sound of screaming, as of some one in mortal terror, mixed with wild entreaties. "Oh, don't, Jeff! Oh, don't, don't, don't! Oh, please! Oh, do let us be! Oh, Jeff, don't!"

Westover looked round bewildered, and not able, amid the clamor of the echoes, to make out where the cries came from. Then, down at the point where the lane joined the road to the southward and the road lost itself in the shadow of a woodland, he saw the boy leaping back and forth across the track, with his dog beside him; he was shouting and his dog barking furiously; those screams and entreaties came from within the shadow. Westover plunged down the lane headlong, with a speed that gathered at each bound, and that almost flung him on his face when he reached the level where the boy and the dog were dancing back and forth across the road. Then he saw, crouching in the edge of the wood, a little girl, who was uttering the appeals he had heard, and clinging to her, with a face of frantic terror, a child of five or six years; her cries had grown hoarse, and had a hard, mechanical action as they followed one another. They were really in no danger, for the boy held his dog tight by his collar, and was merely delighting himself with their terror.

The painter hurled himself upon him, and, with a quick grip upon his collar, gave him half a dozen flat-handed blows wherever he could plant them and then flung him reeling away.

"You infernal little ruffian!" he roared at him; and the sound of his

voice was enough for the dog; he began to scale the hill-side toward the house without a moment's stay.

The children still crouched together, and Westover could hardly make them understand that they were in his keeping when he bent over them and bade them not be frightened. The little girl set about wiping the child's eyes on her apron in a motherly fashion; her own were dry enough, and Westover fancied there was more of fury than of fright in her face. She seemed lost to any sense of his presence, and kept on talking fiercely to herself, while she put the little boy in order, like an indignant woman.

"Great, mean, ugly thing! I'll tell the teacher on him, that's what I will, as soon as ever school begins. I'll see if he can come round with that dog of his scaring folks! I wouldn't 'a' been a bit afraid if it hadn't 'a' been for Franky. Don't cry any more, Franky. Don't you see they're gone? I presume he thinks it smart to scare a little boy and a girl. If I was a boy once, I'd show him!"

She made no sign of gratitude to Westover: as far as any recognition from her was concerned, his intervention was something as impersonal as if it had been a thunder-bolt falling upon her enemies from the sky.

"Where do you live?" he asked. "I'll go home with you if you'll tell me where you live."

She looked up at him in a daze, and Westover heard the Durgin boy saying: "She lives right there in that little wood-colored house at the other end of the lane. There ain't no call to go home with her."

Westover turned and saw the boy kneeling at the edge of a clump of bushes, where he must have struck; he was rubbing, with a tuft of grass, at the dirt ground into the knees of his trousers.

The little, girl turned hawkishly upon him. "Not for anything you can do, Jeff Durgin!"

The boy did not answer.

"There!" she said, giving a final pull and twitch to the dress of her brother, and taking him by the hand tenderly. "Now, come right along, Franky."

"Let me have your other hand," said Westover, and, with the little boy between them, they set off toward the point where the lane joined the road on the northward. They had to pass the bushes where Jeff Durgin was crouching, and the little girl turned and made a face at him. "Oh, oh! I don't think I should have done that," said Westover.

"I don't care!" said the little girl. But she said, in explanation and partial excuse: "He tries to scare all the girls. I'll let him know 't he can't scare one!"

Westover looked up toward the Durgin house with a return of interest in

the canvas he had left in the lane on the easel. Nothing had happened to it. At the door of the barn he saw the farmer and his eldest son slanting forward and staring down the hill at the point he had come from. Mrs. Durgin was looking out from the shelter of the porch, and she turned and went in with Jeff's dog at her skirts when Westover came in sight with the children.

V.

Westover had his tea with the family, but nothing was said or done to show that any of them resented or even knew of what had happened to the boy from him. Jeff himself seemed to have no grudge. He went out with Westover, when the meal was ended, and sat on the steps of the porch with him, watching the painter watch the light darken on the lonely heights and in the lonely depths around. Westover smoked a pipe, and the fire gleamed and smouldered in it regularly with his breathing; the boy, on a lower step, pulled at the long ears of his dog and gazed up at him.

They were both silent till the painter asked: "What do you do here when you're not trying to scare little children to death?"

The boy hung his head and said, with the effect of excusing a long arrears of uselessness: "I'm goin' to school as soon as it commences."

"There's one branch of your education that I should like to undertake if I ever saw you at a thing like that again. Don't you feel ashamed of yourself?"

The boy pulled so hard at the dog's ear that the dog gave a faint yelp of protest.

"They might 'a' seen that I had him by the collar. I wa'n't a-goin' to let go."

"Well, the next time I have you by the collar I won't let go, either," said the painter; but he felt an inadequacy in his threat, and he imagined a superfluity, and he made some haste to ask: "who are they?"

"Whitwell is their name. They live in that little house where you took them. Their father's got a piece of land on Zion's Head that he's clearin' off for the timber. Their mother's dead, and Cynthia keeps house. She's always makin' up names and faces," added the boy. "She thinks herself awful smart. That Franky's a perfect cry-baby."

"Well, upon my word! You are a little ruffian," said Westover, and he knocked the ashes out of his pipe. "The next time you meet that poor little creature you tell her that I think you're about the shabbiest chap I know, and that I hope the teacher will begin where I left off with you and not leave blackguard enough in you to--"

He stopped for want of a fitting figure, and the boy said: "I guess the teacher won't touch me."

Westover rose, and the boy flung his dog away from him with his foot. "Want I should show you where to sleep?"

"Yes," said Westover, and the boy hulked in before him, vanishing into the dark of the interior, and presently appeared with a lighted hand-lamp. He led the way upstairs to a front room looking down upon the porch roof and over toward Zion's Head, which Westover could see dimly outlined against the night sky, when he lifted the edge of the paper shade and peered out.

The room was neat, with greater comfort in its appointments than he hoped for. He tried the bed, and found it hard, but of straw, and not the feathers he had dreaded; while the boy looked into the water-pitcher to see if it was full; and then went out without any form of goodnight.

Westover would have expected to wash in a tin basin at the back door, and wipe on the family towel, but all the means of toilet, such as they were, he found at hand here, and a surprise which he had felt at a certain touch in the cooking renewed itself at the intelligent arrangements for his comfort. A secondary quilt was laid across the foot of his bed; his window-shade was pulled down, and, though the window was shut and the air stuffy within, there was a sense of cleanliness in everything which was not at variance with the closeness.

The bed felt fresh when he got into it, and the sweet breath of the mountains came in so cold through the sash he had lifted that he was glad to pull the secondary quilt up over him. He heard the clock tick in some room below; from another quarter came the muffled sound of coughing; but otherwise the world was intensely still, and he slept deep and long.

VI.

The men folks had finished their breakfast and gone to their farm-work hours before Westover came down to his breakfast, but the boy seemed to be of as much early leisure as himself, and was lounging on the threshold of the back door, with his dog in waiting upon him. He gave the effect of yesterday's cleanliness freshened up with more recent soap and water. At the moment Westover caught sight of him, he heard his mother calling to him from the kitchen, "Well, now, come in and get your breakfast, Jeff," and the boy called to Westover, in turn, "I'll tell her you're here," as he rose and came in-doors. "I guess she's got your breakfast for you."

Mrs. Durgin brought the breakfast almost as soon as Westover had found his way to the table, and she lingered as if for some expression of his opinion upon it. The biscuit and the butter were very good, and he said so; the eggs were fresh, and the hash from yesterday's corned-beef could

not have been better, and he praised them; but he was silent about the coffee.

"It a'n't very good," she suggested.

"Why, I'm used to making my own coffee; I lived so long in a country where it's nearly the whole of breakfast that I got into the habit of it, and I always carry my little machine with me; but I don't like to bring it out, unless--"

"Unless you can't stand the other folks's," said the woman, with a humorous gleam. "Well, you needn't mind me. I want you should have good coffee, and I guess I a'n't too old to learn, if you want to show me. Our folks don't care for it much; they like tea; and I kind of got out of the way of it. But at home we had to have it." She explained, to his inquiring glance.

"My father kept the tavern on the old road to St. Albans, on the other side of Lion's Head. That's where I always lived till I married here."

"Oh," said Westover, and he felt that she had proudly wished to account for a quality which she hoped he had noticed in her cooking. He thought she might be going to tell him something more of herself, but she only said, "Well, any time you want to show me your way of makin' coffee," and went out of the room.

That evening, which was the close of another flawless day, he sat again watching the light outside, when he saw her come into the hallway with a large shade-lamp in her hand. She stopped at the door of a room he had not seen yet, and looked out at him to ask:

"Won't you come in and set in the parlor if you want to?"

He found her there when he came in, and her two sons with her; the younger was sleepily putting away some school-books, and the elder seemed to have been helping him with his lessons.

"He's got to begin school next week," she said to Westover; and at the preparations the other now began to make with a piece of paper and a planchette which he had on the table before him, she asked, in the half-mocking, half-deprecating way which seemed characteristic of her: "You believe any in that?"

"I don't know that I've ever seen it work," said the painter.

"Well, sometimes it won't work," she returned, altogether mockingly now, and sat holding her shapely hands, which were neither so large nor so rough as they might have been, across her middle and watching her son while the machine pushed about under his palm, and he bent his wan eyes upon one of the oval-framed photographs on the wall, as if rapt in a supernal vision. The boy stared drowsily at the planchette, jerking this way and that, and making abrupt starts and stops. At last the young man lifted his palm from it, and put it aside to study the hieroglyphics it

had left on the paper.

"What's it say?" asked his mother.

The young man whispered: "I can't seem to make out very clear. I guess I got to take a little time to it," he added, leaning back wearily in his chair. "Ever seen much of the manifestations?" he gasped at Westover.

"Never any, before," said the painter, with a leniency for the invalid which he did not feel for his belief.

The young man tried for his voice, and found enough of it to say: "There's a trance medium over at the Huddle. Her control says 't I can develop into a writin' medium." He seemed to refer the fact as a sort of question to Westover, who could think of nothing to say but that it must be very interesting to feel that one had such a power.

"I guess he don't know he's got it yet," his mother interposed. "And planchette don't seem to know, either."

"We ha'n't given it a fair trial yet," said the young man, impartially, almost impassively.

"Wouldn't you like to see it do some of your sums, Jeff?" said the mother to the drowsy boy, blinking in a corner. "You better go to bed."

The elder brother rose. "I guess I'll go, too."

The father had not joined their circle in the parlor, now breaking up by common consent.

Mrs. Durgin took up her lamp again and looked round on the appointments of the room, as if she wished Westover to note them, too: the drab wallpaper, the stiff chairs, the long, hard sofa in haircloth, the high bureau of mahogany veneer.

"You can come in here and set or lay down whenever you feel like it," she said. "We use it more than folks generally, I presume; we got in the habit, havin' it open for funerals."

VII.

Four or five days of perfect weather followed one another, and Westover worked hard at his picture in the late afternoon light he had chosen for it. In the morning he tramped through the woods and climbed the hills with Jeff Durgin, who seemed never to do anything about the farm, and had a leisure unbroken by anything except a rare call from his mother to help her in the house. He built the kitchen fire, and got the wood for it; he picked the belated pease and the early beans in the garden, and shelled them; on the Monday when the school opened he did a share of the

family wash, which seemed to have been begun before daylight, and Westover saw him hanging out the clothes before he started off with his books. He suffered no apparent loss of self-respect in these employments, and, while he still had his days free, he put himself at Westover's disposal with an effect of unimpaired equality. He had expected, evidently, that Westover would want to fish or shoot, or at least join him in the hunt for woodchucks, which he still carried on with abated zeal for lack of his company when the painter sat down to sketch certain bits that struck him. When he found that Westover cared for nothing in the way of sport, as people commonly understand it, he did not openly condemn him. He helped him get the flowers he studied, and he learned to know true mushrooms from him, though he did not follow his teaching in eating the toadstools, as his mother called them, when they brought them home to be cooked.

If it could not be said that he shared the affection which began to grow up in Westover from their companionship, there could be no doubt of the interest he took in him, though it often seemed the same critical curiosity which appeared in the eye of his dog when it dwelt upon the painter. Fox had divined in his way that Westover was not only not to be molested, but was to be respectfully tolerated, yet no gleam of kindness ever lighted up his face at sight of the painter; he never wagged his tail in recognition of him; he simply recognized him and no more, and he remained passive under Westover's advances, which he had the effect of covertly referring to Jeff, when the boy was by, for his approval or disapproval; when he was not by, the dog's manner implied a reservation of opinion until the facts could be submitted to his master.

On the Saturday morning which was the last they were to have together, the three comrades had strayed from the vague wood road along one of the unexpected levels on the mountain slopes, and had come to a standstill in a place which the boy pretended not to know his way out of. Westover doubted him, for he had found that Jeff liked to give himself credit for woodcraft by discovering an escape from the depths of trackless wildernesses.

"I guess you know where we are," he suggested.

"No, honestly," said the boy; but he grinned, and Westover still doubted him.

"Hark! What's that?" he said, hushing further speech from him with a motion of his hand. It was the sound of an axe.

"Oh, I know where we are," said Jeff. "It's that Canuck chopping in Whitwell's clearing. Come along."

He led the way briskly down the mountain-side now, stopping from time to time and verifying his course by the sound of the axe. This came and went, and by-and-by it ceased altogether, and Jeff crept forward with a real or feigned uncertainty. Suddenly he stopped. A voice called, "Heigh, there!" and the boy turned and fled, crashing through the underbrush at a tangent, with his dog at his heels.

Westover looked after them, and then came forward. A lank figure of a man at the foot of a poplar, which he had begun to fell, stood waiting him, one hand on his axe-helve and the other on his hip. There was the scent of freshly smitten bark and sap-wood in the air; the ground was paved with broad, clean chips.

"Good-morning," said Westover.

"How are you?" returned the other, without moving or making any sign of welcome for a moment. But then he lifted his axe and struck it into the carf on the tree, and came to meet Westover.

As he advanced he held out his hand. "Oh, you're the one that stopped that fellow that day when he was tryin' to scare my children. Well, I thought I should run across you some time." He shook hands with Westover, in token of the gratitude which did not express itself in words. "How are you? Treat you pretty well up at the Durgins'? I guess so. The old woman knows how to cook, anyway. Jackson's about the best o' the lot above ground, though I don't know as I know very much against the old man, either. But that boy! I declare I 'most feel like takin' the top of his head off when he gets at his tricks. Set down."

Whitwell, as Westover divined the man to be, took a seat himself on a high stump, which suited his length of leg, and courteously waved Westover to a place on the log in front of him. A long, ragged beard of brown, with lines of gray in it, hung from his chin and mounted well up on his thin cheeks toward his friendly eyes. His mustache lay sunken on his lip, which had fallen in with the loss of his upper teeth. From the lower jaw a few incisors showed at this slant and that as he talked.

"Well, well!" he said, with the air of wishing the talk to go on, but without having anything immediately to offer himself.

Westover said, "Thank you," as he dropped on the log, and Whitwell added, relentingly: "I don't suppose a fellow's so much to blame, if he's got the devil in him, as what the devil is."

He referred the point with a twinkle of his eyes to Westover, who said: "It's always a question, of course, whether it's the devil. It may be original sin with the fellow himself."

"Well, that's something so," said Whitwell, with pleasure in the distinction rather than assent. "But I guess it ain't original sin in the boy. Got it from his gran'father pooty straight, I should say, and maybe the old man had it secondhand. Ha'd to say just where so much cussedness gits statted."

"His father's father?" asked Westover, willing to humor Whitwell's evident wish to philosophize the Durgins' history.

"Mother's. He kept the old tavern stand on the west side of Lion's Head, on the St. Albans Road, and I guess he kept a pooty good house in the

old times when the stages stopped with him. Ever noticed how a man on the mean side in politics always knows how to keep a hotel? Well, it's something curious. If there was ever a mean side to any question, old Mason was on it. My folks used to live around there, and I can remember when I was a boy hangin' around the bar-room nights hearin' him argue that colored folks had no souls; and along about the time the fugitive-slave law was passed the folks pooty near run him out o' town for puttin' the United States marshal on the scent of a fellow that was breakin' for Canada. Well, it was just so when the war come. It was known for a fact that he was in with them Secesh devils up over the line that was plannin' a raid into Vermont in '63. He'd got pooty low down by that time; railroads took off all the travel; tavern 'd got to be a regular doggery; old man always drank some, I guess. That was a good while after his girl had married Durgin. He was dead against it, and it broke him up consid'able when she would have him: Well, one night the old stand burnt up and him in it, and neither of 'em insured."

Whitwell laughed with a pleasure in his satire which gave the monuments in his lower jaw a rather sinister action. But, as if he felt a rebuke in Westover's silence, he added: "There ain't anything against Mis' Durgin. She's done her part, and she's had more than her share of hard knocks. If she was tough, to sta't with, she's had blows enough to meller her. But that's the way I account for the boy. I s'pose--I'd oughtn't to feel the way I do about him, but he's such a pest to the whole neighborhood that he'd have the most pop'la' fune'l. Well, I guess I've said enough. I'm much obliged to you, though, Mr.--"

"Westover," the painter suggested. "But the boy isn't so bad all the time."

"Couldn't be," said Whitwell, with a cackle of humorous enjoyment.

"He has his spells of bein' decent, and he's pooty smart, too. But when the other spell ketches him it's like as if the devil got a-hold of him, as I said in the first place. I lost my wife here two-three years along back, and that little girl you see him tormentin', she's a regular little mother to her brother; and whenever Jeff Durgin sees her with him, seems as if the Old Scratch got into him. Well, I'm glad I didn't come across him that day. How you gittin' along with Lion's Head? Sets quiet enough for you?" Whitwell rose from the stump and brushed the clinging chips from his thighs. "Folks trouble you any, lookin' on?"

"Not yet," said Westover.

"Well, there ain't a great many to," said Whitwell, going back to his axe. "I should like to see you workin' some day. Do' know as I ever saw an attist at it."

"I should like to have you," said Westover. "Any time."

"All right." Whitwell pulled his axe out of the carf, and struck it in again with a force that made a wide, square chip leap out. He looked over his shoulder at Westover, who was moving away. "Say, stop in some time you're passin'. I live in that wood-colored house at the foot of

the Durgins' lane."

VIII.

In a little sunken place, behind a rock, some rods away, Westover found Jeff lurking with his dog, both silent and motionless. "Hello?" he said, inquiringly.

"Come back to show you the way," said the boy. "Thought you couldn't find it alone."

"Oh, why didn't you say you'd wait?" The boy grinned. "I shouldn't think a fellow like you would want to be afraid of any man, even for the fun of scaring a little girl." Jeff stopped grinning and looked interested, as if this was a view of the case that had not occurred to him. "But perhaps you like to be afraid."

"I don't know as I do," said the boy, and Westover left him to the question a great part of the way home. He did not express any regret or promise any reparation. But a few days after that, when he had begun to convoy parties of children up to see Westover at work, in the late afternoon, on their way home from school, and to show the painter off to them as a sort of family property, he once brought the young Whitwells. He seemed on perfect terms with them now, and when the crowd of larger children hindered the little boy's view of the picture, Jeff, in his quality of host, lifted him under his arms and held him up so that he could look as long as he liked.

The girl seemed ashamed of the good understanding before Westover. Jeff offered to make a place for her among the other children who had looked long enough, but she pulled the front of her bonnet across her face and said that she did not want to look, and caught her brother by the hand and ran away with him. Westover thought this charming, somewhat; he liked the intense shyness which the child's intense passion had hidden from him before.

Jeff acted as host to the neighbors who came to inspect the picture, and they all came, within a circuit of several miles around, and gave him their opinions freely or scantily, according to their several temperaments. They were mainly favorable, though there was some frank criticism, too, spoken over the painter's shoulder as openly as if he were not by. There was no question but of likeness; all finer facts were far from them; they wished to see how good a portrait Westover had made, and some of them consoled him with the suggestion that the likeness would come out more when the picture got dry.

Whitwell, when he came, attempted a larger view of the artist's work, but apparently more out of kindness for him than admiration of the picture. He said he presumed you could not always get a thing like that just right the first time, and that you had to keep trying till you did get it; but

it paid in the end. Jeff had stolen down from the house with his dog, drawn by the fascination which one we have injured always has for us; when Whitwell suddenly turned upon him and asked, jocularly, "What do you think, Jeff?" the boy could only kick his dog and drive it home, as a means of hiding his feelings.

He brought the teacher to see the picture the last Friday before the painter went away. She was a cold-looking, austere girl, pretty enough, with eyes that wandered away from the young man, although Jeff used all his arts to make her feel at home in his presence. She pretended to have merely stopped on her way up to see Mrs. Durgin, and she did not venture any comment on the painting; but, when Westover asked something about her school, she answered him promptly enough as to the number and ages and sexes of the school-children. He ventured so far toward a joke with her as to ask if she had much trouble with such a tough subject as Jeff, and she said he could be good enough when he had a mind. If he could get over his teasing, she said, with the air of reading him a lecture, she would not have anything to complain of; and Jeff looked ashamed, but rather of the praise than the blame. His humiliation seemed complete when she said, finally: "He's a good scholar."

On the Tuesday following, Westover meant to go. It was the end of his third week, and it had brought him into September. The weather since he had begun to paint Lion's Head was perfect for his work; but, with the long drought, it had grown very warm. Many trees now had flamed into crimson on the hill-slopes; the yellowing corn in the fields gave out a thin, dry sound as the delicate wind stirred the blades; but only the sounds and sights were autumnal. The heat was oppressive at midday, and at night the cold had lost its edge. There was no dew, and Mrs. Durgin sat out with Westover on the porch while he smoked a final pipe there. She had come to join him for some fixed purpose, apparently, and she called to her boy, "You go to bed, Jeff," as if she wished to be alone with Westover; the men folks were already in bed; he could hear them cough now and then.

"Mr. Westover," the woman began, even as she swept her skirts forward before she sat down, "I want to ask you whether you would let that picture of yours go on part board? I'll give you back just as much as you say of this money."

He looked round and saw that she had in the hand dropped in her lap the bills he had given her after supper.

"Why, I couldn't, very well, Mrs. Durgin--" he began.

"I presume you'll think I'm foolish," she pursued. "But I do want that picture; I don't know when I've ever wanted a thing more. It's just like Lion's Head, the way I've seen it, day in and day out, every summer since I come here thirty-five years ago; it's beautiful!"

"Mrs. Durgin," said Westover, "you gratify me more than I can tell you. I wish--I wish I could let you have the picture. I--I don't know what to say--"

"Why don't you let me have it, then? If we ever had to go away from here--if anything happened to us--it's the one thing I should want to keep and take with me. There! That's the way I feel about it. I can't explain; but I do wish you'd let me have it."

Some emotion which did not utter itself in the desire she expressed made her voice shake in the words. She held out the bank-notes to him, and they rustled with the tremor of her hand.

"Mrs. Durgin, I suppose I shall have to be frank with you, and you mustn't feel hurt. I have to live by my work, and I have to get as much as I can for it--"

"That's what I say. I don't want to beat you down on it. I'll give you whatever you think is right. It's my money, and my husband feels just as I do about it," she urged.

"You don't quite understand," he said, gently. "I expect to have an exhibition of my pictures in Boston this fall, and I hope to get two or three hundred dollars for Lion's Head."

"I've been a proper fool," cried the woman, and she drew in a long breath.

"Oh, don't mind," he begged; "it's all right. I've never had any offer for a picture that I'd rather take than yours. I know the thing can't be altogether bad after what you've said. And I'll tell you what! I'll have it photographed when I get to Boston, and I'll send you a photograph of it."

"How much will that be?" Mrs. Durgin asked, as if taught caution by her offer for the painting.

"Nothing. And if you'll accept it and hang it up here somewhere I shall be very glad."

"Thank you," said Mrs. Durgin, and the meekness, the wounded pride, he fancied in her, touched him.

He did not know at first how to break the silence which she let follow upon her words. At last he said:

"You spoke, just now, about taking it with you. Of course, you don't think of leaving Lion's Head?"

She did not answer for so long a time that he thought she had not perhaps heard him or heeded what he said; but she answered, finally: "We did think of it. The day you come we had about made up our minds to leave."

"Oh!"

"But I've been thinkin' of something since you've been here that I don't

know but you'll say is about as wild as wantin' to buy a three-hundred-dollar picture with a week's board." She gave a short, self-scornful laugh; but it was a laugh, and it relieved the tension.

"It may not be worth any more," he said, glad of the relief.

"Oh, I guess it is," she rejoined, and then she waited for him to prompt her.

"Well?"

"Well, it's this; and I wanted to ask you, anyway. You think there'd be any chance of my gettin' summer folks to come here and board if I was to put an advertisement in a Boston paper? I know it's a lonesome place, and there ain't what you may call attractions. But the folks from the hotels, sometimes, when they ride over in a stage to see the view, praise up the scenery, and I guess it is sightly. I know that well enough; and I ain't afraid but what I can do for boarders as well as some, if not better. What do you think?"

"I think that's a capital idea, Mrs. Durgin."

"It's that or go," she said. "There ain't a livin' for us on the farm any more, and we got to do somethin'. If there was anything else I could do! But I've thought it out and thought it out, and I guess there ain't anything I can do but take boarders--if I can get them."

"I should think you'd find it rather pleasant on some accounts. Your boarders would be company for you," said Westover.

"We're company enough for ourselves," said Mrs. Durgin. "I ain't ever been lonesome here, from the first minute. I guess I had company enough when I was a girl to last me the sort that hotel folks are. I presume Mr. Whitwell spoke to you about my father?"

"Yes; he did, Mrs. Durgin."

"I don't presume he said anything that wa'n't true. It's all right. But I know how my mother used to slave, and how I used to slave myself; and I always said I'd rather do anything than wait on boarders; and now I guess I got to come to it. The sight of summer folks makes me sick! I guess I could 'a' had 'em long ago if I'd wanted to. There! I've said enough." She rose, with a sudden lift of her powerful frame, and stood a moment as if expecting Westover to say something.

He said: "Well, when you've made your mind up, send your advertisement to me, and I'll attend to it for you."

"And you won't forget about the picture?"

"No; I won't forget that."

The next morning he made ready for an early start, and in his

preparations he had the zealous and even affectionate help of Jeff Durgin. The boy seemed to wish him to carry away the best impression of him, or, at least, to make him forget all that had been sinister or unpleasant in his behavior. They had been good comrades since the first evil day; they had become good friends even; and Westover was touched by the boy's devotion at parting. He helped the painter get his pack together in good shape, and he took pride in strapping it on Westover's shoulders, adjusting and readjusting it with care, and fastening it so that all should be safe and snug. He lingered about at the risk of being late for school, as if to see the last of the painter, and he waved his hat to him when Westover looked back at the house from half down the lane. Then he vanished, and Westover went slowly on till he reached that corner of the orchard where the slanting gravestones of the family burial-ground showed above the low wall. There, suddenly, a storm burst upon him. The air rained apples, that struck him on the head, the back, the side, and pelted in violent succession on his knapsack and canvases, camp-stool and easel. He seemed assailed by four or five skilful marksmen, whose missiles all told.

When he could lift his face to look round he heard a shrill, accusing voice, "Oh, Jeff Durgin!" and he saw another storm of apples fly through the air toward the little Whitwell girl, who dodged and ran along the road below and escaped in the direction of the schoolhouse. Then the boy's face showed itself over the top of one of the gravestones, all agrin with joy. He waited and watched Westover keep slowly on, as if nothing had happened, and presently he let some apples fall from his hands and walked slowly back to the house, with his dog at his heels.

When Westover reached the level of the road and the shelter of the woods near Whitwell's house, he unstrapped his load to see how much harm had been done to his picture. He found it unhurt, and before he had got the burden back again he saw Jeff Durgin leaping along the road toward the school-house, whirling his satchel of books about his head and shouting gayly to the girl, now hidden by the bushes at the other end of the lane: "Cynthy! Oh, Cynthy! Wait for me! I want to tell you something!"

IX.

Westover, received next spring the copy for an advertisement from Mrs. Durgin, which she asked to have him put in some paper for her. She said that her son Jackson had written it out, and Westover found it so well written that he had scarcely to change the wording. It offered the best of farm-board, with plenty of milk and eggs, berries and fruit, for five dollars a week at Lion's Head Farm, and it claimed for the farm the merit of the finest view of the celebrated Lion's Head Mountain. It was signed, as her letter was signed, "Mrs. J. M. Durgin," with her post-office address, and it gave Westover as a reference.

The letter was in the same handwriting as the advertisement, which he took to be that of Jackson Durgin. It enclosed a dollar note to pay for

three insertions of the advertisement in the evening Transcript, and it ended, almost casually: "I do not know as you have heard that my husband, James Monroe Durgin, passed to spirit life this spring. My son will help me to run the house."

This death could not move Westover more than it had apparently moved the widow. During the three weeks he had passed under his roof, he had scarcely exchanged three words with James Monroe Durgin, who remained to him an impression of large, round, dull-blue eyes, a stubbly upper lip, and cheeks and chin tagged with coarse, hay-colored beard. The impression was so largely the impression that he had kept of the dull-blue eyes and the gaunt, slanted figure of Andrew Jackson Durgin that he could not be very distinct in his sense of which was now the presence and which the absence. He remembered, with an effort, that the son's beard was straw-colored, but he had to make no effort to recall the robust effect of Mrs. Durgin and her youngest son. He wondered now, as he had often wondered before, whether she knew of the final violence which had avenged the boy for the prolonged strain of repression Jeff had inflicted upon himself during Westover's stay at the farm. After several impulses to go back and beat him, to follow him to school and expose him to the teacher, to write to his mother and tell her of his misbehavior, Westover had decided to do nothing. As he had come off unhurt in person and property, he could afford to be more generously amused than if he had suffered damage in either. The more he thought of the incident, the more he was disposed to be lenient with the boy, whom he was aware of having baffled and subdued by his superior wit and virtue in perhaps intolerable measure. He could not quite make out that it was an act of bad faith; there was no reason to think that the good-natured things the fellow had done, the constant little offices of zeal and friendliness, were less sincere than this violent outbreak.

The letter from Lion's Head Farm brought back his three weeks there very vividly, and made Westover wish he was going there for the summer. But he was going over to France for an indefinite period of work in the only air where he believed modern men were doing good things in the right way. He had a sale in the winter, and he had sold pictures enough to provide the means for this sojourn abroad; though his lion's Head Mountain had not brought the two hundred and fifty or three hundred dollars he had hoped for. It brought only a hundred and sixty; but the time had almost come already when Westover thought it brought too much. Now, the letter from Mrs. Durgin reminded him that he had never sent her the photograph of the picture which he had promised her. He encased the photograph at once, and wrote to her with many avowals of contrition for his neglect, and strong regret that he was not soon to see the original of the painting again. He paid a decent reverence to the bereavement she had suffered, and he sent his regards to all, especially his comrade Jeff, whom he advised to keep out of the apple-orchard.

Five years later Westover came home in the first week of a gasping August, whose hot breath thickened round the Cunarder before she got half-way up the harbor. He waited only to see his pictures through the custom-house, and then he left for the mountains. The mountains meant Lion's Head for him, and eight hours after he was dismounting from the

train at a station on the road which had been pushed through on a new line within four miles of the farm. It was called Lion's Head House now, as he read on the side of the mountain-wagon which he saw waiting at the platform, and he knew at a glance that it was Jeff Durgin who was coming forward to meet him and take his hand-bag.

The boy had been the prophecy of the man in even a disappointing degree. Westover had fancied him growing up to the height of his father and brother, but Jeff Durgin's stalwart frame was notable for strength rather than height. He could not have been taller than his mother, whose stature was above the standard of her sex, but he was massive without being bulky. His chest was deep, his square shoulders broad, his powerful legs bore him with a backward bulge of the calves that showed through his shapely trousers; he caught up the trunks and threw them into the baggage-wagon with a swelling of the muscles on his short, thick arms which pulled his coat-sleeves from his heavy wrists and broad, short hands.

He had given one of these to Westover to shake when they met, but with something conditional in his welcome, and with a look which was not so much furtive as latent. The thatch of yellow hair he used to wear was now cropped close to his skull, which was a sort of dun-color; and it had some drops of sweat along the lighter edge where his hat had shaded his forehead. He put his hat on the seat between himself and Westover, and drove away from the station bareheaded, to cool himself after his bout with the baggage, which was following more slowly in its wagon. There was a good deal of it, and there were half a dozen people--women, of course--going to Lion's Head House. Westover climbed to the place beside Jeff to let them have the other two seats to themselves, and to have a chance of talking; but the ladies had to be quieted in their several anxieties concerning their baggage, and the letters and telegrams they had sent about their rooms, before they settled down to an exchange of apprehensions among themselves, and left Jeff Durgin free to listen to Westover.

"I don't know but I ought to have telegraphed you that I was coming," Westover said; "but I couldn't realize that you were doing things on the hotel scale. Perhaps you won't have room for me?"

"Guess we can put you up," said Jeff.

"No chance of getting my old room, I suppose?"

"I shouldn't wonder. If there's any one in it, I guess mother could change 'em."

"Is that so?" asked Westover, with a liking for being liked, which his tone expressed. "How is your mother?"

Jeff seemed to think a moment before he answered:

"Just exactly the same."

"A little older?"

"Not as I can see."

"Does she hate keeping a hotel as badly as she expected?"

"That's what she says," answered Jeff, with a twinkle. All the time, while he was talking with Westover, he was breaking out to his horses, which he governed with his voice, trotting them up hill and down, and walking them on the short, infrequent levels, in the mountain fashion.

Westover almost feared to ask: "And how is Jackson?"

"First-rate--that is, for him. He's as well as ever he was, I guess, and he don't appear a day older. You've changed some," said Jeff, with a look round at Westover.

"Yes; I'm twenty-nine now, and I wear a heavier beard." Westover noticed that Jeff was clean shaved of any sign of an approaching beard, and artistically he rejoiced in the fellow's young, manly beauty, which was very regular and sculpturesque. "You're about eighteen?"

"Nearer nineteen."

"Is Jackson as much interested in the other world as he used to be?"

"Spirits?"

"Yes."

"I guess he keeps it up with Mr. Whitwell. He don't say much about it at home. He keeps all the books, and helps mother run the house. She couldn't very well get along without him."

"And where do you come in?"

"Well, I look after the transportation," said Jeff, with a nod toward his horses--" when I'm at home, that is. I've been at the Academy in Lovewell the last three winters, and that means a good piece of the summer, too, first and last. But I guess I'll let mother talk to you about that."

"All right," said Westover. "What I don't know about education isn't worth knowing."

Jeff laughed, and said to the off horse, which seemed to know that he was meant: "Get up, there!"

"And Cynthia? Is Cynthia at home?" Westover asked.

"Yes; they're all down in the little wood-colored house yet. Cynthia teaches winters, and summers she helps mother. She has charge of the dining-room."

"Does Franky cry as much as ever?"

"No, Frank's a fine boy. He's in the house, too. Kind of bell-boy."

"And you haven't worked Mr. Whitwell in anywhere?"

"Well, he talks to the ladies, and takes parties of 'em mountain-climbing. I guess we couldn't get along without Mr. Whitwell. He talks religion to 'em." He cast a mocking glance at Westover over his shoulder. "Women seem to like religion, whether they belong to church or not."

Westover laughed and asked: "And Fox? How's Fox?"

"Well," said Jeff, "we had to give Fox away. He was always cross with the boarders' children. My brother was on from Colorado, and he took Fox back with him."

"I didn't suppose," said Westover, "that I should have been sorry to miss Fox. But I guess I shall be."

Jeff seemed to enjoy the implication of his words. "He wasn't a bad dog. He was stupid."

When they arrived at the foot of the lane, mounting to the farm, Westover saw what changes had been made in the house. There were large additions, tasteless and characterless, but giving the rooms that were needed. There was a vulgar modernity in the new parts, expressed with a final intensity in the four-light windows, which are esteemed the last word of domestic architecture in the country. Jeff said nothing as they approached the house, but Westover said: "Well, you've certainly prospered. You're quite magnificent."

They reached the old level in front of the house, artificially widened out of his remembrance, with a white flag-pole planted at its edge, and he looked up at the front of the house, which was unchanged, except that it had been built a story higher back of the old front, and discovered the window of his old room. He could hardly wait to get his greetings over with Mrs. Durgin and Jackson, who both showed a decorous pleasure and surprise at his coming, before he asked:

"And could you let me have my own room, Mrs. Durgin?"

"Why, yes," she said, "if you don't want something a little nicer."

"I don't believe you've got anything nicer," Westover said.

"All right, if you think so," she retorted. "You can have the old room, anyway."

X.

Westover could not have said he felt very much at home on his first sojourn at the farm, or that he had cared greatly for the Durgins. But now he felt very much at home, and as if he were in the hands of friends.

It was toward the close of the afternoon that he arrived, and he went in promptly to the meal that was served shortly after. He found that the farm-house had not evolved so far in the direction of a hotel as to have reached the stage of a late dinner. It was tea that he sat down to, but when he asked if there were not something hot, after listening to a catalogue of the cold meats, the spectacled waitress behind his chair demanded, with the air of putting him on his honor:

"You among those that came this afternoon?"

Westover claimed to be of the new arrivals.

"Well, then, you can have steak or chops and baked potatoes."

He found the steak excellent, though succinct, and he looked round in the distinction it conferred upon him, on the older guests, who were served with cold ham, tongue, and corned-beef. He had expected to be appointed his place by Cynthia Whitwell, but Jeff came to the dining-room with him and showed him to the table he occupied, with an effect of doing him special credit.

From his impressions of the berries, the cream, the toast, and the tea, as well as the steak, he decided that on the gastronomic side there could be no question but the Durgins knew how to keep a hotel; and his further acquaintance with the house and its appointments confirmed him in his belief. All was very simple, but sufficient; and no guest could have truthfully claimed that he was stinted in towels, in water, in lamp-light, in the quantity or quality of bedding, in hooks for clothes, or wardrobe or bureau room. Westover made Mrs. Durgin his sincere compliments on her success as they sat in the old parlor, which she had kept for herself much in its former state, and she accepted them with simple satisfaction.

"But I don't know as I should ever had the courage to try it if it hadn't been for you happening along just when you did," she said.

"Then I'm the founder of your fortunes?"

"If you want to call them fortunes. We don't complain It's been a fight, but I guess we've got the best of it. The house is full, and we're turnin' folks away. I guess they can't say that at the big hotels they used to drive over from to see Lion's Head at the farm." She gave a low, comfortable chuckle, and told Westover of the struggle they had made. It was an interesting story and pathetic, like all stories of human endeavor the efforts of the most selfish ambition have something of this interest; and the struggle of the Durgins had the grace of the wish to keep their

home.

"And is Jeff as well satisfied as the rest?" Westover asked, after other talk and comment on the facts.

"Too much so," said Mrs. Durgin. "I should like to talk with you about Jeff, Mr. Westover; you and him was always such friends."

"Yes," said Westover; "I shall be glad if I can be of use to you."

"Why, it's just this. I don't see why Jeff shouldn't do something besides keep a hotel."

Westover's eyes wandered to the photograph of his painting of Lion's Head which hung over the mantelpiece, in what he felt to be the place of the greatest honor in the whole house, and a sudden fear came upon him that perhaps Jeff had developed an artistic talent in the belief of his family. But he waited silently to hear.

"We did think that before we got through the improvements last spring a year ago we should have to get the savings-bank to put a mortgage on the place; but we had just enough to start the season with, and we thought we would try to pull through. We had a splendid season, and made money, and this year we're doin' so well that I ain't afraid for the future any more, and I want to give Jeff a chance in the world. I want he should go to college."

Westover felt all the boldness of the aspiration, but it was at least not in the direction of art. "Wouldn't you rather miss him in the management?"

"We should, some. But he would be here the best part of the summer, in his vacations, and Jackson and I are full able to run the house without him."

"Jackson seems very well," said Westover, evasively.

"He's better. He's only thirty-four years old. His father lived to be sixty, and he had the same kind. Jeff tell you he had been at Lovewell Academy?"

"Yes; he did."

"He done well there. All his teachers that he ever had," Mrs. Durgin went on, with the mother-pride that soon makes itself tiresome to the listener, "said Jeff done well at school when he had a mind to, and at the Academy he studied real hard. I guess," said Mrs. Durgin, with her chuckle, "that he thought that was goin' to be the end of it. One thing, he had to keep up with Cynthy, and that put him on his pride. You seen Cynthy yet?"

"No. Jeff told me she was in charge of the diningroom."

"I guess I'm in charge of the whole house," said Mrs. Durgin. "Cynthy's the housekeeper, though. She's a fine girl, and a smart girl," said Mrs. Durgin, with a visible relenting from some grudge, "and she'll do well wherever you put her. She went to the Academy the first two winters Jeff did. We've about scooped in the whole Whitwell family. Franky's here, and his father's--well, his father's kind of philosopher to the lady boarders." Mrs. Durgin laughed, and Westover laughed with her. "Yes, I want Jeff should go to college, and I want he should be a lawyer."

Westover did not find that he had anything useful to say to this; so he said: "I've no doubt it's better than being a painter."

"I'm not so sure; three hundred dollars for a little thing like that." She indicated the photograph of his Lion's Head, and she was evidently so proud of it that he reserved for the moment the truth as to the price he had got for the painting. "I was surprised when you sent me a photograph full as big. I don't let every one in here, but a good many of the ladies are artists themselves-amateurs, I guess--and first and last they all want to see it. I guess they'll all want to see you, Mr. Westover. They'll be wild, as they call it, when they know you're in the house. Yes, I mean Jeff shall go to college."

"Bowdoin or Dartmouth?" Westover suggested.

"Well, I guess you'll think I'm about as forth-putting as I was when I wanted you to give me a three-hundred-dollar picture for a week's board."

"I only got a hundred and sixty, Mrs. Durgin," said Westover, conscientiously.

"Well, it's a shame. Any rate, three hundred's the price to all my boarders. My, if I've told that story once, I guess I've told it fifty times!"

Mrs. Durgin laughed at herself jollily, and Westover noted how prosperity had changed her. It had freed her tongue, it has brightened her humor, it had cheered her heart; she had put on flesh, and her stalwart frame was now a far greater bulk than he remembered.

"Well, there," she said, "the long and the short of it is, I want Jeff should go to Harvard."

He commanded himself to say: "I don't see why he shouldn't."

Mrs. Durgin called out, "Come in, Jackson," and Westover looked round and saw the elder son like a gaunt shadow in the doorway. "I've just got where I've told Mr. Westover where I want Jeff should go. It don't seem to have ca'd him off his feet any, either."

"I presume," said Jackson, coming in and sitting lankly down in the feather-cushioned rocking-chair which his mother pushed toward him with her foot, "that the expense would be more at Harvard than it would at the other colleges."

"If you want the best you got to pay for it," said Mrs. Durgin.

"I suppose it would cost more," Westover answered Jackson's conjecture.

"I really don't know much about it. One hears tremendous stories at Boston of the rate of living among the swell students in Cambridge. People talk of five thousand a year, and that sort of thing." Mrs. Durgin shut her lips, after catching her breath. "But I fancy that it's largely talk. I have a friend whose son went through Harvard for a thousand a year, and I know that many fellows do it for much less."

"I guess we can manage to let Jeff have a thousand a year," said Mrs. Durgin, proudly, "and not scrimp very much, either."

She looked at her elder son, who said: "I don't believe but what we could. It's more of a question with me what sort of influence Jeff would come under there. I think he's pretty much spoiled here."

"Now, Jackson!" said his mother.

"I've heard," said Westover, "that Harvard takes the nonsense out of a man. I can't enter into what you say, and it isn't my affair; but in regard to influence at Harvard, it depends upon the set Jeff is thrown with or throws himself with. So, at least, I infer from what I've heard my friend say of his son there. There are hard-working sets, loafing sets, and fast sets; and I suppose it isn't different at Harvard in such matters from other colleges."

Mrs. Durgin looked a little grave. "Of course," she said, "we don't know anybody at Cambridge, except some ladies that boarded with us one summer, and I shouldn't want to ask any favor of them. The trouble would be to get Jeff started right."

Westover surmised a good many things, but in the absence of any confidences from the Durgins he could not tell just how much Jackson meant in saying that Jeff was pretty much spoiled, or how little. At first, from Mrs. Durgin's prompt protest, he fancied that Jackson meant that the boy had been over-indulged by his mother: "I understand," he said, in default of something else to say, "that the requirements at Harvard are pretty severe."

"He's passed his preliminary examinations," said Jackson, with a touch of hauteur, "and I guess he can enter this fall if we should so decide. He'll have some conditions, prob'ly, but none but what he can work off, I guess."

"Then, if you wish to have him go to college, by all means let him go to Harvard, I should say. It's our great university and our oldest. I'm not a college man myself; but, if I were, I should wish to have been a Harvard man. If Jeff has any nonsense in him, it will take it out; and I don't believe there's anything in Harvard, as Harvard, to make him worse."

"That's what we both think," said Jackson.

"I've heard," Westover continued, and he rose and stood while he spoke, "that Harvard's like the world. A man gets on there on the same terms that he gets on in the world. He has to be a man, and he'd better be a gentleman."

Mrs. Durgin still looked serious. "Have you come back to Boston for good now? Do you expect to be there right along?"

"I've taken a studio there. Yes, I expect to be in Boston now. I've taken to teaching, and I fancy I can make a living. If Jeff comes to Cambridge, and I can be of any use--"

"We should be ever so much obliged to you," said his mother, with an air of great relief.

"Not at all. I shall be very glad. Your mountain air is drugging me, Mrs. Durgin. I shall have to say good-night, or I shall tumble asleep before I get upstairs. Oh, I can find the way, I guess; this part of the house seems the same." He got away from them, and with the lamp that Jackson gave him found his way to his room. A few moments later some one knocked at his door, and a boy stood there with a pitcher. "Some ice-water, Mr. Westover?"

"Why, is that you, Franky? I'm glad to see you again. How are you?"

"I'm pretty well," said the boy, shyly. He was a very handsome little fellow of distinctly dignified presence, and Westover was aware at once that here was not a subject for patronage. "Is there anything else you want, Mr. Westover? Matches, or soap, or anything?" He put the pitcher down and gave a keen glance round the room.

"No, everything seems to be here, Frank," said Westover.

"Well, good-night," said the boy, and he slipped out, quietly closing the door after him.

Westover pushed up his window and looked at Lion's Head in the moonlight. It slumbered as if with the sleep of centuries-austere, august. The moon-rays seemed to break and splinter on the outline of the lion-shape, and left all the mighty mass black below.

In the old porch under his window Westover heard whispering. Then, "You behave yourself, Jeff Durgin!" came in a voice which could be no other than Cynthia Whitwell's, and Jeff Durgin's laugh followed.

He saw the girl in the morning. She met him at the door of the dining-room, and he easily found in her shy, proud manner, and her pure, cold beauty, the temperament and physiognomy of the child he remembered. She was tall and slim, and she held herself straight without stiffness; her face was fine, with a straight nose, and a decided chin, and a mouth of the same sweetness which looked from her still, gray eyes; her hair,

of the average brown, had a rough effect of being quickly tossed into form, which pleased him; as she slipped down the room before him to place him at table he saw that she was, as it were, involuntarily, unwillingly graceful. She made him think of a wild sweetbrier, of a hermit-thrush; but, if there were this sort of poetic suggestion in Cynthia's looks, her acts were of plain and honest prose, such as giving Westover the pleasantest place and the most intelligent waitress in the room.

He would have liked to keep her in talk a moment, but she made business-like despatch of all his allusions to the past, and got herself quickly away. Afterward she came back to him, with the effect of having forced herself to come, and the color deepened in her cheeks while she stayed.

She seemed glad of his being there, but helpless against the instincts or traditions that forbade her to show her pleasure in his presence. Her reticence became almost snubbing in its strictness when he asked her about her school-teaching in the winter; but he found that she taught at the little school-house at the foot of the hill, and lived at home with her father.

"And have you any bad boys that frighten little girls in your school?" he asked, jocosely.

"I don't know as I have," she said, with a consciousness that flamed into her cheeks.

"Perhaps the boys have reformed?" Westover suggested.

"I presume," she said, stiffly, "that there's room for improvement in every one," and then, as if she were afraid he might take this personally, she looked unhappy and tried to speak of other things. She asked him if he did not see a great many changes at Lion's Head; he answered, gravely, that he wished he could have found it just as he left it, and then she must have thought she had gone wrong again, for she left him in an embarrassment that was pathetic, but which was charming.

XI.

After breakfast Westover walked out and saw Whitwell standing on the grass in front of the house, beside the flagstaff. He suffered Westover to make the first advances toward the renewal of their acquaintance, but when he was sure of his friendly intention he responded with a cordial openness which the painter had fancied wanting in his children. Whitwell had not changed much. The most noticeable difference was the compact phalanx of new teeth which had replaced the staggering veterans of former days, and which displayed themselves in his smile of relenting. There was some novelty of effect also in an arrangement of things in his hat-band. At first Westover thought they were fishhooks and artificial flies, such as the guides wear in the Adirondacks to advertise their calling about the hotel offices and the piazzas. But another glance

showd him that they were sprays and wild flowers of various sorts, with gay mosses and fungi and some stems of Indian-pipe.

Whitwell seemed pleased that these things should have caught Westover's eye. He said, almost immediately: "Lookin' at my almanac? This is one of our field-days; we have 'em once a week; and I like to let the ladies see beforehand what nature's got on the bill for 'em, in the woods and pastur's."

"It's a good idea," said Westover, "and it's fresh and picturesque."
Whitwell laughed for pleasure.

"They told me what a consolation you were to the ladies, with your walks and talks."

"Well, I try to give 'em something to think about," said Whitwell.

"But why do you confine your ministrations to one sex?"

"I don't, on purpose. But it's the only sex here, three-fourths of the time. Even the children are mostly all girls. When the husbands come up Saturday nights, they don't want to go on a tramp Sundays. They want to lay off and rest. That's about how it is. Well, you see some changes about Lion's Head, I presume?" he asked, with what seemed an impersonal pleasure in them.

"I should rather have found the old farm. But I must say I'm glad to find such a good hotel."

"Jeff and his mother made their brags to you?" said Whitwell, with a kind of amiable scorn. "I guess if it wa'n't for Cynthy she wouldn't know where she was standin', half the time. It don't matter where Jeff stands, I guess. Jackson's the best o' the lot, now the old man's gone." There was no one by at the moment to hear these injuries except Westover, but Whitwell called them out with a frankness which was perhaps more carefully adapted to the situation than it seemed. Westover made no attempt to parry them formally; but he offered some generalities in extenuation of the unworthiness of the Durgins, which Whitwell did not altogether refuse.

"Oh, it's ail right. Old woman talk to you about Jeff's going to college? I thought so. Wants to make another Dan'el Webster of him. Guess she can's far forth as Dan'el's graduatin' went." Westover tried to remember how this had been with the statesman, but could not. Whitwell added, with intensifying irony so of look and tone: "Guess the second Dan'el won't have a chance to tear his degree up; guess he wouldn't ever b'en ready to try for it if it had depended on him. They don't keep any record at Harvard, do they, of the way fellows are prepared for their preliminary examinations?"

"I don't quite know what you mean," said Westover.

"Oh, nothin'. You get a chance some time to ask Jeff who done most of

his studyin' for him at the Academy."

This hint was not so darkling but Westover could understand that Whitwell attributed Jeff's scholarship to the help of Cynthia, but he would not press him to an open assertion of the fact. There was something painful in it to him; it had the pathos which perhaps most of the success in the world would reveal if we could penetrate its outside.

He was silent, and Whitwell left the point. "Well," he concluded, "what's goin' on in them old European countries?"

"Oh, the old thing," said Westover. "But I can't speak for any except France, very well."

"What's their republic like, over there? Ours? See anything of it, how it works?"

"Well, you know," said Westover, "I was working so hard myself all the time--"

"Good!" Whitwell slapped his leg. Westover saw that he had on long India-rubber boots, which came up to his knees, and he gave a wayward thought to the misery they would be on an August day to another man; but Whitwell was probably insensible to any discomfort from them. "When a man's mindin' his own business any government's good, I guess. But I should like to prowl round some them places where they had the worst scenes of the Revolution, Ever been in the Place de la Concorde?" Whitwell gave it the full English pronunciation.

"I passed through it nearly every day."

"I want to know! And that column that they, pulled down in the Commune that had that little Boney on it--see that?"

"In the Place Vendome?"

"Yes, Plass Vonndome."

"Oh yes. You wouldn't know it had ever been down."

"Nor the things it stood for?"

"As to that, I can't be so sure."

"Well, it's funny," said the philosopher, "how the world seems to always come out at the same hole it went in at!" He paused, with his mouth open, as if to let the notion have full effect with Westover.

The painter said: "And you're still in the old place, Mr. Whitwell?"

"Yes, I like my own house. They've wanted me to come up here often enough, but I'm satisfied where I am. It's quiet down there, and, when I get through for the day, I can read. And I like to keep my family

together. Cynthia and Frank always sleep at home, and Jombateeste eats with me. You remember Jombateeste?"

Westover had to say that he did not.

"Well, I don't know as you did see him much. He was that Canuck I had helpin' me clear that piece over on Lion's Head for the pulp-mill; pulp-mill went all to thunder, and I never got a cent. And sometimes Jackson comes down with his plantchette, and we have a good time."

"Jackson still believes in the manifestations?"

"Yes. But he's never developed much himself. He can't seem to do much without the plantchette. We've had up some of them old philosophers lately. We've had up Socrates."

"Is that so? It must be very interesting."

Whitwell did not answer, and Westover saw his eye wander. He looked round. Several ladies were coming across the grass toward him from the hotel, lifting their skirts and tiptoeing through the dew. They called to him, "Good-morning, Mr. Whitwell!" and "Are you going up Lion's Head to-day?" and "Don't you think it will rain?"--"Guess not," said Whitwell, with a fatherly urbanity and an air of amusement at the anxieties of the sex which seemed habitual to him. He waited tranquilly for them to come up, and then asked, with a wave of his hand toward Westover: "Acquainted with Mr. Westover, the attist?" He named each of them, and it would have been no great vanity in Westover to think they had made their little movement across the grass quite as much in the hope of an introduction to him as in the wish to consult Whitwell about his plans.

The painter found himself the centre of an agreeable excitement with all the ladies in the house. For this it was perhaps sufficient to be a man. To be reasonably young and decently good-looking, to be an artist, and an artist not unknown, were advantages which had the splendor of superfluity.

He liked finding himself in the simple and innocent American circumstance again, and he was not sorry to be confronted at once with one of the most characteristic aspects of our summer. He could read in the present development of Lion's Head House all the history of its evolution from the first conception of farm-board, which sufficed the earliest comers, to its growth in the comforts and conveniences which more fastidious tastes and larger purses demanded. Before this point was reached, the boarders would be of a good and wholesome sort, but they would be people of no social advantages, and not of much cultivation, though they might be intelligent; they would certainly not be fashionable; five dollars a week implied all that, except in the case of some wandering artist or the family of some poor young professor. But when the farm became a boarding-house and called itself a hotel, as at present with Lion's Head House, and people paid ten dollars a week, or twelve for transients, a moment of its character was reached which could not be surpassed when its prosperity became greater and its inmates more pretentious. In fact,

the people who can afford to pay ten dollars a week for summer board, and not much more, are often the best of the American people, or, at least, of the New England people. They may not know it, and those who are richer may not imagine it. They are apt to be middle-aged maiden ladies from university towns, living upon carefully guarded investments; young married ladies with a scant child or two, and needing rest and change of air; college professors with nothing but their modest salaries; literary men or women in the beginning of their tempered success; clergymen and their wives away from their churches in the larger country towns or the smaller suburbs of the cities; here and there an agreeable bachelor in middle life, fond of literature and nature; hosts of young and pretty girls with distinct tastes in art, and devoted to the clever young painter who leads them to the sources of inspiration in the fields and woods. Such people are refined, humane, appreciative, sympathetic; and Westover, fresh from the life abroad where life is seldom so free as ours without some stain, was glad to find himself in the midst of this unrestraint, which was so sweet and pure. He had seen enough of rich people to know that riches seldom bought the highest qualities, even among his fellow-countrymen who suppose that riches can do everything, and the first aspects of society at Lion's Head seemed to him Arcadian. There really proved to be a shepherd or two among all that troop of shepherdesses, old and young; though it was in the middle of the week, remote alike from the Saturday of arrivals and the Monday of departures. To be sure, there was none quite so young as himself, except Jeff Durgin, who was officially exterior to the social life.

The painter who gave lessons to the ladies was already a man of forty, and he was strongly dragoned round by a wife almost as old, who had taken great pains to secure him for herself, and who worked him to far greater advantage in his profession than he could possibly have worked himself: she got him orders; sold his pictures, even in Boston, where they never buy American pictures; found him pupils, and kept the boldest of these from flirting with him. Westover, who was so newly from Paris, was able to console him with talk of the salons and ateliers, which he had not heard from so directly in ten years. After the first inevitable moment of jealousy, his wife forgave Westover when she found that he did not want pupils, and she took a leading part in the movement to have him read Browning at a picnic, organized by the ladies shortly after he came.

XII.

The picnic was held in Whitwell's Clearing, on the side of Lion's Head, where the moss, almost as white as snow, lay like belated drifts among the tall, thin grass which overran the space opened by the axe, and crept to the verge of the low pines growing in the shelter of the loftier woods. It was the end of one of Whitwell's "Tramps Home to Nature," as he called his walks and talks with the ladies, and on this day Westover's fellow-painter had added to his lessons in woodlore the claims of art, intending that his class should make studies of various bits in the clearing, and should try to catch something of its peculiar charm. He

asked Westover what he thought of the notion, and Westover gave it his approval, which became enthusiastic when he saw the place. He found in it the melancholy grace, the poignant sentiment of ruin which expresses itself in some measure wherever man has invaded nature and then left his conquest to her again. In Whitwell's Clearing the effect was intensified by the approach on the fading wood road, which the wagons had made in former days when they hauled the fallen timber to the pulp-mill. In places it was so vague and faint as to be hardly a trail; in others, where the wheel-tracks remained visible, the trees had sent out a new growth of lower branches in the place of those lopped away, and almost forbade the advance of foot-passengers. The ladies said they did not see how Jeff was ever going to get through with the wagon, and they expressed fears for the lunch he was bringing, which seemed only too well grounded.

But Whitwell, who was leading them on, said: "You let a Durgin alone to do a thing when he's made up his mind to it. I guess you'll have your lunch all right"; and by the time that they had got enough of Browning they heard the welcome sound of wheels crashing upon dead boughs and swishing through the underbrush, and, in the pauses of these pleasant noises, the voice of Jeff Durgin encouraging his horses. The children of the party broke away to meet him, and then he came in sight ahead of his team, looking strong and handsome in his keeping with the scene: Before he got within hearing, the ladies murmured a hymn of praise to his type of beauty; they said he looked like a young Hercules, and Westover owned with an inward smile that Jeff had certainly made the best of himself for the time being. He had taken a leaf from the book of the summer folks; his stalwart calves revealed themselves in thick, ribbed stockings; he wore knickerbockers and a Norfolk jacket of corduroy; he had style as well as beauty, and he had the courage of his clothes and looks. Westover was still in the first surprise of the American facts, and he wondered just what part in the picnic Jeff was to bear socially. He was neither quite host nor guest; but no doubt in the easy play of the life, which Westover was rather proud to find so charming, the question would solve itself rationally and gracefully.

"Where do you want the things?" the young fellow asked of the company at large, as he advanced upon them from the green portals of the roadway, pulling off his soft wool hat, and wiping his wet forehead with his blue-bordered white handkerchief.

"Oh, right here, Jeff!" The nimblest of the nymphs sprang to her feet from the lounging and crouching circle about Westover. She was a young nymph no longer, but with a daughter not so much younger than herself as to make the contrast of her sixteen years painful. Westover recognized the officious, self-approving kind of the woman, but he admired the brisk efficiency with which she had taken possession of the affair from the beginning and inspired every one to help, in strict subordination to herself.

When the cloths were laid on the smooth, elastic moss, and the meal was spread, she heaped a plate without suffering any interval in her activities.

"I suppose you've got to go back to your horses, Jeff, and you shall be the first served," she said, and she offered him the plate with a bright smile and friendly grace, which were meant to keep him from the hurt of her intention.

Jeff did not offer to take the plate which she raised to him from where she was kneeling, but looked down at her with perfect intelligence. "I guess I don't want anything," he said, and turned and walked away into the woods.

The ill-advised woman remained kneeling for a moment with her ingratiating smile hardening on her face, while the sense of her blunder petrified the rest. She was the first to recover herself, and she said, with a laugh that she tried to make reckless, "Well, friends, I suppose the rest of you are hungry; I know I am," and she began to eat.

The others ate, too, though their appetites might well have been affected by the diplomatic behavior of Whitwell. He would not take anything, just at present, he said, and got his long length up from the root of a tree where he had folded it down. "I don't seem to care much for anything in the middle of the day; breakfast's my best meal," and he followed Jeff off into the woods.

"Really," said the lady, "what did they expect?" But the question was so difficult that no one seemed able to make the simple answer.

The incident darkened the day and spoiled its pleasure; it cast a lessening shadow into the evening when the guests met round the fire in the large, ugly new parlor at the hotel.

The next morning the ladies assembled again on the piazza to decide what should be done with the beautiful day before them. Whitwell stood at the foot of the flag-staff with one hand staying his person against it, like a figure posed in a photograph to verify proportions in the different features of a prospect.

The heroine of the unhappy affair of the picnic could not forbear authorizing herself to invoke his opinion at a certain point of the debate, and "Mr. Whitwell," she called to him, "won't you please come here a moment?"

Whitwell slowly pulled himself across the grass to the group, and at the same moment, as if she had been waiting for him to be present, Mrs. Durgin came out of the office door and advanced toward the ladies.

"Mrs. Marven," she said, with the stony passivity which the ladies used to note in her when they came over to Lion's Head Farm in the tally-hos, "the stage leaves here at two o'clock to get the down train at three. I want you should have your trunks ready to go on the wagon a little before two."

"You want I should have my--What do you mean, Mrs. Durgin?"

"I want your rooms."

"You want my rooms?"

Mrs. Durgin did not answer. She let her steadfast look suffice; and Mrs. Marven went on in a rising flutter: "Why, you can't have my rooms! I don't understand you. I've taken my rooms for the whole of August, and they are mine; and--"

"I have got to have your rooms," said Mrs. Durgin.

"Very well, then, I won't give them up," said the lady. "A bargain's a bargain, and I have your agreement--"

"If you're not out of your rooms by two o'clock, your things will be put out; and after dinner to-day you will not eat another bite under my roof."

Mrs. Durgin went in, and it remained for the company to make what they could of the affair. Mrs. Marven did not wait for the result. She was not a dignified person, but she rose with hauteur and whipped away to her rooms, hers no longer, to make her preparations. She knew at least how to give her going the effect of quitting the place with disdain and abhorrence.

The incident of her expulsion was brutal, but it was clearly meant to be so. It made Westover a little sick, and he would have liked to pity Mrs. Marven more than he could. The ladies said that Mrs. Durgin's behavior was an outrage, and they ought all to resent it by going straight to their own rooms and packing their things and leaving on the same stage with Mrs. Marven. None of them did so, and their talk veered around to something extenuating, if not justifying, Mrs. Durgin's action.

"I suppose," one of them said, "that she felt more indignant about it because she has been so very good to Mrs. Marven, and her daughter, too. They were both sick on her hands here for a week after they came, first one and then the other, and she looked after them and did for them like a mother."

"And yet," another lady suggested, "what could Mrs. Marven have done? What did she do? He wasn't asked to the picnic, and I don't see why he should have been treated as a guest. He was there, purely and simply, to bring the things and take them away. And, besides, if there is anything in distinctions, in differences, if we are to choose who is to associate with us--or our daughters--"

"That is true," the ladies said, in one form or another, with the tone of conviction; but they were not so deeply convinced that they did not want a man's opinion, and they all looked at Westover.

He would not respond to their look, and the lady who had argued for Mrs. Marven had to ask: "What do you think, Mr. Westover?"

"Ah, it's a difficult question," he said. "I suppose that as long as one person believes himself or herself socially better than another, it must always be a fresh problem what to do in every given case."

The ladies said they supposed so, and they were forced to make what they could of wisdom in which they might certainly have felt a want of finality.

Westover went away from them in a perplexed mind which was not simplified by the contempt he had at the bottom of all for something unmanly in Jeff, who had carried his grievance to his mother like a slighted boy, and provoked her to take up arms for him.

The sympathy for Mrs. Marven mounted again when it was seen that she did not come to dinner, or permit her daughter to do so, and when it became known later that she had refused for both the dishes sent to their rooms. Her farewells to the other ladies, when they gathered to see her off on the stage, were airy rather than cheery; there was almost a demonstration in her behalf, but Westover was oppressed by a kind of inherent squalor in the incident.

At night he responded to a knock which he supposed that of Frank Whitwell with ice-water, and Mrs. Durgin came into his room and sat down in one of his two chairs. "Mr. Westover," she said, "if you knew all I had done for that woman and her daughter, and how much she had pretended to think of us all, I don't believe you'd be so ready to judge me."

"Judge you!" cried Westover. "Bless my soul, Mrs. Durgin! I haven't said a word that could be tormented into the slightest censure."

"But you think I done wrong?"

"I have not been at all able to satisfy myself on that point, Mrs. Durgin. I think it's always wrong to revenge one's self."

"Yes, I suppose it is," said Mrs. Durgin, humbly; and the tears came into her eyes. "I got the tray ready with my own hands that was sent to her room; but she wouldn't touch it. I presume she didn't like having a plate prepared for her! But I did feel sorry for her. She a'n't over and above strong, and I'm afraid she'll be sick; there a'n't any rest'rant at our depot."

Westover fancied this a fit mood in Mrs. Durgin for her further instruction, and he said: "And if you'll excuse me, Mrs. Durgin, I don't think what you did was quite the way to keep a hotel."

More tears flashed into Mrs. Durgin's eyes, but they were tears of wrath now. "I would 'a' done it," she said, "if I thought every single one of 'em would 'a' left the house the next minute, for there a'n't one that has the first word to say against me, any other way. It wa'n't that I cared whether she thought my son was good enough to eat with her or not; I know what I think, and that's enough for me. He wa'n't invited to the picnic, and he a'n't one to put himself forward. If she didn't want him

to stay, all she had to do was to do nothin'. But to make him up a plate before everybody, and hand it to him to eat with the horses, like a tramp or a dog--"Mrs. Durgin filled to the throat with her wrath, and the sight of her made Westover keenly unhappy.

"Yes, yes," he said, "it was a miserable business." He could not help adding: "If Jeff could have kept it to himself--but perhaps that wasn't possible."

"Mr. Westover!" said Mrs. Durgin, sternly. "Do you think Jeff would come to me, like a great crybaby, and complain of my lady boarders and the way they used him? It was Mr. Whit'ell that let it out, or I don't know as I should ever know about it."

"I'm glad Jeff didn't tell you," said Westover, with a revulsion of good feeling toward him.

"He'd 'a' died first," said his mother. "But Mr. Whit'ell done just right all through, and I sha'n't soon forget it. Jeff's give me a proper goin' over for what I done; both the boys have. But I couldn't help it, and I should do just so again. All is, I wanted you should know just what you was blamin' me for--"

"I don't know that I blame you. I only wish you could have helped it--managed some other way."

"I did try to get over it, and all I done was to lose a night's rest. Then, this morning, when I see her settin' there so cool and mighty with the boarders, and takin' the lead as usual, I just waited till she got Whit'ell across, and nearly everybody was there that saw what she done to Jeff, and then I flew out on her."

Westover could not suppress a laugh. "Well, Mrs. Durgin, your retaliation was complete; it was dramatic."

"I don't know what you mean by that," said Mrs. Durgin, rising and resuming her self-control; she did not refuse herself a grim smile. "But I guess she thought it was pretty perfect herself--or she will, when she's able to give her mind to it. I'm sorry for her daughter; I never had anything against her; or her mother, either, for that matter, before. Franky look after you pretty well? I'll send him up with your ice-water. Got everything else you want?"

I should have to invent a want if I wished to complain," said Westover.

"Well, I should like to have you do it. We can't ever do too much for you. Well, good-night, Mr. Westover."

"Good'-night, Mrs. Durgin."

XIII.

Jeff Durgin entered Harvard that fall, with fewer conditions than most students have to work off. This was set down to the credit of Lovewell Academy, where he had prepared for the university; and some observers in such matters were interested to note how thoroughly the old school in a remote town had done its work for him.

None who formed personal relations with him at that time conjectured that he had done much of the work for himself, and even to Westover, when Jeff came to him some weeks after his settlement in Cambridge, he seemed painfully out of his element, and unamiably aware of it. For the time, at least, he had lost the jovial humor, not too kindly always, which largely characterized him, and expressed itself in sallies of irony which were not so unkindly, either. The painter perceived that he was on his guard against his own friendly interest; Jeff made haste to explain that he came because he had told his mother that he would do so. He scarcely invited a return of his visit, and he left Westover wondering at the sort of vague rebellion against his new life which he seemed to be in. The painter went out to see him in Cambridge, not long after, and was rather glad to find him rooming with some other rustic Freshman in a humble street running from the square toward the river; for he thought Jeff must have taken his lodging for its cheapness, out of regard to his mother's means. But Jeff was not glad to be found there, apparently; he said at once that he expected to get a room in the Yard the next year, and eat at Memorial Hall. He spoke scornfully of his boarding-house as a place where they were all a lot of jays together; and Westover thought him still more at odds with his environment than he had before. But Jeff consented to come in and dine with him at his restaurant, and afterward go to the theatre with him.

When he came, Westover did not quite like his despatch of the half-bottle of California claret served each of them with the Italian table d'hote. He did not like his having already seen the play he proposed; and he found some difficulty in choosing a play which Jeff had not seen. It appeared then that he had been at the theatre two or three times a week for the last month, and that it was almost as great a passion with him as with Westover himself. He had become already a critic of acting, with a rough good sense of it, and a decided opinion. He knew which actors he preferred, and which actresses, better still. It was some consolation for Westover to find that he mostly took an admission ticket when he went to the theatre; but, though he could not blame Jeff for showing his own fondness for it, he wished that he had not his fondness.

So far Jeff seemed to have spent very few of his evenings in Cambridge, and Westover thought it would be well if he had some acquaintance there. He made favor for him with a friendly family, who asked him to dinner. They did it to oblige Westover, against their own judgment and knowledge, for they said it was always the same with Freshmen; a single act of hospitality finished the acquaintance. Jeff came, and he behaved with as great indifference to the kindness meant him as if he were dining out every night; he excused himself very early in the evening on the ground that he had to go into Boston, and he never paid his dinner-call. After

that Westover tried to consider his whole duty to him fulfilled, and not to trouble himself further. Now and then, however, Jeff disappointed the expectation Westover had formed of him, by coming to see him, and being apparently glad of the privilege. But he did not make the painter think that he was growing in grace or wisdom, though he apparently felt an increasing confidence in his own knowledge of life.

Westover could only feel a painful interest tinged with amusement in his grotesque misconceptions of the world where he had not yet begun to right himself. Jeff believed lurid things of the society wholly unknown to him; to his gross credulity, Boston houses, which at the worst were the homes of a stiff and cold exclusiveness, were the scenes of riot only less scandalous than the dissipation to which fashionable ladies abandoned themselves at champagne suppers in the Back Bay hotels and on their secret visits to the Chinese opium-joints in Kingston Street.

Westover tried to make him see how impossible his fallacies were; but he could perceive that Jeff thought him either wilfully ignorant or helplessly innocent, and of far less authority than a barber who had the entree of all these swell families as hair-dresser, and who corroborated the witness of a hotel night-clerk (Jeff would not give their names) to the depravity of the upper classes. He had to content himself with saying: "I hope you will be ashamed some day of having believed such rot. But I suppose it's something you've got to go through. You may take my word for it, though? that it isn't going to do you any good. It's going to do you harm, and that's why I hate to have you think it, for your own sake. It can't hurt any one else."

What disgusted the painter most was that, with all his belief in the wickedness of the fine world, it was clear that Jeff would have willingly been of it; and he divined that if he had any strong aspirations they were for society and for social acceptance. He had fancied, when the fellow seemed to care so little for the studies of the university, that he might come forward in its sports. Jeff gave more and more the effect of tremendous strength in his peculiar physique, though there was always the disappointment of not finding him tall. He was of the middle height, but he was hewn out and squared upward massively. He felt like stone to any accidental contact, and the painter brought away a bruise from the mere brunt of his shoulders. He learned that Jeff was a frequenter of the gymnasium, where his strength must have been known, but he could not make out that he had any standing among the men who went in for athletics. If Jeff had even this, the sort of standing in college which he failed of would easily have been won, too. But he had been falsely placed at the start, or some quality of his nature neutralized other qualities that would have made him a leader in college, and he remained one of the least forward men in it. Other jays won favor and liking, and ceased to be jays; Jeff continued a jay. He was not chosen into any of the nicer societies; those that he joined when he thought they were swell he could not care for when he found they were not.

Westover came into a knowledge of the facts through his casual and scarcely voluntary confidences, and he pitied him somewhat while he blamed him a great deal more, without being able to help him at all.

It appeared to him that the fellow had gone wrong more through ignorance than perversity, and that it was a stubbornness of spirit rather than a badness of heart that kept him from going right. He sometimes wondered whether it was not more a baffled wish to be justified in his own esteem than anything else that made him overvalue the things he missed. He knew how such an experience as that with Mrs. Marven rankles in the heart of youth, and will not cease to smart till some triumph in kind brines it ease; but between the man of thirty and the boy of twenty there is a gulf fixed, and he could not ask. He did not know that a college man often goes wrong in his first year, out of no impulse that he can very clearly account for himself, and then when he ceases to be merely of his type and becomes more of his character, he pulls up and goes right. He did not know how much Jeff had been with a set that was fast without being fine. The boy had now and then a book in his hand when he came; not always such a book as Westover could have wished, but still a book; and to his occasional questions about how he was getting on with his college work, Jeff made brief answers, which gave the notion that he was not neglecting it.

Toward the end of his first year he sent to Westover one night from a station-house, where he had been locked up for breaking a street-lamp in Boston. By his own showing he had not broken the lamp, or assisted, except through his presence, at the misdeed of the tipsy students who had done it. His breath betrayed that he had been drinking, too; but otherwise he seemed as sober as Westover himself, who did not know whether to augur well or ill for him from the proofs he had given before of his ability to carry off a bottle of wine with a perfectly level head. Jeff seemed to believe Westover a person of such influence that he could secure his release at once, and he was abashed to find that he must pass the night in the cell, where he conferred with Westover through the bars.

In the police court, where his companions were fined, the next morning, he was discharged for want of evidence against him; but the university authorities did not take the same view as the civil authorities. He was suspended, and for the time he passed out of Westover's sight and knowledge.

He expected to find him at Lion's Head, where he went to pass the month of August--in painting those pictures of the mountain which had in some sort, almost in spite of him, become his specialty. But Mrs. Durgin employed the first free moments after their meeting in explaining that Jeff had got a chance to work his way to London on a cattle-steamer, and had been abroad the whole summer. He had written home that the voyage had been glorious, with plenty to eat and little to do; and he had made favor with the captain for his return by the same vessel in September. By other letters it seemed that he had spent the time mostly in England; but he had crossed over into France for a fortnight, and had spent a week in Paris. His mother read some passages from his letters aloud to show Westover how Jeff was keeping his eyes open. His accounts of his travel were a mixture of crude sensations in the presence of famous scenes and objects of interest, hard-headed observation of the facts of life, narrow-minded misconception of conditions, and wholly intelligent and

adequate study of the art of inn-keeping in city and country.

Mrs. Durgin seemed to feel that there was some excuse due for the relative quantity of the last. "He knows that's what I'd care for the most; and Jeff a'n't one to forget his mother." As if the word reminded her, she added, after a moment: "We sha'n't any of us soon forget what you done for Jeff--that time."

"I didn't do anything for him, Mrs. Durgin; I couldn't," Westover protested.

"You done what you could, and I know that you saw the thing in the right light, or you wouldn't 'a' tried to do anything. Jeff told me every word about it. I know he was with a pretty harum-scarum crowd. But it was a lesson to him; and I wa'n't goin' to have him come back here, right away, and have folks talkin' about what they couldn't understand, after the way the paper had it."

"Did it get into the papers?"

"Mm." Mrs. Durgin nodded. "And some dirty, sneakin' thing, here, wrote a letter to the paper and told a passel o' lies about Jeff and all of us; and the paper printed Jeff's picture with it; I don't know how they got a hold of it. So when he got that chance to go, I just said, 'Go.' You'll see he'll keep all straight enough after this, Mr. Westover."

"Old woman read you any of Jeff's letters?" Whit-well asked, when his chance for private conference with Westover came. "What was the rights of that scrape he got into?"

Westover explained as favorably to Jeff as he could; the worst of the affair was the bad company he was in.

Well, where there's smoke there's some fire. Cou't discharged him and college suspended him. That's about where it is? I guess he'll keep out o' harm's way next time. Read you what he said about them scenes of the Revolution in Paris?"

"Yes; he seems to have looked it all up pretty thoroughly."

"Done it for me, I guess, much as anything. I was always talkin' it up with him. Jeff's kep' his eyes open, that's a fact. He's got a head on him, more'n I ever thought."

Westover decided that Mrs. Durgin's prepotent behavior toward Mrs. Marven the summer before had not hurt her materially, with the witnesses even. There were many new boarders, but most of those whom he had already met were again at Lion's Head. They said there was no air like it, and no place so comfortable. If they had sold their birthright for a mess of pottage, Westover had to confess that the pottage was very good. Instead of the Irish woman at ten dollars a week who had hitherto been Mrs. Durgin's cook, under her personal surveillance and direction, she had now a man cook, whom she boldly called a chef and paid eighty dollars a

month. He wore the white apron and white cap of his calling, but Westover heard him speak Yankee through his nose to one of the stablemen as they exchanged hilarities across the space between the basement and the barn-door. "Yes," Mrs. Durgin admitted, "he's an American; and he learnt his trade at one of the best hotels in Portland. He's pretty headstrong, but I guess he does what he's told--in the end. The meanyous? Oh, Franky Whitwell prints then. He's got an amateur printing-office in the stable-loft."

XIV.

One morning toward the end of August, Whitwell, who was starting homeward, after leaving his ladies, burdened with their wishes and charges for the morrow, met Westover coming up the hill with his painting-gear in his hand. "Say!" he hailed him. "Why don't you come down to the house to-night? Jackson's goin' to come, and, if you ha'n't seen him work the planchette for a spell, you'll be surprised. There a'n't hardly anybody he can't have up. You'll come? Good enough!"

What affected Westover first of all at the seance, and perhaps most of all, was the quality of the air in the little house; it was close and stuffy, mixed with an odor of mould and an ancient smell of rats. The kerosene-lamp set in the centre of the table, where Jackson afterward placed his planchette, devoured the little life that was left in it. At the gasps which Westover gave, with some despairing glances at the closed windows, Whitwell said: "Hot? Well, I guess it is a little. But, you see, Jackson has got to be careful about the night air; but I guess I can fix it for you." He went out into the ell, and Westover heard him raising a window. He came back and asked, "That do? It 'll get around in here directly," and Westover had to profess relief.

Jackson came in presently with the little Canuck, whom Whitwell presented to Westover: "Know Jombateeste?"

The two were talking about a landslide which had taken place on the other side of the mountain; the news had just come that they had found among the ruins the body of the farm-hand who had been missing since the morning of the slide; his funeral was to be the next day.

Jackson put his planchette on the table, and sat down before it with a sigh; the Canuck remained standing, and on foot he was scarcely a head higher than the seated Yankees. "Well," Jackson said, "I suppose he knows all about it now," meaning the dead farm-hand.

"Yes," Westover suggested, "if he knows anything."

"Know anything!" Whitwell shouted. "Why, man, don't you believe he's as much alive as ever he was?"

"I hope so," said Westover, submissively.

"Don't you know it?"

"Not as I know other things. In fact, I don't know it," said Westover, and he was painfully aware of having shocked his hearers by the agnosticism so common among men in towns that he had confessed it quite simply and unconsciously. He perceived that faith in the soul and life everlasting was as quick as ever in the hills, whatever grotesque or unwonted form it wore. Jackson sat with closed eyes and his head fallen back; Whitwell stared at the painter, with open mouth; the little Canuck began to walk up and down impatiently; Westover felt a reproach, almost an abhorrence, in all of them.

Whitwell asked: "Why, don't you think there's any proof of it?"

"Proof? Oh Yes. There's testimony enough to carry conviction to the stubbornest mind on any other point. But it's very strange about all that. It doesn't convince anybody but the witnesses. If a man tells me he's seen a disembodied spirit, I can't believe him. I must see the disembodied spirit myself."

"That's something so," said Whitwell, with a relenting laugh.

"If one came back from the dead, to tell us of a life beyond the grave, we should want the assurance that he'd really been dead, and not merely dreaming."

Whitwell laughed again, in the delight the philosophic mind finds even in the reasoning that hates it.

The Canuck felt perhaps the simpler joy that the average man has in any strange notion that he is able to grasp. He stopped in his walk and said: "Yes, and if you was dead and went to heaven, and stayed so long you smelt, like Lazarus, and you come back and tol' 'em what you saw, nobody goin' believe you."

"Well, I guess you're right there, Jombateeste," said Whitwell, with pleasure in the Canuck's point. After a moment he suggested to Westover: "Then I s'pose, if you feel the way you do, you don't care much about plantchette?"

"Oh yes, I do," said the painter. "We never know when we may be upon the point of revelation. I wouldn't miss any chance."

Whether Whitwell felt an ironic slant in the words or not, he paused a moment before he said: "Want to start her up, Jackson?"

Jackson brought to the floor the forefeet of his chair, which he had tilted from it in leaning back, and without other answer put his hand on the planchette. It began to fly over the large sheet of paper spread upon the table, in curves and angles and eccentrics.

"Feels pooty lively to-night," said Whitwell, with a glance at Westover.

The little Canuck, as if he had now no further concern in the matter, sat down in a corner and smoked silently. Whitwell asked, after a moment's impatience:

"Can't you git her down to business, Jackson?"

Jackson gasped: "She'll come down when she wants to."

The little instrument seemed, in fact, trying to control itself. Its movements became less wild and large; the zigzags began to shape themselves into something like characters. Jackson's wasted face gave no token of interest; Whitwell laid half his gaunt length across the table in the endeavor to make out some meaning in them; the Canuck, with his hands crossed on his stomach, smoked on, with the same gleam in his pipe and eye.

The planchette suddenly stood motionless.

"She done?" murmured Whitwell.

"I guess she is, for a spell, anyway," said Jackson, wearily.

"Let's try to make out what she says." Whitwell drew the sheets toward himself and Westover, who sat next him. "You've got to look for the letters everywhere. Sometimes she'll give you fair and square writin', and then again she'll slat the letters down every which way, and you've got to hunt 'em out for yourself. Here's a B I've got. That begins along pretty early in the alphabet. Let's see what we can find next."

Westover fancied he could make out an F and a T.

Whitwell exulted in an unmistakable K and N; and he made sure of an I, and an E. The painter was not so sure of an S. "Well, call it an S," said Whitwell. "And I guess I've got an O here, and an H. Hello! Here's an A as large as life. Pooty much of a mixture."

"Yes; I don't see that we're much better off than we were before," said Westover.

"Well, I don't know about that," said Whitwell.

"Write 'em down in a row and see if we can't pick out some sense. I've had worse finds than this; no vowels at all sometimes; but here's three."

He wrote the letters down, while Jackson leaned back against the wall, in patient quiet.

"Well, sir," said Whitwell, pushing the paper, where he had written the letters in a line, to Westover, "make anything out of 'em?"

Westover struggled with them a moment. "I can make out one word-shaft."

"Anything else?" demanded Whitwell, with a glance of triumph at Jackson.

Westover studied the remaining letters. "Yes, I get one other word-broken."

"Just what I done! But I wanted you to speak first. It's Broken Shaft. Jackson, she caught right onto what we was talkin' about. This life," he turned to Westover, in solemn exegesis, "is a broken shaft when death comes. It rests upon the earth, but you got to look for the top of it in the skies. That's the way I look at it. What do you think, Jackson? Jombateeste?"

"I think anybody can't see that. Better go and get some heye-glass."

Westover remained in a shameful minority. He said, meekly: "It suggests a beautiful hope."

Jackson brought his chair-legs down again, and put his hand on the planchette.

"Feel that tinglin'?" asked. Whitwell, and Jackson made yes with silent lips. "After he's been workin' the plantchette for a spell, and then leaves off, and she wants to say something more," Whitwell explained to Westover, "he seems to feel a kind of tinglin' in his arm, as if it was asleep, and then he's got to tackle her again. Writin' steady enough now, Jackson!" he cried, joyously. "Let's see." He leaned over and read, "Thomas Jefferson--" The planchette stopped, "My, I didn't go to do that," said Whitwell, apologetically. "You much acquainted with Jefferson's writin's?" he asked of Westover.

The painter had to own his ignorance of all except the diction that the government is best which governs least; but he was not in a position to deny that Jefferson had ever said anything about a broken shaft.

"It may have come to him on the other side," said Whitwell.

"Perhaps," Westover assented.

The planchette began to stir itself again. "She's goin' ahead!" cried Whitwell. He leaned over the table so as to get every letter as it was formed. "D--Yes! Death. Death is the Broken Shaft. Go on!" After a moment of faltering the planchette formed another letter. It was a U, and it was followed by an R, and so on, till Durgin had been spelled. "Thunder!" cried Whitwell. "If anything's happened to Jeff!"

Jackson lifted his hand from the planchette.

"Oh, go on, Jackson!" Whitwell entreated. "Don't leave it so!"

"I can't seem to go on," Jackson whispered, and Westover could not resist the fear that suddenly rose among them. But he made the first struggle against it. "This is nonsense. Or, if there's any sense in it, it means that Jeff's ship has broken her shaft and put back."

Whitwell gave a loud laugh of relief. "That's so! You've hit it, Mr. Westover."

Jackson said, quietly: "He didn't mean to start home till tomorrow. And how could he send any message unless he was--"

"Easily!" cried Westover. "It's simply an instance of mental impression-of telepathy, as they call it."

"That's so!" shouted Whitwell, with eager and instant conviction.

Westover could see that Jackson still doubted. "If you believe that a disembodied spirit can communicate with you, why not an embodied spirit? If anything has happened to your brother's ship, his mind would be strongly on you at home, and why couldn't it convey its thought to you?"

"Because he ha'n't started yet," said Jackson.

Westover wanted to laugh; but they all heard voices without, which seemed to be coming nearer, and he listened with the rest. He made out Frank Whitwell's voice, and his sister's; and then another voice, louder and gayer, rose boisterously above them. Whitwell flung the door open and plunged out into the night. He came back, hauling Jeff Durgin in by the shoulder.

"Here, now," he shouted to Jackson, "you just let this feller and plantchette fight it out together!"

"What's the matter with plantchette?" said Jeff, before he said to his brother, "Hello, Jackson!" and to the Canuck, "Hello, Jombateeste!" He shook hands conventionally with them both, and then with the painter, whom he greeted with greater interest. "Glad to see you here, Mr. Westover. Did I take you by surprise?" he asked of the company at large.

"No, sir," said Whitwell. "Didn't surprise us any, if you are a fortnight ahead of time," he added, with a wink at the others.

"Well, I took a notion I wouldn't wait for the cattle-ship, and I started back on a French boat. Thought I'd try it. They live well. But I hoped I should astonish you a little, too. I might as well waited."

Whitwell laughed. "We heard from you--plantchette kept right round after you."

"That so?" asked Jeff, carelessly.

"Fact. Have a good voyage?" Whitwell had the air of putting a casual question.

"First-rate," said Jeff. "Plantchette say not?"

"No. Only about the broken shaft."

"Broken shaft? We didn't have any broken shaft. Plantchette's got mixed a little. Got the wrong ship."

After a moment of chop-fallenness, Whitwell said:

"Then somebody's been makin' free with your name. Curious how them devils cut up oftentimes."

He explained, and Jeff laughed uproariously when he understood the whole case. "Plantchette's been havin' fun with you."

Whitwell gave himself time for reflection. "No, sir, I don't look at it that way. I guess the wires got crossed some way. If there's such a thing as the spirits o' the livin' influencin' plantchette, accordin' to Mr. Westover's say, here, I don't see why it wa'n't. Jeff's being so near that got control of her and made her sign his name to somebody else's words. It shows there's something in it."

"Well, I'm glad to come back alive, anyway," said Jeff, with a joviality new to Westover. "I tell you, there a'n't many places finer than old Lion's Head, after all. Don't you think so, Mr. Westover? I want to get the daylight on it, but it does well by moonlight, even." He looked round at the tall girl, who had been lingering to hear the talk of plantchette; at the backward tilt he gave his head, to get her in range, she frowned as if she felt his words a betrayal, and slipped out of the room; the boy had already gone, and was making himself heard in the low room overhead.

"There's a lot of folks here this summer, mother says," he appealed from the check he had got to Jackson. "Every room taken for the whole month, she says."

"We've been pretty full all July, too," said Jackson, blankly.

"Well, it's a great business; and I've picked up a lot of hints over there. We're not so smart as we think we are. The Swiss can teach us a thing or two. They know how to keep a hotel."

"Go to Switzerland?" asked Whitwell.

"I slipped over into the edge of it."

"I want to know! Well, now them Alps, now--they so much bigger 'n the White Hills, after all?"

"Well, I don't know about all of 'em," said Jeff. "There may be some that would compare with our hills, but I should say that you could take Mount Washington up and set it in the lap of almost any one of the Alps I saw, and it would look like a baby on its mother's knee."

"I want to know!" said Whitwell again. His tone expressed disappointment, but impartiality; he would do justice to foreign

superiority if he must. "And about the ocean. What about waves runnin' mountains high?"

"Well, we didn't have it very rough. But I don't believe I saw any waves much higher than Lion's Head." Jeff laughed to find Whitwell taking him seriously. "Won't that satisfy you?"

"Oh, it satisfies me. Truth always does. But, now, about London. You didn't seem to say so much about London in your letters, now. Is it so big as they let on? Big--that is, to the naked eye, as you may say?"

"There a'n't any one place where you can get a complete bird's-eye view of it," said Jeff, "and two-thirds of it would be hid in smoke, anyway. You've got to think of a place that would take in the whole population of New England, outside of Massachusetts, and not feel as if it had more than a comfortable meal."

Whitwell laughed for joy in the bold figure.

"I'll tell you. When you've landed and crossed up from Liverpool, and struck London, you feel as if you'd gone to sea again. It's an ocean--a whole Atlantic of houses."

"That's right!" crowed Whitwell. "That's the way I thought it was. Growin' any?"

Jeff hesitated. "It grows in the night. You've heard about Chicago growing?"

"Yes."

"Well, London grows a whole Chicago every night."

"Good!" said Whitwell. "That suits me. And about Paris, now. Paris strike you the same way?"

"It don't need to," said Jeff. "That's a place where I'd like to live. Everybody's at home there. It's a man's house and his front yard, and I tell you they keep it clean. Paris is washed down every morning; scrubbed and mopped and rubbed dry. You couldn't find any more dirt than you could in mother's kitchen after she's hung out her wash. That so, Mr. Westover?"

Westover confirmed in general Jeff's report of the cleanliness of Paris.

"And beautiful! You don't know what a good-looking town is till you strike Paris. And they're proud of it, too. Every man acts as if he owned it. They've had the statue of Alsace in that Place de la Concorde of yours, Mr. Whitwell, where they had the guillotine all draped in black ever since the war with Germany; and they mean to have her back, some day."

"Great country, Jombateeste!" Whitwell shouted to the Canuck.

The little man roused himself from the muse in which he was listening and smoking. "Me, I'm Frantsh," he said.

"Yes, that's what Jeff was sayin'," said Whitwell. "I meant France."

"Oh," answered Jombateeste, impatiently, "I thought you mean the HUnited State."

"Well, not this time," said Whitwell, amid the general laughter.

"Good for Jombateeste," said Jeff. "Stand up for Canada every time, John. It's the livest country, in the world three months of the year, and the ice keeps it perfectly sweet the other nine."

Whitwell could not brook a diversion from the high and serious inquiry they had entered upon. "It must have made this country look pretty slim when you got back. How'd New York look, after Paris?"

"Like a pigpen," said Jeff. He left his chair and walked round the table toward a door opening into the adjoining room. For the first time Westover noticed a figure in white seated there, and apparently rapt in the talk which had been going on. At the approach of Jeff, and before he could have made himself seen at the doorway, a tremor seemed to pass over the figure; it fluttered to its feet, and then it vanished into the farther dark of the room. When Jeff disappeared within, there was a sound of rustling skirts and skurrying feet and the crash of a closing door, and then the free rise of laughing voices without. After a discreet interval, Westover said: "Mr. Whitwell, I must say good-night. I've got another day's work before me. It's been a most interesting evening."

"You must try it again," said Whitwell, hospitably. "We ha'n't got to the bottom of that broken shaft yet. You'll see 't plantchette 'll have something more to say about it: Heigh, Jackson?" He rose to receive Westover's goodnight; the others nodded to him.

As the painter climbed the hill to the hotel he saw two figures on the road below; the one in white drapery looked severed by a dark line slanting across it at the waist. In the country, he knew, such an appearance might mark the earliest stages of love-making, or mere youthful tenderness, in which there was nothing more implied or expected. But whatever the fact was, Westover felt a vague distaste for it, which, as it related itself to a more serious possibility, deepened to something like pain. It was probable that it should come to this between those two, but Westover rebelled against the event with a sense of its unfitness for which he could not give himself any valid reason; and in the end he accused himself of being a fool.

Two ladies sat on the veranda of the hotel and watched a cloud-wreath trying to lift itself from the summit of Lion's Head. In the effort it thinned away to transparency in places; in others, it tore its frail texture asunder and let parts of the mountain show through; then the

fragments knitted themselves loosely together, and the vapor lay again in dreamy quiescence.

The ladies were older and younger, and apparently mother and daughter. The mother had kept her youth in face and figure so admirably that in another light she would have looked scarcely the elder. It was the candor of the morning which confessed the fine vertical lines running up and down to her lips, only a shade paler than the girl's, and that showed her hair a trifle thinner in its coppery brown, her blue eyes a little dimmer. They were both very graceful, and they had soft, caressing voices; they now began to talk very politely to each other, as if they were strangers, or as if strangers were by. They talked of the landscape, and of the strange cloud effect before them. They said that they supposed they should see the Lion's Head when the cloud lifted, and they were both sure they had never been quite so near a cloud before. They agreed that this was because in Switzerland the mountains were so much higher and farther off. Then the daughter said, without changing the direction of her eyes or the tone of her voice, "The gentleman who came over from the station with us last night," and the mother was aware of Jeff Durgin advancing toward the corner of the veranda where they sat.

"I hope you have got rested," he said, with the jovial bluntness which was characteristic of him with women.

"Oh, yes indeed," said the elder lady. Jeff had spoken to her, but had looked chiefly at the younger. "I slept beautifully. So quiet here, and with this delicious air! Have you just tasted it?"

"No; I've been up ever since daylight, driving round," said Jeff. "I'm glad you like the air," he said, after a certain hesitation. "We always want to have people do that at Lion's Head. There's no air like it, though perhaps I shouldn't say so."

"Shouldn't?" the lady repeated.

"Yes; we own the air here--this part of it." Jeff smiled easily down at the lady's puzzled face.

"Oh! Then you are--are you a son of the house?"

"Son of the hotel, yes," said Jeff, with increasing ease. The lady continued her question in a look, and he went on: "I've been scouring the country for butter and eggs this morning. We shall get all our supplies from Boston next year, I hope, but we depend on the neighbors a little yet."

"How very interesting!" said the lady. "You must have a great many queer adventures," she suggested in a provisional tone.

"Well, nothing's queer to me in the hill country. But you see some characters here." He nodded over his shoulder to where Whitwell stood by the flag-staff, waiting the morning impulse of the ladies. "There's one of the greatest of them now."

The lady put up a lorgnette and inspected Whitwell. "What are those strange things he has got in his hatband?"

"The flowers and the fungi of the season," said Jeff. "He takes parties of the ladies walking, and that collection is what he calls his almanac."

"Really?" cried the girl. "That's charming!"

"Delightful!" said the mother, moved by the same impulse, apparently.

"Yes," said Jeff. "You ought to hear him talk. I'll introduce him to you after breakfast, if you like."

"Oh, we should only be too happy," said the mother, and her daughter, from her inflection, knew that she would be willing to defer her happiness.

But Jeff did not. "Mr. Whitwell!" he called out, and Whitwell came across the grass to the edge of the veranda. "I want to introduce you to Mrs. Vostrand--and Miss Vostrand."

Whitwell took their slim hands successively into his broad, flat palm, and made Mrs. Vostrand repeat her name to him. "Strangers at Lion's Head, I presume?" Mrs. Vostrand owned as much; and he added: "Well, I guess you won't find a much sightlier place anywhere; though, accordin' to Jeff's say, here, they've got bigger mountains on the other side. Ever been in Europe?"

"Why, yes," said Mrs. Vostrand, with a little mouth of deprecation.

"In fact, we've just come home. We've been living there."

"That so?" returned Whitwell, in humorous toleration. "Glad to get back, I presume?"

"Oh yes--yes," said Mrs. Vostrand, in a sort of willowy concession, as if the character before her were not to be crossed or gainsaid.

"Well, it 'll do you good here," said Whitwell. "'N' the young lady, too. A few tramps over these hills 'll make you look like another woman." He added, as if he had perhaps made his remarks too personal to the girl, "Both of you."

"Oh yes," the mother assented, fervently. "We shall count upon your showing us all their-mysteries."

Whitwell looked pleased. "I'll do my best--whenever you're ready." He went on: "Why, Jeff, here, has just got back, too. Jeff, what was the name of that French boat you said you crossed on? I want to see if I can't make out what plantchette meant by that broken shaft. She must have meant something, and if I could find out the name of the ship-- Tell the ladies about it?" Jeff laughed, with a shake of the head, and Whitwell continued, "Why, it was like this," and he possessed the ladies

of a fact which they professed to find extremely interesting. At the end of their polite expressions he asked Jeff again: "What did you say the name was?"

"Aquitaine," said Jeff, briefly.

"Why, we came on the Aquitaine!" said Mrs. Vostrand, with a smile for Jeff. "But how did we happen not to see one another?"

"Oh, I came second-cabin," said Jeff. "I worked my way over on a cattle-ship to London, and, when I decided not to work my way back, I found I hadn't enough money for a first-cabin passage. I was in a hurry to get back in time to get settled at Harvard, and so I came second-cabin. It wasn't bad. I used to see you across the rail."

"Well!" said Whitwell.

"How very--amusing!" said Mrs. Vostrand. "What a small world it is!" With these words she fell into a vagary; her daughter recalled her from it with a slight movement. "Breakfast? How impatient you are, Genevieve! Well!" She smiled the sweetest parting to Whitwell, and suffered herself to be led away by Jeff.

"And you're at Harvard? I'm so interested! My own boy will be going there soon."

"Well, there's no place like Harvard," said Jeff. "I'm in my Sophomore year now."

"Oh, a Sophomore! Fancy!" cried Mrs. Vostrand, as if nothing could give her more pleasure. "My son is going to prepare at St. Mark's. Did you prepare there?"

"No, I prepared at Lovewell Academy, over here." Jeff nodded in a southerly direction.

"Oh, indeed!" said Mrs. Vostrand, as if she knew where Lovewell was, and instantly recognized the name of the ancient school.

They had reached the dining room, and Jeff pushed the screen-door open with one hand, and followed the ladies in. He had the effect of welcoming them like invited guests; he placed the ladies himself at a window, where he said Mrs. Vostrand would be out of the draughts, and they could have a good view of Lion's Head.

He leaned over between them, when they were seated, to get sight of the mountain, and, "There!" he said. "That cloud's gone at last." Then, as if it would be modester in the proprietor of the view to leave them to their flattering raptures in it, he moved away and stood talking a moment with Cynthia Whitwell near the door of the serving-room. He talked gayly, with many tosses of the head and turns about, while she listened with a vague smile, motionlessly.

"She's very pretty," said Miss Vostrand to her mother.

"Yes. The New England type," murmured the mother.

"They all have the same look, a good deal," said the girl, glancing over the room where the waitresses stood ranged against the wall with their hands folded at their waists. "They have better faces than figures, but she is beautiful every way. Do you suppose they are all schoolteachers? They look intellectual. Or is it their glasses?"

"I don't know," said the mother. "They used to be; but things change here so rapidly it may all be different. Do you like it?"

"I think it's charming here," said the younger lady, evasively.

"Everything is so exquisitely clean. And the food is very good. Is this corn-bread--that you've told me about so much?"

"Yes, this is corn-bread. You will have to get accustomed to it."

"Perhaps it won't take long. I could fancy that girl knowing about everything. Don't you like her looks?"

"Oh, very much." Mrs. Vostrand turned for another glance at Cynthia.

"What say?" Their smiling waitress came forward from the wall where she was leaning, as if she thought they had spoken to her.

"Oh, we were speaking--the young lady to whom Mr. Durgin was talking--she is--"

"She's the housekeeper--Miss Whitwell."

"Oh, indeed! She seems so young--"

"I guess she knows what to do-o-o," the waitress chanted. "We think she's about ri-i-ght." She smiled tolerantly upon the misgiving of the stranger, if it was that, and then retreated when the mother and daughter began talking together again.

They had praised the mountain with the cloud off, to Jeff, very politely, and now the mother said, a little more intimately, but still with the deference of a society acquaintance: "He seems very gentlemanly, and I am sure he is very kind. I don't quite know what to do about it, do you?"

"No, I don't. It's all strange to me, you know."

"Yes, I suppose it must be. But you will get used to it if we remain in the country. Do you think you will dislike it?"

"Oh no! It's very different."

"Yes, it's different. He is very handsome, in a certain way." The daughter said nothing, and the mother added: "I wonder if he was trying

to conceal that he had come second-cabin, and was not going to let us know that he crossed with us?"

"Do you think he was bound to do so?"

"No. But it was very odd, his not mentioning it. And his going out on a cattle-steamer?" the mother observed.

"Oh, but that's very chic, I've heard," the daughter replied. "I've heard that the young men like it and think it a great chance. They have great fun. It isn't at all like second-cabin."

"You young people have your own world," the mother answered, caressingly.

XVI.

Westover met the ladies coming out of the dining-room as he went in rather late to breakfast; he had been making a study of Lion's Head in the morning light after the cloud lifted from it. He was always doing Lion's Heads, it seemed to him; but he loved the mountain, and he was always finding something new in it.

He was now seeing it inwardly with so exclusive a vision that he had no eyes for these extremely pretty women till they were out of sight. Then he remembered noticing them, and started with a sense of recognition, which he verified by the hotel register when he had finished his meal. It was, in fact, Mrs. James W. Vostrand, and it was Miss Vostrand, whom Westover had known ten years before in Italy. Mrs. Vostrand had then lately come abroad for the education of her children, and was pausing in doubt at Florence whether she should educate them in Germany or Switzerland. Her husband had apparently abandoned this question to her, and he did not contribute his presence to her moral support during her struggle with a problem which Westover remembered as having a tendency to solution in the direction of a permanent stay in Florence.

In those days he liked Mrs. Vostrand very much, and at twenty he considered her at thirty distinctly middle-aged. For one winter she had a friendly little salon, which was the most attractive place in Florence to him, then a cub painter sufficiently unlicked. He was aware of her children being a good deal in the salon: a girl of eight, who was like her mother, and quite a savage little boy of five, who may have been like his father. If he was, and the absent Mr. Vostrand had the same habit of sulking and kicking at people's shins, Westover could partly understand why Mrs. Vostrand had come to Europe for the education of her children. It all came vividly back to him, while he went about looking for Mrs. Vostrand and her daughter on the verandas and in the parlors. But he did not find them, and he was going to send his name to their rooms when he came upon Jeff Durgin figuring about the office in a fresh London conception of an outing costume.

"You're very swell," said Westover, halting him to take full note of it.

"Like it? Well, I knew you'd understand what it meant. Mother thinks it's a little too rowdy-looking. Her idea is black broadcloth frock-coat and doeskin trousers for a gentleman, you know." He laughed with a young joyousness, and then became serious. "Couple of ladies here, somewhere, I'd like to introduce you to. Came over with me from the depot last night. Very nice people, and I'd like to make it pleasant for them--get up something--go somewhere--and when you see their style you can judge what it had better be. Mrs. Vostrand and her daughter."

"Thank you," said Westover. "I think I know them already at least one of them. I used to go to Mrs. Vostrand's house in Florence."

"That so? Well, fact is, I crossed with them; but I came second-cabin, because I'd spent all my money, and I didn't get acquainted with them on the ship, but we met in the train coming up last night. Said they had heard of Lion's Head on the other side from friends. But it was quite a coincidence, don't you think? I'd like to have them see what this neighborhood really is; and I wish, Mr. Westover, you'd find out, if you can, what they'd like. If they're for walking, we could get Whitwell to personally conduct a party, and if they're for driving, I'd like to show them a little mountain-coaching myself."

"I don't know whether I'd better not leave the whole thing to you, Jeff," Westover said, after a moment's reflection. "I don't see exactly how I could bring the question into a first interview."

"Well, perhaps it would be rather rushing it. But, if I get up something, you'll come, Mr. Westover?"

"I will, with great pleasure," said Westover, and he went to make his call.

A half-hour later he was passing the door of the old parlor which Mrs. Durgin still kept for hers, on his way up to his room, when a sound of angry voices came out to him. Then the voice of Mrs. Durgin defined itself in the words: "I'm not goin' to have to ask any more folks for their rooms on your account, Jeff Durgin--Mr. Westover! Mr. Westover, is that you?" her voice broke off to call after him as he hurried by, "Won't you come in here a minute?"

He hesitated, and then Jeff called, "Yes, come in, Mr. Westover."

The painter found him sitting on the old hair-cloth sofa, with his stick between his hands and knees, confronting his mother, who was rocking excitedly to and fro in the old hair-cloth easy-chair.

"You know these folks that Jeff's so crazy about?" she demanded.

"Crazy!" cried Jeff, laughing and frowning at the same time. "What's crazy in wanting to go off on a drive and choose your own party?"

"Do you know them?" Mrs. Durgin repeated to Westover.

"The Vostrands? Why, yes. I knew Mrs. Vostrand in Italy a good many years ago, and I've just been calling on her and her daughter, who was a little girl then."

"What kind of folks are they?"

"What kind? Really! Why, they're very charming people--"

"So Jeff seems to think. Any call to show them any particular attention?"

"I don't know if I quite understand--"

"Why, it's just this. Jeff, here, wants to make a picnic for them, or something, and I can't see the sense of it. You remember what happened at that other picnic, with that Mrs. Marven"--Jeff tapped the floor with his stick impatiently, and Westover felt sorry for him--"and I don't want it to happen again, and I've told Jeff so. I presume he thinks it'll set him right with them, if they're thinkin' demeaning of him because he came over second-cabin on their ship."

Jeff set his teeth and compressed his lips to bear as best he could, the give-away which his mother could not appreciate in its importance to him:

"They're not the kind of people to take such a thing shabbily," said Westover. "They didn't happen to mention it, but Mrs. Vostrand must have got used to seeing young fellows in straits of all kinds during her life abroad. I know that I sometimes made the cup of tea and biscuit she used to give me in Florence do duty for a dinner, and I believe she knew it."

Jeff looked up at Westover with a grateful, sidelong glance.

His mother said: "Well, then, that's all right, and Jeff needn't do anything for them on that account. And I've made up my mind about one thing: whatever the hotel does has got to be done for the whole hotel. It can't pick and choose amongst the guests." Westover liked so little the part of old family friend which he seemed, whether he liked it or not, to bear with the Durgins, that he would gladly have got away now, but Mrs. Durgin detained him with a direct appeal. "Don't you think so, Mr. Westover?"

Jeff spared him the pain of a response. "Very well," he said to his mother; "I'm not the hotel, and you never want me to be. I can do this on my own account."

"Not with my coach and not with my hosses," said his mother.

Jeff rose. "I might as well go on down to Cambridge, and get to work on my conditions."

"Just as you please about that," said Mrs. Durgin, with the same

impassioned quiet that showed in her son's handsome face and made it one angry red to his yellow hair. "We've got along without you so far, this summer, and I guess we can the rest of the time. And the sooner you work off your conditions the better, I presume."

The next morning Jeff came to take leave of him, where Westover had pitched his easel and camp-stool on the slope behind the hotel.

"Why, are you really going?" he asked. "I was in hopes it might have blown over."

"No, things don't blow over so easy with mother," said Jeff, with an embarrassed laugh, but no resentment. "She generally means what she says."

"Well, in this case, Jeff, I think she was right."

"Oh, I guess so," said Jeff, pulling up a long blade of grass and taking it between his teeth. "Anyway, it comes to the same thing as far as I'm concerned. It's for her to say what shall be done and what sha'n't be done in her own house, even if it is a hotel. That's what I shall do in mine. We're used to these little differences; but we talk it out, and that's the end of it. I shouldn't really go, though, if I didn't think I ought to get in some work on those conditions before the thing begins regularly. I should have liked to help here a little, for I've had a good time and I ought to be willing to pay for it. But she's in good hands. Jackson's well--for him--and she's got Cynthia."

The easy security of tone with which Jeff pronounced the name vexed Westover. "I suppose your mother would hardly know how to do without her, even if you were at home," he said, dryly.

"Well, that's a fact," Jeff assented, with a laugh for the hit. "And Jackson thinks the world of her. I believe he trusts her judgment more than he does mother's about the hotel. Well, I must be going. You don't know where Mrs. Vostrand is going to be this winter, I suppose?"

"No, I don't," said Westover. He could not help a sort of blind resentment in the situation. If he could not feel that Jeff was the best that could be for Cynthia, he had certainly no reason to regret that his thoughts could be so lightly turned from her. But the fact anomalously incensed him as a slight to the girl, who might have been still more sacrificed by Jeff's constancy. He forced himself to add: "I fancy Mrs. Vostrand doesn't know herself."

"I wish I didn't know where I was going to be," said Jeff. "Well, good-bye, Mr. Westover. I'll see you in Boston."

"Oh, good-bye." The painter freed himself from his brush and palette for a parting handshake, reluctantly.

Jeff plunged down the hill, waving a final adieu from the corner of the hotel before he vanished round it.

Mrs. Vostrand and her daughter were at breakfast when Westover came in after the early light had been gone some time. They entreated him to join them at their table, and the mother said: "I suppose you were up soon enough to see young Mr. Durgin off. Isn't it too bad he has to go back to college when it's so pleasant in the country?"

"Not bad for him," said Westover. "He's a young man who can stand a great deal of hard work." Partly because he was a little tired of Jeff, and partly because he was embarrassed in their presence by the reason of his going, he turned the talk upon the days they had known together.

Mrs. Vostrand was very willing to talk of her past, even apart from his, and she told him of her sojourn in Europe since her daughter had left school. They spent their winters in Italy and their summers in Switzerland, where it seemed her son was still at his studies in Lausanne. She wished him to go to Harvard, she said, and she supposed he would have to finish his preparation at one of the American schools; but she had left the choice entirely to Mr. Vostrand.

This seemed a strange event after twelve years' stay in Europe for the education of her children, but Westover did not feel authorized to make any comment upon it. He fell rather to thinking how very pleasant both mother and daughter were, and to wondering how much wisdom they had between them. He reflected that men had very little wisdom, as far as he knew them, and he questioned whether, after all, the main difference between men and women might not be that women talked their follies and men acted theirs. Probably Mrs. Vostrand, with all her babble, had done fewer foolish things than her husband, but here Westover felt his judgment disabled by the fact that he had never met her husband; and his mind began to wander to a question of her daughter, whom he had there before him. He found himself bent upon knowing more of the girl, and trying to eliminate her mother from the talk, or, at least, to make Genevieve lead in it. But apparently she was not one of the natures that like to lead; at any rate, she remained discreetly in abeyance, and Westover fancied she even respected her mother's opinions and ideas. He thought this very well for both of them, whether it was the effect of Mrs. Vostrand's merit or Miss Vostrand's training. They seemed both of one exquisite gentleness, and of one sweet manner, which was rather elaborate and formal in expression. They deferred to each other as politely as they deferred to him, but, if anything, the daughter deferred most.

XVII.

The Vostrands did not stay long at Lion's Head. Before the week was out Mrs. Vostrand had a letter summoning them to meet her husband at Montreal, where that mysterious man, who never came into the range of Westover's vision, somehow, was kept by business from joining them in the mountains.

Early in October the painter received Mrs. Vostrand's card at his studio in Boston, and learned from the scribble which covered it that she was with her daughter at the Hotel Vendome. He went at once to see them there, and was met, almost before the greetings were past, with a prayer for his opinion.

"Favorable opinion?" he asked.

"Favorable? Oh yes; of course. It's simply this. When I sent you my card, we were merely birds of passage, and now I don't know but we are-- What is the opposite of birds of passage?"

Westover could not think, and said so.

"Well, it doesn't matter. We were walking down the street, here, this morning, and we saw the sign of an apartment to let, in a window, and we thought, just for amusement, we would go in and look at it."

"And you took it?"

"No, not quite so rapid as that. But it was lovely; in such a pretty 'hotel garni', and so exquisitely furnished! We didn't really think of staying in Boston; we'd quite made up our minds on New York; but this apartment is a temptation."

"Why not yield, then?" said Westover. "That's the easiest way with a temptation. Confess, now, that you've taken the apartment already!"

"No, no, I haven't yet," said Mrs. Vostrand.

"And if I advised not, you wouldn't?"

"Ah, that's another thing!"

"When are you going to take possession, Mrs. Vostrand?"

"Oh, at once, I suppose--if we do!"

"And may I come in when I'm hungry, just as I used to do in Florence, and will you stay me with flagons in the old way?"

"There never was anything but tea, you know well enough."

"The tea had rum in it."

"Well, perhaps it will have rum in it here, if you're very good."

"I will try my best, on condition that you'll make any and every possible use of me. Mrs. Vostrand, I can't tell you how very glad I am you're going to stay," said the painter, with a fervor that made her impulsively put out her hand to him. He kept it while he could add, "I don't forget --I can never forget--how good you were to me in those days," and at that

she gave his hand a quick pressure. "If I can do anything at all for you, you will let me, won't you. I'm afraid you'll be so well provided for that there won't be anything. Ask them to slight you, to misuse you in something, so that I can come to your rescue."

"Yes, I will," Mrs. Vostrand promised. "And may we come to your studio to implore your protection?"

"The sooner the better." Westover got himself away with a very sweet friendship in his heart for this rather anomalous lady, who, more than half her daughter's life, had lived away from her daughter's father, upon apparently perfectly good terms with him, and so discreetly and self-respectfully that no breath of reproach had touched her. Until now, however, her position had not really concerned Westover, and it would not have concerned him now, if it had not been for a design that formed itself in his mind as soon as he knew that Mrs. Vostrand meant to pass the winter in Boston. He felt at once that he could not do things by halves for a woman who had once done them for him by wholes and something over, and he had instantly decided that he must not only be very pleasant to her himself, but he must get his friends to be pleasant, too. His friends were some of the nicest people in Boston; nice in both the personal and the social sense; he knew they would not hesitate to sacrifice themselves for him in a good cause, and that made him all the more anxious that the cause should be good beyond question.

Since his last return from Paris he had been rather a fad as a teacher, and his class had been kept quite strictly to the ladies who got it up and to such as they chose to let enter it. These were not all chosen for wealth or family; there were some whose gifts gave the class distinction, and the ladies were glad to have them. It would be easy to explain Mrs. Vostrand to these, but the others might be more difficult; they might have their anxieties, and Westover meant to ask the leader of the class to help him receive at the studio tea he had at once imagined for the Vostrands, and that would make her doubly responsible.

He found himself drawing a very deep and long breath before he began to mount the many stairs to his studio, and wishing either that Mrs. Vostrand had not decided to spend the winter in Boston, or else that he were of a slacker conscience and could wear his gratitude more lightly. But there was some relief in thinking that he could do nothing for a month yet. He gained a degree of courage by telling the ladies, when he went to find them in their new apartment, that he should want them to meet a few of his friends at tea as soon as people began to get back to town; and he made the most of their instant joy in accepting his invitation.

His pleasure was somehow dashed a little, before he left them, by the announcement of Jeff Durgin's name.

"I felt bound to send him my card," said Mrs. Vostrand, while Jeff was following his up in the elevator. "He was so very kind to us the day we arrived at Zion's Head; and I didn't know but he might be feeling a little sensitive about coming over second-cabin in our ship; and--"

"How like you, Mrs. Vostrand!" cried Westover, and he was now distinctly glad he had not tried to sneak out of doing something for her. "Your kindness won't be worse wasted on Durgin than it was on me, in the old days, when I supposed I had taken a second-cabin passage for the voyage of life. There's a great deal of good in him; I don't mean to say he got through his Freshman year without trouble with the college authorities, but the Sophomore year generally brings wisdom."

"Oh," said Mrs. Vostrand, "they're always a little wild at first, I suppose."

Later, the ladies brought Jeff with them when they came to Westover's studio, and the painter perceived that they were very good friends, as if they must have met several times since he had seen them together. He interested himself in the growing correctness of Jeff's personal effect. During his Freshman year, while the rigor of the unwritten Harvard law yet forbade him a silk hat or a cane, he had kept something of the boy, if not the country boy. Westover had noted that he had always rather a taste for clothes, but in this first year he did not get beyond a derby-hat and a sack-coat, varied toward the end by a cutaway. In the outing dress he wore at home he was always effective, but there was something in Jeff's figure which did not lend itself to more formal fashion; something of herculean proportion which would have marked him of a classic beauty perhaps if he had not been in clothes at all, or of a yeomanly vigor and force if he had been clad for work, but which seemed to threaten the more worldly conceptions of the tailor with danger. It was as if he were about to burst out of his clothes, not because he wore them tight, but because there was somehow more of the man than the citizen in him; something native, primitive, something that Westover could not find quite a word for, characterized him physically and spiritually. When he came into the studio after these delicate ladies, the robust Jeff Durgin wore a long frockcoat, with a flower in his button-hole, and in his left hand he carried a silk hat turned over his forearm as he must have noticed people whom he thought stylish carrying their hats. He had on dark-gray trousers and sharp-pointed enamelled-leather shoes; and Westover grotesquely reflected that he was dressed, as he stood, to lead Genevieve Vostrand to the altar.

Westover saw at once that when he made his studio tea for the Vostrands he must ask Jeff; it would be cruel, and for several reasons impossible, not to do so, and he really did not see why he should not. Mrs. Vostrand was taking him on the right ground, as a Harvard student, and nobody need take him on any other. Possibly people would ask him to teas at their own houses, from Westover's studio, but he could not feel that he was concerned in that. Society is interested in a man's future, not his past, as it is interested in a woman's past, not her future.

But when he gave his tea it went off wonderfully well in every way, perhaps because it was one of the first teas of the fall. It brought people together in their autumnal freshness before the winter had begun to wither their resolutions to be amiable to one another, to dull their wits, to stale their stories, or to give so wide a currency to their

sayings that they could not freely risk them with every one.

Westover had thought it best to be frank with the leading lady of his class, when she said she should be delighted to receive for him, and would provide suitable young ladies to pour: a brunette for the tea, and a blonde for the chocolate. She took his scrupulosity very lightly when he spoke of Mrs. Vostrand's educational sojourn in Europe; she laughed and said she knew the type, and the situation was one of the most obvious phases of the American marriage.

He protested in vain that Mrs. Vostrand was not the type; she laughed again, and said, Oh, types were never typical. But she was hospitably gracious both to her and to Miss Genevieve; she would not allow that the mother was not the type when Westover challenged her experience, but she said they were charming, and made haste to get rid of the question with the vivid demand: "But who was your young friend who ought to have worn a lion-skin and carried a club?"

Westover by this time disdained palliation. He said that Jeff was the son of the landlady at Lion's Head Mountain, which he had painted so much, and he was now in his second year at Harvard, where he was going to make a lawyer of himself; and this interested the lady. She asked if he had talent, and a number of other things about him and about his mother; and Westover permitted himself to be rather graphic in telling of his acquaintance with Mrs. Durgin.

XVIII.

After all, it was rather a simple-hearted thing of Westover to have either hoped or feared very much for the Vostrands. Society, in the sense of good society, can always take care of itself, and does so perfectly. In the case of Mrs. Vostrand some ladies who liked Westover and wished to be civil to him asked her and her daughter to other afternoon teas, shook hands with them at their coming, and said, when they went, they were sorry they must be going so soon. In the crowds people recognized them now and then, both of those who had met them at Westover's studio, and of those who had met them at Florence and Lausanne. But if these were merely people of fashion they were readily, rid of the Vostrands, whom the dullest among them quickly perceived not to be of their own sort, somehow. Many of the ladies of Westover's class made Genevieve promise to let them paint her; and her beauty and her grace availed for several large dances at the houses of more daring spirits, where the daughters made a duty of getting partners for her, and discharged it conscientiously. But there never was an approach to more intimate hospitalities, and toward the end of February, when good society in Boston goes southward to indulge a Lenten grief at Old Point Comfort, Genevieve had so many vacant afternoons and evenings at her disposal that she could not have truthfully pleaded a previous engagement to the invitations Jeff Durgin made her. They were chiefly for the theatre, and Westover saw him with her and her mother at different plays; he

wondered how Jeff had caught on to the notion of asking Mrs. Vostrand to come with them.

Jeff's introductions at Westover's tea had not been many, and they had not availed him at all. He had been asked to no Boston houses, and when other students, whom he knew, were going in to dances, the whole winter he was socially as quiet, but for the Vostrands, as at the Mid-year Examinations. Westover could not resent the neglect of society in his case, and he could not find that he quite regretted it; but he thought it characteristically nice of Mrs. Vostrand to make as much of the friendless fellow as she fitly could. He had no doubt but her tact would be equal to his management in every way, and that she could easily see to it that he did not become embarrassing to her daughter or herself.

One day, after the east wind had ceased to blow the breath of the ice-fields of Labrador against the New England coast, and the buds on the trees along the mall between the lawns of the avenue were venturing forth in a hardy experiment of the Boston May, Mrs. Vostrand asked Westover if she had told him that Mr. Vostrand was actually coming on to Boston. He rejoiced with her in this prospect, and he reciprocated the wish which she said Mr. Vostrand had always had for a meeting with himself.

A fortnight later, when the leaves had so far inured themselves to the weather as to have fully expanded, she announced another letter from Mr. Vostrand, saying that, after all, he should not be able to come to Boston, but hoped to be in New York before she sailed.

"Sailed!" cried Westover.

"Why, yes! Didn't you know we were going to sail in June? I thought I had told you!"

"No--"

"Why, yes. We must go out to poor Checco, now; Mr. Vostrand insists upon that. If ever we are a united family again, Mr. Westover--if Mr. Vostrand can arrange his business, when Checco is ready to enter Harvard --I mean to take a house in Boston. I'm sure I should be contented to live nowhere else in America. The place has quite bewitched me--dear old, sober, charming Boston! I'm sure I should like to live here all the rest of my life. But why in the world do people go out of town so early? Those houses over there have been shut for a whole month past!"

They were sitting at Mrs. Vostrand's window looking out on the avenue, where the pale globular electrics were swimming like jelly-fish in the clear evening air, and above the ranks of low trees the houses on the other side were close-shuttered from basement to attic.

Westover answered: "Some go because they have such pleasant houses at the shore, and some because they want to dodge their taxes."

"To dodge their taxes?" she repeated, and he had to explain how if people were in their country-houses before the 1st of May they would not have to

pay the high personal tax of the city; and she said that she would write that to Mr. Vostrand; it would be another point in favor of Boston. Women, she declared, would never have thought of such a thing; she denounced them as culpably ignorant of so many matters that concerned them, especially legal matters. "And you think," she asked, "that Mr. Durgin will be a good lawyer? That he will-distinguish himself?"

Westover thought it rather a short-cut to Jeff from the things they had been talking of, but if she wished to speak of him he had no reason to oppose her wish. "I've heard it's all changed a good deal. There are still distinguished lawyers, and lawyers who get on, but they don't distinguish themselves in the old way so much, and they get on best by becoming counsel for some powerful corporation."

"And you think he has talent?" she pursued. "For that, I mean."

"Oh, I don't know," said Westover. "I think he has a good head. He can do what he likes within certain limits, and the limits are not all on the side I used to fancy. He baffles me. But of late I fancy you've seen rather more of him than I have."

"I have urged him to go more to you. But," said Mrs. Vostrand, with a burst of frankness, "he thinks you don't like him."

"He's wrong," said Westover. "But I might dislike him very much."

"I see what you mean," said Mrs. Vostrand, "and I'm glad you've been so frank with me. I've been so interested in Mr. Durgin, so interested! Isn't he very young?"

The question seemed a bit of indirection to Westover. But he answered directly enough. "He's rather old for a Sophomore, I believe. He's twenty-two."

"And Genevieve is twenty. Mr. Westover, may I trust you with something?"

"With everything, I hope, Mrs. Vostrand."

"It's about Genevieve. Her father is so opposed to her making a foreign marriage. It seems to be his one great dread. And, of course, she's very much exposed to it, living abroad so much with me, and I feel doubly bound on that account to respect her father's opinions, or even prejudices. Before we left Florence--in fact, last winter--there was a most delightful young officer wished to marry her. I don't know that she cared anything for him, though he was everything that I could have wished: handsome, brilliant, accomplished, good family; everything but rich, and that was what Mr. Vostrand objected to; or, rather, he objected to putting up, as he called it, the sum that Captain Grassi would have had to deposit with the government before he was allowed to marry. You know how it is with the poor fellows in the army, there; I don't understand the process exactly, but the sum is something like sixty thousand francs, I believe; and poor Gigi hadn't it: I always called him Gigi, but his name is Count Luigi de' Popolani Grassi; and he is

descended from one of the old republican families of Florence. He is so nice! Mr. Vostrand was opposed to him from the beginning, and as soon as he heard of the sixty thousand francs, he utterly refused. He called it buying a son-in-law, but I don't see why he need have looked at it in that light. However, it was broken off, and we left Florence--more for poor Gigi's sake than for Genevieve's, I must say. He was quite heart-broken; I pitied him."

Her voice had a tender fall in the closing words, and Westover could fancy how sweet she would make her compassion to the young man. She began several sentences aimlessly, and he suggested, to supply the broken thread of her discourse rather than to offer consolation, while her eyes seemed to wander with her mind, and ranged the avenue up and down: "Those foreign marriages are not always successful."

"No, they are not," she assented. "But don't you think they're better with Italians than with Germans, for instance."

"I don't suppose the Italians expect their wives to black their boots, but I've heard that they beat them, sometimes."

"In exaggerated cases, perhaps they do," Mrs. Vostrand admitted. "And, of course," she added, thoughtfully, "there is nothing like a purely American marriage for happiness."

Westover wondered how she really regarded her own marriage, but she never betrayed any consciousness of its variance from the type.

XIX.

A young couple came strolling down the avenue who to Westover's artistic eye first typified grace and strength, and then to his more personal perception identified themselves as Genevieve Vostrand and Jeff Durgin.

They faltered before one of the benches beside the mall, and he seemed to be begging her to sit down. She cast her eyes round till they must have caught the window of her mother's apartment; then, as if she felt safe under it, she sank into the seat and Jeff put himself beside her. It was quite too early yet for the simple lovers who publicly notify their happiness by the embraces and hand-clasps everywhere evident in our parks and gardens; and a Boston pair of social tradition would not have dreamed of sitting on a bench in Commonwealth Avenue at any hour. But two such aliens as Jeff and Miss Vostrand might very well do so; and Westover sympathized with their bohemian impulse.

Mrs. Vostrand and he watched them awhile, in talk that straggled away from them, and became more and more distraught in view of them. Jeff leaned forward, and drew on the ground with the point of his stick; Genevieve held her head motionless at a pensive droop. It was only their backs that Westover could see, and he could not, of course, make out a

syllable of what was effectively their silence; but all the same he began to feel as if he were peeping and eavesdropping. Mrs. Vostrand seemed not to share his feeling, and there was no reason why he should have it if she had not. He offered to go, but she said, No, no; he must not think of it till Genevieve came in; and she added some banalities about her always scolding when she had missed one of his calls; they would be so few, now, at the most.

"Why, do you intend to go so soon?" he asked.

She did not seem to hear him, and he could see that she was watching the young people intently. Jeff had turned his face up toward Genevieve, without lifting his person, and was saying something she suddenly shrank back from. She made a start as if to rise, but he put out his hand in front of her, beseechingly or compellingly, and she sank down again. But she slowly shook her head at what he was saying, and turned her face toward him so that it gave her profile to the spectators. In that light and at that distance it was impossible to do more than fancy anything fateful in the words which she seemed to be uttering; but Westover chose to fancy this. Jeff waited a moment in apparent silence, after she had spoken. He sat erect and faced her, and this gave his profile, too. He must have spoken, for she shook her head again; and then, at other words from him, nodded assentingly. Then she listened motionlessly while he poured a rapid stream of visible but inaudible words. He put out his hand, as if to take hers, but she put it behind her; Westover could see it white there against the belt of her dark dress.

Jeff went on more vehemently, but she remained steadfast, slowly shaking her head. When he ended she spoke, and with something of his own energy; he made a gesture of submission, and when she rose he rose, too. She stood a moment, and with a gentle and almost entreating movement she put out her hand to him. He stood looking down, with both his hands resting on the top of his stick, as if ignoring her proffer. Then he suddenly caught her hand, held it a moment; dropped it, and walked quickly away without looking back. Genevieve ran across the lawn and roadway toward the house.

"Oh, must, you go?" Mrs. Vostrand said to Westover. He found that he had probably risen in sympathy with Jeff's action. He was not aware of an intention of going, but he thought he had better not correct Mrs. Vostrand's error.

"Yes, I really must, now," he said.

"Well, then," she returned, distractedly, "do come often."

He hurried out to avoid meeting Genevieve. He passed her, on the public stairs of the house, but he saw that she did not recognize him in the dim light.

Late that night he was startled by steps that seemed to be seeking their way up the stairs to his landing, and then by a heavy knock on his door. He opened it, and confronted Jeff Durgin.

"May I come in, Mr. Westover?" he asked, with unwonted deference.

"Yes, come in," said Westover, with no great relish, setting his door open, and then holding onto it a moment, as if he hoped that, having come in, Jeff might instantly go out again.

His reluctance was lost upon Jeff, who said, unconscious of keeping his hat on: "I want to talk with you--I want to tell you something--"

"All right. Won't you sit down?"

At this invitation Jeff seemed reminded to take his hat off, and he put it on the floor beside his chair. "I'm not in a scrape, this time--or, rather, I'm in the worst kind of a scrape, though it isn't the kind that you want bail for."

"Yes," Westover prompted.

"I don't know whether you've noticed--and if you haven't it don't make any difference--that I've seemed to--care a good deal for Miss Vostrand?"

Westover saw no reason why he should not be frank, and said: "Too much, I've fancied sometimes, for a student in his Sophomore year."

"Yes, I know that. Well, it's over, whether it was too much or too little." He laughed in a joyless, helpless way, and looked deprecatingly at Westover. "I guess I've been making a fool of myself--that's all."

"It's better to make a fool of one's self than to make a fool of some one else," said Westover, oracularly.

"Yes," said Jeff, apparently finding nothing more definite in the oracle than people commonly find in oracles. "But I think," he went on, with a touch of bitterness, "that her mother might have told me that she was engaged--or the same as engaged."

"I don't know that she was bound to take you seriously, or to suppose you took yourself so, at your age and with your prospects in life. If you want to know"--Westover faltered, and then went on--"she began to be kind to you because she was afraid that you might think she didn't take your coming home second-cabin in the right way; and one thing led to another. You mustn't blame her for what's happened."

Westover defended Mrs. Vostrand, but he did not feel strong in her defence; he was not sure that Durgin was quite wrong, absurd as he had been. He sat down and looked up at his visitor under his brows.

"What are you here for, Jeff? Not to complain of Mrs. Vostrand?"

Jeff gave a short, shamefaced laugh. "No, it's this you're such an old friend of Mrs. Vostrand's that I thought she'd be pretty sure to tell you about it; and I wanted to ask--to ask--that you wouldn't say anything to

mother."

"You are a boy! I shouldn't think of meddling with your affairs," said Westover; he got up again, and Jeff rose, too.

Before noon the next day a district messenger brought Westover a letter which he easily knew, from, the now belated tall, angular hand, to be from Mrs. Vostrand. It announced on a much criss-crossed little sheet that she and Genevieve were inconsolably taking a very sudden departure, and were going on the twelve-o'clock train to New York, where Mr. Vostrand was to meet them. "In regard to that affair which I mentioned last night, he withdraws his objections (we have had an overnight telegram), and so I suppose all will go well. I cannot tell you how sorry we both are not to see you again; you have been such a dear, good friend to us; and if you don't hear from us again at New York, you will from the other side. Genevieve had some very strange news when she came in, and we both feel very sorry for the poor young fellow. You must console him from us all you can. I did not know before how much she was attached to Gigi: but it turned out very fortunately that she could say she considered herself bound to him, and did everything to save Mr. D.'s feelings."

XX.

Westover was not at Lion's Head again till the summer before Jeff's graduation. In the mean time the hotel had grown like a living thing. He could not have imagined wings in connection with the main edifice, but it had put forth wings--one that sheltered a new and enlarged dining-room, with two stories of chambers above, and another that hovered a parlor and ball-room under a like provision of chambers. An ell had been pushed back on the level behind the house; the barn had been moved farther to the southward, and on its old site a laundry built, with quarters for the help over it. All had been carefully, frugally, yet sufficiently done, and Westover was not surprised to learn that it was all the effect of Jackson Durgin's ingenuity and energy. Mrs. Durgin confessed to having no part in it; but she had kept pace, with Cynthia Whitwell's help, in the housekeeping. As Jackson had cautiously felt his way to the needs of their public in the enlargement and rearrangement of the hotel, the two housewives had watchfully studied, not merely the demands, but the half-conscious instincts of their guests, and had responded to them simply and adequately, in the spirit of Jackson's exterior and structural improvements. The walls of the new rooms were left unpapered and their floors uncarpeted; there were thin rugs put down; the wood-work was merely stained. Westover found that he need not to ask especially for some hot dish at night; there was almost the abundance of a dinner, though dinner was still at one o'clock.

Mrs. Durgin asked him the first day if he would not like to go into the serving-room and see it while they were serving dinner. She tried to conceal her pride in the busy scene--the waitresses pushing in through

one valve of the double-hinged doors with their empty trays, and out through the other with the trays full laden; delivering their dishes with the broken victual at the wicket, where the untouched portions were put aside and the rest poured into the waste; following in procession along the reeking steamtable, with its great tanks of soup and vegetables, where, the carvers stood with the joints and the trussed fowls smoking before them, which they sliced with quick sweeps of their blades, or waiting their turn at the board where the little plates with portions of fruit and dessert stood ready. All went regularly on amid a clatter of knives and voices and dishes; and the clashing rise and fall of the wire baskets plunging the soiled crockery into misty depths, whence it came up clean and dry without the touch of finger or towel. Westover could not deny that there were elements of the picturesque in it, so that he did not respond quite in kind to Jeff's suggestion--"Scene for a painter, Mr. Westover."

The young fellow followed satirically at his mother's elbow, and made a mock of her pride in it, trying to catch Westover's eye when she led him through the kitchen with its immense range, and introduced him to a new chef, who wiped his hand on his white apron to offer it to Westover.

"Don't let him get away without seeing the laundry, mother," her son jeered at a final air of absent-mindedness in her, and she defiantly accepted his challenge.

"Jeff's mad because he wasn't consulted," she explained, "and because we don't run the house like his one-horse European hotels."

"Oh, I'm not in it at all, Mr. Westover," said the young fellow. "I'm as much a passenger as you are. The only difference is that I'm allowed to work my passage."

"Well, one thing," said his mother, "is that we've got a higher class of boarders than we ever had before. You'll see, Mr. Westover, if you stay on here till August. There's a class that boards all the year round, and that knows what a hotel is--about as well as Jeff, I guess. You'll find 'em at the big city houses, the first of the winter, and then they go down to Floridy or Georgy for February and March; and they get up to Fortress Monroe in April, and work along north about the middle of May to them family hotels in the suburbs around Boston; and they stay there till it's time to go to the shore. They stay at the shore through July, and then they come here in August, and stay till the leaves turn. They're folks that live on their money, and they're the very highest class, I guess. It's a round of gayety with 'em the whole year through."

Jeff, from the vantage of his greater worldly experience, was trying to exchange looks of intelligence with Westover concerning those hotel-dwellers whom his mother revered as aristocrats; but he did not openly question her conceptions. "They've told me how they do, some of the ladies have," she went on. "They've got the money for it, and they know how to get the most for their money. Why, Mr. Westover, we've got rooms in this house, now, that we let for thirty-five to fifty dollars a week for two persons, and folks like that take 'em right along through August

and September, and want a room apiece. It's different now, I can tell you, from what it was when folks thought we was killin' 'em if we wanted ten or twelve dollars."

Westover had finished his dinner before this tour of the house began, and when it was over the two men strolled away together.

"You see, it's on the regular American lines," Jeff pursued, after parting with his mother. "Jackson's done it, and he can't imagine anything else. I don't say it isn't well done in its way, but the way's wrong; it's stupid and clumsy." When they were got so far from the hotel as to command a prospect of its ungainly mass sprawled upon the plateau, his smouldering disgust burst out: "Look at it! Did you ever see anything like it? I wish the damned thing would burn up--or down!"

Westover was aware in more ways than one of Jeff's exclusion from authority in the place, where he was constantly set aside from the management as if his future were so definitely dedicated to another calling that not even his advice was desired or permitted; and he could not help sympathizing a little with him when he chafed at his rejection. He saw a great deal of him, and he thought him quite up to the average of Harvard's Seniors in some essentials. He had been sobered, apparently, by experience; his unfortunate love-affair seemed to have improved him, as the phrase is.

They had some long walks and long talks together, and in one of them Jeff opened his mind, if not his heart, to the painter. He wanted to be the Landlord of the Lion's Head, which he believed he could make the best hotel in the mountains. He knew, of course, that he could not hope to make any changes that did not suit his mother and his brother, as long as they had the control, but he thought they would let him have the control sooner if his mother could only be got to give up the notion of his being a lawyer. As nearly as he could guess, she wanted him to be a lawyer because she did not want him to be a hotel-keeper, and her prejudice against that was because she believed that selling liquor made her father a drunkard.

"Well, now you know enough about me, Mr. Westover, to know that drink isn't my danger."

"Yes, I think I do," said Westover.

"I went a little wild in my Freshman year, and I got into that scrape, but I've never been the worse for liquor since; fact is, I never touch it now. There isn't any more reason why I should take to drink because I keep a hotel than Jackson; but just that one time has set mother against it, and I can't seem to make her understand that once is enough for me. Why, I should keep a temperance house, here, of course; you can't do anything else in these days. If I was left to choose between hotel-keeping and any other life that I know of, I'd choose it every time," Jeff went on, after a moment of silence. "I like a hotel. You can be your own man from the start; the start's made here, and I've helped to make it. All you've got to do is to have common-sense in the hotel

business, and you're sure to succeed. I believe I've got common-sense, and I believe I've got some ideas that I can work up into a great success. The reason that most people fail in the hotel business is that they waste so much, and the landlord that wastes on his guests can't treat them well. It's got so now that in the big city houses they can't make anything on feeding people, and so they try to make it up on the rooms. I should feed them well--I believe I know how--and I should make money on my table, as they do in Europe.

"I've thought a good many things out; my mind runs on it all the time; but I'm not going to bore you with it now."

"Oh, not at all," said Westover. "I'd like to know what your ideas are."

Well, some time I'll tell you. But look here, Mr. Westover, I wish if mother gets to talking about me with you that you'd let her know how I feel. We can't talk together, she and I, without quarrelling about it; but I guess you could put in a word that would show her I wasn't quite a fool. She thinks I've gone crazy from seeing the way they do things in Europe; that I'm conceited and unpatriotic, and I don't know what all." Jeff laughed as if with an inner fondness for his mother's wrong-headedness.

"And would you be willing to settle down here in the country for the rest of your life, and throw away your Harvard training on hotel-keeping?"

"What do the other fellows do with their Harvard training when they go into business, as nine-tenths of them do? Business is business, whether you keep a hotel or import dry-goods or manufacture cotton or run a railroad or help a big trust to cheat legally. Harvard has got to take a back seat when you get out of Harvard. But you don't suppose that keeping a summer hotel would mean living in the country the whole time, do you? That's the way mother does, but I shouldn't. It isn't good for the hotel, even. If I had such a place as Lion's Head, I should put a man and his family into it for the winter to look after it, and I should go to town myself--to Boston or New York, or I might go to London or Paris. They're not so far off, and it's so easy to get to them that you can hardly keep away." Jeff laughed, and looked up at Westover from the log where he sat, whittling a pine stick; Westover sat on the stump from which the log had been felled eight or ten years before.

"You are modern," he said.

"That's what I should do at first. But I don't believe I should have Lion's Head very long before I had another hotel--in Florida, or the Georgia uplands, or North Carolina, somewhere. I should take my help back and forth; it would be as easy to run two hotels as one-easier! It would keep my hand in. But if you want to know, I'd rather stick here in the country, year in and year out, and run Lion's Head, than to be a lawyer and hang round trying to get a case for nine or ten years. Who's going to support me? Do you suppose I want to live on mother till I'm forty? She don't think of that. She thinks I can go right into court and begin distinguishing myself, if I can fight the people off from

sending me to Congress. I'd rather live in the country, anyway. I think town's the place for winter, or two-three months of it, and after that I haven't got any use for it. But mother, she's got this old-fashioned ambition to have me go to a city and set up there. She thinks that if I was a lawyer in Boston I should be at the top of the heap. But I know better than that, and so do you; and I want you to give her some little hint of how it really is: how it takes family and money and a lot of influence to get to the top in any city."

It occurred to Westover, and not for the first time, that the frankest thing in Jeff Durgin was his disposition to use his friends. It seemed to him that Jeff was always asking something of him, and it did not change the fact that in this case he thought him altogether in the right. He said that if Mrs. Durgin spoke to him of the matter he would not keep the light from her. He looked behind him, now, for the first time, in recognition of the place where they had stopped. "Why, this is Whitwell's Clearing."

"Didn't you know it?" Jeff asked. "It changes a good deal every year, and you haven't been here for awhile, have you?"

"Not since Mrs. Marven's picnic," said Westover, and he added, quickly, to efface the painful association which he must have called up by his heedless words:

"The woods have crowded back upon it so. It can't be more than half its old size."

"No," Jeff assented. He struck his heel against a fragment of the pine bough he had been whittling, and drove it into the soft ground beside the log, and said, without looking up from it: "I met that woman at a dance last winter. It wasn't her dance, but she was running it as if it were, just the way she did with the picnic. She seemed to want to let bygones be bygones, and I danced with her daughter. She's a nice girl. I thought mother did wrong about that." Now he looked at Westover. "She couldn't help it, but it wasn't the thing to do. A hotel is a public house, and you can't act as if it wasn't. If mother hadn't known how to keep a hotel so well in other ways, she might have ruined the house by not knowing in a thing like that. But we've got some of the people with us this year that used to come here when we first took farm-boarders; mother don't know that they're ever so much nicer, socially, than the people that take the fifty-dollar rooms." He laughed, and then he said, seriously: "If I ever had a son, I don't believe I should let my pride in him risk doing him mischief. And if you've a mind to let her understand that you believe I'm set against the law for good and all--"

"I guess I shall not be your ambassador, so far as that. Why don't you tell her yourself?"

"She won't believe me," said Jeff, with a laugh. "She thinks I don't know my mind. And I don't like the way we differ when we differ. We differ more than we mean to. I don't pretend to say I'm always right. She was right about that other picnic--the one I wanted to make for Mrs.

Vostrand. I suppose," he ended, unexpectedly, "that you hear from them, now and then?"

"No, I don't. I haven't heard from them for a year; not since--You knew Genevieve was married?"

"Yes, I knew that," said Jeff, steadily.

"I don't quite make it all out. Mr. Vostrand was very much opposed to it, Mrs. Vostrand told me; but he must have given way at last; and he must have put up the money." Jeff looked puzzled, and Westover explained. "You know the officers in the Italian army--and all the other armies in Europe, for that matter--have to deposit a certain sum with the government before they can marry and in the case of Count Grassi, Mr. Vostrand had to furnish the money."

Jeff said, after a moment: "Well, she couldn't help that."

"No, the girl wasn't to blame. I don't know that any one was to blame. But I'm afraid our girls wouldn't marry many titles if their fathers didn't put up the money."

"Well, I don't see why they shouldn't spend their money that way as well as any other," said Jeff, and this proof of his impartiality suggested to Westover that he was not only indifferent to the mercenary international marriages, which are a scandal to so many of our casuists, but had quite outlived his passion for the girl concerned in this.

"At any rate," Jeff added, "I haven't got anything to say against it. Mr. Westover, I've always wanted to say one thing to you. Then I came to your room that night, I wanted to complain of Mrs. Vostrand for not letting me know about the engagement; and I wasn't man enough to acknowledge that what you said would account for their letting me make a fool of myself. But I believe I am now, and I want to say it."

"I'm glad you can see it in that way," said Westover, "and since you do, I don't mind saying that I think Mrs. Vostrand might have been a little franker with you without being less kind. She was kind, but she wasn't quite frank."

"Well, it's all over now," said Jeff, and he rose up and brushed the whittlings from his knees. "And I guess it's just as well."

XXI.

That afternoon Westover saw Jeff helping Cynthia Whitwell into his buckboard, and then, after his lively horse had made some paces of a start, spring to the seat beside her, and bring it to a stand. "Can I do anything for you over at Lovewell, Mr. Westover?" he called, and he smiled toward the painter. Then he lightened the reins on the mare's

back; she squared herself for a start in earnest, and flashed down the sloping hotel road to the highway below, and was lost to sight in the clump of woods to the southward.

"That's a good friend of yours, Cynthy," he said, leaning toward the girl with a simple comfort in her proximity. She was dressed in a pale-pink color, with a hat of yet paler pink; without having a great deal of fashion, she had a good deal of style. She looked bright and fresh; there was a dash of pink in her cheeks, which suggested the color of the sweetbrier, its purity and sweetness, and if there was something in Cynthia's character and temperament that suggested its thorns too, one still could not deny that she was like that flower. She liked to shop, and she liked to ride after a good horse, as the neighbors would have said; she was going over to Lovewell to buy a number of things, and Jeff Durgin was driving her there with the swift mare that was his peculiar property. She smiled upon him without the usual reservations she contrived to express in her smiles.

"Well, I don't know anybody I'd rather have for my friend than Mr. Westover." She added: "He acted like a friend the very first time I saw him."

Jeff laughed with shameless pleasure in the reminiscence her words suggested. "Well, I did get my come-uppings that time. And I don't know but he's been a pretty good friend to me, too. I'm not sure he likes me; but Mr. Westover is a man that could be your friend if he didn't like you."

"What have you done to make him like you?" asked the girl.

"Nothing!" said Jeff, with a shout of laughter in his conviction.

"I've done a lot of things to make him despise me from the start. But if you like a person yourself, you want him to like you whether you deserve it or not."

"I don't know as I do."

"You say that because you always deserve it. You can't tell how it is with a fellow like me. I should want you to like me, Cynthy, whatever you thought of me." He looked round into her face, but she turned it away.

They had struck the level, long for the hill country, at the foot of the hotel road, and the mare, that found herself neither mounting nor descending a steep, dropped from the trot proper for an acclivity into a rapid walk.

"This mare can walk like a Kentucky horse," said Jeff. "I believe I could teach her single-foot." He added, with a laugh, "If I knew how," and now Cynthia laughed with him.

"I was just going to say that."

"Yes, you don't lose many chances to give me a dig, do you?"

"Oh, I don't know as I look for them. Perhaps I don't need to." The pine woods were deep on either side. They whispered in the thin, sweet wind, and gave out their odor in the high, westering sun. They covered with their shadows the road that ran velvety between them.

"This is nice," said Jeff, letting himself rest against the back of the seat. He stretched his left arm along the top, and presently it dropped and folded itself about the waist of the girl.

"You may take your arm away, Jeff," she said, quietly.

"Why?"

"Because it has no right there, for one thing!" She drew herself a little aside and looked round at him. "You wouldn't put it round a town girl if you were riding with her."

"I shouldn't be riding with her: Girls don't go buggy-riding in town any more," said Jeff, brutally.

"Then I shall know what to do the next time you ask me."

"Oh, they'd go quick enough if I asked them up here in the country. Etiquette don't count with them when they're on a vacation."

"I'm not on a vacation; so it counts with me. Please take your arm away," said Cynthia.

"Oh, all right. But I shouldn't object to your putting your arm around me."

"You will never have the chance."

"Why are you so hard on me, Cynthia?" asked Jeff. "You didn't used to be so."

"People change."

"Do I?"

"Not for the better."

Jeff was dumb. She was pleased with her hit, and laughed. But her laugh did not encourage him to put his arm round her again. He let the mare walk on, and left her to resume the conversation at whatever point she would.

She made no haste to resume it. At last she said, with sufficient apparent remoteness from the subject they had dropped: "Jeff, I don't know whether you want me to talk about it. But I guess I ought to, even if it isn't my place exactly. I don't think Jackson's very well, this

summer."

Jeff faced round toward her. "What makes you think he isn't well?"

"He's weaker. Haven't you noticed it?"

"Yes, I have noticed that. He's worked down; that's all."

"No, that isn't all. But if you don't think so--"

"I want to know what you think, Cynthia," said Jeff, with the amorous resentment all gone from his voice. "Sometimes folks outside notice the signs more--I don't mean that you're an outsider, as far as we're concerned--"

She put by that point. "Father's noticed it, too; and he's with Jackson a good deal."

"I'll look after it. If he isn't so well, he's got to have a doctor. That medium's stuff can't do him any good. Don't you think he ought to have a doctor?"

"Oh yes."

"You don't think a doctor can do him much good?"

"He ought to have one," said the girl, noncommittally.

"Cynthia, I've noticed that Jackson was weak, too; and it's no use pretending that he's simply worked down. I believe he's worn out. Do you think mother's ever noticed it?"

"I don't believe she has."

"It's the one thing I can't very well make up my mind to speak to her about. I don't know what she would do." He did not say, "If she lost Jackson," but Cynthia knew he meant that, and they were both silent. "Of course," he went on, "I know that she places a great deal of dependence upon you, but Jackson's her main stay. He's a good man, and he's a good son. I wish I'd always been half as good."

Cynthia did not protest against his self-reproach as he possibly hoped she would. She said: "I think Jackson's got a very good mind. He reads a great deal, and he's thought a great deal, and when it comes to talking, I never heard any one express themselves better. The other night, we were out looking at the stars--I came part of the way home with him; I didn't like to let him go alone, he seemed so feeble and he got to showing me Mars. He thinks it's inhabited, and he's read all that the astronomers say about it, and the seas and the canals that they've found on it. He spoke very beautifully about the other life, and then he spoke about death." Cynthia's voice broke, and she pulled her handkerchief out of her belt, and put it to her eyes. Jeff's heart melted in him at the sight; he felt a tender affection for her, very unlike the gross content

he had enjoyed in her presence before, and he put his arm round her again, but this time almost unconsciously, and drew her toward him. She did not repel him; she even allowed her head to rest a moment on his shoulder; though she quickly lifted it, and drew herself away, not resentfully, it seemed, but for her greater freedom in talking.

"I don't believe he's going to die," Jeff said, consolingly, more as if it were her brother than his that he meant. "But he's a very sick man, and he's got to knock off and go somewhere. It won't do for him to pass another winter here. He must go to California, or Colorado; they'd be glad to have him there, either of them; or he can go to Florida, or over to Italy. It won't matter how long he stays--"

"What are you talking about, Jeff Durgin?" Cynthia demanded, severely. "What would your mother do? What would she do this winter?"

"That brings me to something, Cynthia," said Jeff, "and I don't want you to say anything till I've got through. I guess I could help mother run the place as well as Jackson, and I could stay here next winter."

"You?"

"Now, you let me talk! My mind's made up about one thing: I'm not going to be a lawyer. I don't want to go back to Harvard. I'm going to keep a hotel, and, if I don't keep one here at Lion's Head, I'm going to keep it somewhere else."

"Have you told your mother?"

"Not yet: I wanted to hear what you would say first."

"I? Oh, I haven't got anything to do with it," said Cynthia.

"Yes, you have! You've got everything to do with it, if you'll say one thing first. Cynthia, you know how I feel about you. It's been so ever since we were boy and girl here. I want you to promise to marry me. Will you?"

The girl seemed neither surprised nor very greatly pleased; perhaps her pleasure had spent itself in that moment of triumphant expectation when she foresaw what was coming, or perhaps she was preoccupied in clearing the way in her own mind to a definite result.

"What do you say, Cynthia?" Jeff pursued, with more injury than misgiving in his voice at her delay in answering. "Don't you-care for me?"

"Oh yes, I presume I've always done that--ever since we were boy and girl, as you say. But---"

"Well?" said Jeff, patiently, but not insecurely.

"Have you?"

"Have I what?"

"Always cared for me."

He could not find his voice quite as promptly as before. He cleared his throat before he asked: "Has Mr. Westover been saying anything about me?"

"I don't know what you mean, exactly; but I presume you do."

"Well, then--I always expected to tell you--I did have a fancy for that girl, for Miss Vostrand, and I told her so. It's like something that never happened. She wouldn't have me. That's all."

"And you expect me to take what she wouldn't have?"

"If you like to call it that. But I should call it taking a man that had been out of his head for a while, and had come to his senses again."

"I don't know as I should ever feel safe with a man that had been out of his head once."

"You wouldn't find many men that hadn't," said Jeff, with a laugh that was rather scornful of her ignorance.

"No, I presume not," she sighed. "She was beautiful, and I believe she was good, too. She was very nice. Perhaps I feel strangely about it. But, if she hadn't been so nice, I shouldn't have been so willing that you should have cared for her."

"I suppose I don't understand," said Jeff, "but I know I was hard hit. What's the use? It's over. She's married. I can't go back and unlive it all. But if you want time to think--of course you do--I've taken time enough--"

He was about to lift the reins on the mare's back as a sign to her that the talk was over for the present, and to quicken her pace, when Cynthia put out her hand and laid it on his, and said with a certain effect of authority: "I shouldn't want you should give up your last year in Harvard."

"Just as you say, Cynthia;" and in token of intelligence he wound his arm round her neck and kissed her. It was not the first kiss by any means; in the country kisses are not counted very serious, or at all binding, and Cynthia was a country girl; but they both felt that this kiss sealed a solemn troth between them, and that a common life began for them with it.

XXII.

Cynthia came back in time to go into the dining-room and see that all was

in order there for supper before the door opened. The waitresses knew that she had been out riding, as they called it, with Jeff Durgin; the fact had spread electrically to them where they sat in a shady angle of the hotel listening to one who read a novel aloud, and skipped all but the most exciting love parts. They conjectured that the pair had gone to Lovewell, but they knew nothing more, and the subtlest of them would not have found reason for further conjecture in Cynthia's behavior, when she came in and scanned the tables and the girls' dresses and hair, where they stood ranged against the wall. She was neither whiter nor redder than usual, and her nerves and her tones were under as good control as a girl's ever are after she has been out riding with a fellow. It was not such a great thing, anyway, to ride with Jeff Durgin. First and last, nearly all the young lady boarders had been out with him, upon one errand or another to Lovewell.

After supper, when the girls had gone over to their rooms in the helps' quarters, and the guests had gathered in the wide, low office, in the light of the fire kindled on the hearth to break the evening chill, Jeff joined Cynthia in her inspection of the dining-room. She always gave it a last look, to see that it was in perfect order for breakfast, before she went home for the night. Jeff went home with her; he was impatient of her duties, but he was in no hurry when they stole out of the side door together under the stars, and began to stray sidelong down the hill over the dewless grass.

He lingered more and more as they drew near her father's house, in the abandon of a man's love. He wished to give himself solely up to it, to think and to talk of nothing else, after a man's fashion. But a woman's love is no such mere delight. It is serious, practical. For her it is all future, and she cannot give herself wholly up to any present moment of it, as a man does.

"Now, Jeff," she said, after a certain number of partings, in which she had apparently kept his duty clearly in mind, "you had better go home and tell your mother."

"Oh, there's time enough for that," he began.

"I want you to tell her right away, or there won't be anything to tell."

"Is that so?" he joked back. "Well, if I must, I must, I suppose. But I didn't think you'd take the whip-hand so soon, Cynthia."

"Oh, I don't ever want to take the whip-hand with you, Jeff. Don't make me!"

"Well, I won't, then. But what are you in such a hurry to have mother know for? She's not going to object. And if she does--"

"It isn't that," said the girl, quickly. "If I had to go round a single day with your mother hiding this from her, I should begin to hate you. I couldn't bear the concealment. I shall tell father as soon as I go in."

"Oh, your father 'll be all right, of course."

"Yes, he'll be all right, but if he wouldn't, and I knew it, I should have to tell him, all the same. Now, good-night. Well, there, then; and there! Now, let me go!"

She paused for a moment in her own room, to smooth her tumbled hair, and try to identify herself in her glass. Then she went into the sitting-room, where she found her father pulled up to the table, with his hat on, and poring over a sheet of hieroglyphics, which represented the usual evening with planchette.

"Have you been to help Jackson up?" she asked.

"Well, I wanted to, but he wouldn't hear of it. He's feelin' ever so much better to-night, and he wanted to go alone. I just come in."

"Yes, you've got your hat on yet."

Whitwell put his hand up and found that his daughter was right. He laughed, and said: "I guess I must 'a' forgot it. We've had the most interestin' season with plantchette that I guess we've about ever had. She's said something here--"

"Well, never mind; I've got something more important to say than plantchette has," said Cynthia, and she pulled the sheet away from under her father's eyes.

This made him look up at her. "Why, what's happened?"

"Nothing. Jeff Durgin has asked me to marry him."

"He has!" The New England training is not such as to fit people for the expression of strong emotion, and the best that Whitwell found himself able to do in view of the fact was to pucker his mouth for a whistle which did not come.

"Yes--this afternoon," said Cynthia, lifelessly. The tension of her nerves relaxed in a languor which was evident even to her father, though his eyes still wandered to the sheet she had taken from him.

"Well, you don't seem over and above excited about it. Did--did your-- What did you say--"

"How should I know what I said? What do you think of it, father?"

"I don't know as I ever give the subject much attention," said the philosopher. "I always meant to take it out of him, somehow, if he got to playin' the fool."

"Then you wanted I should accept him?"

"What difference 'd it make what I wanted? That what you done?"

"Yes, I've accepted him," said the girl, with a sigh. "I guess I've always expected to."

"Well, I thought likely it would come to that, myself. All I can say, Cynthia, is 't he's a lucky feller."

Whitwell leaned back, bracing his knees against the table, which was one of his philosophic poses. "I have sometimes believed that Jeff Durgin was goin' to turn out a blackguard. He's got it in him. He's as like his gran'father as two peas, and he was an old devil. But you got to account in all these here heredity cases for counteractin' influences. The Durgins are as good as wheat, right along, all of 'em; and I guess Mis' Durgin's mother must have been a pretty good woman too. Mis' Durgin's all right, too, if she has got a will of her own." Whitwell returned from his scientific inquiry to ask: "How 'll she take it?"

"I don't know," said Cynthia, dreamily, but without apparent misgiving. "That's Jeff's lookout."

"So 'tis. I guess she won't make much fuss. A woman never likes to see her son get married; but you've been a kind of daughter to her so long. Well, I guess that part of it 'll be all right. Jackson," said Whitwell, in a tone of relief, as if turning from an irrelevant matter to something of real importance, "was down here to-night tryin' to ring up some them spirits from the planet Mars. Martians, he calls 'em. His mind's got to runnin' a good deal on Mars lately. I guess it's this apposition that they talk about that does it. Mars comin' so much nearer the earth by a million of miles or so, it stands to reason that he should be more influenced by the minds on it. I guess it's a case o' that telepathy that Mr. Westover tells about. I judge that if he kept at it before Mars gits off too far again he might make something out of it. I couldn't seem to find much sense in what plantchette done to-night; we couldn't either of us; but she has her spells when you can't make head or tail of her. But mebbe she's just leadin' up to something, the way she did about that broken shaft when Jeff come home. We ha'n't ever made out exactly what she meant by that yet."

Whitwell paused, and Cynthia seized the advantage of his getting round to Jeff again. "He wanted to give up going to Harvard this last year, but I wouldn't let him."

"Jeff did?" asked her father. "Well, you done a good thing that time, anyway, Cynthia. His mother 'd never get over it."

"There's something else she's got to get over, and I don't know how she ever will. He's going to give up the law."

"Give up the law!"

"Yes. Don't tease, father! He says he's never cared about it, and he wants to keep a hotel. I thought that I'd ought to tell him how we felt

about Jackson's having a rest and going off somewhere; and he wanted to begin at once. But I said if he left off the last year at Harvard I wouldn't have anything to do with him."

Whitwell put his hand in his pocket for his knife, and mechanically looked down for a stick to whittle. In default of any, he scratched his head. "I guess she'll make it warm for him. She's had her mind set on his studyin' law so long, 't she won't give up in a hurry. She can't see that Jackson ain't fit to help her run the hotel any more--till he's had a rest, anyway--and I believe she thinks her and Frank could run it--and you. She'll make an awful kick," said Whitwell, solemnly. "I hope you didn't encourage him, Cynthy?"

"I should encourage him," said the girl. "He's got the right to shape his own life, and nobody else has got the right to do it; and I should tell his mother so, if she ever said anything to me about it."

"All right," said Whitwell. "I suppose you know what you're about."

"I do, father. Jeff would make a good landlord; he's got ideas about a hotel, and I can see that they're the right ones. He's been out in the world, and he's kept his eyes open. He will make Lion's Head the best hotel in the mountains."

"It's that already."

"He doesn't think it's half as good as he can make it."

"It wouldn't be half what it is now, if it wa'n't for you and Frank."

"I guess he understands that," said Cynthia. "Frank would be the clerk."

"Got it all mapped out!" said Whitwell, proudly, in his turn. "Look out you don't slip up in your calculations. That's all."

"I guess we cha'n't slip up."

XIII.

Jeff came into the ugly old family parlor, where his mother sat mending by the kerosene-lamp which she had kept through all the household changes, and pushed enough of her work aside from the corner of the table to rest his arm upon it.

"Mother, I want you to listen to me, and to wait till I get done. Will you?"

She looked up at him over her spectacles from the stocking she was darning; the china egg gleamed through the frayed place. "What notion have you got in your head, now?"

"It's about Jackson. He isn't well. He's got to leave off work and go away."

The mother's hand dropped at the end of the yarn she had drawn through the stocking heel, and she stared at Jeff. Then she resumed her work with the decision expressed in her tone. "Your father lived to be sixty years old, and Jackson a'n't forty! The doctor said there wa'n't any reason why he shouldn't live as long as his father did."

"I'm not saying he won't live to a hundred. I'm saying he oughtn't to stay another winter here," Jeff said, decisively.

Mrs. Durgin was silent for a time, and then she said. "Jeff, is that your notion about Jackson, or whose is it?"

"It's mine, now."

Mrs. Durgin waited a moment. Then she began, with a feeling quite at variance with her words:

"Well, I'll thank Cynthy Whit'ell to mind her own business! Of course," she added, and in what followed her feeling worked to the surface in her words, "I know 't she thinks the world of Jackson, and he does of her; and I presume she means well. I guess she'd be more apt to notice, if there was any change, than what I should. What did she say?"

Jeff told, as nearly as he could remember, and he told what Cynthia and he had afterward jointly worked out as to the best thing for Jackson to do. Mrs. Durgin listened frowningly, but not disapprovingly, as it seemed; though at the end she asked: "And what am I going to do, with Jackson gone?"

Jeff laughed, with his head down. "Well, I guess you and Cynthy could run it, with Frank and Mr. Whitwell."

"Mr. Whit'ell!" said Mrs. Durgin, concentrating in her accent of his name the contempt she could not justly pour out on the others.

"Oh," Jeff went on, "I did think that I could take hold with you, if you could bring yourself to let me off this last year at Harvard."

"Jeff!" said his mother, reproachfully. "You know you don't mean that you'd give up your last year in college?"

"I do mean it, but I don't expect you to do it; and I don't ask it. I suggested it to Cynthy, when we got to talking it over, and she saw it wouldn't do."

"Well, she showed some sense that time," Mrs. Durgin said.

"I don't know when Cynthy hasn't shown sense; except once, and then I guess it was my fault."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, this afternoon I asked her to marry me some time, and she said she would." He looked at his mother and laughed, and then he did not laugh. He had expected her to be pleased; he had thought to pave the way with this confession for the declaration of his intention not to study law, and to make his engagement to Cynthia serve him in reconciling his mother to the other fact. But a menacing suspense followed his words.

His mother broke out at last: "You asked Cynthy Whit'ell to marry you! And she said she would! Well, I can tell her she won't, then!"

"And I can tell you she will!" Jeff stormed back. He rose to his feet and stood over his mother.

She began steadily, as if he had not spoken. "If that designin'--"

"Look out, mother! Don't you say anything against Cynthia! She's been the best girl to you in the world, and you know it. She's been as true to you as Jackson has himself. She hasn't got a selfish bone in her body, and she's so honest she couldn't design anything against you or any one, unless she told you first. Now you take that back! Take it back! She's no more designing than--than you are!"

Mrs. Durgin was not moved by his storming, but she was inwardly convinced of error. "I do take it back. Cynthia is all right. She's all you say and more. It's your fault, then, and you've got yourself to thank, for whosever fault it is, she'll pack--"

"If Cynthy packs, I pack!" said Jeff. "Understand that. The moment she leaves this house I leave it, too, and I'll marry her anyway. Frank 'd leave and--and--Pshaw! What do you care for that? But I don't know what you mean! I always thought you liked Cynthia and respected her. I didn't believe I could tell you a thing that would please you better than that she had said she would have me. But if it don't, all right."

Mrs. Durgin held her peace in bewilderment; she stared at her son with dazed eyes, under the spectacles lifted above her forehead. She felt a change of mood in his unchanged tone of defiance, and she met him half-way. "I tell you I take back what I called Cynthia, and I told you so. But--but I didn't ever expect you to marry her."

"Why didn't you? There isn't one of the summer folks to compare with her. She's got more sense than all of 'em. I've known her ever since I can remember. Why didn't you expect it?"

"I didn't expect it."

"Oh, I know! You thought I'd see somebody in Boston--some swell girl. Well, they wouldn't any of them look at me, and if they would, they wouldn't look at you."

"I shouldn't care whether they looked at me or not."

"I tell you they wouldn't look at me. You don't understand about these things, and I do. They marry their own kind, and I'm not their kind, and I shouldn't be if I was Daniel Webster himself. Daniel Webster! Who remembers him, or cares for him, or ever did? You don't believe it? You think that because I've been at Harvard--Oh, can't I make you see it? I'm what they call a jay in Harvard, and Harvard don't count if you're a jay."

His mother looked at him without speaking. She would not confess the ambition he taxed her with, and perhaps she had nothing so definite in her mind. Perhaps it was only her pride in him, and her faith in a splendid future for him, that made her averse to his marriage in the lot she had always known, and on a little lower level in it that her own. She said at last:

"I don't know what you mean by being a jay. But I guess we better not say anything more about this to-night."

"All right," Jeff returned. There never were any formal good-nights between the Durgins, and he went away now without further words.

His mother remained sitting where he left her. Two or three times she drew her empty darning-needle through the heel of the stocking she was mending.

She was still sitting there when Jackson passed on his way to bed, after leaving the office in charge of the night porter. He faltered, as he went by, and as he stood on the threshold she told him what Jeff had told her.

"That's good," he said, lifelessly. "Good for Jeff," he added, thoughtfully, conscientiously.

"Why a'n't it good for her, too?" demanded Jeff's mother, in quick resentment of the slight put upon him.

"I didn't say it wa'n't," said Jackson. "But it's better for Jeff."

"She may be very glad to get him!"

"I presume she is. She's always cared for him, I guess. She'll know how to manage him."

"I don't know," said Mrs. Durgin, "as I like to have you talk so, about Jeff. He was here, just now, wantin' to give up his last year in Harvard, so 's to let you go off on a vacation. He thinks you've worked yourself down."

Jackson made no recognition of Jeff's professed self-sacrifice. "I don't want any vacation. I'm feeling first-rate now. I guess that stuff I had from the writin' medium has begun to take hold of me. I don't know when

I've felt so well. I believe I'm going to get stronger than ever I was. Jeff say I needed a rest?"

Something like a smile of compassion for the delusion of his brother dawned upon the sick man's wasted face, which was blotched with large freckles, and stared with dim, large eyes from out a framework of grayish hair, and grayish beard cut to the edges of the cheeks and chin.

XXIV.

Mrs. Durgin and Cynthia did not seek any formal meeting the next morning. The course of their work brought them together, but it was not till after they had transacted several household affairs of pressing importance that Mrs. Durgin asked: "What's this about you and Jeff?"

"Has he been telling you?" asked Cynthia, in her turn, though she knew he had.

"Yes," said Mrs. Durgin, with a certain dryness, which was half humorous. "I presume, if you two are satisfied, it's all right."

"I guess we're satisfied," said the girl, with a tremor of relief which she tried to hide.

Nothing more was said, and there was no physical demonstration of affection or rejoicing between the women. They knew that the time would come when they would talk over the affair down to the bone together, but now they were content to recognize the fact, and let the time for talking arrive when it would. "I guess," said Mrs. Durgin, "you'd better go over to the helps' house and see how that youngest Miller girl's gittin' along. She'd ought to give up and go home if she a'n't fit for her work."

"I'll go and see her," said Cynthia. "I don't believe she's strong enough for a waitress, and I have got to tell her so."

"Well," returned Mrs. Durgin, glumly, after a moment's reflection, "I shouldn't want you should hurry her. Wait till she's out of bed, and give her another chance."

"All right."

Jeff had been lurking about for the event of the interview, and he waylaid Cynthia on the path to the helps' house.

"I'm going over to see that youngest Miller girl," she explained.

"Yes, I know all about that," said Jeff. "Well, mother took it just right, didn't she? You can't always count on her; but I hadn't much anxiety in this case. She likes you, Cynthia."

"I guess so," said the girl, demurely; and she looked away from him to smile her pleasure in the fact.

"But I believe if she hadn't known you were with her about my last year in Harvard--it would have been different. I could see, when I brought it in that you wanted me to go back, her mind was made up for you."

"Why need you say anything about that?"

"Oh, I knew it would clinch her. I understand mother. If you want something from her you mustn't ask it straight out. You must propose something very disagreeable. Then when she refuses that, you can come in for what you were really after and get it."

"I don't know," said Cynthia, "as I should like to think that your mother had been tricked into feeling right about me."

"Tricked!" The color flashed up in Jeff's face.

"Not that, Jeff," said the girl, tenderly. "But you know what I mean. I hope you talked it all out fully with her."

"Fully? I don't know what you mean."

"About your not studying law, and--everything."

"I don't believe in crossing a river till I come to it," said Jeff.

"I didn't say anything to her about that."

"You didn't!"

"No. What had it got to do with our being engaged?"

"What had your going back to Harvard to do with it? If your mother thinks I'm with her in that, she'll think I'm with her in the other. And I'm not. I'm with you." She let her hand find his, as they walked side by side, and gave it a little pressure.

"It's the greatest thing, Cynthy," he said, breathlessly, "to have you with me in that. But, if you said I ought to study law, I should do it."

"I shouldn't say that, for I believe you're right; but even if I believed you were wrong, I shouldn't say it. You have a right to make your life what you want it; and your mother hasn't. Only she must know it, and you must tell her at once."

"At once?"

"Yes--now. What good will it do to put it off? You're not afraid to tell her!"

"I don't like you to use that word."

"And I don't like to use it. But I know how it is. You're afraid that the brunt of it will come on ME. She'll think you're all right, but I'm all wrong because I agree with you."

"Something like that."

"Well, now, I'm not afraid of anything she can say; and what could she do? She can't part us, unless you let her, and then I should let her, too."

"But what's the hurry? What's the need of doing it right off?"

"Because it's a deceit not to do it. It's a lie!"

"I don't see it in that light. I might change my mind, and still go on and study law."

"You know you never will. Now, Jeff! Why do you act so?"

Jeff did not answer at once. He walked beside her with a face of trouble that became one of resolve in the set jaws. "I guess you're right, Cynthia. She's got to know the worst, and the sooner she knows it the better."

"Yes!"

He had another moment of faltering. "You don't want I should talk it over with Mr. Westover?"

"What has he got to do with it?"

"That's true!"

"If you want to see it in the right light, you can think you've let it run on till after you're out of college, and then you've got to tell her. Suppose she asked you how long you had made up your mind against the law, how should you feel? And if she asked me whether I'd known it all along, and I had to say I had, and that I'd supported and encouraged you in it, how should I feel?"

"She mightn't ask any such question," said Jeff, gloomily. Cynthia gave a little impatient "Oh!" and he hastened to add: "But you're right; I've got to tell her. I'll tell her to-night--"

"Don't wait till to-night; do it now."

"Now?"

"Yes; and I'll go with you as soon as I've seen the youngest Miller girl." They had reached the helps' house now, and Cynthia said: "You wait outside here, and I'll go right back with you. Oh, I hope it isn't doing wrong to put it off till I've seen that girl!" She disappeared

through the door, and Jeff waited by the steps outside, plucking up one long grass stem after another and biting it in two. When Cynthia came out she said: "I guess she'll be all right. Now come, and don't-lose another second."

"You're afraid I sha'n't do it if I wait any longer!"

"I'm afraid I sha'n't." There was a silence after this.

"Do you know what I think of you, Cynthy?" asked Jeff, hurrying to keep up with her quick steps. "You've got more courage--"

"Oh, don't praise me, or I shall break down!"

"I'll see that you don't break down," said Jeff, tenderly. "It's the greatest thing to have you go with me!"

"Why, don't you SEE?" she lamented. "If you went alone, and told your mother that I approved of it, you would look as if you were afraid, and wanted to get behind me; and I'm not going to have that."

They found Mrs. Durgin in the dark entry of the old farmhouse, and Cynthia said, with involuntary imperiousness: "Come in here, Mrs. Durgin; I want to tell you something."

She led the way to the old parlor, and she checked Mrs. Durgin's question, "Has that Miller girl--"

"It isn't about her," said Cynthy, pushing the door to. "It's about me and Jeff."

Mrs. Durgin became aware of Jeff's presence with an effect of surprise. "There a'n't anything more, is there?"

"Yes, there is!" Cynthia shrilled. "Now, Jeff!"

"It's just this, mother: Cynthy thinks I ought to tell you--and she thinks I ought to have told you last night--she expected me to--that I'm not going to study law."

"And I approve of his not doing it," Cynthia promptly followed, and she put herself beside Jeff where he stood in front of his mother's rocking-chair.

She looked from one to the other of the faces before her. "I'm sorry a son of mine," she said, with dignity, "had to be told how to act with his mother. But, if he had, I don't know as anybody had a better right to do it than the girl that's going to marry him. And I'll say this, Cynthia Whitwell, before I say anything else: you've begun right. I wish I could say Jeff had."

There was an uncomfortable moment before Cynthia said: "He expected to tell you."

"Oh Yes! I know," said his mother, sadly. She added, sharply: "And did he expect to tell me what he intended to do for a livin'?"

"Jeff took the word. "Yes, I did. I intend to keep a hotel."

"What hotel?" asked Mrs. Durgin, with a touch of taunting in her tone.

"This one."

The mother of the bold, rebellious boy that Jeff had been stirred in Mrs. Durgin's heart, and she looked at him with the eyes, that used to condone his mischief. But she said: "I guess you'll find out that there's more than one has to agree to that."

"Yes, there are two: you and Jackson; and I don't know but what three, if you count Cynthia, here."

His mother turned to the girl. "You think this fellow's got sense enough to keep a hotel?"

"Yes, Mrs. Durgin, I do. I think he's got good ideas about a hotel."

"And what's he goin' to do with his college education?"

Jeff interposed. "You think that all the college graduates turn out lawyers and doctors and professors? Some of 'em are mighty glad to sweep out banks in hopes of a clerkship; and some take any sort of a place in a mill or a business house, to work up; and some bum round out West 'on cattle ranches; and some, if they're lucky, get newspaper reporters' places at ten dollars a week."

Cynthia followed with the generalization: "I don't believe anybody can know too much to keep a hotel. It won't hurt Jeff if he's been to Harvard, or to Europe, either."

"I guess there's a pair of you," said Mrs. Durgin, with superficial contempt. She was silent for a time, and they waited. "Well, there!" she broke out again. "I've got something to chew upon for a spell, I guess. Go along, now, both of you! And the next time you've got to face your mother, Jeff, don't you come in lookin' round anybody's petticoats! I'll see you later about all this."

They went away with the joyful shame of children who have escaped punishment.

"That's the last of it, Cynthia," said Jeff.

"I guess so," the girl assented, with a certain grief in her voice. "I wish you had told her first!"

"Oh, never mind that now!" cried Jeff, and in the dim passageway he took her in his arms and kissed her.

He would have released her, but she lingered in his embrace. "Will you promise that if there's ever anything like it again, you won't wait for me to make you?"

"I like your having made me, but I promise," he said.

Then she tightened her arms round his neck and kissed him.

XXV.

The will of Jeff's mother relaxed its grip upon the purpose so long held, as if the mere strain of the tenacity had wearied and weakened it. When it finally appeared that her ambition for her son was not his ambition for himself and would never be, she abandoned it. Perhaps it was the easier for her to forego her hopes of his distinction in the world, because she had learned before that she must forego her hopes of him in other ways. She had vaguely fancied that with the acquaintance his career at Harvard would open to him Jeff would make a splendid marriage. She had followed darkling and stumbling his course in society as far as he would report it to her, and when he would not suffer her to glory in it, she believed that he was forbidding her from a pride that would not recognize anything out of the common in it. She exulted in his pride, and she took all his snubbing reserves tenderly, as so many proofs of his success.

At the bottom of her heart she had both fear and contempt of all town-people, whom she generalized from her experience of them as summer folks of a greater or lesser silliness. She often found herself unable to cope with them, even when she felt that she had twice their sense; she perceived that they had something from their training that with all her undisciplined force she could never hope to win from her own environment. But she believed that her son would have the advantages which baffled her in them, for he would have their environment; and she had wished him to rivet his hold upon those advantages by taking a wife from among them, and by living the life of their world. Her wishes, of course, had no such distinct formulation, and the feeling she had toward Cynthia as a possible barrier to her ambition had no more definition. There had been times when the fitness of her marriage with Jeff had moved the mother's heart to a jealousy that she always kept silent, while she hoped for the accident or the providence which should annul the danger. But Genevieve Vostrand had not been the kind of accident or the providence that she would have invoked, and when she saw Jeff's fancy turning toward her, Mrs. Durgin had veered round to Cynthia. All the same she kept a keen eye upon the young ladies among the summer folks who came to Lion's Head, and tacitly canvassed their merits and inclinations with respect to Jeff in the often-imagined event of his caring for any one of them. She found that her artfully casual references to her son's being in Harvard scarcely affected their mothers in the right way. The fact made them think of the head waiters whom they had met at other hotels, and who were

working their way through Dartmouth or Williams or Yale, and it required all the force of Jeff's robust personality to dissipate their erroneous impressions of him. He took their daughters out of their arms and from under their noses on long drives upon his buckboard, and it became a convention with them to treat his attentions somewhat like those of a powerful but faithful vassal.

Whether he was indifferent, or whether the young ladies were coy, none of these official flirtations came to anything. He seemed not to care for one more than another; he laughed and joked with them all, and had an official manner with each which served somewhat like a disparity of years in putting them at their ease with him. They agreed that he was very handsome, and some thought him very talented; but they questioned whether he was quite what you would call a gentleman. It is true that this misgiving attacked them mostly in the mass; singly, they were little or not at all troubled by it, and they severally behaved in an unprincipled indifference to it.

Mrs. Durgin had the courage of her own purposes, but she had the fear of Jeff's. After the first pang of the disappointment which took final shape from his declaration that he was going to marry Cynthia, she did not really care much. She had the habit of the girl; she respected her, she even loved her. The children, as she thought of them, had known each other from their earliest days; Jeff had persecuted Cynthia throughout his graceless boyhood, but he had never intimidated her; and his mother, with all her weakness for him, felt that it was well for him that his wife should be brave enough to stand up against him.

She formulated this feeling no more than the others, but she said to Westover, whom Jeff bade her tell of the engagement: "It a'n't exactly as I could 'a' wished it to be. But I don't know as mothers are ever quite suited with their children's marriages. I presume it's from always kind of havin' had her round under my feet ever since she was born, as you may say, and seein' her family always so shiftless. Well, I can't say that of Frank, either. He's turned out a fine boy; but the father! Cynthia is one of the most capable girls, smart as a trap, and bright as a biscuit. She's masterful, too! she NEED to have a will of her own with Jeff."

Something of the insensate pride that mothers have in their children's faults, as their quick tempers, or their wastefulness, or their revengefulness, expressed itself in her tone; and it was perhaps this that irritated Westover.

"I hope he'll never let her know it. I don't think a strong will is a thing to be prized, and I shouldn't consider it one of Cynthia's good points. The happiest life for her would be one that never forced her to use it."

"I don't know as I understand you exactly," said Mrs. Durgin, with some dryness. "I know Jeff's got rather of a domineering disposition, but I don't believe but she can manage him without meetin' him on his own ground, as you may say."

"She's a girl in a thousand," Westover returned, evasively.

"Then you think he's shown sense in choosin' of her?" pursued Jeff's mother, resolute to find some praise of him in Westover's words.

"He's a very fortunate man," said the painter.

"Well, I guess you're right," Mrs. Durgin acquiesced, as much to Jeff's advantage as she could. "You know I was always afraid he would make a fool of himself, but I guess he's kept his eyes pretty well open all the while. Well!" She closed the subject with this exclamation. "Him and Cynthy's been at me about Jackson," she added, abruptly. "They've cooked it up between 'em that he's out of health or run down or something."

Her manner referred the matter to Westover, and he said: "He isn't looking so well this summer. He ought to go away somewhere."

"That's what they thought," said Mrs. Durgin, smiling in her pleasure at having their opinion confirmed by the old and valued friend of the family.

Whereabouts do you think he'd best go?"

"Oh, I don't know. Italy--or Egypt--"

"I guess, if you could get Jackson to go away at all, it would be to some of them old Bible countries," said Mrs. Durgin. "We've got to have a fight to get him off, make the best of it, and I've thought it over since the children spoke about it, and I couldn't seem to see Jackson willin' to go out to Californy or Colorady, to either of his brothers. But I guess he would go to Egypt. That a good climate for the--his complaint?"

She entered eagerly into the question, and Westover promised to write to a Boston doctor, whom he knew very well, and report Jackson's case to him, and get his views of Egypt.

"Tell him how it is," said Mrs. Durgin, "and the tussle we shall have to have anyway to make Jackson believe he'd ought to have a rest. He'll go to Egypt if he'll go anywheres, because his mind keeps runnin' on Bible questions, and it 'll interest him to go out there; and we can make him believe it's just to bang around for the winter. He's terrible hopeful." Now that she began to speak, all her long-repressed anxiety poured itself out, and she hitched her chair nearer to Westover and wistfully clutched his sleeve. "That's the worst of Jackson. You can't make him believe anything's the matter. Sometimes I can't bear to hear him go on about himself as if he was a well young man. He expects that medium's stuff is goin' to cure him!"

"People sick in that way are always hopeful," said Westover.

"Oh, don't I know it! Ha'n't I seen my children and my husband--Oh, do ask that doctor to answer as quick as he can!"

XXVI.

Westover had a difficulty in congratulating Jeff which he could scarcely define to himself, but which was like that obscure resentment we feel toward people whom we think unequal to their good fortune. He was ashamed of his grudge, whatever it was, and this may have made him overdo his expressions of pleasure. He was sensible of a false cordiality in them, and he checked himself in a flow of forced sentiment to say, more honestly: "I wish you'd speak to Cynthia for me. You know how much I think of her, and how much I want to see her happy. You ought to be a very good fellow, Jeff!"

"I'll tell her that; she'll like that," said Jeff. "She thinks the world of you."

"Does she? Well!"

"And I guess she'll be glad you sent word. She's been wondering what you would say; she's always so afraid of you."

"Is she? You're not afraid of me, are you? But perhaps you don't think so much of me."

"I guess Cynthia and I think alike on that point," said Jeff, without abating Westover's discomfort.

There was a stress of sharp cold that year about the 20th of August. Then the weather turned warm again, and held fine till the beginning of October, within a week of the time when Jackson was to sail. It had not been so hard to make him consent when he knew where the doctor wished him to go, and he had willingly profited by Westover's suggestions about getting to Egypt. His interest in the matter, which he tried to hide at first under a mask of decorous indifference, mounted with the fire of Whitwell's enthusiasm, and they held nightly councils together, studying his course on the map, and consulting planchette upon the points at variance that rose between them, while Jombateeste sat with his chair tilted against the wall, and pulled steadily at his pipe, which mixed its strong fumes with the smell of the kerosene-lamp and the perennial odor of potatoes in the cellar under the low room where the companions forgathered.

Toward the end of September Westover spent the night before he went back to town with them. After a season with planchette, their host pushed himself back with his knees from the table till his chair reared upon its hind legs, and shoved his hat up from his forehead in token of philosophical mood.

"I tell you, Jackson," he said, "you'd ought to get hold o' some them occult devils out there, and squeeze their science out of 'em. Any Buddhists in Egypt, Mr. Westover?"

"I don't think there are," said Westover. "Unless Jackson should come across some wandering Hindu. Or he might push on, and come home by the way of India."

"Do it, Jackson!" his friend conjured him. "May cost you something more, but it 'll be worth the money. If it's true, what some them Blavetsky fellers claim, you can visit us here in your astral body--git in with 'em the right way. I should like to have you try it. What's the reason India wouldn't be as good for him as Egypt, anyway?" Whitwell demanded of Westover.

"I suppose the climate's rather too moist; the heat would be rather trying to him there."

"That so?"

"And he's taken his ticket for Alexandria," Westover pursued.

"Well, I guess that's so." Whitwell tilted his backward sloping hat to one side, so as to scratch the northeast corner of his bead thoughtfully.

"But as far as that is concerned," said Westover, "and the doctrine of immortality generally is concerned, Jackson will have his hands full if he studies the Egyptian monuments."

"What they got to do with it?"

"Everything. Egypt is the home of the belief in a future life; it was carried from Egypt to Greece. He might come home by way of Athens."

"Why, man!" cried Whitwell. "Do you mean to say that them old Hebrew saints, Joseph's brethren, that went down into Egypt after corn, didn't know about immortality, and them Egyptian devils did?"

"There's very little proof in the Old Testament that the Israelites knew of it."

Whitwell looked at Jackson. "That the idee you got?"

"I guess he's right," said Jackson. "There's something a little about it in Job, and something in the Psalms: but not a great deal."

"And we got it from them Egyptian d----"

"I don't say that," Westover interposed. "But they had it before we had. As we imagine it, we got it though Christianity."

Jombateeste, who had taken his pipe out of his mouth in a controversial manner, put it back again.

Westover added, "But there's no question but the Egyptians believed in the life hereafter, and in future rewards and punishments for the deeds

done in the body, thousands of years before our era."

"Well, I'm dummed," said Whitwell.

Jombateeste took his pipe out again. "Hit show they got good sense. They know--they feel it in their bone--what goin' 'appen--when you dead. Me, I guess they got some prophet find it hout for them; then they goin' take the credit."

"I guess that's something so, Jombateeste," said Whitwell. "It don't stand to reason that folks without any alphabet, as you may say, and only a lot of pictures for words, like Injuns, could figure out the immortality of the soul. They got the idee by inspiration somehow. Why, here! It's like this. Them Pharaohs must have always been clawin' out for the Hebrews before they got a hold of Joseph, and when they found out the true doctrine, they hushed up where they got it, and their priests went on teachin' it as if it was their own."

"That's w'at I say. Got it from the 'Ebrew."

"Well, it don't matter a great deal where they got it, so they got it," said Jackson, as he rose.

"I believe I'll go with you," said Westover.

"All there is about it," said the sick man, solemnly, with a frail effort to straighten himself, to which his sunken chest would not respond, "is this: no man ever did figure that out for himself. A man sees folks die, and as far as his senses go, they don't live again. But somehow he knows they do; and his knowledge comes from somewhere else; it's inspired--"

"That's w'at I say," Jombateeste hastened to interpose. "Got it from the 'Ebrew. Feel it in 'is bone."

Out under the stars Jackson and Westover silently mounted the hill-side together. At one of the thank-you-marms in the road the sick man stopped, like a weary horse, to breathe. He took off his hat and wiped the sweat of weakness that had gathered upon his forehead, and looked round the sky, powdered with the constellations and the planets. "It's sightly," he whispered.

"Yes, it is fine," Westover assented. "But the stars of our Northern nights are nothing to what you'll see in Egypt."

Jackson repeated, vaguely: "Egypt! Where I should like to go is Mars." He fixed his eyes on the flaming planets, in a long stare. "But I suppose they have their own troubles, same as we do. They must get sick and die, like the rest of us. But I should like to know more about 'em. You believe it's inhabited, don't you?"

Westover's agnosticism did not, somehow, extend to Mars. "Yes, I've no doubt of it."

Jackson seemed pleased. "I've read everything I can lay my hands on about it. I've got a notion that if there's any choosin', after we get through here, I should like to go to Mars for a while, or as long as I was a little homesick still, and wanted to keep as near the earth as I could," he added, quaintly.

Westover laughed. "You could study up the subject of irrigation, there; they say that's what keeps the parallel markings green on Mars; and telegraph a few hints to your brother in Colorado, after the Martians perfect their signal code."

Perhaps the invalid's fancy flagged. He drew a long, ragged breath. "I don't know as I care to leave home, much. If it wa'n't a kind of duty, I shouldn't." He seemed impelled by a sudden need to say, "How do you think Jefferson and mother will make it out together?"

"I've no doubt they'll manage," said Westover.

"They're a good deal alike," Jackson suggested.

Westover preferred not to meet his overture. "You'll be back, you know, almost as soon as the season commences, next summer."

"Yes," Jackson assented, more cheerfully. "And now, Cynthy's sure to be here."

"Yes, she will be here," said Westover, not so cheerfully.

Jackson seemed to find the opening he was seeking, in Westover's tone. "What do you think of gettin' married, anyway, Mr. Westover?" he asked.

"We haven't either of us thought so well of it as to try it, Jackson," said the painter, jocosely.

"Think it's a kind of chance?"

"It's a chance."

Jackson was silent. Then, "I a'n't one of them," he said, abruptly, "that think a man's goin' to be made over by marryin' this woman or that. If he a'n't goin' to be the right kind of a man himself, he a'n't because his wife's a good woman. Sometimes I think that a man's wife is the last person in the world that can change his disposition. She can influence him about this and about that, but she can't change him. It seems as if he couldn't let her if he tried, and after the first start-off he don't try."

"That's true," Westover assented. "We're terribly inflexible. Nothing but something like a change of heart, as they used to call it, can make us different, and even then we're apt to go back to our old shape. When you look at it in that light, marriage seems impossible. Yet it takes place every day!"

"It's a great risk for a woman," said Jackson, putting on his hat and stirring for an onward movement. "But I presume that if the man is honest with her it's the best thing she can have. The great trouble is for the man to be honest with her."

"Honesty is difficult," said Westover.

He made Jackson promise to spend a day with him in Boston, on his way to take the Mediterranean steamer at New York. When they met he yielded to an impulse which the invalid's forlornness inspired, and went on to see him off. He was glad that he did that, for, though Jackson was not sad at parting, he was visibly touched by Westover's kindness.

Of course he talked away from it. "I guess I've left 'em in pretty good shape for the winter at Lion's Head," he said. "I've got Whitwell to agree to come up and live in the house with mother, and she'll have Cynthia with her, anyway; and Frank and Jombateeste can look after the bosses easy enough."

He had said something like this before, but Westover could see that it comforted him to repeat it, and he encouraged him to do so in full. He made him talk about getting home in the spring, after the frost was out of the ground, but he questioned involuntarily, while the sick man spoke, whether he might not then be lying under the sands that had never known a frost since the glacial epoch. When the last warning for visitors to go ashore came, Jackson said, with a wan smile, while he held Westover's hand: "I sha'n't forget this very soon."

"Write to me," said Westover.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Crimson torch of a maple, kindled before its time
Disposition to use his friends
Fear of asking too much and the folly of asking too little
Government is best which governs least
Honesty is difficult
I don't ever want to take the whip-hand
I sha'n't forget this very soon
Insensate pride that mothers have in their children's faults
Iron forks had two prongs
Jefferson
Joyful shame of children who have escaped punishment
Man that could be your friend if he didn't like you
Married Man: after the first start-off he don't try
Nothing in the way of sport, as people commonly understand it
People whom we think unequal to their good fortune
Society interested in a woman's past, not her future
The great trouble is for the man to be honest with her
We're company enough for ourselves

Women talked their follies and men acted theirs
World seems to always come out at the same hole it went in at

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by William Dean Howells

THE LANDLORD AT LION'S HEAD

By William Dean Howells

Part II.

XXVII.

Jackson kept his promise to write to Westover, but he was better than his word to his mother, and wrote to her every week that winter.

"I seem just to live from letter to letter. It's ridic'lous," she said to Cynthia once when the girl brought the mail in from the barn, where the men folks kept it till they had put away their horses after driving over from Lovewell with it. The trains on the branch road were taken off in the winter, and the post-office at the hotel was discontinued. The men had to go to the town by cutter, over a highway that the winds sifted half full of snow after it had been broken out by the ox-teams in the morning. But Mrs. Durgin had studied the steamer days and calculated the time it would take letters to come from New York to Lovewell; and, unless a blizzard was raging, some one had to go for the mail when the day came. It was usually Jombateeste, who reverted in winter to the type of habitant from which he had sprung. He wore a blue woollen cap, like a large sock, pulled over his ears and close to his eyes, and below it his clean-shaven brown face showed. He had blue woollen mittens, and boots of russet leather, without heels, came to his knees; he got a pair every time he went home on St. John's day. His lean little body was swathed in several short jackets, and he brought the letters buttoned into one of the innermost pockets. He produced the letter from Jackson promptly enough when Cynthia came out to the barn for it, and then he made a show of getting his horse out of the cutter shafts, and shouting international reproaches at it, till she was forced to ask, "Haven't you got something for me, Jombateeste?"

"You expec' some letter?" he said, unbuckling a strap and shouting louder.

"You know whether I do. Give it to me."

"I don' know. I think I drop something on the road. I saw something white; maybe snow; good deal of snow."

"Don't plague! Give it here!"

"Wait I finish unhitch. I can't find any letter till I get some time to look."

"Oh, now, Jombateeste! Give me my letter!"

"W'at you want letter for? Always same thing. Well! 'Old the 'oss; I goin' to feel."

Jombateeste felt in one pocket after another, while Cynthia clung to the colt's bridle, and he was uncertain till the last whether he had any letter for her. When it appeared she made a flying snatch at it and ran; and the comedy was over, to be repeated in some form the next week.

The girl somehow always possessed herself of what was in her letters before she reached the room where Mrs. Durgin was waiting for hers. She had to read that aloud to Jackson's mother, and in the evening she had to read it again to Mrs. Durgin and Whitwell and Jombateeste and Frank, after they had done their chores, and they had gathered in the old farmhouse parlor, around the air-tight sheet-iron stove, in a heat of eighty degrees. Whitwell listened, with planchette ready on the table before him, and he consulted it for telepathic impressions of Jackson's actual mental state when the reading was over.

He got very little out of the perverse instrument. "I can't seem to work her. If Jackson was here--"

"We shouldn't need to ask planchette about him," Cynthia once suggested, with the spare sense of humor that sometimes revealed itself in her.

"Well, I guess that's something so," her father candidly admitted. But the next time he consulted the helpless planchette as hopefully as before. "You can't tell, you can't tell," he urged.

"The trouble seems to be that planchette can't tell," said Mrs. Durgin, and they all laughed. They were not people who laughed a great deal, and they were each intent upon some point in the future that kept them from pleasure in the present. The little Canuck was the only one who suffered himself a contemporaneous consolation. His early faith had so far lapsed from him that he could hospitably entertain the wild psychical conjectures of Whitwell without an accusing sense of heresy, and he found the winter of northern New England so mild after that of Lower Canada that he experienced a high degree of animal comfort in it, and looked forward to nothing better. To be well fed, well housed, and well heated; to smoke successive pipes while the others talked, and to catch through his smoke-wreaths vague glimpses of their meanings, was enough. He felt that in being promoted to the care of the stables in Jackson's absence he

occupied a dignified and responsible position, with a confidential relation to the exile which justified him in sending special messages to him, and attaching peculiar value to Jackson's remembrances.

The exile's letters said very little about his health, which in the sense of no news his mother held to be good news, but they were full concerning the monuments and the ethnological interest of life in Egypt.

They were largely rescripts of each day's observations and experiences, close and full, as his mother liked them in regard to fact, and generously philosophized on the side of politics and religion for Whitwell. The Eastern question became in the snow-choked hills of New England the engrossing concern of this speculative mind, and he was apt to spring it upon Mrs. Durgin and Cynthia at mealtimes and other defenceless moments. He tried to debate it with Jombateeste, who conceived of it as a form of spiritualistic inquiry, and answered from the hay-loft, where he was throwing down fodder for the cattle to Whitwell, volubly receiving it on the barn floor below, that he believed, him, everybody got a hastral body, English same as Mormons.

"Guess you mean Moslems," said Whitwell, and Jombateeste asked the difference, defiantly.

The letters which came to Cynthia could not be made as much a general interest, and, in fact, no one else cared so much for them as for Jackson's letters, not even Jeff's mother. After Cynthia got one of them, she would ask, perfunctorily, what Jeff said, but when she was told there was no news she did not press her question.

"If Jackson don't get back in time next summer," Mrs. Durgin said, in one of the talks she had with the girl, "I guess I shall have to let Jeff and you run the house alone."

"I guess we shall want a little help from you," said Cynthia, demurely. She did not refuse the implication of Mrs. Durgin's words, but she would not assume that there was more in them than they expressed.

When Jeff came home for the three days' vacation at Thanksgiving, he wished again to relinquish his last year at Harvard, and Cynthia had to summon all her forces to keep him to his promise of staying. He brought home the books with which he was working off his conditions, with a half-hearted intention of study, and she took hold with him, and together they fought forward over the ground he had to gain. His mother was almost willing at last that he should give up his last year in college.

"What is the use?" she asked. "He's give up the law, and he might as well commence here first as last, if he's goin' to."

The girl had no reason to urge against this; she could only urge her feeling that he ought to go back and take his degree with the rest of his class.

"If you're going to keep Lion's Head the way you pretend you are," she

said to him, as she could not say to his mother, "you want to keep all your Harvard friends, don't you, and have them remember you? Go back, Jeff, and don't you come here again till after you've got your degree. Never mind the Christmas vacation, nor the Easter. Stay in Cambridge and work off your conditions. You can do it, if you try. Oh, don't you suppose I should like to have you here?" she reproached him.

He went back, with a kind of grudge in his heart, which he confessed in his first letter home to her, when he told her that she was right and he was wrong. He was sure now, with the impulse which their work on them in common had given him, that he should get his conditions off, and he wanted her and his mother to begin preparing their minds to come to his Class Day. He planned how they could both be away from the hotel for that day. The house was to be opened on the 20th of June, but it was not likely that there would be so many people at once that they could not give the 21st to Class Day; Frank and his father could run Lion's Head somehow, or, if they could not, then the opening could be postponed till the 24th. At all events, they must not fail to come. Cynthia showed the whole letter to his mother, who refused to think of such a thing, and then asked, as if the fact had not been fully set before her: "When is it to be?"

"The 21st of June."

"Well, he's early enough with his invitation," she grumbled.

"Yes, he is," said Cynthia; and she laughed for shame and pleasure as she confessed, "I was thinking he was rather late."

She hung her head and turned her face away. But Mrs. Durgin understood. "You be'n expectin' it all along, then."

"I guess so."

"I presume," said the elder woman, "that he's talked to you about it. He never tells me much. I don't see why you should want to go. What's it like?"

"Oh, I don't know. But it's the day the graduating class have to themselves, and all their friends come."

"Well, I don't know why anybody should want to go," said Mrs. Durgin.

"I sha'n't. Tell him he won't want to own me when he sees me. What am I goin' to wear, I should like to know? What you goin' to wear, Cynthia?"

XXVIII.

Jeff's place at Harvard had been too long fixed among the jays to allow the hope of wholly retrieving his condition now. It was too late for him to be chosen in any of the nicer clubs or societies, but he was not

beyond the mounting sentiment of comradeship, which begins to tell in the last year among college men, and which had its due effect with his class. One of the men, who had always had a foible for humanity, took advantage of the prevailing mood in another man, and wrought upon him to ask, among the fellows he was asking to a tea at his rooms, several fellows who were distinctly and almost typically jays. The tea was for the aunt of the man who gave it, a very pretty woman from New York, and it was so richly qualified by young people of fashion from Boston that the infusion of the jay flavor could not spoil it, if it would not rather add an agreeable piquancy. This college mood coincided that year with a benevolent emotion in the larger world, from which fashion was not exempt. Society had just been stirred by the reading of a certain book, which had then a very great vogue, and several people had been down among the wretched at the North End doing good in a conscience-stricken effort to avert the millennium which the book in question seemed to threaten. The lady who matronized the tea was said to have done more good than you could imagine at the North End, and she caught at the chance to meet the college jays in a spirit of Christian charity. When the man who was going to give the tea rather sheepishly confessed what the altruistic man had got him in for, she praised him so much that he went away feeling like the hero of a holy cause. She promised the assistance and sympathy of several brave girls, who would not be afraid of all the jays in college.

After all, only one of the jays came. Not many, in fact, had been asked, and when Jeff Durgin actually appeared, it was not known that he was both the first and the last of his kind. The lady who was matronizing the tea recognized him, with a throe of her quickened conscience, as the young fellow whom she had met two winters before at the studio tea which Mr. Westover had given to those queer Florentine friends of his, and whom she had never thought of since, though she had then promised herself to do something for him. She had then even given him some vague hints of a prospective hospitality, and she confessed her sin of omission in a swift but graphic retrospect to one of her brave girls, while Jeff stood blocking out a space for his stalwart bulk amid the alien elegance just within the doorway, and the host was making his way toward him, with an outstretched hand of hardy welcome.

At an earlier period of his neglect and exclusion, Jeff would not have responded to the belated overture which had now been made him, for no reason that he could divine. But he had nothing to lose by accepting the invitation, and he had promised the altruistic man, whom he rather liked; he did not dislike the giver of the tea so much as some other men, and so he came.

The brave girl whom the matron was preparing to devote to him stood shrinking with a trepidation which she could not conceal at sight of his strange massiveness, with his rust-gold hair coming down toward his thick yellow brows and mocking blue eyes in a dense bang, and his jaw squaring itself under the rather insolent smile of his full mouth. The matron felt that her victim teas perhaps going to fail her, when a voice at her ear said, as if the question were extorted, "Who in the world is that?"

She instantly turned, and flashed out in a few inspired syllables the

fact she had just imparted to her treacherous heroine. "Do let me introduce him, Miss Lynde. I must do something for him, when he gets up to me, if he ever does."

"By all means," said the girl, who had an impulse to laugh at the rude force of Jeff's face and figure, so disproportioned to the occasion, and she vented it at the matron's tribulation. The matron was shaking hands with people right and left, and exchanging inaudible banalities with them. She did not know what the girl said in answer, but she was aware that she remained near her. She had professed her joy at seeing Jeff again, when he reached her, and she turned with him and said, "Let me present you to Miss Lynde, Mr. Durgin," and so abandoned them to each other.

As Jeff had none of the anxiety for social success which he would have felt at an earlier period, he now left it to Miss Lynde to begin the talk, or not, as she chose. He bore himself with so much indifference that she was piqued to an effort to hold his eyes, that wandered from her to this face and that in the crowd.

"Do you find many people you know, Mr. Durgin?"

"I don't find any."

"I supposed you didn't from the way you looked at them."

"How did I look at them?"

"As if you wanted to eat them, and one never wants to eat one's friends."

"Why?"

"Oh, I don't know. They wouldn't agree with one."

Jeff laughed, and he now took fuller note of the slender girl who stood before him, and swayed a little backward, in a graceful curve. He saw that she had a dull, thick complexion, with liquid eyes, set wide apart and slanted upward slightly, and a nose that was deflected inward from the straight line; but her mouth was beautiful and vividly red like a crimson blossom.

"Couldn't you find me some place to sit down, Mr. Durgin?" she asked.

He had it on his tongue to say, "Well, not unless you want to sit down on some enemy," but he did not venture this: when it comes to daring of that sort, the boldest man is commonly a little behind a timid woman.

Several of the fellows had clubbed their rooms, and lent them to the man who was giving the tea; he used one of the apartments for a cloak-room, and he meant the other for the social overflow from his own. But people always prefer to remain dammed-up together in the room where they are received, and Miss Lynde looked between the neighboring heads, and over the neighboring shoulders, and saw the borrowed apartment quite empty.

At the moment of this discovery the host came fighting his way up to make sure that Jeff had been provided for in the way of introductions. He promptly introduced him to Miss Lynde. She said: "Oh, that's been done! Can't you think of something new?" Jeff liked the style of this. "I don't mind it, but I'm afraid Mr. Durgin must find it monotonous."

"Oh, well, do something original yourself, then, Miss Lynde!" said the host. "Start a movement for that room across the passage; that's mine, too, for the occasion; and save some of these people's lives. It's suffocating in here."

"I don't mind saving Mr. Durgin's," said the girl, "if he wants it saved."

"Oh, I know he's just dying to have you save it," said the host, and he left them, to inspire other people to follow their example. But such as glanced across the passage into the overflow room seemed to think it now the possession solely of the pioneers of the movement. At any rate, they made no show of joining them; and after Miss Lynde and Jeff had looked at the pictures on the walls and the photographs on the mantel of the room where they found themselves, they sat down on chairs fronting the open door and the door of the room they had left. The window-seat would have been more to Jeff's mind, and he had proposed it, but the girl seemed not to have heard him; she took the deep easy-chair in full view of the company opposite, and left him to pull up a chair beside her.

"I always like to see the pictures in a man's room," she said, with a little sigh of relief from their inspection and a partial yielding of her figure to the luxury of the chair. "Then I know what the man is. This man--I don't know whose room it is--seems to have spent a good deal of his time at the theatre."

"Isn't that where most of them spend their time?" asked Jeff.

"I'm sure I don't know. Is that where you spend yours?"

"It used to be. I'm not spending my time anywhere just now." She looked questioningly, and he added, "I haven't got any to spend."

"Oh, indeed! Is that a reason? Why don't you spend somebody else's?"

"Nobody has any, that I know."

"You're all working off conditions, you mean?"

"That's what I'm doing, or trying to."

"Then it's never certain whether you can do it, after all?"

"Not so certain as to be free from excitement," said Jeff, smiling.

"And are you consumed with the melancholy that seems to be balling up all the men at the prospect of having to leave Harvard and go out into the

hard, cold world?"

"I don't look it, do I? Jeff asked:

"No, you don't. And you don't feel it? You're not trying concealment, and so forth?"

"No; if I'd had my own way, I'd have left Harvard before this." He could see that his bold assumption of difference, or indifference, told upon her. "I couldn't get out into the hard, cold world too soon."

"How fearless! Most of them don't know what they're going to do in it."

"I do."

"And what are you going to do? Or perhaps you think that's asking!"

"Oh no. I'm going to keep a hotel."

He had hoped to startle her, but she asked, rather quietly, "What do you mean?" and she added, as if to punish him for trying to mystify her:

"I've heard that it requires gifts for that. Isn't there some proverb?"

"Yes. But I'm going to try to do it on experience." He laughed, and he did not mind her trying to hit him, for he saw that he had made her curious.

"Do you mean that you have kept a hotel?"

"For three generations," he returned, with a gravity that mocked her from his bold eyes.

"I'm sure I don't know what you mean," she said, indifferently. "Where is your hotel? In Boston--New York--Chicago?"

"It's in the country--it's a summer hotel," he said, as before.

She looked away from him toward the other room. "There's my brother. I didn't know he was coming."

"Shall I go and tell him where you are?" Jeff asked, following the direction of her eyes.

"No, no; he can find me," said the girl, sinking back in her chair again. He left her to resume the talk where she chose, and she said: "If it's something ancestral, of course--"

"I don't know as it's that, exactly. My grandfather used to keep a country tavern, and so it's in the blood, but the hotel I mean is something that we've worked up into from a farm boarding-house."

"You don't talk like a country person," the girl broke in, abruptly.

"Not in Cambridge. I do in the country."

"And so," she prompted, "you're going to turn it into a hotel when you've got out of Harvard."

"It's a hotel already, and a pretty big one; but I'm going to make the right kind of hotel of it when I take hold of it."

"And what is the right kind of a hotel?"

"That's a long story. It would make you tired."

"It might, but we've got to spend the time somehow. You could begin, and then if I couldn't stand it you could stop."

"It's easier to stop first and begin some other time. I guess I'll let you imagine my hotel, Miss Lynde."

"Oh, I understand now," said the girl. "The table will be the great thing. You will stuff people."

"Do you mean that I'm trying to stuff you?"

"How do I know? You never can tell what men really mean."

Jeff laughed with mounting pleasure in her audacity, that imparted a sense of tolerance for him such as he had experienced very seldom from the Boston girls he had met; after all, he had met but few. It flattered him to have her doubt what he had told her in his reckless indifference; it implied that he was fit for better things than hotel-keeping.

"You never can tell how much a woman believes," he retorted.

"And you keep trying to find out?"

"No, but I think that they might believe the truth."

"You'd better try them with it!"

"Well, I will. Do you really want to know what I'm going to do when I get through?"

"Let me see!" Miss Lynde leaned forward, with her elbow on her knee and her chin in her hand, and softly kicked the edge of her skirt with the toe of her shoe, as if in deep thought. Jeff waited for her to play her comedy through. "Yes," she said, "I think I did wish to know--at one time."

"But you don't now?"

"Now? How can I tell? It was a great while ago!"

"I see you don't."

Miss Lynde did not make any reply. She asked, "Do you know my aunt, Durgin?"

"I didn't know you had one."

"Yes, everybody has an aunt--even when they haven't a mother, if you can believe the Gilbert operas. I ask because I happen to live with my aunt, and if you knew her she might--ask you to call." Miss Lynde scanned Jeff's face for the effect of this.

He said, gravely: "If you'll introduce me to her, I'll ask her to let me."

"Would you, really?" said the girl. "I've half a mind to try. I wonder if you'd really have the courage."

"I don't think I'm easily rattled."

"You mean that I'm trying to rattle you."

"No--"

"I'm not. My aunt is just what I've said."

"You haven't said what she was. Is she here?"

"No; that's the worst of it. If she were, I should introduce you, just to see if you'd dare. Well, some other time I will."

"You think there'll be some other time?" Jeff asked.

"I don't know. There are all kinds of times. By-the-way, what time is it?"

Jeff looked at his watch. "Quarter after six."

"Then I must go." She jumped to her feet, and faced about for a glimpse of herself in the little glass on the mantel, and put her hand on the large pink roses massed at her waist. One heavy bud dropped from its stem to the floor, where, while she stood, the edge of her skirt pulled and pushed it. She moved a little aside to peer over at a photograph. Jeff stooped and picked up the flower, which he offered her.

"You dropped it," he said, bowing over it.

"Did I?" She looked at it with an effect of surprise and doubt.

"I thought so, but if you don't, I shall keep it."

The girl removed her careless eyes from it. "When they break off so short, they won't go back."

"If I were a rose, I should want to go back," said Jeff.

She stopped in one of her many aversions and reversions, and looked at him steadily across her shoulder. "You won't have to keep a poet, Mr. Durgin."

"Thank you. I always expected to write the circulars myself. I'll send you one."

"Do."

"With this rose pressed between the leaves, so you'll know."

"That would, be very pretty. But you must take me to Mrs. Bevidge, now, if you can."

"I guess I can," said Jeff; and in a minute or two they stood before the matronizing hostess, after a passage through the babbling and laughing groups that looked as impossible after they had made it as it looked before.

Mrs. Bevidge gave the girl's hand a pressure distinct from the official touch of parting, and contrived to say, for her hearing alone: "Thank you so much, Bessie. You've done missionary work."

"I shouldn't call it that."

"It will do for you to say so! He wasn't really so bad, then? Thank you again, dear!"

Jeff had waited his turn. But now, after the girl had turned away, as if she had forgotten him, his eyes followed her, and he did not know that Mrs. Bevidge was speaking to him. Miss Lynde had slimly lost herself in the mass, till she was only a graceful tilt of hat, before she turned with a distraught air. When her eyes met Jeff's they lighted up with a look that comes into the face when one remembers what one has been trying to think of. She gave him a brilliant smile that seemed to illumine him from head to foot, and before it was quenched he felt as if she had kissed her hand to him from her rich mouth.

Then he heard Mrs. Bevidge asking something about a hall, and he was aware of her bending upon him a look of the daring humanity that had carried her triumphantly through her good works at the North End.

"Oh, I'm not in the Yard," said Jeff, with belated intelligence.

"Then will just Cambridge reach you?"

He gave his number and street, and she thanked him with the benevolence that availed so much with the lower classes. He went away thrilling and tingling, with that girl's tones in his ear, her motions in his nerves, and the colors of her face filling his sight, which he printed on the air whenever he turned, as one does with a vivid light after looking at it.

When Jeff reached his room he felt the need of writing to Cynthia, with whatever obscure intention of atonement. He told her of the college tea he had just come from, and made fun of it, and the kind of people he had met, especially the affected girl who had tried to rattle him; he said he guessed she did not think she had rattled him a great deal.

While he wrote he kept thinking how this Miss Lynde was nearer his early ideal of fashion, of high life, which Westover had pretty well snubbed out of him, than any woman he had seen yet; she seemed a girl who would do what she pleased, and would not be afraid if it did not please other people. He liked her having tried to rattle him, and he smiled to himself in recalling her failure. It was as if she had laid hold of him with her little hands to shake him, and had shaken herself. He laughed out in the dark when this image came into his mind; its intimacy flattered him; and he believed that it was upon some hint from her that Mrs. Bevidge had asked his address. She must be going to ask him to her house, and very soon, for it was part of Jeff's meagre social experience that this was the way swells did; they might never ask you twice, but they would ask you promptly.

The thing that Mrs. Bevidge asked Jeff to, when her note reached him the second day after the tea, was a meeting to interest young people in the work at the North End, and Jeff swore under his breath at the disappointment and indignity put upon him. He had reckoned upon an afternoon tea, at least, or even, in the flights of fancy which he now disowned to himself, a dance after the Mid-Years, or possibly an earlier reception of some sort. He burned with shame to think of a theatre-party, which he had fondly specialized, with a seat next Miss Lynde.

He tore Mrs. Bevidge's note to pieces, and decided not to answer it at all, as the best way of showing how he had taken her invitation. But Mrs. Bevidge's benevolence was not wanting in courage; she believed that Jeff should pay his footing in society, such as it was, and should allow himself to be made use of, the first thing; when she had no reply from him, she wrote him again, asking him to an adjourned meeting of the first convocation, which had been so successful in everything but numbers. This time she baited her hook, in hoping that the young men would feel something of the interest the young ladies had already shown in the matter. She expressed the fear that Mr. Durgin had not got her earlier letter, and she sent this second to the care of the man who had given the tea.

Jeff's resentment was now so far past that he would have civilly declined to go to the woman's house; but all his hopes of seeing that girl, as he always called Miss Lynde in his thought, were revived by the mention of the young ladies interested in the cause. He accepted, though all the way into Boston he laid wagers with himself that she would not be there;

and up to the moment of taking her hand he refused himself any hope of winning.

There was not much business before the meeting; that had really been all transacted before; it was mainly to make sure of the young men, who were present in the proportion of one to five young ladies at least. Mrs. Bevidge explained that she had seen the wastefulness of amateur effort among the poor, and announced that hereafter she was going to work with the established charities. These were very much in want of visitors, especially young men, to go about among the applicants for relief, and inquire into their real necessities, and get work for them. She was herself going to act as secretary for the meetings during the coming month, and apparently she wished to signalize her accession to the regular forces of charity by bringing into camp as large a body of recruits as she could.

But Jeff had not come to be made use of, or as a jay who was willing to work for his footing in society. He had come in the hope of meeting Miss Lynde, and now that he had met her he had no gratitude to Mrs. Bevidge as a means, and no regret for the defeat of her good purposes so far as she intended their fulfilment in him. He was so cool and self-possessed in excusing himself, for reasons that he took no pains to make seem unselfish, that the altruistic man who had got him asked to the college tea as a friendless jay felt it laid upon him to apologize for Mrs. Bevidge's want of tact.

"She means well, and she's very much in earnest, in this work; but I must say she can make herself very offensive--when she doesn't try! She has a right to ask our help, but not to parade us as the captives of her bow and spear."

"Oh, that's all right," said Jeff. He perceived that the amiable fellow was claiming for all an effect that Jeff knew really implicated himself alone. "I couldn't load up with anything of that sort, if I'm to work off my conditions, you know."

"Are you in that boat?" said the altruist, as if he were, too; and he put his hand compassionately on Jeff's iron shoulder, and left him to Miss Lynde, whose side he had not stirred from since he had found her.

"It seems to me," she said, "that where there are so many of you in the same boat, you might manage to get ashore somehow."

"Yes, or all go down together." Jeff laughed, and ate Mrs. Bevidge's bread-and-butter, and drank her tea, with a relish unaffected by his refusal to do what she asked him. He was right, perhaps, and perhaps she deserved nothing better at his hands, but the altruist, when he glanced at him from the other side of the room, thought that he had possibly wasted his excuses upon Jeff's self-complacence.

He went away in a halo of young ladies; several of the other girls grouped themselves in their departure; and it happened that Miss Lynde and Jeff took leave together. Mrs. Bevidge said to her, with the

caressing tenderness of one in the same set, "Good-bye, dear!" To Jeff she said, with the cold conscience of those whom their nobility obliges, "I am always at home on Thursdays, Mr. Durgin."

"Oh, thank you," said Jeff. He understood what the words and the manner meant together, but both were instantly indifferent to him when he got outside and found that Miss Lynde was not driving. Something, which was neither look, nor smile, nor word, of course, but nothing more at most than a certain pull and tilt of the shoulder, as she turned to walk away from Mrs. Bevidge's door, told him from her that he might walk home with her if he would not seem to do so.

It was one of the pink evenings, dry and clear, that come in the Boston December, and they walked down the sidehill street, under the delicate tracery of the elm boughs in the face of the metallic sunset. In the section of the Charles that the perspective of the street blocked out, the wrinkled current showed as if glazed with the hard color. Jeff's strong frame rejoiced in the cold with a hale pleasure when he looked round into the face of the girl beside him, with the gray film of her veil pressed softly against her red mouth by her swift advance. Their faces were nearly on a level, as they looked into each other's eyes, and he kept seeing the play of the veil's edge against her lips as they talked.

"Why sha'n't you go to Mrs. Bevidge's Thursdays?" she asked. "They're very nice."

How do you know I'm not going?" he retorted.

"By the way you thanked her."

"Do you advise me to go?"

"I haven't got anything to do with it. What do mean by that?"

"I don't know. Curiosity, I suppose."

"Well, I do advise you to go," said the girl. "Shall you be there next Thursday?"

"I? I never go to Mrs. Bevidge's Thursdays!"

"Touche," said Jeff, and they both laughed. "Can you always get in at an enemy that way?"

"Enemy?"

"Well, friend. It's the same thing."

"I see," said the girl. "You belong to the pessimistic school of Seniors."

"Why don't you try to make an optimist of me?"

"Would it be worth while?"

"That isn't for me to say."

"Don't be diffident! That's staler yet."

"I'll be anything you like."

"I'm not sure you could." For an instant Jeff did not feel the point, and he had not the magnanimity, when he did, to own himself touched again. Apparently, if this girl could not rattle him, she could beat him at fence, and the will to dominate her began to stir in him. If he could have thought of any sarcasm, no matter how crushing, he would have come back at her with it. He could not think of anything, and he walked at her side, inwardly chafing for the chance which would not come.

When they reached her door there was a young man at the lock with a latch-key, which he was not making work, for, after a bated blasphemy of his failure, he turned and twitched the bell impatiently.

Miss Lynde laughed provokingly, and he looked over his shoulder at her and at Jeff, who felt his injury increased by the disadvantage this young man put him at. Jeff was as correctly dressed; he wore a silk hat of the last shape, and a long frock-coat; he was properly gloved and shod; his clothes fitted him, and were from the best tailor; but at sight of this young man in clothes of the same design he felt ill-dressed. He was in like sort aware of being rudely blocked out physically, and coarsely colored as to his blond tints of hair and eye and cheek. Even the sinister something in the young man's look had distinction, and there was style in the signs of dissipation in his handsome face which Jeff saw with a hunger to outdo him.

Miss Lynde said to Jeff, "My brother, Mr. Durgin," and then she added to the other, "You ought to ring first, Arthur, and try your key afterward."

"The key's all right," said the young man, without paying any attention to Jeff beyond a glance of recognition; he turned his back, and waited for the door to be opened.

His sister suggested, with an amiability which Jeff felt was meant in reparation to him, "Perhaps a night latch never works before dark--or very well before midnight." The door was opened, and she said to Jeff, with winning entreaty, "Won't you come in, Mr. Durgin?"

Jeff excused himself, for he perceived that her politeness was not so much an invitation to him as a defiance to her brother; he gave her credit for no more than it was worth, and he did not wish any the less to get even with her because of it.

XXX.

At dinner, in the absence of the butler, Alan Lynde attacked his sister across the table for letting herself be seen with a jay, who was not only a jay, but a cad, and personally so offensive to most of the college men that he had never got into a decent club or society; he had been suspended the first year, and if he had not had the densest kind of cheek he would never have come back. Lynde said he would like to know where she had picked the fellow up.

She answered that she had picked him up, if that was the phrase he liked, at Mrs. Bevidge's; and then Alan swore a little, so as not to be heard by their aunt, who sat at the head of the table, and looked down its length between them, serenely ignorant, in her slight deafness, of what was going on between them. To her perception Alan was no more vehement than usual, and Bessie no more smilingly self-contained. He said he supposed that it was some more of Lancaster's damned missionary work, then, and he wondered that a gentleman like Morland had ever let Lancaster work such a jay in on him; he had seen her 'afficher' herself with the fellow at Morland's tea; he commanded her to stop it; and he professed to speak for her good.

Bessie returned that she knew how strongly he felt from the way he had misbehaved when she introduced him to Mr. Durgin, but that she supposed he had been at the club and his nerves were unstrung. Was that the reason, perhaps, why he could not make his latchkey work? Mr. Durgin might be a cad, and she would not say he was not a jay, but so far he had not sworn at her; and, if he had been suspended and come back, there were some people who had not been suspended or come back, either, though that might have been for want of cheek.

She ended by declaring she was used to going into society without her brother's protection, or even his company, and she would do her best to get on without his advice. Or was it his conduct he wished her to profit by?

It had come to the fish going out by this time, and Alan, who had eaten with no appetite, and drunken feverishly of apollinaris, flung down his napkin and went out, too.

"What is the matter?" asked his aunt, looking after him.

Bessie shrugged, but she said, presently, with her lips more than her voice: "I don't think he feels very well."

"Do you think he--"

The girl frowned assent, and the meal went on to its end. Then she and her aunt went into the large, dull library, where they passed the evenings which Bessie did not spend in some social function. These evenings were growing rather more frequent, with her advancing years, for she was now nearly twenty-five, and there were few Seniors so old. She was not the kind of girl to renew her youth with the Sophomores and

Freshmen in the classes succeeding the class with which she had danced through college; so far as she had kept up the old relation with students, she continued it with the men who had gone into the law-school. But she saw less and less of these without seeing more of other men, and perhaps in the last analysis she was not a favorite. She was allowed to be fascinating, but she was not felt to be flattering, and people would rather be flattered than fascinated. In fact, the men were mostly afraid of her; and it has been observed of girls of this kind that the men who are not afraid of them are such as they would do well to be afraid of. Whether that was quite the case with Bessie Lynde or not, it was certain that she who was always the cleverest girl in the room, and if not the prettiest, then the most effective, had not the best men about her. Her men were apt to be those whom the other girls called stupid or horrid, and whom it would not be easy, though it might be more just, to classify otherwise. The other girls wondered what she could see in them; but perhaps it was not necessary that she should see anything in them, if they could see all she wished them to see, and no more, in her.

The room where tea was now brought and put before her was volumed round by the collections of her grandfather, except for the spaces filled by his portrait and that of earlier ancestors, going back to the time when Copley made masterpieces of his fellow-Bostonians. Her aunt herself looked a family portrait of the middle period, a little anterior to her father's, but subsequent to her great-grandfather's. She had a comely face, with large, smooth cheeks and prominent eyes; the edges of her decorous brown wig were combed rather near their corners, and a fitting cap palliated but did not deny the wig. She had the quiet but rather dull look of people slightly deaf, and she had perhaps been stupefied by a life of unalloyed prosperity and propriety. She had grown an old maid naturally, but not involuntarily, and she was without the sadness or the harshness of disappointment. She had never known much of the world, though she had always lived in it. She knew that it was made up of two kinds of people--people who were like her and people who were not like her; and she had lived solely in the society of people who were like her, and in the shelter of their opinions and ideals. She did not contemn or exclude the people who were unlike her, but she had never had any more contact with them than she now had with the weather of the streets, as she sat, filling her large arm-chair full of her ladylike correctness, in the library of the handsome house her father had left her. The irruption of her brother's son and daughter into its cloistered quiet had scarcely broken its invulnerable order. It was right and fit they should be there after his death, and it was not strange that in the course of time they should both show certain unregulated tendencies which, since they were not known to be Lynde tendencies, must have been derived from the Southwestern woman her brother had married during his social and financial periclitations in a region wholly inconceivable to her. Their mother was dead, too, and their aunt's life closed about them with full acceptance, if not complacence, as part of her world. They had grown to manhood and womanhood without materially discomposing her faith in the old-fashioned Unitarian deity, whose service she had always attended.

When Alan left college in his Freshman year, and did not go back, but went rather to Europe and Egypt and Japan, it appeared to her myopic

optimism that his escapades had been pretty well hushed up by time and distance. After he came home and devoted himself to his club, she could have wished that he had taken up some profession or business; but since there was money enough, she waited in no great disquiet until he showed as decided a taste for something else as he seemed for the present to have only for horses. In the mean while, from time to time, it came to her doctor's advising his going to a certain retreat. But he came out the first time so much better and remained well so long that his aunt felt a kind of security in his going again and again, whenever he became at all worse. He always came back better. As she took the cup of tea that Bessie poured out for her, she recurred to the question that she had partly asked already:

"Do you think Alan is getting worse again?"

"Not so very much," said the girl, candidly. "He's been at the club, I suppose, but he left the table partly because I vexed him."

"Because you what?"

"Because I vexed him. He was scolding me, and I wouldn't stand it."

Her aunt tasted her tea, and found it so quite what she liked that she said, from a natural satisfaction with Bessie, "I don't see what he had to scold you about."

"Well," returned Bessie, and she got her pretty voice to the level of her aunt's hearing, with some straining, and kept it there, "when he is in that state, he has to scold some one; and I had been rather annoying, I suppose."

"What had you been doing?" asked her aunt, making out her words more from the sight than from the sound, after all.

"I had been walking home with a jay, and we found Alan trying to get in at the front door with his key, and I introduced him to the jay."

Miss Louisa Lynde had heard the word so often from her niece and nephew, that she imagined herself in full possession of its meaning. She asked: "Where had you met him?"

"I met him first," said the girl, "at Willie Morland's tea, last week, and to-day I found him at Mrs. Bevidge's altruistic toot."

"I didn't know," said her aunt, after a momentary attention to her tea, "that jays were interested in that sort of thing."

The girl laughed. "I believe they're not. It hasn't quite reached them, yet; and I don't think it will ever reach my jay. Mrs. Bevidge tried to work him into the cause, but he refused so promptly, and so intelligently, don't you know--and so almost brutally, that poor Freddy Lancaster had to come and apologize to him for her want of tact." Bessie enjoyed the fact, which she had colored a little, in another laugh, but

she had apparently not possessed her aunt of the humor of it. She remained seriously-attentive, and the girl went on: "He was not the least abashed at having refused; he stayed till the last, and as we came out together and he was going my way, I let him walk home with me. He's a jay, but he isn't a common jay." Bessie leaned forward and tried to implant some notion of Jeff's character and personality in her aunt's mind.

Miss Lynde listened attentively enough, but she merely asked, when all was said: "And why was Alan vexed with you about him?"

"Well," said the girl, falling back into her chair, "generally because this man's a jay, and particularly because he's been rather a baddish jay, I believe. He was suspended in his first year for something or other, and you know poor Alan's very particular! But Molly Enderby says Freddy Lancaster gives him the best of characters now." Bessie pulled down her mouth, with an effect befitting the notion of repentance and atonement. Then she flashed out: "Perhaps he had been drinking when he got into trouble. Alan could never forgive him for that."

"I think," said her aunt, "it is to your brother's credit that he is anxious about your associations."

"Oh, very much!" shouted Bessie, with a burst of laughter. "And as he isn't practically so, I ought to have been more patient with his theory. But when he began to scold me I lost my temper, and I gave him a few wholesome truths in the guise of taunts. That was what made him go away, I suppose."

"But I don't really see," her aunt pursued,--"what occasion he had to be angry with you in this instance."

"Oh, I do!" said Bessie. "Mr. Durgin isn't one to inspire the casual beholder with the notion of his spiritual distinction. His face is so rude and strong, and he has such a primitive effect in his clothes, that you feel as if you were coming down the street with a prehistoric man that the barbers and tailors had put a 'fin de siecle' surface on." At the mystification which appeared in her aunt's face the girl laughed again. "I should have been quite as anxious, if I had been in Alan's place, and I shall tell him so, sometime. If I had not been so interested in the situation I don't believe I could have kept my courage. Whenever I looked round, and found that prehistoric man at my elbow, it gave me the creeps, a little, as if he were really carrying me off to his cave. I shall try to express that to Alan."

XXXI.

The ladies finished their tea, and the butler came and took the cups away. Miss Lynde remained silent in her chair at her end of the library-table, and by-and-by Bessie got a book and began to read. When her aunt

woke up it was half past nine. "Was that Alan coming in?" she asked.

"I don't think he's been out," said the girl. "It isn't late enough for him to come in--or early enough."

"I believe I'll go to bed," Miss Lynde returned. "I feel rather drowsy."

Bessie did not smile at a comedy which was apt to be repeated every evening that she and her aunt spent at home together; they parted for the night with the decencies of family affection, and Bessie delivered the elder lady over to her maid. Then the girl sank down again, and lay musing in her deep chair before the fire with her book shut on her thumb. She looked rather old and worn in her reverie; her face lost the air of gay banter which, after the beauty of her queer eyes and her vivid mouth, was its charm. The eyes were rather dull now, and the mouth was a little withered.

She was waiting for her brother to come down, as he was apt to do if he was in the house, after their aunt went to bed, to smoke a cigar in the library. He was in his house shoes when he shuffled into the room, but her ear had detected his presence before a hiccough announced it. She did not look up, but let him make several failures to light his cigar, and damn the matches under his breath, before she pushed the drop-light to him in silent suggestion. As he leaned over her chair-back to reach its chimney with his cigar in his mouth, she said, "You're all right, Alan."

He waited till he got round to his aunt's easy-chair and dropped into it before he answered, "So are you, Bess."

"I'm not so sure of that," said the girl, "as I should be if you were still scolding me. I knew that he was a jay, well enough, and I'd just seen him behaving very like a cad to Mrs. Bevidge."

"Then I don't understand how you came to be with him."

"Oh yes, you do, Alan. You mustn't be logical! You might as well say you can't understand how you came to be more serious than sober." The brother laughed helplessly. "It was the excitement."

"But you can't give way to that sort of thing, Bess," said her brother, with the gravity of a man feeling the consequences of his own errors.

"I know I can't, but I do," she returned. "I know it's bad for me, if it isn't for other people. Come! I'll swear off if you will!"

"I'm always ready, to swear off," said the young man, gloomily. He added, "But you've got brains, Bess, and I hate to see you playing the fool."

"Do you really, Alan?" asked the girl, pleased perhaps as much by his reproach as by his praise. "Do you think I've got brains?"

"You're the only girl that has."

"Oh, I didn't mean to ask so much as that! But what's the reason I can't do anything with them? Other girls draw, and play, and write. I don't do anything but go in for the excitement that's bad for me. I wish you'd explain it."

Alan Lynde did not try. The question seemed to turn his thoughts back upon himself to dispiriting effect. "I've got brains, too, I believe," he began.

"Lots of them!" cried his sister, generously. "There isn't any of the men to compare with you. If I had you to talk with all the time, I shouldn't want jays. I don't mean to flatter. You're a constant feast of reason; I don't care for flows of soul. You always take right views of things when you're yourself, and even when you're somebody else you're not stupid. You could be anything you chose."

"The devil of it is I can't choose," he replied.

"Yes, I suppose that's the devil of it," said the girl.

"You oughtn't to use such language as that, Bess," said her brother, severely.

"Oh, I don't with everybody," she returned. "Never with ladies!"

He looked at her out of the corner of his eye with a smile at once rueful and comic.

"You got me, I guess, that time," he owned.

"'Touche', Mr. Durgin says. He fences, it seems, and he speaks French. It was like an animal speaking French; you always expect them to speak English. But I don't mind your swearing before me; I know that it helps to carry off the electricity." She laughed, and made him laugh with her.

"Is there anything to him?" he growled, when they stopped laughing.

"Yes, a good deal," said Bessie, with an air of thoughtfulness; and then she went on to tell all that Jeff had told her of himself, and she described his aplomb in dealing with the benevolent Bevidge, as she called her, and sketched his character, as it seemed to her. The sketch was full of shrewd guesses, and she made it amusing to her brother, who from the vantage of his own baddishness no doubt judged the original more intelligently.

"Well, you'd better let him alone, after this," he said, at the end.

"Yes," she pensively assented. "I suppose it's as if you took to some very common kind of whiskey, isn't it? I see what you mean. If one must, it ought to be champagne."

She turned upon him a look of that keen but limited knowledge which renders women's conjectures of evil always so amusing, or so pathetic, to men.

"Better let the champagne alone, too," said her brother, darkly.

"Yes, I know that," she admitted, and she lay back in her chair, looking dreamily into the fire. After a while she asked, abruptly: "Will you give it up if I will?"

"I am afraid I couldn't."

"You could try."

"Oh, I'm used to that."

"Then it's a bargain," she said. She jumped from her chair and went over to him, and smoothed his hair over his forehead and kissed the place she had smoothed, though it was unpleasantly damp to her lips. "Poor boy, poor boy! Now, remember! No more jays for me, and no more jags for you. Goodnight."

Her brother broke into a wild laugh at her slanging, which had such a bizarre effect in relation to her physical delicacy.

XXXII.

Jeff did not know whether Miss Bessie Lynde meant to go to Mrs. Bevidge's Thursdays or not. He thought she might have been bantering him by what she said, and he decided that he would risk going to the first of them on the chance of meeting her. She was not there, and there was no one there whom he knew. Mrs. Bevidge made no effort to enlarge his acquaintance, and after he had drunk a cup of her tea he went away with rage against society in his heart, which he promised himself to vent at the first chance of refusing its favors. But the chance seemed not to come. The world which had opened its gates to him was fast shut again, and he had to make what he could of renouncing it. He worked pretty hard, and he renewed himself in his fealty to Cynthia, while his mind strayed curiously to that other girl. But he had almost abandoned the hope of meeting her again, when a large party was given on the eve of the Harvard Mid-Year Examinations, which end the younger gayeties of Boston, for a fortnight at least, in January. The party was so large that the invitations overflowed the strict bounds of society at some points. In the case of Jeff Durgin the excess was intentional beyond the vague benevolence which prompted the giver of the party to ask certain other outsiders. She was a lady of a soul several sizes larger than the souls of some other society leaders; she was not afraid to do as she liked; for instance, she had not only met the Vostrands at Westover's tea, several years before, but she had afterward offered some hospitalities to those ladies which had discharged her whole duty toward them without involving

her in any disadvantages. Jeff had been presented to her at Westover's, but she disliked him so promptly and decidedly that she had left him out of even the things that she asked some other jays to, like lectures and parlor readings for good objects. It was not until one of her daughters met him, first at Willie Morland's tea and then at Mrs. Bevidge's meeting, that her social conscience concerned itself with him. At the first her daughter had not spoken to him, as might very well have happened, since Bessie Lynde had kept him away with her nearly all the time; but at the last she had bowed pleasantly to him across the room, and Jeff had responded with a stiff obeisance, whose coldness she felt the more for having been somewhat softened herself in Mrs. Bevidge's altruistic atmosphere.

"I think he was hurt, mamma," the girl explained to her mother, "that you've never had him to anything. I suppose they must feel it."

"Oh, well, send him a card, then," said her mother; and when Jeff got the card, rather near the eleventh hour, he made haste to accept, not because he cared to go to Mrs. Enderby's house, but because he hoped he should meet Miss Lynde there.

Bessie was the first person he met after he turned from paying his duty to the hostess. She was with her aunt, and she presented him, and promised him a dance, which she let him write on her card. She sat out another dance with him, and he took her to supper.

To Westover, who had gone with the increasing forlornness a man feels in such pleasures after thirty-five, it seemed as if the two were in each other's company the whole evening. The impression was so strong with him that when Jeff restored Bessie to her aunt for the dance that was to be for some one else, and came back to the supper-room, the painter tried to satisfy a certain uneasiness by making talk with him. But Jeff would not talk; he got away with a bottle of champagne, which he had captured, and a plate heaped with croquettes and pease, and galantine and salad. There were no ladies left in the room by that time, and few young men; but the oldsters crowded the place, with their bald heads devoutly bowed over their victual, or their frosty mustaches bathed in their drink, singly or in groups; the noise of their talk and laughter mixed with the sound of their eating and drinking, and the clash of the knives and dishes. Over their stooped shoulders and past their rounded stomachs Westover saw Alan Lynde vaguely making his way with a glass in his hand, and looking vaguely about for wine; he saw Jeff catch his wandering eye, and make offer of his bottle, and then saw Lynde, after a moment of haughty pause, unbend and accept it. His thin face was flushed, and his hair tossed over his forehead, but Jeff seemed not to take note of that. He laughed boisterously at something Lynde said, and kept filling his glass for him. His own color remained clear and cool. It was as if his powerful physique absorbed the wine before it could reach his brain.

Westover wanted to interfere, and so far as Jeff was concerned he would not have hesitated; but Lynde was concerned, too, and you cannot save such a man from himself without offence. He made his way to the young man, hoping he might somehow have the courage he wanted.

Jeff held up the bottle, and called to him, "Get yourself a glass, Mr. Westover." He put on the air of a host, and would hardly be denied. "Know Mr. Westover, Mr. Lynde? Just talking about you," he explained to Westover.

Alan had to look twice at the painter. "Oh yes. Mr. Durgin, here--telling me about his place in the mountains. Says you've been there. Going--going myself in the summer. See his--horses." He made pauses between his words as some people do when they, try to keep from stammering.

Westover believed Lynde understood Jeff to be a country gentleman of sporting tastes, and he would not let that pass. "Yes, it's the pleasantest little hotel in the mountains."

"Strictly-temperance, I suppose?" said Alan, trying to smile with lips that obeyed him stiffly. He appeared not to care who or what Jeff was; the champagne had washed away all difference between them. He went on to say that he had heard of Jeff's intention of running the hotel himself when he got out of Harvard. He held it to be damned good stuff.

Jeff laughed. "Your sister wouldn't believe me when I told her."

"I think I didn't mention Miss Lynde," said Alan, haughtily.

Jeff filled his glass; Alan looked at it, faltered, and then drank it off. The talk began again between the young men, but it left Westover out, and he had to go away. Whether Jeff was getting Lynde beyond himself from the love of mischief, such as had prompted him to tease little children in his boyhood, or was trying to ingratiate himself with the young fellow through his weakness, or doing him harm out of mere thoughtlessness, Westover came away very unhappy at what he had seen. His unhappiness connected itself so distinctly with Lynde's family that he went and sat down beside Miss Lynde from an obscure impulse of compassion, and tried to talk with her. It would not have been so hard if she were merely deaf, for she had the skill of deaf people in arranging the conversation so that a nodded yes or no would be all that was needed to carry it forward. But to Westover she was terribly dull, and he was gasping, as in an exhausted receiver, when Bessie came up with a smile of radiant recognition for his extremity. She got rid of her partner, and devoted herself at once to Westover. "How good of you!" she said, without giving him the pain of an awkward disclaimer.

He could counter in equal sincerity and ambiguity, "How beautiful of you."

"Yes," she said, "I am looking rather well, tonight; but don't you think effective would have been a better word?" She smiled across her aunt at him out of a cloud of pink, from which her thin shoulders and slender neck emerged, and her arms, gloved to the top, fell into her lap; one of them seemed to terminate naturally in the fan which sensitively shared the inquiescence of her person.

"I will say effective, too, if you insist," said Westover. "But at the same time you're the most beautiful person here."

"How lovely of you, even if you don't mean it," she sighed. "If girls could have more of those things said to them, they would be better, don't you think? Or at least feel better."

Westover laughed. "We might organize a society--they have them for nearly everything now--for saying pleasant things to young ladies with a view to the moral effect."

"Oh, do I!"

"But it ought to be done conscientiously, and you couldn't go round telling every one that she was the most beautiful girl in the room."

"Why not? She'd believe it!"

"Yes; but the effect on the members of the society?"

"Oh yes; that! But you could vary it so as to save your conscience. You could say, 'How divinely you're looking!' or 'How angelic!' or 'You're the very poetry of motion,' or 'You are grace itself,' or 'Your gown is a perfect dream, or any little commonplace, and every one would take it for praise of her personal appearance, and feel herself a great beauty, just as I do now, though I know very well that I'm all out of drawing, and just chicqued together.'"

"I couldn't allow any one but you to say that, Miss Bessie; and I only let it pass because you say it so well."

"Yes; you're always so good! You wouldn't contradict me even when you turned me out of your class."

"Did I turn you out of my class?"

"Not just in so many words, but when I said I couldn't do anything in art, you didn't insist that it was because I wouldn't, and of course then I had to go. I've never forgiven you, Mr. Westover, never! Do keep on talking very excitedly; there's a man coming up to us that I don't want to think I see him, or he'll stop. There! He's veered off! Where were you, Mr. Westover?"

"Ah, Miss Bessie," said the painter; delighted at her drama, "there isn't anything you couldn't do if you would."

"You mean parlor entertainments; impersonations; impressions; that sort of thing? I have thought of it. But it would be too easy. I want to try something difficult."

"For instance."

"Well, being very, very good. I want something that would really tax my powers. I should like to be an example. I tried it the other night just before I went to sleep, and it was fine. I became an example to others. But when I woke up--I went on in the old way. I want something hard, don't you know; but I want it to be easy!"

She laughed, and Westover said: "I am glad you're not serious. No one ought to be an example to others. To be exemplary is as dangerous as to be complimentary.

"It certainly isn't so agreeable to the object," said the girl. "But it's fine for the subject as long as it lasts. How metaphysical we're getting! The objective and the subjective. It's quite what I should expect of talk at a Boston dance if I were a New-Yorker. Have you seen anything of my brother, within the last hour or so, Mr. Westover?"

"Yes; I just left him in the supper-room. Shall I go get him for you?" When he had said this, with the notion of rescuing him from Jeff, Westover was sorry, for he doubted if Alan Lynde were any longer in the state to be brought away from the supper-room, and he was glad to have Bessie say:

"No, no. He'll look us up in the course of the evening--or the morning." A young fellow came to claim her for a dance, and Westover had not the face to leave Miss Lynde, all the less because she told him he must not think of staying. He stayed till the dance was over, and Bessie came back to him.

"What time is it, Mr. Westover? I see my aunt beginning to nod on her perch."

Westover looked at his watch. "It's ten minutes past two."

"How early!" sighed the girl. "I'm tired of it, aren't you?"

"Very," said Westover. "I was tired an hour ago."

Bessie sank back in her chair with an air of nervous collapse, and did not say anything. Westover saw her watching the young couples who passed in and out of the room where the dancing was, or found corners on sofas, or window-seats, or sheltered spaces beside the doors and the chimney-piece, the girls panting and the men leaning forward to fan them. She looked very tired of it; and when a young fellow came up and asked her to dance, she told him that she was provisionally engaged. "Come back and get me, if you can't do better," she said, and he answered there was no use trying to do better, and said he would wait till the other man turned up, or didn't, if she would let him. He sat down beside her, and some young talk began between them.

In the midst of it Jeff appeared. He looked at Westover first, and then approached with an embarrassed face.

Bessie got vividly to her feet. "No apologies, Mr. Durgin, please! But

in just another moment you'd have lost your dance."

Westover saw what he believed a change pass in Jeff's look from embarrassment to surprise and then to flattered intelligence. He beamed all over; and he went away with Bessie toward the ballroom, and left Westover to a wholly unsupported belief that she had not been engaged to dance with Jeff. He wondered what her reckless meaning could be, but he had always thought her a young lady singularly fitted by nature and art to take care of herself, and when he reasoned upon what was in his mind he had to own that there was no harm in Jeff's dancing with her.

He took leave of Miss Lynde, and was going to get his coat and hat for his walk home when he was mysteriously stopped in a corner of the stairs by one of the caterer's men whom he knew. It is so unnatural to be addressed by a servant at all unless he asks you if you will have something to eat or drink, that Westover was in a manner prepared to have him say something startling. "It's about young Mr. Lynde, sor. We've got um in one of the rooms up-stairs, but he ain't fit to go home alone, and I've been lookin' for somebody that knows the family to help get um into a car'ge. He won't go for anny of us, sor."

"Where is he?" asked Westover, in anguish at being unable to refuse the appeal, but loathing the office put upon him.

"I'll show you, sor," said the caterer's man, and he sprang up the stairs before Westover, with glad alacrity.

XXXIII.

In a little room at the side of that where the men's hats and coats were checked, Alan Lynde sat drooping forward in an arm-chair, with his head fallen on his breast. He roused himself at the flash of the burner which the man turned up. "What's all this?" he demanded, haughtily. "Where's the carriage? What's the matter?"

"Your carriage is waiting, Lynde," said Westover. "I'll see you down to it," and he murmured, hopelessly, to the caterer's man: "Is there any back way?"

"There's the way we got um up by."

"It will do," said Westover, as simply.

But Lynde called out, defiantly: "Back way; I sha'n't go down back way. Inshult to guest. I wish--say--good-night to--Mrs. Enderby. Who you, anyway? Damn caterer's man?"

"I'm Westover, Lynde," the painter began, but the young fellow broke in upon him, shaking his hand and then taking his arm.

"Oh, Westover! All right! I'll go down back way with you. Thought--thought it was damn caterer's man. No--offence."

"No. It's all right. "Westover got his arm under Lynde's elbow, and, with the man going before for them to fall upon jointly in case they should stumble, he got him down the dark and twisting stairs and through the basement hall, which was vaguely haunted by the dispossessed women servants of the family, and so out upon the pavement of the moonlighted streets.

"Call Miss Lynde's car'ge," shouted the caterer's man to the barker, and escaped back into the basement, leaving Westover to stay his helpless charge on the sidewalk.

It seemed a publication of the wretch's shame when the barker began to fill the night with hoarse cries of, "Miss Lynde's carriage; carriage for Miss Lynde!" The cries were taken up by a coachman here and there in the rank of vehicles whose varnished roofs shone in the moon up and down the street. After a time that Westover of course felt to be longer than it was, Miss Lynde's old coachman was roused from his sleep on the box and started out of the rank. He took in the situation with the eye of custom, when he saw Alan supported on the sidewalk by a stranger at the end of the canopy covering the pavement.

He said, "Oh, ahl right, sor!" and when the two white-gloved policemen from either side of it helped Westover into the carriage with Lynde, he set off at a quick trot. The policemen clapped their hands together, and smiled across the strip of carpet that separated them, and winks and nods of intelligence passed among the barkers to the footmen about the curb and steps. There were none of them sorry to see a gentleman in that state; some of them had perhaps seen Alan in that state before.

Half-way home he roused himself and put his hand on the carriage-door latch. "Tell the coachman drive us to--the--club. Make night of it."

"No, no," said Westover, trying to restrain him. "We'd better go right on to your house."

"Who--who--who are you?" demanded Alan.

"Westover."

"Oh yes--Westover. Thought we left Westover at Mrs. Enderby's. Thought it was that jay--What's his name? Durgin. He's awful jay, but civil to me, and I want be civil to him. You're not--jay? No? That's right. Fellow made me sick; but I took his champagne; and I must show him some --attention." He released the door-handle, and fell back against the cushioned carriage wall. "He's a blackguard!" he said, sourly. "Not--simple jay-blackguard, too. No--no--business bring in my sister's name, hey? You--you say it's--Westover? Oh yes, Westover. Old friend of family. Tell you good joke, Westover--my sister's. No more jays for me, no more jags for you. That's what she say--just between her and me, you know; she's a lady, Bess is; knows when to use--slang. Mark--mark of a

lady know when to use slang. Pretty good--jays and jags. Guess we didn't count this time--either of us."

When the carriage pulled up before Miss Lynde's house, Westover opened the door. "You're at home, now, Lynde. Come, let's get out."

Lynde did not stir. He asked Westover again who he was, and when he had made sure of him, he said, with dignity, Very well; now they must get the other fellow. Westover entreated; he even reasoned; Lynde lay back in the corner of the carriage, and seemed asleep.

Westover thought of pulling him up and getting him indoors by main force. He appealed to the coachman to know if they could not do it together.

"Why, you see, I couldn't leave me harssees, sor," said the coachman. "What's he wants, sor?" He bent urbanely down from his box and listened to the explanation that Westover made him, standing in the cold on the curbstone, with one hand on the carriage door. "Then it's no use, sor," the man decided. "Whin he's that way, ahl hell couldn't stir um. Best go back, sor, and try to find the gentleman."

This was in the end what Westover had to do, feeling all the time that a thing so frantically absurd could not be a waking act, but helpless to escape from its performance. He thought of abandoning his charge and leaving him, to his fate when he opened the carriage door before Mrs. Enderby's house; but with the next thought he perceived that this was on all accounts impossible. He went in, and began his quest for Jeff, sending various serving men about with vague descriptions of him, and asking for him of departing guests, mostly young men he did not know, but who, he thought, might know Jeff.

He had to take off his overcoat at last, and reappear at the ball. The crowd was still great, but visibly less dense than it had been. By a sudden inspiration he made his way to the supper-room, and he found Jeff there, filling a plate, as if he were about to carry it off somewhere. He commanded Jeff's instant presence in the carriage outside; he told him of Alan's desire for him.

Jeff leaned back against the wall with the plate in his hand and laughed till it half slipped from his hold. When he could get his breath, he said: "I'll be back in a few minutes; I've got to take this to Miss Bessie Lynde. But I'll be right back."

Westover hardly believed him. But when he got on his own things again, Jeff joined him in his hat and overcoat, and they went out together.

It was another carriage that stopped the way now, and once more the barker made the night ring with what Westover felt his heartless and shameless cries for Miss Lynde's carriage. After a maddening delay, it lagged up to the curb and Jeff pulled the door open.

"Hello!" he said. "There's nobody here!"

"Nobody there?" cried Westover, and they fell upon the coachman with wild question and reproach; the policeman had to tell him at last that the carriage must move on, to make way for others.

The coachman had no explanation to offer: he did not know how or when Mr. Alan had got away.

"But you can give a guess where he's gone?" Jeff suggested, with a presence of mind which Westover mutely admired.

"Well, sor, I know where he do be gahn, sometimes," the man admitted.

"Well, that will do; take me there," said Jeff. "You go in and account for me to Miss Lynde," he instructed Westover, across his shoulder. "I'll get him home before morning, somehow; and I'll send the carriage right back for the ladies, now."

Westover had the forethought to decide that Miss Bessie should ask for Jeff if she wanted him, and this simplified matters very much. She asked nothing about him. At sight of Westover coming up to her where she sat with her aunt, she merely said: "Why, Mr. Westover! I thought you took leave of this scene of gayety long ago."

"Did you?" Westover returned, provisionally, and she saved him from the sin of framing some deceit in final answer by her next question.

"Have you seen anything of Alan lately?" she asked, in a voice involuntarily lowered.

Westover replied in the same octave: "Yes; I saw him going a good while ago."

"Oh!" said the girl. "Then I think my aunt and I had better go, too."

Still she did not go, and there was an interval in which she had the air of vaguely waiting. To Westover's vision, the young people still passing to and from the ballroom were like the painted figures of a picture quickened with sudden animation. There were scarcely any elders to be seen now, except the chaperons, who sat in their places with iron fortitude; Westover realized that he was the only man of his age left. He felt that the lights ought to have grown dim, but the place was as brilliant as ever. A window had been opened somewhere, and the cold breath of the night was drawing through the heated rooms.

He was content to have Bessie stay on, though he was almost dropping with sleep, for he was afraid that if she went at once, the carriage might not have got back, and the whole affair must somehow be given away; at last, if she were waiting, she decided to wait no longer, and then Westover did not know how to keep her. He saw her rise and stoop over her aunt, putting her mouth to the elder lady's ear, and he heard her saying, "I am going home, Aunt Louisa." She turned sweetly to him. "Won't you let us set you down, Mr. Westover?"

"Why, thank you, I believe I prefer walking. But do let me have your carriage called," and again he hurried himself into his overcoat and hat, and ran down-stairs, and the barker a third time sent forth his lamentable cries in summons of Miss Lynde's carriage.

While he stood on the curb-stone eagerly peering up and down the street, he heard, without being able either to enjoy or resent it, one of the policemen say across him to the other, "Miss Lynde seems to be doin' a livery-stable business to-night."

Almost at the moment a carriage drove up, and he recognized Miss Lynde's coachman, who recognized him.

"Just got back, sor," he whispered, and a minute later Bessie came daintily out over the carpeted way with her aunt.

"How good of you!" she said, and "Good-night, Mr. Westover," said Miss Lynde, with an implication in her voice that virtue was peculiarly its own reward for those who performed any good office for her or hers.

Westover shut them in, the carriage rolled off, and he started on his homeward walk with a long sigh of relief.

XXXIV.

Bessie asked the sleepy man who opened her aunt's door whether her brother had come in yet, and found that he had not. She helped her aunt off up-stairs with her maid, and when she came down again she sent the man to bed; she told him she was going to sit up and she would let her brother in. The caprices of Alan's latch-key were known to all the servants, and the man understood what she meant. He said he had left a light in the reception-room and there was a fire there; and Bessie tripped on down from the library floor, where she had met him. She had put off her ball dress and had slipped into the simplest and easiest of breakfast frocks, which was by no means plain. Bessie had no plain frocks for any hour of the day; her frocks all expressed in stuff and style and color, and the bravery of their flying laces and ribbons, the audacity of spirit with which she was herself chicqued together, as she said. This one she had on now was something that brightened her dull complexion, and brought out the best effect of her eyes and mouth, and seemed the effluence of her personal dash and grace. It made the most of her, and she liked it beyond all her other negligees for its complaisance.

She got a book, and sat down in a long, low chair before the fire and crossed her pretty slippers on the warm hearth. It was a quarter after three by the clock on the mantel; but she had never felt more eagerly awake. The party had not been altogether to her mind, up to midnight, but after that it had been a series of rapid and vivid emotions, which continued themselves still in the tumult of her nerves, and seemed to

demand an indefinite sequence of experience. She did not know what state her brother might be in when he came home; she had not seen anything of him after she first went out to supper; till then, though, he had kept himself straight, as he needs must; but she could not tell what happened to him afterward. She hoped that he would come home able to talk, for she wished to talk. She wished to talk about herself; and as she had already had flattery enough, she wanted some truth about herself; she wanted Alan to say what he thought of her behavior the whole evening with that jay. He must have seen something of it in the beginning, and she should tell him all the rest. She should tell him just how often she had danced with the man, and how many dances she had sat out with him; how she had pretended once that she was engaged when another man asked her, and then danced with the jay, to whom she pretended that he had engaged her for the dance. She had wished to see how he would take it; for the same reason she had given to some one else a dance that was really his. She would tell Alan how the jay had asked her for that last dance, and then never come near her again. That would give him the whole situation, and she would know just what he thought of it.

What she thought of herself she hardly knew, or made believe she hardly knew. She prided herself upon not being a flirt; she might not be very good, as goodness went, but she was not despicable, and a flirt was despicable. She did not call the audacity of her behavior with the jay flirting; he seemed to understand it as well as she, and to meet her in her own spirit; she wondered now whether this jay was really more interesting than the other men one met, or only different; whether he was original, like Alan himself, or merely novel, and would soon wear down to the tiresomeness that seemed to underlie them all, and made one wish to do something dreadful. In the jay's presence she had no wish to do anything dreadful. Was it because he was dreadful enough for both, all the time, without doing anything? She would like to ask Alan that, and see how he would take it. Nothing seemed to put the jay out, so far as she had tried, and she had tried some bold impertinences with him. He was very jolly through them all, and at the worst of them he laughed and asked her for that dance, which he never came to claim, though in the mean time he brought her some belated supper, and was devoted to her and her aunt, inventing services to do for them. Then suddenly he went off and did not return, and Mr. Westover mysteriously reappeared, and got their carriage.

She heard a scratching at the key-hole of the outside door; she knew it was Alan's latch. She had left the inner door ajar that there might be no uncertainty of hearing him, and she ran out into the space between that and the outer door where the fumbling and scraping kept on.

"Is that you, Alan?" she called, softly, and if she had any doubt before, she had none when she heard her brother outside, cursing his luck with his key as usual.

She flung the door open, and confronted him with another man, who had his arms around him as if he had caught him from falling with the inward pull of the door. Alan got to his feet and grappled with the man, and insisted that he should come in and make a night of it.

Bessie saw that it was Jeff, and they stood a moment, looking at each other. Jeff tried to free himself with an appeal to Bessie: "I beg your pardon, Miss Lynde. I walked home with your brother, and I was just helping him to get in--I didn't think that you--"

Alan said, with his measured distinctness: "Nobody cares what you think. Come in, and get something to carry you over the bridge. Cambridge cars stopped running long ago. I say you shall!" He began to raise his voice. A light flashed in a window across the way, and a sash was lifted; some one must be looking out.

"Oh, come in with him!" Bessie implored, and at a little yielding in Jeff her brother added:

"Come in, you damn jay!" He pulled at Jeff.

Jeff made haste to shut the door behind them. He was laughing; and if it was from mere brute insensibility to what would have shocked another in the situation, his frank recognition of its grotesqueness was of better effect than any hopeless effort to ignore it would have been. People adjust themselves to their trials; it is the pretence of the witness that there is no trial which hurts, and Bessie was not wounded by Jeff's laugh.

"There's a fire here in the reception-room," she said. "Can you get him in?"

"I guess so."

Jeff lifted Alan into the room and stayed him on foot there, while he took off his hat and overcoat, and then he let him sink into the low easy-chair Bessie had just risen from. All the time, Alan was bidding her ring and have some champagne and cold meat set out on the side-board, and she was lightly promising and coaxing. But he drowsed quickly in the warmth, and the last demand for supper died half uttered on his lips.

Jeff asked across him: "Can't I get him up-stairs for you? I can carry him."

She shook her head and whispered back, "I can leave him here," and she looked at Jeff with a moment's hesitation. "Did you--do you think that--any one noticed him at Mrs. Enderby's?"

"No; they had got him in a room by himself--the caterer's men had."

"And you found him there?"

"Mr. Westover found him there," Jeff answered.

"I don't understand."

"Didn't he come to you after I left?"

"Yes."

"I told him to excuse me--"

"He didn't."

"Well, I guess he was pretty badly rattled." Jeff stopped himself in the vague laugh of one who remembers something ludicrous, and turned his face away.

"Tell me what it was!" she demanded, nervously.

"Mr. Westover had been home with him once, and he wouldn't stay. He made Mr. Westover come back for me."

"What did he want with you?"

Jeff shrugged.

"And then what?"

"We went out to the carriage, as soon as I could get away from you; but he wasn't in it. I sent Mr. Westover back to you and set out to look for him."

"That was very good of you. And I--thank you for your kindness to my brother. I shall not forget it. And I wish to beg your pardon."

"What for?" asked Jeff, bluntly.

"For blaming you when you didn't come back for the dance."

If Bessie had meant nothing but what was fitting to the moment some inherent lightness of nature played her false. But even the histrionic touch which she could not keep out of her voice, her manner, another sort of man might have found merely pathetic.

Jeff laughed with subtle intelligence. "Were you very hard on me?"

"Very," she answered in kind, forgetting her brother and the whole terrible situation.

"Tell me what you thought of me," he said, and he came a little nearer to her, looking very handsome and very strong. "I should like to know."

"I said I should never speak to you again."

"And you kept your word," said Jeff. "Well, that's all right. Good-night-or good-morning, whichever it is." He took her hand, which she could not withdraw, or feigned to herself that she could not withdraw, and looked at her with a silent laugh, and a hardy, sceptical glance that she felt take in every detail of her prettiness, her plainness. Then he

turned and went out, and she ran quickly and locked the door upon him.

XXXV.

Bessie crept up to her room, where she spent the rest of the night in her chair, amid a tumult of emotion which she would have called thinking. She asked herself the most searching questions, but she got no very candid answers to them, and she decided that she must see the whole fact with some other's eyes before she could know what she had meant or what she had done.

When she let the daylight into her room, it showed her a face in her mirror that bore no trace of conflicting anxieties. Her complexion favored this effect of inward calm; it was always thick; and her eyes seemed to her all the brighter for their vigils.

A smile, even, hovered on her mouth as she sat down at the breakfast-table, in the pretty negligee she had worn all night, and poured out Miss Lynde's coffee for her.

"That's always very becoming to you, Bessie," said her aunt. "It's the nicest breakfast gown you have."

"Do you think so?" Bessie looked down at it, first on one side and then on the other, as a woman always does when her dress is spoken of.

"Mr. Alan said he would have his breakfast in his room, miss," murmured the butler, in husky respectfulness, as he returned to Bessie from carrying Miss Lynde's cup to her. "He don't want anything but a little toast and coffee."

She perceived that the words were meant to make it easy for her to ask: "Isn't he very well, Andrew?"

"About as usual, miss," said Andrew, a thought more sepulchral than before. "He's going on--about as usual."

She knew this to mean that he was going on from bad to worse, and that his last night's excess was the beginning of a debauch which could end only in one way. She must send for the doctor; he would decide what was best, when he saw how Alan came through the day.

Late in the afternoon she heard Mary Enderby's voice in the reception-room, bidding the man say that if Miss Bessie were lying down she would come up to her, or would go away, just as she wished. She flew downstairs with a glad cry of "Molly! What an inspiration! I was just thinking of you, and wishing for you. But I didn't suppose you were up yet!"

"It's pretty early," said Miss Enderby. "But I should have been here

before if I could, for I knew I shouldn't wake you, Bessie, with your habit of turning night into day, and getting up any time in the forenoon."

"How dissipated you sound!"

"Yes, don't I? But I've been thinking about you ever since I woke, and I had to come and find out if you were alive, anyhow."

"Come up-stairs and see!" said Bessie, holding her friend's hand on the sofa where they had dropped down together, and going all over the scene of last night in that place for the thousandth time.

"No, no; I really mustn't. I hope you had a good time?"

"At your house!"

"How dear of you! But, Bessie, I got to thinking you'd been rather sacrificed. It came into my mind the instant I woke, and gave me this severe case of conscience. I suppose it's a kind of conscience."

"Yes, yes. Go on! I like having been a martyr, if I don't know what about."

"Why, you know, Bessie, or if you don't you will presently, that it was I who got mamma to send him a card; I felt rather sorry for him, that day at Mrs. Bevidge's, because she'd so obviously got him there to use him, and I got mamma to ask him. Everything takes care of itself, at a large affair, and I thought I might trust in Providence to deal with him after he came; and then I saw you made a means the whole evening! I didn't reflect that there always has to be a means!"

"It's a question of Mr. Durgin?" said Bessie, coldly thrilling at the sound of a name that she pronounced so gayly in a tone of sympathetic amusement.

Miss Enderby bobbed her head. "It shows that we ought never to do a good action, doesn't it? But, poor thing! How you must have been swearing off!"

"I don't know. Was it so very bad? I'm trying to think," said Bessie, thinking that after this beginning it would be impossible to confide in Mary Enderby.

"Oh, now, Bessie! Don't you be patient, or I shall begin to lose my faith in human nature. Just say at once that it was an outrage and I'll forgive you! You see," Miss Enderby went on, "it isn't merely that he's a jay; but he isn't a very nice jay. None of the men like him--except Freddy Lancaster, of course; he likes everybody, on principle; he doesn't count. I thought that perhaps, although he's so crude and blunt, he might be sensitive and high-minded; you're always reading about such things; but they say he isn't, in the least; oh, not the least! They say he goes with a set of fast jays, and that he's dreadful; though he has a

very good mind, and could do very well if he chose. That's what cousin Jim said to-day; he's just been at our house; and it was so extremely telepathic that I thought I must run round and prevent your having the man on your conscience if you felt you had had too much of him. You won't lay him up against us, will you?" She jumped to her feet.

"You dear!" said Bessie, keeping Mary Enderby's hand, and pressing it between both of hers against her breast as they now stood face to face, "do come up and have some tea!"

"No, no! Really, I can't."

They were both involuntarily silent. The door had been opened to some one, and there was a brief parley, which ended in a voice they knew to be the doctor's, saying, "Then I'll go right up to his room." Both the girls broke into laughing adieux, to hide their consciousness that the doctor was going up to see Alan Lynde, who was never sick except in the one way.

Miss Enderby even said: "I was so glad to see Alan looking so well, last night."

"Yes, he had such a good time," said Bessie, and she followed her friend to the door, where she kissed her reassuringly, and thanked her for taking all the trouble she had, bidding her not be the least anxious on her account.

It seemed to her that she should sink upon the stairs in mounting them to the library. Mary Enderby had told her only what she had known before; it was what her brother had told her; but then it had not been possible for the man to say that he had brought Alan home tipsy, and been alone in the house with her at three o'clock in the morning. He would not only boast of it to all that vulgar comradeship of his, but it might get into those terrible papers which published the society scandals. There would be no way but to appeal to his pity, his generosity. She fancied herself writing to him, but he could show her note, and she must send for him to come and see her, and try to put him on his honor. Or, that would not do, either. She must make it happen that they should be thrown together, and then speak to him. Even that might make him think she was afraid of him; or he might take it wrong, and believe that she cared for him. He had really been very good to Alan, and she tried to feel safe in the thought of that. She did feel safe for a moment; but if she had meant nothing but to make him believe her grateful, what must he infer from her talking to him in the light way she did about forgiving him for not coming back to dance with her. Her manner, her looks, her tone, had given him the right to say that she had been willing to flirt with him there, at that hour, and in those dreadful circumstances.

She found herself lying in a deep arm-chair in the library, when she was aware of Dr. Lacy pausing at the door and looking tentatively in upon her.

"Come in, doctor," she said, and she knew that her face was wet with

tears, and that she spoke with the voice of weeping.

He came forward and looked narrowly at her, without sitting down.

"There's nothing to be alarmed about, Miss Bessie," he said. "But I think your brother had better leave home again, for a while."

"Yes," she said, blankly. Her mind was not on his words.

"I will make the arrangements."

"Thank you," said Bessie, listlessly.

The doctor had made a step backward, as if he were going away, and now he stopped. "Aren't you feeling quite well, Miss Bessie?"

"Oh yes," she said, and she began to cry.

The doctor came forward and said, cheerily: "Let me see." He pulled a chair up to hers, and took her wrist between his fingers. "If you were at Mrs. Enderby's last night, you'll need another night to put you just right. But you're pretty well as it is." He let her wrist softly go, and said: "You mustn't distress yourself about your brother's case. Of course, it's hard to have it happen now after he's held up so long; longer than it has been before, I think, isn't it? But it's something that it has been so long. The next time, let us hope, it will be longer still."

The doctor made as if to rise. Bessie put her hand out to stay him.

"What is it makes him do it?"

"Ah, that's a great mystery," said the doctor. "I suppose you might say the excitement."

"Yes!"

"But it seems to me very often, in such cases, as if it were to escape the excitement. I think you're both keyed up pretty sharply by nature, Miss Bessie," said the doctor, with the personal kindness he felt for the girl, and the pity softening his scientific spirit.

"I know!" she answered. "We're alike. Why don't I take to drinking, too?"

The doctor laughed at such a question from a young lady, but with an inner seriousness in his laugh, as if, coming from a patient, it was to be weighed. "Well, I suppose it isn't the habit of your sex, Miss Bessie."

"Sometimes it is. Sometimes women get drunk, and then I think they do less harm than if they did other things to get away from the excitement." She longed to confide in him; the words were on her tongue; she believed he could help her, tell her what to do; out of his stores of knowledge and experience he must have some suggestion, some remedy; he could advise

her; he could stand her friend, so far. People told their doctors all kinds of things, silly things. Why should she not tell her doctor this?

It would have been easier if it had been an older man, who might have had a daughter of her age. But he was in that period of the early forties when a doctor sometimes has a matter-of-fact, disagreeable wife whose idea stands between him and the spiritual intimacy of his patients, so that it seems as if they were delivering their confidences rather to her than to him. He was able, he was good, he was extremely acute, he was even with the latest facts and theories; but as he sat straight up in his chair his stomach defined itself as a half-moon before him, and he said to the quivering heap of emotions beside him, "You mean like breaking hearts, and such little matters?"

It was fatally stupid, and it beat her back into herself.

"Yes," she said, with a contempt that she easily hid from him, "that's worse than getting drunk, isn't it?"

"Well, it isn't so regarded," said the doctor, who supposed himself to have made a sprightly answer, and laughed at it. "I wish, Miss Bessie, you'd take a little remedy I'm going to send you. You've merely been up too late, but it's a very good thing for people who've been up too late."

"Thank you. And about my brother?"

"Oh! I'll send a man to look after him to-night, and tomorrow I really think he'd better go."

XXXVI.

Miss Lynde had gone earlier than usual to bed, when Bessie heard Alan's door open, and then heard him feeling his way fumbingly down-stairs. She surmised that he had drunk up all that he had in his room, and was making for the side-board in the dining-room.

She ran and got the two decanters—one of whiskey and one of brandy, which he was in the habit of carrying back to his room from such an incursion.

"Alan!" she called to him, in a low voice.

"Where are you?" he answered back.

"In the library," she said. "Come in here, please."

He came, and stood looking gloomily in from the doorway. He caught sight of the decanters and the glasses on the library table. "Oh!" he said, and gave a laugh cut in two by a hiccough.

"Come in, and shut the door, Alan," she said. "Let's make a night of it."

I've got the materials here." She waved her hand toward the decanters.

Alan shrugged. "I don't know what you mean." But he came forward, and slouched into one of the deep chairs.

"Well, I'll tell you what," said Bessie, with a laugh. "We're both excited, and we want to get away from ourselves. Isn't that what's the matter with you when it begins? Doctor Lacy thinks it is."

"Does he?" Alan asked. "I didn't suppose he had so much sense. What of it?"

"Nothing. Merely that I'm going to drink a glass of whiskey and a glass of brandy for every glass that you drink to-night."

"You mustn't play the fool, Bess," said her brother, with dignified severity.

"But I'm really serious, Alan. Shall I give you something? Which shall we begin on? And we'd better begin soon, for there's a man coming from the doctor to look after you, and then you won't get anything."

"Don't be ridiculous! Give me those decanters!" Alan struggled out of his chair, and trembled over to where she had them on the table beside her.

She caught them up, one in either hand, and held them as high as she could lift them. "If you don't sit down and promise to keep still, I'll smash them both on the hearth. You know I will."

Her strange eyes gleamed, and he hesitated; then he went back to his chair.

"I don't see what's got into you to-night. I don't want anything," he said. He tried to brave it out, but presently he cast a piteous glance at the decanters where she had put them down beside her again. "Does the doctor think I'd better go again?" he asked.

"Yes."

"When?"

"To-morrow."

He looked at the decanters. "And when is that fellow coming?"

"He may be here any moment."

"It's pretty rough," he sighed. "Two glasses of that stuff would drive you so wild you wouldn't know where you were, Bess," he expostulated.

"Well, I wish I didn't know where I was. I wish I wasn't anywhere." He looked at her, and then dropped his eyes, with the effect of giving up a

hopeless conundrum.

But he asked: "What's the matter?"

She scanned him keenly before she answered: "Something that I should like to tell you--that you ought to know. Alan, do you think you are fit to judge of a very serious matter?"

He laughed pathetically. "I don't believe I'm in a very judicial frame of mind to-night, Bess. To-morrow--"

"Oh, to-morrow! Where will you be to-morrow?"

"That's true! Well, what is it? I'll try to listen. But if you knew how my nerves were going." His eyes wandered from hers back to the decanters. "If I had just one glass--"

"I'll have one, too," she said, with a motion toward the decanter next her.

He threw up his arms. "Oh well, go on. I'll listen as well as I can." He sank down in his chair and stretched his little feet out toward the fire. "Go on!"

She hesitated before she began. "Do you know who brought you home last night, Alan?"

"Yes," he answered, quickly, "Westover."

"Yes, Mr. Westover brought you, and you wouldn't stay. You don't remember anything else?"

"No. What else?"

"Nothing for you, if you don't remember." She sat in silent hopelessness for a while, and her brother's eyes dwelt on the decanters, which she seemed to have forgotten. "Alan!" she broke out, abruptly, "I'm worried, and if I can't tell you about it there's no one I can."

The appeal in her voice must have reached him, though he seemed scarcely to have heeded her words. "What is it?" he asked, kindly.

"You went back to the Enderbys' after Mr. Westover brought you home, and then some one else had to bring you again."

"How do you know?"

"I was up, and let you in--"

"Did you, Bessie? That was like you," he said, tenderly.

"And I had to let him in, too. You pulled him into the house, and you made such a disturbance at the door that he had to come in for fear you

would bring the police."

"What a beast!" said Alan, of himself, as if it were some one else.

"He came in with you. And you wanted him to have some supper. And you fell asleep before the fire in the reception-room."

"That--that was the dream!" said Alan, severely. "What are you talking that stuff for, Bessie?"

"Oh no!" she retorted, with a laugh, as if the pleasure of its coming in so fitly were compensation for the shame of the fact. "The dream was what happened afterward. The dream was that you fell asleep there, and left me there with him--"

"Well, poor old Westover; he's a gentleman! You needn't be worried about him--"

"You're not fit!" cried the girl. "I give it up." She got upon her feet and stood a moment listless.

"No, I'm not, Bessie. I can't pull my mind together tonight. But look here!" He seemed to lose what he wanted to say. He asked: "Is it something I've got you in for? Do I understand that?"

"Partly," she said.

"Well, then, I'll help you out. You can trust me, Bessie; you can, indeed. You don't believe it?"

"Oh, I believe you think I can trust you."

"But this time you can. If you need my help I will stand by you, right or wrong. If you want to tell me now I'll listen, and I'll advise you the best I can--"

"It's just something I've got nervous about," she said, while her eyes shone with sudden tears. "But I won't trouble you with it to-night. There's no such great hurry. We can talk about it in the morning if you're better then. Oh, I forgot! You're going away!"

"No," said the young man, with pathetic dignity, "I'm not going if you need my help. But you're right about me tonight, Bessie. I'm not fit. I'm afraid I can't grasp anything to-night. Tell me in the morning. Oh, don't be afraid!" he cried out at the glance she gave the decanters. "That's over, now; you could put them in my hands and be safe enough. I'm going back to bed, and in the morning--"

He rose and went toward the door. "If that doctor's man comes to-night you can send him away again. He needn't bother."

"All right, Alan," she said, fondly. "Good-night. Don't worry about me. Try to get some sleep."

"And you must sleep, too. You can trust me, Bessie."

He came back after he got out of the room and looked in. "Bess, if you're anxious about it, if you don't feel perfectly sure of me, you can take those things to your room with you." He indicated the decanters with a glance.

"Oh no! I shall leave them here. It wouldn't be any use your just keeping well overnight. You'll have to keep well a long time, Alan, if you're going to help me. And that's the reason I'd rather talk to you when you can give your whole mind to what I say."

"Is it something so serious?"

"I don't know. That's for you to judge. Not very--not at all, perhaps."

"Then I won't fail you, Bessie. I shall 'keep well,' as you call it, as long as you want me. Good-night."

"Good-night. I shall leave these bottles here, remember."

"You needn't be afraid. You might put them beside my bed."

Bessie slept soundly, from exhaustion, and in that provisional fashion in which people who have postponed a care to a given moment are able to sleep. But she woke early, and crept down-stairs before any one else was astir, and went to the library. The decanters stood there on the table, empty. Her brother lay a shapeless heap in one of the deep arm-chairs.

XXXVII.

Westover got home from the Enderby dance at last with the forecast of a violent cold in his system, which verified itself the next morning. He had been housed a week, when Jeff Durgin came to see him. "Why didn't you let me know you were sick?" he demanded, "I'd have come and looked after you."

"Thank you," said Westover, with as much stiffness as he could command in his physical limpness. "I shouldn't have allowed you to look after me; and I want you to understand, now, that there can't be any sort of friendliness between us till you've accounted for your behavior with Lynde the other night."

"You mean at the party?" Jeff asked, tranquilly.

"Yes!" cried Westover. "If I had not been shut up ever since, I should have gone to see you and had it out with you. I've only let you in, now, to give you the chance to explain; and I refuse to hear a word from you till you do." Westover did not think that this was very forcible, and he

was not much surprised that it made Jeff smile.

"Why, I don't know what there is to explain. I suppose you think I got him drunk; I know what you thought that night. But he was pretty well loaded when he struck my champagne. It wasn't a question of what he was going to do any longer, but how he was going to do it. I kept an eye on him, and at the right time I helped the caterer's man to get him up into that room where he wouldn't make any trouble. I expected to go back and look after him, but I forgot him."

"I don't suppose, really, that you're aware what a devil's argument that is," said Westover. "You got Lynde drunk, and then you went back to his sister, and allowed her to treat you as if you were a gentleman, and didn't deserve to be thrown out of the house." This at last was something like what Westover had imagined he would say to Jeff, and he looked to see it have the imagined effect upon him.

"Do you suppose," asked Jeff, with cheerful cynicism, "that it was the first time she was civil to a man her brother got drunk with?"

"No! But all the more you ought to have considered her helplessness. It ought to have made her the more sacred"--Jeff gave an exasperating shrug--"to you, and you ought to have kept away from her for decency's sake."

"I was engaged to dance with her."

"I can't allow you to be trivial with me, Durgin," said Westover. "You've acted like a blackguard, and worse, if there is anything worse."

Jeff stood at a corner of the fire, leaning one elbow on the mantel, and he now looked thoughtfully down on Westover, who had sunk weakly into a chair before the hearth. "I don't deny it from your point of view, Mr. Westover," he said, without the least resentment in his tone. "You believe that everything is done from a purpose, or that a thing is intended because it's done. But I see that most things in this world are not thought about, and not intended. They happen, just as much as the other things that we call accidents."

"Yes," said Westover, "but the wrong things don't happen from people who are in the habit of meaning the right ones."

"I believe they do, fully half the time," Jeff returned; "and, as far as the grand result is concerned, you might as well think them and intend them as not. I don't mean that you ought to do it; that's another thing, and if I had tried to get Lynde drunk, and then gone to dance with his sister, I should have been what you say I am. But I saw him getting worse without meaning to make him so; and I went back to her because--I wanted to."

"And you think, I suppose," said Westover, "that she wouldn't have cared any more than you cared if she had known what you did."

"I can't say anything about that."

The painter continued, bitterly: "You used to come in here, the first year, with notions of society women that would have disgraced a Goth, or a gorilla. Did you form your estimate of Miss Lynde from those premises?"

"I'm not a boy now," Jeff answered, "and I haven't stayed all the kinds of a fool I was."

"Then you don't think Miss Lynde would speak to you, or look at you, after she knew what you had done?"

"I should like to tell her and see," said Jeff, with a hardy laugh.

"But I guess I sha'n't have the chance. I've never been a favorite in society, and I don't expect to meet her again."

"Perhaps you'd like to have me tell her?"

"Why, yes, I believe I should, if you could tell me what she thought--not what she said about it."

"You are a brute," answered Westover, with a puzzled air. What puzzled him most and pleased him least was the fellow's patience under his severity, which he seemed either not to feel or not to mind. It was of a piece with the behavior of the rascally boy whom he had cuffed for frightening Cynthia and her little brother long ago, and he wondered what final malevolence it portended.

Jeff said, as if their controversy were at an end and they might now turn to more personal things: "You look pretty slim, Mr. Westover. A'n't there something I can do for you-get you? I've come in with a message from mother. She says if you ever want to get that winter view of Lion's Head, now's your time. She wants you to come up there; she and Cynthia both do. They can make you as comfortable as you please, and they'd like to have a visit from you. Can't you go?"

Westover shook his head ruefully. "It's good of them, and I want you to thank them for me. But I don't know when I'm going to get out again."

"Oh, you'll soon get out," said Jeff. "I'm going to look after you a little," and this time Westover was too weak to protest. He did not forbid Jeff's taking off his overcoat; he suffered him to light his spirit-lamp and make a punch of the whiskey which he owned the doctor was giving him; and when Jeff handed him the steaming glass, and asked him, "How's that?" he answered, with a pleasure in it which he knew to be deplorable, "It's fine."

Jeff stayed the whole evening with him, and made him more comfortable than he had been since his cold began. Westover now talked seriously and frankly with him, but no longer so harshly, and in his relenting he felt a return of his old illogical liking for him. He fancied in Durgin's kindness to himself an indirect regret, and a desire to atone for what he

had done, and he said: "The effect is in you--the worst effect. I don't think either of the young Lyndes very exemplary people. But you'd be doing yourself a greater wrong than you've done then if you didn't recognize that you had been guilty toward them."

Jeff seemed struck by this notion. "What do you want me to do? What can I do? Chase myself out of society? Something like that? I'm willing. It's too easy, though. As I said, I've never been wanted much, there, and I shouldn't be missed."

"Well, then, how would you like to leave it to the people at Lion's Head to say what you should do?" Westover suggested.

I shouldn't like it," said Jeff, promptly. "They'd judge it as you do --as if they'd done it themselves. That's the reason women are not fit to judge." His gay face darkened. "But tell 'em if you want to."

"Bah!" cried the painter. "Why should I want to I'm not a woman in everything."

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Westover. I didn't mean that. I only meant that you're an idealist. I look at this thing as if some one else had done it; I believe that's the practical way; and I shouldn't go in for punishing any one else for such a thing very severely." He made another punch--for himself this time, he said; but Westover joined him in a glass of it.

"It won't do to take that view of your faults, Jeff," he said, gravely.

"What's the reason?" Jeff demanded; and now either the punch had begun to work in Westover's brain, or some other influence of like force and quality. He perceived that in this earth-bound temperament was the potentiality of all the success it aimed at. The acceptance of the moral fact as it was, without the unconscious effort to better it, or to hold himself strictly to account for it, was the secret of the power in the man which would bring about the material results he desired; and this simplicity of the motive involved had its charm.

Westover was aware of liking Durgin at that moment much more than he ought, and of liking him helplessly. In the light of his good-natured selfishness, the injury to the Lyndes showed much less a sacrilege than it had seemed; Westover began to see it with Jeff's eyes, and to see it with reference to what might be low and mean in them, instead of what might be fine and high.

He was sensible of the growth Jeff had made intellectually. He had not been at Harvard nearly four years for nothing. He had phrases and could handle them. In whatever obscure or perverse fashion, he had profited by his opportunities. The fellow who could accuse him of being an idealist, and could in some sort prove it, was no longer a naughty boy to be tutored and punished. The revolt latent in him would be violent in proportion to the pressure put upon him, and Westover began to be without the wish to press his fault home to him so strongly. In the optimism

generated by the punch, he felt that he might leave the case to Jeff himself; or else in the comfort we all experience in sinking to a lower level, he was unwilling to make the effort to keep his own moral elevation. But he did make an effort to save himself by saying: "You can't get what you've done before yourself as you can the action of some one else. It's part of you, and you have to judge the motive as well as the effect."

"Well, that's what I'm doing," said Jeff; "but it seems to me that you're trying to have me judge of the effect from a motive I didn't have. As far as I can make out, I hadn't any motive at all."

He laughed, and all that Westover could say was, "Then you're still responsible for the result." But this no longer appeared so true to him.

XXXVIII.

It was not a condition of Westover's welcome at Lion's Head that he should seem peculiarly the friend of Jeff Durgin, but he could not help making it so, and he began to overact the part as soon as he met Jeff's mother. He had to speak of him in thanking her for remembering his wish to paint Lion's Head in the winter, and he had to tell her of Jeff's thoughtfulness during the past fortnight; he had to say that he did not believe he should ever have got away if it had not been for him. This was true; Durgin had even come in from Cambridge to see him off on the train; he behaved as if the incident with Lynde and all their talk about it had cemented the friendship between Westover and himself, and he could not be too devoted. It now came out that he had written home all about Westover, and made his mother put up a stove in the painter's old room, so that he should have the instant use of it when he arrived.

It was an air-tight wood-stove, and it filled the chamber with a heat in which Westover drowsed as soon as he entered it. He threw himself on the bed, and slept away the fatigue of his railroad journey and the cold of his drive with Jombateeste from the station. His nap was long, and he woke from it in a pleasant languor, with the dream-clouds still hanging in his brain. He opened the damper of his stove, and set it roaring again; then he pulled down the upper sash of his window and looked out on a world whose elements of wood and snow and stone he tried to co-ordinate. There was nothing else in that world but these things, so repellent of one another. He suffered from the incongruity of the wooden bulk of the hotel, with the white drifts deep about it, and with the granite cliffs of Lion's Head before it, where the gray crags darkened under the pink afternoon light which was beginning to play upon its crest from the early sunset. The wind that had seemed to bore through his thick cap and his skull itself, and that had tossed the dry snow like dust against his eyes on his way from the railroad, had now fallen, and an incomparable quiet wrapped the solitude of the hills. A teasing sense of the impossibility of the scene, as far as his art was concerned, filled him full of a fond despair of rendering its feeling.

He could give its light and color and form in a sufficiently vivid suggestion of the fact, but he could not make that pink flush seem to exhale, like a long breath, upon those rugged shapes; he could not impart that sentiment of delicately, almost of elegance, which he found in the wilderness, while every detail of civilization physically distressed him. In one place the snow had been dug down to the pine planking of the pathway round the house; and the contact of this woodenness with the frozen ground pierced his nerves and set his teeth on edge like a harsh noise. When once he saw it he had to make an effort to take his eyes from it, and in a sort unknown to him in summer he perceived the offence of the hotel itself amid the pure and lonely beauty of the winter landscape. It was a note of intolerable banality, of philistine pretence and vulgar convention, such as Whitwell's low, unpainted cottage at the foot of the hill did not give, nor the little red school-house, on the other hand, showing through the naked trees. There should have been really no human habitation visible except a wigwam in the shelter of the pines, here and there; and when he saw Whitwell making his way up the hill-side road, Westover felt that if there must be any human presence it should be some savage clad in skins, instead of the philosopher in his rubber boots and his clothing-store ulster. He preferred the small, wiry shape of Jombateeste, in his blue woollen cap and his Canadian footgear, as he ran round the corner of the house toward the barn, and left the breath of his pipe in the fine air behind him.

The light began to deepen from the pale pink to a crimson which stained the tops and steeps of snow, and deepened the dark of the woods massed on the mountain slopes between the irregular fields of white. The burnished brown of the hard-wood trees, the dull carbon shadows of the evergreens, seemed to wither to one black as the red strengthened in the sky. Westover realized that he had lost the best of any possible picture in letting that first delicate color escape him. This crimson was harsh and vulgar in comparison; it would have almost a chromo quality; he censured his pleasure in it as something gross and material, like that of eating; and on a sudden he felt hungry. He wondered what time they would give him supper, and he took slight account of the fact that a caprice of the wind had torn its hood of snow from the mountain summit, and that the profile of the Lion's Head showed almost as distinctly as in summer. He stood before the picture which for that day at least was lost to him, and questioned whether there would be a hearty meal, something like a dinner, or whether there would be something like a farmhouse supper, mainly of doughnuts and tea.

He pulled up his window and was going to lie down again, when some one knocked, and Frank Whitwell stood at the door. "Do you want we should bring your supper to you here, Mr. Westover, or will you--"

"Oh, let me join you all!" cried the painter, eagerly. "Is it ready-- shall I come now?"

"Well, in about five minutes or so." Frank went away, after setting down in the room the lamp he had brought. It was a lamp which Westover thought he remembered from the farm-house period, and on his way down he realized as he had somehow not done in his summer sojourns, the entirety

of the old house in the hotel which had encompassed it. The primitive cold of its stairways and passages struck upon him as soon as he left his own room, and he found the parlor door closed against the chill. There was a hot stove-fire within, and a kerosene-lamp turned low, but there was no one there, and he had the photograph of his first picture of Lion's Head to himself in the dim light. The voices of Mrs. Durgin and Cynthia came to him from the dining-room, and from the kitchen beyond, with the occasional clash of crockery, and the clang of iron upon iron about the stove, and the quick tread of women's feet upon the bare floor. With these pleasant noises came the smell of cooking, and later there was an opening and shutting of doors, with a thrill of the freezing air from without, and the dull thumping of Whitwell's rubber boots, and the quicker flapping of Jombateeste's soft leathern soles. Then there was the sweep of skirted feet at the parlor door, and Cynthia Whitwell came in without perceiving him. She went to the table by the darkening window, and quickly turned up the light of the lamp. In her ignorance of his presence, he saw her as if she had been alone, almost as if she were out of the body; he received from her unconsciousness the impression of something rarely pure and fine, and he had a sudden compassion for her, as for something precious that is fated to be wasted or misprized. At a little movement which he made to relieve himself from a sense of eavesdropping, she gave a start, and shut her lips upon the little cry that would have escaped from another sort of woman.

"I didn't know you were here," she said; and she flushed with the shyness of him which she always showed at first. She had met him already with the rest, but they had scarcely spoken together; and he knew of the struggle she must now be making with herself when she went on: "I didn't know you had been called. I thought you were still sleeping."

"Yes. I seemed to sleep for centuries," said West over, "and I woke up feeling coeval with Lion's Head. But I hope to grow younger again."

She faltered, and then she asked: "Did you see the light on it when the sun went down?"

"I wish I hadn't. I could never get that light--even if it ever came again."

"It's there every afternoon, when it's clear."

"I'm sorry for that; I shall have to try for it, then."

"Wasn't that what you came for?" she asked, by one of the efforts she was making with everything she said. He could have believed he saw the pulse throbbing in her neck. But she held herself stone-still, and he divined her resolution to conquer herself, if she should die for it.

"Yes, I came for that," said Westover. "That's what makes it so dismaying. If I had only happened on it, I shouldn't have been responsible for the failure I shall make of it."

She smiled, as if she liked his lightness, but doubted if she ought.

"We don't often get Lion's Head clear of snow."

"Yes; that's another hardship," said the painter. "Everything is against me! If we don't have a snow overnight, and a cloudy day to-morrow, I shall be in despair."

She played with the little wheel of the wick; she looked down, and then, with a glance flashed at him, she gasped: "I shall have to take your lamp for the table tea is ready."

"Oh, well, if you will only take me with it. I'm frightfully hungry."

Apparently she could not say anything to that. He tried to get the lamp to carry it out for her, but she would not let him. "It isn't heavy," she said, and hurried out before him.

It was all nothing, but it was all very charming, and Westover was richly content with it; and yet not content, for he felt that the pleasure of it was not truly his, but was a moment of merely borrowed happiness.

The table was laid in the old farm-house sitting-room where he had been served alone when he first came to Lion's Head. But now he sat down with the whole family, even to Jombateeste, who brought in a faint odor of the barn with him.

They had each been in contact with the finer world which revisits nature in the summer-time, and they must all have known something of its usages, but they had reverted in form and substance to the rustic living of their neighbors. They had steak for Westover, and baked potatoes; but for themselves they had such farm fare as Mrs. Durgin had given him the first time he supped there. They made their meal chiefly of doughnuts and tea, and hot biscuit, with some sweet dishes of a festive sort added in recognition of his presence; and there was mince-pie for all. Mrs. Durgin and Whitwell ate with their knives, and Jombateeste filled himself so soon with every implement at hand that he was able to ask excuse of the others if he left them for the horses before they had half finished. Frank Whitwell fed with a kind of official or functional conformity to the ways of summer folks; but Cynthia, at whom Westover glanced with anxiety, only drank some tea and ate a little bread and butter. He was ashamed of his anxiety, for he had owned that it ought not to have mattered if she had used her knife like her father; and it seemed to him as if he had prompted Mrs. Durgin by his curious glance to say: "We don't know half the time how the child lives. Cynthy! Take something to eat!"

Cynthia pleaded that she was not hungry; Mrs. Durgin declared that she would die if she kept on as she was going; and then the girl escaped to the kitchen on one of the errands which she made from time to time between the stove and the table.

"I presume it's your coming, Mr. Westover," Mrs. Durgin went on, with the comfortable superiority of elderly people to all the trials of the young. "I don't know why she should make a stranger of you, every time. You've

known her pretty much all her life."

"Ever since you give Jeff what he deserved for scaring her and Frank with his dog," said Whitwell.

"Poor Fox!" Mrs. Durgin sighed. "He did have the least sense for a dog I ever saw. And Jeff used to be so fond of him! Well, I guess he got tired of him, too, toward the last."

"He's gone to the happy hunting-grounds now. Colorady didn't agree with him-or old age," said Whitwell. "I don't see why the Injuns wa'n't right," he pursued, thoughtfully. "If they've got souls, why ha'n't their dogs? I suppose Mr. Westover here would say there wa'n't any certainty about the Injuns themselves!"

"You know my weak point, Mr. Whitwell," the painter confessed. "But I can't prove they haven't."

"Nor dogs, neither, I guess," said Whitwell, tolerantly. "It's curious, though, if animals have got souls, that we ha'n't ever had any communications from 'em. You might say that ag'in' the idea."

"No, I'll let you say it," returned Westover. "But a good many of the communications seem to come from the lower intelligences, if not the lower animals."

Whitwell laughed out his delight in the thrust. "Well, I guess that's something so. And them old Egyptian devils, over there, that you say discovered the doctrine of immortality, seemed to think a cat was about as good as a man. What's that," he appealed to Mrs. Durgin, "Jackson said in his last letter about their cat mummies?"

"Well, I guess I'll finish my supper first," said Mrs. Durgin, whose nerves Westover would not otherwise have suspected of faintness. "But Jackson's letters," she continued, loyally, "are about the best letters!"

"Know they'd got some of 'em in the papers?" Whitwell asked; and at the surprise that Westover showed he told him how a fellow who was trying to make a paper go over at the Huddle, had heard of Jackson's letters and teased for some of them, and had printed them as neighborhood news in that side of his paper which he did not buy ready printed in Boston.

Mrs. Durgin studied with modest deprecation the effect of the fact upon Westover, and seemed satisfied with it. "Well, of course, it's interestin' to Jackson's old friends in the country, here. They know he'd look at things, over there, pretty much as they would. Well, I had to lend the letters round so much, anyway, it was a kind of a relief to have 'em in the paper, where everybody could see 'em, and be done with it. Mr. Whit'ell here, he fixes 'em up so's to leave out the family part, and I guess they're pretty well thought of."

Westover said he had no doubt they were, and he should want to see all the letters they could show him, in print and out of print.

"If Jackson only had Jeff's health and opportunities--" the mother began, with a suppressed passion in her regret.

Frank Whitwell pushed back his chair. "I guess I'll ask to be excused," he said to the head of table.

"There! I a'n't goin' to say any more about that, if that's what you're afraid of, Frank," said Mrs. Durgin. "Well, I presume I do talk a good deal about Jackson when I get goin', and I presume it's natural Cynthy shouldn't want I should talk about Jeff before folks. Frank, a'n't you goin' to wait for that plate of hot biscuit?--if she ever gits it here!"

"I guess I don't care for anything more," said Frank, and he got himself out of the room more inarticulately than he need, Westover thought.

His father followed his retreat with an eye of humorous intelligence. "I guess Frank don't want to keep the young ladies waitin' a great while. There's a church sociable over 't the Huddle," he explained to Westover.

"Oh, that's it, is it?" Mrs. Durgin put in. "Why didn't he say so."

"Well, the young folks don't any of 'em seem to want to talk about such things nowadays, and I don't know as they ever did." Whitwell took Westover into his confidence with a wink.

The biscuit that Cynthia brought in were burned a little on top, and Mrs. Durgin recognized the fact with the question, "Did you get to studyin', out there? Take one, do, Mr. Westover! You ha'n't made half a meal! If I didn't keep round after her, I don't know what would become of us all. The young ladies down at Boston, any of 'em, try to keep up with the fellows in college?"

"I suppose they do in the Harvard Annex," said Westover, simply, in spite of the glance with which Mrs. Durgin tried to convey a covert meaning. He understood it afterward, but for the present his single-mindedness spared the girl.

She remained to clear away the table, when the rest left it, and Westover followed Mrs. Durgin into the parlor, where she indemnified herself for refraining from any explicit allusion to Jeff before Cynthia. "The boy," she explained, when she had made him ransack his memory for every scrap of fact concerning her son, "don't hardly ever write to me, and I guess he don't give Cynthy very much news. I presume he's workin' harder than ever this year. And I'm glad he's goin' about a little, from what you say. I guess he's got to feelin' a little better. It did worry me for him to feel so what you may call meechin' about folks. You see anything that made you think he wa'n't appreciated?"

After Westover got back into his own room, some one knocked at his door, and he found Whitwell outside. He scarcely asked him to come in, but Whitwell scarcely needed the invitation. "Got everything you want? I told Cynthy I'd come up and see after you; Frank won't be back in

time." He sat down and put his feet on top of the stove, and struck the heels of his boots on its edge, from the habit of knocking the caked snow off them in that way on stove-tops. He did not wait to find out that there was no responsive sizzling before he asked, with a long nasal sigh, "Well, how is Jeff gettin' along?"

He looked across at Westover, who had provisionally seated himself on his bed.

"Why, in the old way." Whitwell kept his eye on him, and he added: "I suppose we don't any of us change; we develop."

Whitwell smiled with pleasure in the loosely philosophic suggestion. "You mean that he's the same kind of a man that he was a boy? Well, I guess that's so. The question is, what kind of a boy was he? I've been mullin' over that consid'able since Cynthy and him fixed it up together. Of course, I know it's their business, and all that; but I presume I've got a right to spee'late about it?"

He referred the point to Westover, who knew an inner earnestness in it, in spite of Whitwell's habit of outside jocosity. "Every right in the world, I should say, Mr. Whitwell," he answered, seriously.

"Well, I'm glad you feel that way," said Whitwell, with a little apparent surprise. "I don't want to meddle, any; but I know what Cynthy is--I no need to brag her up--and I don't feel so over and above certain 't I know what he is. He's a good deal of a mixture, if you want to know how he strikes me. I don't mean I don't like him; I do; the fellow's got a way with him that makes me kind of like him when I see him. He's good-natured and clever; and he's willin' to take any amount of trouble for you; but you can't tell where to have him." Westover denied the appeal for explicit assent in Whitwell's eye, and he went on: "If I'd done that fellow a good turn, in spite of him, or if I'd held him up to something that he allowed was right, and consented to, I should want to keep a sharp lookout that he didn't play me some ugly trick for it. He's a comical devil," Whitwell ended, rather inadequately. "How d's it look to you? Seen anything lately that seemed to tally with my idee?"

"No, no; I can't say that I have," said Westover, reluctantly. He wished to be franker than he now meant to be, but he consulted a scruple that he did not wholly respect; a mere convention it seemed to him, presently. He said: "I've always felt that charm in him, too, and I've seen the other traits, though not so clearly as you seem to have done. He has a powerful will, yes--"

He stopped, and Whitwell asked: "Been up to any deviltry lately?"

"I can't say he has. Nothing that I can call intentional."

"No," said Whitwell. "What's he done, though?"

"Really, Mr. Whitwell, I don't know that you have any right to expect me to talk him over, when I'm here as his mother's guest--his own guest--?"

"No. I ha'n't," said Whitwell. "What about the father of the girl he's goin' to marry?"

Westover could not deny the force of this. "You'd be anxious if I didn't tell you what I had in mind, I dare say, more than if I did." He told him of Jeff's behavior with Alan Lynde, and of his talk with him about it. "And I think he was honest. It was something that happened, that wasn't meant."

Whitwell did not assent directly, somewhat to Westover's surprise. He asked: "Fellow ever done anything to Jeff?"

"Not that I know of. I don't know that they ever met before."

Whitwell kicked his heels on the edge of the stove again. "Then it might been an accident," he said, dryly.

Westover had to break the silence that followed, and he found himself defending Jeff, though somehow not for Jeff's sake. He urged that if he had the strong will they both recognized in him, he would never commit the errors of a weak man, which were usually the basest.

"How do you know that a strong-willed man a'n't a weak one?" Whitwell astonished him by asking. "A'n't what we call a strong will just a kind of a bull-dog clinch that the dog himself can't unloose? I take it a man that has a good will is a strong man. If Jeff done a right thing against his will, he wouldn't rest easy till he'd showed that he wa'n't obliged to, by some mischief worse 'n what he was kept out of. I tell you, Mr. Westover, if I'd made that fellow toe the mark any way, I'd be afraid of him." Whitwell looked at Westover with eyes of significance, if not of confidence. Then he rose with a prolonged "M--wel-l-l! We're all born, but we a'n't all buried. This world is a queer place. But I guess Jeff 'll come out right in the end."

Westover said, "I'm sure he will!" and he shook hands warmly with the father of the girl Jeff was going to marry.

Whitwell came back, after he had got some paces away, and said: "Of course, this is between you and me, Mr. Westover."

"Of course!"

"I don't mean Mis' Durgin. I shouldn't care what she thought of my talkin' him over with you. I don't know," he continued, putting up his hand against the door-frame, to give himself the comfort of its support while he talked, "as you understood what she mean by the young ladies at Boston keepin' up with the fellows in college. Well, that's what Cynthy's doin' with Jeff, right along; and if he ever works off them conditions of his, and gits his degree, it' ll be because she helped him to. I tell you, there's more than one kind of telepathy in this world, Mr. Westover. That's all."

XXXIX

Westover understood from Whitwell's afterthought that it was Cynthia he was anxious to keep ignorant of his misgivings, if they were so much as misgivings. But the importance of this fact could not stay him against the tide of sleep which was bearing him down. When his head touched the pillow it swept over him, and he rose from it in the morning with a gayety of heart which he knew to be returning health. He jumped out of bed, and stuffed some shavings into his stove from the wood-box beside it, and laid some logs on them; he slid the damper open, and then lay down again, listening to the fire that showed its red teeth through the slats and roared and laughed to the day which sparkled on the white world without. When he got out of bed a second time, he found the room so hot that he had to pull down his window-sash, and he dressed in a temperature of twenty degrees below zero without knowing that the dry air was more than fresh. Mrs. Durgin called to him through the open door of her parlor, as he entered the dining-room: "Cynthy will give you your breakfast, Mr. Westover. We're all done long ago, and I'm busy in here," and the girl appeared with the coffee-pot and the dishes she had been keeping hot for him at the kitchen stove. She seemed to be going to leave him when she had put them down before him, but she faltered, and then she asked: "Do you want I should pour your coffee for you?"

"Oh yes! Do!" he begged, and she sat down across the table from him. "I'm ashamed to make this trouble for you," he added. "I didn't know it was so late."

"Oh, we have the whole day for our work," she answered, tolerantly.

He laughed, and said: "How strange that seems! I suppose I shall get used to it. But in town we seem never to have a whole day for a day's work; we always have to do part of it at night, or the next morning. Do you ever have a day here that's too large a size for its work?"

"You can nearly always find something to do about a house," she returned, evasively. "But the time doesn't go the way it does in the summer."

"Oh, I know how the country is in the winter," he said. "I was brought up in the country."

"I didn't know that," she said, and she gave him a stare of surprise before her eyes fell.

"Yes. Out in Wisconsin. My people were emigrants, and I lived in the woods, there, till I began to paint my way out. I began pretty early, but I was in the woods till I was sixteen."

"I didn't know that," she repeated. "I always thought that you were--"

"Summer folks, like the rest? No, I'm all-the-year-round folks

originally. But I haven't been in the country in the winter since I was a boy; and it's all been coming back to me, here, like some one else's experience."

She did not say anything, but the interest in her eyes, which she could not keep from his face now, prompted him to go on.

"You can make a beginning in the West easier than you can in the East, and some people who came to our lumber camp discovered me, and gave me a chance to begin. I went to Milwaukee first, and they made me think I was somebody. Then I came on to New York, and they made me think I was nobody. I had to go to Europe to find out which I was; but after I had been there long enough I didn't care to know. What I was trying to do was the important thing to me; not the fellow who was trying to do it."

"Yes," she said, with intelligence.

"I met some Boston people in Italy, and I thought I should like to live where that kind of people lived. That's the way I came to be in Boston. It all seems very simple now, but I used to think it might look romantic from the outside. I've had a happy life; and I'm glad it began in the country. I shouldn't care if it ended there. I don't know why I've bothered you with my autobiography, though. Perhaps because I thought you knew it already."

She looked as if she would have said something fitting if she could have ruled herself to it; but she said nothing at all. Her failure seemed to abash her, and she could only ask him if he would not have some more coffee, and then excuse herself, and leave him to finish his breakfast alone.

That day he tried for his picture from several points out-of-doors before he found that his own window gave him the best. With the window open, and the stove warm at his back, he worked there in great comfort nearly every afternoon. The snows kept off, and the clear sunsets burned behind the summit day after day. He painted frankly and faithfully, and made a picture which, he said to himself, no one would believe in, with that warm color tender upon the frozen hills. The soft suffusion of the winter scene was improbable to him when he had it in, nature before his eyes; when he looked at it as he got it on his canvas it was simply impossible.

In the forenoons he had nothing to do, for he worked at his picture only when the conditions renewed themselves with the sinking sun. He tried to be in the open air, and get the good of it; but his strength for walking had failed him, and he kept mostly to the paths broken around the house. He went a good deal to the barn with Whitwell and Jombateeste to look after the cattle and the horses, whose subdued stamping and champing gave him a sort of animal pleasure. The blended odors of the hay-mows and of the creatures' breaths came to him with the faint warmth which their bodies diffused through the cold obscurity.

When the wide doors were rolled back, and the full day was let in, he

liked the appeal of their startled eyes, and the calls they made to one another from their stalls, while the men spoke back to them in terms which they seemed to have in common with them, and with the poultry that flew down from the barn lofts to the barn floor and out into the brilliant day, with loud clamor and affected alarm.

In these simple experiences he could not imagine the summer life of the place. It was nowhere more extinct than in the hollow verandas, where the rocking-chairs swung in July and August, and where Westover's steps in his long tramps up and down woke no echo of the absent feet. In-doors he kept to the few stove-heated rooms where he dwelt with the family, and sent only now and then a vague conjecture into the hotel built round the old farm-house. He meant, before he left, to ask Mrs. Durgin to let him go through the hotel, but he put it off from day to day, with a physical shrinking from its cold and solitude.

The days went by in the swiftness of monotony. His excursions to the barn, his walks on the verandas, his work on his picture, filled up the few hours of the light, and when the dark came he contentedly joined the little group in Mrs. Durgin's parlor. He had brought two or three books with him, and sometimes he read from one of them; or he talked with Whitwell on some of the questions of life and death that engaged his speculative mind. Jombateeste preferred the kitchen for the naps he took after supper before his early bedtime. Frank Whitwell sat with his books there, where Westover sometimes saw his sister helping him at his studies. He was loyally faithful and obedient to her in all things. He helped her with the dishes, and was not ashamed to be seen at this work; she had charge of his goings and comings in society; he submitted to her taste in his dress, and accepted her counsel on many points which he referred to her, and discussed with her in low-spoken conferences. He seemed a formal, serious boy, shy like his sister; his father let fall some hints of a religious cast of mind in him. He had an ambition beyond the hotel; he wished to study for the ministry; and it was not alone the chance of going home with the girls that made him constant at the evening meetings. "I don't know where he gets it," said his father, with a shake of the head that suggested doubt of the wisdom of the son's preference of theology to planchette.

Cynthia had the same care of her father as of her brother; she kept him neat, and held him up from lapsing into the slovenliness to which he would have tended if she had not, as Westover suspected, made constant appeals to him for the respect due their guest. Mrs. Durgin, for her part, left everything to Cynthia, with a contented acceptance of her future rule and an abiding trust in her sense and strength, which included the details of the light work that employed her rather luxurious leisure. Jombateeste himself came to Cynthia with his mending, and her needle kept him tight and firm against the winter which it amused Westover to realize was the Canuck's native element, insomuch that there was now something incongruous in the notion of Jombateeste and any other season.

The girl's motherly care of all the household did not leave Westover out. Buttons appeared on garments long used to shifty contrivances for getting

on without them; buttonholes were restored to their proper limits; his overcoat pockets were searched for gloves, and the gloves put back with their finger-tips drawn close as the petals of a flower which had decided to shut and be a bud again.

He wondered how he could thank her for his share of the blessing that her passion for motherly care was to all the house. It was pathetic, and he used sometimes to forecast her self-devotion with a tender indignation, which included a due sense of his own present demerit. He was not reconciled to the sacrifice because it seemed the happiness, or at least the will, of the nature which made it. All the same it seemed a waste, in its relation to the man she was to marry.

Mrs. Durgin and Cynthia sat by the lamp and sewed at night, or listened to the talk of the men. If Westover read aloud, they whispered together from time to time about some matters remote from it, as women always do where there is reading. It was quiet, but it was not dull for Westover, who found himself in no hurry to get back to town.

Sometimes he thought of the town with repulsion; its unrest, its vacuous, troubled life haunted him like a memory of sickness; but he supposed that when he should be quite well again all that would change, and be as it was before. He interested himself, with the sort of shrewd ignorance of it that Cynthia showed in the questions she asked about it now and then when they chanced to be left alone together. He fancied that she was trying to form some intelligible image of Jeff's environment there, and was piecing together from his talk of it the impressions she had got from summer folks. He did his best to help her, and to construct for her a veritable likeness of the world as far as he knew it.

A time came when he spoke frankly of Jeff in something they were saying, and she showed no such shrinking as he had expected she would; he reflected that she might have made stricter conditions with Mrs. Durgin than she expected to keep herself in mentioning him. This might well have been necessary with the mother's pride in her son, which knew no stop when it once began to indulge itself. What struck Westover more than the girl's self-possession when they talked of Jeff was a certain austerity in her with regard to him. She seemed to hold herself tense against any praise of him, as if she should fail him somehow if she relaxed at all in his favor.

This, at least, was the rather mystifying impression which Westover got from her evident wish to criticise and understand exactly all that he reported, rather than to flatter herself from it. Whatever her motive was, he was aware that through it all she permitted herself a closer and fuller trust of himself. At times it was almost too implicit; he would have liked to deserve it better by laying open all that had been in his heart against Jeff. But he forbore, of course, and he took refuge, as well as he could, in the respect by which she held herself at a reverent distance from him when he could not wholly respect himself.

XL.

One morning Westover got leave from Mrs. Durgin to help Cynthia open the dim rooms and cold corridors at the hotel to the sun and air. She promised him he should take his death, but he said he would wrap up warm, and when he came to join the girl in his overcoat and fur cap, he found Cynthia equipped with a woollen cloud tied around her head, and a little shawl pinned across her breast.

"Is that all?" he reproached her. "I ought to have put on a single wreath of artificial flowers and some sort of a blazer for this expedition. Don't you think so, Mrs. Durgin?"

"I believe women can stand about twice as much cold as you can, the best of you," she answered, grimly.

"Then I must try to keep myself as warm as I can with work," he said. "You must let me do all the rough work of airing out, won't you, Cynthia?"

"There isn't any rough work about it," she answered, in a sort of motherly toleration of his mood, without losing anything of her filial reverence.

She took care of him, he perceived, as she took care of her brother and her father, but with a delicate respect for his superiority, which was no longer shyness.

They began with the office and the parlor, where they flung up the windows, and opened the doors, and then they opened the dining-room, where the tables stood in long rows, with the chairs piled on them legs upward. Cynthia went about with many sighs for the dust on everything, though to Westover's eyes it all seemed frigidly clean. "If it goes on as it has for the past two years," she said, "we shall have to add on a new dining-room. I don't know as I like to have it get so large!"

"I never wanted it to go beyond the original farmhouse," said Westover. "I've been jealous of every boarder but the first. I should have liked to keep it for myself, and let the world know Lion's Head from my pictures."

"I guess Mrs. Durgin thinks it was your picture that began to send people here."

"And do you blame me, too? What if the thing I'm doing now should make it a winter resort? Nothing could save you, then, but a fire. I believe that's Jeff's ambition. Only he would want to put another hotel in place of this; something that would be more popular. Then the ruin I began would be complete, and I shouldn't come any more; I couldn't bear the sight."

"I guess Mrs. Durgin wouldn't think it was lion's Head if you stopped

coming," said Cynthia.

"But you would know better than that," said Westover; and then he was sorry he had said it, for it seemed to ask something of different quality from her honest wish to make him know their regard for him.

She did not answer, but went down a long corridor to which they had mounted, to raise the window at the end, while he raised another at the opposite extremity. When they met at the stairway again to climb to the story above, he said: "I am always ashamed when I try to make a person of sense say anything silly," and she flushed, still without answering, as if she understood him, and his meaning pleased her. "But fortunately a person of sense is usually equal to the temptation. One ought to be serious when he tries it with a person of the other sort; but I don't know that one is!"

"Do you feel any draught between these windows?" asked Cynthia, abruptly. "I don't want you should take cold."

"Oh, I'm all right," said Westover.

She went into the rooms on one side of the corridor, and put up their windows, and flung the blinds back. He did the same on the other side. He got a peculiar effect of desolation from the mattresses pulled down over the foot of the bedsteads, and the dismantled interiors reflected in the mirrors of the dressing-cases; and he was going to speak of it when he rejoined Cynthia at the stairway leading to the third story, when she said, "Those were Mrs. Vostrand's rooms I came out of the last." She nodded her head over her shoulder toward the floor they were leaving.

"Were they indeed! And do you remember people's rooms so long?"

"Yes; I always think of rooms by the name of people that have them, if they're any way peculiar."

He thought this bit of uncandor charming, and accepted it as if it were the whole truth. "And Mrs. Vostrand was certainly peculiar. Tell me, Cynthia, what did you think of her?"

"She was only here a little while."

"But you wouldn't have come to think of her rooms by her name if she hadn't made a strong impression on you!" She did not answer, and he said, "I see you didn't like her!"

The girl would not speak, and Mr. Westover went on: "She used to be very good to me, and I think she used to be better to herself than she is now." He knew that Jeff must have told Cynthia of his affair with Genevieve Vostrand, and he kept himself from speaking of her by a resolution he thought creditable, as he mounted the stairs to the upper story in the silence to which Cynthia left his last remark. At the top she made a little pause in the obscurer light of the close-shuttered corridor, while she said: "I liked her daughter the best."

"Yes?" he returned. "I--never felt very well acquainted with her, I believe. One couldn't get far with her. Though, for the matter of that, one didn't get far with Mrs. Vostrand herself. Did you think Genevieve was much influenced by her mother?"

"She didn't seem a strong character."

"No, that was it. She was what her mother wished her to be. I've often wondered how much she was interested in the marriage she made."

Cynthia let a rustic silence ensue, and Westover shrank again from the inquisition he longed to make.

It was not Genevieve Vostrand's marriage which really concerned him, but Cynthia's engagement, and it was her mind that he would have liked to look into. It might well be supposed that she regarded it in a perfect matter-of-fact way, and with no ambition beyond it. She was a country girl, acquainted from childhood with facts of life which town-bred girls would not have known without a blunting of the sensibilities, and why should she be different from other country girls? She might be as good and as fine as he saw her, and yet be insensible to the spiritual toughness of Jeff, because of her love for him. Her very goodness might make his badness unimaginable to her, and if her refinement were from the conscience merely, and not from the tastes and experiences, too, there was not so much to dread for her in her marriage with such a man. Still, he would have liked, if he could, to tell her what he had told her father of Durgin's behavior with Lynde, and let her bring the test of her self-devotion to the case with a clear understanding. He had sometimes been afraid that Whitwell might not be able to keep it to himself; but now he wished that the philosopher had not been so discreet. He had all this so absorbingly in mind that he started presently with the fear that she had said something and he had not answered, but when he asked her he found that she had not spoken. They were standing at an open window looking out upon Lion's Head, when he said: "I don't know how I shall show my gratitude to Mrs. Durgin and you for thinking of having me up here. I've done a picture of Lion's Head that might be ever so much worse; but I shouldn't have dreamed of getting at it if it hadn't been for you, though I've so often dreamed of doing it. Now I shall go home richer in every sort of way--thanks to you."

She answered, simply: "You needn't thank anybody; but it was Jeff who thought of it; we were ready enough to ask you."

"That was very good of him," said Westover, whom her words confirmed in a suspicion he had had all along. But what did it matter that Jeff had suggested their asking him, and then attributed the notion to them? It was not so malign for him to use that means of ingratiating himself with Westover, and of making him forget his behavior with Lynde, and it was not unnatural. It was very characteristic; at the worst it merely proved that Jeff was more ashamed of what he had done than he would allow, and that was to his credit.

He heard Cynthia asking: "Mr. Westover, have you ever been at Class Day? He wants us to come."

"Class Day? Oh, Class Day!" He took a little time to gather himself together. "Yes, I've been at a good many. If you care to see something pretty, it's the prettiest thing in the world. The students' sisters and mothers come from everywhere; and there's fashion and feasting and flirting, from ten in the morning till ten at night. I'm not sure there's so much happiness; but I can't tell. The young people know about that. I fancy there's a good deal of defeat and disappointment in it all. But if you like beautiful dresses, and music and dancing, and a great flutter of gayety, you can get more of it at Class Day than you can in any other way. The good time depends a great deal upon the acquaintance a student has, and whether he is popular in college." Westover found this road a little impassable, and he faltered.

Cynthia did not apparently notice his hesitation. "Do you think Mrs. Durgin would like it?"

"Mrs. Durgin?" Westover found that he had been leaving her out of the account, and had been thinking only of Cynthia's pleasure or pain. "Well, I don't suppose--it would be rather fatiguing--Did Jeff want her to come too?"

"He said so."

"That's very nice of him. If he could devote himself to her; but--And would she like to go?"

"To please him, she would." Westover was silent, and the girl surprised him by the appeal she suddenly made to him. "Mr. Westover, do you believe it would be very well for either of us to go? I think it would be better for us to leave all that part of his life alone. It's no use in pretending that we're like the kind of people he knows, or that we know their ways, and I don't believe--"

Westover felt his heart rise in indignant sympathy. "There isn't any one he knows to compare with you!" he said, and in this he was thinking mainly of Bessie Lynde. "You're worth a thousand--If I were--if he's half a man he would be proud--I beg your pardon! I don't mean--but you understand--"

Cynthia put her head far out of the window and looked along the steep roof before them. "There is a blind off one of the windows. I heard it clapping in the wind the other night. I must go and see the number of the room." She drew her head in quickly and ran away without letting him see her face.

He followed her. "Let me help you put it on again!"

"No, no!" she called back. "Frank will do that, or Jombateeste, when they come to shut up the house."

XLI.

Westover, did not meet Durgin for several days after his return from Lion's Head. He brought messages for him from his mother and from Whitwell, and he waited for him to come and get them so long that he had to blame himself for not sending them to him. When Jeff appeared, at the end of a week, Westover had a certain embarrassment in meeting him, and the effort to overcome this carried him beyond his sincerity. He was aware of feigning the cordiality he showed, and of having less real liking for him than ever before. He suggested that he must be busier every day, now, with his college work, and he resented the air of social prosperity which Jeff put on in saying, Yes, there was that, and then he had some engagements which kept him from coming in sooner.

He did not say what the engagements were, and they did not recur to the things they had last spoken of. Westover could not do so without Jeff's leading, and he was rather glad that he gave none. He stayed only a little time, which was spent mostly in a show of interest on both sides, and the hollow hilarities which people use to mask their indifference to one another's being and doing. Jeff declared that he had never seen Westover looking so well, and said he must go up to Lion's Head again; it had done him good. As for his picture, it was a corker; it made him feel as if he were there! He asked about all the folks, and received Westover's replies with vague laughter, and an absence in his bold eye, which made the painter wonder what his mind was on, without the wish to find out. He was glad to have him go, though he pressed him to drop in soon again, and said they would take in a play together.

Jeff said he would like to do that, and he asked at the door whether Westover was going to the tea at Mrs. Bellingham's. He said he had to look in there, before he went out to Cambridge; and left Westover in mute amaze at the length he had apparently gone in a road that had once seemed no thoroughfare for him. Jeff's social acceptance, even after the Enderby ball, which was now some six or seven weeks past, had been slow; but of late, for no reason that he or any one else could have given, it had gained a sudden precipitance; and people who wondered why they met him at other houses began to ask him to their own.

He did not care to go to their houses, and he went at first in the hope of seeing Bessie Lynde again. But this did not happen for some time, and it was a mid-Lenten tea that brought them together. As soon as he caught sight of her he went up to her and began to talk as if they had been in the habit of meeting constantly. She could not control a little start at his approach, and he frankly recognized it.

"What's the matter?"

"Oh--the window!"

"It isn't open," he said, trying it. "Do you want to try it yourself?"

"I think I can trust you," she answered, but she sank a little into the shelter of the curtains, not to be seen talking with him, perhaps, or not to be interrupted--she did not analyze her motive closely.

He remained talking to her until she went away, and then he contrived to go with her. She did not try to escape him after that; each time they met she had the pleasure of realizing that there had never been any danger of what never happened. But beyond this she could perhaps have given no better reason for her willingness to meet him again and again than the bewildered witnesses of the fact. In her set people not only never married outside of it, but they never flirted outside of it. For one of themselves, even for a girl like Bessie, whom they had not quite known from childhood, to be apparently amusing herself with a man like that, so wholly alien in origin, in tradition, was something unheard of; and it began to look as if Bessie Lynde was more than amused. It seemed to Mary Enderby that wherever she went she saw that man talking to Bessie. She could have believed that it was by some evil art that he always contrived to reach Bessie's side, if anything could have been less like any kind of art than the bold push he made for her as soon as he saw her in a room. But sometimes Miss Enderby feared that it was Bessie who used such finesse as there was, and always put herself where he could see her. She waited with trembling for her to give the affair sanction by making her aunt ask him to something at her house. On the other hand, she could not help feeling that Bessie's flirtation was all the more deplorable for the want of some such legitimation.

She did not even know certainly whether Jeff ever called upon Bessie at her aunt's house, till one day the man let him out at the same time he let her in.

"Oh, come up, Molly!" Bessie sang out from the floor above, and met her half-way down the stairs, where she kissed her and led her embraced into the library.

"You don't like my jay, do you, dear?" she asked, promptly.

Mary Enderby turned her face, the mirror of conscience, upon her, and asked: "Is he your jay?"

"Well, no; not just in that sense, Molly. But suppose he was?"

"Then I should have nothing to say."

"And suppose he wasn't?"

Still Mary Enderby found herself with nothing of all she had a thousand times thought she should say to Bessie if she had ever the slightest chance. It always seemed so easy, till now, to take Bessie in her arms, and appeal to her good sense, her self-respect, her regard for her family and friends; and now it seemed so impossible.

She heard herself answering, very stiffly: "Perhaps I'd better apologize

for what I've said already. You must think I was very unjust the last time we mentioned him."

"Not at all!" cried Bessie, with a laugh that sounded very mocking and very unworthy to her friend. "He's all that you said, and worse. But he's more than you said, and better."

"I don't understand," said Mary, coldly.

"He's very interesting; he's original; he's different!"

"Oh, every one says that."

"And he doesn't flatter me, or pretend to think much of me. If he did, I couldn't bear him. You know how I am, Molly. He keeps me interested, don't you understand, and prowling about in the great unknown where he has his weird being."

Bessie put her hand to her mouth, and laughed at Mary Enderby with her slanted eyes; a sort of Parisian version of a Chinese motive in eyes.

"I suppose," her friend said, sadly, "you won't tell me more than you wish."

"I won't tell you more than I know--though I'd like to," said Bessie. She gave Mary a sudden hug. "You dear! There isn't anything of it, if that's what you mean."

"But isn't there danger that there will be, Bessie?" her friend entreated.

"Danger? I shouldn't call it danger, exactly!"

"But if you don't respect him, Bessie--"

"Why, how can I? He doesn't respect me!"

"I know you're teasing, now," said Mary Enderby, getting up, "and you're quite right. I have no business to--"

Bessie pulled her down upon the seat again. "Yes, you have! Don't I tell you, over and over? He doesn't respect me, because I don't know how to make him, and he wouldn't like it if I did. But now I'll try to make you understand. I don't believe I care for him the least; but mind, I'm not certain, for I've never cared for any one, and I don't know what it's like. You know I'm not sentimental; I think sentiment's funny; and I'm not dignified--"

"You're divine," murmured Mary Enderby, with reproachful adoration.

"Yes, but you see how my divinity could be improved," said Bessie, with a wild laugh. "I'm not sentimental, but I'm emotional, and he gives me emotions. He's a riddle, and I'm all the time guessing at him. You get

the answer to the kind of men we know easily; and it's very nice, but it doesn't amuse you so much as trying. Now, Mr. Durgin--what a name! I can see it makes you creep--is no more like one of us than a--bear is --and his attitude toward us is that of a bear who's gone so much with human beings that he thinks he's a human being. He's delightful, that way. And, do you know, he's intellectual! He actually brings me books, and wants to read passages to me out of them! He has brought me the plans of the new hotel he's going to build. It's to be very aesthetic, and it's going to be called The Lion's Head Inn. There's to be a little theatre, for amateur dramatics, which I could conduct, and for all sorts of professional amusements. If you should ever come, Molly, I'm sure we shall do our best to make you comfortable."

Mary Enderby would not let Bessie laugh upon her shoulder after she said this. "Bessie Lynde," she said, severely, "if you have no regard for yourself, you ought to have some regard for him. You may say you are not encouraging him, and you may believe it--"

"Oh, I shouldn't say it if I didn't believe it," Bessie broke in, with a mock air of seriousness.

"I must be going," said Mary, stiffly, and this time she succeeded in getting to her feet.

Bessie laid hold of her again. "You think you've been trifled with, don't you, dear?"

"No--"

"Yes, you do! Don't you try to be slippery, Molly. The plain pikestaff is your style, morally speaking--if any one knows what a pikestaff is. Well, now, listen! You're anxious about me."

"You know how I feel, Bessie," said Mary Enderby, looking her in the eyes.

"Yes, I do," said Bessie. "The trouble is, I don't know how I feel. But if I ever do, Molly, I'll tell you! Is that fair?"

"Yes"

"I'll give you ample warning. At the least little consciousness in the region of the pericardium, off will go a note by a district messenger, and when you come I'll do whatever you say. There!"

"Oh, Bessie!" cried her friend, and she threw her arms round her, "you always were the most fascinating creature in the world!"

"Yes," said Bessie, "that's what I try to have him think."

XLII.

Toward the end of April most people who had places at the Shore were mostly in them, but they came up to town on frequent errands, and had one effect of evanescence with people who still remained in their Boston houses provisionally, and seemed more than half absent. The Enderbys had been at the Shore for a fortnight, and the Lyndes were going to be a fortnight longer in Boston, yet, as Bessie made her friend observe, when Mary, ran in for lunch, or stopped for a moment on her way to the train, every few days, they were both of the same transitory quality.

"It might as well be I as you," Bessie said one day, "if we only think so. It's all very weird, dear, and I'm not sure but it is you who sit day after day at my lonely casement and watch the sparrows examining the fuzzy buds of the Jap ivy to see just how soon they can hope to build in the vines. Do you object to the ivy buds looking so very much like snipped woollen rags? If you do, I'm sure it's you, here in my place, for when I come up to town in your personality it sets my teeth on edge. In fact, that's the worst thing about Boston now--the fuzzy ivy buds; there's so much ivy! When you can forget the buds, there are a great many things to make you happy. I feel quite as if we were spending the summer in town and I feel very adventurous and very virtuous, like some sort of self-righteous bohemian. You don't know how I look down on people who have gone out of town. I consider them very selfish and heartless; I don't know why, exactly. But when we have a good marrow-freezing northeasterly storm, and the newspapers come out with their ironical congratulations to the tax-dodgers at the Shore, I feel that Providence is on my side, and I'm getting my reward, even in this world." Bessie suddenly laughed. "I see by your expression of fixed inattention, Molly, that you're thinking of Mr. Durgin!"

Mary gave a start of protest, but she was too honest to deny the fact outright, and Bessie ran on:

"No, we don't sit on a bench in the Common, or even in the Garden, or on the walk in Commonwealth Avenue. If we come to it later, as the season advances, I shall make him stay quite at the other end of the bench, and not put his hand along the top. You needn't be afraid, Molly; all the proprieties shall be religiously observed. Perhaps I shall ask Aunt Louisa to let us sit out on her front steps, when the evenings get warmer; but I assure you it's much more comfortable in-doors yet, even in town, though you'll hardly, believe it at the Shore. Shall you come up to Class Day?"

"Oh, I don't know," Mary began, with a sigh of the baffled hope and the inextinguishable expectation which the mention of Class Day stirs in the heart of every Boston girl past twenty.

"Yes!" said Bessie, with a sigh burlesqued from Mary's. "That is what we all say, and it is certainly the most maddening of human festivals. I suppose, if we were quite left to ourselves, we shouldn't go; but we seem never to be, quite. After every Class Day I say to myself that nothing on earth could induce me to go to another; but when it comes

round again, I find myself grasping at any straw of a pretext. I'm pretending now that I've a tender obligation to go because it's his Class Day."

"Bessie!" cried Mary Enderby. "You don't mean it!"

"Not if I say it, Mary dear. What did I promise you about the pericardiac symptoms? But I feel--I feel that if he asks me I must go. Shouldn't you like to go and see a jay Class Day--be part of it? Think of going once to the Pi Ute spread--or whatever it is! And dancing in their tent! And being left out of the Gym, and Beck! Yes, I ought to go, so that it can be brought home to me, and I can have a realizing sense of what I am doing, and be stayed in my mad career."

"Perhaps," Mary Enderby suggested, colorlessly, "he will be devoted to his own people." She had a cold fascination in the picture Bessie's words had conjured up, and she was saying this less to Bessie than to herself.

"And I should meet them--his mothers and sisters!" Bessie dramatized an excess of anguish. "Oh, Mary, that is the very thorn I have been trying not to press my heart against; and does your hand commend it to my embrace? His folks! Yes, they would be folks; and what folks! I think I am getting a realizing sense. Wait! Don't speak don't move, Molly!" Bessie dropped her chin into her hand, and stared straight forward, gripping Mary Enderby's hand.

Mary withdrew it. "I shall have to go, Bessie," she said. "How is your aunt?"

"Must you? Then I shall always say that it was your fault that I couldn't get a realizing sense--that you prevented me, just when I was about to see myself as others see me--as you see me. She's very well!" Bessie sighed in earnest, and her friend gave her hand a little pressure of true sympathy. "But of course it's rather dull here, now."

"I hate to have you staying on. Couldn't you come down to us for a week?"

"No. We both think it's best to be here when Alan gets back. We want him to go down with us." Bessie had seldom spoken openly with Mary Enderby about her brother; but that was rather from Mary's shrinking than her own; she knew that everybody understood his case. She went so far now as to say: "He's ever so much better than he has been. We have such hopes of him, if he can keep well, when he gets back this time."

"Oh, I know he will," said Mary, fervently. "I'm sure of it. Couldn't we do something for you, Bessie?"

"No, there isn't anything. But--thank you. I know you always think of me, and that's worlds. When are you coming up again?"

"I don't know. Next week, some time."

"Come in and see me--and Alan, if he should be at home. He likes you, and he will be so glad."

Mary kissed Bessie for consent. "You know how much I admire Alan. He could be anything."

"Yes, he could. If he could!"

Bessie seldom put so much earnest in anything, and Mary loved (as she would have said) the sad sincerity, the honest hopelessness of her tone. "We must help him. I know we can."

"We must try. But people who could--if they could--" Bessie stopped.

Her friend divined that she was no longer speaking wholly of her brother, but she said: "There isn't any if about it; and there are no ifs about anything if we only think so. It's a sin not to think so."

The mixture of severity and of optimism in the nature of her friend had often amused Bessie, and it did not escape her tacit notice in even so serious a moment as this. Her theory was that she was shocked to recognize it now, because of its relation to her brother, but her theories did not always agree with the facts.

That evening, however, she was truly surprised when, after a rather belated ring at the door, the card of Mr. Thomas Jefferson Durgin came up to her from the reception-room. Her aunt had gone to bed, and she had a luxurious moment in which she reaped all the reward of self-denial by supposing herself to have foregone the pleasure of seeing him, and sending down word that she was not at home. She did not wish, indeed, to see him, but she wished to know how he felt warranted in calling in the evening, and it was this unworthy, curiosity which she stifled for that luxurious moment. The next, with undiminished dignity, she said, "Ask him to come up, Andrew," and she waited in the library for him to offer a justification of the liberty he had taken.

He offered none whatever, but behaved at once as if he had always had the habit of calling in the evening, or as if it was a general custom which he need not account for in his own case. He brought her a book which they had talked of at their last meeting, but he made no excuse or pretext of it.

He said it was a beautiful night, and that he had found it rather warm walking in from Cambridge. The exercise had moistened his whole rich, red color, and fine drops of perspiration stood on his clean-shaven upper lip and in the hollow between his under lip and his bold chin; he pushed back the coarse, dark-yellow hair from his forehead with his handkerchief, and let his eyes mock her from under his thick, straw-colored eyebrows. She knew that he was enjoying his own impudence, and he was so handsome that she could not refuse to enjoy it with him. She asked him if he would not have a fan, and he allowed her to get it for him from the mantel. "Will you have some tea?"

"No; but a glass of water, if you please," he said, and Bessie rang and sent for some apollinaris, which Jeff drank a great goblet of when it came. Then he lay back in the deep chair he had taken, with the air of being ready for any little amusing thing she had to say.

"Are you still a pessimist, Mr. Durgin?" she asked, tentatively, with the effect of innocence that he knew meant mischief.

"No," he said. "I'm a reformed optimist."

"What is that?"

"It's a man who can't believe all the good he would like, but likes to believe all the good he can."

Bessie said it over, with burlesque thoughtfulness. "There was a girl here to-day," she said, solemnly, "who must have been a reformed pessimist, then, for she said the same thing."

"Oh! Miss Enderby," said Jeff.

Bessie started. "You're preternatural! But what a pity you should be mistaken. How came you to think of her?"

"She doesn't like me, and you always put me on trial after she's been here."

"Am I putting you on trial now? It's your guilty conscience! Why shouldn't Mary Enderby like you?"

"Because I'm not good enough."

"Oh! And what has that to do with people's liking you? If that was a reason, how many friends do you think you would have?"

"I'm not sure that I should have any."

"And doesn't that make you feel badly?"

"Very." Jeff's confession was a smiling one.

"You don't show it!"

"I don't want to grieve you."

"Oh, I'm not sure that would grieve me."

"Well, I thought I wouldn't risk it."

"How considerate of you!"

They had come to a little barrier, up that way, and could go no further.

Jeff said: "I've just been interviewing another reformed pessimist."

"Mr. Westover?"

"You're preternatural, too. And you're not mistaken, either. Do you ever go to his studio?"

"No; I haven't been there since he told me it would be of no use to come as a student. He can be terribly frank."

"Nobody knows that better than I do," said Jeff, with a smile for the notion of Westover's frankness as he had repeatedly experienced it. "But he means well."

"Oh, that's what they always say. But all the frankness can't be well meant. Why should uncandor be the only form of malevolence?"

"That's a good idea. I believe I'll put that up on Westover the next time he's frank."

"And will you tell me what he says?"

"Oh, I don't know about that." Jeff lay back in his chair at large ease and chuckled. "I should like to tell you what he's just been saying to me, but I don't believe I can."

"Do!"

"You know he was up at Lion's Head in February, and got a winter impression of the mountain. Did you see it?"

"No. Was that what you were talking about?"

"We talked about something a great deal more interesting--the impression he got of me."

"Winter impression."

"Cold enough. He had come to the conclusion that I was very selfish and unworthy; that I used other people for my own advantage, or let them use themselves; that I was treacherous and vindictive, and if I didn't betray a man I couldn't be happy till I had beaten him. He said that if I ever behaved well, it came after I had been successful one way or the other."

"How perfectly fascinating!" Bessie rested her elbow on the corner of the table, and her chin in the palm of the hand whose thin fingers tapped her red lips; the light sleeve fell down and showed her pretty, lean little forearm. "Did it strike you as true, at all?"

"I could see how it might strike him as true."

"Now you are candid. But go on! What did he expect you to do about it?"

"Nothing. He said he didn't suppose I could help it."

"This is immense," said Bessie. "I hope I'm taking it all in. How came he to give you this flattering little impression? So hopeful, too! Or, perhaps your frankness doesn't go any farther?"

"Oh, I don't mind saying. He seemed to think it was a sort of abstract duty he owed to my people."

"Your-folks?" asked Bessie.

"Yes," said Jeff, with a certain dryness. But as her face looked blankly innocent, he must have decided that she meant nothing offensive. He relaxed into a broad smile. "It's a queer household up there, in the winter. I wonder what you would think of it."

"You might describe it to me, and perhaps we shall see."

"You couldn't realize it," said Jeff, with a finality that piqued her. He reached out for the bottle of apollinaris, with somehow the effect of being in another student's room, and poured himself a glass. This would have amused her, nine times out of ten, but the tenth time had come when she chose to resent it.

"I suppose," she said, "you are all very much excited about Class Day at Cambridge."

"That sounds like a remark made to open the way to conversation." Jeff went on to burlesque a reply in the same spirit. "Oh, very much so indeed, Miss Lynde! We are all looking forward to it so eagerly. Are you coming?"

She rejected his lead with a slight sigh so skilfully drawn that it deceived him when she said, gravely:

"I don't know. It's apt to be a very baffling time at the best. All the men that you like are taken up with their own people, and even the men that you don't like overvalue themselves, and think they're doing you a favor if they give you a turn at the Gym or bring you a plate of something."

"Well, they are, aren't they?"

"I suppose, yes, that's what makes me hate it. One doesn't like to have such men do one a favor. And then, Juniors get younger every year! Even a nice Junior is only a Junior," she concluded, with a sad fall of her mocking voice."

"I don't believe there's a Senior in Harvard that wouldn't forsake his family and come to the rescue if your feelings could be known," said Jeff. He lifted the bottle at his elbow and found it empty, and this seemed to remind him to rise.

"Don't make them known, please," said Bessie. "I shouldn't want an ovation." She sat, after he had risen, as if she wished to detain him, but when he came up to take leave she had to put her hand in his. She looked at it there, and so did he; it seemed very little and slim, about one-third the size of his palm, and it seemed to go to nothing in his grasp. "I should think," she added, "that the jays would have the best time on Class Day. I should like to dance at one of their spreads, and do everything they did. It would be twice the fun, and there would be some nature in it. I should like to see a jay Class Day."

"If you'll come out, I'll show you one," said Jeff, without wincing.

"Oh, will you?" she said, taking away her hand. "That would be delightful. But what would become of your folks?" She caught a corner of her mouth with her teeth, as if the word had slipped out.

"Do you call them folks?" asked Jeff, quietly:

"I--supposed--Don't you?"

"Not in Boston. I do at Lion's Head."

"Oh! Well-people."

"I don't know as they're coming."

"How delightful! I don't mean that; but if they're not, and if you really knew some jays, and could get me a little glimpse of their Class Day--"

"I think I could manage it for you." He spoke as before, but he looked at her with a mockery in his lips and eyes as intelligent as her own, and the latent change in his mood gave her the sense of being in the presence of a vivid emotion. She rose in her excitement; she could see that he admired her, and was enjoying her insolence too, in a way, though in a way that she did not think she quite understood; and she had the wish to make him admire her a little more.

She let a light of laughter come into her eyes, of harmless mischief played to an end. "I don't deserve your kindness, and I won't come. I've been very wicked, don't you think?"

"Not very--for you," said Jeff.

"Oh, how good!" she broke out. "But be frank now! I've offended you."

"How? I know I'm a jay, and in the country I've got folks."

"Ah, I see you're hurt at my joking, and I'm awfully sorry. I wish there was some way of making you forgive me. But it couldn't be that alone," she went on rather aimlessly as to her words, trusting to his answer for some leading, and willing meanwhile to prolong the situation for the effect in her nerves. It had been a very dull and tedious day, and she

was finding much more than she could have expected in the mingled fear and slight which he inspired her with in such singular measure. These feminine subtleties of motive are beyond any but the finest natures in the other sex, and perhaps all that Jeff perceived was the note of insincerity in her words.

"Couldn't be what alone?" he asked.

"What I've said," she ventured, letting her eyes fall; but they were not eyes that fell effectively, and she instantly lifted them again to his.

"You haven't said anything, and if you've thought anything, what have I got to do with that? I think all sorts of things about people--or folks, as you call them--"

"Oh, thank you! Now you are forgiving me!"

"I think them about you"

"Oh, do sit down and tell me the kind of things you think about me!" Bessie implored, sinking back into her chair.

"You mightn't like them."

"But if they would do me good?"

"What should I want to do you good for?"

"That's true," sighed Bessie, thoughtfully.

"People--folks--"

"Thank you so much!"

"Don't try to do each other good, unless they're cranks like Lancaster, or bores like Mrs. Bevidge--"

"You belong to the analytical school of Seniors! Go on!"

"That's all," said Jeff.

"And you don't think I've tried to do you good?"

He laughed. Her comedy was delicious to him. He had never found, anybody so amusing; he almost respected her for it.

"If that is your opinion of me, Mr. Durgin," she said, very gravely, "I am sorry. May I remark that I don't see why you come, then?"

"I can tell you," said Jeff, and he advanced upon her where she sat so abruptly that she started and shrank back in her chair. "I come because you've got brains, and you're the only girl that has--here." They were Alan's words, almost his words, and for an instant she thought of her

brother, and wondered what he would think of this jay's praising her in his terms. "Because," Jeff went on, "you've got more sense and nonsense --than all the women here put together. Because it's better than a play to hear you talk--and act; and because you're graceful--and fascinating, and chic, and--Good-night, Miss Lynde."

He put out his hand, but she did not take it as she rose haughtily.

"We've said good-night once. I prefer to say good-bye this time. I'm sure you will understand why after this I cannot see you again." She seemed to examine him for the effect of these words upon him before she went on.

"No, I don't understand," he answered, coolly; "but it isn't necessary I should; and I'm quite willing to say good-bye, if you prefer. You haven't been so frank with me as I have with you; but that doesn't make any difference; perhaps you never meant to be, or couldn't be, if you meant. Good-bye." He bowed and turned toward the door.

She fluttered between him and it. "I wish to know what you accuse me of!"

"I? Nothing."

"You imply that I have been unjust toward you."

"Oh no!"

"And I can't let you go till you prove it."

"Prove to a woman that--Will you let me pass?"

"No!" She spread her slender arms across the doorway.

"Oh, very well!" Jeff took her hands and put them both in the hold of one of his large, strong bands. Then, with the contact, it came to him, from a varied experience of girls in his rustic past, that this young lady, who was nothing but a girl after all, was playing her comedy with a certain purpose, however little she might know it or own it. He put his other large, strong hand upon her waist, and pulled her to him and kissed her. Another sort of man, no matter what he had believed of her, would have felt his act a sacrilege then and there. Jeff only knew that she had not made the faintest straggle against him; she had even trembled toward him, and he brutally exulted in the belief that he had done what she wished, whether it was what she meant or not.

She, for her part, realized that she had been kissed as once she had happened to see one of the maids kissed by the grocer's boy at the basement door. In an instant this man had abolished all her defences of family, of society, of personality, and put himself on a level with her in the most sacred things of life. Her mind grasped the fact and she realized it intellectually, while as yet all her emotions seemed paralyzed. She did not know whether she resented it as an abominable outrage or not; whether she hated the man for it or not. But perhaps he

was in love with her, and his love overpowered him; in that case she could forgive him, if she were in love with him. She asked herself whether she was, and whether she had betrayed herself to him so that he was somehow warranted in what he did. She wondered if another sort of man would have done it, a gentleman, who believed she was in love with him. She wondered if she were as much shocked as she was astonished. She knew that there was everything in the situation to make the fact shocking, but she got no distinct reply from her jarred consciousness.

It ought to be known, and known at once; she ought to tell her brother, as soon as she saw him; she thought of telling her aunt, and she fancied having to shout the affair into her ear, and having to repeat, "He kissed me! Don't you understand? Kissed me!" Then she reflected with a start that she could never tell any one, that in the midst of her world she was alone in relation to this; she was as helpless and friendless as the poorest and lowliest girl could be. She was more so, for if she were like the maid whom the grocer's boy kissed she would be of an order of things in which she could advise with some one else who had been kissed; and she would know what to feel.

She asked herself whether she was at all moved at heart; till now it seemed to her that it had not been different with her toward him from what it had been toward all the other men whose meaning she would have liked to find out. She had not in the least respected them, and she did not respect him; but if it happened because he was overcome by his love for her, and could not help it, then perhaps she must forgive him whether she cared for him or not.

These ideas presented themselves with the simultaneity of things in a dream in that instant when she lingered helplessly in his hold, and she even wondered if by any chance Andrew had seen them; but she heard his step on the floor below; and at the same time it appeared to her that she must be in love with this man if she did not resent what he had done.

XLIII

Westover was sitting at an open window of his studio smoking out into the evening air, and looking down into the thinly foliated tops of the public garden, where the electrics fainted and flushed and hissed. Cars trooped by in the troubled street, scraping the wires overhead that screamed as if with pain at the touch of their trolleys, and kindling now and again a soft planet, as the trolleys struck the batlike plates that connected the crossing lines. The painter was getting almost as much pleasure out of the planets as pain out of the screams, and he was in an after-dinner languor in which he was very reluctant to recognize a step, which he thought he knew, on his stairs and his stairs-landing. A knock at his door followed the sound of the approaching steps. He lifted himself, and called out, inhospitably, "Come in!" and, as he expected, Jeff Durgin came in. Westover's meetings with him had been an increasing discomfort since his return from Lion's Head. The uneasiness which he commonly felt

at the first moment of encounter with him yielded less and less to the influence of Jeff's cynical bonhomie, and it returned in force as soon as they parted.

It was rather dim in the place, except for the light thrown up into it from the turmoil of lights outside, but he could see that there was nothing of the smiling mockery on Jeff's face which habitually expressed his inner hardihood. It was a frowning mockery.

"Hello!" said Westover,

"Hello!" answered Jeff. "Any commands for Lion's Head?"

"What do you mean?"

"I'm going up there to-morrow. I've got to see Cynthia, and tell her what I've been doing."

Westover waited a moment before he asked: "Do you want me to ask what you've been doing?"

"I shouldn't mind it."

The painter paused again. "I don't know that I care to ask. Is it any good?"

"No!" shouted Jeff. "It's the worst thing yet, I guess you'll think. I couldn't have believed it myself, if I hadn't been through it. I shouldn't have supposed I was such a fool. I don't care for the girl; I never did."

"Cynthia?"

"Cynthia? No! Miss Lynde. Oh, try to take it in!" Jeff cried, with a laugh at the daze in Westover's face. "You must have known about the flirtation; if you haven't, you're the only one." His vanity in the fact betrayed itself in his voice. "It came to a crisis last week, and we tried to make each other believe that we were in earnest. But there won't be any real love lost."

Westover did not speak. He could not make out whether he was surprised or whether he was shocked, and it seemed to him that he was neither surprised nor shocked. He wondered whether he had really expected something of the kind, sooner or later, or whether he was not always so apprehensive of some deviltry in Durgin that nothing he did could quite take him unawares. At last he said: "I suppose it's true--even though you say it. It's probably the only truth in you."

"That's something like," said Jeff, as if the contempt gave him a sort of pleasure; and his heavy face lighted up and then darkened again.

"Well," said Westover, "what are we going to do? You've come to tell me."

"I'm going to break with her. I don't care for her--that!" He snapped his fingers. "I told her I cared because she provoked me to. It happened because she wanted it to and led up to it."

"Ah!" said Westover. "You put it on her!" But he waited for Durgin's justification with a dread that he should find something in it.

"Pshaw! What's the use? It's been a game from the beginning, and a question which should ruin. I won. She meant to throw me over, if the time came for her, but it came for me first, and it's only a question now which shall break first; we've both been near it once or twice already. I don't mean she shall get the start of me."

Westover had a glimpse of the innate enmity of the sexes in this game; of its presence in passion that was lived and of its prevalence in passion that was played. But the fate of neither gambler concerned him; he was impatient of his interest in what Jeff now went on to tell him, without scruple concerning her, or palliation of himself. He scarcely realized that he was listening, but afterward he remembered it all, with a little pity for Bessie and none for Jeff, but with more shame for her, too. Love seems more sacredly confided to women than to men; it is and must be a higher and finer as well as a holier thing with them; their blame for its betrayal must always be the heavier. He had sometimes suspected Bessie's willingness to amuse herself with Jeff, as with any other man who would let her play with him; and he would not have relied upon anything in him to defeat her purpose, if it had been anything so serious as a purpose.

At the end of Durgin's story he merely asked: "And what are you going to do about Cynthia?"

"I am going to tell her," said Jeff. "That's what I am going up there for."

Westover rose, but Jeff remained sitting where he had put himself astride of a chair, with his face over the back. The painter walked slowly up and down before him in the capricious play of the street light. He turned a little sick, and he stopped a moment at the window for a breath of air.

"Well?" asked Jeff.

"Oh! You want my advice?" Westover still felt physically incapable of the indignation which he strongly imagined. "I don't know what to say to you, Durgin. You transcend my powers. Are you able to see this whole thing yourself?"

"I guess so," Jeff answered. "I don't idealize it, though. I look at facts; they're bad enough. You don't suppose that Miss Lynde is going to break her heart over--"

"I don't believe I care for Miss Lynde any more than I care for you. But I believe I wish you were not going to break with her."

"Why?"

"Because you and she are fit for each other. If you want my advice, I advise you to be true to her--if you can."

"And Cynthia?"

"Break with her."

"Oh!" Jeff gave a snort of derision.

"You're not fit for her. You couldn't do a crueller thing for her than to keep faith with her."

"Do you mean it?"

"Yes, I mean it. Stick to Miss Lynde--if she'll let you."

Jeff seemed puzzled by Westover's attitude, which was either too sincere or too ironical for him. He pushed his hat, which he had kept on, back from his forehead. "Damned if I don't believe she would," he mused aloud. The notion seemed to flatter him and repay him for what he must have been suffering. He smiled, but he said: "She wouldn't do, even if she were any good. Cynthia is worth a million of her. If she wants to give me up after she knows all about me, well and good. I shu'n't blame her. But I shall give her a fair chance, and I shu'n't whitewash myself; you needn't be afraid of that, Mr. Westover."

"Why should I care what you do?" asked the painter, scornfully.

"Well, you can't, on my account," Durgin allowed. "But you do care on her account."

"Yes, I do," said Westover, sitting down again, and he did not say anything more.

Durgin waited a long while for him to speak before he asked: "Then that's really your advice, is it?"

"Yes, break with her."

"And stick to Miss Lynde."

"If she'll let you."

Jeff was silent in his turn. He started from his silence with a laugh. "She'd make a daisy landlady for Lion's Head. I believe she would like to try it awhile just for the fun. But after the ball was over--well, it would be a good joke, if it was a joke. Cynthia is a woman--she a'n't any corpse-light. She understands me, and she don't overrate me, either. She knew just how much I was worth, and she took me at her own valuation. I've got my way in life marked out, and she believes in it as much as I

do. If anybody can keep me level and make the best of me, she can, and she's going to have the chance, if she wants to. I'm going to act square with her about the whole thing. I guess she's the best judge in a case like this, and I shall lay the whole case before her, don't you be afraid of that. And she's got to have a free field. Why, even if there wa'n't any question of her," he went on, falling more and more into his vernacular, "I don't believe I should care in the long run for this other one. We couldn't make it go for any time at all. She wants excitement, and after the summer folks began to leave, and we'd been to Florida for a winter, and then came back to Lion's Head-well! This planet hasn't got excitement enough in it for that girl, and I doubt if the solar system has. At any rate, I'm not going to act as advance-agent for her."

"I see," said Westover, "that you've been reasoning it all out, and I'm not surprised that you've kept your own advantage steadily in mind. I don't suppose you know what a savage you are, and I don't suppose I could teach you. I sha'n't try, at any rate. I'll take you on your own ground, and I tell you again you had better break with Cynthia. I won't say that it's what you owe her, for that won't have any effect with you, but it's what you owe yourself. You can't do a wrong thing and prosper on it--"

"Oh yes, you can," Jeff interrupted, with a sneering laugh. "How do you suppose all the big fortunes were made? By keeping the Commandments?"

"No. But you're an unlucky man if life hasn't taught you that you must pay in suffering of some kind, sooner or later, for every wrong thing you do--"

"Now that's one of your old-fashioned superstitions, Mr. Westover," said Jeff, with a growing kindness in his tone, as if the pathetic delusion of such a man really touched him. "You pay, or you don't pay, just as it happens. If you get hit soon after you've done wrong, you think it's retribution, and if it holds off till you've forgotten all about it, you think it's a strange Providence, and you puzzle over it, but you don't reform. You keep right along in the old way. Prosperity and adversity, they've got nothing to do with conduct. If you're a strong man, you get there, and if you're a weak man, all the righteousness in the universe won't help you. But I propose to do what's right about Cynthia, and not what's wrong; and according to your own theory, of life--which won't hold water a minute--I ought to be blessed to the third and fourth generation. I don't look for that, though. I shall be blessed if I look out for myself; and if I don't, I shall suffer for my want of foresight. But I sha'n't suffer for anything else. Well, I'm going to cut some of my recitations, and I'm going up to Lion's Head, to-morrow, to settle my business with Cynthia. I've got a little business to look after here with some one else first, and I guess I shall have to be about it. I don't know which I shall like the best." He rose, and went over to where Westover was sitting, and held out his hand to him.

"What is it?" asked Westover.

"Any commands for Lion's Head?" Jeff said, as at first.

"No," said Westover, turning his face away.

"Oh, all right." Durgin put his hand into his pocket unshaken.

XLIV

"What is it, Jeff?" asked Cynthia, the next night, as they started out together after supper, and began to stroll down the hill toward her father's house. It lay looking very little and low in the nook at the foot of the lane, on the verge of the woods that darkened away to the northward from it, under the glassy night sky, lit with the spare young moon. The peeping of the frogs in the marshy places filled the air; the hoarse voice of the brook made itself heard at intervals through them.

"It's not so warm here, quite, as it is in Boston," he returned. "Are you wrapped up enough? This air has an edge to it."

"I'm all right," said the girl. "What is it?"

"You think there's something? You don't believe I've come up for rest over Sunday? I guess mother herself didn't, and I could see your father following up my little lies as if he wa'n't going to let one escape him. Well, you're right. There is something. Think of the worst thing you can, Cynthy!"

She pulled her hand out of his arm, which she had taken, and halted him by her abrupt pause. "You're not going to get through!"

"I'm all right on my conditions," said Jeff, with forlorn derision.

"You'll have to guess again." He stood looking back over his shoulder at her face, which showed white in the moonlight, swathed airily round in the old-fashioned soft woollen cloud she wore.

"Is it some trouble you've got into? I shall stand by you!"

"Oh, you splendid girl! The trouble's over, but it's something you can't stand by me in, I guess. You know that girl I wrote to you about--the one I met at the college tea, and--"

"Yes! Miss Lynde!"

"Come on! We can't stay here talking. Let's go down and sit on your porch." She mechanically obeyed him, and they started on together down the hill again; but she did not offer to take his arm, and he kept the width of the roadway from her.

"What about her?" she quietly asked.

"Last night I ended up the flirtation I've been carrying on with her ever

since."

"I want to know just what you mean, Jeff."

"I mean that last week I got engaged to her, and last night I broke with her." Cynthia seemed to stumble on something; he sprang over and caught her, and now she put her hand in his arm, and stayed herself by him as they walked.

"Go on," she said.

"That's all there is of it."

"No!" She stopped, and then she asked, with a kind of gentle bewilderment: "What did you want to tell me for?"

"To let you break with me--if you wanted to."

"Don't you care for me any more?"

"Yes, more than ever I did. But I'm not fit for you, Cynthia. Mr. Westover said I wasn't. I told him about it--"

"What did he say?"

"That I ought to break with you."

"But if you broke with her?"

"He told me to stick to her. He was right about you, Cynthy. I'm not fit for you, and that's a fact."

"What was it about that girl? Tell me everything." She spoke in a tone of plaintive entreaty, very unlike the command she once used with Jeff when she was urging him to be frank with her and true to himself. They had come to her father's house and she freed her hand from his arm again, and sat down on the step before the side door with a little sigh as of fatigue.

"You'll take cold," said Jeff, who remained on foot in front of her.

"No," she said, briefly. "Go on."

"Why," Jeff began, harshly, and with a note of scorn for himself and his theme in his voice, "there isn't any more of it, but there's no end to her. I promised Mr. Westover I shouldn't whitewash myself, and I sha'n't. I've been behaving badly, and it's no excuse for me because she wanted me to. I began to go for her as soon as I saw that she wanted me to, and that she liked the excitement. The excitement is all that she cared for; she didn't care for me except for the excitement of it. She thought she could have fun with me, and then throw me over; but I guess she found her match. You couldn't understand such a girl, and I don't brag of it. All she cared for was to flirt with me, and she liked it all

the more because I was a jay and she could get something new out of it. I can't explain it; but I could see it right along. She fooled herself more than she fooled me."

"Was she--very good-looking?" Cynthia asked, listlessly.

"No!" shouted Jeff. "She wasn't good-looking at all. She was dark and thin, and she had little slanting eyes; but she was graceful, and she knew how to make herself go further than any girl I ever saw. If she came into a room, she made you look at her, or you had to somehow. She was bright, too; and she had more sense than all the other girls there put together. But she was a fool, all the same." Jeff paused. "Is that enough?"

"It isn't all."

"No, it isn't all. We didn't meet much at first, but I got to walking home with her from some teas; and then we met at a big ball. I danced with her the whole while nearly, and--and I took her brother home--Pshaw! He was drunk; and I--well, he had got drunk drinking with me at the ball. The wine didn't touch me, but it turned his head; and I took him home; he's a drunkard, anyway. She let us in when we got to their house, and that kind of made a tie between us. She pretended to think she was under obligations to me, and so I got to going to her house."

"Did she know how her brother got drunk?"

"She does now. I told her last night." How came you to tell her?"

"I wanted to break with her. I wanted to stop it, once for all, and I thought that would do it, if anything would."

"Did that make her willing to give you up?"

Jeff checked himself in a sort of retrospective laugh. "I'm not so sure. I guess she liked the excitement of that, too. You couldn't understand the kind of girl she--She wanted to flirt with me that night I brought him home tipsy."

"I don't care to hear any more about her. Why did you give her up?"

"Because I didn't care for her, and I did care for you, Cynthia."

"I don't believe it." Cynthia rose from the step, where she had been sitting, as if with renewed strength. "Go up and tell father to come down here. I want to see him." She turned and put her hand on the latch of the door.

"You're not going in there, Cynthia," said Jeff. "It must be like death in there."

"It's more like death out here. But if it's the cold you mean, you needn't be troubled. We've had a fire to-day, airing out the house."

"Will you go?"

"But what do you--what are you going to say to me?"

"I don't know, yet. If I said anything now, I should tell you what Mr. Westover did: go back to that girl, if she'll let you. You're fit for each other, as he said. Did you tell her that you were engaged to some one else?"

"I did, last night."

"But before that she didn't know how false you were. Well, you're not fit for her, then; you're not good enough."

She opened the door and went in, closing it after her. Jeff turned and walked slowly away; then he came quickly back, as if he were going to follow her within. But through the window he saw her as she stood by the table with a lamp in her hand. She had turned up the light, which shone full in her face and revealed its severe beauty broken and writhen with the effort to repress her weeping. He might not have minded the severity or the beauty, but the pathos was more than he could stand. "Oh, Lord!" he said, with a shrug, and he turned again and walked slowly up the hill.

When Whitwell faced his daughter in the little sitting-room, whose low ceiling his hat almost touched as he stood before her, the storm had passed with her, and her tear-drenched visage wore its wonted look of still patience.

"Did Jeff tell you why I sent for you, father?"

"No. But I knew it was trouble," said Whitwell, with a dignity which his sympathy for her gave a countenance better adapted to the expression of the lighter emotions.

"I guess you were right about him," she resumed: She went on to tell in brief the story that Jeff had told her. Her father did not interrupt her, but at the end he said, inadequately: "He's a comical devil. I knew about his gittin' that feller drunk. Mr. Westover told me when he was up here."

"Mr. Westover did!" said Cynthia, in a note of indignation.

"He didn't offer to," Whitwell explained. "I got it out of him in spite of him, I guess." He had sat down with his hat on, as his absent-minded habit was, and he now braced his knees against the edge of the table. Cynthia sat across it from him with her head drooped over it, drawing vague figures on the board with her finger. "What are you goin' to do?"

"I don't know," she answered.

"I guess you don't quite realize it yet," her father suggested, tenderly.

"Well, I don't want to hurry you any. Take your time."

"I guess I realize it," said the girl.

"Well, it's a pooty plain case, that's a fact," Whitwell conceded. She was silent, and he asked: "How did he come to tell you?"

"It's what he came up for. He began to tell me at once. I was certain there was some trouble."

"Was it his notion to come, I wonder, or Mr. Westover's?"

"It was his. But Mr. Westover told him to break off with me, and keep on with her, if she would let him."

"I guess that was pooty good advice," said Whitwell, letting his face betray his humorous relish of it. "I guess there's a pair of 'em."

"She was not playing any one else false," said Cynthia, bitterly.

"Well, I guess that's so, too," her father assented. "'Ta'n't so much of a muchness as you might think, in that light." He took refuge from the subject in an undirected whistle.

After a moment the girl asked, forlornly: "What should you do, father, if you were in my place?"

"Well, there I guess you got me, Cynthy," said her father. "I don't believe 't any man, I don't care how old he is, or how much experience he's had, knows exactly how a girl feels about a thing like this, or has got any call to advise her. Of course, the way I feel is like takin' the top of his head off. But I d' know," he added, "as that would do a great deal of good, either. I presume a woman's got rather of a chore to get along with a man, anyway. We a'n't any of us much to brag on. It's out o' sight, out o' mind, with the best of us, I guess."

"It wouldn't be with Jackson--it wouldn't be with Mr. Westover."

"There a'n't many men like Mr. Westover--well, not a great many; or Jackson, either. Time! I wish Jackson was home! He'd know how to straighten this thing out, and he wouldn't weaken over Jeff much--well, not much. But he a'n't here, and you've got to act for yourself. The way I look at it is this: you took Jeff when you knowed what a comical devil he was, and I presume you ha'n't got quite the same right to be disappointed in what he done as if you hadn't knowed. Now mind, I a'n't excusin' him. But if you knowed he was the feller to play the devil if he got a chance, the question is whether--whether--"

"I know what you mean, father," said the girl, "and I don't want to shirk my responsibility. It was everything to have him come right up and tell me."

"Well," said Whitwell, impartially, "as far forth as that goes, I don't think he's strained himself. He'd know you would hear of it sooner or later anyway, and he ha'n't just found out that he was goin' wrong."

Been keepin' it up for the last three months, and writin' you all the while them letters you was so crazy to get."

"Yes," sighed the girl. "But we've got to be just to his disposition as well as his actions. I can see it in one light that can excuse it some. He can't bear to be put down, and I know he's been left out a good deal among the students, and it's made him bitter. He told me about it; that's one reason why he wanted to leave Harvard this last year. He saw other young men made much of, when he didn't get any notice; and when he had the chance to pay them back with a girl of their own set that was trying to make a fool of him--"

"That was the time for him to remember you," said Whitwell.

Cynthia broke under the defence she was trying to make. "Yes," she said, with an indrawn sigh, and she began to sob piteously.

The sight of her grief seemed to kindle her father's wrath to a flame. "Any way you look at him, he's been a dumn blackguard; that's what he's been. You're a million times too good for him; and I--"

She sobbed herself quiet, and then she said: "Father, I don't like to go up there to-night. I want to stay here."

"All right, Cynthia. I'll come down and stay with you. You got everything we want here?"

"Yes. And I'll go up and get the breakfast for them in the morning. There won't be much to do."

"Dumn 'em! Let 'em get their own breakfast!" said Whitwell, recklessly.

"And, father," the girl went on as if he had not spoken, "don't you talk to Mrs. Durgin about it, will you?"

"No, no. I sha'n't speak to her. I'll just tell Frank you and me are goin' to stay down here to-night. She'll suspicion something, but she can figure it out for herself. Or she can make Jeff tell her. It can't be kept from her."

"Well, let him be the one to tell her. Whatever happens, I shall never speak of it to a soul besides you."

"All right, Cynthy. You'll have the night to think it over--I guess you won't sleep much--and I'll trust you to do what's the best thing about it."

XLV.

Cynthia found Mrs. Durgin in the old farm-house kitchen at work getting

breakfast when she came up to the hotel in the morning. She was early, but the elder woman had been earlier still, and her heavy face showed more of their common night-long trouble than the girl's.

She demanded, at sight of her, "What's the matter with you and Jeff, Cynthia?"

Cynthia was unrolling the cloud from her hair. She said, as she tied on her apron: "You must get him to tell you, Mrs. Durgin."

"Then there is something?"

"Yes."

"Has Jeff been using you wrong?"

Cynthia stooped to open the oven door, and to turn the pan of biscuit she found inside. She shut the door sharply to, and said, as she rose:

"I don't want to tell anything about it, and I sha'n't, Mrs. Durgin. He can do it, if he wants to. Shall I make the coffee?"

"Yes; you seem to make it better than I do. Do you think I shouldn't believe you was fair to him?"

"I wasn't thinking of that. But it's his secret. If he wants to keep it, he can keep it, for all me."

"You ha'n't give each other up?"

"I don't know." Cynthia turned away with a trembling chin, and began to beat the coffee up with an egg she had dropped into the pot. She put the breakfast on the table when it was ready, but she would not sit down with the rest. She said she did not want any breakfast, and she drank a cup of coffee in the kitchen.

It fell to Jeff mainly to keep the talk going. He had been out at the barn with Jombateeste since daybreak, looking after the cattle, and the joy of the weather had got into his nerves and spirits. At first he had lain awake after he went to bed, but he had fallen asleep about midnight, and got a good night's rest. He looked fresh and strong and very handsome. He talked resolutely to every one at the table, but Jombateeste was always preoccupied with eating at his meals, and Frank Whitwell had on a Sunday silence, which was perhaps deepened by a feeling that there was something wrong between his sister and Jeff, and it would be rash to commit himself to an open friendliness until he understood the case. His father met Jeff's advances with philosophical blandness and evasion, and Mrs. Durgin was provisionally dry and severe both with the Whitwells and her son. After breakfast she went to the parlor, and Jeff set about a tour of the hotel, inside and out. He looked carefully to the details of its winter keeping. Then he came back and boldly joined his mother where she sat before her stove, whose subdued heat she found pleasant in the lingering cold of the early spring.

He tossed his hat on the table beside her, and sat down on the other side of the stove. "Well, I must say the place has been well looked after. I don't believe Jackson himself could have kept it in better shape. When was the last you heard from him?"

"I hope," said his mother, gravely, "you've been lookin' after your end at Boston, too."

"Well, not as well as you have here, mother," said Jeff, candidly. "Has Cynthia told you?"

"I guess she expected you to tell me, if there was anything."

"There's a lot; but I guess I needn't go over it all. I've been playing the devil."

"Jeff!"

"Yes, I have. I've been going with another girl down there, one the kind you wanted me to make up to, and I went so far I--well, I made love to her; and then I thought it over, and found out I didn't really care for her, and I had to tell her so, and then I came up to tell Cynthia. That's about the size of it. What do you think of it?"

"D' you tell Cynthia?"

"Yes, I told her."

"What 'd she say?"

"She said I'd better go back to the other girl." Jeff laughed hardily, but his mother remained impassive.

"I guess she's right; I guess you had."

"That seems to be the general opinion. That's what Mr. Westover advised. I seem to be the only one against it. I suppose you mean that I'm not fit for Cynthia. I don't deny it. All I say is I want her, and I don't want the other one. What are you going to do in a case like that?"

"The way I should look at it," said his mother, "is this: whatever you are, Cynthia made you. You was a lazy, disobedient, worthless boy, and it was her carin' for you from the first that put any spirit and any principle into you. It was her that helped you at school when you was little things together; and she helped you at the academy, and she's helped you at college. I'll bet she could take a degree, or whatever it is, at Harvard better than you could now; and if you ever do take a degree, you've got her to thank for it."

"That's so," said Jeff. "And what's the reason you didn't want me to marry her when I came in here last summer and told you I'd asked her to?"

"You know well enough what the reason was. It was part of the same thing

as my wantin' you to be a lawyer; but I might knowed that if you didn't have Cynthy to go into court with you, and put the words into your mouth, you wouldn't make a speech that would"--Mrs. Durgin paused for a fitting figure--"save a flea from the gallows."

Jeff burst into a laugh. "Well, I guess that's so, mother. And now you want me to throw away the only chance I've got of learning how to run Lion's Head in the right way by breaking with Cynthy."

"Nobody wants you to run Lion's Head for a while yet," his mother returned, scornfully. "Jackson is going to run Lion's Head. He'll be home the end of June, and I'll run Lion's Head till he gets here. You talk," she went on, "as if it was in your hands to break with Cynthy, or throw away the chance with her. The way I look at it, she's broke with you, and you ha'n't got any chance with her. Oh, Jeff," she suddenly appealed to him, "tell me all about it! What have you been up to? If I understood it once, I know I can make her see it in the right light."

"The better you understand it, mother, the less you'll like it; and I guess Cynthy sees it in the right light already. What did she say?"

"Nothing. She said she'd leave it to you."

"Well, that's like Cynthy. I'll tell you, then," said Jeff; and he told his mother his whole affair with Bessie Lynde. He had to be very elemental, and he was aware, as he had never been before, of the difference between Bessie's world and his mother's world, in trying to make Bessie's world conceivable to her.

He was patient in going over every obscure point, and illustrating from the characters and condition of different summer folks the facts of Bessie's entourage. It is doubtful, however, if he succeeded in conveying to his mother a clear and just notion of the purely chic nature of the girl. In the end she seemed to conceive of her simply as a hussy, and so pronounced her, without limit or qualification, in spite of Jeff's laughing attempt to palliate her behavior, and to inculcate himself. She said she did not see what he had done that was so much out of the way. That thing had led him on from the beginning; she had merely got her come-uppings, when all was said. Mrs. Durgin believed Cynthia would look at it as she did, if she could have it put before her rightly. Jeff shook his head with persistent misgiving. His notion was that Cynthia saw the affair only too clearly, and that there was no new light to be thrown on it from her point of view. Mrs. Durgin would not allow this; she was sure that she could bring Cynthia round; and she asked Jeff whether it was his getting that fellow drunk that she seemed to blame him for the most. He answered that he thought that was pretty bad, but he did not believe that was the worst thing in Cynthia's eyes. He did not forbid his mother's trying to do what she could with her, and he went away for a walk, and left the house to the two women. Jombateeste was in the barn, which he preferred to the house, and Frank Whitwell had gone to church over at the Huddle. As Jeff passed Whitwell's cottage in setting out on his stroll he saw the philosopher through the window, seated with

his legs on the table, his hat pushed back, and his spectacles fallen to the point of his nose, reading, and moving his lips as he read.

The forenoon sun was soft, but the air was cool.

There was still plenty of snow on the upper slopes of the hills, and there was a drift here and there in a corner of pasture wall in the valley; but the springtime green was beginning to hover over the wet places in the fields; the catkins silvered the golden tracery of the willow branches by the brook; there was a buzz of bees about them, and about the maples, blackened by the earlier flow of sap through the holes in the bark made by the woodpeckers' bills. Now and then the tremolo of a bluebird shook in the tender light and the keen air. At one point in the road where the sun fell upon some young pines in a sheltered spot a balsamic odor exhaled from them.

These gentle sights and sounds and odors blended in the influence which Jeff's spirit felt more and more. He realized that he was a blot on the loveliness of the morning. He had a longing to make atonement and to win forgiveness. His heart was humbled toward Cynthia, and he went wondering how his mother would make it out with her, and how, if she won him any advantage, he should avail himself of it and regain the girl's trust; he had no doubt of her love. He perceived that there was nothing for him hereafter but the most perfect constancy of thought and deed, and he desired nothing better.

At a turn of his road where it branched toward the Huddle a group of young girls stood joking and laughing; before Jeff came up with them they separated, and all but one continued on the way beyond the turning. She came toward Jeff, who gayly recognized her as she drew near.

She blushed and bridled at his bow and at his beauty and splendor, and in her embarrassment pertly said that she did not suppose he would have remembered her. She was very young, but at fifteen a country girl is not so young as her town sister at eighteen in the ways of the other sex.

Jeff answered that he should have known her anywhere, in spite of her looking so much older than she did in the summer when she had come with berries to the hotel. He said she must be feeling herself quite a young lady now, in her long dresses, and he praised the dress which she had on. He said it became her style; and he found such relief from his heavy thoughts in these harmless pleasantries that he kept on with them. He had involuntarily turned with her to walk back to her house on the way he had come, and he asked her if he might not carry her catkins for her. She had a sheaf of them in the hollow of her slender arm, which seemed to him very pretty, and after a little struggle she yielded them to him. The struggle gave him still greater relief from his self-reproach, and at her gate he begged her to let him keep one switch of the pussywillows, and he stood a moment wondering whether he might not ask her for something else. She chose one from the bundle, and drew it lightly across his face before she put it in his hand. "You may have this for Cynthia," she said, and she ran laughingly up the pathway to her door.

XLVI

Cynthia did not appear at dinner, and Jeff asked his mother when he saw her alone if she had spoken to the girl. "Yes, but she said she did not want to talk yet."

"All right," he returned. "I'm going to take a nap; I believe I feel as if I hadn't slept for a month."

He slept the greater part of the afternoon, and came down rather dull to the early tea. Cynthia was absent again, and his mother was silent and wore a troubled look. Whitwell was full of a novel conception of the agency of hypnotism in interpreting the life of the soul as it is intimated in dreams. He had been reading a book that affirmed the consubstantiality of the sleep-dream and the hypnotic illusion. He wanted to know if Jeff, down at Boston, had seen anything of the hypnotic doings that would throw light on this theory.

It was still full light when they rose from the table, and it was scarcely twilight when Jeff heard Cynthia letting herself out at the back door. He fancied her going down to her father's house, and he went out to the corner of the hotel to meet her. She faltered a moment at sight of him, and then kept on with averted face.

He joined her, and walked beside her. "Well, Cynthy, what are you going to say to me? I'm off for Cambridge again to-morrow morning, and I suppose we've got to understand each other. I came up here to put myself in your hands, to keep or to throw away, just as you please. Well? Have you thought about it?"

"Every minute," said the girl, quietly.

"Well?"

"If you had cared for me, it couldn't have happened."

"Oh yes, it could. Now that's just where you're mistaken. That's where a woman never can understand a man. I might carry on with half a dozen girls, and yet never forget you, or think less of you, although I could see all the time how pretty and bright every one of 'em was. That's the way a man's mind is built. It's curious, but it's true."

"I don't believe I care for any share in your mind, then," said the girl.

"Oh, come, now! You don't mean that. You know I was just joking; you know I don't justify what I've done, and I don't excuse it. But I think I've acted pretty square with you about it--about telling you, I mean. I don't want to lay any claim, but you remember when you made me promise that if there was anything shady I wanted to hide from you--Well, I acted

on that. You do remember?"

"Yes," said Cynthia, and she pulled the cloud over the side of her face next to him, and walked a little faster.

He hastened his steps to keep up with her. "Cynthy, if you put your arms round me, as you did then--"

"I can't Jeff!"

"You don't want to."

"Yes, I do! But you don't want me to, as you did then. Do you?" She stopped abruptly and faced him full. "Tell me, honestly!"

Jeff dropped his bold eyes, and the smile left his handsome mouth.

"You don't," said the girl, "for you know that if you did, I would do it." She began to walk on again. "It wouldn't be hard for me to forgive you anything you've done against me--or against yourself; I should care for you the same--if you were the same person; but you're not the same, and you know it. I told you then--that time that I didn't want to make you do what you knew was right, and I never shall try to do it again. I'm sorry I did it then. I was wrong. And I should be afraid of you if I did now. Some time you would make me suffer for it, just as you've made me suffer for making you do then what was right."

It struck Jeff as a very curious fact that Cynthia must always have known him better than he knew himself in some ways, for he now perceived the truth and accuracy of her words. He gave her mind credit for the penetration due her heart; he did not understand that it is through their love women divine the souls of men. What other witnesses of his character had slowly and carefully reasoned out from their experience of him she had known from the beginning, because he was dear to her.

He was silent, and then, with rare gravity, he said, "Cynthia, I believe you're right," and he never knew how her heart leaped toward him at his words. "I'm a pretty bad chap, I guess. But I want you to give me another chance and I'll try not to make you pay for it, either," he added, with a flicker of his saucy humor.

"I'll give you a chance, then," she said, and she shrank from the hand he put out toward her. "Go back and tell that girl you're free now, and if she wants you she can have you."

"Is that what you call a chance?" demanded Jeff, between anger and injury. For an instant he imagined her deriding him and revenging herself.

"It's the only one I can give you. She's never tried to make you do what was right, and you'll never be tempted to hurt her."

"You're pretty rough on me, Cynthia," Jeff protested, almost plaintively.

He asked, more in character: "Ain't you afraid of making me do right, now?"

"I'm not making you. I don't promise you anything, even if she won't have you."

"Oh!"

"Did you suppose I didn't mean that you were free? That I would put a lie in your mouth for you to be true with?"

"I guess you're too deep for me," said Jeff, after a sulky silence.

"Then it's all off between us? What do you say?"

"What do you say?"

"I say it's just as it was before, if you care for me."

"I care for you, but it can never be the same as it was before. What you've done, you've done. I wish I could help it, but I can't. I can't make myself over into what I was twenty-four hours ago. I seem another person, in another world; it's as if I died, and came to life somewhere else. I'm sorry enough, if that could help, but it can't. Go and tell that girl the truth: that you came up here to me, and I sent you back to her."

A gleam of amusement visited Jeff in the gloom where he seemed to be darkling. He fancied doing that very thing with Bessie Lynde, and the wild joy she would snatch from an experience so unique, so impossible. Then the gleam faded. "And what if I didn't want her?" he demanded.

"Tell her that too," said Cynthia.

"I suppose," said Jeff, sulkily, "you'll let me go away and do as I please, if I'm free."

"Oh yes. I don't want you to do anything because I told you. I won't make that mistake again. Go and do what you are able to do of your own free will. You know what you ought to do as well as I do; and you know a great deal better what you can do."

They had reached Cynthia's house, and they were talking at the side door, as they had the night before, when there had been hope for her in the newness of her calamity, before she had yet fully imagined it.

Jeff made no answer to her last words. He asked, "Am I going to see you again?"

"I guess not. I don't believe I shall be up before you start."

"All right. Good-bye, then." He held out his hand, and she put hers in it for the moment he chose to hold it. Then he turned and slowly climbed

the hill.

Cynthia was still lying with her face in her pillow when her father came into the dark little house, and peered into her room with the newly lighted lamp in his hand. She turned her face quickly over and looked at him with dry and shining eyes.

"Well, it's all over with Jeff and me, father."

"Well, I'm satisfied," said Whitwell. "If you could ha' made it up, so you could ha' felt right about it, I shouldn't ha' had anything to say against it, but I'm glad it's turned out the way it has. He's a comical devil, and he always was, and I'm glad you a'n't takin' on about him any more. You used to have so much spirit when you was little."

"Oh,--spirit! You don't know how much spirit I've had, now."

"Well, I presume not," Whitwell assented.

"I've been thinking," said the girl, after a little pause, "that we shall have to go away from here."

"Well, I guess not," her father began. "Not for no Jeff Dur--"

"Yes, yes. We must! Don't make one talk about it. We'll stay here till Jackson gets back in June, and then--we must go somewhere else. We'll go down to Boston, and I'll try to get a place to teach, or something, and Frank can get a place."

"I presume," Whitwell mused, "that Mr. Westover could--"

"Father!" cried the girl, with an energy that startled him, as she lifted herself on her elbow. "Don't ever think of troubling Mr. Westover! Oh," she lamented, "I was thinking of troubling him myself! But we mustn't, we mustn't! I should be so ashamed!"

"Well," said Whitwell, "time enough to think about all that. We got two good months yet to plan it out before Jackson gets back, and I guess we can think of something before that. I presume," he added, thoughtfully, "that when Mrs. Durgin hears that you've give Jeff the sack, she'll make consid'able of a kick. She done it when you got engaged."

XLVII.

After he went back to Cambridge, Jeff continued mechanically in the direction given him by motives which had ceased for him. In the midst of his divergence with Bessie Lynde he had still kept an inner fealty to Cynthia, and tried to fulfil the purposes and ambition she had for him. The operation of this habitual allegiance now kept him up to his work, but the time must come when it could no longer operate, when his whole

consciousness should accept the fact known to his intelligence, and he should recognize the close of that incident of his life as the bereaved finally accept and recognize the fact of death.

The event brought him relief, and it brought him freedom. He was sensible in his relaxation of having strained up to another's ideal, of having been hampered by another's will. His pleasure in the relief was tempered by a regret, not wholly unpleasant, for the girl whose aims, since they were no longer his, must be disappointed. He was sorry for Cynthia, and in his remorse he was fonder of her than he had ever been. He felt her magnanimity and clemency; he began to question, in that wordless deep of being where volition begins, whether it would not be paying a kind of duty to her if he took her at her word and tried to go back to Bessie Lynde. But for the present he did nothing but renounce all notion of working at his conditions, or attempting to take a degree. That was part of a thing that was past, and was no part of anything to come, so far as Jeff now forecast his future.

He did not choose to report himself to Westover, and risk a scolding, or a snubbing. He easily forgave Westover for the tone he had taken at their last meeting, but he did not care to see him. He would have met him half-way, however, in a friendly advance, and he was aware of much good-will toward him, which he could not have been reluctant to show if chance had brought them together.

Jeff missed Cynthia's letters which used to come so regularly every Tuesday, and he had a half-hour every Sunday which was at first rather painfully vacant since he no longer wrote to her. But in this vacancy he had at least no longer the pang of self-reproach which her letters always brought him, and he was not obliged to put himself to the shame of concealment in writing to her. He had never minded that tacit lying on his own account, but he hated it in relation to her; it always hurt him as something incongruous and unfit. He wrote to his mother now on Sunday, and in his first letter, while the impression of Cynthia's dignity and generosity was still vivid, he urged her to make it clear to the girl that he wished her and her family to remain at Lion's Head as if nothing had happened. He put a great deal of real feeling into this request, and he offered to go and spend a year in Europe, if his mother thought that Cynthia would be more reconciled to his coming back at the end of that time.

His mother answered with a dryness to which his ear supplied the tones of her voice, that she would try to get along in the management of Lion's Head till his brother got back, but that she had no objection to his going to Europe for a year if he had the money to spare. Jeff could not refuse her joke, as he felt it, a certain applause, but he thought it pretty rough that his mother should take part so decidedly against him as she seemed to be doing. He had expected her to be angry with him, but before they parted she had seemed to find some excuse for him, and yet here she was siding against her own son in what he might very well consider an unnatural way. If Jackson had been at home he would have laid it to his charge; but he knew that Cynthia would have scorned even to speak of him with his mother, and he knew too well his mother's slight

for Whitwell to suppose that he could have influenced her. His mind turned in momentary suspicion to Westover. Had Westover, he wondered, with a purpose to pay him up for it forming itself simultaneously with his question, been setting his mother against him? She might have written to Westover to get at the true inwardness of his behavior, and Westover might have written her something that had made her harden her heart against him. But upon reflection this seemed out of character for both of them; and Jeff was thrown back upon his mother's sober second thought of his misconduct for an explanation of her coldness. He could not deny that he had grievously disappointed her in several ways. But he did not see why he should not take a certain hint from her letter, or construct a hint from it, at one with a vague intent prompted by his own restless and curious vanity. Since he had parted with Bessie Lynde, on terms of humiliation for her which must have been anguish for him if he had ever loved her, or loved anything but his power over her, he had remained in absolute ignorance of her. He had not heard where she was or how she was; but now, as the few weeks before Class Day and Commencement crumbled away, he began to wonder why she made no sign. He believed that since she had been willing to go so far to get him, she would not be willing to give him up so easily. The thought of Cynthia had always intruded more or less effectively between them, but now that this thought began to fade into the past, the thought of Bessie began to grow out of it with no interposing shadow.

However, Jeff was in no hurry. It was not passion that moved him, and the mood in which he could play with the notion of getting back to his flirtation with Bessie Lynde was pleasanter after the violence of recent events than any renewal of strong sensations could be. He preferred to loiter in this mood, and he was meantime much more comfortable than he had been for a great while. He was rid of the disagreeable sense of disloyalty to Cynthia, and he was rid of the stress of living up to her conscience in various ways. He was rid of Bessie Lynde, too, and of the trouble of forecasting and discounting her caprices. His thought turned at times with a soft regret to hopes, disappointments, experiences connected with neither, and now tinged with a tender melancholy, unalloyed by shame or remorse. As he drew nearer to Class Day he had a somewhat keener compunction for Cynthia and the hopes he had encouraged her to build and had then dashed. But he was coming more and more to regard it all as fatality; and if the chance that he counted upon to bring him and Bessie together again had occurred he could have more easily forgiven himself.

One of the jays, who was spreading on rather a large scale, wanted Jeff to spread with him, but he refused, because, as he said, he meant to keep out of it altogether; and for the same reason he declined to take part in the spread of a rather jay society he belonged to. In his secret heart he trusted that some friendly fortuity might throw an invitation to Beck Hall in his way, or at least a card for the Gym, which, if no longer the place it had been, was still by no means jay. He got neither; but as he felt all the joy of the June day in his young blood he consoled himself very well with the dancing at one of the halls, where the company happened that year to be openly, almost recklessly jay. Jeff had some distinction among the fellows who enviously knew of his social success

during the winter, and especially of his affair with Bessie Lynde; and there were some girls very pretty and very well dressed among the crowd of girls who were neither. They were from remote parts of the country, and in the charge of chaperons ignorant of the differences so poignant to local society. Jeff went about among them, and danced with the sisters and cousins of several men who seemed superior to the lost condition of their kinswomen; these were nice fellows enough, but doomed by their grinding, or digging, or their want of worldly wisdom, to a place among the jays, when they really had some qualifications for a nobler standing. He had a very good time, and he was enjoying himself in his devotion to a lively young brunette whom he was making laugh with his jokes about some of the others, when his eye was caught by a group of ladies who advanced among the jays with something of that collective intrepidity and individual apprehension characteristic of people in slumming. They had the air of not knowing what might happen to them, but the adventurous young Boston matron in charge of the girls kept on a bold front behind her lorgnette, and swept the strange company she found herself in with an unshrinking eye as she led her band among the promenaders, and past the couples seated along the walls. She hesitated a moment as her glance fell upon Jeff, and then she yielded, at whatever risk, to the comfort of finding a known face among so many aliens. "Why, Mr. Durgin!" she called out. "Bessie, here's Mr. Durgin," and she turned to the girl, who was in her train, as Jeff had perceived by something finer than the senses from the first.

He rose from the side of his brunette, whose brother was standing near, and shook hands with the adventurous young matron, who seemed suddenly much better acquainted with him than he had ever thought her, and with Bessie Lynde; the others were New York girls, and the matron presented him. "Are you going on?" she asked, and the vague challenge with the smile that accompanied it was sufficient invitation for him.

"Why, I believe so," he said, and he turned to take leave of his pretty brunette; but she had promptly vanished with her brother, and he was spared the trouble of getting rid of her. He would have been equal to much more for the sake of finding himself with Bessie Lynde again, whose excitement he could see burning in her eyes, though her thick complexion grew neither brighter nor paler. He did not know what quality of excitement it might be, but he said, audaciously: "It's a good while since we met!" and he was sensible that his audacity availed.

"Is it?" she asked. He put himself at her side, and he did not leave her again till he went to dress for the struggle around the Tree. He found himself easily included in the adventurous young matron's party. He had not the elegance of some of the taller and slenderer men in the scholar's gown, but the cap became his handsome face. His affair with Bessie Lynde had given him a certain note, and an adventurous young matron, who was naturally a little indiscriminate, might very well have been willing to let him go about with her party. She could not know how impudent his mere presence was with reference to Bessie, and the girl herself made no sign that could have enlightened her. She accepted something more than her share of his general usefulness to the party; she danced with him whenever he asked her, and she seemed not to scruple to publish her

affair with him in the openest manner. If he could have stilled a certain shame for her which he felt, he would have thought he was having the best kind of time. They made no account of by-gones in their talk, but she had never been so brilliant, or prompted him to so many of the effronteries which were the spirit of his humor. He thought her awfully nice, with lots of sense; he liked her letting him come back without any fooling or fuss, and he began to admire instead of despising her for it. Decidedly it was, as she would have said, the chicquest sort of thing. What was the use, anyway? He made up his mind.

When he said he must go and dress for the Tree, he took leave of her first, and he was aware of a vivid emotion, which was like regret in her at parting with him. She said, Must he? She seemed to want to say something more to him; while he was dismissing himself from the others, he noticed that once or twice she opened her lips as if she were going to speak. In the end she did nothing more important than to ask if he had seen her brother; but after he had left the party he turned and saw her following him with eyes that he fancied anxious and even frightened in their gaze.

The riot round the Tree roared itself through its wonted events. Class after class of the undergraduates filed in and sank upon the grass below the terraces and parterres of brilliantly dressed ladies within the quadrangle of seats; the alumni pushed themselves together against the wall of Holder Chapel; the men of the Senior class came last in their grotesque variety of sweaters and second and third best clothes for the scramble at the Tree. The regulation cheers tore from throats that grew hoarser and hoarser, till every class and every favorite in the faculty had been cheered. Then the signal-hat was flung into the air, and the rush at the Tree was made, and the combat' for the flowers that garlanded its burly waist began.

Jeff's size and shape forbade him to try for the flowers from the shoulders of others. He was one of a group of jays who set their backs to the Tree, and fought away all comers except their own; they pulled down every man not of their sort, and put up a jay, who stripped the Tree of its flowers and flung them to his fellows below. As he was let drop to the ground, Jeff snatched a handful of his spoil from him, and made off with it toward the place where he had seen Bessie Lynde and her party. But when he reached the place, shouldering and elbowing his way through the press, she was no longer there. He saw her hat at a distance through the crowd, where he did not choose to follow, and he stuffed the flowers into his breast to give to her later. He expected to meet her somewhere in the evening; if not, he would try to find her at her aunt's house in town; failing that, he could send her the flowers, and trust her for some sort of leading acknowledgment.

He went and had a bath and dressed himself freshly, and then he went for a walk in the still evening air. He was very hot from the battle which had been fought over him, and which he had shared with all his strength, and it seemed to him as if he could not get cool. He strolled far out along Concord Avenue, beyond the expanses and ice-horses of Fresh Pond, into the country toward Belmont, with his hat off and his head down. He

was very well satisfied, and he was smiling to himself at the ease of his return to Bessie, and securely speculating upon the outcome of their renewed understanding.

He heard a vehicle behind him, rapidly driven, and he turned out for it without looking around. Then suddenly he felt a fiery sting on his forehead, and then a shower of stings swiftly following each other over his head and face. He remembered stumbling, when he was a boy, into a nest of yellow-jackets, that swarmed up around him and pierced him like sparks of fire at every uncovered point. But he knew at the same time that it was some one in the vehicle beside him who was lashing him over the head with a whip. He bowed his head with his eyes shut and lunged blindly out toward his assailant, hoping to seize him.

But the horse sprang aside, and tore past him down the road. Jeff opened his eyes, and through the blood that dripped from the cuts above them he saw the wicked face of Alan Lynde looking back at him from the dogcart where he sat with his man beside him. He brandished his broken whip in the air, and flung it into the bushes. Jeff walked on, and picked it up, before he turned aside to the pools of the marsh stretching on either hand, and tried to stanch his hurts, and get himself into shape for returning to town and stealing back to his lodging. He had to wait till after dark, and watch his chance to get into the house unnoticed.

XLVIII

The chum to whom Jeff confided the story of his encounter with a man he left nameless inwardly thanked fortune that he was not that man; for he knew him destined sooner or later to make such reparation for the injuries he had inflicted as Jeff chose to exact. He tended him carefully, and respected the reticence Jeff guarded concerning the whole matter, even with the young doctor whom his friend called, and who kept to himself his impressions of the nature of Jeff's injuries.

Jeff lay in his darkened room, and burned with them, and with the thoughts, guesses, purposes which flamed through his mind. Had she, that girl, known what her brother meant to do? Had she wished him to think of her in the moment of his punishment, and had she spoken of her brother so that he might recall her, or had she had some ineffective impulse to warn him against her brother when she spoke of him?

He lay and raged in vain with his conjectures, and he did a thousand imagined murders upon Lynde in revenge of his shame.

Toward the end of the week, while his hurts were still too evident to allow him to go out-of-doors before dark, he had a note from Westover asking him to come in at once to see him.

"Your brother Jackson," Westover wrote, "reached Boston by the New York train this morning, and is with me here. I must tell you I think he is

not at all well, but he does not know how sick he is, and so I forewarn you. He wants to get on home, but I do not feel easy about letting him make the rest of the journey alone. Some one ought to go with him. I write not knowing whether you are still in Cambridge or not; or whether, if you are, you can get away at this time. But I think you ought, and I wish, at any rate, that you would come in at once and see Jackson. Then we can settle what had best be done."

Jeff wrote back that he had been suffering with a severe attack of erysipelas--he decided upon erysipelas for the time being, but he meant to let Westover know later that he had been in a row--and the doctor would not let him go out yet. He promised to come in as soon as he possibly could. If Westover thought Jackson ought to be got home at once, and was not fit to travel alone, he asked him to send a hospital nurse with him.

Westover replied by Jeff's messenger that it would worry and alarm Jackson to be put in charge of a nurse; but that he would go home with him, and they would start the next day. He urged Jeff to come and see his brother if it was at all safe for him to do so. But if he could not, Westover would give his mother a reassuring reason for his failure.

Mrs. Durgin did not waste any anxiety for the sickness which prevented Jeff from coming home with his brother. She said ironically that it must be very bad, and she gave all her thought and care to Jackson. The sick man rallied, as he prophesied he should, in his native air, and celebrated the sense and science of the last doctor he had seen in Europe, who told him that he had made a great gain, but he had better hurry home as fast as he could, for he had got all the advantage he could expect to have from his stay abroad, and now home air was the best thing for him.

It could not be known how much of this he believed; he had, at any rate, the pathetic hopefulness of his malady; but his mother believed it all, and she nursed him with a faith in his recovery which Whitwell confided to Westover was about as much as he wanted to see, for one while. She seemed to grow younger in the care of him, and to get back to herself, more and more, from the facts of Jeff's behavior, which had aged and broken her. She had to tell Jackson about it all, but he took it with that indifference to the things of this world which the approach of death sometimes brings, and in the light of his passivity it no longer seemed to her so very bad. It was a relief to have Jackson say, Well, perhaps it was for the best; and it was a comfort to see how he and Cynthia took to each other; it was almost as if that dreadful trouble had not been. She told Jackson what hard work she had had to make Cynthia stay with her, and how the girl had consented to stay only until Jeff came home; but she guessed, now that Jackson had got back, he could make Cynthia see it all in another light, and perhaps it would all come right again. She consulted him about Jeff's plan of going abroad, and Jackson said it might be about as well; he should soon be around, and he thought if Jeff went it would give Cynthia more of a chance to get reconciled. After all, his mother suggested, a good many fellows behaved worse than Jeff had done and still had made it up with the girls they were engaged to;

and Jackson gently assented.

He did not talk with Cynthia about Jeff, out of that delicacy, or that coldness, common to them both. Perhaps it was not necessary for them to speak of him; perhaps they understood him aright in their understanding of each other.

Westover stayed on, day after day, thinking somehow that he ought to wait till Jeff came. There were only a few other people in the hotel, and these were of a quiet sort; they were not saddened by the presence of a doomed man under the same roof, as gayer summer folks might have been, and they were themselves no disturbance to him.

He sat about with them on the veranda, and he made friends among them, and they did what they could to encourage and console him in his impatience to take up his old cares in the management of the hotel. The Whitwells easily looked after the welfare of the guests, and Jackson was so much better to every one's perception that Westover could honestly write Jeff a good report of him.

The report may have been so good that Jeff took the affair too easily. It was a fortnight after Jackson's return to Lion's Head when he began to fail so suddenly and alarmingly that Westover decided upon his own responsibility to telegraph Jeff of his condition. But he had the satisfaction of Whitwell's approval when he told him what he had done.

"Of course, Jackson a'n't long for this world. Anybody but him and his mother could see that; and now he's just melting away, as you might say. I ha'n't liked his not carin' to work plantchette since he got back; looked to me from the start that he kind of knowed that it wa'n't worth while for him to trouble about a world that he'll know all about so soon, anyways; and d' you notice he don't seem to care about Mars, either? I've tried to wake him up on it two-three times, but you can't git him to take an interest. I guess Jeff can't git here any too soon on Jackson's account; but as far forth as I go, he couldn't git here too late. I should like to take the top of his head off."

Westover had been in Whitwell's confidence since their first chance of speech together. He now said:

"I know it will be rather painful to you to have him here for some reasons, but--"

"You mean Cynthy? Well! I guess when Cynthy can't get along with the sight of Jeff Durgin, she'll be a different girl from what she's ever been before. If she's got to see that skunk ag'in, I guess this is about the best time to do it."

It was Westover who drove to meet Jeff at the station, when he got his despatch, naming the train he would take, and he found him looking very well, and perhaps stouter than he had been.

They left the station in silence, after their greeting and Jeff's

inquiries about Jackson. Jeff had taken the reins, and now he put them with the whip in one hand, and pushed up his hat with the other, and turned his face full upon Westover. "Notice anything in particular?" he demanded.

"No; yes--some slight marks."

"I guess that fellow fixed me up pretty well: paints black eyes, and that kind of thing. I got to scrapping with a man, Class Day; we wanted to settle a little business we began at the Tree, and he left his marks on me. I meant to tell you the truth as soon as I could get at you; but I had to say erysipelas in my letter. I guess, if you don't mind, we'll let erysipelas stand, with the rest."

"I shouldn't have cared," Westover said, "if you'd let it stand with me."

"Oh, thank you," Jeff returned.

There could have been no show of affection at his meeting with Jackson even if there had been any fact of it; that was not the law of their life. But Jeff had always been a turbulent, rebellious, younger brother, resentful of Jackson's control, too much his junior to have the associations of an equal companionship in the past, and yet too near him in age to have anything like a filial regard for him. They shook hands, and each asked the other how he was, and then they seemed to have done with each other. Jeff's mother kissed him in addition to the handshaking, but made him feel her preoccupation with Jackson; she asked him if he had hurried home on Jackson's account, and he promptly lied her out of this anxiety.

He shook hands with Cynthia, too, but it was across the barrier which had not been lowered between them since they parted. He spoke to Jackson about her, the day after he came home, when Jackson said he was feeling unusually strong and well, and the two brothers had strolled out through the orchard together. Now and then he gave the sick man his arm, and when he wanted to sit down in a sunny place he spread the shawl he carried for him.

"I suppose mother's told you about Cynthy and me, Jackson?" he began.

Jackson answered, with lack-lustre eyes, "Yes." Presently he asked: "What's become of the other girl?"

"Damn her! I don't know what's become of her, and I don't care!" Jeff exploded, furiously.

"Then you don't care for her any more?" Jackson pursued, with the same languid calm.

"I never cared for her."

Jackson was silent, and the matter seemed to have faded out of his mind. But it was keenly alive in Jeff's mind, and he was in the strange

necessity which men in the flush of life and health often feel of seeking counsel of those who stand in the presence of death, as if their words should have something of the mystical authority of the unknown wisdom they are about to penetrate.

"What I want to know is, what I am going to do about Cynthy?"

"I don't know," Jackson answered, vaguely, and he expressed by his indirection the sense he must sometimes have had of his impending fate--
"I don't know what she's going to do, her or mother, either."

"Yes," Jeff assented, "that's what I think of. And I'd do anything that I could--that you thought was right."

Jackson apparently concentrated his mind upon the question by an effort.
"Do you care as much for Cynthy as you used to?"

"Yes," said Jeff, after a moment, "as much as I ever did; and more. But I've been thinking, since the thing happened, that, if I'd cared for her the way she did for me, it wouldn't have happened. Look here, Jackson! You know I've never pretended to be like some men--like Mr. Westover, for example--always looking out for the right and the wrong, and all that. I didn't make myself, and I guess if the Almighty don't make me go right it's because He don't want me to. But I have got a conscience about Cynthy, and I'd be willing to help out a little if I knew how, about her. The devil of it is, I've got to being afraid. I don't mean that I'm not fit for her; any man's fit for any woman if he wants her bad enough; but I'm afraid I sha'n't ever care for her in the right way. That's the point. I've cared for just one woman in this world, and it a'n't Cynthy, as far as I can make out. But she's gone, and I guess I could coax Cynthy round again, and I could be what she wants me to be, after this."

Jackson lay upon his shawl, looking up at the sky full of islands of warm clouds in its sea of blue; he was silent so long that Jeff began to think he had not been listening; he could not hear him breathe, and he came forward to him quickly from the shadow of the tree where he sat.

"Well?" Jackson whispered, turning his eyes upon him.

"Well?" Jeff returned.

"I guess you'd better let it alone," said Jackson.

"All right. That's what I think, too."

XLIX.

Jackson died a week later, and they buried him in the old family lot in the farthest corner of the orchard. His mother and Cynthia put on

mourning for him, and they stood together by his open grave, Mrs. Durgin leaning upon her son's arm and the girl upon her father's. The women wept quietly, but Jeff's eyes were dry, though his face was discharged of all its prepotent impudence. Westover, standing across the grave from him, noticed the marks on his forehead that he said were from his scrapping, and wondered what really made them. He recognized the spot where they were standing as that where the boy had obeyed the law of his nature and revenged the stress put upon him for righteousness. Over the stone of the nearest grave Jeff had shown a face of triumphant derision when he pelted Westover with apples. The painter's mind fell into a chaos of conjecture and misgiving, so that he scarcely took in the words of the composite service which the minister from the Union Chapel at the Huddle read over the dead.

Some of the guests from the hotel came to the funeral, but others who were not in good health remained away, and there was a general sense among them, which imparted itself to Westover, that Jackson's dying so, at the beginning of the season, was not a fortunate incident. As he sat talking with Jeff at a corner of the piazza late in the afternoon, Frank Whitwell came up to them and said there were some people in the office who had driven over from another hotel to see about board, but they had heard there was sickness in the house, and wished to talk with him.

"I won't come," said Jeff.

"They're not satisfied with what I've said," the boy urged. "What shall I tell them?"

"Tell them to-go to the devil," said Jeff, and when Frank Whitwell made off with this message for delivery in such decent terms as he could imagine for it, Jeff said, rather to himself than to Westover, "I don't see how we're going to run this hotel with that old family lot down there in the orchard much longer."

He assumed the air of full authority at Lion's Head; and Westover felt the stress of a painful conjecture in regard to the Whitwells intensified upon him from the moment he turned away from Jackson's grave.

Cynthia and her father had gone back to their own house as soon as Jeff returned, and though the girl came home with Mrs. Durgin after the funeral, and helped her in their common duties through the afternoon and evening, Westover saw her taking her way down the hill with her brother when the long day's work was over. Jeff saw her too; he was sitting with Westover at the office door smoking, and he was talking of the Whitwells.

"I suppose they won't stay," he said, "and I can't expect it; but I don't know what mother will do, exactly."

At the same moment Whitwell came round the corner of the hotel from the barn, and approached them: "Jeff, I guess I better tell you straight off that we're goin', the children and me."

"All right, Mr. Whitwell," said Jeff, with respectful gravity; "I was

afraid of it."

Westover made a motion to rise, but Whitwell laid a detaining hand upon his knee. "There ain't anything so private about it, so far as I know."

"Don't go, Mr. Westover," said Jeff, and Westover remained.

"We a'n't a-goin' to leave you in the lurch, and we want you should take your time, especially Mis' Durgin. But the sooner the better. Heigh?"

"Yes, I understand that, Mr. Whitwell; I guess mother will miss you, but if you must go, you must." The two men remained silent a moment, and then Jeff broke out passionately, rising and flinging his cigar away:

"I wish I could go, instead! That would be the right way, and I guess mother would like it full as well. Do you see any way to manage it?"

"He put his foot up in his chair, and dropped his elbow on his knee, with his chin propped in his hand. Westover could see that he meant what he was saying. "If there was any way, I'd do it. I know what you think of me, and I should be just like you, in your place. I don't feel right to turn you out here, I don't, Mr. Whitwell, and yet if I stay, I've got to do it. What's the reason I can't go?"

"You can't," said Whitwell, "and that's all about it. We shouldn't let you, if you could. But I a'n't surprised you feel the way you do," he added, unsparingly. "As you say, I should feel just so myself if I was in your place. Well, goodnight, Mr. Westover."

Whitwell turned and slouched down the hill, leaving the painter to the most painful moment he had known with Jeff Durgin, and nearer sympathy.

"That's all right, Mr. Westover," Jeff said, "I don't blame him."

He remained in a constraint from which he presently broke with mocking hilarity when Jombateeste came round the corner of the house, as if he had been waiting for Whitwell to be gone, and told Jeff he must get somebody else to look after the horses.

"Why don't you wait and take the horses with you, Jombateeste?" he inquired. "They'll be handing in their resignation, the next thing. Why not go altogether?"

The little Canuck paused, as if uncertain whether he was made the object of unfriendly derision or not, and looked at Westover for help.

Apparently he decided to chance it in as bitter an answer as he could invent. "The 'oss can't 'elp 'imself, Mr. Durgin. 'E stay. But you don' hown EVERYBODY."

"That's so, Jombateeste," said Jeff. "That's a good hit. It makes me feel awfully. Have a cigar?" The Canuck declined with a dignified bow, and Jeff said: "You don't smoke any more? Oh, I see! It's my tobacco you're down on. What's the matter, Jombateeste? What are you going away for?" Jeff lighted for himself the cigar the Canuck had refused, and smoked down upon the little man.

"Mr. W'itwell goin'," Jombateeste said, a little confused and daunted.

"What's Mr. Whitwell going for?"

"You hask Mr. W'itwell."

"All right. And if I can get him to stay will you stay too, Jombateeste? I don't like to see a rat leaving a ship; the ship's sure to sink, if he does. How do you suppose I'm going to run Lion's Head without you to throw down hay to the horses? It will be ruin to me, sure, Jombateeste. All the guests know how you play on the pitchfork out there, and they'll leave in a body if they hear you've quit. Do say you'll stay, and I'll reduce your wages one-half on the spot."

Jombateeste waited to hear no more injuries. He said: "You'll don' got money enough, Mr. Durgin, by gosh! to reduce my wages," and he started down the hill toward Whitwell's house with as great loftiness as could comport with a down-hill gait and his stature.

"Well, I seem to be getting it all round, Mr. Westover," said Jeff.

"This must make you feel good. I don't know but I begin to believe there's a God in Israel, myself."

He walked away without saying good-night, and Westover went to bed without the chance of setting himself right. In the morning, when he came down to breakfast, and stopped at the desk to engage a conveyance for the station from Frank Whitwell the boy forestalled him with a grave face. "You don't know about Mrs. Durgin?"

"No; what about her?"

"Well, we can't tell exactly. Father thinks it's a shock; Jombateeste gone over to Lovewell for the doctor. Cynthia's with her. It seemed to come on in the night."

He spoke softly, that no one else might hear; but by noon the fact that Mrs. Durgin had been stricken with paralysis was all over the place. The gloom cast upon the opening season by Jackson's death was deepened among the guests. Some who had talked of staying through July went away that day. But under Cynthia's management the housekeeping was really unaffected by Mrs. Durgin's calamity, and the people who stayed found themselves as comfortable as ever. Jeff came fully into the hotel management, and in their business relation Cynthia and he were continually together; there was no longer a question of the Whitwells leaving him; even Jombateeste persuaded himself to stay, and Westover felt obliged to remain at least till the present danger in Mrs. Durgin's case was past.

With the first return of physical strength, Mrs. Durgin was impatient to be seen about the house, and to retrieve the season that her affliction had made so largely a loss. The people who had become accustomed to it stayed on, and the house filled up as she grew better, but even the sight of her in a wheeled chair did not bring back the prosperity of other

years. She lamented over it with a keen and full perception of the fact, but in a cloudy association of it with the joint future of Jeff and Cynthia.

One day, after Mrs. Durgin had declared that she did not know what they were to do, if things kept on as they were going, Whitwell asked his daughter:

"Do you suppose she thinks you and Jeff have made it up again?"

"I don't know," said the girl, with a troubled voice, "and I don't know what to do about it. It don't seem as if I could tell her, and yet it's wrong to let her go on."

"Why didn't he tell her?" demanded her father. "'Ta'n't fair his leavin' it to you. But it's like him."

The sick woman's hold upon the fact weakened most when she was tired. When she was better, she knew how it was with them. Commonly it was when Cynthia had got her to bed for the night that she sent for Jeff, and wished to ask him what he was going to do. "You can't expect Cynthy to stay here another winter helpin' you, with Jackson away. You've got to either take her with you, or else come here yourself. Give up your last year in college, why don't you? I don't want you should stay, and I don't know who does. If I was in Cynthia's place, I'd let you work off your own conditions, now you've give up the law. She'll kill herself, tryin' to keep you along."

Sometimes her speech became so indistinct that no one but Cynthia could make it out; and Jeff, listening with a face as nearly discharged as might be of its laughing irony, had to turn to Cynthia for the word which no one else could catch, and which the stricken woman remained distressfully waiting for her to repeat to him, with her anxious eyes upon the girl's face. He was dutifully patient with all his mother's whims. He came whenever she sent for him, and sat quiet under the severities with which she visited all his past unworthiness. "Who you been hectorin' now, I should like to know," she began on him one evening when he came at her summons. "Between you and Fox, I got no peace of my life. Where is the dog?"

"Fox is all right, mother," Jeff responded. "You're feeling a little better to-night, a'n't you?"

"I don't know; I can't tell," she returned, with a gleam of intelligence in her eye. Then she said: "I don't see why I'm left to strangers all the time."

"You don't call Cynthia a stranger, do you, mother?" he asked, coaxingly.

"Oh--Cynthy!" said Mrs. Durgin, with a glance as of surprise at seeing her. "No, Cynthy's all right. But where's Jackson and your father? If I've told them not to be out in the dew once, I've told 'em a hundred times. Cynthy'd better look after her housekeepin' if she don't want the

whole place to run behind, and not a soul left in the house. What time o' year is it now?" she suddenly asked, after a little weary pause.

"It's the last of August, mother."

"Oh," she sighed, "I thought it was the beginnin' of May. Didn't you come up here in May?"

"Yes."

"Well, then--Or, mebbe that's one o' them tormentin' dreams; they do pester so! What did you come for?"

Jeff was sitting on one side of her bed and Cynthia on the other: She was looking at the sufferer's face, and she did not meet the glance of amusement which Jeff turned upon her at being so fairly cornered. "Well, I don't know," he said. "I thought you might like to see me."

"What 'd he come for?"--the sick woman turned to Cynthia.

"You'd better tell her," said the girl, coldly, to Jeff. "She won't be satisfied till you do. She'll keep coming back to it."

"Well, mother," said Jeff, still with something of his hardy amusement, "I hadn't been acting just right, and I thought I'd better tell Cynthy."

"You better let the child alone. If I ever catch you teasin' them children again, I'll make Jackson shoot Fox."

"All right, mother," said Jeff.

She moved herself restively in bed. "What's this," she demanded of her son, "that Whitwell's tellin' about you and Cynthy breakin' it off?"

"Well, there was talk of that," said Jeff, passing his hand over his lips to keep back the smile that was stealing to them.

"Who done it?"

Cynthia kept her eyes on Jeff, who dropped his to his mother's face. "Cynthy did it; but I guess I gave her good enough reason."

"About that hussy in Boston? She was full more to blame than what you was. I don't see what Cynthy wanted to do it for on her account."

"I guess Cynthy was right."

Mrs. Durgin's speech had been thickening more and more. She now said something that Jeff could not understand. He looked involuntarily at Cynthia.

"She says she thinks I was hasty with you," the girl interpreted.

Jeff kept his eyes on hers, but he answered to his mother: "Not any more than I deserved. I hadn't any right to expect that she would stand it."

Again the sick woman tried to say something. Jeff made out a few syllables, and, after his mother had repeated her words, he had to look to Cynthia for help.

"She wants to know if it's all right now."

"What shall I say?" asked Jeff, huskily.

"Tell her the truth."

"What is the truth?"

"That we haven't made it up."

Jeff hesitated, and then said: "Well, not yet, mother," and he bent an entreating look upon Cynthia which she could not feel was wholly for himself. "I--I guess we can fix it, somehow. I behaved very badly to Cynthia."

"No, not to me!" the girl protested in an indignant burst.

"Not to that little scalawag, then!" cried Jeff. "If the wrong wasn't to you, there wasn't any wrong."

"It was to you!" Cynthia retorted.

"Oh, I guess I can stand it," said Jeff, and his smile now came to his lips and eyes.

His mother had followed their quick parley with eager looks, as if she were trying to keep her intelligence to its work concerning them. The effort seemed to exhaust her, and when she spoke again her words were so indistinct that even Cynthia could not understand them till she had repeated them several times.

Then the girl was silent, while the invalid kept an eager look upon her. She seemed to understand that Cynthia did not mean to speak; and the tears came into her eyes.

"Do you want me to know what she said?" asked Jeff, respectfully, reverently almost.

Cynthia said, gently: "She says that then you must show you didn't mean any harm to me, and that you cared for me, all through, and you didn't care for anybody else."

"Thank you," said Jeff, and he turned to his mother. "I'll do everything I can to make Cynthia believe that, mother."

The girl broke into tears and went out of the room. She sent in the

night-watcher, and then Jeff took leave of his mother with an unwonted kiss.

Into the shadow of a starlit night he saw the figure he had been waiting for glide out of the glitter of the hotel lights. He followed it down the road.

"Cynthia!" he called; and when he came up with her he asked: "What's the reason we can't make it true? Why can't you believe what mother wants me to make you?"

Cynthia stopped, as her wont was when she wished to speak seriously. "Do you ask that for my sake or hers?"

"For both your sakes."

"I thought so. You ought to have asked it for your own sake, Jeff, and then I might have been fool enough to believe you. But now--"

She started swiftly down the hill again, and this time he did not try to follow her.

L.

Mrs. Durgin's speech never regained the measure of clearness it had before; no one but Cynthia could understand her, and often she could not. The doctor from Lovewell surmised that she had sustained another stroke, lighter, more obscure than the first, and it was that which had rendered her almost inarticulate. The paralysis might have also affected her brain, and silenced her thoughts as well as her words. Either she believed that the reconciliation between Jeff and Cynthia had taken place, or else she could no longer care. She did not question them again, but peacefully weakened more and more. Near the end of September she had a third stroke, and from this she died.

The day after the funeral Jeff had a talk with Whitwell, and opened his mind to him.

"I'm going over to the other side, and I shan't be back before spring, or about time to start the season here. What I want to know is whether, if I'm out of the house, and not likely to come back, you'll stay here and look after the place through the winter. It hasn't been a good season, but I guess I can afford to make it worth your while if you look at it as a matter of business."

Whitwell leaned forward and took a straw into his mouth from the golden wall of oat sheaves in the barn where they were talking. A soft rustling in the mow overhead marked the remote presence of Jombateeste, who was getting forward the hay for the horses, pushing it toward the holes where it should fall into their racks.

"I should want to think about it," said Whitwell. "I do' know as Cynthy'd care much about stayin'--or Frank."

"How long do you want to think about it?" Jeff demanded, ignoring the possible wishes of Cynthia and Frank.

"I guess I could let you know by night."

"All right," said Jeff.

He was turning away, when Whitwell remarked:

"I don't know as I should want to stay without I could have somebody I could depend on, with me, to look after the hosses. Frank wouldn't want to."

"Who'd you like?"

"Well--Jombateeste."

"Ask him."

Whitwell called to the Canuck, and he came forward to the edge of the mow, and stood, fork in hand, looking down.

"Want to stay here this winter and look after the horses, Jombateeste?" Whitwell asked.

"Nosseh!" said the Canuck, with a misliking eye on Jeff.

"I mean, along with me," Whitwell explained. "If I conclude to stay, will you? Jeff's goin' abroad."

"I guess I stay," said Jombateeste.

"Don't strain yourself, Jombateeste," said Jeff, with malevolent derision.

"Not for you, Jeff Dorrigin," returned the Canuck. "I strain myself till I bust, if I want."

Jeff sneered to Whitwell: "Well, then, the most important point is settled. Let me know about the minor details as soon as you can."

"All right."

Whitwell talked the matter over with his children at supper that evening. Jeff had made him a good offer, and he had the winter before him to provide for.

"I don't know what deviltry he's up to," he said in conclusion.

Frank looked to his sister for their common decision. "I am going to try for a school," she said, quietly. "It's pretty late, but I guess I can get something. You and Frank had better stay."

"And you don't feel as if it was kind of meechin', our takin' up with his offer, after what's--" Whitwell delicately forbore to fill out his sentence.

"You are doing the favor, father," said the girl. "He knows that, and I guess he wouldn't know where to look if you refused. And, after all, what's happened now is as much my doing as his."

"I guess that's something so," said Whitwell, with a long sigh of relief. "Well, I'm glad you can look at it in that light, Cynthy. It's the way the feller's built, I presume, as much as anything."

His daughter waived the point. "I shouldn't feel just right if none of us stayed in the old place. I should feel as if we had turned our backs on Mrs. Durgin."

Her eyes shone, and her father said: "Well, I guess that's so, come to think of it. She's been like a mother to you, this past year, ha'n't she? And it must have come pooty hard for her, sidin' ag'in' Jeff. But she done it."

The girl turned her head away. They were sitting in the little, low keeping-room of Whitwell's house, and her father had his hat on provisionally. Through the window they could see the light of the lantern at the office door of the hotel, whose mass was lost in the dark above and behind the lamp. It was all very still outside.

"I declare," Whitwell went on, musingly, "I wisht Mr. Westover was here."

Cynthia started, but it was to ask: "Do you want I should help you with your Latin, Frank?"

Whitwell came back an hour later and found them still at their books. He told them it was all arranged; Durgin was to give up the place to him in a week, and he was to surrender it again when Jeff came back in the spring. In the mean time things were to remain as they were; after he was gone, they could all go and live at Lion's Head if they chose.

"We'll see," said Cynthia. "I've been thinking that might be the best way, after all. I might not get a school, it's so late."

"That's so," her father assented. "I declare," he added, after a moment's muse, "I felt sorry for the feller settin' up there alone, with nobody to do for him but that old thing he's got in. She can't cook any more than--" He desisted for want of a comparison, and said: "Such a lookin' table, too."

"Do you think I better go and look after things a little?" Cynthia asked.

"Well, you no need to," said her father. He got down the planchette, and labored with it, while his children returned to Frank's lessons.

"Dum'n 'f I can make the thing work," he said to himself at last.

"I can't git any of 'em up. If Jackson was here, now!"

Thrice a day Cynthia went up to the hotel and oversaw the preparation of Jeff's meals and kept taut the slack housekeeping of the old Irish woman who had remained as a favor, after the hotel closed, and professed to have lost the chance of a place for the winter by her complaisance. She submitted to Cynthia's authority, and tried to make interest for an indefinite stay by sudden zeal and industry, and the last days of Jeff in the hotel were more comfortable than he openly recognized. He left the care of the building wholly to Whitwell, and shut himself up in the old farm parlor with the plans for a new hotel which he said he meant to put up some day, if he could ever get rid of the old one. He went once to Lovewell, where he renewed the insurance, and somewhat increased it; and he put a small mortgage on the property. He forestalled the slow progress of the knowledge of others' affairs, which, in the country, is as sure as it is slow, and told Whitwell what he had done. He said he wanted the mortgage money for his journey, and the insurance money, if he could have the luck to cash up by a good fire, to rebuild with.

Cynthia seldom met him in her comings and goings, but if they met they spoke on the terms of their boy and girl associations, and with no approach through resentment or tenderness to the relation that was ended between them. She saw him oftener than at any other time setting off on the long tramps he took through the woods in the afternoons. He was always alone, and, so far as any one knew, his wanderings had no object but to kill the time which hung heavy on his hands during the fortnight after his mother's death, before he sailed. It might have seemed strange that he should prefer to pass the days at Lion's Head after he had arranged for the care of the place with Whitwell, and Whitwell always believed that he stayed in the hope of somehow making up with Cynthia.

One day, toward the very last, Durgin found himself pretty well fagged in the old pulp-mill clearing on the side of Lion's Head, which still belonged to Whitwell, and he sat down on a mouldering log there to rest. It had always been a favorite picnic ground, but the season just past had known few picnics, and it was those of former years that had left their traces in rusty sardine-cans and broken glass and crockery on the border of the clearing, which was now almost covered with white moss. Jeff thought of the day when he lurked in the hollow below with Fox, while Westover remained talking with Whitwell. He thought of the picnic that Mrs. Marven had embittered for him, and he thought of the last time that he had been there with Westover, when they talked of the Vostrands.

Life had, so far, not been what he meant it, and just now it occurred to him that he might not have wholly made it what it had been. It seemed to him that a good many other people had come in and taken a hand in making his own life what it had been; and if he had meddled with theirs more than he was wanted, it was about an even thing. As far as he could make out, he was a sort of ingredient in the general mixture. He had probably

done his share of the flavoring, but he had had very little to do with the mixing. There were different ways of looking at the thing. Westover had his way, but it struck Jeff that it put too much responsibility on the ingredient, and too little on the power that chose it. He believed that he could prove a clear case in his own favor, as far as the question of final justice was concerned, but he had no complaints to make. Things had fallen out very much to his mind. He was the Landlord at Lion's Head, at last, with the full right to do what he pleased with the place, and with half a year's leisure before him to think it over. He did not mean to waste the time while he was abroad; if there was anything to be learned anywhere about keeping a summer hotel, he was going to learn it; and he thought the summer hotel could be advantageously studied in its winter phases in the mild climates of Southern Europe. He meant to strike for the class of Americans who resorted to those climates; to divine their characters and to please their tastes.

He unconsciously included Cynthia in his scheme of inquiry; he had been used so long to trust to her instincts and opinions, and to rely upon her help, and he realized that she was no longer in his life with something like the shock a man experiences when the loss of a limb, which continues a part of his inveterate consciousness, is brought to his sense by some mechanical attempt to use it. But even in this pang he did not regret that all was over between them. He knew now that he had never cared for her as he had once thought, and on her account, if not his own, he was glad their engagement was broken. A soft melancholy for his own disappointment imparted itself to his thoughts of Cynthia. He felt truly sorry for her, and he truly admired and respected her. He was in a very lenient mood toward every one, and he went so far in thought toward forgiving his enemies that he was willing at least to pardon all those whom he had injured. A little rustling in the underbrush across the clearing caught his quick ear, and he looked up to see Jombateeste parting the boughs of the young pines on its edge and advancing into the open with a gun on his shoulder. He called to him, cheerily: "Hello, John! Any luck?"

Jombateeste shook his head. "Nawthing." He hesitated.

"What are you after?"

"Partridge," Jombateeste ventured back.

Jeff could not resist the desire to scoff which always came upon him at sight of the Canuck. "Oh, pshaw! Why don't you go for woodchucks? They fly low, and you can hit them on the wing, if you can't sneak on 'em sitting."

Jombateeste received his raillery in dignified silence, and turned back into the woods again. He left Durgin in heightened good-humor with himself and with the world, which had finally so well adapted itself to his desires and designs.

Jeff watched his resentful going with a grin, and then threw himself back on the thick bed of dry moss where he had been sitting, and watched the

clouds drifting across the space of blue which the clearing opened overhead. His own action reminded him of Jackson, lying in the orchard and looking up at the sky. He felt strangely at one with him, and he experienced a tenderness for his memory which he had not known before. Jackson had been a good man; he realized that with a curious sense of novelty in the reflection; he wondered what the incentives and the objects of such men as Jackson and Westover were, anyway. Something like grief for his brother came upon him; not such grief as he had felt, passionately enough, though tacitly, for his mother, but a regret for not having shown Jackson during his life that he could appreciate his unselfishness, though he could not see the reason or the meaning of it. He said to himself, in their safe remoteness from each other, that he wished he could do something for Jackson. He wondered if in the course of time he should get to be something like him. He imagined trying.

He heard sounds again in the edge of the clearing, but he decided that it was that fool Jombateeste coming back; and when steps approached softly and hesitantly across the moss, he did not trouble himself to take his eyes from the clouds. He was only vexed to have his reverie broken in upon.

A voice that was not Jombateeste's spoke: "I say! Can you tell me the way to the Brooker Institute, or to the road down the mountain?"

Jeff sat suddenly bolt-upright; in another moment he jumped to his feet. The Brooker Institute was a branch of the Keeley Cure recently established near the Huddle, and this must be a patient who had wandered from it, on one of the excursions the inmates made with their guardians, and lost his way. This was the fact that Jeff realized at the first glance he gave the man. The next he recognized that the man was Alan Lynde.

"Oh, it's you," he said, quite simply. He felt so cruelly the hardship of his one unforgiven enemy's coming upon him just when he had resolved to be good that the tears came into his eyes. Then his rage seemed to swell up in him like the rise of a volcanic flood. "I'm going to kill you!" he, roared, and he launched himself upon Lynde, who stood dazed.

But the murder which Jeff meant was not to be so easily done. Lynde had not grown up in dissolute idleness without acquiring some of the arts of self-defence which are called manly. He met Jeff's onset with remembered skill and with the strength which he had gained in three months of the wholesome regimen of the Brooker Institute. He had been sent there, not by Dr. Lacy's judgment, but by his despair, and so far the Cure had cured. He felt strong and fresh, and the hate which filled Jeff at sight of him steeled his shaken nerves and reinforced his feebler muscles, too.

He made a desperate fight where he could not hope for mercy, and kept himself free of his powerful foe, whom he fought round and foiled, if he could not hurt him. Jeff never knew of the blows Lynde got in upon him; he had his own science, too, but he would not employ it. He wanted to crash through Lynde's defence and lay hold of him and crush the life out of him.

The contest could not have lasted long at the best; but before Lynde was worn out he caught his heel in an old laurel root, and while he whirled to recover his footing Jeff closed in upon him, caught him by the middle, flung him down upon the moss, and was kneeling on his breast with both hands at his throat.

He glared down into his enemy's face, and suddenly it looked pitifully little and weak, like a girl's face, a child's.

Sometimes, afterward, it seemed to him that he forbore because at that instant he saw Jombateeste appear at the edge of the clearing and come running upon them. At other times he had the fancy that his action was purely voluntary, and that, against the logic of his hate and habit of his life, he had mercy upon his enemy. He did not pride himself upon it; he rather humbled himself before the fact, which was accomplished through his will, and not by it, and remained a mystery he did not try to solve.

He took his hands from Lynde's throat and his knees off his breast. "Get up," he said; and when Lynde stood trembling on his feet he said to Jombateeste: "Show this man the way to the Brooker Institute. I'll take your gun home for you," and it was easy for him to detach the piece from the bewildered Canuck's grasp. "Go! And if you stop, or even let him look back, I'll shoot him. Quick!"

LI.

The day after Thanksgiving, when Westover was trying to feel well after the turkey and cranberry and cider which a lady had given him at a consciously old-fashioned Thanksgiving dinner, but not making it out sufficiently to be able to work, he was astonished to receive a visit from Whitwell.

"Well, sir," said the philosopher, without giving himself pause for the exchange of reflections upon his presence in Boston, which might have been agreeable to him on a less momentous occasion. "It's all up with Lion's Head."

"What do you mean?" demanded Westover, with his mind upon the mountain, which he electrically figured in an incredible destruction.

"She's burnt. Burnt down the day before yist'd'y aft'noon. A'n't hardly a stick of her left. Ketehed Lord knows how, from the kitchen chimney, and a high northwest wind blowin', that ca'd the sparks to the barn, and set fire to that, too. Hasses gone; couldn't get round to 'em; only three of us there, and mixed up so about the house till it was so late the critters wouldn't come out. Folks from over Huddle way see the blaze, and helped ail they could; but it wa'n't no use. I guess all we saved, about, was the flag-pole."

"But you're all right yourselves? Cynthia"

"Well, there was our misfortune," said Whitwell, while Westover's heart stopped in a mere wantonness of apprehension. "If she'd be'n there, it might ha' be'n diff'ent. We might ha' had more sense; or she would, anyway. But she was over to Lovewell stockin' up for Thanksgivin', and I had to make out the best I could, with Frank and Jombateeste. Why, that Canuck didn't seem to have no more head on him than a hen. I was disgusted; but Cynthy wouldn't let me say anything to him, and I d' know as 't 'ould done any good, myself. We've talked it all over in every light, ever since; guess we've set up most the time talkin', and nothin' would do her but I should come down and see you before I took a single step about it."

"How--step about what?" asked Westover, with a remote sense of hardship at being brought in, tempered by the fact that it was Cynthia who had brought him in.

"Why, that devil," said Whitwell, and Westover knew that he meant Jeff, "went and piled on all the insurance he could pile on, before he left; and I don't know what to do about it."

"I should think the best thing was to collect the insurance," Westover suggested, distractedly.

"It a'n't so easy as what that comes to," said Whitwell. "I couldn't collect the insurance; and here's the point, anyway. When a hotel's made a bad season, and she's fully insured, she's pootty certain to burn up some time in the winter. Everybody knows that comical devil wanted Lion's Head to burn up so 't he could build new, and I presume there a'n't a man, woman, or child anywhere round but what believes I set her on fire. Hired to do it. Now, see? Jeff off in Europe; daytime; no lives lost; prop'ty total loss. 's a clear case. Heigh? I tell you, I'm afraid I've got trouble ahead."

Westover tried to protest, to say something in derision or defiance; but he was shaken himself, and he ended by getting his hat and coat; Whitwell had kept his own on, in the excitement. "We'll go out and see a lawyer. A friend of mine; it won't cost you anything." He added this assurance at a certain look of reluctance that came into Whitwell's face, and that left it as soon as he had spoken. Whitwell glanced round the studio even cheerily. "Who'd ha' thought," he said, fastening upon the study which Westover had made of Lion's head the winter before, "that the old place would 'a' gone so soon?" He did not mean the mountain which he was looking at, but the hotel that was present to his mind's eye; and Westover perceived as he had not before that to Whitwell the hotel and not the mountain was Lion's Head.

He remembered to ask now where Whitwell had left his family, and Whitwell said that Frank and Cynthia were at home in his own house with Jombateeste; but he presumed he could not get back to them now before the next day. He refused to be interested in any of the aspects of Boston which Westover casually pointed out, but when they had seen the lawyer he

came forth a new man, vividly interested in everything. The lawyer had been able to tell them that though the insurance companies would look sharply into the cause of the fire, there was no probability, hardly a possibility, that they would inculpate him, and he need give himself no anxiety about the affair.

"There's one thing, though," Whitwell said to Westover when they got out upon the street. "Hadn't I ought to let Jeff know?"

"Yes, at once. You'd better cable him. Have you got his address?"

Whitwell had it, and he tasted all the dramatic quality of sending word to Jeff, which he would receive in Florence an hour after it left Boston.

"I did hope I could ha' cabled once to Jackson while he was gone," he said, regretfully, "but, unless we can fix up a wire with the other world, I guess I shan't ever do it now. I suppose Jackson's still hangin' round Mars, some're's."

He had a sectarian pride in the beauty of the Spiritual Temple which Westover walked him by on his way to see Trinity Church and the Fine Arts Museum, and he sorrowed that he could not attend a service' there. But he was consoled by the lunch which he had with Westover at a restaurant where it was served in courses. "I presume this is what Jeff's goin' to give 'em at Lion's Head when he gits it goin' again."

"How is it he's in Florence?" it occurred to Westover to ask. "I thought he was going to Nice for the winter."

"I don't know. That's the address he give in his last letter," said Whitwell. "I'll be glad when I've done with him for good and all. He's all kinds of a devil."

It was in Westover's mind to say that he wished the Whitwells had never had anything to do with Durgin after his mother's death. He had felt it a want of delicacy in them that they had been willing to stay on in his employ, and his ideal of Cynthia had suffered a kind of wound from what must have been her decision in the matter. He would have expected something altogether different from her pride, her self-respect. But he now merely said: "Yes, I shall be glad, too. I'm afraid he's a bad fellow."

His words seemed to appeal to Whitwell's impartiality. "Well, I d' know as I should say bad, exactly. He's a mixture."

"He's a bad mixture," said Westover.

"Well, I guess you're partly right there," Whitwell admitted, with a laugh. After a dreamy moment he asked: "Ever hear anything more about that girl here in Boston?"

Westover knew that he meant Bessie Lynde. "She's abroad somewhere, with her aunt."

Whitwell had not taken any wine; apparently he was afraid of forming instantly the habit of drink if he touched it; but he tolerated Westover's pint of Zinfandel, and he seemed to warm sympathetically to a greater confidence as the painter made away with it. "There's one thing I never told Cynthy yet; well, Jombateeste didn't tell me himself till after Jeff was gone; and then, thinks I, what's the use? But I guess you had better know."

He leaned forward across the table, and gave Jombateeste's story of the encounter between Jeff and Alan Lynde in the clearing. "Now what do you suppose was the reason Jeff let up on the feller? Of course, he meant to choke the life out of him, and his just ketchin' sight of Jombateeste--do you believe that was enough to stop him, when he'd started in for a thing like that? Or what was it done it?"

Westover listened with less thought of the fact itself than of another fact that it threw light upon. It was clear to him now that the Class-Day scrapping which had left its marks upon Jeff's face was with Lynde, and that when Jeff got him in his power he was in such a fury for revenge that no mere motive of prudence could have arrested him. In both events, it must have been Bessie Lynde that was the moving cause; but what was it that stayed Jeff in his vengeance?

"Let him up, and let him walk away, you say?" he demanded of Whitwell.

Whitwell nodded. "That's what Jombateeste said. Said Jeff said if he let the feller look back he'd shoot him. But he didn't haf to."

"I can't make it out," Westover sighed.

"It's been too much for me," Whitwell said. "I told Jombateeste he'd better keep it to himself, and I guess he done so. S'pose Jeff still had a sneakin' fondness for the girl?"

"I don't know; perhaps," Westover asserted.

Whitwell threw his head back in a sudden laugh that showed all the work of his dentist. "Well, wouldn't it be a joke if he was there in Florence after her? Be just like Jeff."

"It would be like Jeff; I don't know whether it would be a joke or not. I hope he won't find it a joke, if it's so," said Westover, gloomily. A fantastic apprehension seized him, which made him wish for the moment that it might be so, and which then passed, leaving him simply sorry for any chance that might bring Bessie Lynde into the fellow's way again.

For the evening Whitwell's preference would have been a lecture of some sort, but there was none advertised, and he consented to go with Westover to the theatre. He came back to the painter at dinner-time, after a wary exploration of the city, which had resulted not only in a personal acquaintance with its monuments, but an immunity from its dangers and temptations which he prided himself hardly less upon. He had seen Faneuil Hall, the old State House, Bunker Hill, the Public Library, and

the Old South Church, and he had not been sandbagged or buncoed or led astray from the paths of propriety. In the comfortable sense of escape, he was disposed, to moralize upon the civilization of great cities, which he now witnessed at first hand for the first time; and throughout the evening, between the acts of the "Old Homestead," which he found a play of some merit, but of not so much novelty in its characters as he had somehow led himself to expect, he recurred to the difficulties and dangers that must beset a young man in coming to a place like Boston. Westover found him less amusing than he had on his own ground at Lion's Head, and tasted a quality of commonplace in his deliverances which made him question whether he had not, perhaps, always owed more to this environment than he had suspected. But they parted upon terms of mutual respect and in the common hope of meeting again. Whitwell promised to let Westover know what he heard of Jeff, but, when the painter had walked the philosopher home to his hotel, he found a message awaiting him at his studio from Jeff direct:

Whitwell's despatch received. Wait letter.

"DURGIN."

Westover raged at the intelligent thrift of this telegram, and at the implication that he not only knew all about the business of Whitwell's despatch, but that he was in communication with him, and would be sufficiently interested to convey Jeff's message to him. Of course, Durgin had at once divined that Whitwell must have come to him for advice, and that he would hear from him, whether he was still in Boston or not. By cabling to Westover, Jeff saved the cost of an elaborate address to Whitwell at Lion's Head, and had brought the painter in for further consultation and assistance in his affairs. What vexed him still more was his own consciousness that he could not defeat this impudent expectation. He had, indeed, some difficulty with himself to keep from going to Whitwell's hotel with the despatch at once, and he slept badly, in his fear that he might not get it to him in the morning before he left town.

The sum of Jeff's letter when it came, and it came to Westover and not to Whitwell, was to request the painter to see a lawyer in his behalf, and put his insurance policies in his hands, with full authority to guard his interests in the matter. He told Westover where his policies would be found, and enclosed the key of his box in the Safety Vaults, with a due demand for Westover's admission to it. He registered his letter, and he jocosely promised Westover to do as much for him some day, in pleading that there was really no one else he could turn to. He put the whole business upon him, and Westover discharged himself of it as briefly as he could by delivering the papers to the lawyer he had already consulted for Whitwell.

"Is this another charity patient?" asked his friend, with a grin.

"No," replied Westover. "You can charge this fellow along the whole line."

Before he parted with the lawyer he had his misgivings, and he said:

"I shouldn't want the blackguard to think I had got a friend a fat job out of him."

The lawyer laughed intelligently. "I shall only make the usual charge. Then he is a blackguard."

"There ought to be a more blistering word."

"One that would imply that he was capable of setting fire to his property?"

"I don't say that. But I'm glad he was away when it took fire," said Westover.

"You give him the benefit of the doubt."

"Yes, of every kind of doubt."

LII.

Westover once more promised himself to have nothing to do with Jeff Durgin or his affairs. But he did not promise this so confidently as upon former occasions, and he instinctively waited for a new complication. He could not understand why Jeff should not have come home to look after his insurance, unless it was because he had become interested in some woman even beyond his concern for his own advantage. He believed him capable of throwing away advantages for disadvantages in a thing of that kind, but he thought it more probable that he had fallen in love with one whom he would lose nothing by winning. It did not seem at all impossible that he should have again met Bessie Lynde, and that they should have made up their quarrel, or whatever it was. Jeff would consider that he had done his whole duty by Cynthia, and that he was free to renew his suit with Bessie; and there was nothing in Bessie's character, as Westover understood it, to prevent her taking him back upon a very small show of repentance if the needed emotions were in prospect. He had decided pretty finally that it would be Bessie rather than another when he received a letter from Mrs. Vostrand. It was dated at Florence, and after some pretty palaver about their old friendship, which she only hoped he remembered half as fondly as she did, the letter ran:

"I am turning to you now in a very strange difficulty, but I do not know that I should turn to you even now, and knowing all I do of your goodness, if I were not asked to do so by another.

"I believe we have not heard from each other since the first days of my poor Genevieve's marriage, when everything looked so bright and fair, and we little realized the clouds that were to overcast her happiness. It is a long story, and I will not go into it fully. The truth is that poor Gigi did not treat her very kindly, and that she has not lived with him since the birth of their little girl, now

nearly two years old, and the sweetest little creature in the world; I wish you could see her; I am sure it would inspire your pencil with the idea of an angel-child. At first I hoped that the separation would be only temporary, and that when Genevieve had regained her strength she would be willing to go back to her husband; but nothing would induce her to do so. In fact, poor Gigi had spent all her money, and they would have had nothing to live upon but his pay, and you know that the pay of the Italian officers is very small.

"Gigi made several attempts to see her, and he threatened to take the child from her, but he was always willing to compromise for money. I am afraid that he never really loved her and that we were both deceived by his fervent protestations. We managed to get away from Florence without his knowing it, and we have spent the last two years in Lausanne, very happily, though very quietly. Our dear Checco is in the university there, his father having given up the plan of sending him to Harvard, and we had him with us, while we were taking measures to secure the divorce. Even in the simple way we lived Genevieve attracted a great deal of attention, as she always has done, and she would have had several eligible offers if she had been divorced, or if her affections had not already been engaged, as I did not know at the time.

"We were in this state of uncertainty up to the middle of last summer, when the news of poor Gigi's sudden death came. I am sorry to say that his habits in some respects were not good, and that probably hastened it some; it had obliged him to leave the army. Genevieve did not feel that she could consistently put on black for him, and I did not urge her, under the peculiar circumstances; there is so much mere formality in those kind of things at the best; but we immediately returned to Florence to try and see if we could not get back some of her effects which his family had seized. I am opposed to lawsuits if they can possibly be avoided, and we arranged with poor Gigi's family by agreeing to let them have Genevieve's furniture if they would promise never to molest her with the child, and I must say they have behaved very well. We are on the best of terms with them, and they have let us have some of the things back which were endeared to her by old associations, at a very reasonable rate.

"This brings me to the romantic part of my letter, and I will say at once that we found your friend Mr. Durgin in Florence, in the very hotel we went to. We all met in the dining-room, at the table d'hote one evening, and Genevieve and he took to each other at once. He spent the evening with us in our private drawing-room, and she said to me, after he went, that for the first time in years she felt rested. It seems that she had always secretly fancied him, and that she gave up to me in the matter of marrying poor Gigi, because she knew I had my heart set upon it, and she was not very certain of her own feelings when Mr. D. offered himself in Boston; but the conviction that she had made a mistake grew upon her more and more after she had married Gigi.

"Well, now, Mr. Westover, I suppose you have guessed by this time that Mr. Durgin has renewed his offer, and Genevieve has conditionally accepted him; we do not feel that she is like an ordinary widow, and that she has to fill up a certain season of mourning; she and Gigi have been dead to each other for years; and Mr. Durgin is as fond of our dear little Bice as her own father could be, and they are together all the time. Her name is Beatrice de' Popolani Grassi. Isn't it lovely? She has poor Gigi's black eyes, with the most beautiful golden hair, which she gets from our aide. You remember Genevieve's hair back in the dear old days, before any trouble had come, and we were all so happy together? And this brings me to what I wanted to say. You are the oldest friend we have, and by a singular coincidence you are the oldest friend of Mr. Durgin, too. I cannot bear to risk my child's happiness a second time, and though Mr. Vostrand fully approves of the match, and has cabled his consent from Seattle, Washington, still, you know, a mother's heart cannot be at rest without some positive assurance. I told Mr. Durgin quite frankly how I felt, and he agreed with me that after our experience with poor Gigi we could not be too careful, and he authorized me to write to you and find out all you knew about him. He said you had known him ever since he was a boy, and that if there was anything bad in his record you could tell it, and he did not want you to spire the truth. He knows you will be just, and he wants you to write out the facts as they struck you at the time.

"I shall be on pins and needles, as the saying is, till we hear from you, and you know how Genevieve and Mr. D. must be feeling. She is fully resolved not to have him without your endorsement, and he is quite willing to abide by what you say.

"I could almost wish you to cable me just Good or Bad, but I know that this will not be wise, and I am going to wait for your letter, and get your opinion in full.

"We all join in the kindest regards. Mr. D. is talking with Genevieve while I write, and has our darling Bice on his knees. You cannot imagine what a picture it makes, her childish delicacy contrasted with his stalwart strength. She says to send you a baciettino, and I wish you were here to receive it from her angel lips. Yours faithfully,

"MEDORA VOSTRAND.

"P. S.--Mr. D. says that he fell in love with Genevieve across the barrier between the first and second cabin when he came over with us on the Aquitaine four years ago, and that he has never ceased to love her, though at one time he persuaded himself that he cared for another because he felt that she was lost to him forever, and it was no use: He really did care for the lady he was engaged to, and had a true affection for her, which he mistook for a warmer feeling. He says that she was worthy of any man's love and of the highest

respect. I tell Genevieve that, she ought to honor him for it, and that she must never be jealous of a memory. We are very happy in Mr. Vostrand's cordial approval of the match. He is so glad to think that Mr. D. is a business man. His cable from Seattle was most enthusiastic.

"M. D."

Westover did not know whether to laugh or cry when he read this letter, which covered several sheets of paper in lines that traversed each other in different directions. His old, youthful ideal of Mrs. Vostrand finally perished in its presence, though still he could not blame her for wishing to see her daughter well married after having seen her married so ill. He asked himself, without getting any very definite response, whether Mrs. Vostrand had always been this kind of a woman, or had grown into it by the use of arts which her peculiar plan of life had rendered necessary to her. He remembered the intelligent toleration of Cynthia in speaking of her, and his indignation in behalf of the girl was also thrill of joy for her escape from the fate which Mrs. Vostrand was so eagerly invoking for her daughter. But he thought of Genevieve with something of the same tenderness, and with a compassion that was for her alone. She seemed to him a victim who was to be sacrificed a second time, and he had clearly a duty to her which he must not evade. The only question could be how best to discharge it, and Westover took some hours from his work to turn the question over in his mind. In the end, when he was about to give the whole affair up for the present, and lose a night's sleep over it later, he had an inspiration, and he acted upon it at once. He perceived that he owed no formal response to the sentimental insincerities of Mrs. Vostrand's letter, and he decided to write to Durgin himself, and to put the case altogether in his hands. If Durgin chose to show the Vostrands what he should write, very well; if he chose not to show it, then Westover's apparent silence would be a sufficient reply to Mrs. Vostrand's appeal.

"I prefer to address you," he began, "because I do not choose to let you think that I have any feeling to indulge against you, and because I do not think I have the right to take you out of your own keeping in any way. You would be in my keeping if I did, and I do not wish that, not only because it would be a bother to me, but because it would be a wrong to you.

"Mrs. Vostrand, whose letter to me I will leave you to answer by showing her this, or in any other manner you choose, tells me you do not want me to spare the truth concerning you. I have never been quite certain what the truth was concerning you; you know that better than I do; and I do not propose to write your biography here. But I will remind you of a few things.

"The first day I saw you, I caught you amusing yourself with the terror of two little children, and I had the pleasure of cuffing you for it. But you were only a boy then, and afterward you behaved so well that I decided you were not so much cruel as thoughtlessly mischievous. When you had done all you could to lead me to this

favorable conclusion, you suddenly turned and avenged yourself on me, so far as you could, for the help I had given the little ones against you. I never greatly blamed you for that, for I decided that you had a vindictive temperament, and that you were not responsible for your temperament, but only for your character.

"In your first year at Harvard your associations were bad, and your conduct generally was so bad that you were suspended. You were arrested with other rowdy students, and passed the night in a police station. I believe you were justly acquitted of any specific offence, and I always believed that if you had experienced greater kindness socially during your first year in college you would have been a better man.

"You seem to have told Mrs. Vostrand of your engagement, and I will not speak of that. It was creditable to you that so wise and good a girl as your betrothed should have trusted you, and I do not know that it was against you that another girl who was neither wise nor good should have trusted you at the same time. You broke with the last, because you had to choose between the two; and, so far as I know, you accepted with a due sense of your faithlessness your dismissal by the first. In this connection I must remind you that while you were doing your best to make the party to your second engagement believe that you were in love with her, you got her brother, an habitual inebriate, drunk, and were, so far, instrumental in breaking down the weak will with which he was struggling against his propensity. It is only fair to you that I should add that you persuaded me you got him only a little drunker than he already got himself, and that you meant to have looked after him, but forgot him in your preoccupation with his sister.

"I do not know what took place between you and these people after you broke your engagement with the sister, until your encounter with the brother in Whitwell's Clearing, and I know of this only at second hand. I can well believe that you had some real or fancied injury to pay off; and I give you all the credit you may wish to claim for sparing him at last. For one of your vindictive temperament it must have been difficult.

"I have told you the worst things I know of you, and I do not pretend to know them more than superficially. I am not asked to judge you, and I will not. You must be your own judge. You are to decide whether these and other acts of yours are the acts of a man good enough to be intrusted with the happiness of a woman who has already been very unhappy.

"You have sometimes, however--oftener than I wished--come to me for advice, and I now offer you some advice voluntarily. Do not suppose that because you love this woman, as you believe, you are fit to be the keeper of her future. Ask yourself how you have dealt hitherto with those who have loved you, and whom in a sort you loved, and do not go further unless the answer is such as you can fully and faithfully report to the woman you wish to marry. What you have

made yourself you will be to the end. You once called me an idealist, and perhaps you will call this idealism. I will only add, and I will give the last word in your defence, you alone know what you are."

LIII.

As soon as Westover had posted his letter he began to blame himself for it. He saw that the right and manly thing would have been to write to Mrs. Vostrand, and tell her frankly what he thought of Durgin. Her folly, her insincerity, her vulgarity, had nothing to do with the affair, so far as he was concerned. If she had once been so kind to him as to bind him to her in grateful friendship, she certainly had a claim upon his best offices. His duty was to her, and not at all to Durgin. He need not have said anything against him because it was against him, but because it was true; and if he had written he must not have said anything less than the truth.

He could have chosen not to write at all. He could have said that her mawkish hypocrisy was a little too much; that she was really wanting him to whitewash Durgin for her, and she had no right to put upon him the responsibility for the step she clearly wished to take. He could have made either of these decisions, and defended them to himself; but in what he had done he had altogether shirked. While he was writing to Durgin, and pretending that he could justly leave this affair to him, he was simply indulging a bit of sentimental pose, far worse than anything in Mrs. Vostrand's sham appeal for his help.

He felt, as the time went by, that she had not written of her own impulse, but at her daughter's urgency, and that it was this poor creature whose trust he had paltered with. He believed that Durgin would not fail to make her unhappy, yet he had not done what he might to deliver her out of his hand. He had satisfied a wretched pseudo-magnanimity toward a faithless scoundrel, as he thought Durgin, at the cost of a woman whose anxious hope of his aid had probably forced her mother's hand.

At first he thought his action irrevocable, and he bitterly upbraided himself for not taking council with Cynthia upon Mrs. Vostrand's letter. He had thought of doing that, and then he had dismissed the thought as involving pain that he had no right to inflict; but now he perceived that the pain was such as she must suffer in the event, and that he had stupidly refused himself the only means of finding out the right thing to do. Her true heart and her clear mind would have been infallible in the affair, and he had trusted to his own muddled impulse.

He began to write other letters: to Durgin, to Mrs. Vostrand, to Genevieve; but none of them satisfied him, and he let the days go by without doing anything to retrieve his error or fulfil his duty. At last he did what he ought to have done at first: he enclosed Mrs. Vostrand's

letter to Cynthia, and asked her what she thought he ought to have done. While he was waiting Cynthia's answer to his letter, a cable message reached him from Florence:

"Kind letter received. Married to-day. Written.
"Vostrand."

The next mail brought Cynthia's reply, which was very brief:

"I am sorry you had to write at all; nothing could have prevented it. Perhaps if he cares for her he will be good to her."

Since the matter was now irremediable, Westover crept less miserably through the days than he could have believed he should, until the letter which Mrs. Vostrand's cable promised came to hand.

"Dear friend," she wrote, "your generous and satisfactory answer came yesterday. It was so delicate and high-minded, and so like you, to write to Mr. Durgin, and leave the whole affair to him; and he did not lose a moment in showing us your beautiful letter. He said you were a man after his own heart, and I wish you could have heard how he praised you. It made Genevieve quite jealous, or would have, if it had been any one else. But she is so happy in your approval of her marriage, which is to take place before the 'sindaco' to-morrow, We shall only have the civil rite; she feels that it is more American, and we are all coming home to Lion's Head in the spring to live and die true Americans. I wish you could spend the summer with us there, but, until Lion's Head is rebuilt, we can't ask you. I don't know exactly how we shall do ourselves, but Mr. Durgin is full of plans, and we leave everything to him. He is here, making Genevieve laugh so that I can hardly write. He joins us in love and thanks, and our darling Bice sends you a little kiss.

"MEDORA VOSTRAND.

"P. S. Mr. D. has told us all about the affairs you alluded to. With Miss L. we cannot feel that he was to blame; but he blames himself in regard to Miss W. He says his only excuse is that he was always in love with Genevieve; and I think that is quite excuse enough. M. V."

From time to time during the winter Westover wrote to Cynthia, and had letters from her in which he pleased himself fancying almost a personal effect of that shyness which he thought a charming thing in her. But no doubt this was something he read into them; on their face they were plain, straightforward accounts of the life she led in the little old house at Lion's Head, under the shadow of the black ruin on the hill. Westover had taken to sending her books and magazines, and in thanking him for these she would sometimes speak of things she had read in them. Her criticism related to the spirit rather than the manner of the things she spoke of, and it pleased him that she seemed, with all her insight,

to have very little artistic sense of any kind; in the world where he lived there were so many women with an artistic sense in every kind that he was rather weary of it.

There never was anything about Durgin in the letters, and Westover was both troubled and consoled by this silence. It might be from consciousness, and it probably was; it might be from indifference. In the worst event, it hid any pain she might have felt with a dignity from which no intimation of his moved her. The nearest she came to speaking of Jeff was when she said that Jombateeste was going to work at the brick-yards in Cambridge as soon as the spring opened, and was not going to stay any longer at Lion's Head.

Her brother Frank, she reported, had got a place with part work in the drug-and-book store at Lovewell, where he could keep on more easily with his studies; he had now fully decided to study for the ministry; he had always wanted to be an Episcopalian.

One day toward the end of April, when several weeks had passed without bringing Westover any word from Cynthia, her father presented himself, and enjoyed in the painter's surprise the sensation of having dropped upon him from the clouds. He gave due accounts of the health of each of his household; ending with Jombateeste. "You know he's out at the brick, as he calls it, in Cambridge."

"Cynthia said he was coming. I didn't know he had come yet," said Westover. "I must go out and look him up, if you think I could find him among all those Canucks."

"Well, I don't know but you'd better look us up at the same time," said Whitwell, with additional pleasure in the painter's additional surprise. "I guess we're out in Cambridge, too," he added, at Westover's start of question. "We're out there, visitin' one of our summer folks, as you might say. Remember Mis' Fredericks?"

"Why, what the deuce kept you from telling me so at once?" Westover demanded, indignantly.

"Guess I hadn't got round to it," said Whitwell, with dry relish.

"Do you mean that Cynthia's there?"

"Well, I guess they wouldn't care much for a visit from me."

Whitwell took advantage of Westover's moment of mystification to explain that Jeff had written over to him from Italy, offering him a pretty good rent for his house, which he wanted to occupy while he was rebuilding Lion's Head. He was going to push the work right through in the summer, and be ready for the season the year after. That was what Whitwell understood, and he understood that Jeff's family was going to stay in Lovewell, but Jeff himself wanted to be on the ground day and night.

"So that's kind of turned us out of doors, as you may say, and Cynthia's

always had this idee of comin' down Boston way: and she didn't know anybody that could advise with her as well as Mis' Fredericks, and she wrote to her, and Mis' Fredericks answered her to come right down and talk it over." Westover felt a pang of resentment that Cynthia, had not turned to him for counsel, but he said nothing, and Whitwell went on: "She said she was, ashamed to bother you, you'd had the whole neighborhood on your hands so much, and so she wrote to Mis' Fredericks."

Westover had a vague discomfort in it all, which ultimately defined itself as a discontent with the willingness of the Whitwells to let Durgin occupy their house upon any terms, for any purpose, and a lingering grudge that Cynthia should have asked help of any one but himself, even from a motive of delicacy.

In the evening he went out to see the girl at the house of Mrs. Fredericks, whom he found living in the Port. They had a first moment of intolerable shyness on her part. He had been afraid to see her, with the jealousy for her dignity he always felt, lest she should look as if she had been unhappy about Durgin. But he found her looking, not only very well, but very happy and full of peace, as soon as that moment of shyness passed. It seemed to Westover as if she had begun to live on new terms, and that a harassing element, which had always been in it, had gone out of her life, and in its absence she was beginning to rejoice in a lasting repose. He found himself rejoicing with her, and he found himself on simpler and franker terms with her than ever before. Neither of them spoke of Jeff, or made any approach to mention him, and Westover believed that this was not from a morbid feeling in her, but from a final and enduring indifference.

He saw her alone, for Mrs. Fredericks and her daughter had gone into town to a concert, which he made her confess she would have gone to herself if it had not been that her father said he was coming out to see her. She would not let him joke about the sacrifice he pretended she had made; he had a certain pain in fancying that his visit was the highest and finest favor that life could do her. She told him of the ambition she had that she might get a school somewhere in the neighborhood of Boston, and then find something for her brother to do, while he began his studies in the Theological School at Harvard. Frank was still at Lovewell, it seemed.

At the end of the long call he made, he said, abruptly, when he had risen to go, "I should like to paint you."

"Who? Me?" she cried, as if it were the most incredible thing, while a glad color rushed over her face.

"Yes. While you're waiting to get your school, couldn't you come in with your father, now and then, and sit for me?"

"What's he want me to come fer?" Whitwell demanded, when the plan was laid before him. He was giving his unlimited leisure to the exploration of Boston, and his tone expressed something of the injury, which he also put into words, as a sole objection to the proposed interruption. "Can't you go alone, Cynthy?" Cynthia said she did not know, but when the point

was referred to Mrs. Fredericks, she was sure Cynthia could not go alone, and she acquainted them both, as far as she could, with that mystery of chaperonage which had never touched their lives before. Whitwell seemed to think that his daughter would give the matter up; and perhaps she might have done so, though she seemed reluctant, if Mrs. Fredericks had not further instructed them that it was the highest possible honor Mr. Westover was offering them, and that if he had proposed to paint her daughter she would simply have gone and lived with him while he was doing it.

Whitwell found some compensation for the time lost to his study of Boston in the conversation of the painter, which he said was worth a hundred cents on the dollar every time, though it dealt less with the metaphysical aspect of the latest facts of science than the philosopher could have wished. He did not, to be sure, take very much stock in the picture as it advanced, somewhat fitfully, with a good many reversion to its original state of sketch. It appeared to him always a slight and feeble representation of Cynthia, though, of course, a native politeness forbade him to express his disappointment. He avowed a faith in Westover's ability to get it right in the end, and always bade him go on, and take as much time to it as he wanted.

He felt less uneasy than at first, because he had now found a little furnished house in the woodenest outskirts of North Cambridge, which he hired cheap from the recently widowed owner, and they were keeping house there. Jombateeste lived with them, and worked in the brick-yards. Out of hours he helped Cynthia, and kept the ugly little place looking trim and neat, and left Whitwell free for the tramps home to nature, which he began to take over the Belmont uplands as soon as the spring opened. He was not homesick, as Cynthia was afraid he might be; his mind was fully occupied by the vast and varied interests opened to it by the intellectual and material activities of the neighboring city; and he found ample scope for his physical energies in doing Cynthia's errands, as well as studying the strange flora of the region. He apparently thought that he had made a distinct rise and advance in the world. Sometimes, in the first days of his satisfaction with his establishment, he expressed the wish that Jackson could only have seen how he was fixed, once. In his preoccupation with other things, he no longer attempted to explore the eternal mysteries with the help of planchette; the ungrateful instrument gathered as much dust as Cynthia would suffer on the what-not in the corner of the solemn parlor; and after two or three visits to the First Spiritual Temple in Boston, he lapsed altogether from an interest in the other world, which had, perhaps, mainly flourished in the absence of pressing subjects of inquiry, in this.

When at last Westover confessed that he had carried his picture of Cynthia as far as he could, Whitwell did his best to hide his disappointment. "Well, sir," he said, tolerantly and even cheerfully, "I presume we're every one of us a different person to whoever looks at us. They say that no two men see the same star."

"You mean that she doesn't look so to you," suggested the painter, who seemed not at all abashed.

"Well, you might say--Why, here! It's like her; photograph couldn't get it any better; but it makes me think--well, of a bird that you've come on sudden, and it stoops as if it was goin' to fly--"

"Ah," said Westover, "does it make you think of that?"

LIV.

The painter could not make out at first whether the girl herself was pleased with the picture or not, and in his uncertainty he could not give it her at once, as he had hoped and meant to do. It was by a kind of accident he found afterward that she had always been passionately proud of his having painted her. This was when he returned from the last sojourn he had made in Paris, whither he went soon after the Whitwells settled in North Cambridge. He left the picture behind him to be framed and then sent to her with a letter he had written, begging her to give it houseroom while he was gone. He got a short, stiff note in reply after he reached Paris, and he had not tried to continue the correspondence. But as soon as he returned he went out to see the Whitwells in North Cambridge. They were still in their little house there; the young widower had married again; but neither he nor his new wife had cared to take up their joint life in his first home, and he had found Whitwell such a good tenant that he had not tried to put up the rent on him. Frank was at home, now, with an employment that gave him part of his time for his theological studies; Cynthia had been teaching school ever since the fall after Westover went away, and they were all, as Whitwell said, in clover. He was the only member of the family at home when Westover called on the afternoon of a warm summer day, and he entertained him with a full account of a visit he had paid Lion's Head earlier in the season.

"Yes, sir," he said, as if he had already stated the fact, "I've sold my old place there to that devil." He said devil without the least rancor; with even a smile of good-will, and he enjoyed the astonishment Westover expressed in his demand:

"Sold Durgin your house?"

"Yes; I see we never wanted to go back there to live, any of us, and I went up to pass the papers and close the thing out. Well, I did have an offer for it from a feller that wanted to open a boa'din'-house there and get the advantage of Jeff's improvements, and I couldn't seem to make up my mind till I'd looked the ground over. Fust off, you know, I thought I'd sell to the other feller, because I could see in a minute what a thorn it 'd be in Jeff's flesh. But, dumn it all! When I met the comical devil I couldn't seem to want to pester him. Why, here, thinks I, if we've made an escape from him--and I guess we have, about the biggest escape--what have I got ag'in' him, anyway? I'd ought to feel good to him; and I guess that's the way I did feel, come to boil it down. He's got a way with him, you know, when you're with him, that makes you

like him. He may have a knife in your ribs the whole while, but so long's he don't turn it, you don't seem to know it, and you can't help likin' him. Why, I hadn't been with Jeff five minutes before I made up my mind to sell to him. I told him about the other offer--felt bound to do it--and he was all on fire. 'I want that place, Mr. Whitwell,' s'd he. 'Name your price.' Well, I wa'n't goin' to take an advantage of the feller, and I guess he see it. 'You've offered me three thousand,' s'd I, 'n' I don't want to be no ways mean about it. Five thousand buys the place.' 'It's mine,' s'd he; just like that. I guess he see he had a gentleman to deal with, and we didn't say a word more. Don't you think I done right to sell to him? I couldn't 'a' got more'n thirty-five hundred out the other feller, to save me, and before Jeff begun his improvements I couldn't 'a' realized a thousand dollars on the prop'ty."

"I think you did right to sell to him," said Westover, saddened somewhat by the proof Whitwell alleged of his magnanimity.

"Well, Sir, I'm glad you do. I don't believe in crowdin' a man because you got him in a corner, an' I don't believe in bearin' malice. Never did. All I wanted was what the place was wo'th--to him. 'Twa'n't wo'th nothin' to me! He's got the house and the ten acres around it, and he's got the house on Lion's Head, includin' the Clearin', that the poottiest picnic-ground in the mountains. Think of goin' up there this summer?"

"No," said Westover, briefly.

"Well, I some wish yon did. I sh'd like to know how Jeff's improvements struck you. Of course, I can't judge of 'em so well, but I guess he's made a pootty sightly thing of it. He told me he'd had one of the leadin' Boston architects to plan the thing out for him, and I tell you he's got something nice. 'Tain't so big as old Lion's Head, and Jeff wants to cater to a different style of custom, anyway. The buildin's longer'n what she is deep, and she spreads in front so's to give as many rooms a view of the mountain as she can. Know what 'runnaysonce' is? Well, that's the style Jeff said it was; it's all pillars and pilasters; and you ride up to the office through a double row of colyums, under a kind of a portico. It's all painted like them old Colonial houses down on Brattle Street, buff and white. Well, it made me think of one of them old pagan temples. He's got her shoved along to the south'ard, and he's widened out a piece of level for her to stand on, so 't that piece o' wood up the hill there is just behind her, and I tell you she looks nice, backin' up ag'inst the trees. I tell you, Jeff's got a head on him! I wish you could see that dinin'-room o' his: all white colyums, and frontin' on the view. Why, that devil's got a regular little theatyre back o' the dinin'-room for the young folks to act ammyture plays in, and the shows that come along, and he's got a dance-hall besides; the parlors ain't much--folks like to set in the office; and a good many of the rooms are done off into soots, and got their own parlors. I tell you, it's swell, as they say. You can order what you please for breakfast, but for lunch and dinner you got to take what Jeff gives you; but he treats you well. He's a Durgin, when it comes to that. Served in cou'ses, and dinner at seven o'clock. I don't know where he got his money for 't all, but I guess he put in his insurance fust, and then he put a mortgage on

the buildin'; be as much as owned it; said he'd had a splendid season last year, and if he done as well for a couple of seasons more he'd have the whole prop'ty free o' debt."

Westover could see that the prosperity of the unjust man had corrupted the imagination and confounded the conscience of this simple witness, and he asked, in the hope of giving his praises pause: "What has he done about the old family burying-ground in the orchard?"

"Well, there!" said Whitwell. "That got me more than any other one thing: I naturally expected that Jeff 'd had 'em moved, for you know and I know, Mr. Westover, that a place like that couldn't be very pop'la' with summer folks; they don't want to have anything to kind of make 'em serious, as you may say. But that devil got his architect to treat the place, as he calls it, and he put a high stone wall around it, and planted it to bushes and evergreens so 't looks like a piece of old garden, down there in the corner of the orchard, and if you didn't hunt for it you wouldn't know it was there. Jeff said 't when folks did happen to find it out, he believed they liked it; they think it's picturesque and ancient. Why, some on 'em wanted him to put up a little chapel alongside and have services there; and Jeff said he didn't know but he'd do it yet. He's got dark-colored stones up for Mis' Durgin and Jackson, so 't they look as old as any of 'em. I tell you, he knows how to do things."

"It seems so," said Westover, with a bitterness apparently lost upon the optimistic philosopher.

"Yes, sir. I guess it's all worked out for the best. So long's he didn't marry Cynthy, I don't care who he married, and--I guess he's made out fust-rate, and he treats his wife well, and his mother-in-law, too. You wouldn't hardly know they was in the house, they're so kind of quiet; and if a guest wants to see Jeff, he's got to send and ask for him; clerk does everything, but I guess Jeff keeps an eye out and knows what's goin' on. He's got an elegant soot of apartments, and he lives as private as if he was in his own house, him and his wife. But when there's anything goin' on that needs a head, they're both right on deck.

"He don't let his wife worry about things a great deal; he's got a fust-rate of a housekeeper, but I guess old Mis' Vostrand keeps the housekeeper, as you may say. I hear some of the boa'ders talkin' up there, and one of 'em said 't the great thing about Lion's Head was 't you could feel everywheres in it that it was a lady's house. I guess Jeff has a pooty good time, and a time 't suits him. He shows up on the coachin' parties, and he's got himself a reg'lar English coachman's rig, with boots outside his trouse's, and a long coat and a fuzzy plug-hat: I tell you, he looks gay! He don't spend his winters at Lion's Head: he is off to Europe about as soon as the house closes in the fall, and he keeps bringin' home new dodges. Guess you couldn't get no boa'd there for no seven dollars a week now! I tell you, Jeff's the gentleman now, and his wife's about the nicest lady I ever saw. Do' know as I care so much about her mother; do' know as I got anything ag'inst her, either, very much. But that little girl, Beechy, as they call her, she's a beauty!

And round with Jeff all the while! He seems full as fond of her as her own mother does, and that devil, that couldn't seem to get enough of tormentin' little children when he was a boy, is as good and gentle with that little thing as-pie!"

Whitwell seemed to have come to an end of his celebration of Jeff's success, and Westover asked:

"And what do you make now, of planchette's brokenshaft business? Or don't you believe in planchette any more?"

Whitwell's beaming face clouded. "Well, sir, that's a thing that's always puzzled me. If it wa'n't that it was Jackson workin' plantchette that night, I shouldn't placed much dependence on what she said; but Jackson could get the truth out of her, if anybody could. Sence I b'en up there I b'en figurin' it out like this: the broken shaft is the old Jeff that he's left off bein'--"

Whitwell stopped midway in his suggestion, with an inquiring eye on the painter, who asked: "You think he's left off being the old Jeff?"

"Well, sir, you got me there," the philosopher confessed. "I didn't see anything to the contrary, but come to think of it--"

"Why couldn't the broken shaft be his unfulfilled destiny on the old lines? What reason is there to believe he isn't what he's always been?"

"Well, come to think of it--"

"People don't change in a day, or a year," Westover went on, "or two or three years, even. Sometimes I doubt if they ever change."

"Well, all that I thought," Whitwell urged, faintly, against the hard scepticism of a man ordinarily so yielding, "is 't there must be a moral government of the universe somewheres, and if a bad feller is to get along and prosper hand over hand, that way, don't it look kind of as if--"

"There wasn't any moral government of the universe? Not the way I see it," said Westover. "A tree brings forth of its kind. As a man sows he reaps. It's dead sure, pitilessly sure. Jeff Durgin sowed success, in a certain way, and he's reaping it. He once said to me, when I tried to waken his conscience, that he should get where he was trying to go if he was strong enough, and being good had nothing to do with it. I believe now he was right. But he was wrong too, as such a man always is. That kind of tree bears Dead Sea apples, after all. He sowed evil, and he must reap evil. He may never know it, but he will reap what he has sown. The dreadful thing is that others must share in his harvest. What do you think?"

Whitwell scratched his head. "Well, sir, there's something in what you say, I guess. But here! What's the use of thinkin' a man can't change? Wa'n't there ever anything in that old idee of a change of heart? What do you s'pose made Jeff let up on that feller that Jombateeste see him

have down, that day, in my Clearin'? What Jeff would natch'ly done would b'en to shake the life out of him; but he didn't; he let him up, and he let him go. What's the reason that wa'n't the beginnin' of a new life for him?"

"We don't know all the ins and outs of that business," said Westover, after a moment. "I've puzzled over it a good deal. The man was the brother of that girl that Jeff had jilted in Boston. I've found out that much. I don't know just the size and shape of the trouble between them, but Jeff may have felt that he had got even with his enemy before that day. Or he may have felt that if he was going in for full satisfaction, there was Jombateeste looking on."

"That's true," said Whitwell, greatly daunted. After a while he took refuge in the reflection, "Well, he's a comical devil."

Westover said, in a sort of absence: "Perhaps we're all broken shafts, here. Perhaps that old hypothesis of another life, a world where there is room enough and time enough for all the beginnings of this to complete themselves--"

"Well, now you're shoutin'," said Whitwell. "And if plantchette--" Westover rose. "Why, a'n't you goin' to wait and see Cynthy? I'm expectin' her along every minute now; she's just gone down to Harvard Square. She'll be awfully put out when she knows you've be'n here."

"I'll come out again soon," said Westover. "Tell her--"

" Well, you must see your picture, anyway. We've got it in the parlor. I don't know what she'll say to me, keepin' you here in the settin'-room all the time."

Whitwell led him into the little dark front hall, and into the parlor, less dim than it should have been because the afternoon sun was burning full upon its shutters. The portrait hung over the mantel, in a bad light, but the painter could feel everything in it that he could not see.

"Yes, it had that look in it."

"Well, she ha'n't took wing yet, I'm thankful to think," said Whitwell, and he spoke from his own large mind to the sympathy of an old friend who he felt could almost share his feelings as a father.

IV

When Westover turned out of the baking little street where the Whitwells lived into an elm-shaded stretch of North Avenue, he took off his hat and strolled bareheaded along in the cooler air. He was disappointed not to have seen Cynthia, and yet he found himself hurrying away after his failure, with a sense of escape, or at least of respite.

What he had come to say, to do, was the effect of long experience and much meditation. The time had arrived when he could no longer feign to himself that his feelings toward the girl were not those of a lover, but he had his modest fears that she could never imagine him in that character, and that if he should ask her to do so he should shock and grieve her, and inflict upon himself an incurable wound.

During this last absence of his he had let his fancy dwell constantly upon her, until life seemed worth having only if she would share it with him. He was an artist, and he had always been a bohemian, but at heart he was philistine and bourgeois. His ideal was a settlement, a fixed habitation, a stated existence, a home where he could work constantly in an air of affection, and unselfishly do his part to make his home happy. It was a very simple-hearted ambition, and I do not quite know how to keep it from appearing commonplace and almost sordid; but such as it was, I must confess that it was his. He had not married his model, because he was mainly a landscapist, perhaps; and he had not married any of his pupils, because he had not been in love with them, charming and good and lovely as he had thought some of them; and of late he had realized more and more why his fancy had not turned in their direction. He perceived that it was already fixed, and possibly had long been fixed.

He did not blink the fact that there were many disparities, and that there would be certain disadvantages which could never be quite overcome. The fact had been brought rather strenuously home to him by his interview with Cynthia's father. He perceived, as indeed he had always known, that with a certain imaginative lift in his thinking and feeling, Whitwell was irreparably rustic, that he was and always must be practically Yankee. Westover was not a Yankee, and he did not love or honor the type, though its struggles against itself touched and amused him. It made him a little sick to hear how Whitwell had profited by Durgin's necessity, and had taken advantage of him with conscientious and self-applauding rapacity, while he admired his prosperity, and tried to account for it by doubt of its injustice. For a moment this seemed to him worse than Durgin's conscientious toughness, which was the antithesis of Whitwell's remorseless self-interest. For the moment this claimed Cynthia of its kind, and Westover beheld her rustic and Yankee of her father's type. If she was not that now, she would grow into that through the lapse from the personal to the ancestral which we all undergo in the process of the years.

The sight of her face as he had pictured it, and of the soul which he had imagined for it, restored him to a better sense of her, but he felt the need of escaping from the suggestion of her father's presence, and taking further thought. Perhaps he should never again reach the point that he was aware of deflecting from now; he filled his lungs with long breaths, which he exhaled in sighs of relief. It might have been a mistake on the spiritual as well as the worldly side; it would certainly not have promoted his career; it might have impeded it. These misgivings flitted over the surface of thought that more profoundly was occupied with a question of other things. In the time since he had seen her last it might very well be that a young and pretty girl had met some one who had

taken her fancy; and he could not be sure that her fancy had ever been his, even if this had not happened. He had no proof at all that she had ever cared or could care for him except gratefully, respectfully, almost reverentially, with that mingling of filial and maternal anxiety which had hitherto been the warmest expression of her regard. He tried to reason it out, and could not. He suddenly found himself bitterly disappointed that he had missed seeing her, for if they had met, he would have known by this time what to think, what to hope. He felt old--he felt fully thirty-six years old--as he passed his hand over his crown, whose gossamer growth opposed so little resistance to his touch. He had begun to lose his hair early, but till then he had not much regretted his baldness. He entered into a little question of their comparative ages, which led him to the conclusion that Cynthia must now be about twenty-five.

Almost at the same moment he saw her coming up the walk toward him from far down the avenue. For a reason, or rather a motive, of his own he pretended to himself that it was not she, but he knew instantly that it was, and he put on his hat. He could see that she did not know him, and it was a pretty thing to witness the recognition dawn on her. When it had its full effect, he was aware of a flutter, a pause in her whole figure before she came on toward him, and he hurried his steps for the charm of her beautiful blushing face.

It was the spiritual effect of figure and face that he had carried in his thought ever since he had arrived at that one-sided intimacy through his study of her for the picture he had just seen. He had often had to ask himself whether he had really perceived or only imagined the character he had translated into it; but here, for the moment at least, was what he had seen. He hurried forward and joyfully took the hand she gave him. He thought he should speak of that at once, but it was not possible, of course. There had to come first the unheeded questions and answers about each other's health, and many other commonplaces. He turned and walked home with her, and at the gate of the little ugly house she asked him if he would not come in and take tea with them.

Her father talked with him while she got the tea, and when it was ready her brother came in from his walk home out of Old Cambridge and helped her put it on the table. He had grown much taller than Westover, and he was very ecclesiastical in his manner; more so than he would be, probably, if he ever became a bishop, Westover decided. Jombateeste, in an interval of suspended work at the brick yard, was paying a visit to his people in Canada, and Westover did not see him.

All the time while they sat at table and talked together Westover realized more and more that for him, at least, the separation of the last two years had put that space between them which alone made it possible for them to approach each other on new ground. A kind of horror, of repulsion, for her engagement to Jeff Durgin had ceased from his sense of her; it was as if she had been unhappily married, and the man, who had been unworthy and unkind, was like a ghost who could never come to trouble his joy. He was more her contemporary, he found, than formerly; she had grown a great deal in the past two years, and a certain

affliction which her father's fixity had given him concerning her passed in the assurance of change which she herself gave him.

She had changed her world, and grown to it, but her nature had not changed. Even her look had not changed, and he told her how he had seen his picture in her at the moment of their meeting in the street. They all went in to verify his impression from the painting. "Yes, that is the way you looked."

"It seems to me that is the way I felt," she asserted.

Frank went about the house-work, and left her to their guest. When Whitwell came back from the post-office, where he said he would only be gone a minute, he did not rejoin Westover and Cynthia in the parlor.

The parlor door was shut; he had risked his fate, and they were talking it over. Cynthia was not sure; she was sure of nothing but that there was no one in the world she cared for so much; but she was not sure that was enough. She did not pretend that she was surprised; she owned that she had sometimes expected it; she blamed herself for not expecting it then.

Westover said that he did not blame her for not knowing her mind; he had been fifteen years learning his own fully. He asked her to take all the time she wished. If she could not make sure after all, he should always be sure that she was wise and good. She told him everything there was to tell of her breaking with Jeff, and he thought the last episode a supreme proof of her wisdom and goodness.

After a certain time they went for a walk in the warm summer moonlight under the elms, where they had met on the avenue.

"I suppose," she said, as they drew near her door again, "that people don't often talk it over as we've done."

"We only know from the novels," he answered. "Perhaps people do, oftener than is ever known. I don't see why they shouldn't."

"No."

"I've never wished to be sure of you so much as since you've wished to be sure of yourself."

"And I've never been so sure as since you were willing to let me," said Cynthia.

"I am glad of that. Try to think of me, if that will help my cause, as some one you might have always known in this way. We don't really know each other yet. I'm a great deal older than you, but still I'm not so very old."

"Oh, I don't care for that. All I want to be certain of is that the feeling I have is really--the feeling."

"I know, dear," said Westover, and his heart surged toward her in his tenderness for her simple conscience, her wise question. "Take time. Don't hurry. Forget what I've said--or no; that's absurd! Think of it; but don't let anything but the truth persuade you. Now, good-night, Cynthia."

"Good-night--Mr. Westover."

"Mr. Westover" he reproached her.

She stood thinking, as if the question were crucial. Then she said, firmly, "I should always have to call you Mr. Westover."

"Oh, well," he returned, "if that's all!"

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Boldest man is commonly a little behind a timid woman
Could not imagine the summer life of the place
Crimson which stained the tops and steeps of snow
Errors of a weak man, which were usually the basest
Exchanging inaudible banalities
He might walk home with her if he would not seem to do so
He's the same kind of a man that he was a boy
Hollow hilarities which people use to mask their indifference
I suppose they must feel it
If one must, it ought to be champagne
Intent upon some point in the future
No two men see the same star
Pathetic hopefulness
Picture which, he said to himself, no one would believe in
Quiet but rather dull look of people slightly deaf
Stupefied by a life of unalloyed prosperity and propriety
To be exemplary is as dangerous as to be complimentary
W'at you want letter for? Always same thing
Want something hard, don't you know; but I want it to be easy
With all her insight, to have very little artistic sense
World made up of two kinds of people

End of this Project Gutenberg Etext of The Landlord At Lions Head, v2
by William Dean Howells

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS FOR THE ENTIRE LANDLORD AT LIONS HEAD:

Boldest man is commonly a little behind a timid woman
Could not imagine the summer life of the place
Crimson which stained the tops and steeps of snow
Crimson torch of a maple, kindled before its time
Disposition to use his friends
Errors of a weak man, which were usually the basest
Exchanging inaudible banalities
Fear of asking too much and the folly of asking too little
Government is best which governs least
He might walk home with her if he would not seem to do so
He's the same kind of a man that he was a boy
Hollow hilarities which people use to mask their indifference
Honesty is difficult
I don't ever want to take the whip-hand
I suppose they must feel it
I sha'n't forget this very soon
If one must, it ought to be champagne
Insensate pride that mothers have in their children's faults
Intent upon some point in the future
Iron forks had two prongs
Jefferson
Joyful shame of children who have escaped punishment
Man that could be your friend if he didn't like you
Married Man: after the first start-off he don't try
No two men see the same star
Nothing in the way of sport, as people commonly understand it
Pathetic hopefulness
People whom we think unequal to their good fortune
Picture which, he said to himself, no one would believe in
Quiet but rather dull look of people slightly deaf
Society interested in a woman's past, not her future
Stupefied by a life of unalloyed prosperity and propriety
The great trouble is for the man to be honest with her
To be exemplary is as dangerous as to be complimentary
W'at you want letter for? Always same thing
Want something hard, don't you know; but I want it to be easy
We're company enough for ourselves
With all her insight, to have very little artistic sense
Women talked their follies and men acted theirs
World made up of two kinds of people
World seems to always come out at the same hole it went in at

THE ENTIRE MARCH FAMILY TRILOGY

By William Dean Howells

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THEIR WEDDING JOURNEY

By William Dean Howells

1871

I. THE OUTSET

They first met in Boston, but the match was made in Europe, where they afterwards saw each other; whither, indeed, he followed her; and there the match was also broken off. Why it was broken off, and why it was renewed after a lapse of years, is part of quite a long love-story, which I do not think myself qualified to rehearse, distrusting my fitness for a sustained or involved narration; though I am persuaded that a skillful

romancer could turn the courtship of Basil. and Isabel March to excellent account. Fortunately for me, however, in attempting to tell the reader of the wedding-journey of a newly married couple, no longer very young, to be sure, but still fresh in the light of their love, I shall have nothing to do but to talk of some ordinary traits of American life as these appeared to them, to speak a little of well-known and easily accessible places, to present now a bit of landscape and now a sketch of character.

They had agreed to make their wedding-journey in the simplest and quietest way, and as it did not take place at once after their marriage, but some weeks later, it had all the desired charm of privacy from the outset.

"How much better," said Isabel, "to go now, when nobody cares whether you go or stay, than to have started off upon a wretched wedding-breakfast, all tears and trousseau, and had people wanting to see you aboard the cars. Now there will not be a suspicion of honey-moonshine about us; we shall go just like anybody else,--with a difference, dear, with a difference!" and she took Basil's cheeks between her hands. In order to do this, she had to run round the table; for they were at dinner, and Isabel's aunt, with whom they had begun married life, sat substantial between them. It was rather a girlish thing for Isabel, and she added, with a conscious blush, "We are past our first youth, you know; and we shall not strike the public as bridal, shall we? My one horror in life is an evident bride."

Basil looked at her fondly, as if he did not think her at all too old to be taken for a bride; and for my part I do not object to a woman's being of Isabel's age, if she is of a good heart and temper. Life must have been very unkind to her if at that age she have not won more than she has lost. It seemed to Basil that his wife was quite as fair as when they met first, eight years before; but he could not help recurring with an inextinguishable regret to the long interval of their broken engagement, which but for that fatality they might have spent together, he imagined, in just such rapture as this. The regret always haunted him, more or less; it was part of his love; the loss accounted irreparable really enriched the final gain.

"I don't know," he said presently, with as much gravity as a man can whose cheeks are clasped between a lady's hands, "you don't begin very well for a bride who wishes to keep her secret. If you behave in this way, they will put us into the 'bridal chambers' at all the hotels. And the cars--they're beginning to have them on the palace-cars."

Just then a shadow fell into the room.

"Wasn't that thunder, Isabel?" asked her aunt, who had been contentedly surveying the tender spectacle before her. "O dear! you'll never be able to go by the boat to-night, if it storms. It 's actually raining now!"

In fact, it was the beginning of that terrible storm of June, 1870. All in a moment, out of the hot sunshine of the day it burst upon us before

we quite knew that it threatened, even before we had fairly noticed the clouds, and it went on from passion to passion with an inexhaustible violence. In the square upon which our friends looked out of their dining-room windows the trees whitened in the gusts, and darkened in the driving floods of the rainfall, and in some paroxysms of the tempest bent themselves in desperate submission, and then with a great shudder rent away whole branches and flung them far off upon the ground. Hail mingled with the rain, and now the few umbrellas that had braved the storm vanished, and the hurtling ice crackled upon the pavement, where the lightning played like flames burning from the earth, while the thunder roared overhead without ceasing. There was something splendidly theatrical about it all; and when a street-car, laden to the last inch of its capacity, came by, with horses that pranced and leaped under the stinging blows of the hailstones, our friends felt as if it were an effective and very naturalistic bit of pantomime contrived for their admiration. Yet as to themselves they were very sensible of a potent reality in the affair, and at intervals during the storm they debated about going at all that day, and decided to go and not to go, according to the changing complexion of the elements. Basil had said that as this was their first journey together in America, he wished to give it at the beginning as pungent a national character as possible, and that as he could imagine nothing more peculiarly American than a voyage to New York by a Fall River boat, they ought to take that route thither. So much upholstery, so much music, such variety of company, he understood, could not be got in any other way, and it might be that they would even catch a glimpse of the inventor of the combination, who represented the very excess and extremity of a certain kind of Americanism. Isabel had eagerly consented; but these aesthetic motives were paralyzed for her by the thought of passing Point Judith in a storm, and she descended from her high intents first to the Inside Boats, without the magnificence and the orchestra, and then to the idea of going by land in a sleeping-car. Having comfortably accomplished this feat, she treated Basil's consent as a matter of course, not because she did not regard him, but because as a woman she could not conceive of the steps to her conclusion as unknown to him, and always treated her own decisions as the product of their common reasoning. But her husband held out for the boat, and insisted that if the storm fell before seven o'clock, they could reach it at Newport by the last express; and it was this obstinacy that, in proof of Isabel's wisdom, obliged them to wait two hours in the station before going by the land route. The storm abated at five o'clock, and though the rain continued, it seemed well by a quarter of seven to set out for the Old Colony Depot, in sight of which a sudden and vivid flash of lightning caused Isabel to seize her husband's arm, and to implore him, "O don't go by the boat!" On this, Basil had the incredible weakness to yield; and bade the driver take them to the Worcester Depot. It was the first swerving from the ideal in their wedding journey, but it was by no means the last; though it must be confessed that it was early to begin.

They both felt more tranquil when they were irretrievably committed by the purchase of their tickets, and when they sat down in the waiting room of the station, with all the time between seven and nine o'clock before them. Basil would have eked out the business of checking the trunks into an affair of some length, but the baggage-master did his duty

with pitiless celerity; and so Basil, in the mere excess of his disoccupation, bought an accident-insurance ticket. This employed him half a minute, and then he gave up the unequal contest, and went and took his place beside Isabel, who sat prettily wrapped in her shawl, perfectly content.

"Isn't it charming," she said gayly, "having to wait so long? It puts me in mind of some of those other journeys we took together. But I can't think of those times with any patience, when we might really have had each other, and didn't! Do you remember how long we had to wait at Chambery? and the numbers of military gentlemen that waited too, with their little waists, and their kisses when they met? and that poor married military gentleman, with the plain wife and the two children, and a tarnished uniform? He seemed to be somehow in misfortune, and his mustache hung down in such a spiritless way, while all the other military mustaches about curled and bristled with so much boldness. I think 'salles d'attente' everywhere are delightful, and there is such a community of interest in them all, that when I come here only to go out to Brookline, I feel myself a traveller once more,--a blessed stranger in a strange land. O dear, Basil, those were happy times after all, when we might have had each other and didn't! And now we're the more precious for having been so long lost."

She drew closer and closer to him, and looked at him in a way that threatened betrayal of her bridal character.

"Isabel, you will be having your head on my shoulder, next," said he.

"Never!" she answered fiercely, recovering her distance with a start.

"But, dearest, if you do see me going to--act absurdly, you know, do stop me."

"I'm very sorry, but I've got myself to stop. Besides, I didn't undertake to preserve the incognito of this bridal party."

If any accident of the sort dreaded had really happened, it would not have mattered so much, for as yet they were the sole occupants of the waiting room. To be sure, the ticket-seller was there, and the lady who checked packages left in her charge, but these must have seen so many endearments pass between passengers,--that a fleeting caress or so would scarcely have drawn their notice to our pair. Yet Isabel did not so much even as put her hand into her husband's; and as Basil afterwards said, it was very good practice.

Our temporary state, whatever it is, is often mirrored in all that come near us, and our friends were fated to meet frequent parodies of their happiness from first to last on this journey. The travesty began with the very first people who entered the waiting-room after themselves, and who were a very young couple starting like themselves upon a pleasure tour, which also was evidently one of the first tours of any kind that they had made. It was of modest extent, and comprised going to New York and back; but they talked of it with a fluttered and joyful expectation as if it were a voyage to Europe. Presently there appeared a burlesque

of their happiness (but with a touch of tragedy) in that kind of young man who is called by the females of his class a fellow, and two young women of that kind known to him as girls. He took a place between these, and presently began a robust flirtation with one of them. He possessed himself, after a brief struggle, of her parasol, and twirled it about, as he uttered, with a sort of tender rudeness inconceivable vapidities, such as you would expect from none but a man of the highest fashion. The girl thus courted became selfishly unconscious of everything but her own joy, and made no attempt to bring the other girl within its warmth, but left her to languish forgotten on the other side. The latter sometimes leaned forward, and tried to divert a little of the flirtation to herself, but the flirter snubbed her with short answers, and presently she gave up and sat still in the sad patience of uncourted women. In this attitude she became a burden to Isabel, who was glad when the three took themselves away, and were succeeded by a very stylish couple--from New York, she knew as well as if they had given her their address on West 99th Street. The lady was not pretty, and she was not, Isabel thought, dressed in the perfect taste of Boston; but she owned frankly to herself that the New-Yorkeress was stylish, undeniably effective. The gentleman bought a ticket for New York, and remained at the window of the office talking quite easily with the seller.

"You couldn't do that, my poor Basil," said Isabel, "you'd be afraid."

"O dear, yes; I'm only too glad to get off without browbeating; though I must say that this officer looks affable enough. Really," he added, as an acquaintance of the ticket-seller came in and nodded to him and said "Hot, to-day!" "this is very strange. I always felt as if these men had no private life, no friendships like the rest of us. On duty they seem so like sovereigns, set apart from mankind, and above us all, that it's quite incredible they should have the common personal relations."

At intervals of their talk and silence there came vivid flashes of lightning and quite heavy shocks of thunder, very consoling to our friends, who took them as so many compliments to their prudence in not going by the boat, and who had secret doubts of their wisdom whenever these acknowledgments were withheld. Isabel went so far as to say that she hoped nothing would happen to the boat, but I think she would cheerfully have learnt that the vessel had been obliged to put back to Newport, on account of the storm, or even that it had been driven ashore at a perfectly safe place.

People constantly came and went in the waiting-room, which was sometimes quite full, and again empty of all but themselves. In the course of their observations they formed many cordial friendships and bitter enmities upon the ground of personal appearance, or particulars of dress, with people whom they saw for half a minute upon an average; and they took such a keen interest in every one, that it would be hard to say whether they were more concerned in an old gentleman with vigorously upright iron-gray hair, who sat fronting them, and reading all the evening papers, or a young man who hurled himself through the door, bought a ticket with terrific precipitation, burst out again, and then ran down a departing train before it got out of the station: they loved

the old gentleman for a certain stubborn benevolence of expression, and if they had been friends of the young man and his family for generations and felt bound if any harm befell him to go and break the news gently to his parents, their nerves could not have been more intimately wrought upon by his hazardous behavior. Still, as they had their tickets for New York, and he was going out on a merely local train,--to Brookline, I believe, they could not, even in their anxiety, repress a feeling of contempt for his unambitious destination.

They were already as completely cut off from local associations and sympathies as if they were a thousand miles and many months away from Boston. They enjoyed the lonely flaring of the gas-jets as a gust of wind drew through the station; they shared the gloom and isolation of a man who took a seat in the darkest corner of the room, and sat there with folded arms, the genius of absence. In the patronizing spirit of travellers in a foreign country they noted and approved the vases of cut-flowers in the booth of the lady who checked packages, and the pots of ivy in her windows. "These poor Bostonians," they said; "have some love of the beautiful in their rugged natures."

But after all was said and thought, it was only eight o'clock, and they still had an hour to wait.

Basil grew restless, and Isabel said, with a subtle interpretation of his uneasiness, "I don't want anything to eat, Basil, but I think I know the weaknesses of men; and you had better go and pass the next half-hour over a plate of something indigestible."

This was said 'con stizza', the least little suggestion of it; but Basil rose with shameful alacrity. "Darling, if it's your wish--"

"It's my fate, Basil," said Isabel.

"I'll go," he exclaimed, "because it isn't bridal, and will help us to pass for old married people."

"No, no, Basil, be honest; fibbing isn't your forte: I wonder you went into the insurance business; you ought to have been a lawyer. Go because you like eating, and are hungry, perhaps, or think you may be so before we get to New York.

"I shall amuse myself well enough here!"

I suppose it is always a little shocking and grievous to a wife when she recognizes a rival in butchers'-meat and the vegetables of the season. With her slender relishes for pastry and confectionery and her dainty habits of lunching, she cannot reconcile with the idea (of) her husband's capacity for breakfasting, dining, supping, and hot meals at all hours of the day and night--as they write it on the sign-boards of barbaric eating-houses. But Isabel would have only herself to blame if she had not perceived this trait of Basil's before marriage. She recurred now, as his figure disappeared down the station, to memorable instances of his appetite in their European travels during their first engagement. "Yes,

he ate terribly at Susa, when I was too full of the notion of getting into Italy to care for bouillon and cold roast chicken. At Rome I thought I must break with him on account of the wild-boar; and at Heidelberg, the sausage and the ham!--how could he, in my presence? But I took him with all his faults,--and was glad to get him," she added, ending her meditation with a little burst of candor; and she did not even think of Basil's appetite when he reappeared.

With the thronging of many sorts of people, in parties and singly, into the waiting room, they became once again mere observers of their kind, more or less critical in temper, until the crowd grew so that individual traits were merged in the character of multitude. Even then, they could catch glimpses of faces so sweet or fine that they made themselves felt like moments of repose in the tumult, and here and there was something so grotesque in dress or manner that it showed distinct from the rest. The ticket-seller's stamp clicked incessantly as he sold tickets to all points South and West: to New York, Philadelphia, Charleston; to New Orleans, Chicago, Omaha; to St. Paul, Duluth, St. Louis; and it would not have been hard to find in that anxious bustle, that unsmiling eagerness, an image of the whole busy affair of life. It was not a particularly sane spectacle, that impatience to be off to some place that lay not only in the distance, but also in the future--to which no line of road carries you with absolute certainty across an interval of time full of every imaginable chance and influence. It is easy enough to buy a ticket to Cincinnati, but it is somewhat harder to arrive there. Say that all goes well, is it exactly you who arrive?

In the midst of the disquiet there entered at last an old woman, so very infirm that she had to be upheld on either hand by her husband and the hackman who had brought them, while a young girl went before with shawls and pillows which she arranged upon the seat. There the invalid lay down, and turned towards the crowd a white, suffering face, which was yet so heavenly meek and peaceful that it comforted whoever looked at it.

In spirit our happy friends bowed themselves before it and owned that there was something better than happiness in it.

"What is it like, Isabel?"

"O, I don't know, darling," she said; but she thought, "Perhaps it is like some blessed sorrow that takes us out of this prison of a world, and sets us free of our every-day hates and desires, our aims, our fears, ourselves. Maybe a long and mortal sickness might come to wear such a face in one of us two, and the other could see it, and not regret the poor mask of youth and pretty looks that had fallen away."

She rose and went over to the sick woman, on whose face beamed a tender smile, as Isabel spoke to her. A chord thrilled in two lives hitherto unknown to each other; but what was said Basil would not ask when the invalid had taken Isabel's hand between her own, as for adieu, and she came back to his side with swimming eyes. Perhaps his wife could have given no good reason for her emotion, if he had asked it. But it made her very sweet and dear to him; and I suppose that when a tolerably

unselfish man is once secure of a woman's love, he is ordinarily more affected by her compassion and tenderness for other objects than by her feelings towards himself. He likes well enough to think, "She loves me," but still better, "How kind and good she is!"

They lost sight of the invalid in the hurry of getting places on the cars, and they never saw her again. The man at the wicket-gate leading to the train had thrown it up, and the people were pressing furiously through as if their lives hung upon the chance of instant passage. Basil had secured his ticket for the sleeping-car, and so he and Isabel stood aside and watched the tumult. When the rash was over they passed through, and as they walked up and down the platform beside the train, "I was thinking," said Isabel, "after I spoke to that poor old lady, of what Clara Williams says: that she wonders the happiest women in the world can look each other in the face without bursting into tears, their happiness is so unreasonable, and so built upon and hedged about with misery. She declares that there's nothing so sad to her as a bride, unless it's a young mother, or a little girl growing up in the innocent gayety of her heart. She wonders they can live through it."

"Clara is very much of a reformer, and would make an end of all of us men, I suppose,--except her father, who supports her in the leisure that enables her to do her deep thinking. She little knows what we poor fellows have to suffer, and how often we break down in business hours, and sob upon one another's necks. Did that old lady talk to you in the same strain?"

"O no! she spoke very calmly of her sickness, and said she had lived a blessed life. Perhaps it was that made me shed those few small tears. She seemed a very religious person."

"Yes," said Basil, "it is almost a pity that religion is going out. But then you are to have the franchise."

"All aboard!"

This warning cry saved him from whatever heresy he might have been about to utter; and presently the train carried them out into the gas-sprinkled darkness, with an ever-growing speed that soon left the city lamps far behind. It is a phenomenon whose commonness alone prevents it from being most impressive, that departure of the night-express. The two hundred miles it is to travel stretch before it, traced by those slender clews, to lose which is ruin, and about which hang so many dangers. The draw bridges that gape upon the way, the trains that stand smoking and steaming on the track, the rail that has borne the wear so long that it must soon snap under it, the deep cut where the overhanging mass of rock trembles to its fall, the obstruction that a pitiless malice may have placed in your path,--you think of these after the journey is done, but they seldom haunt your fancy while it lasts. The knowledge of your helplessness in any circumstances is so perfect that it begets a sense of irresponsibility, almost of security; and as you drowse upon the pallet of the sleeping car, and feel yourself hurled forward through the obscurity, you are almost thankful that you can do nothing, for it is

upon this condition only that you can endure it; and some such condition as this, I suppose, accounts for many heroic facts in the world. To the fantastic mood which possesses you equally, sleeping or waking, the stoppages of the train have a weird character; and Worcester, Springfield, New Haven, and Stamford are rather points in dream-land than well-known towns of New England. As the train stops you drowse if you have been waking, and wake if you have been in a doze; but in any case you are aware of the locomotive hissing and coughing beyond the station, of flaring gas-jets, of clattering feet of passengers getting on and off; then of some one, conductor or station-master, walking the whole length of the train; and then you are aware of an insane satisfaction in renewed flight through the darkness. You think hazily of the folk in their beds in the town left behind, who stir uneasily at the sound of your train's departing whistle; and so all is a blank vigil or a blank slumber.

By daylight Basil and Isabel found themselves at opposite ends of the car, struggling severally with the problem of the morning's toilet. When the combat was ended, they were surprised at the decency of their appearance, and Isabel said, "I think I'm presentable to an early Broadway public, and I've a fancy for not going to a hotel. Lucy will be expecting us out there before noon; and we can pass the time pleasantly enough for a few hours just wandering about."

She was a woman who loved any cheap defiance of custom, and she had an agreeable sense of adventure in what she proposed. Besides, she felt that nothing could be more in the unconventional spirit in which they meant to make their whole journey than a stroll about New York at half-past six in the morning.

"Delightful!" answered Basil, who was always charmed with these small originalities. "You look well enough for an evening party; and besides, you won't meet one of your own critical class on Broadway at this hour. We will breakfast at one of those gilded metropolitan restaurants, and then go round to Leonard's, who will be able to give us just three unhurried seconds. After that we'll push on out to his place."

At that early hour there were not many people astir on the wide avenue down which our friends strolled when they left the station; but in the aspect of those they saw there was something that told of a greater heat than they had yet known in Boston, and they were sensible of having reached a more southern latitude. The air, though freshened by the overnight's storm, still wanted the briskness and sparkle and pungency of the Boston air, which is as delicious in summer as it is terrible in winter; and the faces that showed themselves were sodden from the yesterday's heat and perspiration. A corner-grocer, seated in a sort of fierce despondency upon a keg near his shop door, had lightly equipped himself for the struggle of the day in the battered armor of the day before, and in a pair of roomy pantaloons, and a baggy shirt of neutral tint--perhaps he had made a vow not to change it whilst the siege of the hot weather lasted,--now confronted the advancing sunlight, before which the long shadows of the buildings were slowly retiring. A marketing mother of a family paused at a provision-store, and looking weakly in at the white-aproned butcher among his meats and flies, passes without an effort to

purchase. Hurried and wearied shop-girls tripped by in the draperies that betrayed their sad necessity to be both fine and shabby; from a boarding-house door issued briskly one of those cool young New Yorkers whom no circumstances can oppress: breezy-coated, white-livened, clean, with a good cigar in the mouth, a light cane caught upon the elbow of one of the arms holding up the paper from which the morning's news is snatched, whilst the person sways lightly with the walk; in the street-cars that slowly tinkled up and down were rows of people with baskets between their legs and papers before their faces; and all showed by some peculiarity of air or dress the excess of heat which they had already borne, and to which they seemed to look forward, and gave by the scantiness of their number a vivid impression of the uncounted thousands within doors prolonging, before the day's terror began, the oblivion of sleep.

As they turned into one of the numerical streets to cross to Broadway, and found themselves in a yet deeper seclusion, Basil-began to utter in a musing tone:

"A city against the world's gray Prime,
Lost in some desert, far from Time,
Where noiseless Ages gliding through,
Have only sifted sands and dew,
Yet still a marble head of man
Lying on all the haunted plan;
The passions of the human heart
Beating the marble breast of Art,
Were not more lone to one who first
Upon its giant silence burst,
Than this strange quiet, where the tide
Of life, upheaved on either aide,
Hangs trembling, ready soon to beat
With human waves the Morning Street."

"How lovely!" said Isabel, swiftly catching at her skirt, and deftly escaping contact with one of a long row of ash-barrels posted sentinel-like on the edge of the pavement. "Whose is it, Basil?"

"Ah! a poet's," answered her husband, "a man of whom we shall one day any of us be glad to say that we liked him before he was famous. What a nebulous sweetness the first lines have, and what a clear, cool light of day-break in the last!"

"You could have been as good a poet as that, Basil," said the ever-personal and concretely-speaking Isabel, who could not look at a mountain without thinking what Basil might have done in that way, if he had tried.

"O no, I couldn't, dear. It's very difficult being any poet at all, though it's easy to be like one. But I've done with it; I broke with the Muse the day you accepted me. She came into my office, looking so shabby,--not unlike one of those poor shop-girls; and as I was very well dressed from having just been to see you, why, you know, I felt the difference. 'Well, my dear?' said I, not quite liking the look of reproach she was giving me. 'You are groins to leave me,' she answered

sadly. 'Well, yes; I suppose I must. You see the insurance business is very absorbing; and besides, it has a bad appearance, your coming about so in office hours, and in those clothes.' 'O,' she moaned out, 'you used to welcome me at all times, out in the country, and thought me prettily dressed.' 'Yes, yes; but this is Boston; and Boston makes a great difference in one's ideas; and I'm going to be married, too. Come, I don't want to seem ungrateful; we have had many pleasant times together, I own it; and I've no objections to your being present at Christmas and Thanksgiving and birthdays, but really I must draw the line there.' She gave me a look that made my heart ache, and went straight to my desk and took out of a pigeon hole a lot of papers,--odes upon your cruelty, Isabel; songs to you; sonnets,--the sonnet, a mighty poor one, I'd made the day before,--and threw them all into the grate. Then she turned to me again, signed adieu with mute lips, and passed out. I could hear the bottom wire of the poor thing's hoop-skirt clicking against each step of the stairway, as she went slowly and heavily down to the street."

"O don't--don't, Basil," said his wife, "it seems like something wrong. I think you ought to have been ashamed."

"Ashamed! I was heart broken. But it had to come to that. As I got hopeful about you, the Muse became a sad bore; and more than once I found myself smiling at her when her back was turned. The Muse doesn't like being laughed at any more than another woman would, and she would have left me shortly. No, I couldn't be a poet like our Morning-Street friend. But see! the human wave is beginning to sprinkle the pavement with cooks and second-girls."

They were frowzy serving-maids and silent; each swept down her own door steps and the pavement in front of her own house, and then knocked her broom on the curbstone and vanished into the house, on which the hand of change had already fallen. It was no longer a street solely devoted to the domestic gods, but had been invaded at more than one point by the bustling deities of business in such streets the irregular, inspired doctors and doctresses come first with inordinate door-plates, then a milliner filling the parlor window with new bonnets; here even a publisher had hung his sign beside a door, through which the feet of young ladies used to trip, and the feet of little children to patter. Here and there stood groups of dwellings unmolested as yet outwardly; but even these had a certain careworn and guilty air, as if they knew themselves to be cheapish boarding-houses or furnished lodgings for gentlemen, and were trying to hide it. To these belonged the frowzy serving-women; to these the rows of ash-barrels, in which the decrepit children and mothers of the streets were clawing for bits of coal.

By the time Basil and Isabel reached Broadway there were already some omnibuses beginning their long day's travel up and down the handsome, tiresome length of that avenue; but for the most part it was empty. There was, of course, a hurry of foot-passengers upon the sidewalks, but these were sparse and uncharacteristic, for New York proper was still fast asleep. The waiter at the restaurant into which our friends stepped was so well aware of this, and so perfectly assured they were not of the city, that he could not forbear a little patronage of them, which they did not resent. He brought Basil what he had ordered in barbaric

abundance, and charged for it with barbaric splendor. It is all but impossible not to wish to stand well with your waiter: I have myself been often treated with conspicuous rudeness by the tribe, yet I have never been able to withhold the 'douceur' that marked me for a gentleman in their eyes, and entitled me to their dishonorable esteem. Basil was not superior to this folly, and left the waster with the conviction that, if he was not a New Yorker, he was a high-bred man of the world at any rate.

Vexed by a sense of his own pitifulness, this man of the world continued his pilgrimage down Broadway, which even in that desert state was full of a certain interest. Troops of laborers straggled along the pavements, each with his dinner-pail in hand; and in many places the eternal building up and pulling down was already going on; carts were struggling up the slopes of vast cellars, with loads of distracting rubbish; here stood the half-demolished walls of a house, with a sad variety of wall-paper showing in the different rooms; there clinked the trowel upon the brick, yonder the hammer on the stone; overhead swung and threatened the marble block that the derrick was lifting to its place. As yet these forces of demolition and construction had the business of the street almost to themselves.

"Why, how shabby the street is!" said Isabel, at last. When I landed, after being abroad, I remember that Broadway impressed me with its splendor."

"Ah I but you were merely coming from Europe then; and now you arrive from Burton, and are contrasting this poor Broadway with Washington Street. Don't be hard upon it, Isabel; every street can't be a Boston street, you know," said Basil. Isabel, herself a Bostonian of great intensity both by birth and conviction, believed her husband the only man able to have thoroughly baffled the malignity of the stars in causing him to be born out of Boston; yet he sometimes trifled with his hardly achieved triumph, and even showed an indifference to it, with an insincerity of which there can be no doubt whatever.

"O stuff!" she retorted, "as if I had any of that silly local pride! Though you know well enough that Boston is the best place in the world. But Basil! I suppose Broadway strikes us as so fine, on coming ashore from Europe, because we hardly expect anything of America then."

"Well, I don't know. Perhaps the street has some positive grandeur of its own, though it needs a multitude of people in it to bring out its best effects. I'll allow its disheartening shabbiness and meanness in many ways; but to stand in front of Grace Church, on a clear day,--a day of late September, say,--and look down the swarming length of Broadway, on the movement and the numbers, while the Niagara roar swelled and swelled from those human rapids, was always like strong new wine to me. I don't think the world affords such another sight; and for one moment, at such times, I'd have been willing to be an Irish councilman, that I might have some right to the pride I felt in the capital of the Irish Republic. What a fine thing it must be for each victim of six centuries of oppression to reflect that he owns at least a dozen Americans, and that, with his fellows, he rules a hundred helpless millionaires!"

Like all daughters of a free country, Isabel knew nothing about politics, and she felt that she was getting into deep water; she answered buoyantly, but she was glad to make her weariness the occasion of hailing a stage, and changing the conversation. The farther down town they went the busier the street grew; and about the Astor House, where they alighted, there was already a bustle that nothing but a fire could have created at the same hour in Boston. A little farther on the steeple of Trinity rose high into the scorching sunlight, while below, in the shadow that was darker than it was cool, slumbered the old graves among their flowers.

"How still they lie!" mused the happy wife, peering through the iron fence in passing.

"Yes, their wedding-journeys are ended, poor things!" said Basil; and through both their minds flashed the wonder if they should ever come to something like that; but it appeared so impossible that they both smiled at the absurdity.

"It's too early yet for Leonard," continued Basil; "what a pity the church-yard is locked up. We could spend the time so delightfully in it. But, never mind; let us go down to the Battery,--it 's not a very pleasant place, but it's near, and it's historical, and it's open,--where these drowsy friends of ours used to take the air when they were in the fashion, and had some occasion for the element in its freshness. You can imagine--it's cheap--how they used to see Mr. Burr and Mr. Hamilton down there."

All places that fashion has once loved and abandoned are very melancholy; but of all such places, I think the Battery is the most forlorn. Are there some sickly locust-trees there that cast a tremulous and decrepit shade upon the mangy grass-plots? I believe so, but I do not make sure; I am certain only of the mangy grass-plots, or rather the spaces between the paths, thinly overgrown with some kind of refuse and opprobrious weed, a stunted and pauper vegetation proper solely to the New York Battery. At that hour of the summer morning when our friends, with the aimlessness of strangers who are waiting to do something else, saw the ancient promenade, a few scant and hungry-eyed little boys and girls were wandering over this weedy growth, not playing, but moving listlessly to and fro, fantastic in the wild inaptness of their costumes. One of these little creatures wore, with an odd involuntary jauntiness, the cast-off best dress of some happier child, a gay little garment cut low in the neck and short in the sleeves, which gave her the grotesque effect of having been at a party the night before. Presently came two jaded women, a mother and a grandmother, that appeared, when they had crawled out of their beds, to have put on only so much clothing as the law compelled. They abandoned themselves upon the green stuff, whatever it was, and, with their lean hands clasped outside their knees, sat and stared, silent and hopeless, at the eastern sky, at the heart of the terrible furnace, into which in those days the world seemed cast to be burnt up, while the child which the younger woman had brought with her feebly wailed unheeded at her side. On one side of these women were the shameless houses out of

which they might have crept, and which somehow suggested riotous maritime dissipation; on the other side were those houses in which had once dwelt rich and famous folk, but which were now dropping down the boarding-house scale through various un-homelike occupations to final dishonor and despair. Down nearer the water, and not far from the castle that was once a playhouse and is now the depot of emigration, stood certain express-wagons, and about these lounged a few hard-looking men. Beyond laughed and danced the fresh blue water of the bay, dotted with sails and smokestacks.

"Well," said Basil, "I think if I could choose, I should like to be a friendless German boy, setting foot for the first time on this happy continent. Fancy his rapture on beholding this lovely spot, and these charming American faces! What a smiling aspect life in the New World must wear to his young eyes, and how his heart must leap within him!"

"Yes, Basil; it's all very pleasing, and thank you for bringing me. But if you don't think of any other New York delights to show me, do let us go and sit in Leonard's office till he comes, and then get out into the country as soon as possible."

Basil defended himself against the imputation that he had been trying to show New York to his wife, or that he had any thought but of whiling away the long morning hours, until it should be time to go to Leonard. He protested that a knowledge of Europe made New York the most uninteresting town in America, and that it was the last place in the world where he should think of amusing himself or any one else; and then they both upbraided the city's bigness and dullness with an enjoyment that none but Bostonians can know. They particularly derided the notion of New York's being loved by any one. It was immense, it was grand in some ways, parts of it were exceedingly handsome; but it was too vast, too coarse, too restless. They could imagine its being liked by a successful young man of business, or by a rich young girl, ignorant of life and with not too nice a taste in her pleasures; but that it should be dear to any poet or scholar, or any woman of wisdom and refinement, that they could not imagine. They could not think of any one's loving New York as Dante loved Florence, or as Madame de Stael loved Paris, or as Johnson loved black, homely, home-like London. And as they twittered their little dispraises, the giant Mother of Commerce was growing more and more conscious of herself, waking from her night's sleep and becoming aware of her fleets and trains, and the myriad hands and wheels that throughout the whole sea and land move for her, and do her will even while she sleeps. All about the wedding-journeyers swelled the deep tide of life back from its night-long ebb. Broadway had filled her length with people; not yet the most characteristic New York crowd, but the not less interesting multitude of strangers arrived by the early boats and trams, and that easily distinguishable class of lately New-Yorkized people from other places, about whom in the metropolis still hung the provincial traditions of early rising; and over all, from moment to moment, the eager, audacious, well-dressed, proper life of the mighty city was beginning to prevail,—though this was not so notable where Basil and Isabel had paused at a certain window. It was the office of one of the English steamers, and he was saying, "It was by this line I sailed, you

know,"--and she was interrupting him with, "When who could have dreamed that you would ever be telling me of it here?" So the old marvel was wondered over anew, till it filled the world in which there was room for nothing but the strangeness that they should have loved each other so long and not made it known, that they should ever have uttered it, and that, being uttered, it should be so much more and better than ever could have been dreamed. The broken engagement was a fable of disaster that only made their present fortune more prosperous. The city ceased about them, and they walked on up the street, the first man and first woman in the garden of the new-made earth. As they were both very conscious people, they recognized in themselves some sense of this, and presently drolled it away, in the opulence of a time when every moment brought some beautiful dream, and the soul could be prodigal of its bliss.

"I think if I had the naming of the animals over again, this morning, I shouldn't call snakes 'snakes'; should you, Eve?" laughed Basil in intricate acknowledgment of his happiness.

"O no, Adam; we'd look out all the most graceful euphemisms in the newspapers, and we wouldn't hurt the feelings of a spider."

II. MIDSUMMER-DAY'S DREAM.

They had waited to see Leonard, in order that they might learn better how to find his house in the country; and now, when they came in upon him at nine o'clock, he welcomed them with all his friendly heart. He rose from the pile of morning's letters to which he had but just sat down; he placed them the easiest chairs; he made a feint of its not being a busy hour with him, and would have had them look upon his office, which was still damp and odorous from the porter's broom, as a kind of down-town parlor; but after they had briefly accounted to his amazement for their appearance then and there, and Isabel had boasted of the original fashion in which they had that morning seen New York, they took pity on him, and bade him adieu till evening.

They crossed from Broadway to the noisome street by the ferry, and in a little while had taken their places in the train on the other side of the water.

"Don't tell me, Basil," said Isabel, "that Leonard travels fifty miles every day by rail going to and from his work!"

"I must, dearest, if I would be truthful."

"Then, darling, there are worse things in this world than living up at the South End, aren't there?" And in agreement upon Boston as a place of the greatest natural advantages, as well as all acquirable merits, with after talk that need not be recorded, they arrived in the best humor at the little country station near which the Leonards dwelt.

I must inevitably follow Mrs. Isabel thither, though I do it at the cost of the reader, who suspects the excitements which a long description of the movement would delay. The ladies were very old friends, and they had not met since Isabel's return from Europe and renewal of her engagement. Upon the news of this, Mrs. Leonard had swallowed with surprising ease all that she had said in blame of Basil's conduct during the rupture, and exacted a promise from her friend that she should pay her the first visit after their marriage. And now that they had come together, their only talk; was of husbands, whom they viewed in every light to which husbands could be turned, and still found an inexhaustible novelty in the theme. Mrs. Leonard beheld in her friend's joy the sweet reflection of her own honeymoon, and Isabel was pleased to look upon the prosperous marriage of the former as the image of her future. Thus, with immense profit and comfort, they reassured one another by every question and answer, and in their weak content lapsed far behind the representative women of our age, when husbands are at best a necessary evil, and the relation of wives to them is known to be one of pitiable subjection. When these two pretty, fogies put their heads of false hair together, they were as silly and benighted as their great-grandmothers could have been in the same circumstances, and, as I say, shamefully encouraged each other, in their absurdity. The absurdity appeared too good and blessed to be true. "Do you really suppose, Basil," Isabel would say to her oppressor, after having given him some elegant extract from the last conversation upon husbands, "that we shall get on as smoothly as the Leonards when we have been married ten years? Lucy says that things go more hitchily the first year than ever they do afterwards, and that people love each other better and better just because they've got used to it. Well, our bliss does seem a little crude and garish compared with their happiness; and yet"--she put up both her palms against his, and gave a vehement little push--"there is something agreeable about it, even at this stage of the proceedings."

"Isabel," said her husband, with severity, "this is bridal!"

"No matter! I only want to seem an old married woman to the general public. But the application of it is that you must be careful not to contradict me, or cross me in anything, so that we can be like the Leonards very much sooner than they became so. The great object is not to have any hitchiness; and you know you ARE provoking--at times."

They both educated themselves for continued and tranquil happiness by the example and precept of their friends; and the time passed swiftly in the pleasant learning, and in the novelty of the life led by the Leonards. This indeed merits a closer study than can be given here, for it is the life led by vast numbers of prosperous New Yorkers who love both the excitement of the city and the repose of the country, and who aspire to unite the enjoyment of both in their daily existence. The suburbs of the metropolis stretch landward fifty miles in every direction; and everywhere are handsome villas like Leonard's, inhabited by men like himself, whom strict study of the time-table enables to spend all their working hours in the city and all their smoking and sleeping hours in the country.

The home and the neighborhood of the Leonards put on their best looks for our bridal pair, and they were charmed. They all enjoyed the visit, said guests and hosts, they were all sorry to have it come to an end; yet they all resigned themselves to this conclusion. Practically, it had no other result than to detain the travellers into the very heart of the hot weather. In that weather it was easy to do anything that did not require an active effort, and resignation was so natural with the mercury at ninety, that I am not sure but there was something sinful in it.

They had given up their cherished purpose of going to Albany by the day boat, which was represented to them in every impossible phase. It would be dreadfully crowded, and whenever it stopped the heat would be insupportable. Besides it would bring them to Albany at an hour when they must either spend the night there, or push on to Niagara by the night train. "You had better go by the evening boat. It will be light almost till you reach West Point, and you'll see all the best scenery. Then you can get a good night's rest, and start fresh in the morning." So they were counseled, and they assented, as they would have done if they had been advised: "You had better go by the morning boat. It's deliciously cool, travelling; you see the whole of the river, you reach Albany for supper, and you push through to Niagara that night and are done with it."

They took leave of Leonard at breakfast and of his wife at noon, and fifteen minutes later they were rushing from the heat of the country into the heat of the city, where some affairs and pleasures were to employ them till the evening boat should start.

Their spirits were low, for the terrible spell of the great heat brooded upon them. All abroad burned the fierce white light of the sun, in which not only the earth seemed to parch and thirst, but the very air withered, and was faint and thin to the troubled respiration. Their train was full of people who had come long journeys from broiling cities of the West, and who were dusty and ashen and reeking in the slumbers at which some of them still vainly caught. On every one lay an awful languor. Here and there stirred a fan, like the broken wing of a dying bird; now and then a sweltering young mother shifted her hot baby from one arm to another; after every station the desperate conductor swung through the long aisle and punched the ticket, which each passenger seemed to yield him with a tacit malediction; a suffering child hung about the empty tank, which could only gasp out a cindery drop or two of ice-water. The wind buffeted faintly at the windows; when the door was opened, the clatter of the rails struck through and through the car like a demoniac yell.

Yet when they arrived at the station by the ferry-side, they seemed to have entered its stifling darkness from fresh and vigorous atmosphere, so close and dead and mined with the carbonic breath of the locomotives was the air of the place. The thin old wooden walls that shut out the glare of the sun transmitted an intensified warmth; the roof seemed to hover lower and lower, and in its coal-smoked, raftery hollow to generate a heat deadlier than that poured upon it from the skies.

In a convenient place in the station hung a thermometer, before which

every passenger, on going aboard the ferry-boat, paused as at a shrine, and mutely paid his devotions. At the altar of this fetich our friends also paused, and saw that the mercury was above ninety, and exulting with the pride that savages take in the cruel might of their idols, bowed their souls to the great god Heat.

On the boat they found a place where the breath of the sea struck cool across their faces, and made them forget the thermometer for the brief time of the transit. But presently they drew near that strange, irregular row of wooden buildings and jutting piers which skirts the river on the New York aide, and before the boat's motion ceased the air grew thick and warm again, and tainted with the foulness of the street on which the buildings front. Upon this the boat's passengers issued, passing up through a gangway, on one side of which a throng of return-passengers was pent by a gate of iron barn, like a herd of wild animals. They were streaming with perspiration, and, according to their different temperaments, had faces of deep crimson or deadly pallor.

"Now the question is, my dear," said Basil when, free of the press, they lingered for a moment in the shade outside, "whether we had better walk up to Broadway, at an immediate sacrifice of fibre, and get a stage there, or take one of these cars here, and be landed a little nearer, with half the exertion. By this route we shall have sights end smells which the other can't offer us, but whichever we take we shall be sorry."

"Then I say take this," decided Isabel. "I want to be sorry upon the easiest possible terms, this weather."

They hailed the first car that passed, and got into it. Well for them both if she could have exercised this philosophy with regard to the whole day's business, or if she could have given up her plans for it, with the same resignation she had practiced in regard to the day boat! It seems to me a proof of the small advance our race has made in true wisdom, that we find it so hard to give up doing anything we have meant to do. It matters very little whether the affair is one of enjoyment or of business, we feel the same bitter need of pursuing it to the end. The mere fact of intention gives it a flavor of duty, and dutiolatry, as one may call the devotion, has passed so deeply into our life that we have scarcely a sense any more of the sweetness of even a neglected pleasure. We will not taste the fine, guilty rapture of a deliberate dereliction; the gentle sin of omission is all but blotted from the calendar of our crimes. If I had been Columbus, I should have thought twice before setting sail, when I was quite ready to do so; and as for Plymouth Rock, I should have sternly resisted the blandishments of those twin sirens, Starvation and Cold, who beckoned the Puritans shoreward, and as soon as ever I came in sight of their granite perch should have turned back to England. But it is now too late to repair these errors, and so, on one of the hottest days of last year, behold my obdurate bridal pair, in a Tenth or Twentieth Avenue horse-car, setting forth upon the fulfillment of a series of intentions, any of which had wiselier been left unaccomplished. Isabel had said they would call upon certain people in Fiftieth Street, and then shop slowly down, ice-creaming and staging and variously cooling and calming by the way, until they reached the ticket-

office on Broadway, whence they could indefinitely betake themselves to the steamboat an hour or two before her departure. She felt that they had yielded sufficiently to circumstances and conditions already on this journey, and she was resolved that the present half-day in New York should be the half-day of her original design.

It was not the most advisable thing, as I have allowed, but it was inevitable, and it afforded them a spectacle which is by no means wanting in sublimity, and which is certainly unique,—the spectacle of that great city on a hot day, defiant of the elements, and prospering on with every form of labor, and at a terrible cost of life. The man carrying the hod to the top of the walls that rankly grow and grow as from his life's blood, will only lay down his load when he feels the mortal glare of the sun blaze in upon heart and brain; the plethoric millionaire for whom he toils will plot and plan in his office till he swoons at the desk; the trembling beast must stagger forward while the flame-faced tormentor on the box has strength to lash him on; in all those vast palaces of commerce there are ceaseless sale and purchase, packing and unpacking, lifting up and laying down, arriving and departing loads; in thousands of shops is the unspared and unsparring weariness of selling; in the street, filled by the hurry and suffering of tens of thousands, is the weariness of buying.

Their afternoon's experience was something that Basil and Isabel could, when it was past, look upon only as a kind of vision, magnificent at times, and at other times full of indignity and pain. They seemed to have dreamed of a long horse-car pilgrimage through that squalid street by the river-side, where presently they came to a market, opening upon the view hideous vistas of carnage, and then into a wide avenue, with processions of cars like their own coming and going up and down the centre of a foolish and useless breadth, which made even the tall buildings (rising gauntly up among the older houses of one or two stories) on either hand look low, and let in the sun to bake the dust that the hot breaths of wind caught up and went swirling into the shabby shops. Here they dreamed of the eternal demolition and construction of the city, and farther on of vacant lots full of granite boulders, clambered over by goats. In their dream they had fellow-passengers, whose sufferings made them odious and whom they were glad to leave behind when they alighted from the car, and running out of the blaze of the avenue, quenched themselves in the shade of the cross-street. A little strip of shadow lay along the row of brown-stone fronts, but there were intervals where the vacant lots cast no shadow. With great bestowal of thought they studied hopelessly how to avoid these spaces as if they had been difficult torrents or vast expanses of desert sand; they crept slowly along till they came to such a place, and dashed swiftly across it, and then, fainter than before, moved on. They seemed now and then to stand at doors, and to be told that people were out and again that they were in; and they had a sense of cool dark parlors, and the airy rustling of light-muslined ladies, of chat and of fans and ice-water, and then they came forth again; and evermore

"The day increased from heat to heat"

At last they were aware of an end of their visits, and of a purpose to go down town again, and of seeking the nearest car by endless blocks of brown-stone fronts, which with their eternal brownstone flights of steps, and their handsome, intolerable uniformity, oppressed them like a procession of houses trying to pass a given point and never getting by. Upon these streets there was, seldom a soul to be seen, so that when their ringing at a door had evoked answer, it had startled them with a vague, sad surprise. In the distance on either hand they could see cars and carts and wagons toiling up and down the avenues, and on the next intersecting pavement sometimes a laborer with his jacket slung across his shoulder, or a dog that had plainly made up his mind to go mad. Up to the time of their getting into one of those phantasmal cars for the return down-townwards they had kept up a show of talk in their wretched dream; they had spoken of other hot days that they had known elsewhere; and they had wondered that the tragical character of heat had been so little recognized. They said that the daily New York murder might even at that moment be somewhere taking place; and that no murder of the whole homicidal year could have such proper circumstance; they morbidly wondered what that day's murder would be, and in what swarming tenement-house, or den of the assassin streets by the river-sides,--if indeed it did not befall in some such high, close-shuttered, handsome dwelling as those they passed, in whose twilight it would be so easy to strike down the master and leave him undiscovered and unmourned by the family ignorantly absent at the mountains or the seaside. They conjectured of the horror of midsummer battles, and pictured the anguish of shipwrecked men upon a tropical coast, and the grimy misery of stevedores unloading shiny cargoes of anthracite coal at city docks. But now at last, as they took seats opposite one another in the crowded car, they seemed to have drifted infinite distances and long epochs asunder. They looked hopelessly across the intervening gulf, and mutely questioned when it was and from what far city they or some remote ancestors of theirs had set forth upon a wedding journey. They bade each other a tacit farewell, and with patient, pathetic faces awaited the end of the world.

When they alighted, they took their way up through one of the streets of the great wholesale businesses, to Broadway. On this street was a throng of trucks and wagons lading and unlading; bales and boxes rose and sank by pulleys overhead; the footway was a labyrinth of packages of every shape and size: there was no flagging of the pitiless energy that moved all forward, no sign of how heavy a weight lay on it, save in the reeking faces of its helpless instruments. But when the wedding-journeymen emerged upon Broadway, the other passages and incidents of their dream faded before the superior fantasticality of the spectacle. It was four o'clock, the deadliest hour of the deadly summer day. The spiritless air seemed to have a quality of blackness in it, as if filled with the gloom of low-hovering wings. One half the street lay in shadow, and one half in sun; but the sunshine itself was dim, as if a heat greater than its own had smitten it with languor. Little gusts of sick, warm wind blew across the great avenue at the corners of the intersecting streets. In the upward distance, at which the journeymen looked, the loftier roofs and steeples lifted themselves dim out of the livid atmosphere, and far up and down the length of the street swept a stream of tormented life. All sorts of wheeled things thronged it, conspicuous among which rolled

and jarred the gaudily painted Stages, with quivering horses driven each by a man who sat in the shade of a branching white umbrella, and suffered with a moody truculence of aspect, and as if he harbored the bitterness of death in his heart for the crowding passengers within, when one of them pulled the strap about his legs, and summoned him to halt. Most of the foot-passengers kept to the shady side, and to the unaccustomed eyes of the strangers they were not less in number than at any other time, though there were fewer women among them. Indomitably resolute of soul, they held their course with the swift pace of custom, and only here and there they showed the effect of the heat. One man, collarless, with waistcoat unbuttoned, and hat set far back from his forehead, waved a fan before his death-white flabby face, and set down one foot after the other with the heaviness of a somnambulist. Another, as they passed him, was saying huskily to the friend at his side, "I can't stand this much longer. My hands tingle as if they had gone to sleep; my heart--" But still the multitude hurried on, passing, repassing, encountering, evading, vanishing into shop-doors and emerging from them, dispersing down the side streets, and swarming out of them. It was a scene that possessed the beholder with singular fascination, and in its effect of universal lunacy, it might well have seemed the last phase of a world presently to be destroyed. They who were in it but not of it, as they fancied, though there was no reason for this,--looked on it amazed, and at last their own errands being accomplished, and themselves so far cured of the madness of purpose, they cried with one voice, that it was a hideous sight, and strove to take refuge from it in the nearest place where the soda-fountain sparkled.

It was a vain desire. At the front door of the apothecary's hung a thermometer, and as they entered they heard the next comer cry out with a maniacal pride in the affliction laid upon mankind, "Ninety-seven degrees!" Behind them at the door there poured in a ceaseless stream of people, each pausing at the shrine of heat; before he tossed off the hissing draught that two pale, close-clipped boys served them from either side of the fountain. Then in the order of their coming they issued through another door upon the side street, each, as he disappeared, turning his face half round, and casting a casual glance upon a little group near another counter. The group was of a very patient, half-frightened, half-puzzled looking gentleman who sat perfectly still on a stool, and of a lady who stood beside him, rubbing all over his head a handkerchief full of pounded ice, and easing one hand with the other when the first became tired. Basil drank his soda and paused to look upon this group, which he felt would commend itself to realistic sculpture as eminently characteristic of the local life, and as "The Sunstroke" would sell enormously in the hot season. "Better take a little more of that," the apothecary said, looking up from his prescription, and, as the organized sympathy of the seemingly indifferent crowd, smiling very kindly at his patient, who thereupon tasted something in the glass he held. "Do you still feel like fainting?" asked the humane authority. "Slightly, now and then," answered the other, "but I'm hanging on hard to the bottom curve of that icicled S on your soda-fountain, and I feel that I'm all right as long as I can see that. The people get rather hazy, occasionally, and have no features to speak of. But I don't know that I look very impressive myself," he added in the jesting mood which seems

the natural condition of Americans in the face of all embarrassments.

"O, you'll do!" the apothecary answered, with a laugh; but he said, in answer to an anxious question from the lady, "He mustn't be moved for an hour yet," and gayly pestled away at a prescription, while she resumed her office of grinding the pounded ice round and round upon her husband's skull. Isabel offered her the commiseration of friendly words, and of looks kinder yet, and then seeing that they could do nothing, she and Basil fell into the endless procession, and passed out of the side door. "What a shocking thing!" she whispered. "Did you see how all the people looked, one after another, so indifferently at that couple, and evidently forgot them the next instant? It was dreadful. I shouldn't like to have you sun-struck in New York."

"That's very considerate of you; but place for place, if any accident must happen to me among strangers, I think I should prefer to have it in New York. The biggest place is always the kindest as well as the cruelest place. Amongst the thousands of spectators the good Samaritan as well as the Levite would be sure to be. As for a sun-stroke, it requires peculiar gifts. But if you compel me to a choice in the matter, then I say, give me the busiest part of Broadway for a sun-stroke. There is such experience of calamity there that you could hardly fall the first victim to any misfortune. Probably the gentleman at the apothecary's was merely exhausted by the heat, and ran in there for revival. The apothecary has a case of the kind on his hands every blazing afternoon, and knows just what to do. The crowd may be a little 'ennuye' of sun-strokes, and to that degree indifferent, but they most likely know that they can only do harm by an expression of sympathy, and so they delegate their pity as they have delegated their helpfulness to the proper authority, and go about their business. If a man was overcome in the middle of a village street, the blundering country druggist wouldn't know what to do, and the tender-hearted people would crowd about so that no breath of air could reach the victim."

"May be so, dear," said the wife, pensively; but if anything did happen to you in New York, I should like to have the spectators look as if they saw a human being in trouble. Perhaps I'm a little exacting."

"I think you are. Nothing is so hard as to understand that there are human beings in this world besides one's self and one's set. But let us be selfishly thankful that it isn't you and I there in the apothecary's shop, as it might very well be; and let us get to the boat as soon as we can, and end this horrible midsummer-day's dream. We must have a carriage," he added with tardy wisdom, hailing an empty hack, "as we ought to have had all day; though I'm not sorry, now the worst's over, to have seen the worst."

III. THE NIGHT BOAT.

There is little proportion about either pain or pleasure: a headache

darkens the universe while it lasts, a cup of tea really lightens the spirit bereft of all reasonable consolations. Therefore I do not think it trivial or untrue to say that there is for the moment nothing more satisfactory in life than to have bought your ticket on the night boat up the Hudson and secured your state-room key an hour or two before departure, and some time even before the pressure at the clerk's office has begun. In the transaction with this castellated baron, you have of course been treated with haughtiness, but not with ferocity, and your self-respect swells with a sense of having escaped positive insult; your key clicks cheerfully in your pocket against its gutta-percha number, and you walk up and down the gorgeously carpeted, single-columned, two-story cabin, amid a multitude of plush sofas and chairs, a glitter of glass, and a tinkle of prismatic chandeliers overhead, unawed even by the aristocratic gloom of the yellow waiters. Your own stateroom as you enter it from time to time is an ever-new surprise of splendors, a magnificent effect of amplitude, of mahogany bedstead, of lace curtains, and of marble topped wash-stand. In the mere wantonness of an unalloyed prosperity you say to the saffron nobleman nearest your door, "Bring me a pitcher of ice-water, quick, please!" and you do not find the half-hour that he is gone very long.

If the ordinary wayfarer experiences so much pleasure from these things, then imagine the infinite comfort of our wedding-journeymen, transported from Broadway on that pitiless afternoon to the shelter and the quiet of that absurdly palatial steamboat. It was not yet crowded, and by the river-side there was almost a freshness in the air. They disposed of their troubling bags and packages; they complimented the ridiculous princeliness of their stateroom, and then they betook themselves to the sheltered space aft of the saloon, where they sat down for the tranquiller observance of the wharf and whatever should come to be seen by them. Like all people who have just escaped with their lives from some menacing calamity, they were very philosophical in spirit; and having got aboard of their own motion, and being neither of them apparently the worse for the ordeal they had passed through, were of a light, conversational temper.

"What an amusingly superb affair!" Basil cried as they glanced through an open window down the long vista of the saloon. "Good heavens! Isabel, does it take all this to get us plain republicans to Albany in comfort and safety, or are we really a nation of princes in disguise? Well, I shall never be satisfied with less hereafter," he added. "I am spoilt for ordinary paint and upholstery from this hour; I am a ruinous spendthrift, and a humble three-story swell-front up at the South End is no longer the place for me. Dearest,

'Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal mind,'

never to leave this Aladdin's-palace-like steamboat, but spend our lives in perpetual trips up and down the Hudson."

To which not very costly banter Isabel responded in kind, and rapidly sketched the life they could lead aboard. Since they could not help it, they mocked the public provision which, leaving no interval between

disgraceful squalor and ludicrous splendor, accommodates our democratic 'menage' to the taste of the richest and most extravagant plebeian amongst us. He, unhappily, minds danger and oppression as little as he minds money, so long as he has a spectacle and a sensation, and it is this ruthless imbecile who will have lace curtains to the steamboat berth into which he gets with his pantaloons on, and out of which he may be blown by an exploding boiler at any moment; it is he who will have for supper that overgrown and shapeless dinner in the lower saloon, and will not let any one else buy tea or toast for a less sum than he pays for his surfeit; it is he who perpetuates the insolence of the clerk and the reluctance of the waiters; it is he, in fact, who now comes out of the saloon, with his womenkind, and takes chairs under the awning where Basil and Isabel sit. Personally, he is not so bad; he is good-looking, like all of us; he is better dressed than most of us; he behaves himself quietly, if not easily; and no lord so loathes a scene. Next year he is going to Europe, where he will not show to so much advantage as here; but for the present it would be hard to say in what way he is vulgar, and perhaps vulgarity is not so common a thing after all.

It was something besides the river that made the air so much more sufferable than it had been. Over the city, since our friends had come aboard the boat, a black cloud had gathered and now hung low upon it, while the wind from the face of the water took the dust in the neighboring streets, and frolicked it about the house-tops, and in the faces of the arriving passengers, who, as the moment of departure drew near, appeared in constantly increasing numbers and in greater variety, with not only the trepidation of going upon them, but also with the electrical excitement people feel before a tempest.

The breast of the black cloud was now zigzagged from moment to moment by lightning, and claps of deafening thunder broke from it. At last the long endurance of the day was spent, and out of its convulsion burst floods of rain, again and again sweeping the promenade-deck where the people sat, and driving them disconsolate into the saloon. The air was darkened as by night, and with many regrets for the vanishing prospect, mingled with a sense of relief from the heat, our friends felt the boat tremble away from her moorings and set forth upon her trip.

"Ah! if we had only taken the day boat!" moaned Isabel. "Now, we shall see nothing of the river landscape, and we shall never be able to put ourselves down when we long for Europe, by declaring that the scenery of the Hudson is much finer than that of the Rhine."

Yet they resolved, this indomitably good-natured couple, that they would be just even to the elements, which had by no means been generous to them; and they owned that if so noble a storm had celebrated their departure upon some storied river from some more romantic port than New York, they would have thought it an admirable thing. Even whilst they contented themselves, the storm passed, and left a veiled and humid sky overhead, that gave a charming softness to the scene on which their eyes fell when they came out of the saloon again, and took their places with a largely increased companionship on the deck.

They had already reached that part of the river where the uplands begin, and their course was between stately walls of rocky steepness, or wooded slopes, or grassy hollows, the scene forever losing and taking grand and lovely shape. Wreaths of mist hung about the tops of the loftier headlands, and long shadows draped their sides. As the night grew, lights twinkled from a lonely house here and there in the valleys; a swarm of lamps showed a town where it lay upon the lap or at the foot of the hills. Behind them stretched the great gray river, haunted with many sails; now a group of canal-boats grappled together, and having an air of coziness in their adventure upon this strange current out of their own sluggish waters, drifted out of sight; and now a smaller and slower steamer, making a laborious show of keeping up was passed, and reluctantly fell behind; along the water's edge rattled and hooted the frequent trains. They could not tell at any time what part of the river they were on, and they could not, if they would, have made its beauty a matter of conscientious observation; but all the more, therefore, they deeply enjoyed it without reference to time or place. They felt some natural pain when they thought that they might unwittingly pass the scenes that Irving has made part of the common dream-land, and they would fair have seen the lighted windows of the house out of which a cheerful ray has penetrated to so many hearts; but being sure of nothing, as they were, they had the comfort of finding the Tappan Zee in every expanse of the river, and of discovering Sunny-Side on every pleasant slope. By virtue of this helplessness, the Hudson, without ceasing to be the Hudson, became from moment to moment all fair and stately streams upon which they had voyaged or read of voyaging, from the Nile to the Mississippi. There is no other travel like river travel; it is the perfection of movement, and one might well desire never to arrive at one's destination. The abundance of room, the free, pure air, the constant delight of the eyes in the changing landscape, the soft tremor of the boat, so steady upon her keel, the variety of the little world on board,--all form a charm which no good heart in a sound body can resist. So, whilst the twilight held, well content, in contiguous chairs, they purred in flattery of their kindly fate, imagining different pleasures, certainly, but none greater, and tasting to its subtlest flavor the happiness conscious of itself.

Their own satisfaction, indeed, was so interesting to them in this objective light, that they had little desire to turn from its contemplation to the people around them; and when at last they did so, it was still with lingering glances of self-recognition and enjoyment. They divined rightly that one of the main conditions of their present felicity was the fact that they had seen so much of time and of the world, that they had no longer any desire to take beholding eyes, or to make any sort of impressive figure, and they understood that their prosperous love accounted as much as years and travel for this result. If they had had a loftier opinion of themselves, their indifference to others might have made them offensive; but with their modest estimate of their own value in the world, they could have all the comfort of self-sufficiency, without its vulgarity.

"O yes!" said Basil, in answer to some apostrophe to their bliss from Isabel, "it's the greatest imaginable satisfaction to have lived past

certain things. I always knew that I was not a very handsome or otherwise captivating person, but I can remember years--now blessedly remote--when I never could see a young girl without hoping she would mistake me for something of that sort. I couldn't help desiring that some fascination of mine, which had escaped my own analysis, would have an effect upon her. I dare say all young men are so. I used to live for the possible interest I might inspire in your sex, Isabel. They controlled my movements, my attitudes; they forbade me repose; and yet I believe I was no ass, but a tolerably sensible fellow. Blessed be marriage, I am free at last! All the loveliness that exists outside of you, dearest,--and it 's mighty little,--is mere pageant to me; and I thank Heaven that I can meet the most stylish girl now upon the broad level of our common humanity. Besides, it seems to me that our experience of life has quieted us in many other ways. What a luxury it is to sit here, and reflect that we do not want any of these people to suppose us rich, or distinguished, or beautiful, or well dressed, and do not care to show off in any sort of way before them!"

This content was heightened, no doubt, by a just sense of their contrast to the group of people nearest there,--a young man of the second or third quality--and two young girls. The eldest of these was carrying on a vivacious flirtation with the young man, who was apparently an acquaintance of brief standing; the other was scarcely more than a child, and sat somewhat abashed at the sparkle of the colloquy. They were conjecturally sisters going home from some visit, and not skilled in the world, but of a certain repute in their country neighborhood for beauty and wit. The young man presently gave himself out as one who, in pursuit of trade for the dry-goods house he represented, had travelled many thousands of miles in all parts of the country. The encounter was visibly that kind of adventure which both would treasure up for future celebration to their different friends; and it had a brilliancy and interest which they could not even now consent to keep to themselves. They talked to each other and at all the company within hearing, and exchanged curt speeches which had for them all the sensation of repartee.

Young Man. They say that beauty unadorned is adorned the most.

Young Woman (bridling, and twitching her head from side to side, in the high excitement of the dialogue). Flattery is out of place.

Young Man. Well, never mind. If you don't believe me, you ask your mother when you get home.

(Titter from the younger sister.)

Young Woman (scornfully). Umph! my mother has no control over me!

Young Man. Nobody else has, either, I should say. (Admiringly.)

Young Woman. Yes, you've told the truth for once, for a wonder. I'm able to take care of myself,--perfectly. (Almost hoarse with a sense of sarcastic performance.)

Young Man. "Whole team and big dog under the wagon," as they say out West.

Young Woman. Better a big dog than a puppy, any day.

Giggles and horror from the younger sister, sensation in the young man, and so much rapture in the young woman that she drops the key of her state-room from her hand. They both stoop, and a jocose scuffle for it ensues, after which the talk takes an autobiographical turn on the part of the young man, and drops into an unintelligible murmur. "Ah! poor Real Life, which I love, can I make others share the delight I find in thy foolish and insipid face?"

Not far from this group sat two Hebrews, one young and the other old, talking of some business out of which the latter had retired. The younger had been asked his opinion upon some point, and he was expanding with a flattered consciousness of the elder's perception of his importance, and toadying to him with the pleasure which all young men feel in winning the favor of seniors in their vocation. "Well, as I was a-say'n', Isaac don't seem to haf no natcheral pent for the glothing business. Man gomes in and wands a goat,"--he seemed to be speaking of a garment and not a domestic animal,--"Isaac'll zell him the goat he wands him to puy, and he'll make him believe it 'a the goat he was a lookin' for. Well, now, that's well enough as far as it goes; but you know and I know, Mr. Rosenthal, that that 's no way to do business. A man gan't zugzeed that goes upon that brincible. Id's wrong. Id's easy enough to make a man puy the goat you want him to, if he wands a goat, but the thing is to make him puy the goat that you wand to zell when he don't wand no goat at all. You've asked me what I thought and I've dold you. Isaac'll never zugzeed in the redail glothing-business in the world!"

"Well," sighed the elder, who filled his armchair quite full, and quivered with a comfortable jelly-like tremor in it, at every pulsation of the engine, "I was afraid of something of the kind. As you say, Benjamin, he don't seem to have no pent for it. And yet I proughd him up to the business; I drained him to it, myself."

Besides these talkers, there were scattered singly, or grouped about in twos and threes and fours, the various people one encounters on a Hudson River boat, who are on the whole different from the passengers on other rivers, though they all have features in common. There was that man of the sudden gains, who has already been typified; and there was also the smoother rich man of inherited wealth, from whom you can somehow know the former so readily. They were each attended by their several retinues of womankind, the daughters all much alike, but the mothers somewhat different. They were going to Saratoga, where perhaps the exigencies of fashion would bring them acquainted, and where the blue blood of a quarter of a century would be kind to the yesterday's fluid of warmer hue. There was something pleasanter in the face of the hereditary aristocrat, but not so strong, nor, altogether, so admirable; particularly if you reflected that he really represented nothing in the world, no great culture, no political influence, no civic aspiration, not even a pecuniary force, nothing but a social set, an alien club-life,

a tradition of dining. We live in a true fairy land after all, where the hoarded treasure turns to a heap of dry leaves. The almighty dollar defeats itself, and finally buys nothing that a man cares to have. The very highest pleasure that such an American's money can purchase is exile, and to this rich man doubtless Europe is a twice-told tale. Let us clap our empty pockets, dearest reader, and be glad.

We can be as glad, apparently, and with the same reason as the poorly dressed young man standing near beside the guard, whose face Basil and Isabel chose to fancy that of a poet, and concerning whom, they romanced that he was going home, wherever his home was, with the manuscript of a rejected book in his pocket. They imagined him no great things of a poet, to be sure, but his pensive face claimed delicate feeling for him, and a graceful, sombre fancy, and they conjectured unconsciously caught flavors of Tennyson and Browning in his verse, with a modern tint from Morris: for was it not a story out of mythology, with gods and heroes of the nineteenth century, that he was now carrying back from New York with him? Basil sketched from the colors of his own long-accepted disappointments a moving little picture of this poor imagined poet's adventures; with what kindness and unkindness he had been put to shame by publishers, and how, descending from his high, hopes of a book, he had tried to sell to the magazines some of the shorter pieces out of the "And other Poems" which were to have filled up the volume. "He's going back rather stunned and bewildered; but it's something to have tasted the city, and its bitter may turn to sweet on his palate, at last, till he finds himself longing for the tumult that he abhors now. Poor fellow! one compassionate cut-throat of a publisher even asked him to lunch, being struck, as we are, with something fine in his face. I hope he's got somebody who believes in him, at home. Otherwise he'd be more comfortable, for the present, if he went over the railing there."

So the play of which they were both actors and spectators went on about them. Like all passages of life, it seemed now a grotesque mystery, with a bluntly enforced moral, now a farce of the broadest, now a latent tragedy folded in the disguises of comedy. All the elements, indeed, of either were at work there, and this was but one brief scene of the immense complex drama which was to proceed so variously in such different times and places, and to have its denouement only in eternity. The contrasts were sharp: each group had its travesty in some other; the talk of one seemed the rude burlesque, the bitter satire of the next; but of all these parodies none was so terribly effective as the two women, who sat in the midst of the company, yet were somehow distinct from the rest. One wore the deepest black of widowhood, the other was dressed in bridal white, and they were both alike awful in their mockery of guiltless sorrow and guiltless joy. They were not old, but the soul of youth was dead in their pretty, lamentable faces, and ruin ancient as sin looked from their eyes; their talk and laughter seemed the echo of an innumerable multitude of the lost haunting the world in every land and time, each solitary forever, yet all bound together in the unity of an imperishable slavery and shame.

What a stale effect! What hackneyed characters! Let us be glad the night drops her curtain upon the cheap spectacle, and shuts these with

the other actors from our view.

Within the cabin, through which Basil and Isabel now slowly moved, there were numbers of people lounging about on the sofas, in various attitudes of talk or vacancy; and at the tables there were others reading "Lothair," a new book in the remote epoch of which I write, and a very fashionable book indeed. There was in the air that odor of paint and carpet which prevails on steamboats; the glass drops of the chandeliers ticked softly against each other, as the vessel shook with her respiration, like a comfortable sleeper, and imparted a delicious feeling of coziness and security to our travellers.

A few hours later they struggled awake at the sharp sound of the pilot's bell signaling the engineer to slow the boat. There was a moment of perfect silence; then all the drops of the chandeliers in the saloon clashed musically together; then fell another silence; and at last came wild cries for help, strongly qualified with blasphemies and curses. "Send out a boat!" "There was a woman aboard that steamboat!" "Lower your boats!" "Run a craft right down, with your big boat!" "Send out a boat and pick up the crew!" "The cries rose and sank, and finally ceased; through the lattice of the state-room window some lights shone faintly on the water at a distance.

"Wait here, Isabel!" said her husband. "We've run down a boat. We don't seem hurt; but I'll go see. I'll be back in a minute."

Isabel had emerged into a world of dishabille, a world wildly unbuttoned and unlaced, where it was the fashion for ladies to wear their hair down their backs, and to walk about in their stockings, and to speak to each other without introduction. The place with which she had felt so familiar a little while before was now utterly estranged. There was no motion of the boat, and in the momentary suspense a quiet prevailed, in which those grotesque shapes of disarray crept noiselessly round whispering panic-stricken conjectures. There was no rushing to and fro, nor tumult of any kind, and there was not a man to be seen, for apparently they had all gone like Basil to learn the extent of the calamity. A mist of sleep involved the whole, and it was such a topsy-turvy world that it would have seemed only another dream-land, but that it was marked for reality by one signal fact. With the rest appeared the woman in bridal white and the woman in widow's black, and there, amidst the fright that made all others friends, and for aught that most knew, in the presence of death itself, these two moved together shunned and friendless.

Somehow, even before Basil returned, it had become known to Isabel and the rest that their own steamer had suffered no harm, but that she had struck and sunk another conveying a flotilla of canal boats, from which those alarming cries and curses had come. The steamer was now lying by for the small boats she had sent out to pick up the crew of the sunken vessel.

"Why, I only heard a little tinkling of the chandeliers," said one of the ladies. "Is it such a very alight matter to run down another boat and

sink it?"

She appealed indirectly to Basil, who answered lightly, "I don't think you ladies ought to have been disturbed at all. In running over a common tow-boat on a perfectly clear night like this there should have been no noise and no perceptible jar. They manage better on the Mississippi, and both boats often go down without waking the lightest sleeper on board."

The ladies, perhaps from a deficient sense of humor, listened with undisguised displeasure to this speech. It dispersed them, in fact; some turned away to bivouac for the rest of the night upon the arm-chairs and sofas, while others returned to their rooms. With the latter went Isabel. "Lock me in, Basil," she said, with a bold meekness, "and if anything more happens don't wake me till the last moment." It was hard to part from him, but she felt that his vigil would somehow be useful to the boat, and she confidently fell into a sleep that lasted till daylight.

Meantime, her husband, on whom she had tacitly devolved so great a responsibility, went forward to the promenade in front of the saloon, in hopes of learning something more of the catastrophe from the people whom he had already found gathered there.

A large part of the passengers were still there, seated or standing about in earnest colloquy. They were in that mood which follows great excitement, and in which the feeblest-minded are sure to lead the talk. At such times one feels that a sensible frame of mind is unsympathetic, and if expressed, unpopular, or perhaps not quite safe; and Basil, warned by his fate with the ladies, listened gravely to the voice of the common imbecility and incoherence.

The principal speaker was a tall person, wearing a silk travelling-cap. He had a face of stupid benignity and a self-satisfied smirk; and he was formally trying to put at his ease, and hopelessly confusing the loutish youth before him. "You say you saw the whole accident, and you're probably the only passenger that did see it. You'll be the most important witness at the trial," he added, as if there would ever be any trial about it. "Now, how did the tow-boat hit us?"

"Well, she came bows on."

"Ah! bows on," repeated the other, with great satisfaction; and a little murmur of "Bows on!" ran round the listening circle.

"That is," added the witness, "it seemed as if we struck her amidships, and cut her in two, and sunk her."

"Just so," continued the examiner, accepting the explanation, "bows on. Now I want to ask if you saw our captain or any of the crew about?"

"Not a soul," said the witness, with the solemnity of a man already on oath.

"That'll do," exclaimed the other. "This gentleman's experience coincides exactly with my own. I didn't see the collision, but I did see the cloud of steam from the sinking boat, and I saw her go down. There wasn't an officer to be found anywhere on board our boat. I looked about for the captain and the mate myself, and couldn't find either of them high or low."

"The officers ought all to have been sitting here on the promenade deck," suggested one ironical spirit in the crowd, but no one noticed him.

The gentleman in the silk travelling-cap now took a chair, and a number of sympathetic listeners drew their chairs about him, and then began an interchange of experience, in which each related to the last particular all that he felt, thought, and said, and, if married, what his wife felt, thought, and said, at the moment of the calamity. They turned the disaster over and over in their talk, and rolled it under their tongues. Then they reverted to former accidents in which they had been concerned; and the silk-capped gentleman told, to the common admiration, of a fearful escape of his, on the Erie Road, from being thrown down a steep embankment fifty feet high by a piece of rock that had fallen on the track. "Now just see, gentlemen, what a little thing, humanly speaking, life depends upon. If that old woman had been able to sleep, and hadn't sent that boy down to warn the train, we should have run into the rock and been dashed to pieces. The passengers made up a purse for the boy, and I wrote a full account of it to the papers."

"Well," said one of the group, a man in a hard hat, "I never lie down on a steamboat or a railroad train. I want to be ready for whatever happens."

The others looked at this speaker with interest, as one who had invented a safe method of travel.

"I happened to be up to-night, but I almost always undress and go to bed, just as if I were in my own house," said the gentleman of the silk cap.

"I don't say your way isn't the best, but that's my way."

The champions of the rival systems debated their merits with suavity and mutual respect, but they met with scornful silence a compromising spirit who held that it was better to throw off your coat and boots, but keep your pantaloons on. Meanwhile, the steamer was hanging idle upon the current, against which it now and then stirred a careless wheel, still waiting for the return of the small boats. Thin gray clouds, through rifts of which a star sparkled keenly here and there, veiled the heavens; shadowy bluffs loomed up on either hand; in a hollow on the left twinkled a drowsy little town; a beautiful stillness lay on all.

After an hour's interval a shout was heard from far down the river; then later the splash of oars; then a cry hailing the approaching boats, and the answer, "All safe!" Presently the boats had come alongside, and the passengers crowded down to the guard to learn the details of the search. Basil heard a hollow, moaning, gurgling sound, regular as that

of the machinery, for some note of which he mistook it. "Clear the gangway there!" shouted a gruff voice; "man scalded here!" And a burden was carried by from which fluttered, with its terrible regularity, that utterance of mortal anguish.

Basil went again to the forward promenade, and sat down to see the morning come.

The boat swiftly ascended the current, and presently the steeper shores were left behind and the banks fell away in long upward sloping fields, with farm-houses and with stacks of harvest dimly visible in the generous expanses. By and by they passed a fisherman drawing his nets, and bending from his boat, there near Albany, N. Y., in the picturesque immortal attitudes of Raphael's Galilean fisherman; and now a flush mounted the pale face of the east, and through the dewy coolness of the dawn there came, more to the sight than any other sense, a vague menace of heat. But as yet the air was deliciously fresh and sweet, and Basil bathed his weariness in it, thinking with a certain luxurious compassion of the scalded man, and how he was to fare that day. This poor wretch seemed of another order of beings, as the calamitous always seem to the happy, and Basil's pity was quite an abstraction; which, again, amused and shocked him, and he asked his heart of bliss to consider of sorrow a little more earnestly as the lot of all men, and not merely of an alien creature here and there. He dutifully tried to imagine another issue to the disaster of the night, and to realize himself suddenly bereft of her who so filled his life. He bade his soul remember that, in the security of sleep, Death had passed them both so close that his presence might well have chilled their dreams, as the iceberg that grazes the ship in the night freezes all the air about it. But it was quite idle: where love was, life only was; and sense and spirit alike put aside the burden that he would have laid upon them; his reverie reflected with delicious caprice the looks, the tones, the movements that he loved, and bore him far away from the sad images that he had invited to mirror themselves in it.

IV. A DAY'S RAILROADING

Happiness has commonly a good appetite; and the thought of the fortunately ended adventures of the night, the fresh morning air, and the content of their own hearts, gifted our friends, by the time the boat reached Albany, with a wholesome hunger, so that they debated with spirit the question of breakfast and the best place of breakfasting in a city which neither of them knew, save in the most fugitive and sketchy way.

They decided at last, in view of the early departure of the train, and the probability that they would be more hurried at a hotel, to breakfast at the station, and thither they went and took places at one of the many tables within, where they seemed to have been expected only by the flies. The waitress plainly had not looked for them, and for a time found their presence so incredible that she would not acknowledge the

rattling that Basil was obliged to make on his glass. Then it appeared that the cook would not believe in them, and he did not send them, till they were quite faint, the peppery and muddy draught which impudently affected to be coffee, the oily slices of fugacious potatoes slipping about in their shallow dish and skillfully evading pursuit, the pieces of beef that simulated steak, the hot, greasy biscuit, steaming evilly up into the face when opened, and then soddening into masses of condensed dyspepsia.

The wedding-journeymen looked at each other with eyes of sad amaze. They bowed themselves for a moment to the viands, and then by an equal impulse refrained. They were sufficiently young, they were happy, they were hungry; nature is great and strong, but art is greater, and before these triumphs of the cook at the Albany depot appetite succumbed. By a terrible tour de force they swallowed the fierce and turbid liquor in their cups, and then speculated fantastically upon the character and history of the materials of that breakfast.

Presently Isabel paused, played a little with her knife, and, after a moment, looked up at her husband with an arch regard and said: "I was just thinking of a small station somewhere in the South of France where our train once stopped for breakfast. I remember the freshness and brightness of everything on the little tables,--the plates, the napkins, the gleaming half-bottles of wine. They seemed to have been preparing that breakfast for us from the beginning of time, and we were hardly seated before they served us with great cups of 'caffe-au-lait', and the sweetest rolls and butter; then a delicate cutlet, with an unspeakable gravy, and potatoes,--such potatoes! Dear me, how little I ate of it! I wish, for once, I'd had your appetite, Basil; I do indeed."

She ended with a heartless laugh, in which, despite the tragical contrast her words had suggested, Basil finally joined. So much amazement had probably never been got before out of the misery inflicted in that place; but their lightness did not at all commend them. The waitress had not liked it from the first, and had served them with reluctance; and the proprietor did not like it, and kept his eye upon them as if he believed them about to escape without payment. Here, then, they had enforced a great fact of travelling,--that people who serve the public are kindly and pleasant in proportion as they serve it well. The unjust and the inefficient have always that consciousness of evil which will not let a man forgive his victim, or like him to be cheerful.

Our friends, however, did not heat themselves over the fact. There was already such heat from without, even at eight o'clock in the morning, that they chose to be as cool as possible in mind, and they placidly took their places in the train, which had been made up for departure. They had deliberately rejected the notion of a drawing-room car as affording a less varied prospect of humanity, and as being less in the spirit of ordinary American travel. Now, in reward, they found themselves quite comfortable in the common passenger-car, and disposed to view the scenery, into which they struck an hour after leaving the city, with much complacency. There was sufficient draught through the open window to make the heat tolerable, and the great brooding warmth gave to the

landscape the charm which it alone can impart. It is a landscape that I greatly love for its mild beauty and tranquil picturesqueness, and it is in honor of our friends that I say they enjoyed it. There are nowhere any considerable hills, but everywhere generous slopes and pleasant hollows and the wide meadows of a grazing country, with the pretty brown Mohawk River rippling down through all, and at frequent intervals the life of the canal, now near, now far away, with the lazy boats that seem not to stir, and the horses that the train passes with a whirl, and, leaves slowly stepping forward and swiftly slipping backward. There are farms that had once, or still have, the romance to them of being Dutch farms,--if there is any romance in that,--and one conjectures a Dutch thrift in their waving grass and grain. Spaces of woodland here and there dapple the slopes, and the cozy red farm-houses repose by the side of their capacious red barns. Truly, there is no ground on which to defend the idleness, and yet as the train strives furiously onward amid these scenes of fertility and abundance, I like in fancy to loiter behind it, and to saunter at will up and down the landscape. I stop at the farm-yard gates, and sit upon the porches or thresholds, and am served with cups of buttermilk by old Dutch ladies who have done their morning's work and have leisure to be knitting or sewing; or if there are no old ladies, with decent caps upon their gray hair, then I do not complain if the drink is brought me by some red-cheeked, comely young girl, out of Washington Irving's pages, with no cap on her golden braids, who mirrors my diffidence, and takes an attitude of pretty awkwardness while she waits till I have done drinking. In the same easily contented spirit as I lounge through the barn-yard, if I find the old hens gone about their family affairs, I do not mind a meadow-lark's singing in the top of the elm-tree beside the pump. In these excursions the watch-dogs know me for a harmless person, and will not open their eyes as they lie coiled up in the sun before the gate. At all the places, I have the people keep bees, and, in the garden full of worthy pot-herbs, such idlers in the vegetable world as hollyhocks and larkspurs and four-o'clocks, near a great bed in which the asparagus has gone to sleep for the season with a dream of delicate spray hanging over it. I walk unmolested through the farmer's tall grass, and ride with him upon the perilous seat of his voluble mowing-machine, and learn to my heart's content that his name begins with Van, and that his family has owned that farm ever since the days of the Patroon; which I dare say is not true. Then I fall asleep in a corner of the hayfield, and wake up on the tow-path of the canal beside that wonderfully lean horse, whose bones you cannot count only, because they are so many. He never wakes up, but, with a faltering under-lip and half-shut eyes, hobbles stiffly on, unconscious of his anatomical interest. The captain hospitably asks me on board, with a twist of the rudder swinging the stern of the boat up to the path, so that I can step on. She is laden with flour from the valley of the Genesee, and may have started on her voyage shortly after the canal was made. She is succinctly manned by the captain, the driver, and the cook, a fiery-haired lady of imperfect temper; and the cabin, which I explore, is plainly furnished with a cook-stove and a flask of whiskey. Nothing but profane language is allowed on board; and so, in a life of wicked jollity and ease, we glide imperceptibly down the canal, unvexed by the far-off future of arrival.

Such, I say, are my own unambitious mental pastimes, but I am aware that less superficial spirits could not be satisfied with them, and I can not pretend that my wedding-journeymen were so.

They cast an absurd poetry over the landscape; they invited themselves to be reminded of passages of European travel by it; and they placed villas and castles and palaces upon all the eligible building-sites. Ashamed of these devices, presently, Basil patriotically tried to reconstruct the Dutch and Indian past of the Mohawk Valley, but here he was foiled by the immense ignorance of his wife, who, as a true American woman, knew nothing of the history of her own country, and less than nothing of the barbarous regions beyond the borders of her native province. She proved a bewildering labyrinth of error concerning the events which Basil mentioned; and she had never even heard of the massacres by the French and Indians at Schenectady, which he in his boyhood had known so vividly that he was scalped every night in his dreams, and woke up in the morning expecting to see marks of the tomahawk on the head-board. So, failing at last to extract any sentiment from the scenes without, they turned their faces from the window, and looked about them for amusement within the car.

It was in all respects an ordinary carful of human beings, and it was perhaps the more worthy to be studied on that account. As in literature the true artist will shun the use even of real events if they are of an improbable character, so the sincere observer of man will not desire to look upon the heroic or occasional phases, but will seek him in his habitual moods of vacancy and tiresomeness. To me, at any rate, he is at such times very precious; and I never perceive him to be so much a man and a brother as when I feel the pressure of his vast, natural, unaffected dullness. Then I am able to enter confidently into his life and inhabit there, to think his shallow and feeble thoughts, to be moved by his dumb, stupid desires, to be dimly illumined by his stunted inspirations, to share his foolish prejudices, to practice his obtuse selfishness. Yes, it is a very amusing world, if you do not refuse to be amused; and our friends were very willing to be entertained. They delighted in the precise, thick-fingered old ladies who bought sweet apples of the boys come aboard with baskets, and who were so long in finding the right change, that our travellers, leaping in thought with the boys from the moving train, felt that they did so at the peril of their lives. Then they were interested in people who went out and found their friends waiting for them, or else did not find them, and wandered disconsolately up and down before the country stations, carpet-bag in hand; in women who came aboard, and were awkwardly shaken hands with or sheepishly kissed by those who hastily got seats for them, and placed their bags or their babies in their laps, and turned for a nod at the door; in young ladies who were seen to places by young men the latter seemed not to care if the train did go off with them, and then threw up their windows and talked with girl-friends, on the platform without, till the train began to move, and at last turned with gleaming eyes and moist red lips, and panted hard in the excitement of thinking about it, and could not calm themselves to the dull level of the travel around them; in the conductor, coldly and inaccessibly vigilant, as he went his rounds, reaching blindly for the tickets with one hand while he bent his

head from time, to time, and listened with a faint, sarcastic smile to the questions of passengers who supposed they were going to get some information out of him; in the trainboy, who passed through on his many errands with prize candies, gum-drops, pop-corn, papers and magazines, and distributed books and the police journals with a blind impartiality, or a prodigious ignorance, or a supernatural perception of character in those who received them.

A through train from East to West presents some peculiar features as well as the traits common to all railway travel; and our friends decided that this was not a very well-dressed company, and would contrast with the people on an express-train between Boston and New York to no better advantage than these would show beside the average passengers between London and Paris. And it seems true that on a westerling' line, the blacking fades gradually from the boots, the hat softens and sinks, the coat loses its rigor of cut, and the whole person lounges into increasing informality of costume. I speak of the undressful sex alone: woman, wherever she is, appears in the last attainable effects of fashion, which are now all but telegraphic and universal. But most of the passengers here were men, and they were plainly of the free-and easy West rather than the dapper East. They wore faces thoughtful with the problem of buying cheap and selling dear, and they could be known by their silence from the loquacious, acquaintance-making way-travellers. In these, the mere coming aboard seemed to beget an aggressively confidential mood. Perhaps they clutched recklessly at any means of relieving their ennui; or they felt that they might here indulge safely in the pleasures of autobiography, so dear to all of us; or else, in view of the many possible catastrophes, they desired to leave some little memory of themselves behind. At any rate, whenever the train stopped, the wedding-journeymen caught fragments of the personal histories of their fellow-passengers which had been rehearsing to those that sat next the narrators. It was no more than fair that these should somewhat magnify themselves, and put the best complexion on their actions and the worst upon their sufferings; that they should all appear the luckiest or the unluckiest, the healthiest or the sickest, people that ever were, and should all have made or lost the most money. There was a prevailing desire among them to make out that they came from or were going to some very large place; and our friends fancied an actual mortification in the face of a modest gentleman who got out at Penelope (or some other insignificant classical station, in the ancient Greek and Roman part of New York State), after having listened to the life of a somewhat rustic-looking person who had described himself as belonging near New York City.

Basil also found diversion in the tender couples, who publicly comported themselves as if in a sylvan solitude, and, as it had been on the bank of some umbrageous stream, far from the ken of envious or unsympathetic eyes, reclined upon each other's shoulders and slept; but Isabel declared that this behavior was perfectly indecent. She granted, of course, that they were foolish, innocent people, who meant no offense, and did not feel guilty of an impropriety, but she said that this sort of thing was a national reproach. If it were merely rustic lovers, she should not care so much; but you saw people who ought to know better, well-dressed, stylish people, flaunting their devotion in the face of the world, and

going to sleep on each other's shoulders on every railroad train. It was outrageous, it was scandalous, it was really infamous. Before she would allow herself to do such a thing she would--well, she hardly knew what she would not do; she would have a divorce, at any rate. She wondered that Basil could laugh at it; and he would make her hate him if he kept on.

From the seat behind their own they were now made listeners to the history of a ten weeks' typhoid fever, from the moment when the narrator noticed that he had not felt very well for a day or two back, and all at once a kind of shiver took him, till he lay fourteen days perfectly insensible, and could eat nothing but a little pounded ice--and his wife--a small woman, too--used to lift him back and forth between the bed and sofa like a feather, and the neighbors did not know half the time whether he was dead or alive. This history, from which not the smallest particular or the least significant symptom of the case was omitted, occupied an hour in recital, and was told, as it seemed, for the entertainment of one who had been five minutes before it began a stranger to the historian.

At last the train came to a stand, and Isabel wailed forth in accents of desperation the words, "O, disgusting!" The monotony of the narrative in the seat behind, fatally combining with the heat of the day, had lulled her into slumbers from which she awoke at the stopping of the train, to find her head resting tenderly upon her husband's shoulder.

She confronted his merriment with eyes of mournful rebuke; but as she could not find him, or the harshest construction, in the least to blame, she was silent.

"Never mind, dear, never mind," he coaxed, "you were really not responsible. It was fatigue, destiny, the spite of fortune,--whatever you like. In the case of the others, whom you despise so justly, I dare say it is sheer, disgraceful affection. But see that ravishing placard, swinging from the roof: 'This train stops twenty minutes for dinner at Utica.' In a few minutes more we shall be at Utica. If they have anything edible there, it shall never contract my powers. I could dine at the Albany station, even."

In a little while they found themselves in an airy, comfortable dining-room, eating a dinner, which it seemed to them France in the flush of her prosperity need not have blushed to serve; for if it wanted a little in the last graces of art, it redeemed itself in abundance, variety, and wholesomeness. At the elbow of every famishing passenger stood a beneficent coal-black glossy fairy, in a white linen apron and jacket, serving him with that alacrity and kindness and grace which make the negro waiter the master, not the slave of his calling, which disenthral it of servility, and constitute him your eager host, not your menial, for the moment. From table to table passed a calming influence in the person of the proprietor, who, as he took his richly earned money, checked the rising fears of the guests by repeated proclamations that there was plenty of time, and that he would give them due warning before the train started. Those who had flocked out of the cars, to prey with beak and

claw, as the vulture-like fashion is, upon everything in reach, remained to eat like Christians; and even a poor, scantily-Englished Frenchman, who wasted half his time in trying to ask how long the cars stopped and in looking at his watch, made a good dinner in spite of himself.

"O Basil, Basil!" cried Isabel, when the train was again in motion, "have we really dined once more? It seems too good to be true. Cleanliness, plenty, wholesomeness, civility! Yes, as you say, they cannot be civil where they are not just; honesty and courtesy go together; and wherever they give you outrageous things to eat, they add indigestible insults. Basil, dear, don't be jealous; I shall never meet him again; but I'm in love with that black waiter at our table. I never saw such perfect manners, such a winning and affectionate politeness. He made me feel that every mouthful I ate was a personal favor to him. What a complete gentleman. There ought never to be a white waiter. None but negroes are able to render their service a pleasure and distinction to you."

So they prattled on, doing, in their eagerness to be satisfied, a homage perhaps beyond its desert to the good dinner and the decent service of it. But here they erred in the right direction, and I find nothing more admirable in their behavior throughout a wedding journey which certainly had its trials, than their willingness to make the very heat of whatever would suffer itself to be made anything at all of. They celebrated its pleasures with magnanimous excess, they passed over its griefs with a wise forbearance. That which they found the most difficult of management was the want of incident for the most part of the time; and I who write their history might also sink under it, but that I am supported by the fact that it is so typical, in this respect. I even imagine that ideal reader for whom one writes as yawning over these barren details with the life-like weariness of an actual travelling companion of theirs. Their own silence often sufficed my wedded lovers, or then, when there was absolutely nothing to engage them, they fell back upon the story of their love, which they were never tired of hearing as they severally knew it. Let it not be a reproach to human nature or to me if I say that there was something in the comfort of having well dined which now touched the springs of sentiment with magical effect, and that they had never so rejoiced in these tender reminiscences.

They had planned to stop over at Rochester till the morrow, that they might arrive at Niagara by daylight, and at Utica they had suddenly resolved to make the rest of the day's journey in a drawing-room car. The change gave them an added reason for content; and they realized how much they had previously sacrificed to the idea of travelling in the most American manner, without achieving it after all, for this seemed a touch of Americanism beyond the old-fashioned car. They reclined in luxury upon the easy-cushioned, revolving chairs; they surveyed with infinite satisfaction the elegance of the flying-parlor in which they sat, or turned their contented regard through the broad plate-glass windows upon the landscape without. They said that none but Americans or enchanted princes in the "Arabian Nights" ever travelled in such state; and when the stewards of the car came round successively with tropical fruits, ice-creams, and claret-punches, they felt a heightened assurance that they were either enchanted princes--or Americans. There were more ladies

and more fashion than in the other cars; and prettily dressed children played about on the carpet; but the general appearance of the passengers hardly suggested greater wealth than elsewhere; and they were plainly in that car because they were of the American race, which finds nothing too good for it that its money can buy.

V. THE ENCHANTED CITY, AND BEYOND.

They knew none of the hotels in Rochester, and they had chosen a certain one in reliance upon their handbook. When they named it, there stepped forth a porter of an incredibly cordial and pleasant countenance, who took their travelling-bags, and led them to the omnibus. As they were his only passengers, the porter got inside with them, and seeing their interest in the streets through which they rode, he descanted in a strain of cheerful pride upon the city's prosperity and character, and gave the names of the people who lived in the finer houses, just as if it had been an Old-World town, and he some eager historian expecting reward for his comment upon it. He cast quite a glamour over Rochester, so that in passing a body of water, bordered by houses, and overlooked by odd balconies and galleries, and crossed in the distance by a bridge upon which other houses were built, they boldly declared, being at their wit's end for a comparison, and taken with the unhopd-for picturesqueness, that it put them in mind of Verona. Thus they reached their hotel in almost a spirit of foreign travel, and very willing to verify the pleasant porter's assurance that they would like it, for everybody liked it; and it was with a sudden sinking of the heart that Basil beheld presiding over the register the conventional American hotel clerk. He was young, he had a neat mustache and well-brushed hair; jeweled studs sparkled in his shirt-front, and rings on his white hands; a gentle disdain of the travelling public breathed from his person in the mystical odors of Ihlang ihlang. He did not lift his haughty head to look at the wayfarer who meekly wrote his name in the register; he did not answer him when he begged for a cool room; he turned to the board on which the keys hung, and, plucking one from it, slid it towards Basil on the marble counter, touched a bell for a call-boy, whistled a bar of Offenbach, and as he wrote the number of the room against Basil's name, said to a friend lounging near him, as if resuming a conversation, "Well, she's a mighty pooty gul, any way, Chawley!"

When I reflect that this was a type of the hotel clerk throughout the United States, that behind unnumbered registers at this moment he is snubbing travellers into the dust, and that they are suffering and perpetuating him, I am lost in wonder at the national meekness. Not that I am one to refuse the humble pie his jeweled fingers offer me. Abjectly I take my key, and creep off up stairs after the call-boy, and try to give myself the genteel air of one who has not been stepped upon. But I think homicidal things all the same, and I rejoice that in the safety of print I can cry out against the despot, whom I have not the presence to defy. "You vulgar and cruel little soul," I say, and I imagine myself breathing the words to his teeth, "why do you treat a weary stranger with

this ignominy? I am to pay well for what I get, and I shall not complain of that. But look at me, and own my humanity; confess by some civil action, by some decent phrase, that I have rights and that they shall be respected. Answer my proper questions; respond to my fair demands. Do not slide my key at me; do not deny me the poor politeness of a nod as you give it in my hand. I am not your equal; few men are; but I shall not presume upon your clemency. Come, I also am human!"

Basil found that, for his sin in asking for a cool room, the clerk had given them a chamber into which the sun had been shining the whole afternoon; but when his luggage had been put in it seemed useless to protest, and like a true American, like you, like me, he shrank from asserting himself. When the sun went down it would be cool enough; and they turned their thoughts to supper, not venturing to hope that, as it proved, the handsome clerk was the sole blemish of the house.

Isabel viewed with innocent surprise the evidences of luxury afforded by all the appointments of a hotel so far west of Boston, and they both began to feel that natural ease and superiority which an inn always inspires in its guests, and which our great hotels, far from impairing, enhance in flattering degree; in fact, the clerk once forgotten, I protest, for my own part, I am never more conscious of my merits and riches in any other place. One has there the romance of being a stranger and a mystery to every one else, and lives in the alluring possibility of not being found out a most ordinary person.

They were so late in coming to the supper-room, that they found themselves alone in it. At the door they had a bow from the head-waiter, who ran before them and drew out chairs for them at a table, and signaled waiters to serve them, first laying before them with a gracious flourish the bill of fare.

A force of servants flocked about them, as if to contest the honor of ordering their supper; one set upon the table a heaping vase of strawberries, another flanked it with flagons of cream, a third accompanied it with Gates of varied flavor and device; a fourth obsequiously smoothed the table-cloth; a fifth, the youngest of the five, with folded arms stood by and admired the satisfaction the rest were giving. When these had been dispatched for steak, for broiled white-fish of the lakes,--noblest and delicatest of the fish that swim,--for broiled chicken, for fried potatoes, for mums, for whatever the lawless fancy, and ravening appetites of the wayfarers could suggest, this fifth waiter remained to tempt them to further excess, and vainly proposed some kind of eggs,--fried eggs, poached eggs, scrambled eggs, boiled eggs, or omelette.

"O, you're sure, dearest, that this isn't a vision of fairy-land, which will vanish presently, and leave us empty and forlorn?" plaintively murmured Isabel, as the menial train reappeared, bearing the supper they had ordered and set it smoking down.

Suddenly a look of apprehension dawned upon her face, and she let fall her knife and fork. "You don't think, Basil," she faltered, "that they

could have found out we're a bridal party, and that they're serving us so magnificently because--because--O, I shall be miserable every moment we're here!" she concluded desperately.

She looked, indeed, extremely wretched for a woman with so much broiled white-fish on her plate, and such a banquet array about her; and her husband made haste to reassure her. "You're still demoralized, Isabel, by our sufferings at the Albany depot, and you exaggerate the blessings we enjoy, though I should be sorry to undervalue them. I suspect it's the custom to use people well at this hotel; or if we are singled out for uncommon favor, I think I can explain the cause. It has been discovered by the register that we are from Boston, and we are merely meeting the reverence, affection, and homage which the name everywhere commands!

"It 's our fortune to represent for the time being the intellectual and moral virtue of Boston. This supper is not a tribute to you as a bride, but as a Bostonian."

It was a cheap kind of raillery, to be sure, but it served. It kindled the local pride of Isabel to self-defense, and in the distraction of the effort she forgot her fears; she returned with renewed appetite to the supper, and in its excellence they both let fall their dispute,--which ended, of course, in Basil's abject confession that Boston was the best place in the world, and nothing but banishment could make him live elsewhere,--and gave themselves up, as usual, to the delight of being just what and where they were. At last, the natural course brought them to the strawberries, and when the fifth waiter approached from the corner of the table at which he stood, to place the vase near them, he did not retire at once, but presently asked if they were from the West.

Isabel smiled, and Basil answered that they were from the East.

He faltered at this, as if doubtful of the result if he went further, but took heart, then, and asked, "Don't you think this is a pretty nice hotel"--hastily adding as a concession of the probable existence of much finer things at the East--"for a small hotel?"

They imagined this waiter as new to his station in life, as perhaps just risen to it from some country tavern, and unable to repress his exultation in what seemed their sympathetic presence. They were charmed to have invited his guileless confidence, to have evoked possibly all the simple poetry of his soul; it was what might have happened in Italy, only there so much naivete would have meant money; they looked at each other with rapture. and Basil answered warmly while the waiter flushed as at a personal compliment: "Yes, it 's a nice hotel; one of the best I ever saw, East or West, in Europe or America."

They rose and left the room, and were bowed out by the head-waiter.

"How perfectly idyllic!" cried Isabel. "Is this Rochester, New York, or is it some vale of Arcady? Let's go out and see."

They walked out into the moonlit city, up and down streets that seemed

very stately and fine, amidst a glitter of shop-window lights; and then, Less of their own motion than of mere error, they quitted the business quarter, and found themselves in a quiet avenue of handsome residences,-- the Beacon Street of Rochester, whatever it was called. They said it was a night and a place for lovers, for none but lovers, for lovers newly plighted, and they made believe to bemoan themselves that, hold each other dear as they would, the exaltation, the thrill, the glory of their younger love was gone. Some of the houses had gardened spaces about them, from which stole, like breaths of sweetest and saddest regret, the perfume of midsummer flowers,--the despair of the rose for the bud. As they passed a certain house, a song fluttered out of the open window and ceased, the piano warbled at the final rush of fingers over its chords, and they saw her with her fingers resting lightly on the keys, and her graceful head lifted to look into his; they saw him with his arm yet stretched across to the leaves of music he had been turning, and his face lowered to meet her gaze.

"Ah, Basil, I wish it was we, there!"

And if they knew that we, on our wedding journey, stood outside, would not they wish it was they, here?"

"I suppose so, dearest, and yet, once-upon-a-time was sweet. Pass on; and let us see what charm we shall find next in this enchanted city."

"Yes, it is an enchanted city to us," mused Basil, aloud, as they wandered on, "and all strange cities are enchanted. What is Rochester to the Rochesterese? A place of a hundred thousand people, as we read in our guide, an immense flour interest, a great railroad entrepot, an unrivaled nursery trade, a university, two commercial colleges, three collegiate institutes, eight or ten newspapers, and a free library. I dare say any respectable resident would laugh at us sentimentalizing over his city. But Rochester is for us, who don't know it at all, a city of any time or country, moonlit, filled with lovers hovering over pianofortes, of a palatial hotel with pastoral waiters and porter,--a city of handsome streets wrapt in beautiful quiet and dreaming of the golden age. The only definite association with it in our minds is the tragically romantic thought that here Sam Patch met his fate."

"And who in the world was Sam Patch?"

"Isabel, your ignorance of all that an American woman should be proud of distresses me. Have you really, then, never heard of the man who invented the saying, 'Some things can be done as well as others,' and proved it by jumping over Niagara Falls twice? Spurred on by this belief, he attempted the leap of the Genesee Falls. The leap was easy enough, but the coming up again was another matter. He failed in that. It was the one thing that could not be done as well as others."

"Dreadful!" said Isabel, with the cheerfulest satisfaction. "But what has all that to do with Rochester?"

"Now, my dear, You don't mean to say you didn't know that the Genesee

Falls were at Rochester? Upon my word, I'm ashamed. Why, we're within ten minutes' walk of them now."

"Then walk to them at once!" cried Isabel, wholly unabashed, and in fact unable to see what he had to be ashamed of. "Actually, I believe you would have allowed me to leave Rochester without telling me the falls were here, if you hadn't happened to think of Sam Patch."

Saying this, she persuaded herself that a chief object of their journey had been to visit the scene of Sam Patch's fatal exploit, and she drew Basil with a nervous swiftness in the direction of the railroad station, beyond which he said were the falls. Presently, after threading their way among a multitude of locomotives, with and without trains attached, that backed and advanced, or stood still, hissing impatiently on every side, they passed through the station to a broad planking above the river on the other side, and thence, after encounter of more locomotives, they found, by dint of much asking, a street winding up the hill-side to the left, and leading to the German Bierhaus that gives access to the best view of the cataract.

The Americans have characteristically bordered the river with manufactures, making every drop work its passage to the brink; while the Germans have as characteristically made use of the beauty left over, and have built a Bierhaus where they may regale both soul and sense in the presence of the cataract. Our travellers might, in another mood and place, have thought it droll to arrive at that sublime spectacle through a Bierhaus, but in this enchanted city it seemed to have a peculiar fitness.

A narrow corridor gave into a wide festival space occupied by many tables, each of which was surrounded by a group of clamorous Germans of either sex and every age, with tall beakers of beaded lager before them, and slim flasks of Rhenish; overhead flamed the gas in globes of varicolored glass; the walls were painted like those of such haunts in the fatherland; and the wedding-journeyers were fair to linger on their way, to dwell upon that scene of honest enjoyment, to inhale the mingling odors of beer and of pipes, and of the pungent cheeses in which the children of the fatherland delight. Amidst the inspiring clash of plates and glasses, the rattle of knives and forks, and the hoarse rush of gutturals, they could catch the words *Franzosen*, *Kaiser*, *Konig*, and *Schlacht*, and they knew that festive company to be exulting in the first German triumphs of the war, which were then the day's news; they saw fists shaken at noses in fierce exchange of joy, arms tossed abroad in wild congratulation, and health-pouring goblets of beer lifted in air. Then they stepped into the moonlight again, and heard only the solemn organ stops of the cataract. Through garden-ground they were led by the little maid, their guide, to a small pavilion that stood on the edge of the precipitous shore, and commanded a perfect view of the falls. As they entered this pavilion, a youth and maiden, clearly lovers, passed out, and they were left alone with that sublime presence. Something of definiteness was to be desired in the spectacle, but there was ample compensation in the mystery with which the broad effulgence and the dense unluminous shadows of the moonshine invested it. The light touched all

the tops of the rapids, that seemed to writhe sway from the brink of the cataract, and then desperately breaking and perishing to fall, the white disembodied ghosts of rapids, down to the bottom of the vast and deep ravine through which the river rushed away. Now the waters seemed to mass themselves a hundred feet high in a wall of snowy compactness, now to disperse into their multitudinous particles and hang like some vaporous cloud from the cliff. Every moment renewed the vision of beauty in some rare and fantastic shape; and its loveliness isolated it, in spite of the great town on the other shore, the station with its bridge and its trains, the mills that supplied their feeble little needs from the cataract's strength.

At last Basil pointed out the table-rock in the middle of the fall, from which Sam Patch had made his fatal leap; but Isabel refused to admit that tragical figure to the honors of her emotions. "I don't care for him!" she said fiercely. "Patch! What a name to be linked in our thoughts with this superb cataract."

"Well, Isabel, I think you are very unjust. It's as good a name as Leander, to my thinking, and it was immortalized in support of a great idea, the feasibility of all things; while Leander's has come down to us as that of the weak victim of a passion. We shall never have a poetry of our own till we get over this absurd reluctance from facts, till we make the ideal embrace and include the real, till we consent to face the music in our simple common names, and put Smith into a lyric and Jones into a tragedy. The Germans are braver than we, and in them you find facts and dreams continually blended and confronted. Here is a fortunate illustration. The people we met coming out of this pavilion were lovers, and they had been here sentimentalizing on this superb cataract, as you call it, with which my heroic Patch is not worthy to be named. No doubt they had been quoting Uhland or some other of their romantic poets, perhaps singing some of their tender German love-songs,--the tenderest, unearthliest love-songs in the world. At the same time they did not disdain the matter-of-fact corporeity in which their sentiment was enshrined; they fed it heartily and abundantly with the banquet whose relics we see here."

On a table before them stood a pair of beer-glasses, in the bottoms of which lurked scarce the foam of the generous liquor lately brimming them; some shreds of sausage, some rinds of Swiss cheese, bits of cold ham, crusts of bread, and the ashes of a pipe.

Isabel shuddered at the spectacle, but made no comment, and Basil went on: "Do you suppose they scorned the idea of Sam Patch as they gazed upon the falls? On the contrary, I've no doubt that he recalled to her the ballad which a poet of their language made about him. It used to go the rounds of the German newspapers, and I translated it, a long while ago, when I thought that I too was in 'Arkadien geboren'.

'In the Bierhauagarten I linger
By the Falls of the Geneses:
From the Table-Rock in the middle
Leaps a figure bold and free.

Aloof in the air it rises
O'er the rush, the plunge, the death;
On the thronging banks of the river
There is neither pulse nor breath.

Forever it hovers and poises
Aloof in the moonlit air;
As light as mist from the rapids,
As heavy as nightmare.

In anguish I cry to the people,
The long-since vanished hosts;
I see them stretch forth in answer,
The helpless hands of ghosts."

"I once met the poet who wrote this. He drank too much beer."

"I don't see that he got in the name of Sam Patch, after all," said Isabel.

"O yes; he did; but I had to yield to our taste, and where he said, I 'Springt der Sam Patsch kuhn and frei,' I made it 'Leaps a figure bold and free.'"

As they passed through the house on their way out, they saw the youth and maiden they had met at the pavilion door. They were seated at a table; two glasses of beer towered before them; on their plates were odorous crumbs of Limburger cheese. They both wore a pensive air.

The next morning the illusion that had wrapt the whole earth was gone with the moonlight. By nine o'clock, when the wedding-journeymen resumed their way toward Niagara, the heat had already set in with the effect of ordinary midsummer's heat at high noon. The car into which they got had come the past night from Albany, and had an air of almost conscious shabbiness, griminess, and over-use. The seats were covered with cinders, which also crackled under foot. Dust was on everything, especially the persons of the crumpled and weary passengers of overnight. Those who came aboard at Rochester failed to lighten the spiritual gloom, and presently they sank into the common bodily wretchedness. The train was somewhat belated, and as it drew nearer Buffalo they knew the conductor to have abandoned himself to that blackest of the arts, making time. The long irregular jolt of the ordinary progress was reduced to an incessant shudder and a quick lateral motion. The air within the cars was deadly; if a window was raised, a storm of dust and cinders blew in and quick gusts caught away the breath. So they sat with closed windows, sweltering and stifling, and all the faces on which a lively horror was not painted were dull and damp with apathetic misery.

The incidents were in harmony with the abject physical tone of the company. There was a quarrel between a thin, shrill-voiced, highly dressed, much-bedizened Jewess, on the one side, and a fat, greedy old

woman, half asleep, and a boy with large pink transparent ears that stood out from his head like the handles of a jar, on the other side, about a seat which the Hebrew wanted, and which the others had kept filled with packages on the pretense that it was engaged. It was a loud and fierce quarrel enough, but it won no sort of favor; and when the Jewess had given a final opinion that the greedy old woman was no lady, and the boy, who disputed in an ironical temper, replied, "Highly complimentary, I must say," there was no sign of relief or other acknowledgment in any of the spectators, that there had been a quarrel.

There was a little more interest taken in the misfortune of an old purblind German and his son, who were found by the conductor to be a few hundred miles out of the direct course to their destination, and were with some trouble and the aid of an Americanized fellow-countryman made aware of the fact. The old man then fell back in the prevailing apathy, and the child naturally cared nothing. By and by came the unsparing train-boy on his rounds, bestrewing the passengers successively with papers, magazines, fine-cut tobacco, and packages of candy. He gave the old man a package of candy, and passed on. The German took it as the bounty of the American people, oddly manifested in a situation where he could otherwise have had little proof of their care. He opened it and was sharing it with his son when the train-boy came back, and metallicly, like a part of the machinery, demanded, "Ten cents!" The German stared helplessly, and the boy repeated, "Ten cents! ten cents!" with tiresome patience, while the other passengers smiled. When it had passed through the alien's head that he was to pay for this national gift and he took with his tremulous fingers from the recesses of his pocket-book a ten-cent note and handed it to his tormentor, some of the people laughed. Among the rest, Basil and Isabel laughed, and then looked at each other with eyes of mutual reproach.

"Well, upon my word, my dear," he said, "I think we've fallen pretty low. I've never felt such a poor, shabby ruffian before. Good heavens! To think of our immortal souls being moved to mirth by such a thing as this,--so stupid, so barren of all reason of laughter. And then the cruelty of it! What ferocious imbeciles we are! Whom have I married? A woman with neither heart nor brain!"

"O Basil, dear, pay him back the money-do."

"I can't. That's the worst of it. He 's money enough, and might justly take offense. What breaks my heart is that we could have the depravity to smile at the mistake of a friendless stranger, who supposed he had at last met with an act of pure kindness. It's a thing to weep over. Look at these grinning wretches! What a fiendish effect their smiles have, through their cinders and sweat! O, it's the terrible weather; the despotism of the dust and heat; the wickedness of the infernal air. What a squalid and loathsome company!"

At Buffalo, where they arrived late, they found themselves with several hours' time on their hands before the train started for Niagara, and in the first moments of tedium, Isabel forgot herself into saying, "Don't you think we'd have done better to go directly from Rochester to the

Falls, instead of coming this way?"

"Why certainly. I didn't propose coming this way."

"I know it, dear. I was only asking," said Isabel, meekly. "But I should think you'd have generosity enough to take a little of the blame, when I wanted to come out of a romantic feeling for you."

This romantic feeling referred to the fact that, many years before, when Basil made his first visit to Niagara, he had approached from the west by way of Buffalo; and Isabel, who tenderly begrudged his having existed before she knew him, and longed to ally herself retrospectively with his past, was resolved to draw near the great cataract by no other route.

She fetched a little sigh which might mean the weather or his hard-heartedness. The sigh touched him, and he suggested a carriage-ride through the city; she assented with eagerness, for it was what she had been thinking of. She had never seen a lakeside city before, and she was taken by surprise. "If ever we leave Boston," she said, "we will not live at Rochester, as I thought last night; we'll come to Buffalo." She found that the place had all the picturesqueness of a sea-port, without the ugliness that attends the rising and falling tides. A delicious freshness breathed from the lake, which lying so smooth, faded into the sky at last, with no line between sharper than that which divides drowsing from dreaming. But the color was the most charming thing, that delicate blue of the lake, without the depth of the sea-blue, but infinitely softer and lovelier. The nearer expanses rippled with dainty waves, silver and lucent; the further levels made, with the sun-dimmed summer sky, a vague horizon of turquoise and amethyst, lit by the white sails of ships, and stained by the smoke of steamers.

"Take me away now," said Isabel, when her eyes had feasted upon all this, "and don't let me see another thing till I get to Niagara. Nothing less sublime is worthy the eyes that have beheld such beauty."

However, on the way to Niagara she consented to glimpses of the river which carries the waters of the lake for their mighty plunge, and which shows itself very nobly from time to time as you draw toward the cataract, with wooded or cultivated islands, and rich farms along its low shores, and at last flashes upon the eye the shining white of the rapids,—a hint, no more, of the splendor and awfulness to be revealed.

VI. NIAGARA.

As the train stopped, Isabel's heart beat with a child-like exultation, as I believe every one's heart must who is worthy to arrive at Niagara. She had been trying to fancy, from time to time, that she heard the roar of the cataract, and now, when she alighted from the car, she was sure she should have heard it but for the vulgar little noises that attend the arrival of trains at Niagara as well as everywhere else. "Never mind,

dearest; you shall be stunned with it before you leave," promised her husband; and, not wholly disconsolate, she rode through the quaint streets of the village, where it remains a question whether the lowliness of the shops and private houses makes the hotels look so vast, or the bigness of the hotels dwarfs all the other buildings. The immense caravansaries swelling up from among the little bazaars (where they sell feather fans, and miniature bark canoes, and jars and vases and bracelets and brooches carved out of the local rocks), made our friends with their trunks very conscious of their disproportion to the accommodations of the smallest. They were the sole occupants of the omnibus, and they were embarrassed to be received at their hotel with a burst of minstrelsy from a whole band of music. Isabel felt that a single stringed instrument of some timid note would have been enough; and Basil was going to express his own modest preference for a jew's-harp, when the music ceased with a sudden clash of the cymbals. But the next moment it burst out with fresh sweetness, and in alighting they perceived that another omnibus had turned the corner and was drawing up to the pillared portico of the hotel. A small family dismounted, and the feet of the last had hardly touched the pavement when the music again ended as abruptly as those flourishes of trumpets that usher player-kings upon the stage. Isabel could not help laughing at this melodious parsimony. "I hope they don't let on the cataract and shut it off in this frugal style; do they, Basil?" she asked, and passed jesting through a pomp of unoccupied porters and tallboys. Apparently there were not many people stopping at this hotel, or else they were all out looking at the Falls or confined to their rooms. However, our travellers took in the almost weird emptiness of the place with their usual gratitude to fortune for all queerness in life, and followed to the pleasant quarters assigned them. There was time before supper for a glance at the cataract, and after a brief toilet they sallied out again upon the holiday street, with its parade of gay little shops, and thence passed into the grove beside the Falls, enjoying at every instant their feeling of arrival at a sublime destination.

In this sense Niagara deserves almost to rank with Rome, the metropolis of history and religion; with Venice, the chief city of sentiment and fantasy. In either you are at once made at home by a perception of its greatness, in which there is no quality of aggression, as there always seems to be in minor places as well as in minor men, and you gratefully accept its sublimity as a fact in no way contrasting with your own insignificance.

Our friends were beset of course by many carriage-drivers, whom they repelled with the kindly firmness of experienced travel. Isabel even felt a compassion for these poor fellows who had seen Niagara so much as to have forgotten that the first time one must see it alone or only with the next of friendship. She was voluble in her pity of Basil that it was not as new to him as to her, till between the trees they saw a white cloud of spray, shot through and through with sunset, rising, rising, and she felt her voice softly and steadily beaten down by the diapason of the cataract.

I am not sure but the first emotion on viewing Niagara is that of familiarity. Ever after, its strangeness increases; but in that earliest

moment when you stand by the side of the American fall, and take in so much of the whole as your giants can compass, an impression of having seen it often before is certainly very vivid. This may be an effect of that grandeur which puts you at your ease in its presence; but it also undoubtedly results in part from lifelong acquaintance with every variety of futile picture of the scene. You have its outward form clearly in your memory; the shores, the rapids, the islands, the curve of the Falls, and the stout rainbow with one end resting on their top and the other lost in the mists that rise from the gulf beneath. On the whole I do not account this sort of familiarity a misfortune. The surprise is none the less a surprise because it is kept till the last, and the marvel, making itself finally felt in every nerve, and not at once through a single sense, all the more fully possesses you. It is as if Niagara reserved her magnificence, and preferred to win your heart with her beauty; and so Isabel, who was instinctively prepared for the reverse, suffered a vague disappointment, for a little instant, as she looked along the verge from the water that caressed the shore at her feet before it flung itself down, to the wooded point that divides the American from the Canadian Fall, beyond which showed dimly through its veil of golden and silver mists the emerald wall of the great Horse-Shoe. "How still it is!" she said, amidst the roar that shook the ground under their feet and made the leaves tremble overhead, and "How lonesome!" amidst the people lounging and sauntering about in every direction among the trees. In fact that prodigious presence does make a solitude and silence round every spirit worthy to perceive it, and it gives a kind of dignity to all its belongings, so that the rocks and pebbles in the water's edge, and the weeds and grasses that nod above it, have a value far beyond that of such common things elsewhere. In all the aspects of Niagara there seems a grave simplicity, which is perhaps a reflection of the spectator's soul for once utterly dismantled of affectation and convention. In the vulgar reaction from this, you are of course as trivial, if you like, at Niagara, as anywhere.

Slowly Isabel became aware that the sacred grove beside the fall was profaned by some very common presences indeed, that tossed bits of stone and sticks into the consecrated waters, and struggled for handkerchiefs and fans, and here and there put their arms about each other's waists, and made a show of laughing and joking. They were a picnic party of rude, silly folks of the neighborhood, and she stood pondering them in sad wonder if anything could be worse, when she heard a voice saying to Basil, "Take you next, Sir? Plenty of light yet, and the wind's down the river, so the spray won't interfere. Make a capital picture of you; falls in the background." It was the local photographer urging them to succeed the young couple he had just posed at the brink: the gentleman was sitting down, with his legs crossed and his hands elegantly disposed; the lady was standing at his side, with one arm thrown lightly across his shoulder, while with the other hand she thrust his cane into the ground; you could see it was going to be a splendid photograph.

Basil thanked the artist, and Isabel said, trusting as usual to his sympathy for perception of her train of thought, "Well, I'll never try to be high-strung again. But shouldn't you have thought, dearest, that I might expect to be high-strung with success at Niagara if anywhere?"

She passively followed him into the long, queer, downward-sloping edifice on the border of the grove, unflinchingly mounted the car that stood ready, and descended the incline. Emerging into the light again, she found herself at the foot of the fall by whose top she had just stood. At first she was glad there were other people down there, as if she and Basil were not enough to bear it alone, and she could almost have spoken to the two hopelessly pretty brides, with parasols and impertinent little boots, whom their attendant husbands were helping over the sharp and slippery rocks, so bare beyond the spray, so green and mossy within the fall of mist. But in another breath she forgot them; as she looked on that dizzied sea, hurling itself from the high summit in huge white knots, and breaks and masses, and plunging into the gulf beside her, while it sent continually up a strong voice of lamentation, and crawled away in vast eddies, with somehow a look of human terror, bewilderment, and pain. It was bathed in snowy vapor to its crest, but now and then heavy currents of air drew this aside, and they saw the outline of the Falls almost as far as the Canada side. They remembered afterwards how they were able to make use of but one sense at a time, and how when they strove to take in the forms of the descending flood, they ceased to hear it; but as soon as they released their eyes from this service, every fibre in them vibrated to the sound, and the spectacle dissolved away in it. They were aware, too, of a strange capriciousness in their senses, and of a tendency of each to palter with the things perceived. The eye could no longer take truthful note of quality, and now beheld the tumbling deluge as a Gothic wall of careen marble, white, motionless, and now as a fall of lightest snow, with movement in all its atoms, and scarce so much cohesion as would hold them together; and again they could not discern if this course were from above or from beneath, whether the water rose from the abyss or dropped from the height. The ear could give the brain no assurance of the sound that felled it, and whether it were great or little; the prevailing softness of the cataract's tone seemed so much opposed to ideas of prodigious force or of prodigious volume. It was only when the sight, so idle in its own behalf, came to the aid of the other sense, and showed them the mute movement of each other's lips, that they dimly appreciated the depth of sound that involved them.

"I think you might have been high-strung there, for a second or two," said Basil, when, ascending the incline; he could make himself heard. "We will try the bridge next."

Over the river, so still with its oily eddies and delicate wreaths of foam, just below the Falls they have in late years woven a web of wire high in air, and hung a bridge from precipice to precipice. Of all the bridges made with hands it seems the lightest, most ethereal; it is ideally graceful, and droops from its slight towers like a garland. It is worthy to command, as it does, the whole grandeur of Niagara, and to show the traveller the vast spectacle, from the beginning of the American Fall to the farthest limit of the Horse-Shoe, with all the awful pomp of the rapids, the solemn darkness of the wooded islands, the mystery of the vaporous gulf, the indomitable wildness of the shores, as far as the eye can reach up or down the fatal stream.

To this bridge our friends now repaired, by a path that led through

another of those groves which keep the village back from the shores of the river on the American side, and greatly help the sight-seer's pleasure in the place. The exquisite structure, which sways so tremulously from its towers, and seems to lay so slight a hold on earth where its cables sink into the ground, is to other bridges what the blood horse is to the common breed of roadsters; and now they felt its sensitive nerves quiver under them and sympathetically through them as they advanced farther and farther toward the centre. Perhaps their sympathy with the bridge's trepidation was too great for unalloyed delight, and yet the thrill was a glorious one, to be known only there; and afterwards, at least, they would not have had their airy path seem more secure.

The last hues of sunset lingered in the mists that sprung from the base of the Falls with a mournful, tremulous grace, and a movement weird as the play of the northern lights. They were touched with the most delicate purples and crimsons, that darkened to deep red, and then faded from them at a second look, and they flew upward, swiftly upward, like troops of pale, transparent ghosts; while a perfectly clear radiance, better than any other for local color, dwelt upon the scene. Far under the bridge the river smoothly swam, the undercurrents forever unfolding themselves upon the surface with a vast rose-like evolution, edged all round with faint lines of white, where the air that filled the water freed itself in foam. What had been clear green on the face of the cataract was here more like rich verd-antique, and had a look of firmness almost like that of the stone itself. So it showed beneath the bridge, and down the river till the curving shores hid it. These, springing abruptly from the water's brink, and shagged with pine and cedar, displayed the tender verdure of grass and bushes intermingled with the dark evergreens that comb from ledge to ledge, till they point their speary tops above the crest of bluffs. In front, where tumbled rocks and expanses of caked clay varied the gloomier and gayer green, sprung those spectral mists; and through them loomed out, in its manifold majesty, Niagara, with the seemingly immovable white Gothic screen of the American Fall, and the green massive curve of the Horseshoe, solid and simple and calm as an Egyptian wall; while behind this, with their white and black expanses broken by dark foliaged little isles, the steep Canadian rapids billowed down between their heavily wooded shores.

The wedding-journeymen hung, they knew not how long, in rapture on the sight; and then, looking back from the shore to the spot where they had stood, they felt relieved that unreality should possess itself of all, and that the bridge should swing there in mid-air like a filmy web, scarce more passable than the rainbow that flings its arch above the mists.

On the portico of the hotel they found half a score of gentlemen smoking, and creating together that collective silence which passes for sociality on our continent. Some carriages stood before the door, and within, around the base of a pillar, sat a circle of idle call-boys. There were a few trunks heaped together in one place, with a porter standing guard over them; a solitary guest was buying a cigar at the newspaper stand in one corner; another friendless creature was writing a letter in the

reading-room; the clerk, in a seersucker coat and a lavish shirt-bosom, tried to give the whole an effect of watering-place gayety and bustle, as he provided a newly arrived guest with a room.

Our pair took in these traits of solitude and repose with indifference. If the hotel had been thronged with brilliant company, they would have been no more and no less pleased; and when, after supper, they came into the grand parlor, and found nothing there but a marble-topped centre-table, with a silver-plated ice-pitcher and a small company of goblets, they sat down perfectly content in a secluded window-seat. They were not seen by the three people who entered soon after, and halted in the centre of the room.

"Why, Kitty!" said one of the two ladies who must be in any travelling-party of three, "this is more inappropriate to your gorgeous array than the supper-room, even."

She who was called Kitty was armed, as for social conquest, in some kind of airy evening-dress, and was looking round with bewilderment upon that forlorn waste of carpeting and upholstery. She owned, with a smile, that she had not seen so much of the world yet as she had been promised; but she liked Niagara very much, and perhaps they should find the world at breakfast.

"No," said the other lady, who was as unquiet as Kitty was calm, and who seemed resolved to make the most of the worst, "it isn't probable that the hotel will fill up overnight; and I feel personally responsible for this state of things. Who would ever have supposed that Niagara would be so empty? I thought the place was thronged the whole summer long. How do you account for it, Richard?"

The gentleman looked fatigued, as from a long-continued discussion elsewhere of the matter in hand, and he said that he had not been trying to account for it.

"Then you don't care for Kitty's pleasure at all, and you don't want her to enjoy herself. Why don't you take some interest in the matter?"

"Why, if I accounted for the emptiness of Niagara in the most satisfactory way, it wouldn't add a soul to the floating population. Under the circumstances I prefer to leave it unexplained."

"Do you think it's because it's such a hot summer? Do you suppose it's not exactly the season? Didn't you expect there'd be more people? Perhaps Niagara isn't as fashionable as it used to be."

"It looks something like that."

"Well, what under the sun do you think is the reason?"

"I don't know."

"Perhaps," interposed Kitty, placidly, "most of the visitors go to the

other hotel, now."

"It 's altogether likely," said the other lady, eagerly. "There are just such caprices."

"Well," said Richard, "I wanted you to go there."

"But you said that you always heard this was the a most fashionable."

"I know it. I didn't want to come here for that reason. But fortune favors the brave."

"Well, it's too bad! Here we've asked Kitty to come to Niagara with us, just to give her a little peep into the world, and you've brought us to a hotel where we're--"

"Monarchs of all we survey," suggested Kitty.

"Yes, and start at the sound of our own," added the other lady, helplessly.

"Come now, Fanny," said the gentleman, who was but too clearly the husband of the last speaker. "You know you insisted, against all I could say or do, upon coming to this house; I implored you to go to the other, and now you blame me for bringing you here."

"So I do. If you'd let me have my own way without opposition about coming here, I dare my I should have gone to the other place. But never mind. Kitty knows whom to blame, I hope. She 's your cousin,"

Kitty was sitting with her hands quiescently folded in her lap. She now rose and said that she did not know anything about the other hotel, and perhaps it was just as empty as this.

"It can't be. There can't be two hotels so empty," said Fanny. "It don't stand to reason."

"If you wish Kitty to see the world so much," said the gentleman, "why don't you take her on to Quebec, with us?"

Kitty had left her seat beside Fanny, and was moving with a listless content about the parlor.

"I wonder you ask, Richard, when you know she's only come for the night, and has nothing with her but a few cuffs and collars! I certainly never heard of anything so absurd before!"

The absurdity of the idea then seemed to cast its charm upon her, for, after a silence, "I could lend her some things," she said musingly. "But don't speak of it to-night, please. It's too ridiculous. Kitty!" she called out, and, as the young lady drew near, she continued, "How would you like to go to Quebec, with us?"

"O Fanny!" cried Kitty, with rapture; and then, with dismay, "How can I?"

"Why, very well, I think. You've got this dress, and your travelling-suit; and I can lend you whatever you want. Come!" she added joyously, "let's go up to your room, and talk it over!"

The two ladies vanished upon this impulse, and the gentleman followed. To their own relief the guiltless eaves-droppers, who found no moment favorable for revealing themselves after the comedy began, issued from their retiracy.

"What a remarkable little lady!" said Basil, eagerly turning to Isabel for sympathy in his enjoyment of her inconsequence.

"Yes, poor thing!" returned his wife; "it's no light matter to invite a young lady to take a journey with you, and promise her all sorts of gayety, and perhaps beaux and flirtations, and then find her on your hands in a desolation like this. It's dreadful, I think."

Basil stared. "O, certainly," he said. "But what an amusingly illogical little body!"

"I don't understand what you mean, Basil. It was the only thing that she could do, to invite the young lady to go on with them. I wonder her husband had the sense to think of it first. Of course she'll have to lend her things."

"And you didn't observe anything peculiar in her way of reaching her conclusions?"

"Peculiar? What do you mean?"

"Why, her blaming her husband for letting her have her own way about the hotel; and her telling him not to mention his proposal to Kitty, and then doing it herself, just--after she'd pronounced it absurd and impossible." He spoke with heat at being forced to make what he thought a needless explanation.

"O!" said Isabel, after a moment's reflection. "That! Did you think it so very odd?"

Her husband looked at her with the gravity a man must feel when he begins to perceive that he has married the whole mystifying world of womankind in the woman of his choice, and made no answer. But to his own soul he said: "I supposed I had the pleasure of my wife's acquaintance. It seems I have been flattering myself."

The next morning they went out as they had planned, for an exploration of Goat Island, after an early breakfast. As they sauntered through the village's contrasts of pigmy and colossal in architecture, they praisefully took in the unalloyed holiday character of the place, enjoying equally the lounging tourists at the hotel doors, the drivers and their carriages to let, and the little shops, with nothing but

mementos of Niagara, and Indian beadwork, and other trumpery, to sell. Shops so useless, they agreed, could not be found outside the Palms Royale, or the Square of St. Mark, or anywhere else in the world but here. They felt themselves once more a part of the tide of mere sight-seeing pleasure-travel, on which they had drifted in other days, and in an eddy of which their love itself had opened its white blossom, and lily-like dreamed upon the wave.

They were now also part of the great circle of newly wedded bliss, which, involving the whole land during the season of bridal-tours, may be said to show richest and fairest at Niagara, like the costly jewel of a precious ring. The place is, in fact, almost abandoned to bridal couples, and any one out of his honey-moon is in some degree an alien there, and must discern a certain immodesty in his intrusion. Is it for his profane eyes to look upon all that blushing and trembling joy? A man of any sensibility must desire to veil his face, and, bowing his excuses to the collective rapture, take the first train for the wicked outside world to which he belongs. Everywhere, he sees brides and brides. Three or four with the benediction still on them, come down in the same car with him; he hands her travelling-shawl after one as she springs from the omnibus into her husband's arms; there are two or three walking back and forth with their new lords upon the porch of the hotel; at supper they are on every side of him, and he feels himself suffused, as it were, by a roseate atmosphere of youth and love and hope. At breakfast it is the same, and then, in his wanderings about the place he constantly meets them. They are of all manners of beauty, fair and dark, slender and plump, tall and short; but they are all beautiful with the radiance of loving and being loved. Now, if ever in their lives, they are charmingly dressed, and ravishing toilets take the willing eye from the objects of interest. How high the heels of the pretty boots, how small the tender-tinted gloves, how electrical the flutter of the snowy skirts! What is Niagara to these things?

Isabel was not willing to own her bridal sisterhood to these blessed souls; but she secretly rejoiced in it, even while she joined Basil in noting their number and smiling at their innocent abandon. She dropped his arm at encounter of the first couple, and walked carelessly at his side; she made a solemn vow never to take hold of his watch-chain in speaking to him; she trusted that she might be preserved from putting her face very close to his at dinner in studying the bill of fare; getting out of carriages, she forbade him ever to take her by the waist. All ascetic resolutions are modified by experiment; but if Isabel did not rigorously keep these, she is not the less to be praised for having formed them.

Just before they reached the bridge to Goat Island, they passed a little group of the Indians still lingering about Niagara, who make the barbaric wares in which the shops abound, and, like the woods and the wild faces of the cliffs and precipices, help to keep the cataract remote, and to invest it with the charm of primeval loneliness. This group were women, and they sat motionless on the ground, smiling sphinx-like over their laps full of bead-work, and turning their dark liquid eyes of invitation upon the passers. They wore bright kirtles, and red shawls fell from

their heads over their plump brown cheeks and down their comfortable persons. A little girl with them was attired in like gayety of color. "What is her name?" asked Isabel, paying for a bead pincushion. "Daisy Smith," said her mother, in distressingly good English. "But her Indian name?" "She has none," answered the woman, who told Basil that her village numbered five hundred people, and that they were Protestants. While they talked they were joined by an Indian, whom the women saluted musically in their native tongue. This was somewhat consoling; but he wore trousers and a waistcoat, and it could have been wished that he had not a silk hat on.

"Still," said Isabel, as they turned away, "I'm glad he hasn't Lisle-thread gloves, like that chieftain we saw putting his forest queen on board the train at Oneida. But how shocking that they should be Christians, and Protestants! It would have been bad enough to have them Catholics. And that woman said that they were increasing. They ought to be fading away."

On the bridge, they paused and looked up and down the rapids rushing down the slope in all their wild variety, with the white crests of breaking surf, the dark massiveness of heavy-climbing waves, the fleet, smooth sweep of currents over broad shelves of sunken rock, the dizzy swirl and suck of whirlpools.

Spell-bound, the journeyers pored upon the deathful course beneath their feet, gave a shudder to the horror of being cast upon it, and then hurried over the bridge to the island, in the shadow of whose wildness they sought refuge from the sight and sound.

There had been rain in the night; the air was full of forest fragrance, and the low, sweet voice of twittering birds. Presently they came to a bench set in a corner of the path, and commanding a pleasant vista of sunlit foliage, with a mere gleam of the foaming river beyond. As they sat down here loverwise, Basil, as in the early days of their courtship, began to recite a poem. It was one which had been haunting him since his first sight of the rapids, one of many that he used to learn by heart in his youth--the rhyme of some poor newspaper poet, whom the third or fourth editor copying his verses consigned to oblivion by carelessly clipping his name from the bottom. It had always lingered in Basil's memory, rather from the interest of the awful fact it recorded, than from any merit of its own; and now he recalled it with a distinctness that surprised him.

AVERY.

I.

All night long they heard in the houses beside the shore,
Heard, or seemed to hear, through the multitudinous roar,
Out of the hell of the rapids as 'twere a lost soul's cries
Heard and could not believe; and the morning mocked their eyes,
Showing where wildest and fiercest the waters leaped up and ran
Raving round him and past, the visage of a man
Clinging, or seeming to cling, to the trunk of a tree that, caught
Fast in the rocks below, scarce out of the surges caught.

Was it a life, could it be, to yon slender hope that clung
Shrill, above all the tumult the answering terror rang.

II.

Under the weltering rapids a boat from the bridge is drowned,
Over the rocks the lines of another are tangled and wound,
And the long, fateful hours of the morning have wasted soon,
As it had been in some blessed trance, and now it is noon.
Hurry, now with the raft! But O, build it strong and stanch,
And to the lines and the treacherous rocks look well as yon launch
Over the foamy tops of the waves, and their foam-sprent sides,
Over the hidden reefs, and through the embattled tides,
Onward rushes the raft, with many a lurch and leap,--
Lord! if it strike him loose from the hold he scarce can keep!
No! through all peril unharmed, it reaches him harmless at least,
And to its proven strength he lashes his weakness fast.
Now, for the shore! But steady, steady, my men, and slow;
Taut, now, the quivering lines; now slack; and so, let her go!
Thronging the shores around stands the pitying multitude;
Wan as his own are their looks, and a nightmare seems to brood
Heavy upon them, and heavy the silence hangs on all,
Save for the rapids' plunge, and the thunder of the fall.
But on a sudden thrills from the people still and pale,
Chorussing his unheard despair, a desperate wail
Caught on a lurking point of rock it sways and swings,
Sport of the pitiless waters, the raft to which he clings.

III.

All the long afternoon it idly swings and sways;
And on the shore the crowd lifts up its hands and prays:
Lifts to heaven and wrings the hands so helpless to save,
Prays for the mercy of God on him whom the rock and the ways
Battle for, fettered betwixt them, and who amidst their strife
Straggles to help his helpers, and fights so hard for his life,
Tugging at rope and at reef, while men weep and women swoon.
Priceless second by second, so wastes the afternoon.
And it is sunset now; and another boat and the last
Down to him from the bridge through the rapids has safely passed.

IV.

Wild through the crowd comes flying a man that nothing can stay
Maddening against the gate that is locked athwart his way.
"No! we keep the bridge for them that can help him. You,
Tell us, who are you?" "His brother!" "God help you both! Pass through."
Wild, with wide arms of imploring he calls aloud to him,
Unto the face of his brother, scarce seen in the distance dim;
But in the roar of the rapids his fluttering words are lost
As in a wind of autumn the leaves of autumn are tossed.
And from the bridge he sees his brother sever the rope
Holding him to the raft, and rise secure in his hope;
Sees all as in a dream the terrible pageantry,
Populous shores, the woods, the sky, the birds flying free;
Sees, then, the form--that, spent with effort and fasting and fear,

Flings itself feebly and fails of the boat that is lying so near,
Caught in the long-baffled clutch of the rapids, and rolled and hurled
Headlong on to the cataract's brink, and out of the world.

"O Basil!" said Isabel, with a long sigh breaking the hush that best
praised the unknown poet's skill, "it isn't true, is it?"

"Every word, almost, even to the brother's coming at the last moment.
It's a very well-known incident," he added, and I am sure the reader
whose memory runs back twenty years cannot have forgotten it.

Niagara, indeed, is an awful homicide; nearly every point of interest
about the place has killed its man, and there might well be a deeper
stain of crimson than it ever wears in that pretty bow overarching the
falls. Its beauty is relieved against an historical background as gloomy
as the lightest-hearted tourist could desire. The abominable savages,
revering the cataract as a kind of august devil, and leading a life of
demoniacal misery and wickedness, whom the first Jesuits found here two
hundred years ago; the ferocious Iroquois bloodily driving out these
squalid devil-worshippers; the French planting the fort that yet guards
the mouth of the river, and therewith the seeds of war that fruited
afterwards in murderous strifes throughout the whole Niagara country; the
struggle for the military posts on the river, during the wars of France
and England; the awful scene in the conspiracy of Pontiac, where a
detachment of English troops was driven by the Indians over the precipice
near the great Whirlpool; the sorrow and havoc visited upon the American
settlements in the Revolution by the savages who prepared their attacks
in the shadow of Fort Niagara; the battles of Chippewa and of Lundy's
Lane, that mixed the roar of their cannon with that of the fall; the
savage forays with tomahawk and scalping-knife, and the blazing villages
on either shore in the War of 1812,--these are the memories of the place,
the links in a chain of tragical interest scarcely broken before our time
since the white man first beheld the mist-veiled face of Niagara. The
facts lost nothing of their due effect as Basil, in the ramble across
Goat Island, touched them with the reflected light of Mr. Parkman's
histories,--those precious books that make our meagre past wear something
of the rich romance of old European days, and illumine its savage
solitudes with the splendor of mediaeval chivalry, and the glory of
mediaeval martyrdom, --and then, lacking this light, turned upon them the
feeble glimmer of the guide-books. He and Isabel enjoyed the lurid
picture with all the zest of sentimentalists dwelling upon the troubles
of other times from the shelter of the safe and peaceful present. They
were both poets in their quality of bridal couple, and so long as their
own nerves were unshaken they could transmute all facts to entertaining
fables. They pleasantly exercised their sympathies upon those who every
year perish at Niagara in the tradition of its awful power; only they
refused their cheap and selfish compassion to the Hermit of Goat Island,
who dwelt so many years in its conspicuous seclusion, and was finally
carried over the cataract. This public character they suspected of
design in his death as in his life, and they would not be moved by his
memory; though they gave a sigh to that dream, half pathetic, half
ludicrous, yet not ignoble, of Mordecai Noah, who thought to assemble all
the Jews of the world, and all the Indians, as remnants of the lost

tribes, upon Grand Island, there to rebuild Jerusalem, and who actually laid the corner-stone of the new temple there.

Goat Island is marvelously wild for a place visited by so many thousands every year. The shrubbery and undergrowth remain unravaged, and form a deceitful privacy, in which, even at that early hour of the day, they met many other pairs. It seemed incredible that the village and the hotels should be so full, and that the wilderness should also abound in them; yet on every embowered seat, and going to and from all points of interest and danger, were these new-wedded lovers with their interlacing arms and their fond attitudes, in which each seemed to support and lean upon the other. Such a pair stood prominent before them when Basil and Isabel emerged at last from the cover of the woods at the head of the island, and glanced up the broad swift stream to the point where it ran smooth before breaking into the rapids; and as a soft pastoral feature in the foreground of that magnificent landscape, they found them far from unpleasing. Some such pair is in the foreground of every famous American landscape; and when I think of the amount of public love-making in the season of pleasure-travel, from Mount Desert to the Yosemite, and from the parks of Colorado to the Keys of Florida, I feel that our continent is but a larger Arcady, that the middle of the nineteenth century is the golden age, and that we want very little of being a nation of shepherds and shepherdesses.

Our friends returned by the shore of the Canadian rapids, having traversed the island by a path through the heart of the woods, and now drew slowly near the Falls again. All parts of the prodigious pageant have an eternal novelty, and they beheld the ever-varying effect of that constant sublimity with the sense of discoverers, or rather of people whose great fortune it is to see the marvel in its beginning, and new from the creating hand. The morning hour lent its sunny charm to this illusion, while in the cavernous precipices of the shores, dark with evergreens, a mystery as of primeval night seemed to linger. There was a wild fluttering of their nerves, a rapture with an under-consciousness of pain, the exaltation of peril and escape, when they came to the three little isles that extend from Goat Island, one beyond another far out into the furious channel. Three pretty suspension-bridges connect them now with the larger island, and under each of these flounders a huge rapid, and hurls itself away to mingle with the ruin of the fall. The Three Sisters are mere fragments of wilderness, clumps of vine-tangled woods, planted upon masses of rock; but they are part of the fascination of Niagara which no one resists; nor could Isabel have been persuaded from exploring them. It wants no courage to do this, but merely submission to the local sorcery, and the adventurer has no other reward than the consciousness of having been where but a few years before no human being had perhaps set foot. She crossed from bridge to bridge with a quaking heart, and at last stood upon the outermost isle, whence, through the screen of vines and boughs, she gave fearful glances at the heaving and tossing flood beyond, from every wave of which at every instant she rescued herself with a desperate struggle. The exertion told heavily upon her strength unawares, and she suddenly made Basil another revelation of character. Without the slightest warning she sank down at the root of a tree, and said, with serious composure, that she could

never go back on those bridges; they were not safe. He stared at her cowering form in blank amaze, and put his hands in his pockets. Then it occurred to his dull masculine sense that it must be a joke; and he said, "Well, I'll have you taken off in a boat."

"O do, Basil, do, have me taken off in a boat!" implored Isabel. "You see yourself the Midges are not safe. Do get a boat."

"Or a balloon," he suggested, humoring the pleasantry.

Isabel burst into tears; and now he went on his knees at her side, and took her hands in his. "Isabel! Isabel! Are you crazy?" he cried, as if he meant to go mad himself. She moaned and shuddered in reply; he said, to mend matters, that it was a jest, about the boat; and he was driven to despair when Isabel repeated, "I never can go back by the bridges, never."

"But what do you propose to do?"

"I don't know, I don't know!"

He would try sarcasm. "Do you intend to set up a hermitage here, and have your meals sent out from the hotel? It's a charming spot, and visited pretty constantly; but it's small, even for a hermitage."

Isabel moaned again with her hands still on her eyes, and wondered that he was not ashamed to make fun of her.

He would try kindness. "Perhaps, darling, you'll let me carry you ashore."

"No, that will bring double the weight on the bridge at once."

"Couldn't you shut your eyes, and let me lead you?"

"Why, it isn't the sight of the rapids," she said, looking up fiercely.

"The bridges are not safe. I'm not a child, Basil. O, what shall we do?"

"I don't know," said Basil, gloomily. "It's an exigency for which I wasn't prepared." Then he silently gave himself to the Evil One, for having probably overwrought Isabel's nerves by repeating that poem about Avery, and by the ensuing talk about Niagara, which she had seemed to enjoy so much. He asked her if that was it; and she answered, "O no, it's nothing but the bridges." He proved to her that the bridges, upon all known principles, were perfectly safe, and that they could not give way. She shook her head, but made no answer, and he lost his patience.

"Isabel," he cried, "I'm ashamed of you!"

"Don't say anything you'll be sorry for afterwards, Basil," she replied, with the forbearance of those who have reason and justice on their side.

The rapids beat and shouted round their little prison-isle, each billow leaping as if possessed by a separate demon. The absurd horror of the situation overwhelmed him. He dared not attempt to carry her ashore, for she might spring from his grasp into the flood. He could not leave her to call for help; and what if nobody came till she lost her mind from terror? Or, what if somebody should come and find them in that ridiculous affliction?

Somebody was coming!

"Isabel!" he shouted in her ear, "here come those people we saw in the parlor last night."

Isabel dashed her veil over her face, clutched Basil's with her icy hand, rose, drew her arm convulsively through his, and walked ashore without a word.

In a sheltered nook they sat down, and she quickly "repaired her drooping head and tricked her beams" again. He could see her tearfully smiling through her veil. "My dear," he said, "I don't ask an explanation of your fright, for I don't suppose you could give it. But should you mind telling me why those people were so sovereign against it?"

"Why, dearest! Don't you understand? That Mrs. Richard--whoever she is --is so much like me."

She looked at him as if she had made the most satisfying statement, and he thought he had better not ask further then, but wait in hope that the meaning would come to him. They walked on in silence till they came to the Biddle Stairs, at the head of which is a notice that persons have been killed by pieces of rock from the precipice overhanging the shore below, and warning people that they descend at their peril. Isabel declined to visit the Cave of the Winds, to which these stairs lead, but was willing to risk the ascent of Terrapin Tower. "Thanks; no," said her husband. "You might find it unsafe to come back the way you went up. We can't count certainly upon the appearance of the lady who is so much like you; and I've no fancy for spending my life on Terrapin Tower." So he found her a seat, and went alone to the top of the audacious little structure standing on the verge of the cataract, between the smooth curve of the Horse-Shoe and the sculptured front of the Central Fall, with the stormy sea of the Rapids behind, and the river, dim seen through the mists, crawling away between its lofty bluffs before. He knew again the awful delight with which so long ago he had watched the changes in the beauty of the Canadian Fall as it hung a mass of translucent green from the brink, and a pearly white seemed to crawl up from the abyss, and penetrate all its substance to the very crest, and then suddenly vanished from it, and perpetually renewed the same effect. The mystery of the rising vapors veiled the gulf into which the cataract swooped; the sun shone, and a rainbow dreamed upon them.

Near the foot of the tower, some loose rocks extend quite to the verge, and here Basil saw an elderly gentleman skipping from one slippery stone to another, and looking down from time to time into the abyss, who, when

he had amused himself long enough in this way, clambered up on the plank bridge. Basil, who had descended by this time, made bold to say that he thought the diversion an odd one and rather dangerous. The gentleman took this in good part, and owned it might seem so, but added that a distinguished phrenologist had examined his head, and told him he had equilibrium so large that he could go anywhere.

"On your bridal tour, I presume," he continued, as they approached the bench where Basil had left Isabel. She had now the company of a plain, middle-aged woman, whose attire hesitatingly expressed some inward festivity, and had a certain reluctant fashionableness. "Well, this is my third bridal tour to Niagara, and my wife's been here once before on the same business. We see a good many changes. I used to stand on Table Rock with the others. Now that's all gone. Well, old lady, shall we move on?" he asked; and this bridal pair passed up the path, attended, haply, by the guardian spirits of those who gave the place so many sad yet pleasing associations.

At dinner, Mr. Richard's party sat at the table next Basil's, and they were all now talking cheerfully over the emptiness of the spacious dining-hall.

"Well, Kitty," the married lady was saying, you can tell the girls what you please about the gayeties of Niagara, when you get home. They'll believe anything sooner than the truth."

"O yes, indeed," said Kitty, "I've got a good deal of it made up already. I'll describe a grand hop at the hotel, with fashionable people from all parts of the country, and the gentlemen I danced with the most. I'm going to have had quite a flirtation with the gentleman of the long blond mustache, whom we met on the bridge this morning and he's got to do duty in accounting for my missing glove. It'll never do to tell the girls I dropped it from the top of Terrapin Tower. Then you know, Fanny, I really can say something about dining with aristocratic Southerners, waited upon by their black servants."

This referred to the sad-faced patrician whom Basil and Isabel had noted in the cars from Buffalo as a Southerner probably coming North for the first time since the war. He had an air at once fierce and sad, and a half-barbaric, homicidal gentility of manner fascinating enough in its way. He sat with his wife at a table farther down the room, and their child was served in part by a little tan-colored nurse-maid. The fact did not quite answer to the young lady's description of it, and get it certainly afforded her a ground-work. Basil fancied a sort of bewilderment in the Southerner, and explained it upon the theory that he used to come every year to Niagara before the war, and was now puzzled to find it so changed.

"Yes," he said, "I can't account for him except as the ghost of Southern travel, and I can't help feeling a little sorry for him. I suppose that almost any evil commends itself by its ruin; the wrecks of slavery are fast growing a fungus crop of sentiment, and they may yet outflourish the remains of the feudal system in the kind of poetry they produce. The

impoverished slave-holder is a pathetic figure, in spite of all justice and reason, the beaten rebel does move us to compassion, and it is of no use to think of Andersonville in his presence. This gentleman, and others like him, used to be the lords of our summer resorts. They spent the money they did not earn like princes; they held their heads high; they trampled upon the Abolitionist in his lair; they received the homage of the doughface in his home. They came up here from their rice-swamps and cotton-fields, and bullied the whole busy civilization of the North. Everybody who had merchandise or principles to sell truckled to them, and travel amongst us was a triumphal progress. Now they're moneyless and subjugated (as they call it), there's none so poor to do them reverence, and it's left for me, an Abolitionist from the cradle, to sigh over their fate. After all, they had noble traits, and it was no great wonder they got, to despise us, seeing what most of us were. It seems to me I should like to know our friend. I can't help feeling towards him as towards a fallen prince, heaven help my craven spirit! I wonder how our colored waiter feels towards him. I dare say he admires him immensely."

There were not above a dozen other people in the room, and Basil contrasted the scene with that which the same place formerly presented. "In the old time," he said, "every table was full, and we dined to the music of a brass band. I can't say I liked the band, but I miss it. I wonder if our Southern friend misses it? They gave us a very small allowance of brass band when we arrived, Isabel. Upon my word, I wonder what's come over the place," he said, as the Southern party, rising from the table, walked out of the dining-room, attended by many treacherous echoes in spite of an ostentatious clatter of dishes that the waiters made.

After dinner they drove on the Canada shore up past the Clifton House, towards the Burning Spring, which is not the least wonder of Niagara. As each bubble breaks upon the troubled surface, and yields its flash of infernal flame and its whiff of sulphurous stench, it seems hardly strange that the Neutral Nation should have revered the cataract as a demon; and another subtle spell (not to be broken even by the business-like composure of the man who shows off the hell-broth) is added to those successive sorceries by which Niagara gradually changes from a thing of beauty to a thing of terror. By all odds, too, the most tremendous view of the Falls is afforded by the point on the drive whence you look down upon the Horse-Shoe, and behold its three massive walls of sea rounding and sweeping into the gulf together, the color gone, and the smooth brink showing black and ridgy.

Would they not go to the battle-field of Lundy's Lane? asked the driver at a certain point on their return; but Isabel did not care for battle-fields, and Basil preferred to keep intact the reminiscence of his former visit. "They have a sort of tower of observation built on the battle-ground," he said, as they drove on down by the river, "and it was in charge of an old Canadian militia-man, who had helped his countrymen to be beaten in the fight. This hero gave me a simple and unintelligible account of the battle, asking me first if I had ever heard of General Scott, and adding without flinching that here he got his earliest laurels. He seemed to go just so long to every listener, and nothing

could stop him short, so I fell into a reverie until he came to an end. It was hard to remember, that sweet summer morning, when the sun shone, and the birds sang, and the music of a piano and a girl's voice rose from a bowery cottage near, that all the pure air had once been tainted with battle-smoke, that the peaceful fields had been planted with cannon, instead of potatoes and corn, and that where the cows came down the farmer's lane, with tinkling bells, the shock of armed men had befallen. The blue and tranquil Ontario gleamed far away, and far away rolled the beautiful land, with farm-houses, fields, and woods, and at the foot of the tower lay the pretty village. The battle of the past seemed only a vagary of mine; yet how could I doubt the warrior at my elbow?--grieved though I was to find that a habit of strong drink had the better of his utterance that morning. My driver explained afterwards, that persons visiting the field were commonly so much pleased with the captain's eloquence, that they kept the noble old soldier in a brandy and-water rapture throughout the season, thereby greatly refreshing his memory, and making the battle bloodier and bloodier as the season advanced and the number of visitors increased. There my dear," he suddenly broke off, as they came in sight of a slender stream of water that escaped from the brow of a cliff on the American side below the Falls, and spun itself into a gauze of silvery mist, "that's the Bridal Veil; and I suppose you think the stream, which is making such a fine display, yonder, is some idle brooklet, ending a long course of error and worthlessness by that spectacular plunge. It's nothing of the kind; it's an honest hydraulio canal, of the most straightforward character, a poor but respectable mill-race which has devoted itself strictly to business, and has turned mill-wheels instead of fooling round water-lilies. It can afford that ultimate finery. What you behold in the Bridal Veil, my love, is the apotheosis of industry."

"What I can't help thinking of," said Isabel, who had not paid the smallest attention to the Bridal Veil, or anything about it, "is the awfulness of stepping off these places in the night-time." She referred to the road which, next the precipice, is unguarded by any sort of parapet. In Europe a strong wall would secure it, but we manage things differently on our continent, and carriages go running over the brink from time to time.

"If your thoughts have that direction," answered her husband, "we had better go back to the hotel, and leave the Whirlpool for to-morrow morning. It's late for it to-day, at any rate." He had treated Isabel since the adventure on the Three Sisters with a superiority which he felt himself to be very odious, but which he could not disuse.

"I'm not afraid," she sighed, "but in the words of the retreating soldier, I--I'm awfully demoralized;" and added, "You know we must reserve some of the vital forces for shopping this evening."

Part of their business also was to buy the tickets for their return to Boston by way of Montreal and Quebec, and it was part of their pleasure to get these of the heartiest imaginable ticket-agent. He was a colonel or at least a major, and he made a polite feint of calling Basil by some military title. He commended the trip they were about to make as the

most magnificent and beautiful on the whole continent, and he commended them for intending to make it. He said that was Mrs. General Bowdur of Philadelphia who just went out; did they know her? Somehow, the titles affected Basil as of older date than the late war, and as belonging to the militia period; and he imagined for the agent the romance of a life spent at a watering-place, in contact with rich money-spending, pleasure-taking people, who formed his whole jovial world. The Colonel, who included them in this world, and thereby brevetted them rich and fashionable, could not secure a state-room for them on the boat,--a perfectly splendid Lake steamer, which would take them down the rapids of the St. Lawrence, and on to Montreal without change,--but he would give them a letter to the captain, who was a very particular friend of his, and would be happy to show them as his friends every attention; and so he wrote a note ascribing peculiar merits to Basil, and in spite of all reason making him feel for the moment that he was privileged by a document which was no doubt part of every such transaction. He spoke in a loud cheerful voice; he laughed jollily at no apparent joke; he bowed very low and said, "GOOD-evening!" at parting, and they went away as if he had blessed them.

The rest of the evening they spent in wandering through the village, charmed with its bizarre mixture of quaintness and commonplaceness; in hanging about the shop-Windows with their monotonous variety of feather fans,--each with a violently red or yellow bird painfully sacrificed in its centre,--moccasins, bead-wrought work-bags, tobacco-pouches, bows and arrows, and whatever else the savage art of the neighboring squaws can invent; in sauntering through these gay booths, pricing many things, and in hanging long and undecidedly over cases full of feldspar crosses, quartz bracelets and necklaces, and every manner of vase, inoperative pitcher, and other vessel that can be fashioned out of the geological formations at Niagara, tormented meantime by the heat of the gas-lights and the persistence of the mosquitoes. There were very few people besides themselves in the shops, and Isabel's purchases were not lavish. Her husband had made up his mind to get her some little keepsake; and when he had taken her to the hotel he ran back to one of the shops, and hastily bought her a feather fan,--a magnificent thing of deep magenta dye shading into blue, with a whole yellow-bird transfixed in the centre. When he triumphantly displayed it in their room, "Who's that for, Basil?" demanded his wife; "the cook?" But seeing his ghastly look at this, she fell upon his neck, crying, "O you poor old tasteless darling! You've got it for me!" and seemed about to die of laughter.

"Didn't you start and throw up your hands," he stammered, "when you came to that case of fans?"

"Yes,--in horror! Did you think I liked the cruel things, with their dead birds and their hideous colors? O Basil, dearest! You are incorrigible. Can't you learn that magenta is the vilest of all the hues that the perverseness of man has invented in defiance of nature? Now, my love, just promise me one thing," she said pathetically. "We're going to do a little shopping in Montreal, you know; and perhaps you'll be wanting to surprise me with something there. Don't do it. Or if you must, do tell me all about it beforehand, and what the color of it's to be; and I

can say whether to get it or not, and then there'll be some taste about it, and I shall be truly surprised and pleased."

She turned to put the fan into her trunk, and he murmured something about exchanging it. "No," she said, "we'll keep it as a--a--monument." And she deposed him, with another peal of laughter, from the proud height to which he had climbed in pity of her nervous fears of the day. So completely were their places changed, that he doubted if it were not he who had made that scene on the Third Sister; and when Isabel said, "O, why won't men use their reasoning faculties?" he could not for himself have claimed any, and he could not urge the truth: that he had bought the fan more for its barbaric brightness than for its beauty. She would not let him get angry, and he could say nothing against the half-ironical petting with which she soothed his mortification.

But all troubles passed with the night, and the next morning they spent a charming hour about Prospect Point, and in sauntering over Goat Island, somewhat daintily tasting the flavors of the place on whose wonders they had so hungrily and indiscriminately feasted at first. They had already the feeling of veteran visitors, and they loftily marveled at the greed with which newer-comers plunged at the sensations. They could not conceive why people should want to descend the inclined railway to the foot of the American Fall; they smiled at the idea of going up Terrapin Tower; they derided the vulgar daring of those who went out upon the Three Weird Sisters; for some whom they saw about to go down the Biddle Stairs to the Cave of the Winds, they had no words to express their contempt.

Then they made their excursion to the Whirlpool, mistakenly going down on the American side, for it is much better seen from the other, though seen from any point it is the most impressive feature of the whole prodigious spectacle of Niagara.

Here within the compass of a mile, those inland seas of the North, Superior, Huron, Michigan, Erie, and the multitude of smaller lakes, all pour their floods, where they swirl in dreadful vortices, with resistless under-currents boiling beneath the surface of that mighty eddy. Abruptly from this scene of secret power, so different from the thunderous splendors of the cataract itself, rise lofty cliffs on every side, to a height of two hundred feet, clothed from the water's edge almost to their crests with dark cedars. Noiselessly, so far as your senses perceive, the lakes steal out of the whirlpool, then, drunk and wild, with brawling rapids roar away to Ontario through the narrow channel of the river. Awful as the scene is, you stand so far above it that you do not know the half of its terribleness; for those waters that look so smooth are great ridges and rings, forced, by the impulse of the currents, twelve feet higher in the centre than at the margin. Nothing can live there, and with what is caught in its hold, the maelstrom plays for days, and whirls and tosses round and round in its toils, with a sad, maniacal patience. The guides tell ghastly stories, which even their telling does not wholly rob of ghastliness, about the bodies of drowned men carried into the whirlpool and made to enact upon its dizzy surges a travesty of life, apparently floating there at their pleasure, diving and frolicking amid

the waves, or frantically struggling to escape from the death that has long since befallen them.

On the American side, not far below the railway suspension bridge, is an elevator more than a hundred and eighty feet high, which is meant to let people down to the shore below, and to give a view of the rapids on their own level. From the cliff opposite, it looks a terribly frail structure of pine sticks, but is doubtless stronger than it looks; and at any rate, as it has never yet fallen to pieces, it may be pronounced perfectly safe.

In the waiting-room at the top, Basil and Isabel found Mr. Richard and his ladies again, who got into the movable chamber with them, and they all silently descended together. It was not a time for talk of any kind, either when they were slowly and not quite smoothly dropping through the lugubrious upper part of the structure, where it was darkened by a rough weatherboarding, or lower down, where the unobstructed light showed the grim tearful face of the cliff, bedrabbled with oozy springs, and the audacious slightness of the elevator.

An abiding distrust of the machinery overhead mingled in Isabel's heart with a doubt of the value of the scene below, and she could not look forward to escape from her present perils by the conveyance which had brought her into them, with any satisfaction. She wanly smiled, and shrank closer to Basil; while the other matron made nothing of seizing her husband violently by the arm and imploring him to stop it whenever they experienced a rougher jolt than usual.

At the bottom of the cliff they were helped out of their prison by a humid young Englishman, with much clay on him, whose face was red and bathed in perspiration, for it was very hot down there in his little inclosure of baking pine boards, and it was not much cooler out on the rocks upon which the party issued, descending and descending by repeated and desultory flights of steps, till at last they stood upon a huge fragment of stone right abreast of the rapids. Yet it was a magnificent sight, and for a moment none of them were sorry to have come. The surges did not look like the gigantic ripples on a river's course as they were, but like a procession of ocean billows; they arose far aloft in vast bulks of clear green, and broke heavily into foam at the crest. Great blocks and shapeless fragments of rock strewed the margin of the awful torrent; gloomy walls of dark stone rose naked from these, bearded here and there with cedar, and everywhere frowning with shaggy brows of evergreen. The place is inexpressibly lonely and dreadful, and one feels like an alien presence there, or as if he had intruded upon some mood or haunt of Nature in which she had a right to be forever alone. The slight, impudent structure of the elevator rises through the solitude, like a thing that merits ruin, yet it is better than something more elaborate, for it looks temporary, and since there must be an elevator, it is well to have it of the most transitory aspect. Some such quality of rude impermanence consoles you for the presence of most improvements by which you enjoy Niagara; the suspension bridges for their part being saved from offensiveness by their beauty and unreality.

Ascending, none of the party spoke; Isabel and the other matron blanched in each other's faces; their husbands maintained a stolid resignation. When they stepped out of their trap into the waiting room at the top, "What I like about these little adventures," said Mr. Richard to Basil, abruptly, "is getting safely out of them. Good-morning, sir." He bowed slightly to Isabel, who returned his politeness, and exchanged faint nods, or glances, with the ladies. They got into their separate carriages, and at that safe distance made each other more decided obeisances.

"Well," observed Basil, "I suppose we're introduced now. We shall be meeting them from time to time throughout our journey. You know how the same faces and the same trunks used to keep turning up in our travels on the other side. Once meet people in travelling, and you can't get rid of them."

"Yes," said Isabel, as if continuing his train of thought, "I'm glad we're going to-day."

"O dearest!"

"Truly. When we first arrived I felt only the loveliness of the place. It seemed more familiar, too, then; but ever since, it's been growing stranger and dreadfuller. Somehow it's begun to pervade me and possess me in a very uncomfortable way; I'm tossed upon rapids, and flung from cataract brinks, and dizzied in whirlpools; I'm no longer yours, Basil; I'm most unhappily married to Niagara. Fly with me, save me from my awful lord!"

She lightly burlesqued the woes of a prima donna, with clasped hands and uplifted eyes.

"That'll do very well," Basil commented, "and it implies a reality that can't be quite definitely spoken. We come to Niagara in the patronizing spirit in which we approach everything nowadays, and for a few hours we have it our own way, and pay our little tributes of admiration with as much complacency as we feel in acknowledging the existence of the Supreme Being. But after a while we are aware of some potent influence undermining our self-satisfaction; we begin to conjecture that the great cataract does not exist by virtue of our approval, and to feel that it will not cease when we go away. The second day makes us its abject slaves, and on the third we want to fly from it in terror. I believe some people stay for weeks, however, and hordes of them have written odes to Niagara."

"I can't understand it, at all," said Isabel. "I don't wonder now that the town should be so empty this season, but that it should ever be full. I wish we'd gone after our first look at the Falls from the suspension bridge. How beautiful that was! I rejoice in everything that I haven't done. I'm so glad I haven't been in the Cave of the Winds; I'm so happy that Table Rock fell twenty years ago! Basil, I couldn't stand another rainbow today. I'm sorry we went out on the Three Weird Sisters. O, I shall dream about it! and the rush, and the whirl, and the dampness in

one's face, and the everlasting chirr-r-r-r of everything!"

She dipped suddenly upon his shoulder for a moment's oblivion, and then rose radiant with a question: "Why in the world, if Niagara is really what it seems to us now, do so many bridal parties come here?"

"Perhaps they're the only people who've the strength to bear up against it, and are not easily dispersed and subjected by it."

"But we're dispersed and subjected."

"Ah, my dear, we married a little late. Who knows how it would be if you were nineteen instead of twenty-seven, and I twenty-five and not turned of thirty?"

"Basil, you're very cruel."

"No, no. But don't you see how it is? We've known too much of life to desire any gloomy background for our happiness. We're quite contented to have things gay and bright about us. Once we couldn't have made the circle dark enough. Well, my dear, that's the effect of age. We're superannuated."

"I used to think I was before we were married," answered Isabel simply; "but now," she added triumphantly, "I'm rescued from all that. I shall never be old again, dearest; never, as long as you love me!"

They were about to enter the village, and he could not make any open acknowledgment of her tenderness; but her silken mantle (or whatever) slipped from her shoulder, and he embracingly replaced it, flattering himself that he had delicately seized this chance of an unavowed caress and not allowing (O such is the blindness of our sex!) that the opportunity had been yet more subtly afforded him, with the art which women never disuse in this world, and which I hope they will not forget in the next.

They had an early dinner, and looked their last upon the nuptial gayety of the otherwise forlorn hotel. Three brides sat down with them in travelling-dress; two occupied the parlor as they passed out; half a dozen happy pairs arrived (to the music of the band) in the omnibus that was to carry our friends back to the station; they caught sight of several about the shop windows, as that drove through the streets. Thus the place perpetually renews itself in the glow of love as long as the summer lasts. The moon which is elsewhere so often of wormwood, or of the ordinary green cheese at the best, is of lucent honey there from the first of June to the last of October; and this is a great charm in Niagara. I think with tenderness of all the lives that have opened so fairly there; the hopes that have reigned in the glad young hearts; the measureless tide of joy that ebbs and flows with the arriving and departing trains. Elsewhere there are carking cares of business and of fashion, there are age, and sorrow, and heartbreak: but here only youth, faith, rapture. I kiss my hand to Niagara for that reason, and would I were a poet for a quarter of an hour.

Isabel departed in almost a forgiving mood towards the weak sisterhood of evident brides, and both our friends felt a lurking fondness for Niagara at the last moment. I do not know how much of their content was due to the fact that they had suffered no sort of wrong there, from those who are apt to prey upon travellers. In the hotel a placard warned them to have nothing to do with the miscreant hackmen on the streets, but always to order their carriage at the office; on the street the hackmen whispered to them not to trust the exorbitant drivers in league with the landlords; yet their actual experience was great reasonableness and facile contentment with the sum agreed upon,

This may have been because the hackmen so far outnumbered the visitors, that the latter could dictate terms; but they chose to believe it a triumph of civilization; and I will never be the cynic to sneer at their faith. Only at the station was the virtue of the Niagarans put in doubt, by the hotel porter who professed to find Basil's trunk enfeebled by travel, and advised a strap for it, which a friend of his would sell for a dollar and a half. Yet even he may have been a benevolent nature unjustly suspected.

DOWN THE ST. LAWRENCE.

They were to take the Canadian steamer at Charlotte, the port of Rochester, and they rattled uneventfully down from Niagara by rail. At the broad, low-banked river-mouth the steamer lay beside the railroad station; and while Isabel disposed of herself on board, Basil looked to the transfer of the baggage, novelly comforted in the business by the respectfulness of the young Canadian who took charge of the trunks for the boat. He was slow, and his system was not good,—he did not give checks for the pieces, but marked them with the name of their destination; and there was that indefinable something in his manner which hinted his hope that you would remember the porter; but he was so civil that he did not snub the meekest and most vexatious of the passengers, and Basil mutely blessed his servile soul. Few white Americans, he said to himself, would behave so decently in his place; and he could not conceive of the American steamboat clerk who would use the politeness towards a waiting crowd that the Canadian purser showed when they all wedged themselves in about his window to receive their stateroom keys. He was somewhat awkward, like the porter, but he was patient, and he did not lose his temper even when some of the crowd, finding he would not bully them, made bold to bully him. He was three times as long in serving them as an American would have been, but their time was of no value there, and he served them well. Basil made a point of speaking him fair, when his turn came, and the purser did not trample on him for a base truckler, as an American jack-in-office would have done.

Our tourists felt at home directly on this steamer, which was very comfortable, and in every way sufficient for its purpose, with a visible captain, who answered two or three questions very pleasantly, and bore

himself towards his passengers in some sort like a host.

In the saloon Isabel had found among the passengers her semi-acquaintances of the hotel parlor and the Rapids-elevator, and had glanced tentatively towards them. Whereupon the matron of the party had made advances that ended in their all sitting down together and wondering when the boat would start, and what time they would get to Montreal next evening, with other matters that strangers going upon the same journey may properly marvel over in company. The introduction having thus accomplished itself, they exchanged addresses, and it appeared that Richard was Colonel Ellison, of Milwaukee, and that Fanny was his wife. Miss Kitty Ellison was of Western New York, not far from Erie. There was a diversion presently towards the different state-rooms; but the new acquaintances sat vis-a-vis at the table, and after supper the ladies drew their chairs together on the promenade deck, and enjoyed the fresh evening breeze. The sun set magnificent upon the low western shore which they had now left an hour away, and a broad stripe of color stretched behind the steamer. A few thin, luminous clouds darkened momentarily along the horizon, and then mixed with the land. The stars came out in a clear sky, and a light wind softly buffeted the cheeks, and breathed life into nerves that the day's heat had wasted. It scarcely wrinkled the tranquil expanse of the lake, on which loomed, far or near, a full-sailed schooner, and presently melted into the twilight, and left the steamer solitary upon the waters. The company was small, and not remarkable enough in any way to take the thoughts of any one off his own comfort. A deep sense of the coziness of the situation possessed them all which was if possible intensified by the spectacle of the captain, seated on the upper deck, and smoking a cigar that flashed and faded like a stationary fire-fly in the gathering dusk. How very distant, in this mood, were the most recent events! Niagara seemed a fable of antiquity; the ride from Rochester a myth of the Middle Ages. In this pool, happy world of quiet lake, of starry skies, of air that the soul itself seemed to breathe, there was such consciousness of repose as if one were steeped in rest and soaked through and through with calm.

The points of likeness between Isabel and Mrs. Ellison shortly made them mutually uninteresting, and, leaving her husband to the others, Isabel frankly sought the companionship of Miss Kitty, in whom she found a charm of manner which puzzled at first, but which she presently fancied must be perfect trust of others mingling with a peculiar self-reliance.

"Can't you see, Basil, what a very flattering way it is?" she asked of her husband, when, after parting with their friends for the night, she tried to explain the character to him. "Of course no art could equal such a natural gift; for that kind of belief in your good-nature and sympathy makes you feel worthy of it, don't you know; and so you can't help being good-natured and sympathetic. This Miss Ellison, why, I can tell you, I shouldn't be ashamed of her anywhere.' By anywhere Isabel meant Boston, and she went on to praise the young lady's intelligence and refinement, with those expressions of surprise at the existence of civilization in a westerner which westerners find it so hard to receive graciously. Happily, Miss Ellison had not to hear them. "The reason she happened to come with only two dresses is, she lives so near Niagara that

she could come for one day, and go back the next. The colonel's her cousin, and he and his wife go East every year, and they asked her this time to see Niagara with them. She told me all over again what we eavesdropped so shamefully in the hotel parlor;--and I don't know whether she was better pleased with the prospect of what's before her, or with the notion of making the journey in this original way. She didn't force her confidence upon me, any more than she tried to withhold it. We got to talking in the most natural manner; and she seemed to tell these things about herself because they amused her and she liked me. I had been saying how my trunk got left behind once on the French side of Mont Cenis, and I had to wear aunt's things at Turin till it could be sent for."

"Well, I don't see but Miss Ellison could describe you to her friends very much as you've described her to me," said Basil. "How did these mutual confidences begin? Whose trustfulness first flattered the other's? What else did you tell about yourself?"

"I said we were on our wedding journey," guiltily admitted Isabel.

"O, you did!"

"Why, dearest! I wanted to know, for once, you see, whether we seemed honeymoon-struck."

"And do we?"

"No," came the answer, somewhat ruefully. "Perhaps, Basil," she added, "we've been a little too successful in disguising our bridal character. Do you know," she continued, looking him anxiously in the face, "this Miss Ellison took me at first for--your sister!"

Basil broke forth in outrageous laughter. "One more such victory," he said, "and we are undone;" and he laughed again, immoderately. "How sad is the fruition of human wishes! There 's nothing, after all, like a good thorough failure for making people happy."

Isabel did not listen to him. Safe in a dim corner of the deserted saloon, she seized him in a vindictive embrace; then, as if it had been he who suggested the idea of such a loathsome relation, hissed out the hated words, "Your sister!" and released him with a disdainful repulse.

A little after daybreak the steamer stopped at the Canadian city of Kingston, a handsome place, substantial to the water's edge, and giving a sense of English solidity by the stone of which it is largely built. There was an accession of many passengers here, and they and the people on the wharf were as little like Americans as possible. They were English or Irish or Scotch, with the healthful bloom of the Old World still upon their faces, or if Canadians they looked not less hearty; so that one must wonder if the line between the Dominion and the United States did not also sharply separate good digestion and dyspepsia. These provincials had not our regularity of features, nor the best of them our careworn sensibility of expression; but neither had they our complexions

of adobe; and even Isabel was forced to allow that the men were, on the whole, better dressed than the same number of average Americans would have been in a city of that size and remoteness. The stevedores who were putting the freight aboard were men of leisure; they joked in a kindly way with the orange-women and the old women picking up chips on the pier; and our land of hurry seemed beyond the ocean rather than beyond the lake.

Kingston has romantic memories of being Fort Frontenac two hundred years ago; of Count Frontenac's splendid advent among the Indians; of the brave La Salle, who turned its wooden walls to stone; of wars with the savages and then with the New York colonists, whom the French and their allies harried from this point; of the destruction of La Salle's fort in the Old French War; and of final surrender a few years later to the English. It is as picturesque as it is historical. All about the city, the shores are beautifully wooded, and there are many lovely islands,--the first indeed of those Thousand Islands with which the head of the St. Lawrence is filled, and among which the steamer was presently threading her way. They are still as charming and still almost as wild as when, in 1673, Frontenac's flotilla of canoes passed through their labyrinth and issued upon the lake. Save for a light-house upon one of them, there is almost nothing to show that the foot of man has ever pressed the thin grass clinging to their rocky surfaces, and keeping its green in the eternal shadow of their pines and cedars. In the warm morning light they gathered or dispersed before the advancing vessel, which some of them almost touched with the plumage of their evergreens; and where none of them were large, some were so small that it would not have been too bold to figure them as a vaster race of water-birds assembling and separating in her course. It is curiously affecting to find them so unclaimed yet from the solitude of the vanished wilderness, and scarcely touched even by tradition. But for the interest left them by the French, these tiny islands have scarcely any associations, and must be enjoyed for their beauty alone. There is indeed about them a faint light of legend concerning the Canadian rebellion of 1837, for several patriots are said to have taken refuge amidst their lovely multitude; but this episode of modern history is difficult for the imagination to manage, and somehow one does not take sentimentally even to that daughter of a lurking patriot, who long baffled her father's pursuers by rowing him from one island to another, and supplying him with food by night.

Either the reluctance is from the natural desire that so recent a heroine should be founded on fact, or it is mere perverseness. Perhaps I ought to say; in justice to her, that it was one of her own sex who refused to be interested in her, and forbade Basil to care for her. When he had read of her exploit from the guide-book, Isabel asked him if he had noticed that handsome girl in the blue and white striped Garibaldi and Swiss hat, who had come aboard at Kingston. She pointed her out, and courageously made him admire her beauty, which was of the most bewitching Canadian type. The young girl was redeemed by her New World birth from the English heaviness; a more delicate bloom lighted her cheeks; a softer grace dwelt in her movement; yet she was round and full, and she was in the perfect flower of youth. She was not so ethereal in her loveliness as an American girl, but she was not so nervous and had none of the

painful fragility of the latter. Her expression was just a little vacant, it must be owned; but so far as she went she was faultless. She looked like the most tractable of daughters, and as if she would be the most obedient of wives. She had a blameless taste in dress, Isabel declared; her costume of blue and white striped Garibaldi and Swiss hat (set upon heavy masses of dark brown hair) being completed by a black silk skirt. "And you can see," she added, "that it's an old skirt made over, and that she's dressed as cheaply as she is prettily." This surprised Basil, who had imputed the young lady's personal sumptuousness to her dress, and had thought it enormously rich. When she got off with her chaperone at one of the poorest-looking country landings, she left them in hopeless conjecture about her. Was she visiting there, or was the interior of Canada full of such stylish and exquisite creatures? Where did she get her taste, her fashions, her manners? As she passed from sight towards the shadow of the woods, they felt the poorer for her going; yet they were glad to have seen her, and on second thoughts they felt that they could not justly ask more of her than to have merely existed for a few hours in their presence. They perceived that beauty was not only its own excuse for being, but that it flattered and favored and profited the world by consenting to be.

At Prescott, the boat on which they had come from Charlotte, and on which they had been promised a passage without change to Montreal, stopped, and they were transferred to a smaller steamer with the uncomfortable name of Banshee. She was very old, and very infirm and dirty, and in every way bore out the character of a squalid Irish goblin. Besides, she was already heavily laden with passengers, and, with the addition of the other steamer's people had now double her complement; and our friends doubted if they were not to pass the Rapids in as much danger as discomfort. Their fellow-passengers were in great variety, however, and thus partly atoned for their numbers. Among them of course there was a full force of brides from Niagara and elsewhere, and some curious forms of the prevailing infatuation appeared. It is well enough, if she likes, and it may even be very noble for a passably good-looking young lady to marry a gentleman of venerable age; but to intensify the idea of self-devotion by furtively caressing his wrinkled front seems too reproachful of the general public; while, on the other hand, if the bride is very young and pretty, it enlists in behalf of the white-haired husband the unwilling sympathies of the spectator to see her the centre of a group of young people, and him only acknowledged from time to time by a Parthian snub. Nothing, however, could have been more satisfactory than the sisterly surrounding of this latter bride. They were of a better class of Irish people; and if it had been any sacrifice for her to marry so old a man, they were doing their best to give the affair at least the liveliness of a wake. There were five or six of those great handsome girls, with their generous curves and wholesome colors, and they were every one attended by a good-looking colonial lover, with whom they joked in slightly brogued voices, and laughed with careless Celtic laughter. One of the young fellows presently lost his hat overboard, and had to wear the handkerchief of his lady about his head; and this appeared to be really one of the best things in the world, and led to endless banter. They were well dressed, and it could be imagined that the ancient bridegroom had come in for the support of the whole good-looking,

healthy, light-hearted family. In some degree he looked it, and wore but a rueful countenance for a bridegroom; so that a very young newly married couple, who sat next the jolly sister-and-loverhood could not keep their pitying eyes off his downcast face. "What if he, too, were young at heart!" the kind little wife's regard seemed to say.

For the sake of the slight air that was stirring, and to have the best view of the Rapids, the Banshee's whole company was gathered upon the forward promenade, and the throng was almost as dense as in a six-o'clock horse-car out from Boston. The standing and sitting groups were closely packed together, and the expanded parasols and umbrellas formed a nearly unbroken roof. Under this Isabel chatted at intervals with the Ellisons, who sat near; but it was not an atmosphere that provoked social feeling, and she was secretly glad when after a while they shifted their position.

It was deadly hot, and most of the people saddened and silenced in the heat. From time to time the clouds idling about overhead met and sprinkled down a cruel little shower of rain that seemed to make the air less breathable than before. The lonely shores were yellow with drought; the islands grew wilder and barrener; the course of the river was for miles at a stretch through country which gave no signs of human life. The St. Lawrence has none of the bold picturesqueness of the Hudson, and is far more like its far-off cousin the Mississippi. Its banks are low like the Mississippi's, its current, swift, its way through solitary lands. The same sentiment of early adventure hangs about each: both are haunted by visions of the Jesuit in his priestly robe, and the soldier in his mediaeval steel; the same gay, devout, and dauntless race has touched them both with immortal romance. If the water were of a dusky golden color, instead of translucent green, and the shores and islands were covered with cottonwoods and willows instead of dark cedars, one could with no great effort believe one's self on the Mississippi between Cairo and St. Louis, so much do the great rivers strike one as kindred in the chief features of their landscape. Only, in tracing this resemblance you do not know just what to do with the purple mountains of Vermont, seen vague against the horizon from the St. Lawrence, or with the quaint little French villages that begin to show themselves as you penetrate farther down into Lower Canada. These look so peaceful, with their dormer-windowed cottages clustering about their church-spires, that it seems impossible they could once have been the homes of the savages and the cruel peasants who, with fire-brand and scalping-knife and tomahawk, harassed the borders of New England for a hundred years. But just after you descend the Long Sault you pass the hamlet of St. Regis, in which was kindled the torch that wrapt Deerfield in flames, waking her people from their sleep to meet instant death or taste the bitterness of a captivity. The bell which was sent out from France for the Indian converts of the Jesuits, and was captured by an English ship and carried into Salem, and thence sold to Deerfield, where it called the Puritans to prayer, till at last it also summoned the priest-led Indians and 'habitans' across hundreds of miles of winter and of wilderness to reclaim it from that desecration,—this fateful bell still hangs in the church-tower of St. Regis, and has invited to matins and vespers for nearly two centuries the children of those who fought so pitilessly and dared and endured so much for it. Our friends would fair have heard it as they passed, hoping for

some mournful note of history in its sound; but it hung silent over the silent hamlet, which, as it lay in the hot afternoon sun by the river's side, seemed as lifeless as the Deerfield burnt long ago.

They turned from it to look at a gentleman who had just appeared in a mustard-colored linen duster, and Basil asked, "Shouldn't you like to know the origin, personal history, and secret feelings of a gentleman who goes about in a duster of that particular tint? Or, that gentleman yonder with his eye tied up in a wet handkerchief, do you suppose he's travelling for pleasure? Look at those young people from Omaha: they haven't ceased flirting or cackling since we left Kingston. Do you think everybody has such spirits out at Omaha? But behold a yet more surprising figure than any we have yet seen among this boat-load of nondescripts."

This was a tall, handsome young man, with a face of somewhat foreign cast, and well dressed, with a certain impressive difference from the rest in the cut of his clothes. But what most drew the eye to him was a large cross, set with brilliants, and surmounted by a heavy double-headed eagle in gold. This ornament dazzled from a conspicuous place on the left lappet of his coat; on his hand shone a magnificent diamond ring, and he bore a stately opera-glass, with which, from time to time, he imperiously, as one may say, surveyed the landscape. As the imposing apparition grew upon Isabel, "O here," she thought, "is something truly distinguished. Of course, dear," she added aloud to Basil, "he's some foreign nobleman travelling here"; and she ran over in her mind the newspaper announcements of patrician visitors from abroad and tried to identify him with some one of them. The cross must be the decoration of a foreign order, and Basil suggested that he was perhaps a member of some legation at Washington, who had ran up there for his summer vacation. The cross puzzled him, but the double-headed eagle, he said, meant either Austria or Russia; probably Austria, for the wearer looked a trifle too civilized for a Russian.

"Yes, indeed! What an air he has. Never tell me. Basil, that there's nothing in blood!" cried Isabel, who was a bitter aristocrat at heart, like all her sex, though in principle she was democratic enough. As she spoke, the object of her regard looked about him on the different groups, not with pride, not with hauteur, but with a glance of unconscious, unmistakable superiority. "O, that stare!" she added; nothing but high birth and long descent can give it! Dearest, he's becoming a great affliction to me. I want to know who he is. Couldn't you invent some pretext for speaking to him?"

"No, I couldn't do it decently; and no doubt he'd snub me as I deserved if I intruded upon him. Let's wait for fortune to reveal him."

"Well, I suppose I must, but it's dreadful; it's really dreadful. You can easily see that's distinction," she continued, as her hero moved about the promenade and gently but loftily made a way for himself among the other passengers and favored the scenery through his opera-glass from one point and another. He spoke to no one, and she reasonably supposed that he did not know English.

In the mean time it was drawing near the hour of dinner, but no dinner appeared. Twelve, one, two came and went, and then at last came the dinner, which had been delayed, it seemed, till the cook could recruit his energies sufficiently to meet the wants of double the number he had expected to provide for. It was observable of the officers and crew of the Banshee, that while they did not hold themselves aloof from the passengers in the disdainful American manner, they were of feeble mind, and not only did everything very slowly (in the usual Canadian fashion), but with an inefficiency that among us would have justified them in being insolent. The people sat down at several successive tables to the worst dinner that ever was cooked; the ladies first, and the gentlemen afterwards, as they made conquest of places. At the second table, to Basil's great satisfaction, he found a seat, and on his right hand the distinguished foreigner.

"Naturally, I was somewhat abashed," he said in the account he was presently called to give Isabel of the interview, "but I remembered that I was an American citizen, and tried to maintain a decent composure. For several minutes we sat silent behind a dish of flabby cucumbers, expecting the dinner, and I was wondering whether I should address him in French or German,--for I knew you'd never forgive me if I let slip such a chance,--when he turned and spoke himself."

"O what did he say, dearest?"

He said, "Pretty tejjious waitin,' ain't it? in she best New York State accent."

"You don't mean it!" gasped Isabel.

"But I do. After that I took courage to ask what his cross and double-headed eagle meant. He showed the condescension of a true nobleman. 'O,' says he, 'I 'm glad you like it, and it 's not the least offense to ask,' and he told me. "Can you imagine what it is? It 's the emblem of the fifty-fourth degree in the secret society he belongs to!"

"I don't believe it!"

"Well, ask him yourself, then," returned Basil; "he 's a very good fellow. 'O, that stare! nothing but high birth and long descent could give it!" he repeated, abominably implying that he had himself had no share in their common error.

What retort Isabel might have made cannot now be known, for she was arrested at this moment by a rumor amongst the passengers that they were coming to the Long Sault Rapids. Looking forward she saw the tossing and flashing of surges that, to the eye, are certainly as threatening as the rapids above Niagara. The steamer had already passed the Deplau and the Galopes, and they had thus had a foretaste of whatever pleasure or terror there is in the descent of these nine miles of stormy sea. It is purely a matter of taste, about shooting the rapids of the St. Lawrence. The passengers like it better than the captain and the pilot, to guesses by

their looks, and the women and children like it better than the men. It is no doubt very thrilling and picturesque and wildly beautiful: the children crow and laugh, the women shout forth their delight, as the boat enters the seething current; great foaming waves strike her bows, and brawl away to the stern, while she dips, and rolls, and shoots onward, light as a bird blown by the wind; the wild shores and islands whirl out of sight; you feel in every fibre the career of the vessel. But the captain sits in front of the pilothouse smoking with a grave face, the pilots tug hard at the wheel; the hoarse roar of the waters fills the air; beneath the smoother sweeps of the current you can see the brown rocks; as you sink from ledge to ledge in the writhing and twisting steamer, you have a vague sense that all this is perhaps an achievement rather than an enjoyment. When, descending the Long Sault, you look back up hill, and behold those billows leaping down the steep slope after you, "No doubt," you confide to your soul, "it is magnificent; but it is not pleasure." You greet with silent satisfaction the level river, stretching between the Long Sault and the Coteau, and you admire the delightful tranquillity of that beautiful Lake St. Francis into which it expands. Then the boat shudders into the Coteau Rapids, and down through the Cedars and Cascades. On the rocks of the last lies the skeleton of a steamer wrecked upon them, and gnawed at still by the white-tusked wolfish rapids. No one, they say, was lost from her. "But how," Basil thought, "would it fare with all these people packed here upon her bow, if the Banshee should swing round upon a ledge?" As to Isabel, she looked upon the wrecked steamer with indifference, as did all the women; but then they could not swim, and would not have to save themselves. "The La Chine's to come yet," they exulted, "and that 's the awfulest of all!"

They passed the Lake St. Louis; the La Chin; rapids flashed into sight. The captain rose up from his seat, took his pipe from his mouth, and waved a silence with it. "Ladies and gentlemen," said he, "it's very important in passing these rapids to keep the boat perfectly trim. Please to remain just as you are."

It was twilight, for the boat was late. From the Indian village on the shore they signaled to know if he wanted the local pilot; the captain refused; and then the steamer plunged into the leaping waves. From rock to rock she swerved and sank; on the last ledge she scraped with a deadly touch that went to the heart.

Then the danger was passed, and the noble city of Montreal was in full sight, lying at the foot of her dark green mountain, and lifting her many spires into the rosy twilight air: massive and grand showed the sister towers of the French cathedral.

Basil had hoped to approach this famous city with just associations. He had meant to conjure up for Isabel's sake some reflex, however faint, of that beautiful picture Mr. Parkman has painted of Maisonneuve founding and consecrating Montreal. He flushed with the recollection of the historian's phrase; but in that moment there came forth from the cabin a pretty young person who gave every token of being a pretty young actress, even to the duenna-like, elderly female companion, to be detected in the

remote background of every young actress. She had flirted audaciously during the day with some young Englishmen and Canadians of her acquaintance, and after passing the La Chine Rapids she had taken the hearts of all the men by springing suddenly to her feet, apostrophizing the tumult with a charming attitude, and warbling a delicious bit of song. Now as they drew near the city the Victoria Bridge stretched its long tube athwart the river, and looked so low because of its great length that it seemed to bar the steamer's passage.

"I wonder," said one of the actress's adorers, a Canadian, whose face was exactly that of the beaver on the escutcheon of his native province, and whose heavy gallantries she had constantly received with a gay, impertinent nonchalance,--"I wonder if we can be going right under that bridge?"

"No, sir!" answered the pretty young actress with shocking promptness, "we're going right over it!"

"Three groans and a guggle,
And an awful struggle,
And over we go!"

At this witless, sweet impudence the Canadian looked very sheepish--for a beaver; and all the other people laughed; but the noble historical shades of Basil's thought vanished in wounded dignity beyond recall, and left him feeling rather ashamed,--for he had laughed too.

THE SENTIMENT OF MONTREAL.

The feeling of foreign travel for which our tourists had striven throughout their journey, and which they had known in some degree at Kingston and all the way down the river, was intensified from the first moment in Montreal; and it was so welcome that they were almost glad to lose money on their greenbacks, which the conductor of the omnibus would take only at a discount of twenty cents. At breakfast next morning they could hardly tell on what country they had fallen. The waiters had but a thin varnish of English speech upon their native French, and they spoke their own tongue with each other; but most of the meats were cooked to the English taste, and the whole was a poor imitation of an American hotel. During their stay the same commingling of usages and races bewildered them; the shops were English and the clerks were commonly French; the carriage-drivers were often Irish, and up and down the streets with their pious old-fashioned names, tinkled American horse-cars. Everywhere were churches and convents that recalled the ecclesiastical and feudal origin of the city; the great tubular bridge, the superb water-front with its long array of docks only surpassed by those of Liverpool, the solid blocks of business houses, and the substantial mansions on the quieter streets, proclaimed the succession of Protestant thrift and energy.

Our friends cared far less for the modern splendor of Montreal than for the remnants of its past, and for the features that identified it with another faith and another people than their own. Isabel would almost have confessed to any one of the black-robed priests upon the street; Basil could easily have gone down upon his knees to the white-hooded, pale-faced nuns gliding among the crowd. It was rapture to take a carriage, and drive, not to the cemetery, not to the public library, not to the rooms of the Young Men's Christian Association, or the grain elevators, or the new park just tricked out with rockwork and sprigs of evergreen,--not to any of the charming resorts of our own cities, but as in Europe to the churches, the churches of a pitiless superstition, the churches with their atrocious pictures and statues, their lingering smell of the morning's incense, their confessionals, their fee-taking sacristans, their worshippers dropped here and there upon their knees about the aisles and saying their prayers with shut or wandering eyes according as they were old women or young! I do not defend the feeble sentimentality,--call it wickedness if you like,--but I understand it, and I forgive it from my soul.

They went first, of course, to the French cathedral, pausing on their way to alight and walk through the Bonsecours Market, where the habitans have all come in their carts, with their various stores of poultry, fruit, and vegetables, and where every cart is a study. Here is a simple-faced young peasant-couple with butter and eggs and chickens ravishingly displayed; here is a smooth-checked, blackeyed, black-haired young girl, looking as if an infusion of Indian blood had darkened the red of her cheeks, presiding over a stock of onions, potatoes, beets, and turnips; there an old woman with a face carven like a walnut, behind a flattering array of cherries and pears; yonder a whole family trafficking in loaves of brown-bread and maple-sugar in many shapes of pious and grotesque device. There are gay shows of bright scarfs and kerchiefs and varicolored yarns, and sad shows of old clothes and second-hand merchandise of other sorts; but above all prevails the abundance of orchard and garden, while within the fine edifice are the stalls of the butchers, and in the basement below a world of household utensils, glass-ware, hardware, and wooden-ware. As in other Latin countries, each peasant has given a personal interest to his wares, but the bargains are not clamored over as in Latin lands abroad. Whatever protest and concession and invocation of the saints attend the transacting of business at Bonsecours Market are in a subdued tone. The fat huckster-women drowsing beside their wares, scarce send their voices beyond the borders of their broad-brimmed straw hats, as they softly haggle with purchasers, or tranquilly gossip together.

At the cathedral there are, perhaps, the worst paintings in the world, and the massive pine-board pillars are unscrupulously smoked to look like marble; but our tourists enjoyed it as if it had been St. Peter's; in fact it has something of the barnlike immensity and impressiveness of St. Peter's. They did not ask it to be beautiful or grand; they desired it only to recall the beloved ugliness, the fondly cherished hideousness and incongruity of the average Catholic churches of their remembrance, and it did this and more: it added an effect of its own; it offered the spectacle of a swarthy old Indian kneeling before the high altar, telling

his beads, and saying with many sighs and tears the prayers which it cost so much martyrdom and heroism to teach his race. "O, it is only a savage man," said the little French boy who was showing them the place, impatient of their interest in a thing so unworthy as this groaning barbarian. He ran swiftly about from object to object, rapidly lecturing their inattention. "It is now time to go up into the tower," said he, and they gladly made that toilsome ascent, though it is doubtful if the ascent of towers is not too much like the ascent of mountains ever to be compensatory. From the top of Notre Dame is certainly to be had a prospect upon which, but for his fluttered nerves and trembling muscles and troubled respiration, the traveller might well look with delight, and as it is must behold with wonder. So far as the eye reaches it dwells only upon what is magnificent. All the features of that landscape are grand. Below you spreads the city, which has less that is merely mean in it than any other city of our continent, and which is everywhere ennobled by stately civic edifices, adorned by tasteful churches, and skirted by full foliaged avenues of mansions and villas. Behind it rises the beautiful mountain, green with woods and gardens to its crest, and flanked on the east by an endless fertile plain, and on the west by another expanse, through which the Ottawa rushes, turbid and dark, to its confluence with the St. Lawrence. Then these two mighty streams commingled flow past the city, lighting up the vast Champaign country to the south, while upon the utmost southern verge, as on the northern, rise the cloudy summits of far-off mountains.

As our travellers gazed upon all this grandeur, their hearts were humbled to the tacit admission that the colonial metropolis was not only worthy of its seat, but had traits of a solid prosperity not excelled by any of the abounding and boastful cities of the Republic. Long before they quitted Montreal they had rallied from this weakness, but they delighted still to honor her superb beauty.

The tower is naturally bescribed to its top with the names of those who have climbed it, and most of these are Americans, who flock in great numbers to Canada in summer. They modify its hotel life, and the objects of interest thrive upon their bounty. Our friends met them at every turn, and knew them at a glance from the native populations, who are also easily distinguishable from each other. The French Canadians are nearly always of a peasant-like commonness, or where they rise above this have a bourgeois commonness of face and manner, and the English Canadians are to be known from the many English sojourners by the effort to look much more English than the latter. The social heart of the colony clings fast to the mother-country, that is plain, whatever the political tendency may be; and the public monuments and inscriptions celebrate this affectionate union.

At the English cathedral the effect is deepened by the epitaphs of those whose lives were passed in the joint service of England and her loyal child; and our travellers, whatever their want of sympathy with the sentiment, had to own to a certain beauty in that attitude of proud reverence. Here, at least, was a people not cut off from its past, but holding, unbroken in life and death, the ties which exist for us only in history. It gave a glamour of olden time to the new land; it touched the

prosaic democratic present with the waning poetic light of the aristocratic and monarchical tradition. There was here and there a title on the tablets, and there was everywhere the formal language of loyalty and of veneration for things we have tumbled into the dust. It is a beautiful church, of admirable English Gothic; if you are so happy, you are rather curtly told you may enter by a burly English figure in some kind of sombre ecclesiastical drapery, and within its quiet precincts you may feel yourself in England if you like,--which, for my part, I do not. Neither did our friends enjoy it so much as the Church of the Jesuits, with its more than tolerable painting, its coldly frescoed ceiling, its architectural taste of subdued Renaissance, and its black-eyed peasant-girl telling her beads before a side altar, just as in the enviably deplorable countries we all love; nor so much even as the Irish cathedral which they next visited. That is a very gorgeous cathedral indeed, painted and gilded 'a merveille', and everywhere stuck about with big and little saints and crucifixes, and pictures incredibly bad--but for those in the French cathedral. There is, of course, a series representing Christ's progress to Calvary; and there was a very tattered old man,--an old man whose voice had been long ago drowned in whiskey, and who now spoke in a ghostly whisper,--who, when he saw Basil's eye fall upon the series, made him go the round of them, and tediously explained them.

"Why did you let that old wretch bore you, and then pay him for it?" Isabel asked.

"O, it reminded me so sweetly of the swindles of other lands and days, that I couldn't help it," he answered; and straightway in the eyes of both that poor, whiskeyfied, Irish tatterdemalion stood transfigured to the glorious likeness of an Italian beggar.

They were always doing something of this kind, those absurdly sentimental people, whom yet I cannot find it in my heart to blame for their folly, though I could name ever so many reasons for rebuking it. Why, in fact, should we wish to find America like Europe? Are the ruins and impostures and miseries and superstitions which beset the traveller abroad so precious, that he should desire to imagine them at every step in his own hemisphere? Or have we then of our own no effective shapes of ignorance and want and incredibility, that we must forever seek an alien contrast to our native intelligence and comfort? Some such questions this guilty couple put to each other, and then drove off to visit the convent of the Gray Nuns with a joyful expectation which I suppose the prospect of the finest public-school exhibition in Boston could never have inspired. But, indeed, since there must be Gray Nuns, is it not well that there are sentimentalists to take a mournful pleasure in their sad, pallid existence?

The convent is at a good distance from the Irish cathedral, and in going to it the tourists made their driver carry them through one of the few old French streets which still remain in Montreal. Fires and improvements had made havoc among the quaint houses since Basil's first visit; but at last they came upon a narrow, ancient Rue Saint Antoine, --or whatever other saint it was called after,--in which there was no English face or house to be seen. The doors of the little one-story

dwelling opened from the pavement, and within you saw fat madame the mother moving about her domestic affairs, and spare monsieur the elderly husband smoking beside the open window; French babies crawled about the tidy floors; French martyrs (let us believe Lalement or Brebeuf, who gave up their heroic lives for the conversion of Canada) sifted their eyes in high-colored lithographs on the wall; among the flower-pots in the dormer-window looking from every tin roof sat and sewed a smooth haired young girl, I hope,--the romance of each little mansion. The antique and foreign character of the place was accented by the inscription upon a wall of "Sirop adoucissant de Madame Winslow."

Ever since 1692 the Gray Nuns have made refuge within the ample borders of their convent for infirm old people and for foundling children, and it is now in the regular course of sight-seeing for the traveller to visit their hospital at noonday, when he beholds the Sisters at their devotions in the chapel. It is a bare, white-walled, cold-looking chapel, with the usual paraphernalia of pictures and crucifixes. Seated upon low benches on either side of the aisle were the curious or the devout; the former in greater number and chiefly Americans, who were now and then whispered silent by an old pauper zealous for the sanctity of the place. At the stroke of twelve the Sisters entered two by two, followed by the lady-superior with a prayerbook in her hand. She clapped the leaves of this together in signal for them to kneel, to rise, to kneel again and rise, while they repeated in rather harsh voices their prayers, and then clattered out of the chapel as they had clattered in, with resounding shoes. The two young girls at the head were very pretty, and all the pale faces had a corpse-like peace. As Basil looked at their pensive sameness, it seemed to him that those prettiest girls might very well be the twain that he had seen here so many years ago, stricken forever young in their joyless beauty. The ungraceful gowns of coarse gray, the blue checked aprons, the black crape caps, were the same; they came and went with the same quick tread, touching their brows with holy water and kneeling and rising now as then with the same constrained and ordered movements. Would it be too cruel if they were really the same persons? or would it be yet more cruel if every year two girls so young and fair were self-doomed to renew the likeness of that youthful death?

The visitors went about the hospital, and saw the old men and the little children to whom these good pure lives were given, and they could only blame the system, not the instruments or their work. Perhaps they did not judge wisely of the amount of self-sacrifice involved, for they judged from hearts to which love was the whole of earth and heaven; but nevertheless they pitied the Gray Nuns amidst the unhomelike comfort of their convent, the unnatural care of those alien little ones. Poor 'Soeurs Grises' in their narrow cells; at the bedside of sickness and age and sorrow; kneeling with clasped hands and yearning eyes before the bloody spectacle of the cross!--the power of your Church is shown far more subtly and mightily in such as you, than in her grandest fanes or the sight of her most august ceremonies, with praying priests, swinging censers, tapers and pictures and images, under a gloomy heaven of cathedral arches. There, indeed, the faithful have given their substance; but here the nun has given up the most precious part of her woman's nature, and all the tenderness that clings about the thought of

wife and mother.

"There are some things that always greatly afflict me in the idea of a new country," said Basil, as they loitered slowly through the grounds of the convent toward the gate. "Of course, it's absurd to think of men as other than men, as having changed their natures with their skies; but a new land always does seem at first thoughts like a new chance afforded the race for goodness and happiness, for health and life. So I grieve for the earliest dead at Plymouth more than for the multitude that the plague swept away in London; I shudder over the crime of the first guilty man, the sin of the first wicked woman in a new country; the trouble of the first youth or maiden crossed in love there is intolerable. All should be hope and freedom and prosperous life upon that virgin soil. It never was so since Eden; but none the less I feel it ought to be; and I am oppressed by the thought that among the earliest walls which rose upon this broad meadow of Montreal were those built to immure the innocence of such young girls as these and shut them from the life we find so fair. Wouldn't you like to know who was the first that took the veil in this wild new country? Who was she, poor soul, and what was her deep sorrow or lofty rapture? You can fancy her some Indian maiden lured to the renunciation by the splendor of symbols and promises seen vaguely through the lingering mists of her native superstitions; or some weary soul, sick from the vanities and vices, the bloodshed and the tears of the Old World, and eager for a silence profounder than that of the wilderness into which she had fled. Well, the Church knows and God. She was dust long ago."

From time to time there had fallen little fitful showers during the morning. Now as the wedding-journeymen passed out of the convent gate the rain dropped soft and thin, and the gray clouds that floated through the sky so swiftly were as far-seen Gray Sisters in flight for heaven.

"We shall have time for the drive round the mountain before dinner," said Basil, as they got into their carriage again; and he was giving the order to the driver, when Isabel asked how far it was.

"Nine miles."

"O, then we can't think of going with one horse. You know," she added, "that we always intended to have two horses for going round the mountain."

"No," said Basil, not yet used to having his decisions reached without his knowledge. "And I don't see why we should. Everybody goes with one. You don't suppose we're too heavy, do you?"

"I had a party from the States, ma'am, yesterday," interposed the driver; "two ladies, real heavy apes, two gentlemen, weighin' two hundred apiece, and a stout young man on the box with me. You'd 'a' thought the horse was drawin' an empty carriage, the way she darted along."

"Then his horse must be perfectly worn out to-day," said Isabel, refusing to admit the pool fellow directly even to the honors of a defeat. He had

proved too much, and was put out of court with no hope of repairing his error.

"Why, it seems a pity," whispered Basil, dispassionately, "to turn this man adrift, when he had a reasonable hope of being with us all day, and has been so civil and obliging."

"O yes, Basil, sentimentalize him, do! Why don't you sentimentalize his helpless, overworked horse?--all in a reek of perspiration."

"Perspiration! Why, my dear, it 's the rain!"

"Well, rain or shine, darling, I don't want to go round the mountain with one horse; and it 's very unkind of you to insist now, when you've tacitly promised me all along to take two."

"Now, this is a little too much, Isabel. You know we never mentioned the matter till this moment."

"It 's the same as a promise, your not saying you wouldn't. But I don't ask you to keep your word. I don't want to go round the mountain. I'd much rather go to the hotel. I'm tired."

"Very well, then, Isabel, I'll leave you at the hotel."

In a moment it had come, the first serious dispute of their wedded life. It had come as all such calamities come, from nothing, and it was on them in full disaster ere they knew. Such a very little while ago, there in the convent garden, their lives had been drawn closer in sympathy than ever before; and now that blessed time seemed ages since, and they were further asunder than those who have never been friends. "I thought," bitterly mused Isabel, "that he would have done anything for me." "Who could have dreamed that a woman of her sense would be so unreasonable," he wondered. Both had tempers, as I know my dearest reader has (if a lady), and neither would yield; and so, presently, they could hardly tell how, for they were aghast at it all, Isabel was alone in her room amidst the ruins of her life, and Basil alone in the one-horse carriage, trying to drive away from the wreck of his happiness. All was over; the dream was past; the charm was broken. The sweetness of their love was turned to gall; whatever had pleased them in their loving moods was loathsome now, and the things they had praised a moment before were hateful. In that baleful light, which seemed to dwell upon all they ever said or did in mutual enjoyment, how poor and stupid and empty looked their wedding-journey! Basil spent five minutes in arraigning his wife and convicting her of every folly and fault. His soul was in a whirl,

"For to be wroth with one we love
Doth work like madness in the brain."

In the midst of his bitter and furious upbraidings he found himself suddenly become her ardent advocate, and ready to denounce her judge as a heartless monster. "On our wedding journey, too! Good heavens, what an incredible brute I am!" Then he said, "What an ass I am!" And the

pathos of the case having yielded to its absurdity, he was helpless. In five minutes more he was at Isabel's side, the one-horse carriage driver dismissed with a handsome pour-boire, and a pair of lusty bays with a glittering barouche waiting at the door below. He swiftly accounted for his presence, which she seemed to find the most natural thing that could be, and she met his surrender with the openness of a heart that forgives but does not forget, if indeed the most gracious art is the only one unknown to the sex.

She rose with a smile from the ruins of her life, amidst which she had heart-brokenly sat down with all her things on. "I knew you'd come back," she said.

"So did I," he answered. "I am much too good and noble to sacrifice my preference to my duty."

"I didn't care particularly for the two horses, Basil," she said, as they descended to the barouche. "It was your refusing them that hurt me."

"And I didn't want the one-horse carriage. It was your insisting so that provoked me."

"Do you think people ever quarreled before on a wedding journey?" asked Isabel as they drove gayly out of the city.

"Never! I can't conceive of it. I suppose if this were written down, nobody would believe it."

"No, nobody could," said Isabel, musingly, and she added after a pause, "I wish you would tell me just what you thought of me, dearest. Did you feel as you did when our little affair was broken off, long ago? Did you hate me?"

"I did, most cordially; but not half so much as I despised myself the next moment. As to its being like a lover's quarrel, it wasn't. It was more bitter, so much more love than lovers ever give had to be taken back. Besides, it had no dignity, and a lover's quarrel always has. A lover's quarrel always springs from a more serious cause, and has an air of romantic tragedy. This had no grace of the kind. It was a poor shabby little squabble."

"O, don't call it so, Basil! I should like you to respect even a quarrel of ours more than that. It was tragical enough with me, for I didn't see how it could ever be made up. I knew I couldn't make the advances. I don't think it is quite feminine to be the first to forgive, is it?"

"I'm sure I can't say. Perhaps it would be rather unladylike."

"Well, you see, dearest, what I am trying to get at is this: whether we shall love each other the more or the less for it. I think we shall get on all the better for a while, on account of it. But I should have said it was totally out of character it's something you might have expected of a very young bridal couple; but after what we've been through, it seems

too improbable."

"Very well," said Basil, who, having made all the concessions, could not enjoy the quarrel as she did, simply because it was theirs; "let 's behave as if it had never been."

"O no, we can't. To me, it's as if we had just won each other."

In fact it gave a wonderful zest and freshness to that ride round the mountain, and shed a beneficent glow upon the rest of their journey. The sun came out through the thin clouds, and lighted up the vast plain that swept away north and east, with the purple heights against the eastern sky. The royal mountain lifted its graceful mass beside them, and hid the city wholly from sight. Peasant-villages, in the shade of beautiful elms, dotted the plain in every direction, and at intervals crept up to the side of the road along which they drove. But these had been corrupted by a more ambitious architecture since Basil saw them last, and were no longer purely French in appearance. Then, nearly every house was a tannery in a modest way, and poetically published the fact by the display of a sheep's tail over the front door, like a bush at a wine-shop. Now, if the tanneries still existed, the poetry of the cheeps' tails had vanished from the portals. But our friends were consoled by meeting numbers of the peasants jolting home from market in the painted carts, which are doubtless of the pattern of the carts first built there two hundred years ago. They were grateful for the immortal old wooden, crooked and brown with the labor of the fields, who abounded in these vehicles; when a huge girl jumped from the tail of her cart, and showed the thick, clumsy ankles of a true peasant-maid, they could only sigh out their unspeakable satisfaction.

Gardens embowered and perfumed the low cottages, through the open doors of which they could see the exquisite neatness of the life within. One of the doors opened into a school-house, where they beheld with rapture the school-mistress, book in hand, and with a quaint cap on her gray head, and encircled by her flock of little boys and girls.

By and by it began to rain again; and now while their driver stopped to put up the top of the barouche, they entered a country church which had taken their fancy, and walked up the aisle with the steps that blend with silence rather than break it, while they heard only the soft whisper of the shower without. There was no one there but themselves. The urn of holy water seemed not to have been troubled that day, and no penitent knelt at the shrine, before which twinkled so faintly one lighted lamp. The white roof swelled into dim arches over their heads; the pale day like a visible hush stole through the painted windows; they heard themselves breathe as they crept from picture to picture.

A narrow door opened at the side of the high altar, and a slender young priest appeared in a long black robe, and with shaven head. He, too as he moved with noiseless feet, seemed a part of the silence; and when he approached with dreamy black eyes fixed upon them, and bowed courteously, it seemed impossible he should speak. But he spoke, the pale young priest, the dark-robed tradition, the tonsured vision of an age and a

church that are passing.

"Do you understand French, monsieur?"

"A very little, monsieur."

"A very little is more than my English," he said, yet he politely went the round of the pictures with them, and gave them the names of the painters between his crossings at the different altars. At the high altar there was a very fair Crucifixion; before this the priest bent one knee. "Fine picture, fine altar, fine church," he said in English. At last they stopped next the poor-box. As their coins clinked against those within, he smiled serenely upon the good heretics. Then he bowed, and, as if he had relapsed into the past, he vanished through the narrow door by which he had entered.

Basil and Isabel stood speechless a moment on the church steps. Then she cried,

"O, why didn't something happen?"

"Ah, my dear! what could have been half so good as the nothing that did happen? Suppose we knew him to have taken orders because of a disappointment in love: how common it would have made him; everybody has been crossed in love once or twice." He bade the driver take them back to the hotel. "This is the very bouquet of adventure why should we care for the grosser body? I dare say if we knew all about yonder pale young priest, we should not think him half so interesting as we do now."

At dinner they spent the intervals of the courses in guessing the nationality of the different persons, and in wondering if the Canadians did not make it a matter of conscientious loyalty to out-English the English even in the matter of pale-ale and sherry, and in rotundity of person and freshness of face, just as they emulated them in the cut of their clothes and whiskers. Must they found even their health upon the health of the mother-country?

Our friends began to detect something servile in it all, and but that they were such amiable persons, the loyalty perfect digestion of Montreal would have gone far to impair their own.

The loyalty, which had already appeared to them in the cathedral, suggested itself in many ways upon the street, when they went out after dinner to do that little shopping which Isabel had planned to do in Montreal. The booksellers' windows were full of Canadian editions of our authors, and English copies of English works, instead of our pirated editions; the dry-goods stores were gay with fabrics in the London taste and garments of the London shape; here was the sign of a photographer to the Queen, there of a hatter to H. R. H. the Prince of Wales; a barber was "under the patronage of H. R. H. the Prince of Wales, H. E. the Duke of Cambridge, and the gentry of Montreal." 'Ich dien' was the motto of a restaurateur; a hosier had gallantly labeled his stock in trade with 'Honi soit qui mal y pense'. Again they noted the English solidity of

the civic edifices, and already they had observed in the foreign population a difference from that at home. They saw no German faces on the streets, and the Irish faces had not that truculence which they wear sometimes with us. They had not lost their native simpleness and kindliness; the Irishmen who drove the public carriages were as civil as our own Boston hackmen, and behaved as respectfully under the shadow of England here, as they would have done under it in Ireland. The problem which vexes us seems to have been solved pleasantly enough in Canada. Is it because the Celt cannot brook equality; and where he has not an established and recognized caste above him, longs to trample on those about him; and if he cannot be lowest, will at least be highest?

However, our friends did not suffer this or any other advantage of the colonial relation to divert them from the opinion to which their observation was gradually bringing them,—that its overweening loyalty placed a great country like Canada in a very silly attitude, the attitude of an overgrown, unmanly boy, clinging to the maternal skirts, and though spoiled and willful, without any character of his own. The constant reference of local hopes to that remote centre beyond seas, the test of success by the criterions of a necessarily different civilization, the social and intellectual dependence implied by traits that meet the most hurried glance in the Dominion, give an effect of meanness to the whole fabric. Doubtless it is a life of comfort, of peace, of irresponsibility they live there, but it lacks the grandeur which no sum of material prosperity can give; it is ignoble, like all voluntarily subordinate things. Somehow, one feels that it has no basis in the New World, and that till it is shaken loose from England it cannot have.

It would be a pity, however, if it should be parted from the parent country merely to be joined to an unsympathetic half-brother like ourselves and nothing, fortunately, seems to be further from the Canadian mind. There are some experiments no longer possible to us which could still be tried there to the advantage of civilization, and we were better two great nations side by side than a union of discordant traditions and ideas. But none the less does the American traveller, swelling with forgetfulness of the shabby despots who govern New York, and the swindling railroad kings whose word is law to the whole land, feel like saying to the hulking young giant beyond St. Lawrence and the Lakes, "Sever the apron-strings of allegiance, and try to be yourself whatever you are."

Something of this sort Basil said, though of course not in apostrophic phrase, nor with Isabel's entire concurrence, when he explained to her that it was to the colonial dependence of Canada she owed the ability to buy things so cheaply there.

The fact is that the ladies' parlor at the hotel had been after dinner no better than a den of smugglers, in which the fair contrabandists had debated the best means of evading the laws of their country. At heart every man is a smuggler, and how much more every woman! She would have no scruple in ruining the silk and woolen interest throughout the United States. She is a free-trader by intuitive perception of right, and is limited in practice by nothing but fear of the statute. What could be

taken into the States without detection, was the subject before that wicked conclave; and next, what it would pay to buy in Canada. It seemed that silk umbrellas were most eligible wares; and in the display of such purchases the parlor was given the appearance of a violent thunder-storm. Gloves it was not advisable to get; they were better at home, as were many kinds of fine woolen goods. But laces, which you could carry about you, were excellent; and so was any kind of silk. Could it be carried if simply cut, and not made up? There was a difference about this: the friend of one lady had taken home half a trunkful of cut silks; the friend of another had "run up the breadths" of one lone little silk skirt, and then lost it by the rapacity of the customs officers. It was pretty much luck, and whether the officers happened to be in good-humor or not. You must not try to take in anything out of season, however. One had heard of a Boston lady going home in July, who "had the furs taken off her back," in that inclement month. Best get everything seasonable, and put it on at once. "And then, you know, if they ask you, you can say it's been worn." To this black wisdom came the combined knowledge of those miscreants. Basil could not repress a shudder at the innate depravity of the female heart. Here were virgins nurtured in the most spotless purity of life, here were virtuous mothers of families, here were venerable matrons, patterns in society and the church,--smugglers to a woman, and eager for any guilty subterfuge! He glanced at Isabel to see what effect the evil conversation had upon her. Her eyes sparkled; her cheeks glowed; all the woman was on fire for smuggling. He sighed heavily and went out with her to do the little shopping.

Shall I follow them upon their excursion? Shopping in Montreal is very much what it is in Boston or New York, I imagine, except that the clerks have a more honeyed sweetness of manners towards the ladies of our nation, and are surprisingly generous constructionists of our revenue laws. Isabel had profited by every word that she had heard in the ladies' parlor, and she would not venture upon unsafe ground; but her tender eyes looked her unutterable longing to believe in the charming possibilities that the clerks suggested. She bemoaned herself before the corded silks, which there was no time to have made up; the piece-velvets and the linens smote her to the heart. But they also stimulated her invention, and she bought and bought of the made-up wares in real or fancied needs, till Basil represented that neither their purses nor their trunks could stand any more. "O, don't be troubled about the trunks, dearest," she cried, with that gayety which nothing but shopping can kindle in a woman's heart; while he faltered on from counter to counter, wondering at which he should finally swoon from fatigue. At last, after she had declared repeatedly, "There, now, I am done," she briskly led the way back to the hotel to pack up her purchases.

Basil parted with her at the door. He was a man of high principle himself, and that scene in the smugglers' den, and his wife's preparation for transgression, were revelations for which nothing could have consoled him but a paragon umbrella for five dollars, and an excellent business suit of Scotch goods for twenty.

When some hours later he sat with Isabel on the forward promenade of the steamboat for Quebec, and summed up the profits of their shopping, they

were both in the kindest mood towards the poor Canadians, who had built the admirable city before them.

For miles the water front of Montreal is superbly faced with quays and locks of solid stone masonry, and thus she is clean and beautiful to the very feet. Stately piles of architecture, instead of the foul old tumble-down warehouses that dishonor the waterside in most cities, rise from the broad wharves; behind these spring the twin towers of Notre Dame, and the steeples of the other churches above the city roofs.

It's noble, yes, it's noble, after the best that Europe can show," said Isabel, with enthusiasm; "and what a pleasant day we've had here! Doesn't even our quarrel show 'couleur de rose' in this light?"

"One side of it," answered Basil, dreamily, but all the rest is black."

"What do you mean, my dear?"

"Why, the Nelson Monument, with the sunset on it at the head of the street there."

The affect was so fine that Isabel could not be angry with him for failing to heed what she had said, and she mused a moment with him.

"It seems rather far-fetched," she said presently, "to erect a monument to Nelson in Montreal, doesn't it? But then, it's a very absurd monument when you're near it," she added, thoughtfully.

Basil did not answer at once, for gazing on this Nelson column in Jacques Cartier Square, his thoughts wandered away, not to the hero of the Nile, but to the doughty old Breton navigator, the first white man who ever set foot upon that shore, and who more than three hundred years ago explored the St. Lawrence as far as Montreal, and in the splendid autumn weather climbed to the top of her green height and named it. The scene that Jacques Cartier then beheld, like a mirage of the past projected upon the present, floated before him, and he saw at the mountain's foot the Indian city of Hochelaga, with its vast and populous lodges of bark, its encircling palisades, and its wide outlying fields of yellow maize. He heard with Jacques Cartier's sense the blare of his followers' trumpets down in the open square of the barbarous city, where the soldiers of many an Old-World fight, "with mustached lip and bearded chin, with arquebuse and glittering halberd, helmet, and cuirass," moved among the plumed and painted savages; then he lifted Jacques Cartier's eyes, and looked out upon the magnificent landscape. "East, west, and north, the mantling forest was over all, and the broad blue ribbon of the great river glistened amid a realm of verdure. Beyond, to the bounds of Mexico, stretched a leafy desert, and the vast hive of industry, the mighty battle-ground of late centuries, lay sunk in savage torpor, wrapped in illimitable woods."

A vaguer picture of Champlain, who, seeking a westward route to China and the East, some three quarters of a century later, had fixed the first trading-post at Montreal, and camped upon the spot where the convent of

the Gray Nuns now stands, appeared before him, and vanished with all its fleets of fur-traders' boats and hunters' birch canoes, and the watch-fires of both; and then in the sweet light of the spring morning, he saw Maisonneuve leaping ashore upon the green meadows, that spread all gay with early flowers where Hochelaga once stood, and with the black-robed Jesuits, the high-born, delicately nurtured, and devoted nuns, and the steel-clad soldiers of his train, kneeling about the altar raised there in the wilderness, and silent amidst the silence of nature at the lifted Host.

He painted a semblance of all this for Isabel, using the colors of the historian who has made these scenes the beautiful inheritance of all dream era, and sketched the battles, the miracles, the sufferings, and the penances through which the pious colony was preserved and prospered, till they both grew impatient of modern Montreal, and would fain have had the ancient Villemarie back in its place.

"Think of Maisonneuve, dearest, climbing in midwinter to the top of the mountain there, under a heavy cross set with the bones of saints, and planting it on the summit, in fulfillment of a vow to do so if Villemarie were saved from the freshet; and then of Madame de la Peltrie romantically receiving the sacrament there, while all Villemarie fell down adoring! Ah, that was a picturesque people! When did ever a Boston governor climb to the top of Beacon hill in fulfillment of a vow? To be sure, we may yet see a New York governor doing something of the kind-- if he can find a hill. But this ridiculous column to Nelson, who never had anything to do with Montreal," he continued; "it really seems to me the perfect expression of snobbish colonial dependence and sentimentality, seeking always to identify itself with the mother-country, and ignoring the local past and its heroic figures. A column to Nelson in Jacques Cartier Square, on the ground that was trodden by Champlain, and won for its present masters by the death of Wolfe"

The boat departed on her trip to Quebec. During supper they were served by French waiters, who, without apparent English of their own, miraculously understood that of the passengers, except in the case of the furious gentleman who wanted English breakfast tea; to so much English as that their inspiration did not reach, and they forced him to compromise on coffee. It was a French boat, owned by a French company, and seemed to be officered by Frenchmen throughout; certainly, as our tourists in the joy of their good appetites affirmed, the cook was of that culinarily delightful nation.

The boat was almost as large as those of the Hudson, but it was not so lavishly splendid, though it had everything that could minister to the comfort and self-respect of the passengers. These were of all nations, but chiefly Americans, with some French Canadians. The former gathered on the forward promenade, enjoying what little of the landscape the growing night left visible, and the latter made society after their manner in the saloon. They were plain-looking men and women, mostly, and provincial, it was evident, to their inmost hearts; provincial in origin, provincial by inheritance, by all their circumstances, social and political. Their relation with France was not a proud one, but it was

not like submersion by the slip-slop of English colonial loyalty; yet they seem to be troubled by no memories of their hundred years' dominion of the land that they rescued from, the wilderness, and that was wrested from them by war. It is a strange fate for any people thus to have been cut off from the parent-country, and abandoned to whatever destiny their conquerors chose to reserve for them; and if each of the race wore the sadness and strangeness of that fate in his countenance it would not be wonderful. Perhaps it is wonderful that none of them shows anything of the kind. In their desertion they have multiplied and prospered; they may have a national grief, but they hide it well; and probably they have none.

Later, one of them appeared to Isabel in the person of the pale, slender young ecclesiastic who had shown her and Basil the pictures in the country church. She was confessing to the priest, and she was not at all surprised to find that he was Basil in a suit of medieval armor. He had an immense cross on his shoulder.

"To get this cross to the top of the mountain," thought Isabel, "we must have two horses. Basil," she added, aloud, "we must have two horses!"

"Ten, if you like, my dear," answered his voice, cheerfully, "though I think we'd better ride up in the omnibus."

She opened her eyes, and saw him smiling.

"We're in sight of Quebec," he said. "Come out as soon as you can,--come out into the seventeenth century."

IX. QUEBEC.

Isabel hurried out upon the forward promenade, where all the other passengers seemed to be assembled, and beheld a vast bulk of gray and purple rock, swelling two hundred feet up from the mists of the river, and taking the early morning light warm upon its face and crown. Black-hulked, red-illuminated Liverpool steamers, gay river-craft and ships of every sail and flag, filled the stream athwart which the ferries sped their swift traffic-laden shuttles; a lower town hung to the foot of the rock, and crept, populous and picturesque, up its sides; from the massive citadel on its crest flew the red banner of Saint George, and along its brow swept the gray wall of the famous, heroic, beautiful city, overtopped by many a gleaming spire and antique roof.

Slowly out of our work-day, business-suited, modern world the vessel steamed up to this city of an olden time and another ideal,--to her who was a lady from the first, devout and proud and strong, and who still, after two hundred and fifty years, keeps perfect the image and memory of the feudal past from which she sprung. Upon her height she sits unique; and when you say Quebec, having once beheld her, you invoke a sense of medieval strangeness and of beauty which the name of no other city could

intensify.

As they drew near the steamboat wharf they saw, swarming over a broad square, a market beside which the Bonsecours Market would have shown as common as the Quincy, and up the odd wooden-sidewalked street stretched an aisle of carriages and those high swung calashes, which are to Quebec what the gondolas are to Venice. But the hand of destiny was upon our tourists, and they rode up town in an omnibus. They were going to the dear old Hotel Musty in Street, wanting which Quebec is not to be thought of without a pang. It is now closed, and Prescott Gate, through which they drove into the Upper Town, has been demolished since the summer of last year. Swiftly whirled along the steep winding road, by those Quebec horses which expect to gallop up hill whatever they do going down, they turned a corner of the towering weed-grown rock, and shot in under the low arch of the gate, pierced with smaller doorways for the foot-passengers. The gloomy masonry dripped with damp, the doors were thickly studded with heavy iron spikes; old cannon, thrust endwise into the ground at the sides of the gate, protected it against passing wheels. Why did not some semi-forbidding commissary of police, struggling hard to overcome his native politeness, appear and demand their passports? The illusion was otherwise perfect, and it needed but this touch. How often in the adored Old World, which we so love and disapprove, had they driven in through such gates at that morning hour! On what perverse pretext, then, was it not some ancient town of Normandy?

"Put a few enterprising Americans in here, and they'd soon rattle this old wall down and let in a little fresh air!" said a patriotic voice at Isabel's elbow, and continued to find fault with the narrow irregular streets, the huddling gables, the quaint roofs, through which and under which they drove on to the hotel.

As they dashed into a broad open square, "Here is the French Cathedral; there is the Upper Town Market; yonder are the Jesuit Barracks!" cried Basil; and they had a passing glimpse of gray stone towers at one side of the square, and a low, massive yellow building at the other, and, between the two, long ranks of carts, and fruit and vegetable stands, protected by canvas awnings and broad umbrellas. Then they dashed round the corner of a street, and drew up before the hotel door. The low ceilings, the thick walls, the clumsy wood-work, the wandering corridors, gave the hotel all the desired character of age, and its slovenly state bestowed an additional charm. In another place they might have demanded neatness, but in Quebec they would almost have resented it. By a chance they had the best room in the house, but they held it only till certain people who had engaged it by telegraph should arrive in the hourly expected steamer from Liverpool; and, moreover, the best room at Hotel Musty was consolingly bad. The house was very full, and the Ellisons (who had come on with them from Montreal) were bestowed in less state only on like conditions.

The travellers all met at breakfast, which was admirably cooked, and well served, with the attendance of those swarms of flies which infest Quebec. and especially infested the old Musty House, in summer. It had, of course, the attraction of broiled salmon, upon which the traveller

breakfasts every day as long as he remains in Lower Canada; and it represented the abundance of wild berries in the Quebec market; and it was otherwise a breakfast worthy of the appetites that honored it.

There were not many other Americans besides themselves at this hotel, which seemed, indeed, to be kept open to oblige such travellers as had been there before, and could not persuade themselves to try the new Hotel St. Louis, whither the vastly greater number resorted. Most of the faces our tourists saw were English or English-Canadian, and the young people from Omaha; who had got here by some chance, were scarcely in harmony with the place. They appeared to be a bridal party, but which of the two sisters, in buff linen 'clad from head to foot' was the bride, never became known. Both were equally free with the husband, and he was impartially fond of both: it was quite a family affair.

For a moment Isabel harbored the desire to see the city in company with Miss Ellison; but it was only a passing weakness. She remembered directly the coolness between friends which she had seen caused by objects of interest in Europe, and she wisely deferred a more intimate acquaintance till it could have a purely social basis. After all, nothing is so tiresome as continual exchange of sympathy or so apt to end in mutual dislike,--except gratitude. So the ladies parted friends till dinner, and drove off in separate carriages.

As in other show cities, there is a routine at Quebec for travellers who come on Saturday and go on Monday, and few depart from it. Our friends necessarily, therefore, drove first to the citadel. It was raining one of those cold rains by which the scarce-banished winter reminds the Canadian fields of his nearness even in midsummer, though between the bitter showers the air was sultry and close; and it was just the light in which to see the grim strength of the fortress next strongest to Gibraltar in the world. They passed a heavy iron gateway, and up through a winding lane of masonry to the gate of the citadel, where they were delivered into the care of Private Joseph Drakes, who was to show them such parts of the place as are open to curiosity. But, a citadel which has never stood a siege, or been threatened by any danger more serious than Fenianism, soon becomes, however strong, but a dull piece of masonry to the civilian; and our tourists more rejoiced in the crumbling fragment of the old French wall which the English destroyed than in all they had built; and they valued the latter work chiefly for the glorious prospects of the St. Lawrence and its mighty valleys which it commanded. Advanced into the centre of an amphitheatre inconceivably vast, that enormous beak of rock overlooks the narrow angle of the river, and then, in every direction, immeasurable stretches of gardened vale, and wooded upland, till all melts into the purple of the encircling mountains. Far and near are lovely white villages nestling under elms, in the heart of fields and meadows; and everywhere the long, narrow, accurately divided farms stretch downward to the river-shores. The best roads on the continent make this beauty and richness accessible; each little village boasts some natural wonder in stream, or lake, or cataract: and this landscape, magnificent beyond any in eastern America, is historical and interesting beyond all others. Hither came Jacques Cartier three hundred and fifty years ago, and wintered on the low point there by the St. Charles; here,

nearly a century after, but still fourteen years before the landing at Plymouth, Champlain founded the missionary city of Quebec; round this rocky beak came sailing the half-piratical armament of the Calvinist Kirks in 1629, and seized Quebec in the interest of the English, holding it three years; in the Lower Town, yonder, first landed the coldly welcomed Jesuits, who came with the returning French and made Quebec forever eloquent of their zeal, their guile, their heroism; at the foot of this rock lay the fleet of Sir William Phipps, governor of Massachusetts, and vainly assailed it in 1698; in 1759 came Wolfe and embattled all the region, on river and land, till at last the bravely defended city fell into his dying hand on the Plains of Abraham; here Montgomery laid down his life at the head of the boldest and most hopeless effort of our War of Independence.

Private Joseph Drakes, with the generosity of an enemy expecting drink-money, pointed out the sign, board on the face of the crag commemorating 'Montgomery's death'; and then showed them the officers' quarters and those of the common soldiers, not far from which was a line of hang-dog fellows drawn up to receive sentence for divers small misdemeanors, from an officer whose blond whiskers drooped Dundrearly from his fresh English cheeks. There was that immense difference between him and the men in physical grandeur and beauty, which is so notable in the aristocratically ordered military services of Europe, and which makes the rank seem of another race from the file. Private Drakes saluted his superior, and visibly deteriorated in his presence, though his breast was covered with medals, and he had fought England's battles in every part of the world. It was a gross injustice, the triumph of a thousand years of wrong; and it was touching to have Private Drakes say that he expected in three months to begin life for himself, after twenty years' service of the Queen; and did they think he could get anything to do in the States? He scarcely knew what he was fit for, but he thought--to so little in him came the victories he had helped to win in the Crimea, in China, and in India--that he could take care of a gentleman's horse and work about his place. He looked inquiringly at Basil, as if he might be a gentleman with a horse to be taken care of and a place to be worked about, and made him regret that he was not a man of substance enough to provide for Private Drakes and Mrs. Drakes and the brood of Ducklings, who had been shown to him stowed away in one of those cavernous rooms in the earthworks where the married soldiers have their quarters. His regret enriched the reward of Private Drakes' service,--which perhaps answered one of Private Drakes' purposes, if not his chief aim. He promised to come to the States upon the pressing advice of Isabel, who, speaking from her own large experience, declared that everybody got on there,--and he bade our friends an affectionate farewell as they drove away to the Plains of Abraham.

The fashionable suburban cottages and places of Quebec are on the St. Louis Road leading northward to the old battle-ground and beyond it; but, these face chiefly towards the rivers St. Lawrence and St. Charles, and lofty hedges and shrubbery hide them in an English seclusion from the highway; so that the visitor may uninterruptedly meditate whatever emotion he will for the scene of Wolfe's death as he rides along. His loftiest emotion will want the noble height of that heroic soul, who must

always stand forth in history a figure of beautiful and singular distinction, admirable alike for the sensibility and daring, the poetic pensiveness, and the martial ardor that mingled in him and taxed his feeble frame with tasks greater than it could bear. The whole story of the capture of Quebec is full of romantic splendor and pathos. Her fall was a triumph for all the English-speaking race, and to us Americans, long scourged by the cruel Indian wars plotted within her walls or sustained by her strength, such a blessing as was hailed with ringing bells and blazing bonfires throughout the Colonies; yet now we cannot think without pity of the hopes extinguished and the labors brought to naught in her overthrow. That strange colony of priests and soldiers, of martyrs and heroes, of which she was the capital, willing to perish for an allegiance to which the mother-country was indifferent, and fighting against the armies with which England was prepared to outnumber the whole Canadian population, is a magnificent spectacle; and Montcalm laying down his life to lose Quebec is not less affecting than Wolfe dying to win her. The heart opens towards the soldier who recited, on the eve of his costly victory, the "Elegy in a Country Churchyard," which he would "rather have written than beat the French to-morrow;" but it aches for the defeated general, who, hurt to death, answered, when told how brief his time was, "So much the better; then I shall not live to see the surrender of Quebec."

In the city for which they perished their fame has never been divided. The English have shown themselves very generous victors; perhaps nothing could be alleged against them, but that they were victors. A shaft common to Wolfe and Montcalm celebrates them both in the Governor's Garden; and in the Chapel of the Ursuline Convent a tablet is placed, where Montcalm died, by the same conquerors who raised to Wolfe's memory the column on the battle-field.

A dismal prison covers the ground where the hero fell, and the monument stands on the spot where Wolfe breathed his last, on ground lower than the rest of the field; the friendly hollow that sheltered him from the fire of the French dwarfs his monument; yet it is sufficient, and the simple inscription, "Here died Wolfe victorious," gives it a dignity which many cubits of added stature could not bestow. Another of those bitter showers, which had interspersed the morning's sunshine, drove suddenly across the open plain, and our tourists comfortably sentimentalized the scene behind the close-drawn curtains of their carriage. Here a whole empire had been lost and won, Basil reminded Isabel; and she said, "Only think of it!" and looked to a wandering fold of her skirt, upon which the rain beat through a rent of the curtain.

Do I pitch the pipe too low? We poor honest men are at a sad disadvantage; and now and then I am minded to give a loose to fancy, and attribute something really grand and fine to my people, in order to make them worthier the reader's respected acquaintance. But again, I forbid myself in a higher interest; and I am afraid that even if I were less virtuous, I could not exalt their mood upon a battle-field; for of all things of the past a battle is the least conceivable. I have heard men who fought in many battles say that the recollection was like a dream to them; and what can the merely civilian imagination do on the Plains of

Abraham, with the fact that there, more than a century ago, certain thousands of Frenchmen marched out, on a bright September morning, to kill and maim as many Englishmen? This ground, so green and oft with grass beneath the feet, was it once torn with shot and soaked with the blood of men? Did they lie here in ranks and heaps, the miserable slain, for whom tender hearts away yonder over the sea were to ache and break? Did the wretches that fell wounded stretch themselves here, and writhe beneath the feet of friend and foe, or crawl array for shelter into little hollows, and behind gushes and fallen trees! Did he, whose soul was so full of noble and sublime impulses, die here, shot through like some ravening beast? The loathsome carnage, the shrieks, the hellish din of arms, the cries of victory,--I vainly strive to conjure up some image of it all now; and God be thanked, horrible spectre! that, fill the world with sorrow as thou wilt, thou still remainest incredible in its moments of sanity and peace. Least credible art thou on the old battle-fields, where the mother of the race denies thee with breeze and sun and leaf and bird, and every blade of grass! The red stain in Basil's thought yielded to the rain sweeping across the pasture-land from which it had long since faded, and the words on the monument, "Here died Wolfe victorious," did not proclaim his bloody triumph over the French, but his self-conquest, his victory over fear and pain and love of life. Alas! when shall the poor, blind, stupid world honor those who renounce self in the joy of their kind, equally with those who devote themselves through the anguish and loss of thousands? So old a world and groping still!

The tourists were better fitted for the next occasion of sentiment, which was at the Hotel Dieu whither they went after returning from the battlefield. It took all the mal-address of which travellers are masters to secure admittance, and it was not till they had rung various wrong bells, and misunderstood many soft nun-voices speaking French through grated doors, and set divers sympathetic spectators doing ineffectual services, that they at last found the proper entrance, and were answered in English that the porter would ask if they might see the chapel. They hoped to find there the skull of Brebeuf, one of those Jesuit martyrs who perished long ago for the conversion of a race that has perished, and whose relics they had come, fresh from their reading of Parkman, with some vague and patronizing intention to revere. An elderly sister with a pale, kind face led them through a ward of the hospital into the chapel, which they found in the expected taste, and exquisitely neat and cool, but lacking the martyr's skull. They asked if it were not to be seen. "Ah, yes, poor Pere Brebeuf!" sighed the gentle sister, with the tone and manner of having lost him yesterday; "we had it down only last week, showing it to some Jesuit fathers; but it's in the convent now, and isn't to be seen." And there mingled apparently in her regret for Pere Brebeuf a confusing sense of his actual state as a portable piece of furniture. She would not let them praise the chapel. It was very clean, yes, but there was nothing to see in it. She deprecated their compliments with many shrugs, but she was pleased; for when we renounce the pomps and vanities of this world, we are pretty sure to find them in some other, --if we are women. She, good and pure soul, whose whole life was given to self-denying toil, had yet something angelically coquettish in her manner, a spiritual-worldliness which was the clarified likeness of this-

worldliness. O, had they seen the Hotel Dieu at Montreal? Then (with a vivacious wave of the hands) they would not care to look at this, which by comparison was nothing. Yet she invited them to go through the wards if they would, and was clearly proud to have them see the wonderful cleanness and comfort of the place. There were not many patients, but here and there a wan or fevered face looked at them from its pillow, or a weak form drooped beside a bed, or a group of convalescents softly talked together. They came presently to the last hall, at the end of which sat another nun, beside a window that gave a view of the busy port, and beyond it the landscape of village-lit plain and forest-darkened height. On a table at her elbow stood a rose-tree, on which hung two only pale tea-roses, so fair, so perfect, that Isabel cried out in wonder and praise. Ere she could prevent it, the nun, to whom there had been some sort of presentation, gathered one of the roses, and with a shy grace offered it to Isabel, who shrank back a little as from too costly a gift. "Take it," said the first nun, with her pretty French accent; while the other, who spoke no English at all, beamed a placid smile; and Isabel took it. The flower, lying light in her palm, exhaled a delicate odor, and a thrill of exquisite compassion for it trembled through her heart, as if it had been the white, cloistered life of the silent nun: with its pallid loveliness, it was as a flower that had taken the veil. It could never have uttered the burning passion of a lover for his mistress; the nightingale could have found no thorn on it to press his aching poet's heart against; but sick and weary eyes had dwelt gratefully upon it; at most it might have expressed, like a prayer, the nun's stainless love of some favorite saint in paradise. Cold, and pale, and sweet,--was it indeed only a flower, this cloistered rose of the Hotel Dieu?

"Breathe it," said the gentle Gray Sister; "sometimes the air of the hospital offends. Not us, no; we are used; but you come from the outside." And she gave her rose for this humble use as lovingly as she devoted herself to her lowly taxes.

"It is very little to see," she said at the end; "but if you are pleased, I am very glad. Goodby, good-by!" She stood with her arms folded, and watched them out of sight with her kind, coquettish little smile, and then the mute, blank life of the nun resumed her.

From Hotel Dieu to Hotel Musty it was but a step; both were in the same street; but our friends fancied themselves to have come an immense distance when they sat down at an early dinner, amidst the clash of crockery and cutlery, and looked round upon all the profane travelling world assembled. Their regard presently fixed upon one company which monopolized a whole table, and were defined from the other diners by peculiarities as marked as those of the Soeurs Grises themselves. There were only two men among some eight or ten women; one of the former had a bad amiable face, with eyes full of a merry deviltry; the other, clean-shaven, and dark, was demure and silent as a priest. The ladies were of various types, but of one effect, with large rolling eyes, and faces that somehow regarded the beholder as from a distance, and with an impartial feeling for him as for an element of publicity. One of them, who caressed a lapdog with one hand while she served herself with the other, was, as she seemed to believe, a blonde; she had pale blue eyes, and her

hair was cut in front so as to cover her forehead with a straggling sandy-colored fringe. She had an English look, and three or four others, with dark complexion and black, unsteady eyes, and various abandon of back-hair, looked like Cockney hours of Jewish blood; while two of the lovely company were clearly of our own nation, as was the young man with the reckless laughing face. The ladies were dressed and jeweled with a kind of broad effectiveness, which was to the ordinary style of society what scene-painting is to painting, and might have borne close inspection no better. They seemed the best-humored people in the world, and on the kindest terms with each other. The waiters shared their pleasant mood, and served them affectionately, and were now and then invited to join in the gay talk which babbled on over dislocated aspirates, and filled the air with a sentiment of vagabond enjoyment, of the romantic freedom of violated convention, of something Gil Blas-like, almost picaresque.

If they had needed explanation it would have been given by the announcement in the office of the hotel that a troupe of British blondes was then appearing in Quebec for one week only.

After dinner they took possession of the parlor, and while one strummed fitfully upon the ailing hotel piano, the rest talked, and talked shop, of course, as all of us do when several of a trade are got together.

"W'at," said the eldest of the dark-faced, black haired British blondes of Jewish race,--"w'at are we going to give at Montrehal?"

"We're going to give 'Pygmalion,' at Montrehal," answered the British blonde of American birth, good-humoredly burlesquing the erring h of her sister.

"But we cahn't, you know," said the lady with the fringed forehead; "Hagnes is gone on to New York, and there's nobody to do Wenus."

"Yes, you know," demanded the, first speaker, "oo's to do Wenus?"

"Bella's to do Wenus," said a third.

There was an outcry at this, and "'Ow ever would she get herself up for 'Venus?'" and "W'at a guy she'll look!" and "Nonsense! Bella's too 'eavy for Venus!" came from different lively critics; and the debate threatened to become too intimate for the public ear, when one of their gentlemen came in and said, "Charley don't seem so well this afternoon." On this the chorus changed its note, and at the proposal, "Poor Charley, let 's go and cheer 'im hop a bit," the whole good-tempered company trooped out of the parlor together.

Our tourists meant to give the rest of the afternoon to that sort of aimless wandering to and fro about the streets which seizes a foreign city unawares, and best develops its charm of strangeness. So they went out and took their fill of Quebec with appetites keen through long fasting from the quaint and old, and only sharpened by Montreal, and impartially rejoiced in the crooked up-and-down hill streets; the thoroughly French domestic architecture of a place that thus denied

having been English for a hundred years; the porte-cocheres beside every house; the French names upon the doors, and the oddity of the bellpulls; the rough-paved, rattling streets; the shining roofs of tin, and the universal dormer-windows; the littleness of the private houses, and the greatness of the high-walled and garden-girdled convents; the breadths of weather-stained city wall, and the shaggy cliff beneath; the batteries, with their guns peacefully staring through loop-holes of masonry, and the red-coated sergeants flirting with nursery-maids upon the carriages, while the children tumbled about over the pyramids of shot and shell; the sloping market-place before the cathedral, where yet some remnant of the morning's traffic lingered under canvas canopies, and where Isabel bought a bouquet of marigolds and asters of an old woman peasant enough to have sold it in any market-place of Europe; the small, dark shops beyond the quarter invaded by English retail trade; the movement of all the strange figures of cleric and lay and military life; the sound of a foreign speech prevailing over the English; the encounter of other tourists, the passage back and forth through the different city gates; the public wooden stairways, dropping flight after flight from the Upper to the Lower Town; the bustle of the port, with its commerce and shipping and seafaring life huddled close in under the hill; the many desolate streets of the Lower Town, as black and ruinous as the last great fire left them; and the marshy meadows beyond, memorable of Recollets and Jesuits, of Cartier and Montcalm.

They went to the chapel of the Seminary at Laval University, and admired the Le Brun, and the other paintings of less merit, but equal interest through their suggestion of a whole dim religious world of paintings; and then they spent half an hour in the cathedral, not so much in looking at the Crucifixion by Vandyck which is there, as in reveling amid the familiar rococo splendors of the temple. Every swaggering statue of a saint, every rope-dancing angel, every cherub of those that on the carven and gilded clouds above the high altar float--

"Like little wanton boys that swim on bladders,"--

was precious to them; the sacristan dusting the sacred properties with a feather brush, and giving each shrine a business-like nod as he passed, was as a long-lost brother; they had hearts of aggressive tenderness for the young girls and old women who stepped in for a half-hour's devotion, and for the men with bourgeois or peasant faces, who stole a moment from affairs and crops, and gave it to the saints. There was nothing in the place that need remind them of America, and its taste was exactly that of a thousand other churches of the eighteenth century. They could easily have believed themselves in the farthest Catholic South, but for the two great porcelain stoves that stood on either side of the nave near the entrance, and that too vividly reminded them of the possibility of cold.

In fact, Quebec is a little painful in this and other confusions of the South and North, and one never quite reconciles himself to them. The Frenchmen, who expected to find there the climate of their native land, and ripen her wines in as kindly a sun, have perpetuated the image of home in so many things, that it goes to the heart with a painful emotion to find the sad, oblique light of the North upon them. As you ponder

some characteristic aspect of Quebec,--a bit of street with heavy stone houses opening upon a stretch of the city wall, with a Lombardy poplar rising slim against it,--you say, to your satisfied soul, "Yes, it is the real thing!" and then all at once a sense of that Northern sky strikes in upon you, and makes the reality a mere picture. The sky is blue, the sun is often fiercely hot; you could not perhaps prove that the pathetic radiance is not an efflux of your own consciousness that summer is but hanging over the land, briefly poising on wings which flit at the first dash of rain, and will soon vanish in long retreat before the snow. But somehow, from without or from within, that light of the North is there.

It lay saddest, our travellers thought, upon the little circular garden near Durham Terrace, where every brightness of fall flowers abounded,--marigold, coxcomb, snap-dragon, dahlia, hollyhock, and sunflower. It was a substantial and hardy efflorescence, and they fancied that fainter-hearted plants would have pined away in that garden, where the little fountain, leaping up into the joyless light, fell back again with a musical shiver. The consciousness of this latent cold, of winter only held in abeyance by the bright sun, was not deeper even in the once magnificent, now neglected Governor's Garden, where there was actually a rawness in the late afternoon air, and whither they were strolling for the view from its height, and to pay their duty to the obelisk raised there to the common fame of Wolfe and Montcalm. The sounding Latin inscription celebrates the royal governor-general who erected it almost as much as the heroes to whom it was raised; but these spectators did not begrudge the space given to his praise, for so fine a thought merited praise. It enforced again the idea of a kind posthumous friendship between Wolfe and Montcalm, which gives their memory its rare distinction, and unites them, who fell in fight against each other, as closely as if they had both died for the same cause.

Some lasting dignity seems to linger about the city that has once been a capital; and this odor of fallen nobility belongs to Quebec, which was a capital in the European sense, with all the advantages of a small vice-regal court, and its social and political intrigues, in the French times. Under the English, for a hundred years it was the centre of Colonial civilization and refinement, with a governor-general's residence and a brilliant, easy, and delightful society, to which the large garrison of former days gave gayety and romance. The honors of a capital, first shared with Montreal and Toronto, now rest with half-savage Ottawa; and the garrison has dwindled to a regiment of rifles, whose presence would hardly be known, but for the natty sergeants lounging, stick in hand, about the streets and courting the nurse-maids. But in the days of old there were scenes of carnival pleasure in the Governor's Garden, and there the garrison band still plays once a week, when it is filled by the fashion and beauty of Quebec, and some semblance of the past is recalled. It is otherwise a lonesome, indifferently tended place, and on this afternoon there was no one there but a few loafing young fellows of low degree, French and English, and children that played screaming from seat to seat and path to path and over the too-heavily shaded grass. In spite of a conspicuous warning that any dog entering the garden would be destroyed, the place was thronged with dogs unmolested and apparently in no danger of the threatened doom. The seal of a disagreeable desolation

was given in the legend rudely carved upon one of the benches, "Success to the Irish Republic!"

The morning of the next day our tourists gave to hearing mass at the French cathedral, which was not different, to their heretical senses, from any other mass, except that the ceremony was performed with a very full clerical force, and was attended by an uncommonly devout congregation. With Europe constantly in their minds, they were bewildered to find the worshippers not chiefly old and young women, but men also of all ages and of every degree, from the neat peasant in his Sabbath-day best to the modish young Quebecker, who spread his handkerchief on the floor to save his pantaloons during supplication. There was fashion and education in large degree among the men, and there was in all a pious attention to the function in poetical keeping with the origin and history of a city which the zeal of the Church had founded.

A magnificent beadle, clothed in a gold-laced coat and bearing a silver staff, bowed to them when they entered, and, leading them to a pew, punched up a kneeling peasant, who mutely resumed his prayers in the aisle outside, while they took his place. It appeared to Isabel very unjust that their curiosity should displace his religion; but she consoled herself by making Basil give a shilling to the man who, preceded by the shining beadle, came round to take up a collection. The peasant could have given nothing but copper, and she felt that this restored the lost balance of righteousness in their favor. There was a sermon, very sweetly and gracefully delivered by a young priest of singular beauty, even among clergy whose good looks are so notable as those of Quebec; and then they followed the orderly crowd of worshippers out, and left the cathedral to the sacristan and the odor of incense.

They thought the type of French-Canadian better here than at Montreal, and they particularly noticed the greater number of pretty young girls. All classes were well dressed; for though the best dressed could not be called stylish according to the American standard, as Isabel decided, and had only a provincial gentility, the poorest wore garments that were clean and whole. Everybody, too, was going to have a hot Sunday dinner, if there was any truth in the odors that steamed out of every door and window; and this dinner was to be abundantly garnished with onions, for the dullest nose could not err concerning that savor.

Numbers of tourists, of a nationality that showed itself superior to every distinction of race, were strolling vaguely and not always quite happily about; but they made no impression on the proper local character, and the air throughout the morning was full of the sentiment of Sunday in a Catholic city. There was the apparently meaningless jangling of bells, with profound hushes between, and then more jubilant jangling, and then deeper silence; there was the devout trooping of the crowds to the churches; and there was the beginning of the long afternoon's lounging and amusement with which the people of that faith reward their morning's devotion. Little stands for the sale of knotty apples and choke-cherries and cakes and cider sprang magically into existence after service, and people were already eating and drinking at them. The carriage-drivers resumed their chase of the tourists, and the unvoiced stir of the new

week had begun again. Quebec, in fact, is but a pantomimic reproduction of France; it is as if two centuries in a new land, amidst the primeval silences of nature and the long hush of the Northern winters, had stilled the tongues of the lively folk and made them taciturn as we of a graver race. They have kept the ancestral vivacity of manner; the elegance of the shrug is intact; the talking hands take part in dialogue; the agitated person will have its share of expression. But the loud and eager tone is wanting, and their dumb show mystifies the beholder almost as much as the Southern architecture under the slanting Northern sun. It is not America; if it is not France, what is it?

Of the many beautiful things to see in the neighborhood of Quebec, our wedding-journeymen were in doubt on which to bestow their one precious afternoon. Should it be Lorette, with its cataract and its remnant of bleached and fading Hurons, or the Isle of Orleans with its fertile farms and its primitive peasant life, or Montmorenci, with the unrivaled fall and the long drive through the beautiful village of Beauport? Isabel chose the last, because Basil had been there before, and it had to it the poetry of the wasted years in which she did not know him. She had possessed herself of the journal of his early travels, among the other portions and parcels recoverable from the dreadful past, and from time to time on this journey she had read him passages out of it, with mingled sentiment and irony, and, whether she was mocking or admiring, equally to his confusion. Now, as they smoothly bowled away from the city, she made him listen to what he had written of the same excursion long ago.

It was, to be sure, a sad farrago of sentiment about the village and the rural sights, and especially a girl tossing hay in the field. Yet it had touches of nature and reality, and Basil could not utterly despise himself for having written it. "Yes," he said, "life was then a thing to be put into pretty periods; now it's something that has risks and averages, and may be insured."

There was regret, fancied or expressed, in his tone, that made her sigh, "Ah! if I'd only had a little more money, you might have devoted yourself to literature;" for she was a true Bostonian in her honor of our poor craft.

"O, you're not greatly to blame," answered her husband, "and I forgive you the little wrong you've done me. I was quits with the Muse, at any rate, you know, before we were married; and I'm very well satisfied to be going back to my applications and policies to-morrow."

To-morrow? The word struck cold upon her. Then their wedding journey would begin to end tomorrow! So it would, she owned with another sigh; and yet it seemed impossible.

"There, ma'am," said the driver, rising from his seat and facing round, while he pointed with his whip towards Quebec, "that's what we call the Silver City."

They looked back with him at the city, whose thousands of tinned roofs, rising one above the other from the water's edge to the citadel, were all

a splendor of argent light in the afternoon sun. It was indeed as if some magic had clothed that huge rock, base and steepy flank and crest, with a silver city. They gazed upon the marvel with cries of joy that satisfied the driver's utmost pride in it, and Isabel said, "To live there, there in that Silver City, in perpetual sojourn! To be always going to go on a morrow that never came! To be forever within one day of the end of a wedding journey that never ended!"

From far down the river by which they rode came the sound of a cannon, breaking the Sabbath repose of the air. "That's the gun of the Liverpool steamer, just coming in," said the driver.

"O," cried Isabel, "I'm thankful we're only to stay one night more, for now we shall be turned out of our nice room by those people who telegraphed for it!"

There is a continuous village along the St. Lawrence from Quebec, almost to Montmorenci; and they met crowds of villagers coming from the church as they passed through Beauport. But Basil was dismayed at the change that had befallen them. They had their Sunday's best on, and the women, instead of wearing the peasant costume in which he had first seen them, were now dressed as if out of "Harper's Bazar" of the year before. He anxiously asked the driver if the broad straw hats and the bright sacks and kirtles were no more. "O, you'd see them on weekdays, sir," was the answer, "but they're not so plenty any time as they used to be." He opened his store of facts about the habitans, whom he praised for every virtue,—for thrift, for sobriety, for neatness, for amiability; and his words ought to have had the greater weight, because he was of the Irish race, between which and the Canadians there is no kindness lost. But the looks of the passers-by corroborated him, and as for the little houses, open-doored beside the way, with the pleasant faces at window and portal, they were miracles of picturesqueness and cleanliness. From each the owner's slim domain, narrowing at every successive division among the abundant generations, runs back to hill or river in well-defined lines, and beside the cottage is a garden of pot-herbs, bordered with a flame of bright autumn flowers; somewhere in decent seclusion grunts the fattening pig, which is to enrich all those peas and onions for the winter's broth; there is a cheerfulness of poultry about the barns; I dare be sworn there is always a small girl driving a flock of decorous ducks down the middle of the street; and of the priest with a book under his arm, passing a way-side shrine, what possible doubt? The houses, which are of one model, are built by the peasants themselves with the stone which their land yields more abundantly than any other crop, and are furnished with galleries and balconies to catch every ray of the fleeting summer, and perhaps to remember the long-lost ancestral summers of Normandy. At every moment, in passing through this ideally neat and pretty village, our tourists must think of the lovely poem of which all French Canada seems but a reminiscence and illustration. It was Grand Pre, not Beauport; and they paid an eager homage to the beautiful genius which has touched those simple village aspects with an undying charm, and which, whatever the land's political allegiance, is there perpetual Seigneur.

The village, stretching along the broad interval of the St. Lawrence,

grows sparser as you draw near the Falls of Montmorenci, and presently you drive past the grove shutting from the road the country-house in which the Duke of Kent spent some merry days of his jovial youth, and come in sight of two lofty towers of stone,--monuments and witnesses of the tragedy of Montmorenci.

Once a suspension-bridge, built sorely against the will of the neighboring habitans, hung from these towers high over the long plunge of the cataract. But one morning of the fatal spring after the first winter's frost had tried the hold of the cable on the rocks, an old peasant and his wife with their little grandson set out in their cart to pass the bridge. As they drew near the middle the anchoring wires suddenly lost their grip upon the shore, and whirled into the air; the bridge crashed under the hapless passengers and they were launched from its height, upon the verge of the fall and thence plunged, two hundred and fifty feet, into the ruin of the abyss.

The habitans rebuilt their bridge of wood upon low stone piers, so far up the river from the cataract that whoever fell from it would yet have many a chance for life; and it would have been perilous to offer to replace the fallen structure, which, in the belief of faithful Christians, clearly belonged to the numerous bridges built by the Devil, in times when the Devil did not call himself a civil engineer.

The driver, with just unction, recounted the sad tale as he halted his horses on the bridge; and as his passengers looked down the rock-fretted brown torrent towards the fall, Isabel seized the occasion to shudder that ever she had set foot on that suspension-bridge below Niagara, and to prove to Basil's confusion that her doubt of the bridges between the Three Sisters was not a case of nerves but an instinctive wisdom concerning the unsafety of all bridges of that design.

From the gate opening into the grounds about the fall two or three little French boys, whom they had not the heart to forbid, ran noisily before them with cries in their sole English, "This way, sir" and led toward a weather-beaten summer-house that tottered upon a projecting rock above the verge of the cataract. But our tourists shook their heads, and turned away for a more distant and less dizzy enjoyment of the spectacle, though any commanding point was sufficiently chasmal and precipitous. The lofty bluff was scooped inward from the St. Lawrence in a vast irregular semicircle, with cavernous hollows, one within another, sinking far into its sides, and naked from foot to crest, or meagrely wooded here and there with evergreen. From the central brink of these gloomy purple chasms the foamy cataract launched itself, and like a cloud,

"Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem."

I say a cloud, because I find it already said to my hand, as it were, in a pretty verse, and because I must needs liken Montmorenci to something that is soft and light. Yet a cloud does not represent the glinting of the water in its downward swoop; it is like some broad slope of sun-smitten snow; but snow is coldly white and opaque, and this has a creamy warmth in its luminous mass; and so, there hangs the cataract unsaid as

before. It is a mystery that anything so grand should be so lovely, that anything so tenderly fair in whatever aspect should yet be so large that one glance fails to comprehend it all. The rugged wildness of the cliffs and hollows about it is softened by its gracious beauty, which half redeems the vulgarity of the timber-merchant's uses in setting the river at work in his saw-mills and choking its outlet into the St. Lawrence with rafts of lumber and rubbish of slabs and shingles. Nay, rather, it is alone amidst these things, and the eye takes note of them by a separate effort.

Our tourists sank down upon the turf that crept with its white clover to the edge of the precipice, and gazed dreamily upon the fall, filling their vision with its exquisite color and form. Being wiser than I, they did not try to utter its loveliness; they were content to feel it, and the perfection of the afternoon, whose low sun slanting over the landscape gave, under that pale, greenish-blue sky, a pensive sentiment of autumn to the world. The crickets cried amongst the grass; the hesitating chirp of birds came from the tree overhead; a shaggy colt left off grazing in the field and stalked up to stare at them; their little guides, having found that these people had no pleasure in the sight of small boys scuffling on the verge of a precipice, threw themselves also down upon the grass and crooned a long, long ballad in a mournful minor key about some maiden whose name was La Belle Adeline. It was a moment of unmixed enjoyment for every sense, and through all their being they were glad; which considering, they ceased to be so, with a deep sigh, as one reasoning that he dreams must presently awake. They never could have an emotion without desiring to analyze it; but perhaps their rapture would have ceased as swiftly, even if they had not tried to make it a fact of consciousness.

"If there were not dinner after such experiences as these," said Isabel, as they sat at table that evening, "I don't know what would become of one. But dinner unites the idea of pleasure and duty, and brings you gently back to earth. You must eat, don't you see, and there's nothing disgraceful about what you're obliged to do; and so--it's all right."

"Isabel, Isabel," cried her husband, "you have a wonderful mind, and its workings always amaze me. But be careful, my dear; be careful. Don't work it too hard. The human brain, you know: delicate organ."

"Well, you understand what I mean; and I think it's one of the great charms of a husband, that you're not forced to express yourself to him. A husband," continued Isabel, sententiously, poising a bit of meringue between her thumb and finger,--for they had reached that point in the repast, "a husband is almost as good as another woman!"

In the parlor they found the Ellisons, and exchanged the history of the day with them.

"Certainly," said Mrs. Ellison, at the end, "it's been a pleasant day enough, but what of the night? You've been turned out, too, by those people who came on the steamer, and who might as well have stayed on

board to-night; have you got another room?"

"Not precisely," said Isabel; "we have a coop in the fifth story, right under the roof."

Mrs. Ellison turned energetically upon her husband and cried in tones of reproach, "Richard, Mrs. March has a room!"

"A coop, she said," retorted that amiable Colonel, "and we're too good for that. The clerk is keeping us in suspense about a room, because he means to surprise us with something palatial at the end. It's his joking way."

"Nonsense!" said Mrs. Ellison. "Have you seen him since dinner?"

"I have made life a burden to him for the last half-hour," returned the Colonel, with the kindest smile.

"O Richard," cried his wife, in despair of his amendment, "you wouldn't make life a burden to a mouse!" And having nothing else for it, she laughed, half in sorrow, half in fondness.

"Well, Fanny," the Colonel irrelevantly answered, "put on your hat and things, and let's all go up to Durham Terrace for a promenade. I know our friends want to go. It's something worth seeing; and by the time we get back, the clerk will have us a perfectly sumptuous apartment."

Nothing, I think, more enforces the illusion of Southern Europe in Quebec than the Sunday-night promenading on Durham Terrace. This is the ample space on the brow of the cliff to the left of the citadel, the noblest and most commanding position in the whole city, which was formerly occupied by the old castle of Saint Louis, where dwelt the brave Count Frontenac and his splendid successors of the French regime. The castle went the way of Quebec by fire some forty years ago, and Lord Durham leveled the site and made it a public promenade. A stately arcade of solid masonry supports it on the brink of the rock, and an iron parapet incloses it; there are a few seats to lounge upon, and some idle old guns for the children to clamber over and play with. A soft twilight had followed the day, and there was just enough obscurity to hide from a willing eye the Northern and New World facts of the scene, and to bring into more romantic relief the citadel dark against the mellow evening, and the people gossiping from window to window across the narrow streets of the Lower Town. The Terrace itself was densely thronged, and there was a constant coming and going of the promenaders, who each formally paced back and forth upon the planking for a certain time, and then went quietly home, giving place to the new arrivals. They were nearly all French, and they were not generally, it seemed, of the first fashion, but rather of middling condition in life; the English being represented only by a few young fellows and now and then a redfaced old gentleman with an Indian scarf trailing from his hat. There were some fair American costumes and faces in the crowd, but it was essentially Quebecian. The young girls walking in pairs, or with their lovers, had the true touch of provincial unstylishness, the young men the ineffectual excess of the

second-rate Latin dandy, their elders the rich inelegance of a bourgeoisie in their best. A few, better-figured avocats or notaires (their profession was as unmistakable as if they had carried their well-polished brass doorplates upon their breasts) walked and gravely talked with each other. The non-American character of the scene was not less vividly marked in the fact that each person dressed according to his own taste and frankly indulged private preferences in shapes and colors. One of the promenaders was in white, even to his canvas shoes; another, with yet bolder individuality, appeared in perfect purple. It had a strange, almost portentous effect when these two startling figures met as friends and joined each other in the promenade with linked arms; but the evening was already beginning to darken round them, and presently the purple comrade was merely a sombre shadow beside the glimmering white.

The valleys and the heights now vanished; but the river defined itself by the varicolored lights of the ships and steamers that lay, dark, motionless bulks, upon its broad breast; the lights of Point Lewis swarmed upon the other shore; the Lower Town, two hundred feet below them, stretched an alluring mystery of clustering roofs and lamplit windows and dark and shining streets around the mighty rock, mural-crowned. Suddenly a spectacle peculiarly Northern and characteristic of Quebec revealed itself; a long arch brightened over the northern horizon; the tremulous flames of the aurora, pallid violet or faintly tinged with crimson, shot upward from it, and played with a weird apparition and evanescence to the zenith. While the strangers looked, a gun boomed from the citadel, and the wild sweet notes of the bugle sprang out upon the silence.

Then they all said, "How perfectly in keeping everything has been!" and sauntered back to the hotel.

The Colonel went into the office to give the clerk another turn on the rack, and make him confess to a hidden apartment somewhere, while Isabel left her husband to Mrs. Ellison in the parlor, and invited Miss Kitty to look at her coop in the fifth story. As they approached, light and music and laughter stole out of an open door next hers, and Isabel, distinguishing the voices of the theatrical party, divined that this was the sick-chamber, and that they were again cheering up the afflicted member of the troupe. Some one was heard to say, "Well, 'ow do you feel now, Charley?" and a sound of subdued swearing responded, followed by more laughter, and the twanging of a guitar, and a snatch of song, and a stir of feet and dresses as for departure.

The two listeners shrank together; as women they could not enjoy these proofs of the jolly camaraderie existing among the people of the troupe. They trembled as before the merriment of as many light-hearted, careless, good-natured young men: it was no harm, but it was dismaying; and, "Dear!" cried Isabel, "what shall we do?"

"Go back," said Miss Ellison, boldly, and back they ran to the parlor, where they found Basil and the Colonel and his wife in earnest conclave. The Colonel, like a shrewd strategist, was making show of a desperation more violent than his wife's, who was thus naturally forced into the

attitude of moderating his fury.

"Well, Fanny, that's all he can do for us; and I do think it 's the most outrageous thing in the world! It 's real mean!"

Fanny perceived a bold parody of her own denunciatory manner, but just then she was obliged to answer Isabel's eager inquiry whether they had got a room yet. "Yes, a room," she said, "with two beds. But what are we to do with one room? That clerk--I don't know what to call him"-- ("Call him a hotel-clerk, my dear; you can't say anything worse," interrupted her husband)--"seems to think the matter perfectly settled."

"You see, Mrs. March," added the Colonel, "he's able to bully us in this way because he has the architecture on his side. There isn't another room in the house."

"Let me think a moment," said Isabel not thinking an instant. She had taken a fancy to at least two of these people from the first, and in the last hour they had all become very well acquainted now she said, "I'll tell you: there are two beds in our room also; we ladies will take one room, and you gentlemen the other!"

"Mrs. March, I bow to the superiority of the Boston mind," said the Colonel, while his females civilly protested and consented; "and I might almost hail you as our preserver. If ever you come to Milwaukee,--which is the centre of the world, as Boston is,--we--I--shall be happy to have you call at my place of business.--I didn't commit myself, did I, Fanny? --I am sometimes hospitable to excess, Mrs. March," he said, to explain his aside. "And now, let us reconnoitre. Lead on, madam, and the gratitude of the houseless stranger will follow you."

The whole party explored both rooms, and the ladies decided to keep Isabel's. The Colonel was dispatched to see that the wraps and traps of his party were sent to this number, and Basil went with him. The things came long before the gentlemen returned, but the ladies happily employed the interval in talking over the excitements of the day, and in saying from time to time, "So very kind of you, Mrs. March," and "I don't know what we should have done," and "Don't speak of it, please," and "I'm sure it 's a great pleasure to me."

In the room adjoining theirs, where the invalid actor lay, and where lately there had been minstrelsy and apparently dancing for his solace, there was now comparative silence. Two women's voices talked together, and now and then a guitar was touched by a wandering hand. Isabel had just put up her handkerchief to conceal her first yawn, when the gentlemen, odorous of cigars, returned to say good-night.

"It's the second door from this, isn't it, Isabel?" asked her husband.

"Yes, the second door. Good-night. Good-night."

The two men walked off together; but in a minute afterwards they had returned and were knocking tremulously at the closed door.

"O, what has happened?" chorused the ladies in woeful tune, seeing a certain wildness in the face that confronted them.

"We don't know!" answered the others in as fearful a key, and related how they had found the door of their room ajar, and a bright light streaming into the corridor. They did not stop to ponder this fact, but, with the heedlessness of their sex, pushed the door wide open, when they saw seated before the mirror a bewildering figure, with disheveled locks wandering down the back, and in dishabille expressive of being quite at home there, which turned upon them a pair of pale blue eyes, under a forehead remarkable for the straggling fringe of hair that covered it. They professed to have remained transfixed at the sight, and to have noted a like dismay on the visage before the glass, ere they summoned strength to fly. These facts Colonel Ellison gave at the command of his wife, with many protests and insincere delays amidst which the curiosity of his hearers alone prevented them from rending him in pieces.

"And what do you suppose it was?" demanded his wife, with forced calmness, when he had at last made an end of the story and his abominable hypocrisies.

"Well, I think it was a mermaid."

"A mermaid!" said his wife, scornfully. "How do you know?"

"It had a comb in its hand, for one thing; and besides, my dear, I hope I know a mermaid when I see it."

"Well," said Mrs. Ellison, "it was no mermaid, it was a mistake; and I'm going to see about it. Will you go with me, Richard?"

"No money could induce me! If it's a mistake, it isn't proper for me to go; if it's a mermaid, it's dangerous."

"O you coward!" said the intrepid little woman to a hero of all the fights on Sherman's march to the sea; and presently they heard her attack the mysterious enemy with a lady-like courage, claiming the invaded chamber. The foe replied with like civility, saying the clerk had given her that room with the understanding that another lady was to be put there with her, and she had left the door unlocked to admit her. The watchers with the sick man next door appeared and confirmed this speech, a feeble voice from the bedclothes swore to it.

"Of course," added the invader, "if I'd known 'ow it really was, I never would have listened to such a thing, never. And there isn't another 'ole in the louse to lay me 'ead," she concluded.

"Then it's the clerk's fault," said Mrs. Ellison, glad to retreat unharmed; and she made her husband ring for the guilty wretch, a pale, quiet young Frenchman, whom the united party, sallying into the corridor, began to upbraid in one breath, the lady in dishabille vanishing as often as she remembered it, and reappearing whenever some strong point of

argument or denunciation occurred to her.

The clerk, who was the Benjamin of his wicked tribe, threw himself upon their mercy and confessed everything: the house was so crowded, and he had been so crazed by the demands upon him, that he had understood Colonel Ellison's application to be for a bed for the young lady in his party, and he had done the very best he could. If the lady there--she vanished again--would give up the room to the two gentlemen, he would find her a place with the housekeeper. To this the lady consented without difficulty, and the rest dispersing, she kissed one of the sick man's watchers with "Isn't it a shame, Bella?" and flitted down the darkness of the corridor. The rooms upon it seemed all, save the two assigned our travellers, to be occupied by ladies of the troupe; their doors successively opened, and she was heard explaining to each as she passed. The momentary displeasure which she had shown at her banishment was over. She detailed the facts with perfect good-nature, and though the others appeared no more than herself to find any humorous cast in the affair, they received her narration with the same amiability. They uttered their sympathy seriously, and each parted from her with some friendly word. Then all was still.

"Richard," said Mrs. Ellison, when in Isabel's room the travellers had briefly celebrated these events, "I should think you'd hate to leave us alone up here."

"I do; but you can't think how I hate to go off alone. I wish you'd come part of the way with us, Ladies; I do indeed. Leave your door unlocked, at any rate."

This prayer, uttered at parting outside the room, was answered from within by a sound of turning keys and sliding bolts, and a low thunder as of bureaus and washstands rolled against the door. "The ladies are fortifying their position," said the Colonel to Basil, and the two returned to their own chamber. "I don't wish any intrusions," he said, instantly shutting himself in; "my nerves are too much shaken now. What an awfully mysterious old place this Quebec is, Mr. March! I'll tell you what: it's my opinion that this is an enchanted castle, and if my ribs are not walked over by a muleteer in the course of the night, it's all I ask."

In this and other discourse recalling the famous adventure of Don Quixote, the Colonel beguiled the labor of disrobing, and had got as far as his boots, when there came a startling knock at the door. With one boot in his hand and the other on his foot, the Colonel limped forward. "I suppose it's that clerk has sent to say he's made some other mistake," and he flung wide the door, and then stood motionless before it, dumbly staring at a figure on the threshold,--a figure with the fringed forehead and pale blue eyes of her whom they had so lately turned out of that room.

Shrinking behind the side of the doorway, "Excuse me, gentlemen," she said, with a dignity that recalled their scattered senses, "but will you 'ave the goodness to look if my beads are on your table--O thanks,

thanks, thanks!" she continued, showing her face and one hand, as Basil blushing advanced with a string of heavy black beads, piously adorned with a large cross. "I'm sure, I'm greatly obliged to you, gentlemen, and I have a thousand pardons for troubling you," she concluded in a somewhat severe tone, that left them abashed and culpable; and vanished as mysteriously as she had appeared.

"Now, see here," said the Colonel, with a huge sigh as he closed the door again, and this time locked it, "I should like to know how long this sort of thing is to be kept up? Because, if it's to be regularly repeated during the night, I'm going to dress again." Nevertheless, he finished undressing and got into bed, where he remained for some time silent. Basil put out the light. "O, I'm sorry you did that, my dear fellow," said the Colonel; "but never mind, it was an idle curiosity, no doubt. It's my belief that in the landlord's extremity of bedlinen, I've been put to sleep between a pair of tablecloths; and I thought I'd like to look. It seems to me that I make out a checkered pattern on top and a flowered or arabesque pattern underneath. I wish they had given me mates. It's pretty hard having to sleep between odd tablecloths. I shall complain to the landlord of this in the morning. I've never had to sleep between odd table-cloths at any hotel before."

The Colonel's voice seemed scarcely to have died away upon Basil's drowsy ear, when suddenly the sounds of music and laughter from the invalid's room startled him wide awake. The sick man's watchers were coquetting with some one who stood in the little court-yard five stories below. A certain breadth of repartee was naturally allowable at that distance; the lover avowed his passion in ardent terms, and the ladies mocked him with the same freedom, now and then totally neglecting him while they sang a snatch of song to the twanging of the guitar, or talked professional gossip, and then returning to him with some tormenting expression of tenderness.

All this, abstractly speaking, was nothing to Basil; yet he could recollect few things intended for his pleasure that had given him more satisfaction. He thought, as he glanced out into the moonlight on the high-gabled silvery roofs around and on the gardens of the convents and the towers of the quaint city, that the scene wanted nothing of the proper charm of Spanish humor and romance, and he was as grateful to those poor souls as if they had meant him a favor. To us of the hither side of the foot-lights, there is always something fascinating in the life of the strange beings who dwell beyond them, and who are never so unreal as in their own characters. In their shabby bestowal in those mean upper rooms, their tawdry poverty, their merry submission to the errors and caprices of destiny, their mutual kindness and careless friendship, these unprofitable devotees of the twinkling-footed burlesque seemed to be playing rather than living the life of strolling players; and their love-making was the last touch of a comedy that Basil could hardly accept as reality, it was so much more like something seen upon the stage. He would not have detracted anything from the commonness and cheapness of the 'mise en scene', for that, he reflected drowsily and confusedly, helped to give it an air of fact and make it like an episode of fiction. But above all, he was pleased with the natural eventlessness

of the whole adventure, which was in perfect agreement with his taste; and just as his reveries began to lose shape in dreams, he was aware of an absurd pride in the fact that all this could have happened to him in our commonplace time and hemisphere. "Why," he thought, "if I were a student in Alcalá, what better could I have asked?" And as at last his soul swung out from its moorings and lapsed down the broad slowly circling tides out in the sea of sleep, he was conscious of one subtle touch of compassion for those poor strollers,--a pity so delicate and fine and tender that it hardly seemed his own but rather a sense of the compassion that pities the whole world.

X. HOMEWARD AND HOME.

The travellers all met at breakfast and duly discussed the adventures of the night; and for the rest, the forenoon passed rapidly and slowly with Basil and Isabel, as regret to leave Quebec, or the natural impatience of travellers to be off, overcame them. Isabel spent part of it in shopping, for she had found some small sums of money and certain odd corners in her trunks still unappropriated, and the handsome stores on the Rue Fabrique were very tempting. She said she would just go in and look; and the wise reader imagines the result. As she knelt over her boxes, trying so to distribute her purchases as to make them look as if they were old,--old things of hers, which she had brought all the way round from Boston with her,--a fleeting touch of conscience stayed her hand.

"Basil," she said, "perhaps we'd better declare some of these things. What's the duty on those?" she asked, pointing to certain articles.

"I don't know. About a hundred per cent. ad valorem."

"C'est a dire--?"

"As much as they cost."

"O then, dearest," responded Isabel indignantly, "it can't be wrong to smuggle! I won't declare a thread!"

"That's very well for you, whom they won't ask. But what if they ask me whether there's anything to declare?"

Isabel looked at her husband and hesitated. Then she replied in terms that I am proud to record in honor of American womanhood: "You mustn't fib about--it, Basil" (heroically); "I couldn't respect you if you did," (tenderly); "but" (with decision) "you must slip out of it some way!"

The ladies of the Ellison party, to whom she put the case in the parlor, agreed with her perfectly. They also had done a little shopping in Quebec, and they meant to do more at Montreal before they returned to the States. Mrs. Ellison was disposed to look upon Isabel's compunctions as

a kind of treason to the sex, to be forgiven only because so quickly repented.

The Ellisons were going up the Saguenay before coming on to Boston, and urged our friends hard to go with them. "No, that must be for another time," said Isabel. "Mr. March has to be home by a certain day; and we shall just get back in season." Then she made them promise to spend a day with her in Boston, and the Colonel coming to say that he had a carriage at the door for their excursion to Lorette, the two parties bade good-by with affection and many explicit hopes of meeting soon again.

"What do you think of them, dearest?" demanded Isabel, as she sallied out with Basil for a final look at Quebec.

"The young lady is the nicest; and the other is well enough, too. She is a good deal like you, but with the sense of humor left out. You've only enough to save you."

"Well, her husband is jolly enough for both of them. He's funnier than you, Basil, and he hasn't any of your little languid airs and affectations. I don't know but I'm a bit disappointed in my choice, darling; but I dare say I shall work out of it. In fact, I don't know but the Colonel is a little too jolly. This drolling everything is rather fatiguing." And having begun, they did not stop till they had taken their friends to pieces. Dismayed, then, they hastily reconstructed them, and said that they were among the pleasantest people they ever knew, and they were really very sorry to part with them, and they should do everything to make them have a good time in Boston.

They were sauntering towards Durham Terrace where they leaned long upon the iron parapet and blest themselves with the beauty of the prospect. A tender haze hung upon the landscape and subdued it till the scene was as a dream before them. As in a dream the river lay, and dream-like the shipping moved or rested on its deep, broad bosom. Far off stretched the happy fields with their dim white villages; farther still the mellow heights melted into the low hovering heaven. The tinned roofs of the Lower Town twinkled in the morning sun; around them on every hand, on that Monday forenoon when the States were stirring from ocean to ocean in feverish industry, drownsed the gray city within her walls; from the flag-staff of the citadel hung the red banner of Saint George in sleep.

Their hearts were strangely and deeply moved. It seemed to them that they looked upon the last stronghold of the Past, and that afar off to the southward they could hear the marching hosts of the invading Present; and as no young and loving soul can relinquish old things without a pang, they sighed a long mute farewell to Quebec.

Next summer they would come again, yes; but, ah me' every one knows what next summer is!

Part of the burlesque troupe rode down in the omnibus to the Grand Trunk Ferry with them, and were good-natured to the last, having shaken hands

all round with the waiters, chambermaids, and porters of the hotel. The young fellow with the bad amiable face came in a calash, and refused to overpay the driver with a gay decision that made him Basil's envy till he saw his tribulation in getting the troupe's luggage checked. There were forty pieces, and it always remained a mystery, considering the small amount of clothing necessary to those people on the stage, what could have filled their trunks. The young man and the two English blondes of American birth found places in the same car with our tourists, and enlivened the journey with their frolics. When the young man pretended to fall asleep, they wrapped his golden curly head in a shawl, and vexed him with many thumps and thrusts, till he bought a brief truce with a handful of almonds; and the ladies having no other way to eat them, one of them saucily snatched off her shoe, and cracked them hammerwise with the heel. It was all so pleasant that it ought to have been all right; and in their merry world of outlawry perhaps things are not so bad as we like to think them.

The country into which the train plunges as soon as Quebec is out of sight is very stupidly savage, and our friends had little else to do but to watch the gambols of the players, till they came to the river St. Francis, whose wandering loveliness the road follows through an infinite series of soft and beautiful landscapes, and finds everywhere glassing in its smooth current the elms and willows of its gentle shores. At one place, where its calm broke into foamy rapids, there was a huge saw mill, covering the stream with logs and refuse, and the banks with whole cities of lumber; which also they accepted as no mean elements of the picturesque. They clung the most tenderly to traces of the peasant life they were leaving. When some French boys came aboard with wild raspberries to sell in little birch-bark canoes, they thrilled with pleasure, and bought them, but sighed then, and said, "What thing characteristic of the local life will they sell us in Maine when we get there? A section of pie poetically wrapt in a broad leaf of the squash-vine, or pop-corn in its native tissue-paper, and advertising the new Dollar Store in Portland?" They saw the quaintness vanish from the farm-houses; first the dormer-windows, then the curve of the steep roof, then the steep roof itself. By and by they came to a store with a Grecian portico and four square pine pillars. They shuddered and looked no more.

The guiltily dreaded examination of baggage at Island Pond took place at nine o'clock, without costing them a cent of duty or a pang of conscience. At that charming station the trunks are piled higgledy-piggledy into a room beside the track, where a few inspectors with stifling lamps of smoky kerosene await the passengers. There are no porters to arrange the baggage, and each lady and gentleman digs out his box, and opens it before the lordly inspector, who stirs up its contents with an unpleasant hand and passes it. He makes you feel that you are once more in the land of official insolence, and that, whatever you are collectively, you are nothing personally. Isabel, who had sent her husband upon this business with quaking meekness of heart, experienced the bold indignation of virtue at his account of the way people were made their own baggage-smashers, and would not be amused when he painted the vile terrors of each husband as he tremblingly unlocked his wife's store of contraband.

The morning light showed them the broad elmy meadows of western-looking Maine; and the Grand Trunk brought them, of course, an hour behind time into Portland. All breakfastless they hurried aboard the Boston train on the Eastern Road, and all along that line (which is built to show how uninteresting the earth can be when she is 'ennuyee' of both sea and land), Basil's life became a struggle to construct a meal from the fragmentary opportunities of twenty different stations where they stopped five minutes for refreshments. At one place he achieved two cups of shameless chickory, at another three sardines, at a third a dessert of elderly bananas.

"Home again, home again, from a foreign shore!"

they softly sang as the successive courses of this feast were disposed of.

The drouth and heat, which they had briefly escaped during their sojourn in Canada, brooded sovereign upon the tiresome landscape. The red granite rocks were as if red-hot; the banks of the deep cuts were like ash heaps; over the fields danced the sultry atmosphere; they fancied that they almost heard the grasshoppers sing above the rattle of the train. When they reached Boston at last, they were dustier than most of us would like to be a hundred years hence. The whole city was equally dusty; and they found the trees in the square before their own door gray with dust. The bit of Virginia-creeper planted under the window hung shriveled upon its trellis.

But Isabel's aunt met them with a refreshing shower of tears and kisses in the hall, throwing a solid arm about each of them. "O you dears!" the good soul cried, "you don't know how anxious I've been about you; so many accidents happening all the time. I've never read the 'Evening Transcript' till the next morning, for fear I should find your names among the killed and wounded."

"O aunty, you're too good, always!" whimpered Isabel; and neither of the women took note of Basil, who said, "Yes, it 's probably the only thing that preserved our lives."

The little tinge of discontent, which had colored their sentiment of return faded now in the kindly light of home. Their holiday was over, to be sure, but their bliss had but began; they had entered upon that long life of holidays which is happy marriage. By the time dinner was ended they were both enthusiastic at having got back, and taking their aunt between them walked up and down the parlor with their arms round her massive waist, and talked out the gladness of their souls.

Then Basil said he really must run down to the office that afternoon, and he issued all aglow upon the street. He was so full of having been long away and of having just returned, that he unconsciously tried to impart his mood to Boston, and the dusty composure of the street and houses, as he strode along, bewildered him. He longed for some familiar face to welcome him, and in the horse-car into which he stepped he was charmed to

see an acquaintance. This was a man for whom ordinarily he cared nothing, and whom he would perhaps rather have gone out upon the platform to avoid than have spoken to; but now he plunged at him with effusion, and wrung his hand, smiling from ear to ear.

The other remained coldly unaffected, after a first start of surprise at his cordiality, and then reviled the dust and heat. "But I'm going to take a little run down to Newport, to-morrow, for a week," he said. "By the way, you look as if you needed a little change. Aren't you going anywhere this summer?"

"So you see, my dear," observed Basil, when he had recounted the fact to Isabel at tea, "our travels are incommunicably our own. We had best say nothing about our little jaunt to other people, and they won't know we've been gone. Even if we tried, we couldn't make our wedding-journey theirs."

She gave him a great kiss of recompense and consolation. "Who wants it," she demanded, "to be Their Wedding Journey?"

NIAGARA REVISITED, TWELVE YEARS AFTER THEIR WEDDING JOURNEY.

Life had not used them ill in this time, and the fairish treatment they had received was not wholly unmerited. The twelve years past had made them older, as the years must in passing. Basil was now forty-two, and his moustache was well sprinkled with gray. Isabel was thirty-nine, and the parting of her hair had thinned and retreated; but she managed to give it an effect of youthful abundance by combing it low down upon her forehead, and roughing it there with a wet brush. By gaslight she was still very pretty; she believed that she looked more interesting, and she thought Basil's gray moustache distinguished. He had grown stouter; he filled his double-breasted frock coat compactly, and from time to time he had the buttons set forward; his hands were rounded up on the backs, and he no longer wore his old number of gloves by two sizes; no amount of powder or manipulation from the young lady in the shop would induce them to go on. But this did not matter much now, for he seldom wore gloves at all. He was glad that the fashion suffered him to spare in that direction, for he was obliged to look somewhat carefully after the out-goes. The insurance business was not what it had been, and though Basil had comfortably established himself in it, he had not made money. He sometimes thought that he might have done quite as well if he had gone into literature; but it was now too late. They had not a very large family: they had a boy of eleven, who took after his father, and a girl of nine, who took after the boy; but with the American feeling that their children must have the best of everything, they made it an expensive family, and they spent nearly all Basil earned.

The narrowness of their means, as well as their household cares, had kept

them from taking many long journeys. They passed their winters in Boston, and their summers on the South Shore, cheaper than the North Shore, and near enough for Basil to go up and down every day for business; but they promised themselves that some day they would revisit certain points on their wedding journey, and perhaps somewhere find their lost second-youth on the track. It was not that they cared to be young, but they wished the children to see them as they used to be when they thought themselves very old; and one lovely afternoon in June they started for Niagara.

It had been very hot for several days, but that morning the east wind came in, and crisped the air till it seemed to rustle like tinsel, and the sky was as sincerely and solidly blue as if it had been chromoed. They felt that they were really looking up into the roof of the world, when they glanced at it; but when an old gentleman hastily kissed a young woman, and commended her to the conductor as being one who was going all the way to San Francisco alone, and then risked his life by stepping off the moving train, the vastness of the great American fact began to affect Isabel disagreeably. "Is n't it too big, Basil?" she pleaded, peering timidly out of the little municipal consciousness in which she had been so long housed.--In that seclusion she had suffered certain original tendencies to increase upon her; her nerves were more sensitive and electrical; her apprehensions had multiplied quite beyond the ratio of the dangers that beset her; and Basil had counted upon a tonic effect of the change the journey would make in their daily lives. She looked ruefully out of the window at the familiar suburbs whisking out of sight, and the continental immensity that advanced devouringly upon her. But they had the best section in the very centre of the sleeping-car, --she drew what consolation she could from the fact,--and the children's premature demand for lunch helped her to forget her anxieties; they began to be hungry as soon as the train started. She found that she had not put up sandwiches enough; and when she told Basil that he would have to get out somewhere and buy some cold chicken, he asked her what in the world had become of that whole ham she had had boiled. It seemed to him, he said, that there was enough of it to subsist them to Niagara and back; and he went on as some men do, while Somerville vanished, and even Tufts College, which assails the Bostonian vision from every point of the compass, was shut out by the curve at the foot of the Belmont hills.

They had chosen the Hoosac Tunnel route to Niagara, because, as Basil said, their experience of travel had never yet included a very long tunnel, and it would be a signal fact by which the children would always remember the journey, if nothing else remarkable happened to impress it upon them. Indeed, they were so much concerned in it that they began to ask when they should come to this tunnel, even before they began to ask for lunch; and the long time before they reached it was not perceptibly shortened by Tom's quarter-hourly consultations of his father's watch.

It scarcely seemed to Basil and Isabel that their fellow-passengers were so interesting as their fellow passengers used to be in their former days of travel. They were soberly dressed, and were all of a middle-aged sobriety of deportment, from which nothing salient offered itself for conjecture or speculation; and there was little within the car to take

their minds from the brilliant young world that flashed and sang by them outside. The belated spring had ripened, with its frequent rains, into the perfection of early summer; the grass was thicker and the foliage denser than they had ever seen it before; and when they had run out into the hills beyond Fitchburg, they saw the laurel in bloom. It was everywhere in the woods, lurking like drifts among the underbrush, and overflowing the tops, and stealing down the hollows, of the railroad embankments; a snow of blossom flushed with a mist of pink. Its shy, wild beauty ceased whenever the train stopped, but the orioles made up for its absence with their singing in the village trees about the stations; and though Fitchburg and Ayer's Junction and Athol are not names that invoke historical or romantic associations, the hearts of Basil and Isabel began to stir with the joy of travel before they had passed these points. At the first Basil got out to buy the cold chicken which had been commanded, and he recognized in the keeper of the railroad restaurant their former conductor, who had been warned by the spirits never to travel without a flower of some sort carried between his lips, and who had preserved his own life and the lives of his passengers for many years by this simple device. His presence lent the sponge cake and rhubarb pie and baked beans a supernatural interest, and reconciled Basil to the toughness of the athletic bird which the mystical ex-partner of fate had sold him; he justly reflected that if he had heard the story of the restaurateur's superstition in a foreign land, or another time, he would have found in it a certain poetry. It was this willingness to find poetry in things around them that kept his life and Isabel's fresh, and they taught their children the secret of their elixir. To be sure, it was only a genre poetry, but it was such as has always inspired English art and song; and now the whole family enjoyed, as if it had been a passage from Goldsmith or Wordsworth, the flying sentiment of the railroad side. There was a simple interior at one place,--a small shanty, showing through the open door a cook stove surmounted by the evening coffee-pot, with a lazy cat outstretched upon the floor in the middle distance, and an old woman standing just outside the threshold to see the train go by,--which had an unrivaled value till they came to a superannuated car on a siding in the woods, in which the railroad workmen boarded--some were lounging on the platform and at the open windows, while others were "washing up" for supper, and the whole scene was full of holiday ease and sylvan comradery that went to the hearts of the sympathetic spectators. Basil had lately been reading aloud the delightful history of Rudder Grange, and the children, who had made their secret vows never to live in anything but an old canal-boat when they grew up, owned that there were fascinating possibilities in a worn-out railroad car.

The lovely Deerfield Valley began to open on either hand, with smooth stretches of the quiet river, and breadths of grassy intervale and tableland; the elms grouped themselves like the trees of a park; here and there the nearer hills broke away, and revealed long, deep, chasmed hollows, full of golden light and delicious shadow. There were people rowing on the water; and every pretty town had some touch of picturesqueness or pastoral charm to offer: at Greenfield, there were children playing in the new-mown hay along the railroad embankment; at Shelburne Falls, there was a game of cricket going on (among the English

operatives of the cutlery works, as Basil boldly asserted). They looked down from their car-window on a young lady swinging in a hammock, in her door-yard, and on an old gentleman hoeing his potatoes; a group of girls waved their handkerchiefs to the passing train, and a boy paused in weeding a garden-bed,--and probably denied that he had paused, later. In the mean time the golden haze along the mountain side changed to a clear, pearly lustre, and the quiet evening possessed the quiet landscape. They confessed to each other that it was all as sweet and beautiful as it used to be; and in fact they had seen palaces, in other days, which did not give them the pleasure they found in a woodcutter's shanty, losing itself among the shadows in a solitude of the hills. The tunnel, after this, was a gross and material sensation; but they joined the children in trying to hold and keep it, and Basil let the boy time it by his watch. "Now," said Tom, when five minutes were gone, "we are under the very centre of the mountain." But the tunnel was like all accomplished facts, all hopes fulfilled, valueless to the soul, and scarcely appreciable to the sense; and the children emerged at North Adams with but a mean opinion of that great feat of engineering. Basil drew a pretty moral from their experience. "If you rode upon a comet you would be disappointed. Take my advice, and never ride upon a comet. I shouldn't object to your riding on a little meteor,--you would n't expect much of that; but I warn you against comets; they are as bad as tunnels."

The children thought this moral was a joke at their expense, and as they were a little sleepy they permitted themselves the luxury of feeling trifled with. But they woke, refreshed and encouraged, from slumbers that had evidently been unbroken, though they both protested that they had not slept a wink the whole night, and gave themselves up to wonder at the interminable levels of Western New York over which the train was running. The longing to come to an edge, somewhere, that the New England traveler experiences on this plain, was inarticulate with the children; but it breathed in the sigh with which Isabel welcomed even the architectural inequalities of a city into which they drew in the early morning. This city showed to their weary eyes a noble stretch of river, from the waters of which lofty piles of buildings rose abruptly; and Isabel, being left to guess where they were, could think of no other place so picturesque as Rochester.

"Yes," said her husband; "it is our own Enchanted City. I wonder if that unstinted hospitality is still dispensed by the good head waiter at the hotel where we stopped, to bridal parties who have passed the ordeal of the haughty hotel clerk. I wonder what has become of that hotel clerk. Has he fallen, through pride, to some lower level, or has he bowed his arrogant spirit to the demands of advancing civilization, and realized that he is the servant, and not the master, of the public? I think I've noticed, since his time, a growing kindness in hotel clerks; or perhaps I have become of a more impressive presence; they certainly unbend to me a little more. I should like to go up to our hotel, and try myself on our old enemy, if he is still there. I can fancy how his shirt front has expanded in these twelve years past; he has grown a little bald, after the fashion of middle-aged hotel clerks, but he parts his hair very much on one side, and brushes it squarely across his forehead to hide his loss; the forefinger that he touches that little snapbell with, when he

doesn't look at you, must be very pudgy now. Come, let us get out and breakfast at, Rochester; they will give us broiled whitefish; and we can show the children where Sam Patch jumped over Genesee Falls, and--"

"No, no, Basil," cried his wife. "It would be sacrilege! All that is sacred to those dear young days of ours; and I wouldn't think of trying to repeat it. Our own ghosts would rise up in that dining-room to reproach us for our intrusion! Oh, perhaps we have done a wicked thing in coming this journey! We ought to have left the past alone; we shall only mar our memories of all these beautiful places. Do you suppose Buffalo can be as poetical as it was then? Buffalo! The name does n't invite the Muse very much. Perhaps it never was very poetical! Oh, Basil, dear, I'm afraid we have only come to find out that we were mistaken about everything! Let's leave Rochester alone, at any rate!"

I'm not troubled! We won't disturb our dream of Rochester; but I don't despair of Buffalo. I'm sure that Buffalo will be all that our fancy ever painted it. I believe in Buffalo."

"Well, well," murmured Isabel, "I hope you're right;" and she put some things together for leaving their car at Buffalo, while they were still two hours away.

When they reached a place where the land mated its level with the level of the lake, they ran into a wilderness of railroad cars, in a world where life seemed to be operated solely by locomotives and their helpless minions. The bellowing and bleating trains were arriving in every direction, not only along the ground floor of the plain, but stately stretches of trestle-work, which curved and extended across the plain, carried them to and fro overhead. The travelers owned that this railroad suburb had its own impressiveness, and they said that the trestle-work was as noble in effect as the lines of aqueduct that stalk across the Roman Campagna. Perhaps this was because they had not seen the Campagna or its aqueducts for a great while; but they were so glad to find themselves in the spirit of their former journey again that they were amiable to everything. When the children first caught sight of the lake's delicious blue, and cried out that it was lovelier than the sea, they felt quite a local pride in their preference. It was what Isabel had said twelve years before, on first beholding the lake.

But they did not really see the lake till they had taken the train for Niagara Falls, after breakfasting in the depot, where the children, used to the severe native or the patronizing Irish ministrations of Boston restaurants and hotels, reveled for the first time in the affectionate devotion of a black waiter. There was already a ridiculous abundance and variety on the table; but this waiter brought them strawberries and again strawberries, and repeated plates of griddle cakes with maple syrup; and he hung over the back of first one chair and then another with an unselfish joy in the appetites of the breakfasters which gave Basil renewed hopes of his race. "Such rapture in serving argues a largeness of nature which will be recognized hereafter," he said, feeling about in his waistcoat pocket for a quarter. It seemed a pity to render the waiter's zeal retroactively interested, but in view of the fact that he

possibly expected the quarter, there was nothing else to do; and by a mysterious stroke of gratitude the waiter delivered them into the hands of a friend, who took another quarter from them for carrying their bags and wraps to the train. This second retainer approved their admiration of the aesthetic forms and colors of the depot colonnade; and being asked if that were the depot whose roof had fallen in some years before, proudly replied that it was.

"There were a great many killed, were n't there?" asked Basil, with sympathetic satisfaction in the disaster. The porter seemed humiliated; he confessed the mortifying truth that the loss of life was small, but he recovered a just self-respect in adding, "If the roof had fallen in five minutes sooner, it would have killed about three hundred people."

Basil had promised the children a sight of the Rapids before they reached the Falls, and they held him rigidly accountable from the moment they entered the train, and began to run out of the city between the river and the canal. He attempted a diversion with the canal boats, and tried to bring forward the subject of Rudder Grange in that connection. They said that the canal boats were splendid, but they were looking for the Rapids now; and they declined to be interested in a window in one of the boats, which Basil said was just like the window that the Rudder Granger and the boarder had popped Pomona out of when they took her for a burglar.

"You spoil those children, Basil," said his wife, as they clambered over him, and clamored for the Rapids.

"At present I'm giving them an object-lesson in patience and self-denial; they are experiencing the fact that they can't have the Rapids till they get to them, and probably they'll be disappointed in them when they arrive."

In fact, they valued the Rapids very little more than the Hoosac Tunnel, when they came in sight of them, at last; and Basil had some question in his own mind whether the Rapids had not dwindled since his former visit. He did not breathe this doubt to Isabel, however, and she arrived at the Falls with unabated expectations. They were going to spend only half a day there; and they turned into the station, away from the phalanx of omnibuses, when they dismounted from their train. They seemed, as before, to be the only passengers who had arrived, and they found an abundant choice of carriages waiting in the street, outside the station. The Niagara hackman may once have been a predatory and very rampant animal, but public opinion, long expressed through the public prints, has reduced him to silence and meekness. Apparently, he may not so much as beckon with his whip to the arriving wayfarer; it is certain that he cannot cross the pavement to the station door; and Basil, inviting one of them to negotiation, was himself required by the attendant policeman to step out to the curbstone, and complete his transaction there. It was an impressive illustration of the power of a free press, but upon the whole Basil found the effect melancholy; it had the saddening quality which inheres in every sort of perfection. The hackman, reduced to entire order, appealed to his compassion, and he had not the heart to beat him down from his moderate first demand, as perhaps he ought to have done.

They drove directly to the cataract, and found themselves in the pretty grove beside the American Fall, and in the air whose dampness was as familiar as if they had breathed it all their childhood. It was full now of the fragrance of some sort of wild blossom; and again they had that old, entrancing sense of the mingled awfulness and loveliness of the great spectacle. This sylvan perfume, the gayety of the sunshine, the mildness of the breeze that stirred the leaves overhead, and the bird-singing that made itself heard amid the roar of the rapids and the solemn incessant plunge of the cataract, moved their hearts, and made them children with the boy and girl, who stood rapt for a moment and then broke into joyful wonder. They could sympathize with the ardor with which Tom longed to tempt fate at the brink of the river, and over the tops of the parapets which have been built along the edge of the precipice, and they equally entered into the terror with which Bella screamed at his suicidal zeal. They joined her in restraining him; they reduced him to a beggarly account of half a dozen stones, flung into the Rapids at not less than ten paces from the brink; and they would not let him toss the smallest pebble over the parapet, though he laughed to scorn the notion that anybody should be hurt by them below.

It seemed to them that the triviality of man in the surroundings of the Falls had increased with the lapse of time. There were more booths and bazaars, and more colored feather fans with whole birds spitted in the centres; and there was an offensive array of blue and green and yellow glasses on the shore, through which you were expected to look at the Falls gratis. They missed the simple dignity of the blanching Indian maids, who used to squat about on the grass, with their laps full of moccasins and pin-cushions. But, as of old, the photographer came out of his saloon, and invited them to pose for a family group; representing that the light and the spray were singularly propitious, and that everything in nature invited them to be taken. Basil put him off gently, for the sake of the time when he had refused to be photographed in a bridal group, and took refuge from him in the long low building from which you descend to the foot of the cataract.

The grove beside the American Fall has been inclosed, and named Prospect Park, by a company which exacts half a dollar for admittance, and then makes you free of all its wonders and conveniences, for which you once had to pay severally. This is well enough; but formerly you could refuse to go down the inclined tramway, and now you cannot, without feeling that you have failed to get your money's worth. It was in this illogical spirit of economy that Basil invited his family to the descent; but Isabel shook her head. "No, you go with the children," she said, "and I will stay, here, till you get back;" her agonized countenance added, "and pray for you;" and Basil took his children on either side of him, and rumbled down the, terrible descent with much of the excitement that attends travel in an open horse-car. When he stepped out of the car he felt that increase of courage which comes to every man after safely passing through danger. He resolved to brave the mists and slippery-stones at the foot of the Fall; and he would have plunged at once into this fresh peril, if he had not been prevented by the Prospect Park Company. This ingenious association has built a large tunnel-like shed quite to the water's edge, so that you cannot view the cataract as you

once could, at a reasonable remoteness, but must emerge from the building into a storm of spray. The roof of the tunnel is painted with a lively effect in party-colored stripes, and is lettered "The Shadow of the Rock," so that you take it at first to be an appeal to your aesthetic sense; but the real object of the company is not apparent till you put your head out into the tempest, when you agree with the nearest guide--and one is always very near--that you had better have an oil-skin dress, as Basil did. He told the guide that he did not wish to go under the Fall, and the guide confidentially admitted that there was no fun in that, any way; and in the mean time he equipped him and his children for their foray into the mist. When they issued forth, under their friend's leadership, Basil felt that, with his children clinging to each hand, he looked like some sort of animal with its young, and, though not unsocial by nature, he was glad to be among strangers for the time. They climbed hither and thither over the rocks, and lifted their streaming faces for the views which the guide pointed out; and in a rift of the spray they really caught one glorious glimpse of the whole sweep of the Fall. The next instant the spray swirled back, and they were glad to turn for a sight of the rainbow, lying in a circle on the rocks as quietly and naturally as if that had been the habit of rainbows ever since the flood. This was all there was to be done, and they streamed back into the tunnel, where they disrobed in the face of a menacing placard, which announced that the hire of a guide and a dress for going under the Fall was one dollar.

"Will they make you pay a dollar for each of us, papa?" asked Tom, fearfully.

"Oh, pooh, no!" returned Basil; "we have n't been under the Fall." But he sought out the proprietor with a trembling heart. The proprietor was a man of severely logical mind; he said that the charge would be three dollars, for they had had the use of the dresses and the guide just the same as if they had gone under the Fall; and he refused to recognize anything misleading in the dressing-room placard: In fine, he left Basil without a leg to stand upon. It was not so much the three dollars as the sense of having been swindled that vexed him; and he instantly resolved not to share his annoyance with Isabel. Why, indeed, should he put that burden upon her? If she were none the wiser, she would be none the poorer; and he ought to be willing to deny himself her sympathy for the sake of sparing her needless pain.

He met her at the top of the inclined tramway with a face of exemplary unconsciousness, and he listened with her to the tale their coachman told, as they sat in a pretty arbor looking out on the Rapids, of a Frenchman and his wife. This Frenchman had returned, one morning, from a stroll on Goat Island, and reported with much apparent concern that his wife had fallen into the water, and been carried over the Fall. It was so natural for a man to grieve for the loss of his wife, under the peculiar circumstances, that every one condoled with the widower; but when a few days later, her body was found, and the distracted husband refused to come back from New York to her funeral, there was a general regret that he had not been arrested. A flash of conviction illumed the whole fact to Basil's guilty consciousness: this unhappy Frenchman had

paid a dollar for the use of an oil-skin suit at the foot of the Fall, and had been ashamed to confess the swindle to his wife, till, in a moment of remorse and madness, he shouted the fact into her ear, and then Basil looked at the mother of his children, and registered a vow that if he got away from Niagara without being forced to a similar excess he would confess his guilt to Isabel at the very first act of spendthrift profusion she committed. The guide pointed out the rock in the Rapids to which Avery had clung for twenty-four hours before he was carried over the Falls, and to the morbid fancy of the deceitful husband Isabel's bonnet ribbons seemed to flutter from the pointed reef. He could endure the pretty arbor no longer. "Come, children!" he cried, with a wild, unnatural gayety; "let us go to Goat Island, and see the Bridge to the Three Sisters, that your mother was afraid to walk back on after she had crossed it."

"For shame, Basil!" retorted Isabel. "You know it was you who were afraid of that bridge."

The children, who knew the story by heart, laughed with their father at the monstrous pretension; and his simulated hilarity only increased upon paying a toll of two dollars at the Goat Island bridge.

"What extortion!" cried Isabel, with an indignation that secretly unnerved him. He trembled upon the verge of confession; but he had finally the moral force to resist. He suffered her to compute the cost of their stay at Niagara without allowing those three dollars to enter into her calculation; he even began to think what justificative extravagance he could tempt her to. He suggested the purchase of local bric-a-brac; he asked her if she would not like to dine at the International, for old times' sake. But she answered, with disheartening virtue, that they must not think of such a thing, after what they had spent already. Nothing, perhaps, marked the confirmed husband in Basil more than these hidden fears and reluctances.

In the mean time Isabel ignorantly abandoned herself to the charm of the place, which she found unimpaired, in spite of the reported ravages of improvement about Niagara. Goat Island was still the sylvan solitude of twelve years ago, haunted by even fewer nymphs and dryads than of old. The air was full of the perfume that scented it at Prospect Park; the leaves showered them with shade and sun, as they drove along. "If it were not for the children here," she said, "I should think that our first drive on Goat Island had never ended."

She sighed a little, and Basil leaned forward and took her hand in his. "It never has ended; it's the same drive; only we are younger now, and enjoy it more." It always touched him when Isabel was sentimental about the past, for the years had tended to make her rather more seriously maternal towards him than towards the other children; and he recognized that these fond reminiscences were the expression of the girlhood still lurking deep within her heart.

She shook her head. "No, but I'm willing the children should be young in our place. It's only fair they should have their turn."

She remained in the carriage, while Basil visited the various points of view on Luna Island with the boy and girl. A boy is probably of considerable interest to himself, and a man looks back at his own boyhood with some pathos. But in his actuality a boy has very little to commend him to the toleration of other human beings. Tom was very well, as boys go; but now his contribution to the common enjoyment was to venture as near as possible to all perilous edges; to throw stones into the water, and to make as if to throw them over precipices on the people below; to pepper his father with questions, and to collect cumbrous mementos of the vegetable and mineral kingdoms. He kept the carriage waiting a good five minutes, while he could cut his initials on a band-rail. "You can come back and see 'em on your bridal tower," said the driver. Isabel gave a little start, as if she had almost thought of something she was trying to think of.

They occasionally met ladies driving, and sometimes they encountered a couple making a tour of the island on foot. But none of these people were young, and Basil reported that the Three Sisters were inhabited only by persons of like maturity; even a group of people who were eating lunch to the music of the shouting Rapids, on the outer edge of the last Sister, were no younger, apparently.

Isabel did not get out of the carriage to verify his report; she preferred to refute his story of her former panic on those islands by remaining serenely seated while he visited them. She thus lost a superb novelty which nature has lately added to the wonders of this Fall, in that place at the edge of the great Horse Shoe where the rock has fallen and left a peculiarly shaped chasm: through this the spray leaps up from below, and flashes a hundred feet into the air, in rocket-like jets and points, and then breaks and dissolves away in the pyrotechnic curves of a perpetual Fourth of July. Basil said something like this in celebrating the display, with the purpose of rendering her loss more poignant; but she replied, with tranquil piety, that she would rather keep her Niagara unchanged; and she declared that, as she understood him, there must be something rather cheap and conscious in the new feature. She approved, however, of the change that had removed that foolish little Terrapin Tower from the brink on which it stood, and she confessed that she could have enjoyed a little variety in the stories the driver told them of the Indian burial-ground on the island: they were exactly the stories she and Basil had heard twelve years before, and the ill-starred goats, from which the island took its name, perished once more in his narrative.

Under the influence of his romances our travelers began to find the whole scene hackneyed; and they were glad to part from him a little sooner than they had bargained to do. They strolled about the anomalous village on foot, and once more marveled at the paucity of travel and the enormity of the local preparation. Surely the hotels are nowhere else in the world so large! Could there ever have been visitors enough at Niagara to fill them? They were built so big for some good reason, no doubt; but it is no more apparent than why all these magnificent equipages are waiting about the empty streets for the people who never come to hire them.

"It seems to me that I don't see so many strangers here as I used," Basil had suggested to their driver.

"Oh, they have n't commenced coming yet," he replied, with hardy cheerfulness, and pretended that they were plenty enough in July and August.

They went to dine at the modest restaurant of a colored man, who advertised a table d'hote dinner on a board at his door; and they put their misgivings to him, which seemed to grieve him, and he contended that Niagara was as prosperous and as much resorted to as ever. In fact, they observed that their regret for the supposed decline of the Falls as a summer resort was nowhere popular in the village, and they desisted in their offers of sympathy, after their rebuff from the restaurateur.

Basil got his family away to the station after dinner, and left them there, while he walked down the village street, for a closer inspection of the hotels. At the door of the largest a pair of children sported in the solitude, as fearlessly as the birds on Selkirk's island; looking into the hotel, he saw a few porters and call-boys seated in statuesque repose against the wall, while the clerk pined in dreamless inactivity behind the register; some deserted ladies flitted through the door of the parlor at the side. He recalled the evening of his former visit, when he and Isabel had met the Ellisons in that parlor, and it seemed, in the retrospect, a scene of the wildest gayety. He turned for consolation into the barber's shop, where he found himself the only customer, and no busy sound of "Next" greeted his ear. But the barber, like all the rest, said that Niagara was not unusually empty; and he came out feeling bewildered and defrauded. Surely the agent of the boats which descend the Rapids of the St. Lawrence must be frank, if Basil went to him and pretended that he was going to buy a ticket. But a glance at the agent's sign showed Basil that the agent, with his brave jollity of manner and his impressive "Good-morning," had passed away from the deceits of travel, and that he was now inherited by his widow, who in turn was absent, and temporarily represented by their son. The boy, in supplying Basil with an advertisement of the line, made a specious show of haste, as if there were a long queue of tourists waiting behind him to be served with tickets. Perhaps there was, indeed, a spectral line there, but Basil was the only tourist present in the flesh, and he shivered in his isolation, and fled with the advertisement in his hand. Isabel met him at the door of the station with a frightened face.

"Basil," she cried, "I have found out what the trouble is! Where are the brides?"

He took her outstretched hands in his, and passing one of them through his arm walked with her apart from the children, who were examining at the news-man's booth the moccasins and the birchbark bric-a-brac of the Irish aborigines, and the cups and vases of Niagara spar imported from Devonshire.

"My dear," he said, "there are no brides; everybody was married twelve

years ago, and the brides are middle-aged mothers of families now, and don't come to Niagara if they are wise."

"Yes," she desolately asserted, "that is so! Something has been hanging over me ever since we came, and suddenly I realized that it was the absence of the brides. But--but--down at the hotels--Didn't you see anything bridal there? When the omnibuses arrived, was there no burst of minstrelsy? Was there--"

She could not go on, but sank nervelessly into the nearest seat.

"Perhaps," said Basil, dreamily regarding the contest of Tom and Bella for a newly-purchased paper of sour cherries, and helplessly forecasting in his remoter mind the probable consequences, "there were both brides and minstrelsy at the hotel, if I had only had the eyes to see and the ears to hear. In this world, my dear, we are always of our own time, and we live amid contemporary things. I daresay there were middle-aged people at Niagara when we were here before, but we did not meet them, nor they us. I daresay that the place is now swarming with bridal couples, and it is because they are invisible and inaudible to us that it seems such a howling wilderness. But the hotel clerks and the restaurateurs and the hackmen know them, and that is the reason why they receive with surprise and even offense our sympathy for their loneliness. Do you suppose, Isabel, that if you were to lay your head on my shoulder, in a bridal manner, it would do anything to bring us en rapport with that lost bridal world again?"

Isabel caught away her hand. "Basil," she cried, "it would be disgusting! I wouldn't do it for the world--not even for that world. I saw one middle-aged couple on Goat Island, while you were down at the Cave of the Winds, or somewhere, with the children. They were sitting on some steps, he a step below her, and he seemed to want to put his head on her knee; but I gazed at him sternly, and he didn't dare. We should look like them, if we yielded to any outburst of affection. Don't you think we should look like them?"

"I don't know," said Basil. "You are certainly a little wrinkled, my dear."

"And you are very fat, Basil."

They glanced at each other with a flash of resentment, and then they both laughed. "We couldn't look young if we quarreled a week," he said. "We had better content ourselves with feeling young, as I hope we shall do if we live to be ninety. It will be the loss of others if they don't see our bloom upon us. Shall I get you a paper of cherries, Isabel? The children seem to be enjoying them."

Isabel sprang upon her offspring with a cry of despair. "Oh, what shall I do? Now we shall not have a wink of sleep with them to-night. Where is that nux?" She hunted for the medicine in her bag, and the children submitted; for they had eaten all the cherries, and they took their medicine without a murmur. "I wonder at your letting them eat the sour

things, Basil," said their mother, when the children had run off to the newsstand again.

"I wonder that you left me to see what they were doing," promptly retorted their father.

"It was your nonsense about the brides," said Isabel; "and I think this has been a lesson to us. Don't let them get anything else to eat, dearest."

"They are safe; they have no more money. They are frugally confining themselves to the admiration of the Japanese bows and arrows yonder. Why have our Indians taken to making Japanese bows and arrows?"

Isabel despised the small pleasantry. "Then you saw nobody at the hotel?" she asked.

"Not even the Ellisons," said Basil.

"Ah, yes," said Isabel; "that was where we met them. How long ago it seems! And poor little Kitty! I wonder what has become of them? But I'm glad they're not here. That's what makes you realize your age: meeting the same people in the same place a great while after, and seeing how old--they've grown. I don't think I could bear to see Kitty Ellison again. I'm glad she did n't come to visit us in Boston, though, after what happened, she could n't, poor thing! I wonder if she 's ever regretted her breaking with him in the way she did. It's a very painful thing to think of,--such an inconclusive conclusion; it always seemed as if they ought to meet again, somewhere."

"I don't believe she ever wished it."

"A man can't tell what a woman wishes."

"Well, neither can a woman," returned Basil, lightly.

His wife remained serious. "It was a very fine point,--a very little thing to reject a man for. I felt that when I first read her letter about it."

Basil yawned. "I don't believe I ever knew just what the point was."

"Oh yes, you did; but you forget everything. You know that they met two Boston ladies just after they were engaged, and she believed that he did n't introduce her because he was ashamed of her countrified appearance before them."

"It was a pretty fine point," said Basil, and he laughed provokingly.

"He might not have meant to ignore her," answered Isabel thoughtfully; "he might have chosen not to introduce her because he felt too proud of her to subject her to any possible misappreciation from them. You might have looked at it in that way."

"Why didn't you look at it in that way? You advised her against giving him another chance. Why did you?"

"Why?" repeated Isabel, absently. "Oh, a woman does n't judge a man by what he does, but by what he is! I knew that if she dismissed him it was because she never really had trusted or could trust his love; and I thought she had better not make another trial."

"Well, very possibly you were right. At any rate, you have the consolation of knowing that it's too late to help it now."

"Yes, it's too late," said Isabel; and her thoughts went back to her meeting with the young girl whom she had liked so much, and whose after history had interested her so painfully. It seemed to her a hard world that could come to nothing better than that for the girl whom she had seen in her first glimpse of it that night. Where was she now? What had become of her? If she had married that man, would she have been any happier? Marriage was not the poetic dream of perfect union that a girl imagines it; she herself had found that out. It was a state of trial, of probation; it was an ordeal, not an ecstasy. If she and Basil had broken each other's hearts and parted, would not the fragments of their lives have been on a much finer, much higher plane? Had not the commonplace, every-day experiences of marriage vulgarized them both? To be sure, there were the children; but if they had never had the children, she would never have missed them; and if Basil had, for example, died just before they were married--She started from this wicked reverie, and ran towards her husband, whose broad, honest back, with no visible neck or shirt-collar, was turned towards her, as he stood, with his head thrown up, studying a time-table on the wall; she passed her arm convulsively through his, and pulled him away.

"It's time to be getting our bags out to the train, Basil! Come, Bella! Tom, we're going!"

The children reluctantly turned from the newsman's trumpety, and they all went out to the track, and took seats on the benches under the colonnade. While they waited; the train for Buffalo drew in, and they remained watching it till it started. In the last car that passed them, when it was fairly under way, a face looked full at Isabel from one of the windows. In that moment of astonishment she forgot to observe whether it was sad or glad; she only saw, or believed she saw, the light of recognition dawn into its eyes, and then it was gone.

"Basil!" she cried, "stop the train! That was Kitty Ellison!"

"Oh no, it wasn't," said Basil, easily. "It looked like her; but it looked at least ten years older."

"Why, of course it was! We're all ten years older," returned his wife in such indignation at his stupidity that she neglected to insist upon his stopping the train, which was rapidly diminishing in the perspective.

He declared it was only a fancied resemblance; she contended that this was in the neighborhood of Eriecreek, and it must be Kitty; and thus one of their most inveterate disagreements began.

Their own train drew into the depot, and they disputed upon the fact in question till they entered on the passage of the Suspension Bridge. Then Basil rose and called the children to his side. On the left hand, far up the river, the great Fall shows, with its mists at its foot and its rainbow on its brow, as silent and still as if it were vastly painted there; and below the bridge on the right, leap the Rapids in the narrow gorge, like seas on a rocky shore. "Look on both sides, now," he said to the children. "Isabel you must see this!"

Isabel had been preparing for the passage of this bridge ever since she left Boston. "Never!" she exclaimed. She instantly closed her eyes, and hid her face in her handkerchief. Thanks to this precaution of hers, the train crossed the bridge in perfect safety.

ETEXT EDITORS BOOKMARKS:

All luckiest or the unluckiest, the healthiest or the sickest
All the loveliness that exists outside of you, dearest is little
Amusing world, if you do not refuse to be amused
At heart every man is a smuggler
Beautiful with the radiance of loving and being loved
Bewildering labyrinth of error
Biggest place is always the kindest as well as the cruelest
Brown-stone fronts
Civilly protested and consented
Coldly and inaccessibly vigilant
Collective silence which passes for sociality
Deadly summer day
Dinner unites the idea of pleasure and duty
Dog that had plainly made up his mind to go mad
Evil which will not let a man forgive his victim
Feeblest-minded are sure to lead the talk
Feeling of contempt for his unambitious destination
Feeling rather ashamed,--for he had laughed too
Glad; which considering, they ceased to be
Guilty rapture of a deliberate dereliction
Happiness built upon and hedged about with misery
Happiness is so unreasonable
Headache darkens the universe while it lasts
Heart that forgives but does not forget
Helplessness accounts for many heroic facts in the world
Helplessness begets a sense of irresponsibility
I supposed I had the pleasure of my wife's acquaintance
I want to be sorry upon the easiest possible terms
I'm not afraid--I'm awfully demoralized
Indulge safely in the pleasures of autobiography

It 's the same as a promise, your not saying you wouldn't
It had come as all such calamities come, from nothing
Jesting mood in the face of all embarrassments
Long life of holidays which is happy marriage
Married the whole mystifying world of womankind
Muddy draught which impudently affected to be coffee
Never could have an emotion without desiring to analyze it
Nothing so apt to end in mutual dislike,--except gratitude
Nothing so sad to her as a bride, unless it's a young mother
Oblivion of sleep
Only so much clothing as the law compelled
Parkman
Patronizing spirit of travellers in a foreign country
Rejoice in everything that I haven't done
Seemed the last phase of a world presently to be destroyed
Self-sufficiency, without its vulgarity
So hard to give up doing anything we have meant to do
So old a world and groping still
The knowledge of your helplessness in any circumstances
There is little proportion about either pain or pleasure
They can only do harm by an expression of sympathy
Tragical character of heat
Used to having his decisions reached without his knowledge
Vexed by a sense of his own pitifulness
Voice of the common imbecility and incoherence
Weariness of buying
Willingness to find poetry in things around them

End of this Project Gutenberg Etext of Their Wedding Journey,
by William Dean Howells

A HAZARD OF NEW FORTUNES

By William Dean Howells

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL

The following story was the first fruit of my New York life when I began to live it after my quarter of a century in Cambridge and Boston, ending in 1889; and I used my own transition to the commercial metropolis in framing the experience which was wholly that of my supposititious literary adventurer. He was a character whom, with his wife, I have employed in some six or eight other stories, and whom I made as much the

hero and heroine of 'Their Wedding Journey' as the slight fable would bear. In venturing out of my adoptive New England, where I had found myself at home with many imaginary friends, I found it natural to ask the company of these familiar acquaintances, but their company was not to be had at once for the asking. When I began speaking of them as Basil and Isabel, in the fashion of 'Their Wedding Journey,' they would not respond with the effect of early middle age which I desired in them. They remained wilfully, not to say woodenly, the young bridal pair of that romance, without the promise of novel functioning. It was not till I tried addressing them as March and Mrs. March that they stirred under my hand with fresh impulse, and set about the work assigned them as people in something more than their second youth.

The scene into which I had invited them to figure filled the largest canvas I had yet allowed myself; and, though 'A Hazard of New Fortunes' was not the first story I had written with the printer at my heels, it was the first which took its own time to prescribe its own dimensions. I had the general design well in mind when I began to write it, but as it advanced it compelled into its course incidents, interests, individualities, which I had not known lay near, and it specialized and amplified at points which I had not always meant to touch, though I should not like to intimate anything mystical in the fact. It became, to my thinking, the most vital of my fictions, through my quickened interest in the life about me, at a moment of great psychological import. We had passed through a period of strong emotioning in the direction of the humaner economics, if I may phrase it so; the rich seemed not so much to despise the poor, the poor did not so hopelessly repine. The solution of the riddle of the painful earth through the dreams of Henry George, through the dreams of Edward Bellamy, through the dreams of all the generous visionaries of the past, seemed not impossibly far off. That shedding of blood which is for the remission of sins had been symbolized by the bombs and scaffolds of Chicago, and the hearts of those who felt the wrongs bound up with our rights, the slavery implicated in our liberty, were thrilling with griefs and hopes hitherto strange to the average American breast. Opportunely for me there was a great street-car strike in New York, and the story began to find its way to issues nobler and larger than those of the love-affairs common to fiction. I was in my fifty-second year when I took it up, and in the prime, such as it was, of my powers. The scene which I had chosen appealed prodigiously to me, and the action passed as nearly without my conscious agency as I ever allow myself to think such things happen.

The opening chapters were written in a fine, old fashioned apartment house which had once been a family house, and in an uppermost room of which I could look from my work across the trees of the little park in Stuyvesant Square to the towers of St. George's Church. Then later in the spring of 1889 the unfinished novel was carried to a country house on the Belmont border of Cambridge. There I must have written very rapidly to have pressed it to conclusion before the summer ended. It came, indeed, so easily from the pen that I had the misgiving which I always have of things which do not cost me great trouble.

There is nothing in the book with which I amused myself more than the

house-hunting of the Marches when they were placing themselves in New York; and if the contemporary reader should turn for instruction to the pages in which their experience is detailed I assure him that he may trust their fidelity and accuracy in the article of New York housing as it was early in the last decade of the last century: I mean, the housing of people of such moderate means as the Marches. In my zeal for truth I did not distinguish between reality and actuality in this or other matters--that is, one was as precious to me as the other. But the types here portrayed are as true as ever they were, though the world in which they were finding their habitat is wonderfully, almost incredibly different. Yet it is not wholly different, for a young literary pair now adventuring in New York might easily parallel the experience of the Marches with their own, if not for so little money; many phases of New York housing are better, but all are dearer. Other aspects of the material city have undergone a transformation much more wonderful. I find that in my book its population is once modestly spoken of as two millions, but now in twenty years it is twice as great, and the grandeur as well as grandiosity of its forms is doubly apparent. The transitional public that then moped about in mildly tinkling horse-cars is now hurried back and forth in clanging trolleys, in honking and whirring motors; the Elevated road which was the last word of speed is undermined by the Subway, shooting its swift shuttles through the subterranean woof of the city's haste. From these feet let the witness infer our whole massive Hercules, a bulk that sprawls and stretches beyond the rivers through the tunnels piercing their beds and that towers into the skies with innumerable tops--a Hercules blent of Briareus and Cerberus, but not so bad a monster as it seemed then to threaten becoming.

Certain hopes of truer and better conditions on which my heart was fixed twenty years ago are not less dear, and they are by no means touched with despair, though they have not yet found the fulfilment which I would then have prophesied for them. Events have not wholly played them false; events have not halted, though they have marched with a slowness that might affect a younger observer as marking time. They who were then mindful of the poor have not forgotten them, and what is better the poor have not often forgotten themselves in violences such as offered me the material of tragedy and pathos in my story. In my quality of artist I could not regret these, and I gratefully realize that they offered me the opportunity of a more strenuous action, a more impressive catastrophe than I could have achieved without them. They tended to give the whole fable dignity and doubtless made for its success as a book. As a serial it had crept a sluggish course before a public apparently so unmindful of it that no rumor of its acceptance or rejection reached the writer during the half year of its publication; but it rose in book form from that failure and stood upon its feet and went its way to greater favor than any book of his had yet enjoyed. I hope that my recognition of the fact will not seem like boasting, but that the reader will regard it as a special confidence from the author and will let it go no farther.

KITTERY POINT, MAINE, July, 1909.

PART FIRST

A HAZARD OF NEW FORTUNES

I.

"Now, you think this thing over, March, and let me know the last of next week," said Fulkerson. He got up from the chair which he had been sitting astride, with his face to its back, and tilting toward March on its hind-legs, and came and rapped upon his table with his thin bamboo stick. "What you want to do is to get out of the insurance business, anyway. You acknowledge that yourself. You never liked it, and now it makes you sick; in other words, it's killing you. You ain't an insurance man by nature. You're a natural-born literary man, and you've been going against the grain. Now, I offer you a chance to go with the grain. I don't say you're going to make your everlasting fortune, but I'll give you a living salary, and if the thing succeeds you'll share in its success. We'll all share in its success. That's the beauty of it. I tell you, March, this is the greatest idea that has been struck since"--Fulkerson stopped and searched his mind for a fit image--"since the creation of man."

He put his leg up over the corner of March's table and gave himself a sharp cut on the thigh, and leaned forward to get the full effect of his words upon his listener.

March had his hands clasped together behind his head, and he took one of them down long enough to put his inkstand and mucilage-bottle out of Fulkerson's way. After many years' experiment of a mustache and whiskers, he now wore his grizzled beard full, but cropped close; it gave him a certain grimness, corrected by the gentleness of his eyes.

"Some people don't think much of the creation of man nowadays. Why stop at that? Why not say since the morning stars sang together?"

"No, sir; no, sir! I don't want to claim too much, and I draw the line at the creation of man. I'm satisfied with that. But if you want to ring the morning stars into the prospectus all right; I won't go back on you."

"But I don't understand why you've set your mind on me," March said. "I haven't had, any magazine experience, you know that; and I haven't seriously attempted to do anything in literature since I was married. I gave up smoking and the Muse together. I suppose I could still manage a cigar, but I don't believe I could--"

"Muse worth a cent." Fulkerson took the thought out of his mouth and put it into his own words. "I know. Well, I don't want you to. I don't care if you never write a line for the thing, though you needn't reject anything of yours, if it happens to be good, on that account. And I don't want much experience in my editor; rather not have it. You told

me, didn't you, that you used to do some newspaper work before you settled down?"

"Yes; I thought my lines were permanently cast in those places once. It was more an accident than anything else that I got into the insurance business. I suppose I secretly hoped that if I made my living by something utterly different, I could come more freshly to literature proper in my leisure."

"I see; and you found the insurance business too many, for you. Well, anyway, you've always had a hankering for the inkpots; and the fact that you first gave me the idea of this thing shows that you've done more or less thinking about magazines."

"Yes--less."

"Well, all right. Now don't you be troubled. I know what I want, generally, speaking, and in this particular instance I want you. I might get a man of more experience, but I should probably get a man of more prejudice and self-conceit along with him, and a man with a following of the literary hangers-on that are sure to get round an editor sooner or later. I want to start fair, and I've found out in the syndicate business all the men that are worth having. But they know me, and they don't know you, and that's where we shall have the pull on them. They won't be able to work the thing. Don't you be anxious about the experience. I've got experience enough of my own to run a dozen editors. What I want is an editor who has taste, and you've got it; and conscience, and you've got it; and horse sense, and you've got that. And I like you because you're a Western man, and I'm another. I do cotton to a Western man when I find him off East here, holding his own with the best of 'em, and showing 'em that he's just as much civilized as they are. We both know what it is to have our bright home in the setting sun; heigh?"

"I think we Western men who've come East are apt to take ourselves a little too objectively and to feel ourselves rather more representative than we need," March remarked.

Fulkerson was delighted. "You've hit it! We do! We are!"

"And as for holding my own, I'm not very proud of what I've done in that way; it's been very little to hold. But I know what you mean, Fulkerson, and I've felt the same thing myself; it warmed me toward you when we first met. I can't help suffusing a little to any man when I hear that he was born on the other side of the Alleghanies. It's perfectly stupid. I despise the same thing when I see it in Boston people."

Fulkerson pulled first one of his blond whiskers and then the other, and twisted the end of each into a point, which he left to untwine itself. He fixed March with his little eyes, which had a curious innocence in their cunning, and tapped the desk immediately in front of him. "What I like about you is that you're broad in your sympathies. The first time I saw you, that night on the Quebec boat, I said to myself: 'There's a man

I want to know. There's a human being.' I was a little afraid of Mrs. March and the children, but I felt at home with you--thoroughly domesticated--before I passed a word with you; and when you spoke first, and opened up with a joke over that fellow's tableful of light literature and Indian moccasins and birch-bark toy canoes and stereoscopic views, I knew that we were brothers-spiritual twins. I recognized the Western style of fun, and I thought, when you said you were from Boston, that it was some of the same. But I see now that its being a cold fact, as far as the last fifteen or twenty years count, is just so much gain. You know both sections, and you can make this thing go, from ocean to ocean."

"We might ring that into the prospectus, too," March suggested, with a smile. "You might call the thing 'From Sea to Sea.' By-the-way, what are you going to call it?"

"I haven't decided yet; that's one of the things I wanted to talk with you about. I had thought of 'The Syndicate'; but it sounds kind of dry, and doesn't seem to cover the ground exactly. I should like something that would express the co-operative character of the thing, but I don't know as I can get it."

"Might call it 'The Mutual'."

"They'd think it was an insurance paper. No, that won't do. But Mutual comes pretty near the idea. If we could get something like that, it would pique curiosity; and then if we could get paragraphs afloat explaining that the contributors were to be paid according to the sales, it would be a first-rate ad."

He bent a wide, anxious, inquiring smile upon March, who suggested, lazily: "You might call it 'The Round-Robin'. That would express the central idea of irresponsibility. As I understand, everybody is to share the profits and be exempt from the losses. Or, if I'm wrong, and the reverse is true, you might call it 'The Army of Martyrs'. Come, that sounds attractive, Fulkerson! Or what do you think of 'The Fifth Wheel'? That would forestall the criticism that there are too many literary periodicals already. Or, if you want to put forward the idea of complete independence, you could call it 'The Free Lance'; or--"

"Or 'The Hog on Ice'--either stand up or fall down, you know," Fulkerson broke in coarsely. "But we'll leave the name of the magazine till we get the editor. I see the poison's beginning to work in you, March; and if I had time I'd leave the result to time. But I haven't. I've got to know inside of the next week. To come down to business with you, March, I sha'n't start this thing unless I can get you to take hold of it."

He seemed to expect some acknowledgment, and March said, "Well, that's very nice of you, Fulkerson."

"No, sir; no, sir! I've always liked you and wanted you ever since we met that first night. I had this thing inchoately in my mind then, when I was telling you about the newspaper syndicate business--beautiful vision of a lot of literary fellows breaking loose from the bondage of

publishers and playing it alone--"

"You might call it 'The Lone Hand'; that would be attractive," March interrupted. "The whole West would know what you meant."

Fulkerson was talking seriously, and March was listening seriously; but they both broke off and laughed. Fulkerson got down off the table and made some turns about the room. It was growing late; the October sun had left the top of the tall windows; it was still clear day, but it would soon be twilight; they had been talking a long time. Fulkerson came and stood with his little feet wide apart, and bent his little lean, square face on March. "See here! How much do you get out of this thing here, anyway?"

"The insurance business?" March hesitated a moment and then said, with a certain effort of reserve, "At present about three thousand." He looked up at Fulkerson with a glance, as if he had a mind to enlarge upon the fact, and then dropped his eyes without saying more.

Whether Fulkerson had not thought it so much or not, he said: "Well, I'll give you thirty-five hundred. Come! And your chances in the success."

"We won't count the chances in the success. And I don't believe thirty-five hundred would go any further in New York than three thousand in Boston."

"But you don't live on three thousand here?"

"No; my wife has a little property."

"Well, she won't lose the income if you go to New York. I suppose you pay ten or twelve hundred a year for your house here. You can get plenty of flats in New York for the same money; and I understand you can get all sorts of provisions for less than you pay now--three or four cents on the pound. Come!"

This was by no means the first talk they had had about the matter; every three or four months during the past two years the syndicate man had dropped in upon March to air the scheme and to get his impressions of it. This had happened so often that it had come to be a sort of joke between them. But now Fulkerson clearly meant business, and March had a struggle to maintain himself in a firm poise of refusal.

"I dare say it wouldn't--or it needn't--cost so very much more, but I don't want to go to New York; or my wife doesn't. It's the same thing."

"A good deal samer," Fulkerson admitted.

March did not quite like his candor, and he went on with dignity.

"It's very natural she shouldn't. She has always lived in Boston; she's attached to the place. Now, if you were going to start 'The Fifth Wheel' in Boston--"

Fulkerson slowly and sadly shook his head, but decidedly. "Wouldn't do. You might as well say St. Louis or Cincinnati. There's only one city that belongs to the whole country, and that's New York."

"Yes, I know," sighed March; "and Boston belongs to the Bostonians, but they like you to make yourself at home while you're visiting."

"If you'll agree to make phrases like that, right along, and get them into 'The Round-Robin' somehow, I'll say four thousand," said Fulkerson. "You think it over now, March. You talk it over with Mrs. March; I know you will, anyway; and I might as well make a virtue of advising you to do it. Tell her I advised you to do it, and you let me know before next Saturday what you've decided."

March shut down the rolling top of his desk in the corner of the room, and walked Fulkerson out before him. It was so late that the last of the chore-women who washed down the marble halls and stairs of the great building had wrung out her floor-cloth and departed, leaving spotless stone and a clean, damp smell in the darkening corridors behind her.

"Couldn't offer you such swell quarters in New York, March," Fulkerson said, as he went tack-tacking down the steps with his small boot-heels. "But I've got my eye on a little house round in West Eleventh Street that I'm going to fit up for my bachelor's hall in the third story, and adapt for 'The Lone Hand' in the first and second, if this thing goes through; and I guess we'll be pretty comfortable. It's right on the Sand Strip --no malaria of any kind."

"I don't know that I'm going to share its salubrity with you yet," March sighed, in an obvious travail which gave Fulkerson hopes.

"Oh yes, you are," he coaxed. "Now, you talk it over with your wife. You give her a fair, unprejudiced chance at the thing on its merits, and I'm very much mistaken in Mrs. March if she doesn't tell you to go in and win. We're bound to win!"

They stood on the outside steps of the vast edifice beetling like a granite crag above them, with the stone groups of an allegory of life-insurance foreshortened in the bas-relief overhead. March absently lifted his eyes to it. It was suddenly strange after so many years' familiarity, and so was the well-known street in its Saturday-evening solitude. He asked himself, with prophetic homesickness, if it were an omen of what was to be. But he only said, musingly: "A fortnightly. You know that didn't work in England. The fortnightly is published once a month now."

"It works in France," Fulkerson retorted. "The 'Revue des Deux Mondes' is still published twice a month. I guess we can make it work in America--with illustrations."

"Going to have illustrations?"

"My dear boy! What are you giving me? Do I look like the sort of lunatic

who would start a thing in the twilight of the nineteenth century without illustrations? Come off!"

"Ah, that complicates it! I don't know anything about art." March's look of discouragement confessed the hold the scheme had taken upon him.

"I don't want you to!" Fulkerson retorted. "Don't you suppose I shall have an art man?"

"And will they--the artists--work at a reduced rate, too, like the writers, with the hopes of a share in the success?"

"Of course they will! And if I want any particular man, for a card, I'll pay him big money besides. But I can get plenty of first-rate sketches on my own terms. You'll see! They'll pour in!"

"Look here, Fulkerson," said March, "you'd better call this fortnightly of yours 'The Madness of the Half-Moon'; or 'Bedlam Broke Loose' wouldn't be bad! Why do you throw away all your hard earnings on such a crazy venture? Don't do it!" The kindness which March had always felt, in spite of his wife's first misgivings and reservations, for the merry, hopeful, slangy, energetic little creature trembled in his voice. They had both formed a friendship for Fulkerson during the week they were together in Quebec. When he was not working the newspapers there, he went about with them over the familiar ground they were showing their children, and was simply grateful for the chance, as well as very entertaining about it all. The children liked him, too; when they got the clew to his intention, and found that he was not quite serious in many of the things he said, they thought he was great fun. They were always glad when their father brought him home on the occasion of Fulkerson's visits to Boston; and Mrs. March, though of a chancier hospitality, welcomed Fulkerson with a grateful sense of his admiration for her husband. He had a way of treating March with deference, as an older and abler man, and of qualifying the freedom he used toward every one with an implication that March tolerated it voluntarily, which she thought very sweet and even refined.

"Ah, now you're talking like a man and a brother," said Fulkerson. "Why, March, old man, do you suppose I'd come on here and try to talk you into this thing if I wasn't morally, if I wasn't perfectly, sure of success? There isn't any if or and about it. I know my ground, every inch; and I don't stand alone on it," he added, with a significance which did not escape March. "When you've made up your mind I can give you the proof; but I'm not at liberty now to say anything more. I tell you it's going to be a triumphal march from the word go, with coffee and lemonade for the procession along the whole line. All you've got to do is to fall in." He stretched out his hand to March. "You let me know as soon as you can."

March deferred taking his hand till he could ask, "Where are you going?"

"Parker House. Take the eleven for New York to-night."

"I thought I might walk your way." March looked at his watch. "But I shouldn't have time. Goodbye!"

He now let Fulkerson have his hand, and they exchanged a cordial pressure. Fulkerson started away at a quick, light pace. Half a block off he stopped, turned round, and, seeing March still standing where he had left him, he called back, joyously, "I've got the name!"

"What?"

"Every Other Week."

"It isn't bad."

"Ta-ta!"

II.

All the way up to the South End March mentally prolonged his talk with Fulkerson, and at his door in Nankeen Square he closed the parley with a plump refusal to go to New York on any terms. His daughter Bella was lying in wait for him in the hall, and she threw her arms round his neck with the exuberance of her fourteen years and with something of the histrionic intention of her sex. He pressed on, with her clinging about him, to the library, and, in the glow of his decision against Fulkerson, kissed his wife, where she sat by the study lamp reading the Transcript through her first pair of eye-glasses: it was agreed in the family that she looked distinguished in them, or, at any rate, cultivated. She took them off to give him a glance of question, and their son Tom looked up from his book for a moment; he was in his last year at the high school, and was preparing for Harvard.

"I didn't get away from the office till half-past five," March explained to his wife's glance, "and then I walked. I suppose dinner's waiting. I'm sorry, but I won't do it any more."

At table he tried to be gay with Bella, who babbled at him with a voluble pertness which her brother had often advised her parents to check in her, unless they wanted her to be universally despised.

"Papa!" she shouted at last, "you're not listening!" As soon as possible his wife told the children they might be excused. Then she asked, "What is it, Basil?"

"What is what?" he retorted, with a specious brightness that did not avail.

"What is on your mind?"

"How do you know there's anything?"

"Your kissing me so when you came in, for one thing."

"Don't I always kiss you when I come in?"

"Not now. I suppose it isn't necessary any more. 'Cela va sans baisser.'"

"Yes, I guess it's so; we get along without the symbolism now."

He stopped, but she knew that he had not finished.

"Is it about your business? Have they done anything more?"

"No; I'm still in the dark. I don't know whether they mean to supplant me, or whether they ever did. But I wasn't thinking about that.

Fulkerson has been to see me again."

"Fulkerson?" She brightened at the name, and March smiled, too.

"Why didn't you bring him to dinner?"

"I wanted to talk with you. Then you do like him?"

"What has that got to do with it, Basil?"

"Nothing! nothing! That is, he was boring away about that scheme of his again. He's got it into definite shape at last."

"What shape?"

March outlined it for her, and his wife seized its main features with the intuitive sense of affairs which makes women such good business-men when they will let it.

"It sounds perfectly crazy," she said, finally. "But it mayn't be. The only thing I didn't like about Mr. Fulkerson was his always wanting to chance things. But what have you got to do with it?"

"What have I got to do with it?" March toyed with the delay the question gave him; then he said, with a sort of deprecatory laugh: "It seems that Fulkerson has had his eye on me ever since we met that night on the Quebec boat. I opened up pretty freely to him, as you do to a man you never expect to see again, and when I found he was in that newspaper syndicate business I told him about my early literary ambitions--"

"You can't say that I ever discouraged them, Basil," his wife put in.

"I should have been willing, any time, to give up everything for them."

"Well, he says that I first suggested this brilliant idea to him.

Perhaps I did; I don't remember. When he told me about his supplying literature to newspapers for simultaneous publication, he says I asked:

'Why not apply the principle of co-operation to a magazine, and run it in the interest of the contributors?' and that set him to thinking, and he thought out his plan of a periodical which should pay authors and artists a low price outright for their work and give them a chance of the profits

in the way of a percentage. After all, it isn't so very different from the chances an author takes when he publishes a book. And Fulkerson thinks that the novelty of the thing would pique public curiosity, if it didn't arouse public sympathy. And the long and short of it is, Isabel, that he wants me to help edit it."

"To edit it?" His wife caught her breath, and she took a little time to realize the fact, while she stared hard at her husband to make sure he was not joking.

"Yes. He says he owes it all to me; that I invented the idea--the germ --the microbe."

His wife had now realized the fact, at least in a degree that excluded trifling with it. "That is very honorable of Mr. Fulkerson; and if he owes it to you, it was the least he could do." Having recognized her husband's claim to the honor done him, she began to kindle with a sense of the honor itself and the value of the opportunity. "It's a very high compliment to you, Basil--a very high compliment. And you could give up this wretched insurance business that you've always hated so, and that's making you so unhappy now that you think they're going to take it from you. Give it up and take Mr. Fulkerson's offer! It's a perfect interposition, coming just at this time! Why, do it! Mercy!" she suddenly arrested herself, "he wouldn't expect you to get along on the possible profits?" Her face expressed the awfulness of the notion.

March smiled reassuringly, and waited to give himself the pleasure of the sensation he meant to give her. "If I'll make striking phrases for it and edit it, too, he'll give me four thousand dollars."

He leaned back in his chair, and stuck his hands deep into his pockets, and watched his wife's face, luminous with the emotions that flashed through her mind--doubt, joy, anxiety.

"Basil! You don't mean it! Why, take it! Take it instantly! Oh, what a thing to happen! Oh, what luck! But you deserve it, if you first suggested it. What an escape, what a triumph over all those hateful insurance people! Oh, Basil, I'm afraid he'll change his mind! You ought to have accepted on the spot. You might have known I would approve, and you could so easily have taken it back if I didn't. Telegraph him now! Run right out with the despatch--Or we can send Tom!"

In these imperatives of Mrs. March's there was always much of the conditional. She meant that he should do what she said, if it were entirely right; and she never meant to be considered as having urged him.

"And suppose his enterprise went wrong?" her husband suggested.

"It won't go wrong. Hasn't he made a success of his syndicate?"

"He says so--yes."

"Very well, then, it stands to reason that he'll succeed in this, too."

He wouldn't undertake it if he didn't know it would succeed; he must have capital."

"It will take a great deal to get such a thing going; and even if he's got an Angel behind him--"

She caught at the word--"An Angel?"

"It's what the theatrical people call a financial backer. He dropped a hint of something of that kind."

"Of course, he's got an Angel," said his wife, promptly adopting the word. "And even if he hadn't, still, Basil, I should be willing to have you risk it. The risk isn't so great, is it? We shouldn't be ruined if it failed altogether. With our stocks we have two thousand a year, anyway, and we could pinch through on that till you got into some other business afterward, especially if we'd saved something out of your salary while it lasted. Basil, I want you to try it! I know it will give you a new lease of life to have a congenial occupation." March laughed, but his wife persisted. "I'm all for your trying it, Basil; indeed I am. If it's an experiment, you can give it up."

"It can give me up, too."

"Oh, nonsense! I guess there's not much fear of that. Now, I want you to telegraph Mr. Fulkerson, so that he'll find the despatch waiting for him when he gets to New York. I'll take the whole responsibility, Basil, and I'll risk all the consequences."

III.

March's face had sobered more and more as she followed one hopeful burst with another, and now it expressed a positive pain. But he forced a smile and said: "There's a little condition attached. Where did you suppose it was to be published?"

"Why, in Boston, of course. Where else should it be published?"

She looked at him for the intention of his question so searchingly that he quite gave up the attempt to be gay about it. "No," he said, gravely, "it's to be published in New York."

She fell back in her chair. "In New York?" She leaned forward over the table toward him, as if to make sure that she heard aright, and said, with all the keen reproach that he could have expected: "In New York, Basil! Oh, how could you have let me go on?"

He had a sufficiently rueful face in owning: "I oughtn't to have done it, but I got started wrong. I couldn't help putting the best foot, forward at first--or as long as the whole thing was in the air. I didn't know

that you would take so much to the general enterprise, or else I should have mentioned the New York condition at once; but, of course, that puts an end to it."

"Oh, of course," she assented, sadly. "We COULDN'T go to New York."

"No, I know that," he said; and with this a perverse desire to tempt her to the impossibility awoke in him, though he was really quite cold about the affair himself now. "Fulkerson thought we could get a nice flat in New York for about what the interest and taxes came to here, and provisions are cheaper. But I should rather not experiment at my time of life. If I could have been caught younger, I might have been inured to New York, but I don't believe I could stand it now."

"How I hate to have you talk that way, Basil! You are young enough to try anything--anywhere; but you know I don't like New York. I don't approve of it. It's so big, and so hideous! Of course I shouldn't mind that; but I've always lived in Boston, and the children were born and have all their friendships and associations here." She added, with the helplessness that discredited her good sense and did her injustice, "I have just got them both into the Friday afternoon class at Papanti's, and you know how difficult that is."

March could not fail to take advantage of an occasion like this.

"Well, that alone ought to settle it. Under the circumstances, it would be flying in the face of Providence to leave Boston. The mere fact of a brilliant opening like that offered me on 'The Microbe,' and the halcyon future which Fulkerson promises if we'll come to New York, is as dust in the balance against the advantages of the Friday afternoon class."

"Basil," she appealed, solemnly, "have I ever interfered with your career?"

"I never had any for you to interfere with, my dear."

"Basil! Haven't I always had faith in you? And don't you suppose that if I thought it would really be for your advancement I would go to New York or anywhere with you?"

"No, my dear, I don't," he teased. "If it would be for my salvation, yes, perhaps; but not short of that; and I should have to prove by a cloud of witnesses that it would. I don't blame you. I wasn't born in Boston, but I understand how you feel. And really, my dear," he added, without irony, "I never seriously thought of asking you to go to New York. I was dazzled by Fulkerson's offer, I'll own that; but his choice of me as editor sapped my confidence in him."

"I don't like to hear you say that, Basil," she entreated.

"Well, of course there were mitigating circumstances. I could see that Fulkerson meant to keep the whip-hand himself, and that was reassuring. And, besides, if the Reciprocity Life should happen not to want my services any longer, it wouldn't be quite like giving up a certainty;

though, as a matter of business, I let Fulkerson get that impression; I felt rather sneaking to do it. But if the worst comes to the worst, I can look about for something to do in Boston; and, anyhow, people don't starve on two thousand a year, though it's convenient to have five. The fact is, I'm too old to change so radically. If you don't like my saying that, then you are, Isabel, and so are the children. I've no right to take them from the home we've made, and to change the whole course of their lives, unless I can assure them of something, and I can't assure them of anything. Boston is big enough for us, and it's certainly prettier than New York. I always feel a little proud of hailing from Boston; my pleasure in the place mounts the farther I get away from it. But I do appreciate it, my dear; I've no more desire to leave it than you have. You may be sure that if you don't want to take the children out of the Friday afternoon class, I don't want to leave my library here, and all the ways I've got set in. We'll keep on. Very likely the company won't supplant me, and if it does, and Watkins gets the place, he'll give me a subordinate position of some sort. Cheer up, Isabel! I have put Satan and his angel, Fulkerson, behind me, and it's all right. Let's go in to the children."

He came round the table to Isabel, where she sat in a growing distraction, and lifted her by the waist from her chair.

She sighed deeply. "Shall we tell the children about it?"

"No. What's the use, now?"

"There wouldn't be any," she assented. When they entered the family room, where the boy and girl sat on either side of the lamp working out the lessons for Monday which they had left over from the day before, she asked, "Children, how would you like to live in New York?"

Bella made haste to get in her word first. "And give up the Friday afternoon class?" she wailed.

Tom growled from his book, without lifting his eyes: "I shouldn't want to go to Columbia. They haven't got any dormitories, and you have to board round anywhere. Are you going to New York?" He now deigned to look up at his father.

"No, Tom. You and Bella have decided me against it. Your perspective shows the affair in its true proportions. I had an offer to go to New York, but I've refused it."

IV

March's irony fell harmless from the children's preoccupation with their own affairs, but he knew that his wife felt it, and this added to the bitterness which prompted it. He blamed her for letting her provincial narrowness prevent his accepting Fulkerson's offer quite as much as if he

had otherwise entirely wished to accept it. His world, like most worlds, had been superficially a disappointment. He was no richer than at the beginning, though in marrying he had given up some tastes, some preferences, some aspirations, in the hope of indulging them later, with larger means and larger leisure. His wife had not urged him to do it; in fact, her pride, as she said, was in his fitness for the life he had renounced; but she had acquiesced, and they had been very happy together. That is to say, they made up their quarrels or ignored them.

They often accused each other of being selfish and indifferent, but she knew that he would always sacrifice himself for her and the children; and he, on his part, with many gibes and mockeries, wholly trusted in her. They had grown practically tolerant of each other's disagreeable traits; and the danger that really threatened them was that they should grow too well satisfied with themselves, if not with each other. They were not sentimental, they were rather matter-of-fact in their motives; but they had both a sort of humorous fondness for sentimentality. They liked to play with the romantic, from the safe vantage-ground of their real practicality, and to divine the poetry of the commonplace. Their peculiar point of view separated them from most other people, with whom their means of self-comparison were not so good since their marriage as before. Then they had travelled and seen much of the world, and they had formed tastes which they had not always been able to indulge, but of which they felt that the possession reflected distinction on them. It enabled them to look down upon those who were without such tastes; but they were not ill-natured, and so they did not look down so much with contempt as with amusement. In their unfashionable neighborhood they had the fame of being not exclusive precisely, but very much wrapped up in themselves and their children.

Mrs. March was reputed to be very cultivated, and Mr. March even more so, among the simpler folk around them. Their house had some good pictures, which her aunt had brought home from Europe in more affluent days, and it abounded in books on which he spent more than he ought. They had beautified it in every way, and had unconsciously taken credit to themselves for it. They felt, with a glow almost of virtue, how perfectly it fitted their lives and their children's, and they believed that somehow it expressed their characters--that it was like them. They went out very little; she remained shut up in its refinement, working the good of her own; and he went to his business, and hurried back to forget it, and dream his dream of intellectual achievement in the flattering atmosphere of her sympathy. He could not conceal from himself that his divided life was somewhat like Charles Lamb's, and there were times when, as he had expressed to Fulkerson, he believed that its division was favorable to the freshness of his interest in literature. It certainly kept it a high privilege, a sacred refuge. Now and then he wrote something, and got it printed after long delays, and when they met on the St. Lawrence Fulkerson had some of March's verses in his pocket-book, which he had cut out of astray newspaper and carried about for years, because they pleased his fancy so much; they formed an immediate bond of union between the men when their authorship was traced and owned, and this gave a pretty color of romance to their acquaintance. But, for the most part, March was satisfied to read. He was proud of reading critically, and he kept in

the current of literary interests and controversies. It all seemed to him, and to his wife at second-hand, very meritorious; he could not help contrasting his life and its inner elegance with that of other men who had no such resources. He thought that he was not arrogant about it, because he did full justice to the good qualities of those other people; he congratulated himself upon the democratic instincts which enabled him to do this; and neither he nor his wife supposed that they were selfish persons. On the contrary, they were very sympathetic; there was no good cause that they did not wish well; they had a generous scorn of all kinds of narrow-heartedness; if it had ever come into their way to sacrifice themselves for others, they thought they would have done so, but they never asked why it had not come in their way. They were very gentle and kind, even when most elusive; and they taught their children to loathe all manner of social cruelty. March was of so watchful a conscience in some respects that he denied himself the pensive pleasure of lapsing into the melancholy of unfulfilled aspirations; but he did not see that, if he had abandoned them, it had been for what he held dearer; generally he felt as if he had turned from them with a high, altruistic aim. The practical expression of his life was that it was enough to provide well for his family; to have cultivated tastes, and to gratify them to the extent of his means; to be rather distinguished, even in the simplification of his desires. He believed, and his wife believed, that if the time ever came when he really wished to make a sacrifice to the fulfilment of the aspirations so long postponed, she would be ready to join with heart and hand.

When he went to her room from his library, where she left him the whole evening with the children, he found her before the glass thoughtfully removing the first dismantling pin from her back hair.

"I can't help feeling," she grieved into the mirror, "that it's I who keep you from accepting that offer. I know it is! I could go West with you, or into a new country--anywhere; but New York terrifies me. I don't like New York, I never did; it disheartens and distracts me; I can't find myself in it; I shouldn't know how to shop. I know I'm foolish and narrow and provincial," she went on, "but I could never have any inner quiet in New York; I couldn't live in the spirit there. I suppose people do. It can't, be that all these millions--"

"Oh, not so bad as that!" March interposed, laughing. "There aren't quite two."

"I thought there were four or five. Well, no matter. You see what I am, Basil. I'm terribly limited. I couldn't make my sympathies go round two million people; I should be wretched. I suppose I'm standing in the way of your highest interest, but I can't help it. We took each other for better or worse, and you must try to bear with me--" She broke off and began to cry.

"Stop it!" shouted March. "I tell you I never cared anything for Fulkerson's scheme or entertained it seriously, and I shouldn't if he'd proposed to carry it out in Boston." This was not quite true, but in the retrospect it seemed sufficiently so for the purposes of argument.

"Don't say another word about it. The thing's over now, and I don't want to think of it any more. We couldn't change its nature if we talked all night. But I want you to understand that it isn't your limitations that are in the way. It's mine. I shouldn't have the courage to take such a place; I don't think I'm fit for it, and that's the long and short of it."

"Oh, you don't know how it hurts me to have you say that, Basil."

The next morning, as they sat together at breakfast, without the children, whom they let lie late on Sunday, Mrs. March said to her husband, silent over his fish-balls and baked beans: "We will go to New York. I've decided it."

"Well, it takes two to decide that," March retorted. "We are not going to New York."

"Yes, we are. I've thought it out. Now, listen."

"Oh, I'm willing to listen," he consented, airily.

"You've always wanted to get out of the insurance business, and now with that fear of being turned out which you have you mustn't neglect this offer. I suppose it has its risks, but it's a risk keeping on as we are; and perhaps you will make a great success of it. I do want you to try, Basil. If I could once feel that you had fairly seen what you could do in literature, I should die happy."

"Not immediately after, I hope," he suggested, taking the second cup of coffee she had been pouring out for him. "And Boston?"

"We needn't make a complete break. We can keep this place for the present, anyway; we could let it for the winter, and come back in the summer next year. It would be change enough from New York."

"Fulkerson and I hadn't got as far as to talk of a vacation."

"No matter. The children and I could come. And if you didn't like New York, or the enterprise failed, you could get into something in Boston again; and we have enough to live on till you did. Yes, Basil, I'm going."

"I can see by the way your chin trembles that nothing could stop you. You may go to New York if you wish, Isabel, but I shall stay here."

"Be serious, Basil. I'm in earnest."

"Serious? If I were any more serious I should shed tears. Come, my dear, I know what you mean, and if I had my heart set on this thing-- Fulkerson always calls it 'this thing' I would cheerfully accept any sacrifice you could make to it. But I'd rather not offer you up on a shrine I don't feel any particular faith in. I'm very comfortable where I am; that is, I know just where the pinch comes, and if it comes harder,

why, I've got used to bearing that kind of pinch. I'm too old to change pinches."

"Now, that does decide me."

"It decides me, too."

"I will take all the responsibility, Basil," she pleaded.

"Oh yes; but you'll hand it back to me as soon as you've carried your point with it. There's nothing mean about you, Isabel, where responsibility is concerned. No; if I do this thing--Fulkerson again? I can't get away from 'this thing'; it's ominous--I must do it because I want to do it, and not because you wish that you wanted me to do it. I understand your position, Isabel, and that you're really acting from a generous impulse, but there's nothing so precarious at our time of life as a generous impulse. When we were younger we could stand it; we could give way to it and take the consequences. But now we can't bear it. We must act from cold reason even in the ardor of self-sacrifice."

"Oh, as if you did that!" his wife retorted.

"Is that any cause why you shouldn't?" She could not say that it was, and he went on triumphantly:

"No, I won't take you away from the only safe place on the planet and plunge you into the most perilous, and then have you say in your revulsion of feeling that you were all against it from the first, and you gave way because you saw I had my heart set on it." He supposed he was treating the matter humorously, but in this sort of banter between husband and wife there is always much more than the joking. March had seen some pretty feminine inconsistencies and trepidations which once charmed him in his wife hardening into traits of middle-age which were very like those of less interesting older women. The sight moved him with a kind of pathos, but he felt the result hindering and vexatious.

She now retorted that if he did not choose to take her at her word he need not, but that whatever he did she should have nothing to reproach herself with; and, at least, he could not say that she had trapped him into anything.

"What do you mean by trapping?" he demanded.

"I don't know what you call it," she answered; "but when you get me to commit myself to a thing by leaving out the most essential point, I call it trapping."

"I wonder you stop at trapping, if you think I got you to favor Fulkerson's scheme and then sprung New York on you. I don't suppose you do, though. But I guess we won't talk about it any more."

He went out for a long walk, and she went to her room. They lunched silently together in the presence of their children, who knew that they

had been quarrelling, but were easily indifferent to the fact, as children get to be in such cases; nature defends their youth, and the unhappiness which they behold does not infect them. In the evening, after the boy and girl had gone to bed, the father and mother resumed their talk. He would have liked to take it up at the point from which it wandered into hostilities, for he felt it lamentable that a matter which so seriously concerned them should be confused in the fumes of senseless anger; and he was willing to make a tacit acknowledgment of his own error by recurring to the question, but she would not be content with this, and he had to concede explicitly to her weakness that she really meant it when she had asked him to accept Fulkerson's offer. He said he knew that; and he began soberly to talk over their prospects in the event of their going to New York.

"Oh, I see you are going!" she twitted.

"I'm going to stay," he answered, "and let them turn me out of my agency here," and in this bitterness their talk ended.

V.

His wife made no attempt to renew their talk before March went to his business in the morning, and they parted in dry offence. Their experience was that these things always came right of themselves at last, and they usually let them. He knew that she had really tried to consent to a thing that was repugnant to her, and in his heart he gave her more credit for the effort than he had allowed her openly. She knew that she had made it with the reservation he accused her of, and that he had a right to feel sore at what she could not help. But he left her to brood over his ingratitude, and she suffered him to go heavy and unfriended to meet the chances of the day. He said to himself that if she had assented cordially to the conditions of Fulkerson's offer, he would have had the courage to take all the other risks himself, and would have had the satisfaction of resigning his place. As it was, he must wait till he was removed; and he figured with bitter pleasure the pain she would feel when he came home some day and told her he had been supplanted, after it was too late to close with Fulkerson.

He found a letter on his desk from the secretary, "Dictated," in typewriting, which briefly informed him that Mr. Hubbell, the Inspector of Agencies, would be in Boston on Wednesday, and would call at his office during the forenoon. The letter was not different in tone from many that he had formerly received; but the visit announced was out of the usual order, and March believed he read his fate in it. During the eighteen years of his connection with it--first as a subordinate in the Boston office, and finally as its general agent there--he had seen a good many changes in the Reciprocity; presidents, vice-presidents, actuaries, and general agents had come and gone, but there had always seemed to be a recognition of his efficiency, or at least sufficiency, and there had never been any manner of trouble, no question of accounts, no apparent

dissatisfaction with his management, until latterly, when there had begun to come from headquarters some suggestions of enterprise in certain ways, which gave him his first suspicions of his clerk Watkins's willingness to succeed him; they embodied some of Watkins's ideas. The things proposed seemed to March undignified, and even vulgar; he had never thought himself wanting in energy, though probably he had left the business to take its own course in the old lines more than he realized. Things had always gone so smoothly that he had sometimes fancied a peculiar regard for him in the management, which he had the weakness to attribute to an appreciation of what he occasionally did in literature, though in saner moments he felt how impossible this was. Beyond a reference from Mr. Hubbell to some piece of March's which had happened to meet his eye, no one in the management ever gave a sign of consciousness that their service was adorned by an obscure literary man; and Mr. Hubbell himself had the effect of regarding the excursions of March's pen as a sort of joke, and of winking at them; as he might have winked if once in a way he had found him a little the gayer for dining.

March wore through the day gloomily, but he had it on his conscience not to show any resentment toward Watkins, whom he suspected of wishing to supplant him, and even of working to do so. Through this self-denial he reached a better mind concerning his wife. He determined not to make her suffer needlessly, if the worst came to the worst; she would suffer enough, at the best, and till the worst came he would spare her, and not say anything about the letter he had got.

But when they met, her first glance divined that something had happened, and her first question frustrated his generous intention. He had to tell her about the letter. She would not allow that it had any significance, but she wished him to make an end of his anxieties and forestall whatever it might portend by resigning his place at once. She said she was quite ready to go to New York; she had been thinking it all over, and now she really wanted to go. He answered, soberly, that he had thought it over, too; and he did not wish to leave Boston, where he had lived so long, or try a new way of life if he could help it. He insisted that he was quite selfish in this; in their concessions their quarrel vanished; they agreed that whatever happened would be for the best; and the next day he went to his office fortified for any event.

His destiny, if tragical, presented itself with an aspect which he might have found comic if it had been another's destiny. Mr. Hubbell brought March's removal, softened in the guise of a promotion. The management at New York, it appeared, had acted upon a suggestion of Mr. Hubbell's, and now authorized him to offer March the editorship of the monthly paper published in the interest of the company; his office would include the authorship of circulars and leaflets in behalf of life-insurance, and would give play to the literary talent which Mr. Hubbell had brought to the attention of the management; his salary would be nearly as much as at present, but the work would not take his whole time, and in a place like New York he could get a great deal of outside writing, which they would not object to his doing.

Mr. Hubbell seemed so sure of his acceptance of a place in every way

congenial to a man of literary tastes that March was afterward sorry he dismissed the proposition with obvious irony, and had needlessly hurt Hubbell's feelings; but Mrs. March had no such regrets. She was only afraid that he had not made his rejection contemptuous enough.

"And now," she said, "telegraph Mr. Fulkerson, and we will go at once."

"I suppose I could still get Watkins's former place," March suggested.

"Never!" she retorted. "Telegraph instantly!"

They were only afraid now that Fulkerson might have changed his mind, and they had a wretched day in which they heard nothing from him. It ended with his answering March's telegram in person. They were so glad of his coming, and so touched by his satisfaction with his bargain, that they laid all the facts of the case before him. He entered fully into March's sense of the joke latent in Mr. Hubbell's proposition, and he tried to make Mrs. March believe that he shared her resentment of the indignity offered her husband.

March made a show of willingness to release him in view of the changed situation, saying that he held him to nothing. Fulkerson laughed, and asked him how soon he thought he could come on to New York. He refused to reopen the question of March's fitness with him; he said they had gone into that thoroughly, but he recurred to it with Mrs. March, and confirmed her belief in his good sense on all points. She had been from the first moment defiantly confident of her husband's ability, but till she had talked the matter over with Fulkerson she was secretly not sure of it; or, at least, she was not sure that March was not right in distrusting himself. When she clearly understood, now, what Fulkerson intended, she had no longer a doubt. He explained how the enterprise differed from others, and how he needed for its direction a man who combined general business experience and business ideas with a love for the thing and a natural aptness for it. He did not want a young man, and yet he wanted youth--its freshness, its zest--such as March would feel in a thing he could put his whole heart into. He would not run in ruts, like an old fellow who had got hackneyed; he would not have any hobbies; he would not have any friends or any enemies. Besides, he would have to meet people, and March was a man that people took to; she knew that herself; he had a kind of charm. The editorial management was going to be kept in the background, as far as the public was concerned; the public was to suppose that the thing ran itself. Fulkerson did not care for a great literary reputation in his editor--he implied that March had a very pretty little one. At the same time the relations between the contributors and the management were to be much more, intimate than usual. Fulkerson felt his personal disqualification for working the thing socially, and he counted upon Mr. March for that; that was to say, he counted upon Mrs. March.

She protested he must not count upon her; but it by no means disabled Fulkerson's judgment in her view that March really seemed more than anything else a fancy of his. He had been a fancy of hers; and the sort of affectionate respect with which Fulkerson spoke of him laid forever some doubt she had of the fineness of Fulkerson's manners and reconciled

her to the graphic slanginess of his speech.

The affair was now irretrievable, but she gave her approval to it as superbly as if it were submitted in its inception. Only, Mr. Fulkerson must not suppose she should ever like New York. She would not deceive him on that point. She never should like it. She did not conceal, either, that she did not like taking the children out of the Friday afternoon class; and she did not believe that Tom would ever be reconciled to going to Columbia. She took courage from Fulkerson's suggestion that it was possible for Tom to come to Harvard even from New York; and she heaped him with questions concerning the domiciliation of the family in that city. He tried to know something about the matter, and he succeeded in seeming interested in points necessarily indifferent to him.

VI.

In the uprooting and transplanting of their home that followed, Mrs. March often trembled before distant problems and possible contingencies, but she was never troubled by present difficulties. She kept up with tireless energy; and in the moments of dejection and misgiving which harassed her husband she remained dauntless, and put heart into him when he had lost it altogether.

She arranged to leave the children in the house with the servants, while she went on with March to look up a dwelling of some sort in New York. It made him sick to think of it; and, when it came to the point, he would rather have given up the whole enterprise. She had to nerve him to it, to represent more than once that now they had no choice but to make this experiment. Every detail of parting was anguish to him. He got consolation out of the notion of letting the house furnished for the winter; that implied their return to it, but it cost him pangs of the keenest misery to advertise it; and, when a tenant was actually found, it was all he could do to give him the lease. He tried his wife's love and patience as a man must to whom the future is easy in the mass but terrible as it translates itself piecemeal into the present. He experienced remorse in the presence of inanimate things he was going to leave as if they had sensibly reproached him, and an anticipative homesickness that seemed to stop his heart. Again and again his wife had to make him reflect that his depression was not prophetic. She convinced him of what he already knew, and persuaded him against his knowledge that he could be keeping an eye out for something to take hold of in Boston if they could not stand New York. She ended by telling him that it was too bad to make her comfort him in a trial that was really so much more a trial to her. She had to support him in a last access of despair on their way to the Albany depot the morning they started to New York; but when the final details had been dealt with, the tickets bought, the trunks checked, and the handbags hung up in their car, and the future had massed itself again at a safe distance and was seven hours and two hundred miles away, his spirits began to rise and hers to sink. He would

have been willing to celebrate the taste, the domestic refinement, of the ladies' waiting-room in the depot, where they had spent a quarter of an hour before the train started. He said he did not believe there was another station in the world where mahogany rocking-chairs were provided; that the dull-red warmth of the walls was as cozy as an evening lamp, and that he always hoped to see a fire kindled on that vast hearth and under that aesthetic mantel, but he supposed now he never should. He said it was all very different from that tunnel, the old Albany depot, where they had waited the morning they went to New York when they were starting on their wedding journey.

"The morning, Basil!" cried his wife. "We went at night; and we were going to take the boat, but it stormed so!" She gave him a glance of such reproach that he could not answer anything, and now she asked him whether he supposed their cook and second girl would be contented with one of those dark holes where they put girls to sleep in New York flats, and what she should do if Margaret, especially, left her. He ventured to suggest that Margaret would probably like the city; but, if she left, there were plenty of other girls to be had in New York. She replied that there were none she could trust, and that she knew Margaret would not stay. He asked her why she took her, then--why she did not give her up at once; and she answered that it would be inhuman to give her up just in the edge of the winter. She had promised to keep her; and Margaret was pleased with the notion of going to New York, where she had a cousin.

"Then perhaps she'll be pleased with the notion of staying," he said.

"Oh, much you know about it!" she retorted; and, in view of the hypothetical difficulty and his want of sympathy, she fell into a gloom, from which she roused herself at last by declaring that, if there was nothing else in the flat they took, there should be a light kitchen and a bright, sunny bedroom for Margaret. He expressed the belief that they could easily find such a flat as that, and she denounced his fatal optimism, which buoyed him up in the absence of an undertaking and let him drop into the depths of despair in its presence.

He owned this defect of temperament, but he said that it compensated the opposite in her character. "I suppose that's one of the chief uses of marriage; people supplement one another, and form a pretty fair sort of human being together. The only drawback to the theory is that unmarried people seem each as complete and whole as a married pair."

She refused to be amused; she turned her face to the window and put her handkerchief up under her veil.

It was not till the dining-car was attached to their train that they were both able to escape for an hour into the care-free mood of their earlier travels, when they were so easily taken out of themselves. The time had been when they could have found enough in the conjectural fortunes and characters of their fellow-passengers to occupy them. This phase of their youth had lasted long, and the world was still full of novelty and interest for them; but it required all the charm of the dining-car now to lay the anxieties that beset them. It was so potent for the moment,

however, that they could take an objective view at their sitting cozily down there together, as if they had only themselves in the world. They wondered what the children were doing, the children who possessed them so intensely when present, and now, by a fantastic operation of absence, seemed almost non-existent. They tried to be homesick for them, but failed; they recognized with comfortable self-abhorrence that this was terrible, but owned a fascination in being alone; at the same time, they could not imagine how people felt who never had any children. They contrasted the luxury of dining that way, with every advantage except a band of music, and the old way of rushing out to snatch a fearful joy at the lunch-counters of the Worcester and Springfield and New Haven stations. They had not gone often to New York since their wedding journey, but they had gone often enough to have noted the change from the lunch-counter to the lunch-basket brought in the train, from which you could subsist with more ease and dignity, but seemed destined to a superabundance of pickles, whatever you ordered.

They thought well of themselves now that they could be both critical and tolerant of flavors not very sharply distinguished from one another in their dinner, and they lingered over their coffee and watched the autumn landscape through the windows.

"Not quite so loud a pattern of calico this year," he said, with patronizing forbearance toward the painted woodlands whirling by. "Do you see how the foreground next the train rushes from us and the background keeps ahead of us, while the middle distance seems stationary? I don't think I ever noticed that effect before. There ought to be something literary in it: retreating past and advancing future and deceitfully permanent present--something like that?"

His wife brushed some crumbs from her lap before rising. "Yes. You mustn't waste any of these ideas now."

"Oh no; it would be money out of Fulkerson's pocket."

VII.

They went to a quiet hotel far down-town, and took a small apartment which they thought they could easily afford for the day or two they need spend in looking up a furnished flat. They were used to staying at this hotel when they came on for a little outing in New York, after some rigid winter in Boston, at the time of the spring exhibitions. They were remembered there from year to year; the colored call-boys, who never seemed to get any older, smiled upon them, and the clerk called March by name even before he registered. He asked if Mrs. March were with him, and said then he supposed they would want their usual quarters; and in a moment they were domesticated in a far interior that seemed to have been waiting for them in a clean, quiet, patient disoccupation ever since they left it two years before. The little parlor, with its gilt paper and ebonized furniture, was the lightest of the rooms, but it was not very

light at noonday without the gas, which the bell-boy now flared up for them. The uproar of the city came to it in a soothing murmur, and they took possession of its peace and comfort with open celebration. After all, they agreed, there was no place in the world so delightful as a hotel apartment like that; the boasted charms of home were nothing to it; and then the magic of its being always there, ready for any one, every one, just as if it were for some one alone: it was like the experience of an Arabian Nights hero come true for all the race.

"Oh, why can't we always stay here, just we two!" Mrs. March sighed to her husband, as he came out of his room rubbing his face red with the towel, while she studied a new arrangement of her bonnet and handbag on the mantel.

"And ignore the past? I'm willing. I've no doubt that the children could get on perfectly well without us, and could find some lot in the scheme of Providence that would really be just as well for them."

"Yes; or could contrive somehow never to have existed. I should insist upon that. If they are, don't you see that we couldn't wish them not to be?"

"Oh yes; I see your point; it's simply incontrovertible."

She laughed and said: "Well, at any rate, if we can't find a flat to suit us we can all crowd into these three rooms somehow, for the winter, and then browse about for meals. By the week we could get them much cheaper; and we could save on the eating, as they do in Europe. Or on something else."

"Something else, probably," said March. "But we won't take this apartment till the ideal furnished flat winks out altogether. We shall not have any trouble. We can easily find some one who is going South for the winter and will be glad to give up their flat 'to the right party' at a nominal rent. That's my notion. That's what the Evanses did one winter when they came on here in February. All but the nominality of the rent."

"Yes, and we could pay a very good rent and still save something on letting our house. You can settle yourselves in a hundred different ways in New York, that is one merit of the place. But if everything else fails, we can come back to this. I want you to take the refusal of it, Basil. And we'll commence looking this very evening as soon as we've had dinner. I cut a lot of things out of the Herald as we came on. See here!"

She took a long strip of paper out of her hand-bag with minute advertisements pinned transversely upon it, and forming the effect of some glittering nondescript vertebrate.

"Looks something like the sea-serpent," said March, drying his hands on the towel, while he glanced up and down the list. "But we sha'n't have any trouble. I've no doubt there are half a dozen things there that will

do. You haven't gone up-town? Because we must be near the 'Every Other Week' office."

"No; but I wish Mr. Fulkerson hadn't called it that! It always makes one think of 'jam yesterday and jam tomorrow, but never jam to-day,' in 'Through the Looking-Glass.' They're all in this region."

They were still at their table, beside a low window, where some sort of never-blooming shrub symmetrically balanced itself in a large pot, with a leaf to the right and a leaf to the left and a spear up the middle, when Fulkerson came stepping square-footedly over the thick dining-room carpet. He wagged in the air a gay hand of salutation at sight of them, and of repression when they offered to rise to meet him; then, with an apparent simultaneity of action he gave a hand to each, pulled up a chair from the next table, put his hat and stick on the floor beside it, and seated himself.

"Well, you've burned your ships behind you, sure enough," he said, beaming his satisfaction upon them from eyes and teeth.

"The ships are burned," said March, "though I'm not sure we alone did it. But here we are, looking for shelter, and a little anxious about the disposition of the natives."

"Oh, they're an awful peaceable lot," said Fulkerson. "I've been round among the caciques a little, and I think I've got two or three places that will just suit you, Mrs. March. How did you leave the children?"

"Oh, how kind of you! Very well, and very proud to be left in charge of the smoking wrecks."

Fulkerson naturally paid no attention to what she said, being but secondarily interested in the children at the best. "Here are some things right in this neighborhood, within gunshot of the office, and if you want you can go and look at them to-night; the agents gave me houses where the people would be in."

"We will go and look at them instantly," said Mrs. March. "Or, as soon as you've had coffee with us."

"Never do," Fulkerson replied. He gathered up his hat and stick. "Just rushed in to say Hello, and got to run right away again. I tell you, March, things are humming. I'm after those fellows with a sharp stick all the while to keep them from loafing on my house, and at the same time I'm just bubbling over with ideas about 'The Lone Hand--wish we could call it that!--that I want to talk up with you."

"Well, come to breakfast," said Mrs. March, cordially.

"No; the ideas will keep till you've secured your lodge in this vast wilderness. Good-bye."

"You're as nice as you can be, Mr. Fulkerson," she said, "to keep us in

mind when you have so much to occupy you."

"I wouldn't have anything to occupy me if I hadn't kept you in mind, Mrs. March," said Fulkerson, going off upon as good a speech as he could apparently hope to make.

"Why, Basil," said Mrs. March, when he was gone, "he's charming! But now we mustn't lose an instant. Let's see where the places are." She ran over the half-dozen agents' permits. "Capital-first-rate-the very thing-every one. Well, I consider ourselves settled! We can go back to the children to-morrow if we like, though I rather think I should like to stay over another day and get a little rested for the final pulling up that's got to come. But this simplifies everything enormously, and Mr. Fulkerson is as thoughtful and as sweet as he can be. I know you will get on well with him. He has such a good heart. And his attitude toward you, Basil, is beautiful always--so respectful; or not that so much as appreciative. Yes, appreciative--that's the word; I must always keep that in mind."

"It's quite important to do so," said March.

"Yes," she assented, seriously, "and we must not forget just what kind of flat we are going to look for. The 'sine qua nons' are an elevator and steam heat, not above the third floor, to begin with. Then we must each have a room, and you must have your study and I must have my parlor; and the two girls must each have a room. With the kitchen and dining room, how many does that make?"

"Ten."

"I thought eight. Well, no matter. You can work in the parlor, and run into your bedroom when anybody comes; and I can sit in mine, and the girls must put up with one, if it's large and sunny, though I've always given them two at home. And the kitchen must be sunny, so they can sit in it. And the rooms must all have outside light. And the rent must not be over eight hundred for the winter. We only get a thousand for our whole house, and we must save something out of that, so as to cover the expenses of moving. Now, do you think you can remember all that?"

"Not the half of it," said March. "But you can; or if you forget a third of it, I can come in with my partial half and more than make it up."

She had brought her bonnet and sacque down-stairs with her, and was transferring them from the hatrack to her person while she talked. The friendly door-boy let them into the street, and the clear October evening air brightened her so that as she tucked her hand under her husband's arm and began to pull him along she said, "If we find something right away--and we're just as likely to get the right flat soon as late; it's all a lottery--well go to the theatre somewhere."

She had a moment's panic about having left the agents' permits on the table, and after remembering that she had put them into her little shopping-bag, where she kept her money (each note crushed into a round

wad), and had heft it on the hat-rack, where it would certainly be stolen, she found it on her wrist. She did not think that very funny; but after a first impulse to inculpate her husband, she let him laugh, while they stopped under a lamp and she held the permits half a yard away to read the numbers on them.

"Where are your glasses, Isabel?"

"On the mantel in our room, of course."

"Then you ought to have brought a pair of tongs."

"I wouldn't get off second-hand jokes, Basil," she said; and "Why, here!" she cried, whirling round to the door before which they had halted, "this is the very number. Well, I do believe it's a sign!"

One of those colored men who soften the trade of janitor in many of the smaller apartment-houses in New York by the sweetness of their race let the Marches in, or, rather, welcomed them to the possession of the premises by the bow with which he acknowledged their permit. It was a large, old mansion cut up into five or six dwellings, but it had kept some traits of its former dignity, which pleased people of their sympathetic tastes. The dark-mahogany trim, of sufficiently ugly design, gave a rich gloom to the hallway, which was wide and paved with marble; the carpeted stairs curved aloft through a generous space.

"There is no elevator?" Mrs. March asked of the janitor.

He answered, "No, ma'am; only two flights up," so winningly that she said,

"Oh!" in courteous apology, and whispered to her husband, as she followed lightly up, "We'll take it, Basil, if it's like the rest."

"If it's like him, you mean."

"I don't wonder they wanted to own them," she hurriedly philosophized.

"If I had such a creature, nothing but death should part us, and I should no more think of giving him his freedom!"

"No; we couldn't afford it," returned her husband.

The apartment which the janitor unlocked for them, and lit up from those chandeliers and brackets of gilt brass in the form of vine bunches, leaves, and tendrils in which the early gas-fitter realized most of his conceptions of beauty, had rather more of the ugliness than the dignity of the hall. But the rooms were large, and they grouped themselves in a reminiscence of the time when they were part of a dwelling that had its charm, its pathos, its impressiveness. Where they were cut up into smaller spaces, it had been done with the frankness with which a proud old family of fallen fortunes practises its economies. The rough pine-floors showed a black border of tack-heads where carpets had been lifted and put down for generations; the white paint was yellow with age; the

apartment had light at the front and at the back, and two or three rooms had glimpses of the day through small windows let into their corners; another one seemed lifting an appealing eye to heaven through a glass circle in its ceiling; the rest must darkle in perpetual twilight. Yet something pleased in it all, and Mrs. March had gone far to adapt the different rooms to the members of her family, when she suddenly thought (and for her to think was to say), "Why, but there's no steam heat!"

"No, ma'am," the janitor admitted; "but dere's grates in most o' de rooms, and dere's furnace heat in de halls."

"That's true," she admitted, and, having placed her family in the apartments, it was hard to get them out again. "Could we manage?" she referred to her husband.

"Why, I shouldn't care for the steam heat if--What is the rent?" he broke off to ask the janitor.

"Nine hundred, sir."

March concluded to his wife, "If it were furnished."

"Why, of course! What could I have been thinking of? We're looking for a furnished flat," she explained to the janitor, "and this was so pleasant and homelike that I never thought whether it was furnished or not."

She smiled upon the janitor, and he entered into the joke and chuckled so amiably at her flattering oversight on the way down-stairs that she said, as she pinched her husband's arm, "Now, if you don't give him a quarter I'll never speak to you again, Basil!"

"I would have given half a dollar willingly to get you beyond his glamour," said March, when they were safely on the pavement outside. "If it hadn't been for my strength of character, you'd have taken an unfurnished flat without heat and with no elevator, at nine hundred a year, when you had just sworn me to steam heat, an elevator, furniture, and eight hundred."

"Yes! How could I have lost my head so completely?" she said, with a lenient amusement in her aberration which she was not always able to feel in her husband's.

"The next time a colored janitor opens the door to us, I'll tell him the apartment doesn't suit at the threshold. It's the only way to manage you, Isabel."

"It's true. I am in love with the whole race. I never saw one of them that didn't have perfectly angelic manners. I think we shall all be black in heaven--that is, black-souled."

"That isn't the usual theory," said March.

"Well, perhaps not," she assented. "Where are we going now? Oh yes, to the Xenophon!"

She pulled him gayly along again, and after they had walked a block down and half a block over they stood before the apartment-house of that name, which was cut on the gas-lamps on either side of the heavily spiked, aesthetic-hinged black door. The titter of an electric-bell brought a large, fat Buttons, with a stage effect of being dressed to look small, who said he would call the janitor, and they waited in the dimly splendid, copper-colored interior, admiring the whorls and waves into which the wallpaint was combed, till the janitor came in his gold-banded cap, like a Continental porker. When they said they would like to see Mrs. Grosvenor Green's apartment, he owned his inability to cope with the affair, and said he must send for the superintendent; he was either in the Herodotus or the Thucydides, and would be there in a minute. The Buttons brought him--a Yankee of browbeating presence in plain clothes--almost before they had time to exchange a frightened whisper in recognition of the fact that there could be no doubt of the steam heat and elevator in this case. Half stifled in the one, they mounted in the other eight stories, while they tried to keep their self-respect under the gaze of the superintendent, which they felt was classing and assessing them with unfriendly accuracy. They could not, and they faltered abashed at the threshold of Mrs. Grosvenor Green's apartment, while the superintendent lit the gas in the gangway that he called a private hall, and in the drawing-room and the succession of chambers stretching rearward to the kitchen. Everything had, been done by the architect to save space, and everything, to waste it by Mrs. Grosvenor Green. She had conformed to a law for the necessity of turning round in each room, and had folding-beds in the chambers, but there her subordination had ended, and wherever you might have turned round she had put a gimcrack so that you would knock it over if you did turn. The place was rather pretty and even imposing at first glance, and it took several joint ballots for March and his wife to make sure that with the kitchen there were only six rooms. At every door hung a portiere from large rings on a brass rod; every shelf and dressing-case and mantel was littered with gimcracks, and the corners of the tiny rooms were curtained off, and behind these portieres swarmed more gimcracks. The front of the upright piano had what March called a short-skirted portiere on it, and the top was covered with vases, with dragon candlesticks and with Jap fans, which also expanded themselves bat wise on the walls between the etchings and the water colors. The floors were covered with filling, and then rugs and then skins; the easy-chairs all had tidies, Armenian and Turkish and Persian; the lounges and sofas had embroidered cushions hidden under tidies.

The radiator was concealed by a Jap screen, and over the top of this some Arab scarfs were flung. There was a superabundance of clocks. China pugs guarded the hearth; a brass sunflower smiled from the top of either andiron, and a brass peacock spread its tail before them inside a high filigree fender; on one side was a coalhod in 'repousse' brass, and on the other a wrought iron wood-basket. Some red Japanese bird-kites were stuck about in the necks of spelter vases, a crimson Jap umbrella hung opened beneath the chandelier, and each globe had a shade of yellow silk.

March, when he had recovered his self-command a little in the presence of the agglomeration, comforted himself by calling the bric-a-brac Jamescracks, as if this was their full name.

The disrespect he was able to show the whole apartment by means of this joke strengthened him to say boldly to the superintendent that it was altogether too small; then he asked carelessly what the rent was.

"Two hundred and fifty."

The Marches gave a start, and looked at each other.

"Don't you think we could make it do?" she asked him, and he could see that she had mentally saved five hundred dollars as the difference between the rent of their house and that of this flat. "It has some very pretty features, and we could manage to squeeze in, couldn't we?"

"You won't find another furnished flat like it for no two-fifty a month in the whole city," the superintendent put in.

They exchanged glances again, and March said, carelessly, "It's too small."

"There's a vacant flat in the Herodotus for eighteen hundred a year, and one in the Thucydides for fifteen," the superintendent suggested, clicking his keys together as they sank down in the elevator; "seven rooms and bath."

"Thank you," said March; "we're looking for a furnished flat."

They felt that the superintendent parted from them with repressed sarcasm.

"Oh, Basil, do you think we really made him think it was the smallness and not the dearness?"

"No, but we saved our self-respect in the attempt; and that's a great deal."

"Of course, I wouldn't have taken it, anyway, with only six rooms, and so high up. But what prices! Now, we must be very circumspect about the next place."

It was a janitress, large, fat, with her arms wound up in her apron, who received them there. Mrs. March gave her a succinct but perfect statement of their needs. She failed to grasp the nature of them, or feigned to do so. She shook her head, and said that her son would show them the flat. There was a radiator visible in the narrow hall, and Isabel tacitly compromised on steam heat without an elevator, as the flat was only one flight up. When the son appeared from below with a small kerosene hand-lamp, it appeared that the flat was unfurnished, but there was no stopping him till he had shown it in all its impossibility. When

they got safely away from it and into the street March said: "Well, have you had enough for to-night, Isabel? Shall we go to the theatre now?"

"Not on any account. I want to see the whole list of flats that Mr. Fulkerson thought would be the very thing for us." She laughed, but with a certain bitterness.

"You'll be calling him my Mr. Fulkerson next, Isabel."

"Oh no!"

The fourth address was a furnished flat without a kitchen, in a house with a general restaurant. The fifth was a furnished house. At the sixth a pathetic widow and her pretty daughter wanted to take a family to board, and would give them a private table at a rate which the Marches would have thought low in Boston.

Mrs. March came away tingling with compassion for their evident anxiety, and this pity naturally soured into a sense of injury. "Well, I must say I have completely lost confidence in Mr. Fulkerson's judgment. Anything more utterly different from what I told him we wanted I couldn't imagine. If he doesn't manage any better about his business than he has done about this, it will be a perfect failure."

"Well, well, let's hope he'll be more circumspect about that," her husband returned, with ironical propitiation. "But I don't think it's Fulkerson's fault altogether. Perhaps it's the house-agents'. They're a very illusory generation. There seems to be something in the human habitation that corrupts the natures of those who deal in it, to buy or sell it, to hire or let it. You go to an agent and tell him what kind of a house you want. He has no such house, and he sends you to look at something altogether different, upon the well-ascertained principle that if you can't get what you want you will take what you can get. You don't suppose the 'party' that took our house in Boston was looking for any such house? He was looking for a totally different kind of house in another part of the town."

"I don't believe that!" his wife broke in.

"Well, no matter. But see what a scandalous rent you asked for it."

"We didn't get much more than half; and, besides, the agent told me to ask fourteen hundred."

"Oh, I'm not blaming you, Isabel. I'm only analyzing the house-agent and exonerating Fulkerson."

"Well, I don't believe he told them just what we wanted; and, at any rate, I'm done with agents. Tomorrow I'm going entirely by advertisements."

VIII.

Mrs. March took the vertebrate with her to the Vienna Coffee-House, where they went to breakfast next morning. She made March buy her the Herald and the World, and she added to its spiny convolutions from them. She read the new advertisements aloud with ardor and with faith to believe that the apartments described in them were every one truthfully represented, and that any one of them was richly responsive to their needs. "Elegant, light, large, single and outside flats" were offered with "all improvements--bath, ice-box, etc."--for twenty-five to thirty dollars a month. The cheapness was amazing. The Wagram, the Esmeralda, the Jacinth, advertised them for forty dollars and sixty dollars, "with steam heat and elevator," rent free till November. Others, attractive from their air of conscientious scruple, announced "first-class flats; good order; reasonable rents." The Helena asked the reader if she had seen the "cabinet finish, hard-wood floors, and frescoed ceilings" of its fifty-dollar flats; the Asteroid affirmed that such apartments, with "six light rooms and bath, porcelain wash-tubs, electric bells, and hall-boy," as it offered for seventy-five dollars were unapproached by competition. There was a sameness in the jargon which tended to confusion. Mrs. March got several flats on her list which promised neither steam heat nor elevators; she forgot herself so far as to include two or three as remote from the down-town region of her choice as Harlem. But after she had rejected these the nondescript vertebrate was still voluminous enough to sustain her buoyant hopes.

The waiter, who remembered them from year to year, had put them at a window giving a pretty good section of Broadway, and before they set out on their search they had a moment of reminiscence. They recalled the Broadway of five, of ten, of twenty years ago, swelling and roaring with a tide of gayly painted omnibuses and of picturesque traffic that the horsecars have now banished from it. The grind of their wheels and the clash of their harsh bells imperfectly fill the silence that the omnibuses have left, and the eye misses the tumultuous perspective of former times.

They went out and stood for a moment before Grace Church, and looked down the stately thoroughfare, and found it no longer impressive, no longer characteristic. It is still Broadway in name, but now it is like any other street. You do not now take your life in your hand when you attempt to cross it; the Broadway policeman who supported the elbow of timorous beauty in the hollow of his cotton-gloved palm and guided its little fearful boots over the crossing, while he arrested the billowy omnibuses on either side with an imperious glance, is gone, and all that certain processional, barbaric gayety of the place is gone.

"Palmyra, Baalbec, Timour of the Desert," said March, voicing their common feeling of the change.

They turned and went into the beautiful church, and found themselves in time for the matin service. Rapt far from New York, if not from earth, in the dim richness of the painted light, the hallowed music took them

with solemn ecstasy; the aerial, aspiring Gothic forms seemed to lift them heavenward. They came out, reluctant, into the dazzle and bustle of the street, with a feeling that they were too good for it, which they confessed to each other with whimsical consciousness.

"But no matter how consecrated we feel now," he said, "we mustn't forget that we went into the church for precisely the same reason that we went to the Vienna Cafe for breakfast--to gratify an aesthetic sense, to renew the faded pleasure of travel for a moment, to get back into the Europe of our youth. It was a purely Pagan impulse, Isabel, and we'd better own it."

"I don't know," she returned. "I think we reduce ourselves to the bare bones too much. I wish we didn't always recognize the facts as we do. Sometimes I should like to blink them. I should like to think I was devouter than I am, and younger and prettier."

"Better not; you couldn't keep it up. Honesty is the best policy even in such things."

"No; I don't like it, Basil. I should rather wait till the last day for some of my motives to come to the top. I know they're always mixed, but do let me give them the benefit of a doubt sometimes."

"Well, well, have it your own way, my dear. But I prefer not to lay up so many disagreeable surprises for myself at that time."

She would not consent. "I know I am a good deal younger than I was. I feel quite in the mood of that morning when we walked down Broadway on our wedding journey. Don't you?"

"Oh yes. But I know I'm not younger; I'm only prettier."

She laughed for pleasure in his joke, and also for unconscious joy in the gay New York weather, in which there was no 'arriere pensee' of the east wind. They had crossed Broadway, and were walking over to Washington Square, in the region of which they now hoped to place themselves. The 'primo tenore' statue of Garibaldi had already taken possession of the place in the name of Latin progress, and they met Italian faces, French faces, Spanish faces, as they strolled over the asphalt walks, under the thinning shadows of the autumn-stricken sycamores. They met the familiar picturesque raggedness of Southern Europe with the old kindly illusion that somehow it existed for their appreciation, and that it found adequate compensation for poverty in this. March thought he sufficiently expressed his tacit sympathy in sitting down on one of the iron benches with his wife and letting a little Neapolitan put a superfluous shine on his boots, while their desultory comment wandered with equal esteem to the old-fashioned American respectability which keeps the north side of the square in vast mansions of red brick, and the international shabbiness which has invaded the southern border, and broken it up into lodging-houses, shops, beer-gardens, and studios.

They noticed the sign of an apartment to let on the north side, and as

soon as the little bootblack could be bought off they went over to look at it. The janitor met them at the door and examined them. Then he said, as if still in doubt, "It has ten rooms, and the rent is twenty-eight hundred dollars."

"It wouldn't do, then," March replied, and left him to divide the responsibility between the paucity of the rooms and the enormity of the rent as he best might. But their self-love had received a wound, and they questioned each other what it was in their appearance made him doubt their ability to pay so much.

"Of course, we don't look like New-Yorkers," sighed Mrs. March, "and we've walked through the Square. That might be as if we had walked along the Park Street mall in the Common before we came out on Beacon. Do you suppose he could have seen you getting your boots blacked in that way?"

"It's useless to ask," said March. "But I never can recover from this blow."

"Oh, pshaw! You know you hate such things as badly as I do. It was very impertinent of him."

"Let us go back and 'e craser l' infame' by paying him a year's rent in advance and taking immediate possession. Nothing else can soothe my wounded feelings. You were not having your boots blacked: why shouldn't he have supposed you were a New-Yorker, and I a country cousin?"

"They always know. Don't you remember Mrs. Williams's going to a Fifth Avenue milliner in a Worth dress, and the woman's asking her instantly what hotel she should send her hat to?"

"Yes; these things drive one to despair. I don't wonder the bodies of so many genteel strangers are found in the waters around New York. Shall we try the south side, my dear? or had we better go back to our rooms and rest awhile?"

Mrs. March had out the vertebrate, and was consulting one of its glittering ribs and glancing up from it at a house before which they stood. "Yes, it's the number; but do they call this being ready October first?" The little area in front of the basement was heaped with a mixture of mortar, bricks, laths, and shavings from the interior; the brownstone steps to the front door were similarly bestrewn; the doorway showed the half-open, rough pine carpenter's sketch of an unfinished house; the sashless windows of every story showed the activity of workmen within; the clatter of hammers and the hiss of saws came out to them from every opening.

"They may call it October first," said March, "because it's too late to contradict them. But they'd better not call it December first in my presence; I'll let them say January first, at a pinch."

"We will go in and look at it, anyway," said his wife; and he admired how, when she was once within, she began provisionally to settle the

family in each of the several floors with the female instinct for domiciliation which never failed her. She had the help of the landlord, who was present to urge forward the workmen apparently; he lent a hopeful fancy to the solution of all her questions. To get her from under his influence March had to represent that the place was damp from undried plastering, and that if she stayed she would probably be down with that New York pneumonia which visiting Bostonians are always dying of. Once safely on the pavement outside, she realized that the apartment was not only unfinished, but unfurnished, and had neither steam heat nor elevator. "But I thought we had better look at everything," she explained.

"Yes, but not take everything. If I hadn't pulled you away from there by main force you'd have not only died of New York pneumonia on the spot, but you'd have had us all settled there before we knew what we were about."

"Well, that's what I can't help, Basil. It's the only way I can realize whether it will do for us. I have to dramatize the whole thing."

She got a deal of pleasure as well as excitement out of this, and he had to own that the process of setting up housekeeping in so many different places was not only entertaining, but tended, through association with their first beginnings in housekeeping, to restore the image of their early married days and to make them young again.

It went on all day, and continued far into the night, until it was too late to go to the theatre, too late to do anything but tumble into bed and simultaneously fall asleep. They groaned over their reiterated disappointments, but they could not deny that the interest was unflagging, and that they got a great deal of fun out of it all. Nothing could abate Mrs. March's faith in her advertisements. One of them sent her to a flat of ten rooms which promised to be the solution of all their difficulties; it proved to be over a livery-stable, a liquor store, and a milliner's shop, none of the first fashion. Another led them far into old Greenwich Village to an apartment-house, which she refused to enter behind a small girl with a loaf of bread under one arm and a quart can of milk under the other.

In their search they were obliged, as March complained, to the acquisition of useless information in a degree unequalled in their experience. They came to excel in the sad knowledge of the line at which respectability distinguishes itself from shabbiness. Flattering advertisements took them to numbers of huge apartment-houses chiefly distinguishable from tenement-houses by the absence of fire-escapes on their facades, till Mrs. March refused to stop at any door where there were more than six bell-ratchets and speaking-tubes on either hand. Before the middle of the afternoon she decided against ratchets altogether, and confined herself to knobs, neatly set in the door-trim. Her husband was still sunk in the superstition that you can live anywhere you like in New York, and he would have paused at some places where her quicker eye caught the fatal sign of "Modes" in the ground-floor windows. She found that there was an east and west line beyond which they could

not go if they wished to keep their self-respect, and that within the region to which they had restricted themselves there was a choice of streets. At first all the New York streets looked to them ill-paved, dirty, and repulsive; the general infamy imparted itself in their casual impression to streets in no wise guilty. But they began to notice that some streets were quiet and clean, and, though never so quiet and clean as Boston streets, that they wore an air of encouraging reform, and suggested a future of greater and greater domesticity. Whole blocks of these downtown cross-streets seemed to have been redeemed from decay, and even in the midst of squalor a dwelling here and there had been seized, painted a dull red as to its brick-work, and a glossy black as to its wood-work, and with a bright brass bell-pull and door-knob and a large brass plate for its key-hole escutcheon, had been endowed with an effect of purity and pride which removed its shabby neighborhood far from it. Some of these houses were quite small, and imaginably within their means; but, as March said, some body seemed always to be living there himself, and the fact that none of them was to rent kept Mrs. March true to her ideal of a fiat. Nothing prevented its realization so much as its difference from the New York ideal of a flat, which was inflexibly seven rooms and a bath. One or two rooms might be at the front, the rest crooked and cornered backward through in creasing and then decreasing darkness till they reached a light bedroom or kitchen at the rear. It might be the one or the other, but it was always the seventh room with the bath; or if, as sometimes happened, it was the eighth, it was so after having counted the bath as one; in this case the janitor said you always counted the bath as one. If the flats were advertised as having "all light rooms," he explained that any room with a window giving into the open air of a court or shaft was counted a light room.

The Marches tried to make out why it was that these flats were go much more repulsive than the apartments which everyone lived in abroad; but they could only do so upon the supposition that in their European days they were too young, too happy, too full of the future, to notice whether rooms were inside or outside, light or dark, big or little, high or low. "Now we're imprisoned in the present," he said, "and we have to make the worst of it."

In their despair he had an inspiration, which she declared worthy of him: it was to take two small flats, of four or five rooms and a bath, and live in both. They tried this in a great many places, but they never could get two flats of the kind on the same floor where there was steam heat and an elevator. At one place they almost did it. They had resigned themselves to the humility of the neighborhood, to the prevalence of modistes and livery-stablemen (they seem to consort much in New York), to the garbage in the gutters and the litter of paper in the streets, to the faltering slats in the surrounding window-shutters and the crumbled brownstone steps and sills, when it turned out that one of the apartments had been taken between two visits they made. Then the only combination left open to them was of a ground-floor flat to the right and a third-floor flat to the left.

Still they kept this inspiration in reserve for use at the first opportunity. In the mean time there were several flats which they

thought they could almost make do: notably one where they could get an extra servant's room in the basement four flights down, and another where they could get it in the roof five flights up. At the first the janitor was respectful and enthusiastic; at the second he had an effect of ironical pessimism. When they trembled on the verge of taking his apartment, he pointed out a spot in the kalsomining of the parlor ceiling, and gratuitously said, Now such a thing as that he should not agree to put in shape unless they took the apartment for a term of years. The apartment was unfurnished, and they recurred to the fact that they wanted a furnished apartment, and made their escape. This saved them in several other extremities; but short of extremity they could not keep their different requirements in mind, and were always about to decide without regard to some one of them.

They went to several places twice without intending: once to that old-fashioned house with the pleasant colored janitor, and wandered all over the apartment again with a haunting sense of familiarity, and then recognized the janitor and laughed; and to that house with the pathetic widow and the pretty daughter who wished to take them to board. They stayed to excuse their blunder, and easily came by the fact that the mother had taken the house that the girl might have a home while she was in New York studying art, and they hoped to pay their way by taking boarders. Her daughter was at her class now, the mother concluded; and they encouraged her to believe that it could only be a few days till the rest of her scheme was realized.

"I dare say we could be perfectly comfortable there," March suggested when they had got away. "Now if we were truly humane we would modify our desires to meet their needs and end this sickening search, wouldn't we?"

"Yes, but we're not truly humane," his wife answered, "or at least not in that sense. You know you hate boarding; and if we went there I should have them on my sympathies the whole time."

"I see. And then you would take it out of me."

"Then I should take it out of you. And if you are going to be so weak, Basil, and let every little thing work upon you in that way, you'd better not come to New York. You'll see enough misery here."

"Well, don't take that superior tone with me, as if I were a child that had its mind set on an undesirable toy, Isabel."

"Ah, don't you suppose it's because you are such a child in some respects that I like you, dear?" she demanded, without relenting.

"But I don't find so much misery in New York. I don't suppose there's any more suffering here to the population than there is in the country. And they're so gay about it all. I think the outward aspect of the place and the hilarity of the sky and air must get into the people's blood. The weather is simply unapproachable; and I don't care if it is the ugliest place in the world, as you say. I suppose it is. It shrieks and yells with ugliness here and there but it never loses its spirits. That

widow is from the country. When she's been a year in New York she'll be as gay--as gay as an L road." He celebrated a satisfaction they both had in the L roads. "They kill the streets and avenues, but at least they partially hide them, and that is some comfort; and they do triumph over their prostrate forms with a savage exultation that is intoxicating. Those bends in the L that you get in the corner of Washington Square, or just below the Cooper Institute--they're the gayest things in the world. Perfectly atrocious, of course, but incomparably picturesque! And the whole city is so," said March, "or else the L would never have got built here. New York may be splendidly gay or squalidly gay; but, prince or pauper, it's gay always."

"Yes, gay is the word," she admitted, with a sigh. "But frantic. I can't get used to it. They forget death, Basil; they forget death in New York."

"Well, I don't know that I've ever found much advantage in remembering it."

"Don't say such a thing, dearest."

He could see that she had got to the end of her nervous strength for the present, and he proposed that they should take the Elevated road as far as it would carry them into the country, and shake off their nightmare of flat-hunting for an hour or two; but her conscience would not let her. She convicted him of levity equal to that of the New-Yorkers in proposing such a thing; and they dragged through the day. She was too tired to care for dinner, and in the night she had a dream from which she woke herself with a cry that roused him, too. It was something about the children at first, whom they had talked of wistfully before falling asleep, and then it was of a hideous thing with two square eyes and a series of sections growing darker and then lighter, till the tail of the monstrous articulate was quite luminous again. She shuddered at the vague description she was able to give; but he asked, "Did it offer to bite you?"

"No. That was the most frightful thing about it; it had no mouth."

March laughed. "Why, my dear, it was nothing but a harmless New York flat--seven rooms and a bath."

"I really believe it was," she consented, recognizing an architectural resemblance, and she fell asleep again, and woke renewed for the work before them.

IX.

Their house-hunting no longer had novelty, but it still had interest; and they varied their day by taking a coupe, by renouncing advertisements, and by reverting to agents. Some of these induced them to consider the

idea of furnished houses; and Mrs. March learned tolerance for Fulkerson by accepting permits to visit flats and houses which had none of the qualifications she desired in either, and were as far beyond her means as they were out of the region to which she had geographically restricted herself. They looked at three-thousand and four-thousand dollar apartments, and rejected them for one reason or another which had nothing to do with the rent; the higher the rent was, the more critical they were of the slippery inlaid floors and the arrangement of the richly decorated rooms. They never knew whether they had deceived the janitor or not; as they came in a coupe, they hoped they had.

They drove accidentally through one street that seemed gayer in the perspective than an L road. The fire-escapes, with their light iron balconies and ladders of iron, decorated the lofty house fronts; the roadway and sidewalks and door-steps swarmed with children; women's heads seemed to show at every window. In the basements, over which flights of high stone steps led to the tenements, were green-grocers' shops abounding in cabbages, and provision stores running chiefly to bacon and sausages, and cobblers' and tanners' shops, and the like, in proportion to the small needs of a poor neighborhood. Ash barrels lined the sidewalks, and garbage heaps filled the gutters; teams of all trades stood idly about; a peddler of cheap fruit urged his cart through the street, and mixed his cry with the joyous screams and shouts of the children and the scolding and gossiping voices of the women; the burly blue bulk of a policeman defined itself at the corner; a drunkard zigzagged down the sidewalk toward him. It was not the abode of the extremest poverty, but of a poverty as hopeless as any in the world, transmitting itself from generation to generation, and establishing conditions of permanency to which human life adjusts itself as it does to those of some incurable disease, like leprosy.

The time had been when the Marches would have taken a purely aesthetic view of the facts as they glimpsed them in this street of tenement-houses; when they would have contented themselves with saying that it was as picturesque as a street in Naples or Florence, and with wondering why nobody came to paint it; they would have thought they were sufficiently serious about it in blaming the artists for their failure to appreciate it, and going abroad for the picturesque when they had it here under their noses. It was to the nose that the street made one of its strongest appeals, and Mrs. March pulled up her window of the coupe. "Why does he take us through such a disgusting street?" she demanded, with an exasperation of which her husband divined the origin.

"This driver may be a philanthropist in disguise," he answered, with dreamy irony, "and may want us to think about the people who are not merely carried through this street in a coupe, but have to spend their whole lives in it, winter and summer, with no hopes of driving out of it, except in a hearse. I must say they don't seem to mind it. I haven't seen a jollier crowd anywhere in New York. They seem to have forgotten death a little more completely than any of their fellow-citizens, Isabel. And I wonder what they think of us, making this gorgeous progress through their midst. I suppose they think we're rich, and hate us--if they hate rich people; they don't look as if they hated anybody. Should we be as

patient as they are with their discomfort? I don't believe there's steam heat or an elevator in the whole block. Seven rooms and a bath would be more than the largest and genteelest family would know what to do with. They wouldn't know what to do with the bath, anyway."

His monologue seemed to interest his wife apart from the satirical point it had for themselves. "You ought to get Mr. Fulkerson to let you work some of these New York sights up for Every Other Week, Basil; you could do them very nicely."

"Yes; I've thought of that. But don't let's leave the personal ground. Doesn't it make you feel rather small and otherwise unworthy when you see the kind of street these fellow-beings of yours live in, and then think how particular you are about locality and the number of bellpulls? I don't see even ratchets and speaking-tubes at these doors." He craned his neck out of the window for a better look, and the children of discomfort cheered him, out of sheer good feeling and high spirits. "I didn't know I was so popular. Perhaps it's a recognition of my humane sentiments."

"Oh, it's very easy to have humane sentiments, and to satirize ourselves for wanting eight rooms and a bath in a good neighborhood, when we see how these wretched creatures live," said his wife. "But if we shared all we have with them, and then settled down among them, what good would it do?"

"Not the least in the world. It might help us for the moment, but it wouldn't keep the wolf from their doors for a week; and then they would go on just as before, only they wouldn't be on such good terms with the wolf. The only way for them is to keep up an unbroken intimacy with the wolf; then they can manage him somehow. I don't know how, and I'm afraid I don't want to. Wouldn't you like to have this fellow drive us round among the halls of pride somewhere for a little while? Fifth Avenue or Madison, up-town?"

"No; we've no time to waste. I've got a place near Third Avenue, on a nice cross street, and I want him to take us there." It proved that she had several addresses near together, and it seemed best to dismiss their coupe and do the rest of their afternoon's work on foot. It came to nothing; she was not humbled in the least by what she had seen in the tenement-house street; she yielded no point in her ideal of a flat, and the flats persistently refused to lend themselves to it. She lost all patience with them.

"Oh, I don't say the flats are in the right of it," said her husband, when she denounced their stupid inadequacy to the purposes of a Christian home. "But I'm not so sure that we are, either. I've been thinking about that home business ever since my sensibilities were dragged--in a coupe--through that tenement-house street. Of course, no child born and brought up in such a place as that could have any conception of home. But that's because those poor people can't give character to their habitations. They have to take what they can get. But people like us--that is, of our means--do give character to the average flat. It's made

to meet their tastes, or their supposed tastes; and so it's made for social show, not for family life at all. Think of a baby in a flat! It's a contradiction in terms; the flat is the negation of motherhood. The flat means society life; that is, the pretence of social life. It's made to give artificial people a society basis on a little money--too much money, of course, for what they get. So the cost of the building is put into marble halls and idiotic decoration of all kinds. I don't object to the conveniences, but none of these flats has a living-room. They have drawing-rooms to foster social pretence, and they have dining-rooms and bedrooms; but they have no room where the family can all come together and feel the sweetness of being a family. The bedrooms are black-holes mostly, with a sinful waste of space in each. If it were not for the marble halls, and the decorations, and the foolishly expensive finish, the houses could be built round a court, and the flats could be shaped something like a Pompeian house, with small sleeping-closets--only lit from the outside--and the rest of the floor thrown into two or three large cheerful halls, where all the family life could go on, and society could be transacted unpretentiously. Why, those tenements are better and humaner than those flats! There the whole family lives in the kitchen, and has its consciousness of being; but the flat abolishes the family consciousness. It's confinement without coziness; it's cluttered without being snug. You couldn't keep a self-respecting cat in a flat; you couldn't go down cellar to get cider. No! the Anglo-Saxon home, as we know it in the Anglo-Saxon house, is simply impossible in the Franco-American flat, not because it's humble, but because it's false."

"Well, then," said Mrs. March, "let's look at houses."

He had been denouncing the flat in the abstract, and he had not expected this concrete result. But he said, "We will look at houses, then."

X.

Nothing mystifies a man more than a woman's aberrations from some point at which he, supposes her fixed as a star. In these unfurnished houses, without steam or elevator, March followed his wife about with patient wonder. She rather liked the worst of them best: but she made him go down into the cellars and look at the furnaces; she exacted from him a rigid inquest of the plumbing. She followed him into one of the cellars by the fitful glare of successively lighted matches, and they enjoyed a moment in which the anomaly of their presence there on that errand, so remote from all the facts of their long-established life in Boston, realized itself for them.

"Think how easily we might have been murdered and nobody been any the wiser!" she said when they were comfortably outdoors again.

"Yes, or made way with ourselves in an access of emotional insanity, supposed to have been induced by unavailing flat-hunting," he suggested. She fell in with the notion. "I'm beginning to feel crazy. But I don't

want you to lose your head, Basil. And I don't want you to sentimentalize any of the things you see in New York. I think you were disposed to do it in that street we drove through. I don't believe there's any real suffering--not real suffering--among those people; that is, it would be suffering from our point of view, but they've been used to it all their lives, and they don't feel their' discomfort so much."

"Of course, I understand that, and I don't propose to sentimentalize them. I think when people get used to a bad state of things they had better stick to it; in fact, they don't usually like a better state so well, and I shall keep that firmly in mind."

She laughed with him, and they walked along the L bestridden avenue, exhilarated by their escape from murder and suicide in that cellar, toward the nearest cross town track, which they meant to take home to their hotel. "Now to-night we will go to the theatre," she said, "and get this whole house business out of our minds, and be perfectly fresh for a new start in the morning." Suddenly she clutched his arm. "Why, did you see that man?" and she signed with her head toward a decently dressed person who walked beside them, next the gutter, stooping over as if to examine it, and half halting at times.

"No. What?"

"Why, I saw him pick up a dirty bit of cracker from the pavement and cram it into his mouth and eat it down as if he were famished. And look! he's actually hunting for more in those garbage heaps!"

This was what the decent-looking man with the hard hands and broken nails of a workman was doing--like a hungry dog. They kept up with him, in the fascination of the sight, to the next corner, where he turned down the side street still searching the gutter.

They walked on a few paces. Then March said, "I must go after him," and left his wife standing.

"Are you in want--hungry?" he asked the man.

The man said he could not speak English, Monsieur.

March asked his question in French.

The man shrugged a pitiful, desperate shrug, "Mais, Monsieur--"

March put a coin in his hand, and then suddenly the man's face twisted up; he caught the hand of this alms-giver in both of his and clung to it. "Monsieur! Monsieur!" he gasped, and the tears rained down his face.

His benefactor pulled himself away, shocked and ashamed, as one is by such a chance, and got back to his wife, and the man lapsed back into the mystery of misery out of which he had emerged.

March felt it laid upon him to console his wife for what had happened.

"Of course, we might live here for years and not see another case like that; and, of course, there are twenty places where he could have gone for help if he had known where to find them."

"Ah, but it's the possibility of his needing the help so badly as that," she answered. "That's what I can't bear, and I shall not come to a place where such things are possible, and we may as well stop our house-hunting here at once."

"Yes? And what part of Christendom will you live in? Such things are possible everywhere in our conditions."

"Then we must change the conditions--"

"Oh no; we must go to the theatre and forget them. We can stop at Brentano's for our tickets as we pass through Union Square."

"I am not going to the theatre, Basil. I am going home to Boston to-night. You can stay and find a flat."

He convinced her of the absurdity of her position, and even of its selfishness; but she said that her mind was quite made up irrespective of what had happened, that she had been away from the children long enough; that she ought to be at home to finish up the work of leaving it. The word brought a sigh. "Ah, I don't know why we should see nothing but sad and ugly things now. When we were young--"

"Younger," he put in. "We're still young."

"That's what we pretend, but we know better. But I was thinking how pretty and pleasant things used to be turning up all the time on our travels in the old days. Why, when we were in New York here on our wedding journey the place didn't seem half so dirty as it does now, and none of these dismal things happened."

"It was a good deal dirtier," he answered; "and I fancy worse in every way--hungrier, raggeder, more wretchedly housed. But that wasn't the period of life for us to notice it. Don't you remember, when we started to Niagara the last time, how everybody seemed middle-aged and commonplace; and when we got there there were no evident brides; nothing but elderly married people?"

"At least they weren't starving," she rebelled.

"No, you don't starve in parlor-cars and first-class hotels; but if you step out of them you run your chance of seeing those who do, if you're getting on pretty well in the forties. If it's the unhappy who see unhappiness, think what misery must be revealed to people who pass their lives in the really squalid tenement-house streets--I don't mean picturesque avenues like that we passed through."

"But we are not unhappy," she protested, bringing the talk back to the personal base again, as women must to get any good out of talk. "We're

really no unhappier than we were when we were young."

"We're more serious."

"Well, I hate it; and I wish you wouldn't be so serious, if that's what it brings us to."

"I will be trivial from this on," said March. "Shall we go to the Hole in the Ground to-night?"

"I am going to Boston."

"It's much the same thing. How do you like that for triviality? It's a little blasphemous, I'll allow."

"It's very silly," she said.

At the hotel they found a letter from the agent who had sent them the permit to see Mrs. Grosvenor Green's apartment. He wrote that she had heard they were pleased with her apartment, and that she thought she could make the terms to suit. She had taken her passage for Europe, and was very anxious to let the flat before she sailed. She would call that evening at seven.

"Mrs. Grosvenor Green!" said Mrs. March. "Which of the ten thousand flats is it, Basil?"

"The gimcrackery," he answered. "In the Xenophon, you know."

"Well, she may save herself the trouble. I shall not see her. Or yes-- I must. I couldn't go away without seeing what sort of creature could have planned that fly-away flat. She must be a perfect--"

"Parachute," March suggested.

"No! anybody so light as that couldn't come down."

"Well, toy balloon."

"Toy balloon will do for the present," Mrs. March admitted. "But I feel that naught but herself can be her parallel for volatility."

When Mrs. Grosvenor-Green's card came up they both descended to the hotel parlor, which March said looked like the saloon of a Moorish day-boat; not that he knew of any such craft, but the decorations were so Saracenic and the architecture so Hudson Riverish. They found there on the grand central divan a large lady whose vast smoothness, placidity, and plumpness set at defiance all their preconceptions of Mrs. Grosvenor Green, so that Mrs. March distinctly paused with her card in her hand before venturing even tentatively to address her. Then she was astonished at the low, calm voice in which Mrs. Green acknowledged herself, and slowly proceeded to apologize for calling. It was not quite true that she had taken her passage for Europe, but she hoped soon to do

so, and she confessed that in the mean time she was anxious to let her flat. She was a little worn out with the care of housekeeping-- Mrs. March breathed, "Oh yes!" in the sigh with which ladies recognize one another's martyrdom--and Mrs. Green had business abroad, and she was going to pursue her art studies in Paris; she drew in Mr. Ilcomb's class now, but the instruction was so much better in Paris; and as the superintendent seemed to think the price was the only objection, she had ventured to call.

"Then we didn't deceive him in the least," thought Mrs. March, while she answered, sweetly: "No; we were only afraid that it would be too small for our family. We require a good many rooms." She could not forego the opportunity of saying, "My husband is coming to New York to take charge of a literary periodical, and he will have to have a room to write in," which made Mrs. Green bow to March, and made March look sheepish. "But we did think the apartment very charming", (It was architecturally charming, she protested to her conscience)," and we should have been so glad if we could have got into it." She followed this with some account of their house-hunting, amid soft murmurs of sympathy from Mrs. Green, who said that she had been through all that, and that if she could have shown her apartment to them she felt sure that she could have explained it so that they would have seen its capabilities better, Mrs. March assented to this, and Mrs. Green added that if they found nothing exactly suitable she would be glad to have them look at it again; and then Mrs. March said that she was going back to Boston herself, but she was leaving Mr. March to continue the search; and she had no doubt he would be only too glad to see the apartment by daylight. "But if you take it, Basil," she warned him, when they were alone, "I shall simply renounce you. I wouldn't live in that junk-shop if you gave it to me. But who would have thought she was that kind of looking person? Though of course I might have known if I had stopped to think once. It's because the place doesn't express her at all that it's so unlike her. It couldn't be like anybody, or anything that flies in the air, or creeps upon the earth, or swims in the waters under the earth. I wonder where in the world she's from; she's no New-Yorker; even we can see that; and she's not quite a country person, either; she seems like a person from some large town, where she's been an aesthetic authority. And she can't find good enough art instruction in New York, and has to go to Paris for it! Well, it's pathetic, after all, Basil. I can't help feeling sorry for a person who mistakes herself to that extent."

"I can't help feeling sorry for the husband of a person who mistakes herself to that extent. What is Mr. Grosvenor Green going to do in Paris while she's working her way into the Salon?"

"Well, you keep away from her apartment, Basil; that's all I've got to say to you. And yet I do like some things about her."

"I like everything about her but her apartment," said March.

"I like her going to be out of the country," said his wife. "We shouldn't be overlooked. And the place was prettily shaped, you can't deny it. And there was an elevator and steam heat. And the location is

very convenient. And there was a hall-boy to bring up cards. The halls and stairs were kept very clean and nice. But it wouldn't do. I could put you a folding bed in the room where you wrote, and we could even have one in the parlor"

"Behind a portiere? I couldn't stand any more portieres!"

"And we could squeeze the two girls into one room, or perhaps only bring Margaret, and put out the whole of the wash. Basil!" she almost shrieked, "it isn't to be thought of!"

He retorted, "I'm not thinking of it, my dear."

Fulkerson came in just before they started for Mrs. March's train, to find out what had become of them, he said, and to see whether they had got anything to live in yet.

"Not a thing," she said. "And I'm just going back to Boston, and leaving Mr. March here to do anything he pleases about it. He has 'carte blanche.'"

"But freedom brings responsibility, you know, Fulkerson, and it's the same as if I'd no choice. I'm staying behind because I'm left, not because I expect to do anything."

"Is that so?" asked Fulkerson. "Well, we must see what can be done. I supposed you would be all settled by this time, or I should have humped myself to find you something. None of those places I gave you amounts to anything?"

"As much as forty thousand others we've looked at," said Mrs. March. "Yes, one of them does amount to something. It comes so near being what we want that I've given Mr. March particular instructions not to go near it."

She told him about Mrs. Grosvenor Green and her flats, and at the end he said:

"Well, well, we must look out for that. I'll keep an eye on him, Mrs. March, and see that he doesn't do anything rash, and I won't leave him till he's found just the right thing. It exists, of course; it must in a city of eighteen hundred thousand people, and the only question is where to find it. You leave him to me, Mrs. March; I'll watch out for him."

Fulkerson showed some signs of going to the station when he found they were not driving, but she bade him a peremptory good-bye at the hotel door.

"He's very nice, Basil, and his way with you is perfectly charming. It's very sweet to see how really fond of you he is. But I didn't want him stringing along with us up to Forty-second Street and spoiling our last moments together."

At Third Avenue they took the Elevated for which she confessed an infatuation. She declared it the most ideal way of getting about in the world, and was not ashamed when he reminded her of how she used to say that nothing under the sun could induce her to travel on it. She now said that the night transit was even more interesting than the day, and that the fleeing intimacy you formed with people in second and third floor interiors, while all the usual street life went on underneath, had a domestic intensity mixed with a perfect repose that was the last effect of good society with all its security and exclusiveness. He said it was better than the theatre, of which it reminded him, to see those people through their windows: a family party of work-folk at a late tea, some of the men in their shirt-sleeves; a woman sewing by a lamp; a mother laying her child in its cradle; a man with his head fallen on his hands upon a table; a girl and her lover leaning over the window-sill together. What suggestion! what drama? what infinite interest! At the Forty-second Street station they stopped a minute on the bridge that crosses the track to the branch road for the Central Depot, and looked up and down the long stretch of the Elevated to north and south. The track that found and lost itself a thousand times in the flare and tremor of the innumerable lights; the moony sheen of the electrics mixing with the reddish points and blots of gas far and near; the architectural shapes of houses and churches and towers, rescued by the obscurity from all that was ignoble in them, and the coming and going of the trains marking the stations with vivider or fainter plumes of flame-shot steam-formed an incomparable perspective. They often talked afterward of the superb spectacle, which in a city full of painters nightly works its unrecorded miracles; and they were just to the Arachne roof spun in iron over the cross street on which they ran to the depot; but for the present they were mostly inarticulate before it. They had another moment of rich silence when they paused in the gallery that leads from the Elevated station to the waiting-rooms in the Central Depot and looked down upon the great night trains lying on the tracks dim under the rain of gas-lights that starred without dispersing the vast darkness of the place. What forces, what fates, slept in these bulks which would soon be hurling themselves north and south and west through the night! Now they waited there like fabled monsters of Arab story ready for the magician's touch, tractable, reckless, will-less--organized lifelessness full of a strange semblance of life.

The Marches admired the impressive sight with a thrill of patriotic pride in the fact that the whole world perhaps could not afford just the like. Then they hurried down to the ticket-offices, and he got her a lower berth in the Boston sleeper, and went with her to the car. They made the most of the fact that her berth was in the very middle of the car; and she promised to write as soon as she reached home. She promised also that, having seen the limitations of New York in respect to flats, she would not be hard on him if he took something not quite ideal. Only he must remember that it was not to be above Twentieth Street nor below Washington Square; it must not be higher than the third floor; it must have an elevator, steam heat, hail-boys, and a pleasant janitor. These were essentials; if he could not get them, then they must do without. But he must get them.

XI.

Mrs. March was one of those wives who exact a more rigid adherence to their ideals from their husbands than from themselves. Early in their married life she had taken charge of him in all matters which she considered practical. She did not include the business of bread-winning in these; that was an affair that might safely be left to his absent-minded, dreamy inefficiency, and she did not interfere with him there. But in such things as rehangings the pictures, deciding on a summer boarding-place, taking a seaside cottage, repapering rooms, choosing seats at the theatre, seeing what the children ate when she was not at table, shutting the cat out at night, keeping run of calls and invitations, and seeing if the furnace was dampered, he had failed her so often that she felt she could not leave him the slightest discretion in regard to a flat. Her total distrust of his judgment in the matters cited and others like them consisted with the greatest admiration of his mind and respect for his character. She often said that if he would only bring these to bear in such exigencies he would be simply perfect; but she had long given up his ever doing so. She subjected him, therefore, to an iron code, but after proclaiming it she was apt to abandon him to the native lawlessness of his temperament. She expected him in this event to do as he pleased, and she resigned herself to it with considerable comfort in holding him accountable. He learned to expect this, and after suffering keenly from her disappointment with whatever he did he waited patiently till she forgot her grievance and began to extract what consolation lurks in the irreparable. She would almost admit at moments that what he had done was a very good thing, but she reserved the right to return in full force to her original condemnation of it; and she accumulated each act of independent volition in witness and warning against him. Their mass oppressed but never deterred him. He expected to do the wrong thing when left to his own devices, and he did it without any apparent recollection of his former misdeeds and their consequences. There was a good deal of comedy in it all, and some tragedy.

He now experienced a certain expansion, such as husbands of his kind will imagine, on going back to his hotel alone. It was, perhaps, a revulsion from the pain of parting; and he toyed with the idea of Mrs. Grosvenor Green's apartment, which, in its preposterous unsuitability, had a strange attraction. He felt that he could take it with less risk than anything else they had seen, but he said he would look at all the other places in town first. He really spent the greater part of the next day in hunting up the owner of an apartment that had neither steam heat nor an elevator, but was otherwise perfect, and trying to get him to take less than the agent asked. By a curious psychical operation he was able, in the transaction, to work himself into quite a passionate desire for the apartment, while he held the Grosvenor Green apartment in the background of his mind as something that he could return to as altogether more suitable. He conducted some simultaneous negotiation for a furnished house, which enhanced still more the desirability of the

Grosvenor Green apartment. Toward evening he went off at a tangent far up-town, so as to be able to tell his wife how utterly preposterous the best there would be as compared even with this ridiculous Grosvenor Green gimcrackery. It is hard to report the processes of his sophistication; perhaps this, again, may best be left to the marital imagination.

He rang at the last of these up-town apartments as it was falling dusk, and it was long before the janitor appeared. Then the man was very surly, and said if he looked at the flat now he would say it was too dark, like all the rest. His reluctance irritated March in proportion to his insincerity in proposing to look at it at all. He knew he did not mean to take it under any circumstances; that he was going to use his inspection of it in dishonest justification of his disobedience to his wife; but he put on an air of offended dignity. "If you don't wish to show the apartment," he said, "I don't care to see it."

The man groaned, for he was heavy, and no doubt dreaded the stairs. He scratched a match on his thigh, and led the way up. March was sorry for him, and he put his fingers on a quarter in his waistcoat-pocket to give him at parting. At the same time, he had to trump up an objection to the flat. This was easy, for it was advertised as containing ten rooms, and he found the number eked out with the bath-room and two large closets. "It's light enough," said March, "but I don't see how you make out ten rooms"

"There's ten rooms," said the man, deigning no proof.

March took his fingers off the quarter, and went down-stairs and out of the door without another word. It would be wrong, it would be impossible, to give the man anything after such insolence. He reflected, with shame, that it was also cheaper to punish than forgive him.

He returned to his hotel prepared for any desperate measure, and convinced now that the Grosvenor Green apartment was not merely the only thing left for him, but was, on its own merits, the best thing in New York.

Fulkerson was waiting for him in the reading-room, and it gave March the curious thrill with which a man closes with temptation when he said: "Look here! Why don't you take that woman's flat in the Xenophon? She's been at the agents again, and they've been at me. She likes your look--or Mrs. March's--and I guess you can have it at a pretty heavy discount from the original price. I'm authorized to say you can have it for one seventy-five a month, and I don't believe it would be safe for you to offer one fifty."

March shook his head, and dropped a mask of virtuous rejection over his corrupt acquiescence. "It's too small for us--we couldn't squeeze into it."

"Why, look here!" Fulkerson persisted. "How many rooms do you people want?"

"I've got to have a place to work--"

"Of course! And you've got to have it at the Fifth Wheel office."

"I hadn't thought of that," March began. "I suppose I could do my work at the office, as there's not much writing--"

"Why, of course you can't do your work at home. You just come round with me now, and look at that again."

"No; I can't do it."

"Why?"

"I--I've got to dine."

"All right," said Fulkerson. "Dine with me. I want to take you round to a little Italian place that I know."

One may trace the successive steps of March's descent in this simple matter with the same edification that would attend the study of the self-delusions and obfuscations of a man tempted to crime. The process is probably not at all different, and to the philosophical mind the kind of result is unimportant; the process is everything.

Fulkerson led him down one block and half across another to the steps of a small dwelling-house, transformed, like many others, into a restaurant of the Latin ideal, with little or no structural change from the pattern of the lower middle-class New York home. There were the corroded brownstone steps, the mean little front door, and the cramped entry with its narrow stairs by which ladies could go up to a dining-room appointed for them on the second floor; the parlors on the first were set about with tables, where men smoked cigarettes between the courses, and a single waiter ran swiftly to and fro with plates and dishes, and, exchanged unintelligible outcries with a cook beyond a slide in the back parlor. He rushed at the new-comers, brushed the soiled table-cloth before them with a towel on his arm, covered its worst stains with a napkin, and brought them, in their order, the vermicelli soup, the fried fish, the cheese-strewn spaghetti, the veal cutlets, the tepid roast fowl and salad, and the wizened pear and coffee which form the dinner at such places.

"Ah, this is nice!" said Fulkerson, after the laying of the charitable napkin, and he began to recognize acquaintances, some of whom he described to March as young literary men and artists with whom they should probably have to do; others were simply frequenters of the place, and were of all nationalities and religions apparently--at least, several were Hebrews and Cubans. "You get a pretty good slice of New York here," he said, "all except the frosting on top. That you won't find much at Maroni's, though you will occasionally. I don't mean the ladies ever, of course." The ladies present seemed harmless and reputable-looking people enough, but certainly they were not of the first fashion, and, except in a few instances, not Americans. "It's like cutting straight

down through a fruitcake," Fulkerson went on, "or a mince-pie, when you don't know who made the pie; you get a little of everything." He ordered a small flask of Chianti with the dinner, and it came in its pretty wicker jacket. March smiled upon it with tender reminiscence, and Fulkerson laughed. "Lights you up a little. I brought old Dryfoos here one day, and he thought it was sweet-oil; that's the kind of bottle they used to have it in at the country drug-stores."

"Yes, I remember now; but I'd totally forgotten it," said March.

"How far back that goes! Who's Dryfoos?"

"Dryfoos?" Fulkerson, still smiling, tore off a piece of the half-yard of French loaf which had been supplied them, with two pale, thin disks of butter, and fed it into himself. "Old Dryfoos? Well, of course! I call him old, but he ain't so very. About fifty, or along there."

"No," said March, "that isn't very old--or not so old as it used to be."

"Well, I suppose you've got to know about him, anyway," said Fulkerson, thoughtfully. "And I've been wondering just how I should tell you. Can't always make out exactly how much of a Bostonian you really are! Ever been out in the natural-gas country?"

"No," said March. "I've had a good deal of curiosity about it, but I've never been able to get away except in summer, and then we always preferred to go over the old ground, out to Niagara and back through Canada, the route we took on our wedding journey. The children like it as much as we do."

"Yes, yes," said Fulkerson. "Well, the natural-gas country is worth seeing. I don't mean the Pittsburg gas-fields, but out in Northern Ohio and Indiana around Moffitt--that's the place in the heart of the gas region that they've been booming so. Yes, you ought to see that country. If you haven't been West for a good many years, you haven't got any idea how old the country looks. You remember how the fields used to be all full of stumps?"

"I should think so."

"Well, you won't see any stumps now. All that country out around Moffitt is just as smooth as a checker-board, and looks as old as England. You know how we used to burn the stumps out; and then somebody invented a stump-extractor, and we pulled them out with a yoke of oxen. Now they just touch 'em off with a little dynamite, and they've got a cellar dug and filled up with kindling ready for housekeeping whenever you want it. Only they haven't got any use for kindling in that country--all gas. I rode along on the cars through those level black fields at corn-planting time, and every once in a while I'd come to a place with a piece of ragged old stove-pipe stickin' up out of the ground, and blazing away like forty, and a fellow ploughing all round it and not minding it any more than if it was spring violets. Horses didn't notice it, either. Well, they've always known about the gas out there; they say there are places in the woods where it's been burning ever since the country was

settled.

"But when you come in sight of Moffitt--my, oh, my! Well, you come in smell of it about as soon. That gas out there ain't odorless, like the Pittsburg gas, and so it's perfectly safe; but the smell isn't bad--about as bad as the finest kind of benzine. Well, the first thing that strikes you when you come to Moffitt is the notion that there has been a good warm, growing rain, and the town's come up overnight. That's in the suburbs, the annexes, and additions. But it ain't shabby--no shanty-farm business; nice brick and frame houses, some of 'em Queen Anne style, and all of 'em looking as if they had come to stay. And when you drive up from the depot you think everybody's moving. Everything seems to be piled into the street; old houses made over, and new ones going up everywhere. You know the kind of street Main Street always used to be in our section--half plank-road and turnpike, and the rest mud-hole, and a lot of stores and doggeries strung along with false fronts a story higher than the back, and here and there a decent building with the gable end to the public; and a court-house and jail and two taverns and three or four churches. Well, they're all there in Moffitt yet, but architecture has struck it hard, and they've got a lot of new buildings that needn't be ashamed of themselves anywhere; the new court-house is as big as St. Peter's, and the Grand Opera-house is in the highest style of the art. You can't buy a lot on that street for much less than you can buy a lot in New York--or you couldn't when the boom was on; I saw the place just when the boom was in its prime. I went out there to work the newspapers in the syndicate business, and I got one of their men to write me a real bright, snappy account of the gas; and they just took me in their arms and showed me everything. Well, it was wonderful, and it was beautiful, too! To see a whole community stirred up like that was--just like a big boy, all hope and high spirits, and no discount on the remotest future; nothing but perpetual boom to the end of time--I tell you it warmed your blood. Why, there were some things about it that made you think what a nice kind of world this would be if people ever took hold together, instead of each fellow fighting it out on his own hook, and devil take the hindmost. They made up their minds at Moffitt that if they wanted their town to grow they'd got to keep their gas public property. So they extended their corporation line so as to take in pretty much the whole gas region round there; and then the city took possession of every well that was put down, and held it for the common good. Anybody that's a mind to come to Moffitt and start any kind of manufacture can have all the gas he wants free; and for fifteen dollars a year you can have all the gas you want to heat and light your private house. The people hold on to it for themselves, and, as I say, it's a grand sight to see a whole community hanging together and working for the good of all, instead of splitting up into as many different cut-throats as there are able-bodied citizens. See that fellow?" Fulkerson broke off, and indicated with a twirl of his head a short, dark, foreign-looking man going out of the door. "They say that fellow's a Socialist. I think it's a shame they're allowed to come here. If they don't like the way we manage our affairs let 'em stay at home," Fulkerson continued. "They do a lot of mischief, shooting off their mouths round here. I believe in free speech and all that; but I'd like to see these fellows shut up in jail and left to jaw one another to death. We don't want any of their poison."

March did not notice the vanishing Socialist. He was watching, with a teasing sense of familiarity, a tall, shabbily dressed, elderly man, who had just come in. He had the aquiline profile uncommon among Germans, and yet March recognized him at once as German. His long, soft beard and mustache had once been fair, and they kept some tone of their yellow in the gray to which they had turned. His eyes were full, and his lips and chin shaped the beard to the noble outline which shows in the beards the Italian masters liked to paint for their Last Suppers. His carriage was erect and soldierly, and March presently saw that he had lost his left hand. He took his place at a table where the overworked waiter found time to cut up his meat and put everything in easy reach of his right hand.

"Well," Fulkerson resumed, "they took me round everywhere in Moffitt, and showed me their big wells--lit 'em up for a private view, and let me hear them purr with the soft accents of a mass-meeting of locomotives. Why, when they let one of these wells loose in a meadow that they'd piped it into temporarily, it drove the flame away forty feet from the mouth of the pipe and blew it over half an acre of ground. They say when they let one of their big wells burn away all winter before they had learned how to control it, that well kept up a little summer all around it; the grass stayed green, and the flowers bloomed all through the winter. I don't know whether it's so or not. But I can believe anything of natural gas. My! but it was beautiful when they turned on the full force of that well and shot a roman candle into the gas--that's the way they light it--and a plume of fire about twenty feet wide and seventy-five feet high, all red and yellow and violet, jumped into the sky, and that big roar shook the ground under your feet! You felt like saying:

"Don't trouble yourself; I'm perfectly convinced. I believe in Moffitt.' We-e-e-ll!" drawled Fulkerson, with a long breath, "that's where I met old Dryfoos."

"Oh yes!--Dryfoos," said March. He observed that the waiter had brought the old one-handed German a towering glass of beer.

"Yes," Fulkerson laughed. "We've got round to Dryfoos again. I thought I could cut a long story short, but I seem to be cutting a short story long. If you're not in a hurry, though--"

"Not in the least. Go on as long as you like."

"I met him there in the office of a real-estate man--speculator, of course; everybody was, in Moffitt; but a first-rate fellow, and public-spirited as all get-out; and when Dryfoos left he told me about him. Dryfoos was an old Pennsylvania Dutch farmer, about three or four miles out of Moffitt, and he'd lived there pretty much all his life; father was one of the first settlers. Everybody knew he had the right stuff in him, but he was slower than molasses in January, like those Pennsylvania Dutch. He'd got together the largest and handsomest farm anywhere around there; and he was making money on it, just like he was in some business somewhere; he was a very intelligent man; he took the papers and kept

himself posted; but he was awfully old-fashioned in his ideas. He hung on to the doctrines as well as the dollars of the dads; it was a real thing with him. Well, when the boom began to come he hated it awfully, and he fought it. He used to write communications to the weekly newspaper in Moffitt--they've got three dailies there now--and throw cold water on the boom. He couldn't catch on no way. It made him sick to hear the clack that went on about the gas the whole while, and that stirred up the neighborhood and got into his family. Whenever he'd hear of a man that had been offered a big price for his land and was going to sell out and move into town, he'd go and labor with him and try to talk him out of it, and tell him how long his fifteen or twenty thousand would last him to live on, and shake the Standard Oil Company before him, and try to make him believe it wouldn't be five years before the Standard owned the whole region.

"Of course, he couldn't do anything with them. When a man's offered a big price for his farm, he don't care whether it's by a secret emissary from the Standard Oil or not; he's going to sell and get the better of the other fellow if he can. Dryfoos couldn't keep the boom out of his own family even. His wife was with him. She thought whatever he said and did was just as right as if it had been thundered down from Sinai. But the young folks were sceptical, especially the girls that had been away to school. The boy that had been kept at home because he couldn't be spared from helping his father manage the farm was more like him, but they contrived to stir the boy up--with the hot end of the boom, too. So when a fellow came along one day and offered old Dryfoos a cool hundred thousand for his farm, it was all up with Dryfoos. He'd 'a' liked to 'a' kept the offer to himself and not done anything about it, but his vanity wouldn't let him do that; and when he let it out in his family the girls outvoted him. They just made him sell.

"He wouldn't sell all. He kept about eighty acres that was off in some piece by itself, but the three hundred that had the old brick house on it, and the big barn--that went, and Dryfoos bought him a place in Moffitt and moved into town to live on the interest of his money. Just what he had scolded and ridiculed everybody else for doing. Well, they say that at first he seemed like he would go crazy. He hadn't anything to do. He took a fancy to that land-agent, and he used to go and set in his office and ask him what he should do. 'I hain't got any horses, I hain't got any cows, I hain't got any pigs, I hain't got any chickens. I hain't got anything to do from sun-up to sun-down.' The fellow said the tears used to run down the old fellow's cheeks, and if he hadn't been so busy himself he believed he should 'a' cried, too. But most o' people thought old Dryfoos was down in the mouth because he hadn't asked more for his farm, when he wanted to buy it back and found they held it at a hundred and fifty thousand. People couldn't believe he was just homesick and heartsick for the old place. Well, perhaps he was sorry he hadn't asked more; that's human nature, too.

"After a while something happened. That land-agent used to tell Dryfoos to get out to Europe with his money and see life a little, or go and live in Washington, where he could be somebody; but Dryfoos wouldn't, and he kept listening to the talk there, and all of a sudden he caught on. He

came into that fellow's one day with a plan for cutting up the eighty acres he'd kept into town lots; and he'd got it all plotted out so-well, and had so many practical ideas about it, that the fellow was astonished. He went right in with him, as far as Dryfoos would let him, and glad of the chance; and they were working the thing for all it was worth when I struck Moffitt. Old Dryfoos wanted me to go out and see the Dryfoos & Hendry Addition--guess he thought maybe I'd write it up; and he drove me out there himself. Well, it was funny to see a town made: streets driven through; two rows of shadetrees, hard and soft, planted; cellars dug and houses put up-regular Queen Anne style, too, with stained glass-all at once. Dryfoos apologized for the streets because they were hand-made; said they expected their street-making machine Tuesday, and then they intended to push things."

Fulkerson enjoyed the effect of his picture on March for a moment, and then went on: "He was mighty intelligent, too, and he questioned me up about my business as sharp as I ever was questioned; seemed to kind of strike his fancy; I guess he wanted to find out if there was any money in it. He was making money, hand over hand, then; and he never stopped speculating and improving till he'd scraped together three or four hundred thousand dollars, they said a million, but they like round numbers at Moffitt, and I guess half a million would lay over it comfortably and leave a few thousands to spare, probably. Then he came on to New York."

Fulkerson struck a match against the ribbed side of the porcelain cup that held the matches in the centre of the table, and lit a cigarette, which he began to smoke, throwing his head back with a leisurely effect, as if he had got to the end of at least as much of his story as he meant to tell without prompting.

March asked him the desired question. "What in the world for?"

Fulkerson took out his cigarette and said, with a smile: "To spend his money, and get his daughters into the old Knickerbocker society. Maybe he thought they were all the same kind of Dutch."

"And has he succeeded?"

"Well, they're not social leaders yet. But it's only a question of time --generation or two--especially if time's money, and if Every Other Week is the success it's bound to be."

"You don't mean to say, Fulkerson," said March, with a half-doubting, half-daunted laugh, "that he's your Angel?"

"That's what I mean to say," returned Fulkerson. "I ran onto him in Broadway one day last summer. If you ever saw anybody in your life; you're sure to meet him in Broadway again, sooner or later. That's the philosophy of the bunco business; country people from the same neighborhood are sure to run up against each other the first time they come to New York. I put out my hand, and I said, 'Isn't this Mr. Dryfoos from Moffitt?' He didn't seem to have any use for my hand; he let me

keep it, and he squared those old lips of his till his imperial stuck straight out. Ever see Bernhardt in 'L'Etrangere'? Well, the American husband is old Dryfoos all over; no mustache; and hay-colored chin-whiskers cut slanting froze the corners of his mouth. He cocked his little gray eyes at me, and says he: 'Yes, young man; my name is Dryfoos, and I'm from Moffitt. But I don't want no present of Longfellow's Works, illustrated; and I don't want to taste no fine teas; but I know a policeman that does; and if you're the son of my old friend Squire Strohfeldt, you'd better get out.' 'Well, then,' said I, 'how would you like to go into the newspaper syndicate business?' He gave another look at me, and then he burst out laughing, and he grabbed my hand, and he just froze to it. I never saw anybody so glad.

"Well, the long and the short of it was that I asked him round here to Maroni's to dinner; and before we broke up for the night we had settled the financial side of the plan that's brought you to New York. I can see," said Fulkerson, who had kept his eyes fast on March's face, "that you don't more than half like the idea of Dryfoos. It ought to give you more confidence in the thing than you ever had. You needn't be afraid," he added, with some feeling, "that I talked Dryfoos into the thing for my own advantage."

"Oh, my dear Fulkerson!" March protested, all the more fervently because he was really a little guilty.

"Well, of course not! I didn't mean you were. But I just happened to tell him what I wanted to go into when I could see my way to it, and he caught on of his own accord. The fact is," said Fulkerson, "I guess I'd better make a clean breast of it, now I'm at it, Dryfoos wanted to get something for that boy of his to do. He's in railroads himself, and he's in mines and other things, and he keeps busy, and he can't bear to have his boy hanging round the house doing nothing, like as if he was a girl. I told him that the great object of a rich man was to get his son into just that fix, but he couldn't seem to see it, and the boy hated it himself. He's got a good head, and he wanted to study for the ministry when they were all living together out on the farm; but his father had the old-fashioned ideas about that. You know they used to think that any sort of stuff was good enough to make a preacher out of; but they wanted the good timber for business; and so the old man wouldn't let him. You'll see the fellow; you'll like him; he's no fool, I can tell you; and he's going to be our publisher, nominally at first and actually when I've taught him the ropes a little."

XII.

Fulkerson stopped and looked at March, whom he saw lapsing into a serious silence. Doubtless he divined his uneasiness with the facts that had been given him to digest. He pulled out his watch and glanced at it. "See here, how would you like to go up to Forty-sixth street with me, and drop in on old Dryfoos? Now's your chance. He's going West tomorrow,

and won't be back for a month or so. They'll all be glad to see you, and you'll understand things better when you've seen him and his family. I can't explain."

March reflected a moment. Then he said, with a wisdom that surprised him, for he would have liked to yield to the impulse of his curiosity: "Perhaps we'd better wait till Mrs. March comes down, and let things take the usual course. The Dryfoos ladies will want to call on her as the last-comer, and if I treated myself 'en garçon' now, and paid the first visit, it might complicate matters."

"Well, perhaps you're right," said Fulkerson. "I don't know much about these things, and I don't believe Ma Dryfoos does, either." He was on his legs lighting another cigarette. "I suppose the girls are getting themselves up in etiquette, though. Well, then, let's have a look at the 'Every Other Week' building, and then, if you like your quarters there, you can go round and close for Mrs. Green's flat."

March's dormant allegiance to his wife's wishes had been roused by his decision in favor of good social usage. "I don't think I shall take the flat," he said.

"Well, don't reject it without giving it another look, anyway. Come on!"

He helped March on with his light overcoat, and the little stir they made for their departure caught the notice of the old German; he looked up from his beer at them. March was more than ever impressed with something familiar in his face. In compensation for his prudence in regard to the Dryfooses he now indulged an impulse. He stepped across to where the old man sat, with his bald head shining like ivory under the gas-jet, and his fine patriarchal length of bearded mask taking picturesque lights and shadows, and put out his hand to him.

"Lindau! Isn't this Mr. Lindau?"

The old man lifted himself slowly to his feet with mechanical politeness, and cautiously took March's hand. "Yes, my name is Lindau," he said, slowly, while he scanned March's face. Then he broke into a long cry. "Ah-h-h-h-h, my dear poy! my gong friendt! my-my--ldt is Passil Marge, not zo? Ah, ha, ha, ha! How gladt I am to zee you! Why, I am gladt! And you rememberdt me? You remember Schiller, and Goethe, and Uhland? And Indianapolis? You still lif in Indianapolis? It sheers my hardt to zee you. But you are lidtle oldt, too? Twenty-five years makes a difference. Ah, I am gladt! Dell me, idt is Passil Marge, not zo?"

He looked anxiously into March's face, with a gentle smile of mixed hope and doubt, and March said: "As sure as it's Berthold Lindau, and I guess it's you. And you remember the old times? You were as much of a boy as I was, Lindau. Are you living in New York? Do you recollect how you tried to teach me to fence? I don't know how to this day, Lindau. How good you were, and how patient! Do you remember how we used to sit up in the little parlor back of your printing-office, and read *Die Rauber* and *Die Theilung der Erde* and *Die Glocke*? And Mrs. Lindau? Is she with--"

"Deadt--deadt long ago. Right after I got home from the war--twenty years ago. But tell me, you are married? Children? Yes! Goodt! And how oldt are you now?"

"It makes me seventeen to see you, Lindau, but I've got a son nearly as old."

"Ah, ha, ha! Goodt! And where do you lif?"

"Well, I'm just coming to live in New York," March said, looking over at Fulkerson, who had been watching his interview with the perfunctory smile of sympathy that people put on at the meeting of old friends. "I want to introduce you to my friend Mr. Fulkerson. He and I are going into a literary enterprise here."

"Ah! zo?" said the old man, with polite interest. He took Fulkerson's proffered hand, and they all stood talking a few moments together.

Then Fulkerson said, with another look at his watch, "Well, March, we're keeping Mr. Lindau from his dinner."

"Dinner!" cried the old man. "Idt's better than breadt and meadt to see Mr. Marge!"

"I must be going, anyway," said March. "But I must see you again soon, Lindau. Where do you live? I want a long talk."

"And I. You will find me here at dinner-time." said the old man. "It is the best place"; and March fancied him reluctant to give another address.

To cover his consciousness he answered, gayly: "Then, it's 'auf wiedersehen' with us. Well!"

"Also!" The old man took his hand, and made a mechanical movement with his mutilated arm, as if he would have taken it in a double clasp. He laughed at himself. "I wanted to gif you the other handt, too, but I gafe it to your gountry a goodt while ago."

"To my country?" asked March, with a sense of pain, and yet lightly, as if it were a joke of the old man's. "Your country, too, Lindau?"

The old man turned very grave, and said, almost coldly, "What gountry hass a poor man got, Mr. Marge?"

"Well, you ought to have a share in the one you helped to save for us rich men, Lindau," March returned, still humoring the joke.

The old man smiled sadly, but made no answer as he sat down again.

"Seems to be a little soured," said Fulkerson, as they went down the steps. He was one of those Americans whose habitual conception of life

is unalloyed prosperity. When any experience or observation of his went counter to it he suffered--something like physical pain. He eagerly shrugged away the impression left upon his buoyancy by Lindau, and added to March's continued silence, "What did I tell you about meeting every man in New York that you ever knew before?"

I never expected to meet Lindau in the world again," said March, more to himself than to Fulkerson. "I had an impression that he had been killed in the war. I almost wish he had been."

"Oh, hello, now!" cried Fulkerson.

March laughed, but went on soberly: "He was a man predestined to adversity, though. When I first knew him out in Indianapolis he was starving along with a sick wife and a sick newspaper. It was before the Germans had come over to the Republicans generally, but Lindau was fighting the anti-slavery battle just as naturally at Indianapolis in 1858 as he fought behind the barricades at Berlin in 1848. And yet he was always such a gentle soul! And so generous! He taught me German for the love of it; he wouldn't spoil his pleasure by taking a cent from me; he seemed to get enough out of my being young and enthusiastic, and out of prophesying great things for me. I wonder what the poor old fellow is doing here, with that one hand of his?"

"Not amassing a very 'handsome pittance,' I guess, as Artemus Ward would say," said Fulkerson, getting back some of his lightness. "There are lots of two-handed fellows in New York that are not doing much better, I guess. Maybe he gets some writing on the German papers."

"I hope so. He's one of the most accomplished men! He used to be a splendid musician--pianist--and knows eight or ten languages."

"Well, it's astonishing," said Fulkerson, "how much lumber those Germans can carry around in their heads all their lives, and never work it up into anything. It's a pity they couldn't do the acquiring, and let out the use of their learning to a few bright Americans. We could make things hum, if we could arrange 'em that way."

He talked on, unheeded by March, who went along half-consciously tormented by his lightness in the pensive memories the meeting with Lindau had called up. Was this all that sweet, unselfish nature could come to? What a homeless old age at that meagre Italian table d'hote, with that tall glass of beer for a half-hour's oblivion! That shabby dress, that pathetic mutilation! He must have a pension, twelve dollars a month, or eighteen, from a grateful country. But what else did he eke out with?

"Well, here we are," said Fulkerson, cheerily. He ran up the steps before March, and opened the carpenter's temporary valve in the door frame, and led the way into a darkness smelling sweetly of unpainted wood-work and newly dried plaster; their feet slipped on shavings and grated on sand. He scratched a match, and found a candle, and then walked about up and down stairs, and lectured on the advantages of the

place. He had fitted up bachelor apartments for himself in the house, and said that he was going to have a flat to let on the top floor.

"I didn't offer it to you because I supposed you'd be too proud to live over your shop; and it's too small, anyway; only five rooms."

"Yes, that's too small," said March, shirking the other point.

"Well, then, here's the room I intend for your office," said Fulkerson, showing him into a large back parlor one flight up. "You'll have it quiet from the street noises here, and you can be at home or not, as you please. There'll be a boy on the stairs to find out. Now, you see, this makes the Grosvenor Green flat practicable, if you want it."

March felt the forces of fate closing about him and pushing him to a decision. He feebly fought them off till he could have another look at the flat. Then, baked and subdued still more by the unexpected presence of Mrs. Grosvenor Green herself, who was occupying it so as to be able to show it effectively, he took it. He was aware more than ever of its absurdities; he knew that his wife would never cease to hate it; but he had suffered one of those eclipses of the imagination to which men of his temperament are subject, and into which he could see no future for his desires. He felt a comfort in irretrievably committing himself, and exchanging the burden of indecision for the burden of responsibility.

"I don't know," said Fulkerson, as they walked back to his hotel together, "but you might fix it up with that lone widow and her pretty daughter to take part of their house here." He seemed to be reminded of it by the fact of passing the house, and March looked up at its dark front. He could not have told exactly why he felt a pang of remorse at the sight, and doubtless it was more regret for having taken the Grosvenor Green flat than for not having taken the widow's rooms. Still, he could not forget her wistfulness when his wife and he were looking at them, and her disappointment when they decided against them. He had toyed, in, his after-talk to Mrs. March, with a sort of hypothetical obligation they had to modify their plans so as to meet the widow's want of just such a family as theirs; they had both said what a blessing it would be to her, and what a pity they could not do it; but they had decided very distinctly that they could not. Now it seemed to him that they might; and he asked himself whether he had not actually departed as much from their ideal as if he had taken board with the widow. Suddenly it seemed to him that his wife asked him this, too.

"I reckon," said Fulkerson, "that she could have arranged to give you your meals in your rooms, and it would have come to about the same thing as housekeeping."

"No sort of boarding can be the same as house-keeping," said March. "I want my little girl to have the run of a kitchen, and I want the whole family to have the moral effect of housekeeping. It's demoralizing to board, in every way; it isn't a home, if anybody else takes the care of it off your hands."

"Well, I suppose so," Fulkerson assented; but March's words had a hollow

ring to himself, and in his own mind he began to retaliate his dissatisfaction upon Fulkerson.

He parted from him on the usual terms outwardly, but he felt obscurely abused by Fulkerson in regard to the Dryfooses, father and son. He did not know but Fulkerson had taken an advantage of him in allowing him to commit himself to their enterprise without fully and frankly telling him who and what his backer was; he perceived that with young Dryfoos as the publisher and Fulkerson as the general director of the paper there might be very little play for his own ideas of its conduct. Perhaps it was the hurt to his vanity involved by the recognition of this fact that made him forget how little choice he really had in the matter, and how, since he had not accepted the offer to edit the insurance paper, nothing remained for him but to close with Fulkerson. In this moment of suspicion and resentment he accused Fulkerson of hastening his decision in regard to the Grosvenor Green apartment; he now refused to consider it a decision, and said to himself that if he felt disposed to do so he would send Mrs. Green a note reversing it in the morning. But he put it all off till morning with his clothes, when he went to bed, he put off even thinking what his wife would say; he cast Fulkerson and his constructive treachery out of his mind, too, and invited into it some pensive reveries of the past, when he still stood at the parting of the ways, and could take this path or that. In his middle life this was not possible; he must follow the path chosen long ago, wherever, it led. He was not master of himself, as he once seemed, but the servant of those he loved; if he could do what he liked, perhaps he might renounce this whole New York enterprise, and go off somewhere out of the reach of care; but he could not do what he liked, that was very clear. In the pathos of this conviction he dwelt compassionately upon the thought of poor old Lindau; he resolved to make him accept a handsome sum of money--more than he could spare, something that he would feel the loss of--in payment of the lessons in German and fencing given so long ago. At the usual rate for such lessons, his debt, with interest for twenty-odd years, would run very far into the hundreds. Too far, he perceived, for his wife's joyous approval; he determined not to add the interest; or he believed that Lindau would refuse the interest; he put a fine speech in his mouth, making him do so; and after that he got Lindau employment on 'Every Other Week,' and took care of him till he died.

Through all his melancholy and munificence he was aware of sordid anxieties for having taken the Grosvenor Green apartment. These began to assume visible, tangible shapes as he drowsed, and to become personal entities, from which he woke, with little starts, to a realization of their true nature, and then suddenly fell fast asleep.

In the accomplishment of the events which his reverie played with, there was much that retroactively stamped it with prophecy, but much also that was better than he forboded. He found that with regard to the Grosvenor Green apartment he had not allowed for his wife's willingness to get any sort of roof over her head again after the removal from their old home, or for the alleviations that grow up through mere custom. The practical workings of the apartment were not so bad; it had its good points, and after the first sensation of oppression in it they began to feel the

convenience of its arrangement. They were at that time of life when people first turn to their children's opinion with deference, and, in the loss of keenness in their own likes and dislikes, consult the young preferences which are still so sensitive. It went far to reconcile Mrs. March to the apartment that her children were pleased with its novelty; when this wore off for them, she had herself begun to find it much more easily manageable than a house. After she had put away several barrels of gimcracks, and folded up screens and rugs and skins, and carried them all off to the little dark store-room which the flat developed, she perceived at once a roominess and coziness in it unsuspected before. Then, when people began to call, she had a pleasure, a superiority, in saying that it was a furnished apartment, and in disclaiming all responsibility for the upholstery and decoration. If March was by, she always explained that it was Mr. March's fancy, and amiably laughed it off with her callers as a mannish eccentricity. Nobody really seemed to think it otherwise than pretty; and this again was a triumph for Mrs. March, because it showed how inferior the New York taste was to the Boston taste in such matters.

March submitted silently to his punishment, and laughed with her before company at his own eccentricity. She had been so preoccupied with the adjustment of the family to its new quarters and circumstances that the time passed for laying his misgivings, if they were misgivings, about Fulkerson before her, and when an occasion came for expressing them they had themselves passed in the anxieties of getting forward the first number of 'Every Other Week.' He kept these from her, too, and the business that brought them to New York had apparently dropped into abeyance before the questions of domestic economy that presented and absented themselves. March knew his wife to be a woman of good mind and in perfect sympathy with him, but he understood the limitations of her perspective; and if he was not too wise, he was too experienced to intrude upon it any affairs of his till her own were reduced to the right order and proportion. It would have been folly to talk to her of Fulkerson's conjecturable uncandor while she was in doubt whether her cook would like the kitchen, or her two servants would consent to room together; and till it was decided what school Tom should go to, and whether Bella should have lessons at home or not, the relation which March was to bear to the Dryfooses, as owner and publisher, was not to be discussed with his wife. He might drag it in, but he was aware that with her mind distracted by more immediate interests he could not get from her that judgment, that reasoned divination, which he relied upon so much. She would try, she would do her best, but the result would be a view clouded and discolored by the effort she must make.

He put the whole matter by, and gave himself to the details of the work before him. In this he found not only escape, but reassurance, for it became more and more apparent that whatever was nominally the structure of the business, a man of his qualifications and his instincts could not have an insignificant place in it. He had also the consolation of liking his work, and of getting an instant grasp of it that grew constantly firmer and closer. The joy of knowing that he had not made a mistake was great. In giving rein to ambitions long forborne he seemed to get back to the youth when he had indulged them first; and after half a lifetime

passed in pursuits alien to his nature, he was feeling the serene happiness of being mated through his work to his early love. From the outside the spectacle might have had its pathos, and it is not easy to justify such an experiment as he had made at his time of life, except upon the ground where he rested from its consideration--the ground of necessity.

His work was more in his thoughts than himself, however; and as the time for the publication of the first number of his periodical came nearer, his cares all centred upon it. Without fixing any date, Fulkerson had announced it, and pushed his announcements with the shameless vigor of a born advertiser. He worked his interest with the press to the utmost, and paragraphs of a variety that did credit to his ingenuity were afloat everywhere. Some of them were speciously unfavorable in tone; they criticised and even ridiculed the principles on which the new departure in literary journalism was based. Others defended it; others yet denied that this rumored principle was really the principle. All contributed to make talk. All proceeded from the same fertile invention.

March observed with a degree of mortification that the talk was very little of it in the New York press; there the references to the novel enterprise were slight and cold. But Fulkerson said: "Don't mind that, old man. It's the whole country that makes or breaks a thing like this; New York has very little to do with it. Now if it were a play, it would be different. New York does make or break a play; but it doesn't make or break a book; it doesn't make or break a magazine. The great mass of the readers are outside of New York, and the rural districts are what we have got to go for. They don't read much in New York; they write, and talk about what they've written. Don't you worry."

The rumor of Fulkerson's connection with the enterprise accompanied many of the paragraphs, and he was able to stay March's thirst for employment by turning over to him from day to day heaps of the manuscripts which began to pour in from his old syndicate writers, as well as from adventurous volunteers all over the country. With these in hand March began practically to plan the first number, and to concrete a general scheme from the material and the experience they furnished. They had intended to issue the first number with the new year, and if it had been an affair of literature alone, it would have been very easy; but it was the art leg they limped on, as Fulkerson phrased it. They had not merely to deal with the question of specific illustrations for this article or that, but to decide the whole character of their illustrations, and first of all to get a design for a cover which should both ensnare the heedless and captivate the fastidious. These things did not come properly within March's province--that had been clearly understood--and for a while Fulkerson tried to run the art leg himself. The phrase was again his, but it was simpler to make the phrase than to run the leg. The difficult generation, at once stiff-backed and slippery, with which he had to do in this endeavor, reduced even so buoyant an optimist to despair, and after wasting some valuable weeks in trying to work the artists himself, he determined to get an artist to work them. But what artist? It could not be a man with fixed reputation and a following: he would be too costly, and would have too many enemies among his brethren, even if he would

consent to undertake the job. Fulkerson had a man in mind, an artist, too, who would have been the very thing if he had been the thing at all. He had talent enough, and his sort of talent would reach round the whole situation, but, as Fulkerson said, he was as many kinds of an ass as he was kinds of an artist.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Anticipative homesickness

Any sort of stuff was good enough to make a preacher out of

Appearance made him doubt their ability to pay so much

As much of his story as he meant to tell without prompting

Considerable comfort in holding him accountable

Extract what consolation lurks in the irreparable

Flavors not very sharply distinguished from one another

Handsome pittance

He expected to do the wrong thing when left to his own devices

Hypothetical difficulty

Never-blooming shrub

Poverty as hopeless as any in the world

Seeming interested in points necessarily indifferent to him

Servant of those he loved

Sigh with which ladies recognize one another's martyrdom

Sorry he hadn't asked more; that's human nature

That isn't very old--or not so old as it used to be

Tried to be homesick for them, but failed

Turn to their children's opinion with deference

Wish we didn't always recognize the facts as we do

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by William Dean Howells

A HAZARD OF NEW FORTUNES

By William Dean Howells

PART SECOND

I.

The evening when March closed with Mrs. Green's reduced offer, and decided to take her apartment, the widow whose lodgings he had rejected sat with her daughter in an upper room at the back of her house. In the shaded glow of the drop-light she was sewing, and the girl was drawing at the same table. From time to time, as they talked, the girl lifted her head and tilted it a little on one side so as to get some desired effect of her work.

"It's a mercy the cold weather holds off," said the mother. "We should have to light the furnace, unless we wanted to scare everybody away with a cold house; and I don't know who would take care of it, or what would become of us, every way."

"They seem to have been scared away from a house that wasn't cold," said the girl. "Perhaps they might like a cold one. But it's too early for cold yet. It's only just in the beginning of November."

"The Messenger says they've had a sprinkling of snow."

"Oh yes, at St. Barnaby! I don't know when they don't have sprinklings of snow there. I'm awfully glad we haven't got that winter before us."

The widow sighed as mothers do who feel the contrast their experience opposes to the hopeful recklessness of such talk as this. "We may have a worse winter here," she said, darkly.

"Then I couldn't stand it," said the girl, "and I should go in for lighting out to Florida double-quick."

"And how would you get to Florida?" demanded her mother, severely.

"Oh, by the usual conveyance Pullman vestibuled train, I suppose. What makes you so blue, mamma?" The girl was all the time sketching away, rubbing out, lifting her head for the effect, and then bending it over her work again without looking at her mother.

"I am not blue, Alma. But I cannot endure this--this hopefulness of yours."

"Why? What harm does it do?"

"Harm?" echoed the mother.

Pending the effort she must make in saying, the girl cut in: "Yes, harm. You've kept your despair dusted off and ready for use at an instant's notice ever since we came, and what good has it done? I'm going to keep on hoping to the bitter end. That's what papa did."

It was what the Rev. Archibald Leighton had done with all the consumptive's buoyancy. The morning he died he told them that now he had turned the point and was really going to get well. The cheerfulness was not only in his disease, but in his temperament. Its excess was always a little against him in his church work, and Mrs. Leighton was right enough

in feeling that if it had not been for the ballast of her instinctive despondency he would have made shipwreck of such small chances of prosperity as befell him in life. It was not from him that his daughter got her talent, though he had left her his temperament intact of his widow's legal thirds. He was one of those men of whom the country people say when he is gone that the woman gets along better without him. Mrs. Leighton had long eked out their income by taking a summer boarder or two, as a great favor, into her family; and when the greater need came, she frankly gave up her house to the summer-folks (as they call them in the country), and managed it for their comfort from the small quarter of it in which she shut herself up with her daughter.

The notion of shutting up is an exigency of the rounded period. The fact is, of course, that Alma Leighton was not shut up in any sense whatever. She was the pervading light, if not force, of the house. She was a good cook, and she managed the kitchen with the help of an Irish girl, while her mother looked after the rest of the housekeeping. But she was not systematic; she had inspiration but not discipline, and her mother mourned more over the days when Alma left the whole dinner to the Irish girl than she rejoiced in those when one of Alma's great thoughts took form in a chicken-pie of incomparable savor or in a matchless pudding. The off-days came when her artistic nature was expressing itself in charcoal, for she drew to the admiration of all among the lady boarders who could not draw. The others had their reserves; they readily conceded that Alma had genius, but they were sure she needed instruction. On the other hand, they were not so radical as to agree with the old painter who came every summer to paint the elms of the St. Barnaby meadows. He contended that she needed to be a man in order to amount to anything; but in this theory he was opposed by an authority, of his own sex, whom the lady sketchers believed to speak with more impartiality in a matter concerning them as much as Alma Leighton. He said that instruction would do, and he was not only, younger and handsomer, but he was fresher from the schools than old Harrington, who, even the lady sketchers could see, painted in an obsolescent manner. His name was Beaton--Angus Beaton; but he was not Scotch, or not more Scotch than Mary Queen of Scots was. His father was a Scotchman, but Beaton was born in Syracuse, New York, and it had taken only three years in Paris to obliterate many traces of native and ancestral manner in him. He wore his black beard cut shorter than his mustache, and a little pointed; he stood with his shoulders well thrown back and with a lateral curve of his person when he talked about art, which would alone have carried conviction even if he had not had a thick, dark bang coming almost to the brows of his mobile gray eyes, and had not spoken English with quick, staccato impulses, so as to give it the effect of epigrammatic and sententious French. One of the ladies said that you always thought of him as having spoken French after it was over, and accused herself of wrong in not being able to feel afraid of him. None of the ladies was afraid of him, though they could not believe that he was really so deferential to their work as he seemed; and they knew, when he would not criticise Mr. Harrington's work, that he was just acting from principle.

They may or may not have known the deference with which he treated Alma's work; but the girl herself felt that his abrupt, impersonal comment

recognized her as a real sister in art. He told her she ought to come to New York, and draw in the League, or get into some painter's private class; and it was the sense of duty thus appealed to which finally resulted in the hazardous experiment she and her mother were now making. There were no logical breaks in the chain of their reasoning from past success with boarders in St. Barnaby to future success with boarders in New York. Of course the outlay was much greater. The rent of the furnished house they had taken was such that if they failed their experiment would be little less than ruinous.

But they were not going to fail; that was what Alma contended, with a hardy courage that her mother sometimes felt almost invited failure, if it did not deserve it. She was one of those people who believe that if you dread harm enough it is less likely to happen. She acted on this superstition as if it were a religion.

"If it had not been for my despair, as you call it, Alma," she answered, "I don't know where we should have been now."

"I suppose we should have been in St. Barnaby," said the girl. "And if it's worse to be in New York, you see what your despair's done, mamma. But what's the use? You meant well, and I don't blame you. You can't expect even despair to come out always just the way you want it. Perhaps you've used too much of it." The girl laughed, and Mrs. Leighton laughed, too. Like every one else, she was not merely a prevailing mood, as people are apt to be in books, but was an irregularly spheroidal character, with surfaces that caught the different lights of circumstance and reflected them. Alma got up and took a pose before the mirror, which she then transferred to her sketch. The room was pinned about with other sketches, which showed with fantastic indistinctness in the shaded gaslight. Alma held up the drawing. "How do you like it?"

Mrs. Leighton bent forward over her sewing to look at it. "You've got the man's face rather weak."

"Yes, that's so. Either I see all the hidden weakness that's in men's natures, and bring it to the surface in their figures, or else I put my own weakness into them. Either way, it's a drawback to their presenting a truly manly appearance. As long as I have one of the miserable objects before me, I can draw him; but as soon as his back's turned I get to putting ladies into men's clothes. I should think you'd be scandalized, mamma, if you were a really feminine person. It must be your despair that helps you to bear up. But what's the matter with the young lady in young lady's clothes? Any dust on her?"

"What expressions!" said Mrs. Leighton. "Really, Alma, for a refined girl you are the most unrefined!"

"Go on--about the girl in the picture!" said Alma, slightly knocking her mother on the shoulder, as she stood over her.

"I don't see anything to her. What's she doing?"

"Oh, just being made love to, I suppose."

"She's perfectly insipid!"

"You're awfully articulate, mamma! Now, if Mr. Wetmore were to criticise that picture he'd draw a circle round it in the air, and look at it through that, and tilt his head first on one side and then on the other, and then look at you, as if you were a figure in it, and then collapse awhile, and moan a little and gasp, 'Isn't your young lady a little too-too--' and then he'd try to get the word out of you, and groan and suffer some more; and you'd say, 'She is, rather,' and that would give him courage, and he'd say, 'I don't mean that she's so very--' 'Of course not.' 'You understand?' 'Perfectly. I see it myself, now.' 'Well, then' ---and he'd take your pencil and begin to draw--'I should give her a little more--Ah?' 'Yes, I see the difference.'--'You see the difference?' And he'd go off to some one else, and you'd know that you'd been doing the wishy-washiest thing in the world, though he hadn't spoken a word of criticism, and couldn't. But he wouldn't have noticed the expression at all; he'd have shown you where your drawing was bad. He doesn't care for what he calls the literature of a thing; he says that will take care of itself if the drawing's good. He doesn't like my doing these chic things; but I'm going to keep it up, for I think it's the nearest way to illustrating."

She took her sketch and pinned it up on the door.

"And has Mr. Beaton been about, yet?" asked her mother.

"No," said the girl, with her back still turned; and she added, "I believe he's in New York; Mr. Wetmore's seen him."

"It's a little strange he doesn't call."

"It would be if he were not an artist. But artists never do anything like other people. He was on his good behavior while he was with us, and he's a great deal more conventional than most of them; but even he can't keep it up. That's what makes me really think that women can never amount to anything in art. They keep all their appointments, and fulfil all their duties just as if they didn't know anything about art. Well, most of them don't. We've got that new model to-day."

"What new model?"

"The one Mr. Wetmore was telling us about the old German; he's splendid. He's got the most beautiful head; just like the old masters' things. He used to be Humphrey Williams's model for his Biblical-pieces; but since he's dead, the old man hardly gets anything to do. Mr. Wetmore says there isn't anybody in the Bible that Williams didn't paint him as. He's the Law and the Prophets in all his Old Testament pictures, and he's Joseph, Peter, Judas Iscariot, and the Scribes and Pharisees in the New."

"It's a good thing people don't know how artists work, or some of the most sacred pictures would have no influence," said Mrs. Leighton.

"Why, of course not!" cried the girl. "And the influence is the last thing a painter thinks of--or supposes he thinks of. What he knows he's anxious about is the drawing and the color. But people will never understand how simple artists are. When I reflect what a complex and sophisticated being I am, I'm afraid I can never come to anything in art. Or I should be if I hadn't genius."

"Do you think Mr. Beaton is very simple?" asked Mrs. Leighton.

"Mr. Wetmore doesn't think he's very much of an artist. He thinks he talks too well. They believe that if a man can express himself clearly he can't paint."

"And what do you believe?"

"Oh, I can express myself, too."

The mother seemed to be satisfied with this evasion. After a while she said, "I presume he will call when he gets settled."

The girl made no answer to this. "One of the girls says that old model is an educated man. He was in the war, and lost a hand. Doesn't it seem a pity for such a man to have to sit to a class of affected geese like us as a model? I declare it makes me sick. And we shall keep him a week, and pay him six or seven dollars for the use of his grand old head, and then what will he do? The last time he was regularly employed was when Mr. Mace was working at his Damascus Massacre. Then he wanted so many Arab sheiks and Christian elders that he kept old Mr. Lindau steadily employed for six months. Now he has to pick up odd jobs where he can."

"I suppose he has his pension," said Mrs. Leighton.

"No; one of the girls"--that was the way Alma always described her fellow-students--"says he has no pension. He didn't apply for it for a long time, and then there was a hitch about it, and it was somethinged --vetoed, I believe she said."

"Who vetoed it?" asked Mrs. Leighton, with some curiosity about the process, which she held in reserve.

"I don't know--whoever vetoes things. I wonder what Mr. Wetmore does think of us--his class. We must seem perfectly crazy. There isn't one of us really knows what she's doing it for, or what she expects to happen when she's done it. I suppose every one thinks she has genius. I know the Nebraska widow does, for she says that unless you have genius it isn't the least use. Everybody's puzzled to know what she does with her baby when she's at work--whether she gives it soothing syrup. I wonder how Mr. Wetmore can keep from laughing in our faces. I know he does behind our backs."

Mrs. Leighton's mind wandered back to another point. "Then if he says Mr. Beaton can't paint, I presume he doesn't respect him very much."

"Oh, he never said he couldn't paint. But I know he thinks so. He says he's an excellent critic."

"Alma," her mother said, with the effect of breaking off, "what do you suppose is the reason he hasn't been near us?"

"Why, I don't know, mamma, except that it would have been natural for another person to come, and he's an artist at least, artist enough for that."

"That doesn't account for it altogether. He was very nice at St. Barnaby, and seemed so interested in you--your work."

"Plenty of people were nice at St. Barnaby. That rich Mrs. Horn couldn't contain her joy when she heard we were coming to New York, but she hasn't poured in upon us a great deal since we got here."

"But that's different. She's very fashionable, and she's taken up with her own set. But Mr. Beaton's one of our kind."

"Thank you. Papa wasn't quite a tombstone-cutter, mamma."

"That makes it all the harder to bear. He can't be ashamed of us. Perhaps he doesn't know where we are."

"Do you wish to send him your card, mamma?" The girl flushed and towered in scorn of the idea.

"Why, no, Alma," returned her mother.

"Well, then," said Alma.

But Mrs. Leighton was not so easily quelled. She had got her mind on Mr. Beaton, and she could not detach it at once. Besides, she was one of those women (they are commoner than the same sort of men) whom it does not pain to take out their most intimate thoughts and examine them in the light of other people's opinions. "But I don't see how he can behave so. He must know that--"

"That what, mamma?" demanded the girl.

"That he influenced us a great deal in coming--"

"He didn't. If he dared to presume to think such a thing--"

"Now, Alma," said her mother, with the clinging persistence of such natures, "you know he did. And it's no use for you to pretend that we didn't count upon him in--in every way. You may not have noticed his attentions, and I don't say you did, but others certainly did; and I must say that I didn't expect he would drop us so."

"Drop us!" cried Alma, in a fury. "Oh!"

"Yes, drop us, Alma. He must know where we are. Of course, Mr. Wetmore's spoken to him about you, and it's a shame that he hasn't been near us. I should have thought common gratitude, common decency, would have brought him after--after all we did for him."

"We did nothing for him--nothing! He paid his board, and that ended it."

"No, it didn't, Alma. You know what he used to say--about its being like home, and all that; and I must say that after his attentions to you, and all the things you told me he said, I expected something very dif--"

A sharp peal of the door-bell thrilled through the house, and as if the pull of the bell-wire had twitched her to her feet, Mrs. Leighton sprang up and grappled with her daughter in their common terror.

They both glared at the clock and made sure that it was five minutes after nine. Then they abandoned themselves some moments to the unrestricted play of their apprehensions.

II.

"Why, Alma," whispered the mother, "who in the world can it be at this time of night? You don't suppose he--"

"Well, I'm not going to the door, anyhow, mother, I don't care who it is; and, of course, he wouldn't be such a goose as to come at this hour." She put on a look of miserable trepidation, and shrank back from the door, while the hum of the bell died away, in the hall.

"What shall we do?" asked Mrs. Leighton, helplessly.

"Let him go away--whoever they are," said Alma.

Another and more peremptory ring forbade them refuge in this simple expedient.

"Oh, dear! what shall we do? Perhaps it's a despatch."

The conjecture moved Alma to no more than a rigid stare. "I shall not go," she said. A third ring more insistent than the others followed, and she said: "You go ahead, mamma, and I'll come behind to scream if it's anybody. We can look through the side-lights at the door first."

Mrs. Leighton fearfully led the way from the back chamber where they had been sitting, and slowly descended the stairs. Alma came behind and turned up the hall gas-jet with a sudden flash that made them both jump a little. The gas inside rendered it more difficult to tell who was on the threshold, but Mrs. Leighton decided from a timorous peep through the scrims that it was a lady and gentleman. Something in this distribution

of sex emboldened her; she took her life in her hand, and opened the door.

The lady spoke. "Does Mrs. Leighton live heah?" she said, in a rich, throaty voice; and she feigned a reference to the agent's permit she held in her hand.

"Yes," said Mrs. Leighton; she mechanically occupied the doorway, while Alma already quivered behind her with impatience of her impoliteness.

"Oh," said the lady, who began to appear more and more a young lady, "Ah didn't know but Ah had mistaken the hoase. Ah suppose it's rather late to see the apawments, and Ah most ask you to pawdon us." She put this tentatively, with a delicately growing recognition of Mrs. Leighton as the lady of the house, and a humorous intelligence of the situation in the glance she threw Alma over her mother's shoulder. "Ah'm afraid we most have frightened you."

"Oh, not at all," said Alma; and at the same time her mother said, "Will you walk in, please?"

The gentleman promptly removed his hat and made the Leightons an inclusive bow. "You awe very kind, madam, and I am sorry for the trouble we awe giving you." He was tall and severe-looking, with a gray, trooperish mustache and iron-gray hair, and, as Alma decided, iron-gray eyes. His daughter was short, plump, and fresh-colored, with an effect of liveliness that did not all express itself in her broad-vowelled, rather formal speech, with its odd valuations of some of the auxiliary verbs, and its total elision of the canine letter.

"We awe from the Soath," she said, "and we arrived this mawning, but we got this cyahd from the brokah just befo' dinnah, and so we awe rathah late."

"Not at all; it's only nine o'clock," said Mrs. Leighton. She looked up from the card the young lady had given her, and explained, "We haven't got in our servants yet, and we had to answer the bell ourselves, and--"

"You were frightened, of coase," said the young lady, caressingly.

The gentleman said they ought not to have come so late, and he offered some formal apologies.

"We should have been just as much scared any time after five o'clock," Alma said to the sympathetic intelligence in the girl's face.

She laughed out. "Of coase! Ah would have my hawt in my moath all day long, too, if Ah was living in a big hoase alone."

A moment of stiffness followed; Mrs. Leighton would have liked to withdraw from the intimacy of the situation, but she did not know how. It was very well for these people to assume to be what they pretended; but, she reflected too late, she had no proof of it except the agent's

permit. They were all standing in the hall together, and she prolonged the awkward pause while she examined the permit. "You are Mr. Woodburn?" she asked, in a way that Alma felt implied he might not be.

"Yes, madam; from Charlottesboag, Virginia," he answered, with the slight umbrage a man shows when the strange cashier turns his check over and questions him before cashing it.

Alma writhed internally, but outwardly remained subordinate; she examined the other girl's dress, and decided in a superficial consciousness that she had made her own bonnet.

"I shall be glad to show you my rooms," said Mrs. Leighton, with an irrelevant sigh. "You must excuse their being not just as I should wish them. We're hardly settled yet."

"Don't speak of it, madam," said the gentleman, "if you can overlook the trouble we awe giving you at such an unseasonable houah."

"Ah'm a hoasekeepah mahself," Miss Woodburn joined in, "and Ah know ho' to accyoant fo' everything."

Mrs. Leighton led the way up-stairs, and the young lady decided upon the large front room and small side room on the third story. She said she could take the small one, and the other was so large that her father could both sleep and work in it. She seemed not ashamed to ask if Mrs. Leighton's price was inflexible, but gave way laughing when her father refused to have any bargaining, with a haughty self-respect which he softened to deference for Mrs. Leighton. His impulsiveness opened the way for some confidence from her, and before the affair was arranged she was enjoying in her quality of clerical widow the balm of the Virginians' reverent sympathy. They said they were church people themselves.

"Ah don't know what yo' mothah means by yo' hoase not being in oddah," the young lady said to Alma as they went down-stairs together. "Ah'm a great hoasekeepah mahself, and Ah mean what Ah say."

They had all turned mechanically into the room where the Leightons were sitting when the Woodburns rang: Mr. Woodburn consented to sit down, and he remained listening to Mrs. Leighton while his daughter bustled up to the sketches pinned round the room and questioned Alma about them.

"Ah suppose you awe going to be a great awtust?" she said, in friendly banter, when Alma owned to having done the things. "Ah've a great notion to take a few lessons mahself. Who's yo' teachah?"

Alma said she was drawing in Mr. Wetmore's class, and Miss Woodburn said: "Well, it's just beautiful, Miss Leighton; it's grand. Ah suppose it's raght expensive, now? Mah goodness! we have to cyoant the coast so much nowadays; it seems to me we do nothing but cyoant it. Ah'd like to hah something once without askin' the price."

"Well, if you didn't ask it," said Alma, "I don't believe Mr. Wetmore

would ever know what the price of his lessons was. He has to think, when you ask him."

"Why, he must be chomping," said Miss Woodburn. "Perhaps Ah might get the lessons for nothing from him. Well, Ah believe in my soul Ah'll trah. Now ho' did you begin? and ho' do you expect to get anything out of it?" She turned on Alma eyes brimming with a shrewd mixture of fun and earnest, and Alma made note of the fact that she had an early nineteenth-century face, round, arch, a little coquettish, but extremely sensible and unspoiled-looking, such as used to be painted a good deal in miniature at that period; a tendency of her brown hair to twine and twist at the temples helped the effect; a high comb would have completed it, Alma felt, if she had her bonnet off. It was almost a Yankee country-girl type; but perhaps it appeared so to Alma because it was, like that, pure Anglo-Saxon. Alma herself, with her dull, dark skin, slender in figure, slow in speech, with aristocratic forms in her long hands, and the oval of her fine face pointed to a long chin, felt herself much more Southern in style than this blooming, bubbling, bustling Virginian.

"I don't know," she answered, slowly.

"Going to take po'traits," suggested Miss Woodburn, "or just paint the ahdeal?" A demure burlesque lurked in her tone.

"I suppose I don't expect to paint at all," said Alma. "I'm going to illustrate books--if anybody will let me."

"Ah should think they'd just joamp at you," said Miss Woodburn. "Ah'll tell you what let's do, Miss Leighton: you make some pictures, and Ah'll wrahte a book fo' them. Ah've got to do something. Ali might as well wrahte a book. You know we Southerners have all had to go to woak. But Ah don't mand it. I tell papa I shouldn't ca' fo' the disgrace of bein' poo' if it wasn't fo' the inconvenience."

"Yes, it's inconvenient," said Alma; "but you forget it when you're at work, don't you think?"

"Mah, yes! Perhaps that's one reason why poo' people have to woak so hawd-to keep their wands off their poverty."

The girls both tittered, and turned from talking in a low tone with their backs toward their elders, and faced them.

"Well, Madison," said Mr. Woodburn, "it is time we should go. I bid you good-night, madam," he bowed to Mrs. Leighton. "Good-night," he bowed again to Alma.

His daughter took leave of them in formal phrase, but with a jolly cordiality of manner that deformed it. "We shall be roand raght soon in the mawning, then," she threatened at the door.

"We shall be all ready for you," Alma called after her down the steps.

"Well, Alma?" her mother asked, when the door closed upon them.

"She doesn't know any more about art," said Alma, "than--nothing at all. But she's jolly and good-hearted. She praised everything that was bad in my sketches, and said she was going to take lessons herself. When a person talks about taking lessons, as if they could learn it, you know where they belong artistically."

Mrs. Leighton shook her head with a sigh. "I wish I knew where they belonged financially. We shall have to get in two girls at once. I shall have to go out the first thing in the morning, and then our troubles will begin."

"Well, didn't you want them to begin? I will stay home and help you get ready. Our prosperity couldn't begin without the troubles, if you mean boarders, and boarders mean servants. I shall be very glad to be afflicted with a cook for a while myself."

"Yes; but we don't know anything about these people, or whether they will be able to pay us. Did she talk as if they were well off?"

"She talked as if they were poor; poo' she called it."

"Yes, how queerly she pronounced," said Mrs. Leighton. "Well, I ought to have told them that I required the first week in advance."

"Mamma! If that's the way you're going to act!"

"Oh, of course, I couldn't, after he wouldn't let her bargain for the rooms. I didn't like that."

"I did. And you can see that they were perfect ladies; or at least one of them." Alma laughed at herself, but her mother did not notice.

"Their being ladies won't help if they've got no money. It 'll make it all the worse."

"Very well, then; we have no money, either. We're a match for them any day there. We can show them that two can play at that game."

III.

Arnus Beaton's studio looked at first glance like many other painters' studios. A gray wall quadrangularly vaulted to a large north light; casts of feet, hands, faces hung to nails about; prints, sketches in oil and water-color stuck here and there lower down; a rickety table, with paint and palettes and bottles of varnish and siccativè tossed comfortlessly on it; an easel, with a strip of some faded mediæval silk trailing from it; a lay figure simpering in incomplete nakedness, with its head on one side, and a stocking on one leg, and a Japanese dress

dropped before it; dusty rugs and skins kicking over the varnished floor; canvases faced to the mop-board; an open trunk overflowing with costumes: these features one might notice anywhere. But, besides, there was a bookcase with an unusual number of books in it, and there was an open colonial writing-desk, claw-footed, brass-handled, and scutcheoned, with foreign periodicals--French and English--littering its leaf, and some pages of manuscript scattered among them. Above all, there was a sculptor's revolving stand, supporting a bust which Beaton was modelling, with an eye fixed as simultaneously as possible on the clay and on the head of the old man who sat on the platform beside it.

Few men have been able to get through the world with several gifts to advantage in all; and most men seem handicapped for the race if they have more than one. But they are apparently immensely interested as well as distracted by them. When Beaton was writing, he would have agreed, up to a certain point, with any one who said literature was his proper expression; but, then, when he was painting, up to a certain point, he would have maintained against the world that he was a colorist, and supremely a colorist. At the certain point in either art he was apt to break away in a frenzy of disgust and wreak himself upon some other. In these moods he sometimes designed elevations of buildings, very striking, very original, very chic, very everything but habitable.

It was in this way that he had tried his hand on sculpture, which he had at first approached rather slightly as a mere decorative accessory of architecture. But it had grown in his respect till he maintained that the accessory business ought to be all the other way: that temples should be raised to enshrine statues, not statues made to ornament temples; that was putting the cart before the horse with a vengeance. This was when he had carried a plastic study so far that the sculptors who saw it said that Beaton might have been an architect, but would certainly never be a sculptor. At the same time he did some hurried, nervous things that had a popular charm, and that sold in plaster reproductions, to the profit of another. Beaton justly despised the popular charm in these, as well as in the paintings he sold from time to time; he said it was flat burglary to have taken money for them, and he would have been living almost wholly upon the bounty of the old tombstone-cutter in Syracuse if it had not been for the syndicate letters which he supplied to Fulkerson for ten dollars a week.

They were very well done, but he hated doing them after the first two or three, and had to be punched up for them by Fulkerson, who did not cease to prize them, and who never failed to punch him up. Beaton being what he was, Fulkerson was his creditor as well as patron; and Fulkerson being what he was, had an enthusiastic patience with the elusive, facile, adaptable, unpractical nature of Beaton. He was very proud of his art-letters, as he called them; but then Fulkerson was proud of everything he secured for his syndicate. The fact that he had secured it gave it value; he felt as if he had written it himself.

One art trod upon another's heels with Beaton. The day before he had rushed upon canvas the conception of a picture which he said to himself was glorious, and to others (at the table d'hote of Maroni) was not bad. He had worked at it in a fury till the light failed him, and he execrated

the dying day. But he lit his lamp and transferred the process of his thinking from the canvas to the opening of the syndicate letter which he knew Fulkerson would be coming for in the morning. He remained talking so long after dinner in the same strain as he had painted and written in that he could not finish his letter that night. The next morning, while he was making his tea for breakfast, the postman brought him a letter from his father enclosing a little check, and begging him with tender, almost deferential, urgency to come as lightly upon him as possible, for just now his expenses were very heavy. It brought tears of shame into Beaton's eyes--the fine, smouldering, floating eyes that many ladies admired, under the thick bang--and he said to himself that if he were half a man he would go home and go to work cutting gravestones in his father's shop. But he would wait, at least, to finish his picture; and as a sop to his conscience, to stay its immediate ravaging, he resolved to finish that syndicate letter first, and borrow enough money from Fulkerson to be able to send his father's check back; or, if not that, then to return the sum of it partly in Fulkerson's check. While he still teemed with both of these good intentions the old man from whom he was modelling his head of Judas came, and Beaton saw that he must get through with him before he finished either the picture or the letter; he would have to pay him for the time, anyway. He utilized the remorse with which he was tingling to give his Judas an expression which he found novel in the treatment of that character--a look of such touching, appealing self-abhorrence that Beaton's artistic joy in it amounted to rapture; between the breathless moments when he worked in dead silence for an effect that was trying to escape him, he sang and whistled fragments of comic opera.

In one of the hushes there came a blow on the outside of the door that made Beaton jump, and swear with a modified profanity that merged itself in apostrophic prayer. He knew it must be Fulkerson, and after roaring "Come in!" he said to the model, "That 'll do this morning, Lindau."

Fulkerson squared his feet in front of the bust and compared it by fleeting glances with the old man as he got stiffly up and suffered Beaton to help him on with his thin, shabby overcoat.

"Can you come to-morrow, Lindau?"

"No, not to-morrow, Mr. Peaton. I haf to zit for the young ladties."

"Oh!" said Beaton. "Wet-more's class? Is Miss Leighton doing you?"

"I don't know their names," Lindau began, when Fulkerson said:

"Hope you haven't forgotten mine, Mr. Lindau? I met you with Mr. March at Maroni's one night." Fulkerson offered him a universally shakable hand.

"Oh yes! I am gladt to zee you again, Mr. Vulkerson. And Mr. Marge--he don't zeem to come any more?"

"Up to his eyes in work. Been moving on from Boston and getting settled, and starting in on our enterprise. Beaton here hasn't got a very

flattering likeness of you, hey? Well, good-morning," he said, for Lindau appeared not to have heard him and was escaping with a bow through the door.

Beaton lit a cigarette which he pinched nervously between his lips before he spoke. "You've come for that letter, I suppose, Fulkerson? It isn't done."

Fulkerson turned from staring at the bust to which he had mounted. "What you fretting about that letter for? I don't want your letter."

Beaton stopped biting his cigarette and looked at him. "Don't want my letter? Oh, very good!" he bristled up. He took his cigarette from his lips, and blew the smoke through his nostrils, and then looked at Fulkerson.

"No; I don't want your letter; I want you."

Beaton disdained to ask an explanation, but he internally lowered his crest, while he continued to look at Fulkerson without changing his defiant countenance. This suited Fulkerson well enough, and he went on with relish, "I'm going out of the syndicate business, old man, and I'm on a new thing." He put his leg over the back of a chair and rested his foot on its seat, and, with one hand in his pocket, he laid the scheme of 'Every Other Week' before Beaton with the help of the other. The artist went about the room, meanwhile, with an effect of indifference which by no means offended Fulkerson. He took some water into his mouth from a tumbler, which he blew in a fine mist over the head of Judas before swathing it in a dirty cotton cloth; he washed his brushes and set his palette; he put up on his easel the picture he had blocked on the day before, and stared at it with a gloomy face; then he gathered the sheets of his unfinished letter together and slid them into a drawer of his writing-desk. By the time he had finished and turned again to Fulkerson, Fulkerson was saying: "I did think we could have the first number out by New-Year's; but it will take longer than that--a month longer; but I'm not sorry, for the holidays kill everything; and by February, or the middle of February, people will get their breath again and begin to look round and ask what's new. Then we'll reply in the language of Shakespeare and Milton, 'Every Other Week; and don't you forget it.'" He took down his leg and asked, "Got a pipe of 'baccy anywhere?"

Beaton nodded at a clay stem sticking out of a Japanese vase of bronze on his mantel. "There's yours," he said; and Fulkerson said, "Thanks," and filled the pipe and sat down and began to smoke tranquilly.

Beaton saw that he would have to speak now. "And what do you want with me?"

"You? Oh yes," Fulkerson humorously dramatized a return to himself from a pensive absence. "Want you for the art department."

Beaton shook his head. "I'm not your man, Fulkerson," he said, compassionately. "You want a more practical hand, one that's in touch

with what's going. I'm getting further and further away from this century and its claptrap. I don't believe in your enterprise; I don't respect it, and I won't have anything to do with it. It would-choke me, that kind of thing."

"That's all right," said Fulkerson. He esteemed a man who was not going to let himself go cheap. "Or if it isn't, we can make it. You and March will pull together first-rate. I don't care how much ideal you put into the thing; the more the better. I can look after the other end of the schooner myself."

"You don't understand me," said Beaton. "I'm not trying to get a rise out of you. I'm in earnest. What you want is some man who can have patience with mediocrity putting on the style of genius, and with genius turning mediocrity on his hands. I haven't any luck with men; I don't get on with them; I'm not popular." Beaton recognized the fact with the satisfaction which it somehow always brings to human pride.

"So much the better!" Fulkerson was ready for him at this point. "I don't want you to work the old-established racket the reputations. When I want them I'll go to them with a pocketful of rocks--knock-down argument. But my idea is to deal with the volunteer material. Look at the way the periodicals are carried on now! Names! names! names! In a country that's just boiling over with literary and artistic ability of every kind the new fellows have no chance. The editors all engage their material. I don't believe there are fifty volunteer contributions printed in a year in all the New York magazines. It's all wrong; it's suicidal. 'Every Other Week' is going back to the good old anonymous system, the only fair system. It's worked well in literature, and it will work well in art."

"It won't work well in art," said Beaton. "There you have a totally different set of conditions. What you'll get by inviting volunteer illustrations will be a lot of amateur trash. And how are you going to submit your literature for illustration? It can't be done. At any rate, I won't undertake to do it."

"We'll get up a School of Illustration," said Fulkerson, with cynical security. "You can read the things and explain 'em, and your pupils can make their sketches under your eye. They wouldn't be much further out than most illustrations are if they never knew what they were illustrating. You might select from what comes in and make up a sort of pictorial variations to the literature without any particular reference to it. Well, I understand you to accept?"

"No, you don't."

"That is, to consent to help us with your advice and criticism. That's all I want. It won't commit you to anything; and you can be as anonymous as anybody." At the door Fulkerson added: "By-the-way, the new man--the fellow that's taken my old syndicate business--will want you to keep on; but I guess he's going to try to beat you down on the price of the letters. He's going in for retrenchment. I brought along a check for

this one; I'm to pay for that." He offered Beaton an envelope.

"I can't take it, Fulkerson. The letter's paid for already." Fulkerson stepped forward and laid the envelope on the table among the tubes of paint.

"It isn't the letter merely. I thought you wouldn't object to a little advance on your 'Every Other Week' work till you kind of got started."

Beaton remained inflexible. "It can't be done, Fulkerson. Don't I tell you I can't sell myself out to a thing I don't believe in? Can't you understand that?"

"Oh yes; I can understand that first-rate. I don't want to buy you; I want to borrow you. It's all right. See? Come round when you can; I'd like to introduce you to old March. That's going to be our address." He put a card on the table beside the envelope, and Beaton allowed him to go without making him take the check back. He had remembered his father's plea; that unnerved him, and he promised himself again to return his father's poor little check and to work on that picture and give it to Fulkerson for the check he had left and for his back debts. He resolved to go to work on the picture at once; he had set his palette for it; but first he looked at Fulkerson's check. It was for only fifty dollars, and the canny Scotch blood in Beaton rebelled; he could not let this picture go for any such money; he felt a little like a man whose generosity has been trifled with. The conflict of emotions broke him up, and he could not work.

IV

The day wasted away in Beaton's hands; at half-past four o'clock he went out to tea at the house of a lady who was At Home that afternoon from four till seven. By this time Beaton was in possession of one of those other selves of which we each have several about us, and was again the laconic, staccato, rather worldlified young artist whose moments of a controlled utterance and a certain distinction of manner had commended him to Mrs. Horn's fancy in the summer at St. Barnaby.

Mrs. Horn's rooms were large, and they never seemed very full, though this perhaps was because people were always so quiet. The ladies, who outnumbered the men ten to one, as they always do at a New York tea, were dressed in sympathy with the low tone every one spoke in, and with the subdued light which gave a crepuscular uncertainty to the few objects, the dim pictures, the unexcited upholstery, of the rooms. One breathed free of bric-a-brac there, and the new-comer breathed softly as one does on going into church after service has begun. This might be a suggestion from the voiceless behavior of the man-servant who let you in, but it was also because Mrs. Horn's At Home was a ceremony, a decorum, and not festival. At far greater houses there was more gayety, at richer houses there was more freedom; the suppression at Mrs. Horn's was a personal,

not a social, effect; it was an efflux of her character, demure, silentious, vague, but very correct.

Beaton easily found his way to her around the grouped skirts and among the detached figures, and received a pressure of welcome from the hand which she momentarily relaxed from the tea-pot. She sat behind a table put crosswise of a remote corner, and offered tea to people whom a niece of hers received provisionally or sped finally in the outer room. They did not usually take tea, and when they did they did not usually drink it; but Beaton was, feverishly glad of his cup; he took rum and lemon in it, and stood talking at Mrs. Horn's side till the next arrival should displace him: he talked in his French manner.

"I have been hoping to see you," she said. "I wanted to ask you about the Leightons. Did they really come?"

"I believe so. They are in town--yes. I haven't seen them."

"Then you don't know how they're getting on--that pretty creature, with her cleverness, and poor Mrs. Leighton? I was afraid they were venturing on a rash experiment. Do you know where they are?"

"In West Eleventh Street somewhere. Miss Leighton is in Mr. Wetmore's class."

"I must look them up. Do you know their number?"

"Not at the moment. I can find out."

"Do," said Mrs. Horn. "What courage they must have, to plunge into New York as they've done! I really didn't think they would. I wonder if they've succeeded in getting anybody into their house yet?"

"I don't know," said Beaton.

"I discouraged their coming all I could," she sighed, "and I suppose you did, too. But it's quite useless trying to make people in a place like St. Barnaby understand how it is in town."

"Yes," said Beaton. He stirred his tea, while inwardly he tried to believe that he had really discouraged the Leightons from coming to New York. Perhaps the vexation of his failure made him call Mrs. Horn in his heart a fraud.

"Yes," she went on, "it is very, very hard. And when they won't understand, and rush on their doom, you feel that they are going to hold you respons--"

Mrs. Horn's eyes wandered from Beaton; her voice faltered in the faded interest of her remark, and then rose with renewed vigor in greeting a lady who came up and stretched her glove across the tea-cups.

Beaton got himself away and out of the house with a much briefer adieu to

the niece than he had meant to make. The patronizing compassion of Mrs. Horn for the Leightons filled him with indignation toward her, toward himself. There was no reason why he should not have ignored them as he had done; but there was a feeling. It was his nature to be careless, and he had been spoiled into recklessness; he neglected everybody, and only remembered them when it suited his whim or his convenience; but he fiercely resented the inattentions of others toward himself. He had no scruple about breaking an engagement or failing to keep an appointment; he made promises without thinking of their fulfilment, and not because he was a faithless person, but because he was imaginative, and expected at the time to do what he said, but was fickle, and so did not. As most of his shortcomings were of a society sort, no great harm was done to anybody else. He had contracted somewhat the circle of his acquaintance by what some people called his rudeness, but most people treated it as his oddity, and were patient with it. One lady said she valued his coming when he said he would come because it had the charm of the unexpected. "Only it shows that it isn't always the unexpected that happens," she explained.

It did not occur to him that his behavior was immoral; he did not realize that it was creating a reputation if not a character for him. While we are still young we do not realize that our actions have this effect. It seems to us that people will judge us from what we think and feel. Later we find out that this is impossible; perhaps we find it out too late; some of us never find it out at all.

In spite of his shame about the Leightons, Beaton had no present intention of looking them up or sending Mrs. Horn their address. As a matter of fact, he never did send it; but he happened to meet Mr. Wetmore and his wife at the restaurant where he dined, and he got it of the painter for himself. He did not ask him how Miss Leighton was getting on; but Wetmore launched out, with Alma for a tacit text, on the futility of women generally going in for art. "Even when they have talent they've got too much against them. Where a girl doesn't seem very strong, like Miss Leighton, no amount of chic is going to help."

His wife disputed him on behalf of her sex, as women always do.

"No, Dolly," he persisted; "she'd better be home milking the cows and leading the horse to water."

Do you think she'd better be up till two in the morning at balls and going all day to receptions and luncheons?"

"Oh, guess it isn't a question of that, even if she weren't drawing. You knew them at home," he said to Beaton.

"Yes."

"I remember. Her mother said you suggested me. Well, the girl has some notion of it; there's no doubt about that. But--she's a woman. The trouble with these talented girls is that they're all woman. If they weren't, there wouldn't be much chance for the men, Beaton. But we've

got Providence on our own side from the start. I'm able to watch all their inspirations with perfect composure. I know just how soon it's going to end in nervous breakdown. Somebody ought to marry them all and put them out of their misery."

"And what will you do with your students who are married already?" his wife said. She felt that she had let him go on long enough.

"Oh, they ought to get divorced."

"You ought to be ashamed to take their money if that's what you think of them."

"My dear, I have a wife to support."

Beaton intervened with a question. "Do you mean that Miss Leighton isn't standing it very well?"

"How do I know? She isn't the kind that bends; she's the kind that breaks."

After a little silence Mrs. Wetmore asked, "Won't you come home with us, Mr. Beaton?"

"Thank you; no. I have an engagement."

"I don't see why that should prevent you," said Wetmore. "But you always were a punctilious cuss. Well!"

Beaton lingered over his cigar; but no one else whom he knew came in, and he yielded to the threefold impulse of conscience, of curiosity, of inclination, in going to call at the Leightons'. He asked for the ladies, and the maid showed him into the parlor, where he found Mrs. Leighton and Miss Woodburn.

The widow met him with a welcome neatly marked by resentment; she meant him to feel that his not coming sooner had been noticed. Miss Woodburn bubbled and gurgled on, and did what she could to mitigate his punishment, but she did not feel authorized to stay it, till Mrs. Leighton, by studied avoidance of her daughter's name, obliged Beaton to ask for her. Then Miss Woodburn caught up her work, and said, "Ah'll go and tell her, Mrs. Leighton." At the top of the stairs she found Alma, and Alma tried to make it seem as if she had not been standing there. "Mah goodness, chald! there's the handsomest young man asking for you down there you evah saw. Ah told you' mothah Ah would come up fo' you."

"What--who is it?"

"Don't you know? But bo' could you? He's got the most beautiful eyes, and he wea's his hai' in a bang, and he talks English like it was something else, and his name's Mr. Beaton."

"Did he ask for me?" said Alma, with a dreamy tone. She put her hand on

the stairs rail, and a little shiver ran over her.

"Didn't I tell you? Of coase he did! And you ought to go raght down if you want to save the poo' fellah's lahfe; you' mothah's just freezin' him to death."

V.

"She is?" cried Alma. "Tchk!" She flew downstairs, and flitted swiftly into the room, and fluttered up to Beaton, and gave him a crushing handshake.

"How very kind, of you to come and see us, Mr. Beaton! When did you come to New York? Don't you find it warm here? We've only just lighted the furnace, but with this mild weather it seems too early. Mamma does keep it so hot!" She rushed about opening doors and shutting registers, and then came back and sat facing him from the sofa with a mask of radiant cordiality. "How have you been since we saw you?"

"Very well," said Beaton. "I hope you're well, Miss Leighton?"

"Oh, perfectly! I think New York agrees with us both wonderfully. I never knew such air. And to think of our not having snow yet! I should think everybody would want to come here! Why don't you come, Mr. Beaton?"

Beaton lifted his eyes and looked at her. "I--I live in New York," he faltered.

"In New York City!" she exclaimed.

"Surely, Alma," said her mother, "you remember Mr. Beaton's telling us he lived in New York."

"But I thought you came from Rochester; or was it Syracuse? I always get those places mixed up."

"Probably I told you my father lived at Syracuse. I've been in New York ever since I came home from Paris," said Beaton, with the confusion of a man who feels himself played upon by a woman.

"From Paris!" Alma echoed, leaning forward, with her smiling mask tight on. "Wasn't it Munich where you studied?"

"I was at Munich, too. I met Wetmore there."

"Oh, do you know Mr. Wetmore?"

"Why, Alma," her mother interposed again, "it was Mr. Beaton who told you of Mr. Wetmore."

"Was it? Why, yes, to be sure. It was Mrs. Horn who suggested Mr. Ilcomb. I remember now. I can't thank you enough for having sent me to Mr. Wetmore, Mr. Beaton. Isn't he delightful? Oh yes, I'm a perfect Wetmorian, I can assure you. The whole class is the same way."

"I just met him and Mrs. Wetmore at dinner," said Beaton, attempting the recovery of something that he had lost through the girl's shining ease and steely sprightliness. She seemed to him so smooth and hard, with a repellent elasticity from which he was flung off. "I hope you're not working too hard, Miss Leighton?"

"Oh no! I enjoy every minute of it, and grow stronger on it. Do I look very much wasted away?" She looked him full in the face, brilliantly smiling, and intentionally beautiful.

"No," he said, with a slow sadness; "I never saw you looking better."

"Poor Mr. Beaton!" she said, in recognition of his doleful tune. "It seems to be quite a blow."

"Oh no--"

"I remember all the good advice you used to give me about not working too hard, and probably it's that that's saved my life--that and the house-hunting. Has mamma told you of our adventures in getting settled?"

"Some time we must. It was such fun! And didn't you think we were fortunate to get such a pretty house? You must see both our parlors." She jumped up, and her mother followed her with a bewildered look as she ran into the back parlor and flashed up the gas.

"Come in here, Mr. Beaton. I want to show you the great feature of the house." She opened the low windows that gave upon a glazed veranda stretching across the end of the room. "Just think of this in New York! You can't see it very well at night, but when the southern sun pours in here all the afternoon--"

"Yes, I can imagine it," he said. He glanced up at the bird-cage hanging from the roof. "I suppose Gypsy enjoys it."

"You remember Gypsy?" she said; and she made a cooing, kissing little noise up at the bird, who responded drowsily. "Poor old Gypsum! Well, he sha'n't be disturbed. Yes, it's Gyp's delight, and Colonel Woodburn likes to write here in the morning. Think of us having a real live author in the house! And Miss Woodburn: I'm so glad you've seen her! They're Southern people."

"Yes, that was obvious in her case."

"From her accent? Isn't it fascinating? I didn't believe I could ever endure Southerners, but we're like one family with the Woodburns. I should think you'd want to paint Miss Woodburn. Don't you think her

coloring is delicious? And such a quaint kind of eighteenth-century type of beauty! But she's perfectly lovely every way, and everything she says is so funny. The Southerners seem to be such great talkers; better than we are, don't you think?"

"I don't know," said Beaton, in pensive discouragement. He was sensible of being manipulated, operated, but he was helpless to escape from the performer or to fathom her motives. His pensiveness passed into gloom, and was degenerating into sulky resentment when he went away, after several failures to get back to the old ground he had held in relation to Alma. He retrieved something of it with Mrs. Leighton; but Alma glittered upon him to the last with a keen impenetrable candor, a child-like singleness of glance, covering unfathomable reserve.

"Well, Alma," said her mother, when the door had closed upon him.

"Well, mother." Then, after a moment, she said, with a rush: "Did you think I was going to let him suppose we were piqued at his not coming? Did you suppose I was going to let him patronize us, or think that we were in the least dependent on his favor or friendship?"

Her mother did not attempt to answer her. She merely said, "I shouldn't think he would come any more."

"Well, we have got on so far without him; perhaps we can live through the rest of the winter."

"I couldn't help feeling sorry for him. He was quite stupefied. I could see that he didn't know what to make of you."

"He's not required to make anything of me," said Alma.

"Do you think he really believed you had forgotten all those things?"

"Impossible to say, mamma."

"Well, I don't think it was quite right, Alma."

"I'll leave him to you the next time. Miss Woodburn said you were freezing him to death when I came down."

"That was quite different. But, there won't be any next time, I'm afraid," sighed Mrs. Leighton.

Beaton went home feeling sure there would not. He tried to read when he got to his room; but Alma's looks, tones, gestures, whirred through and through the woof of the story like shuttles; he could not keep them out, and he fell asleep at last, not because he forgot them, but because he forgave them. He was able to say to himself that he had been justly cut off from kindness which he knew how to value in losing it. He did not expect ever to right himself in Alma's esteem, but he hoped some day to let her know that he had understood. It seemed to him that it would be a good thing if she should find it out after his death. He imagined her

being touched by it under those circumstances.

VI.

In the morning it seemed to Beaton that he had done himself injustice. When he uncovered his Judas and looked at it, he could not believe that the man who was capable of such work deserved the punishment Miss Leighton had inflicted upon him. He still forgave her, but in the presence of a thing like that he could not help respecting himself; he believed that if she could see it she would be sorry that she had cut herself off from his acquaintance. He carried this strain of conviction all through his syndicate letter, which he now took out of his desk and finished, with an increasing security of his opinions and a mounting severity in his judgments. He retaliated upon the general condition of art among us the pangs of wounded vanity, which Alma had made him feel, and he folded up his manuscript and put it in his pocket, almost healed of his humiliation. He had been able to escape from its sting so entirely while he was writing that the notion of making his life more and more literary commended itself to him. As it was now evident that the future was to be one of renunciation, of self-forgetting, an oblivion tinged with bitterness, he formlessly reasoned in favor of reconsidering his resolution against Fulkerson's offer. One must call it reasoning, but it was rather that swift internal dramatization which constantly goes on in persons of excitable sensibilities, and which now seemed to sweep Beaton physically along toward the 'Every Other Week' office, and carried his mind with lightning celerity on to a time when he should have given that journal such quality and authority in matters of art as had never been enjoyed by any in America before. With the prosperity which he made attend his work he changed the character of the enterprise, and with Fulkerson's enthusiastic support he gave the public an art journal of as high grade as 'Les Lettres et les Arts', and very much that sort of thing. All this involved now the unavailing regret of Alma Leighton, and now his reconciliation with her they were married in Grace Church, because Beaton had once seen a marriage there, and had intended to paint a picture of it some time.

Nothing in these fervid fantasies prevented his responding with due dryness to Fulkerson's cheery "Hello, old man!" when he found himself in the building fitted up for the 'Every Other Week' office. Fulkerson's room was back of the smaller one occupied by the bookkeeper; they had been respectively the reception-room and dining-room of the little place in its dwelling-house days, and they had been simply and tastefully treated in their transformation into business purposes. The narrow old trim of the doors and windows had been kept, and the quaintly ugly marble mantels. The architect had said, Better let them stay they expressed epoch, if not character.

"Well, have you come round to go to work? Just hang up your coat on the floor anywhere," Fulkerson went on.

"I've come to bring you that letter," said Beaton, all the more haughtily because he found that Fulkerson was not alone when he welcomed him in these free and easy terms. There was a quiet-looking man, rather stout, and a little above the middle height, with a full, close-cropped iron-gray beard, seated beyond the table where Fulkerson tilted himself back, with his knees set against it; and leaning against the mantel there was a young man with a singularly gentle face, in which the look of goodness qualified and transfigured a certain simplicity. His large blue eyes were somewhat prominent; and his rather narrow face was drawn forward in a nose a little too long perhaps, if it had not been for the full chin deeply cut below the lip, and jutting firmly forward.

"Introduce you to Mr. March, our editor, Mr. Beaton," Fulkerson said, rolling his head in the direction of the elder man; and then nodding it toward the younger, he said, "Mr. Dryfoos, Mr. Beaton." Beaton shook hands with March, and then with Mr. Dryfoos, and Fulkerson went on, gayly: "We were just talking of you, Beaton--well, you know the old saying. Mr. March, as I told you, is our editor, and Mr. Dryfoos has charge of the publishing department--he's the counting-room incarnate, the source of power, the fountain of corruption, the element that prevents journalism being the high and holy thing that it would be if there were no money in it." Mr. Dryfoos turned his large, mild eyes upon Beaton, and laughed with the uneasy concession which people make to a character when they do not quite approve of the character's language. "What Mr. March and I are trying to do is to carry on this thing so that there won't be any money in it--or very little; and we're planning to give the public a better article for the price than it's ever had before. Now here's a dummy we've had made up for 'Every Other Week', and as we've decided to adopt it, we would naturally like your opinion of it, so's to know what opinion to have of you." He reached forward and pushed toward Beaton a volume a little above the size of the ordinary duodecimo book; its ivory-white pebbled paper cover was prettily illustrated with a water-colored design irregularly washed over the greater part of its surface: quite across the page at top, and narrowing from right to left as it descended. In the triangular space left blank the title of the periodical and the publisher's imprint were tastefully lettered so as to be partly covered by the background of color.

"It's like some of those Tartarin books of Daudet's," said Beaton, looking at it with more interest than he suffered to be seen. "But it's a book, not a magazine." He opened its pages of thick, mellow white paper, with uncut leaves, the first few pages experimentally printed in the type intended to be used, and illustrated with some sketches drawn into and over the text, for the sake of the effect.

"A Daniel--a Daniel come to judgment! Sit down, Dan'el, and take it easy." Fulkerson pushed a chair toward Beaton, who dropped into it. "You're right, Dan'el; it's a book, to all practical intents and purposes. And what we propose to do with the American public is to give it twenty-four books like this a year--a complete library--for the absurd sum of six dollars. We don't intend to sell 'em--it's no name for the transaction--but to give 'em. And what we want to get out of you--beg, borrow, buy, or steal from you is an opinion whether we shall make the

American public this princely present in paper covers like this, or in some sort of flexible boards, so they can set them on the shelf and say no more about it. Now, Dan'el, come to judgment, as our respected friend Shylock remarked."

Beacon had got done looking at the dummy, and he dropped it on the table before Fulkerson, who pushed it away, apparently to free himself from partiality. "I don't know anything about the business side, and I can't tell about the effect of either style on the sales; but you'll spoil the whole character of the cover if you use anything thicker than that thickish paper."

"All right; very good; first-rate. The ayes have it. Paper it is. I don't mind telling you that we had decided for that paper before you came in. Mr. March wanted it, because he felt in his bones just the way you do about it, and Mr. Dryfoos wanted it, because he's the counting-room incarnate, and it's cheaper; and I 'wanted it, because I always like to go with the majority. Now what do you think of that little design itself?"

"The sketch?" Beaton pulled the book toward him again and looked at it again. "Rather decorative. Drawing's not remarkable. Graceful; rather nice." He pushed the book away again, and Fulkerson pulled it to his aide of the table.

"Well, that's a piece of that amateur trash you despise so much. I went to a painter I know-by-the-way, he was guilty of suggesting you for this thing, but I told him I was ahead of him--and I got him to submit my idea to one of his class, and that's the result. Well, now, there ain't anything in this world that sells a book like a pretty cover, and we're going to have a pretty cover for 'Every Other Week' every time. We've cut loose from the old traditional quarto literary newspaper size, and we've cut loose from the old two-column big page magazine size; we're going to have a duodecimo page, clear black print, and paper that 'll make your mouth water; and we're going to have a fresh illustration for the cover of each number, and we ain't agoing to give the public any rest at all. Sometimes we're going to have a delicate little landscape like this, and sometimes we're going to have an indelicate little figure, or as much so as the law will allow."

The young man leaning against the mantelpiece blushed a sort of protest.

March smiled and said, dryly, "Those are the numbers that Mr. Fulkerson is going to edit himself."

"Exactly. And Mr. Beaton, here, is going to supply the floating females, gracefully airing themselves against a sunset or something of that kind." Beaton frowned in embarrassment, while Fulkerson went on philosophically; "It's astonishing how you fellows can keep it up at this stage of the proceedings; you can paint things that your harshest critic would be ashamed to describe accurately; you're as free as the theatre. But that's neither here nor there. What I'm after is the fact that we're going to have variety in our title-pages, and we are going to have

novelty in the illustrations of the body of the book. March, here, if he had his own way, wouldn't have any illustrations at all."

"Not because I don't like them, Mr. Beacon," March interposed, "but because I like them too much. I find that I look at the pictures in an illustrated article, but I don't read the article very much, and I fancy that's the case with most other people. You've got to doing them so prettily that you take our eyes off the literature, if you don't take our minds off."

"Like the society beauties on the stage: people go in for the beauty so much that they don't know what the play is. But the box-office gets there all the same, and that's what Mr. Dryfoos wants." Fulkerson looked up gayly at Mr. Dryfoos, who smiled deprecatingly.

"It was different," March went on, "when the illustrations used to be bad. Then the text had some chance."

"Old legitimate drama days, when ugliness and genius combined to storm the galleries," said Fulkerson.

"We can still make them bad enough," said Beaton, ignoring Fulkerson in his remark to March.

Fulkerson took the reply upon himself. "Well, you needn't make 'em so bad as the old-style cuts; but you can make them unobtrusive, modestly retiring. We've got hold of a process something like that those French fellows gave Daudet thirty-five thousand dollars to write a novel to use with; kind of thing that begins at one side; or one corner, and spreads in a sort of dim religious style over the print till you can't tell which is which. Then we've got a notion that where the pictures don't behave quite so sociably, they can be dropped into the text, like a little casual remark, don't you know, or a comment that has some connection, or maybe none at all, with what's going on in the story. Something like this." Fulkerson took away one knee from the table long enough to open the drawer, and pull from it a book that he shoved toward Beaton. "That's a Spanish book I happened to see at Brentano's, and I froze to it on account of the pictures. I guess they're pretty good."

"Do you expect to get such drawings in this country?" asked Beaton, after a glance at the book. "Such character--such drama? You won't."

"Well, I'm not so sure," said Fulkerson, "come to get our amateurs warmed up to the work. But what I want is to get the physical effect, so to speak--get that sized picture into our page, and set the fashion of it. I shouldn't care if the illustration was sometimes confined to an initial letter and a tail-piece."

"Couldn't be done here. We haven't the touch. We're good in some things, but this isn't in our way," said Beaton, stubbornly. "I can't think of a man who could do it; that is, among those that would."

"Well, think of some woman, then," said Fulkerson, easily. "I've got a

notion that the women could help us out on this thing, come to get 'em interested. There ain't anything so popular as female fiction; why not try female art?"

"The females themselves have been supposed to have been trying it for a good while," March suggested; and Mr. Dryfoos laughed nervously; Beaton remained solemnly silent.

"Yes, I know," Fulkerson assented. "But I don't mean that kind exactly. What we want to do is to work the 'ewig Weibliche' in this concern. We want to make a magazine that will go for the women's fancy every time. I don't mean with recipes for cooking and fashions and personal gossip about authors and society, but real high-tone literature that will show women triumphing in all the stories, or else suffering tremendously. We've got to recognize that women form three-fourths of the reading public in this country, and go for their tastes and their sensibilities and their sex-piety along the whole line. They do like to think that women can do things better than men; and if we can let it leak out and get around in the papers that the managers of 'Every Other Week' couldn't stir a peg in the line of the illustrations they wanted till they got a lot of God-gifted girls to help them, it 'll make the fortune of the thing. See?"

He looked sunnily round at the other men, and March said: "You ought to be in charge of a Siamese white elephant, Fulkerson. It's a disgrace to be connected with you."

"It seems to me," said Becton, "that you'd better get a God-gifted girl for your art editor."

Fulkerson leaned alertly forward, and touched him on the shoulder, with a compassionate smile. "My dear boy, they haven't got the genius of organization. It takes a very masculine man for that--a man who combines the most subtle and refined sympathies with the most forceful purposes and the most ferruginous will-power. Which his name is Angus Beaton, and here he sets!"

The others laughed with Fulkerson at his gross burlesque of flattery, and Becton frowned sheepishly. "I suppose you understand this man's style," he growled toward March.

"He does, my son," said Fulkerson. "He knows that I cannot tell a lie." He pulled out his watch, and then got suddenly upon his feet.

"It's quarter of twelve, and I've got an appointment." Beaton rose too, and Fulkerson put the two books in his lax hands. "Take these along, Michelangelo Da Vinci, my friend, and put your multitudinous mind on them for about an hour, and let us hear from you to-morrow. We hang upon your decision."

"There's no deciding to be done," said Beaton. "You can't combine the two styles. They'd kill each other."

"A Dan'el, a Dan'el come to judgment! I knew you could help us out! Take 'em along, and tell us which will go the furthest with the 'ewig Weibliche.' Dryfoos, I want a word with you." He led the way into the front room, flirting an airy farewell to Beaton with his hand as he went.

VII.

March and Beaton remained alone together for a moment, and March said: "I hope you will think it worth while to take hold with us, Mr. Beaton. Mr. Fulkerson puts it in his own way, of course; but we really want to make a nice thing of the magazine." He had that timidity of the elder in the presence of the younger man which the younger, preoccupied with his own timidity in the presence of the elder, cannot imagine. Besides, March was aware of the gulf that divided him as a literary man from Beaton as an artist, and he only ventured to feel his way toward sympathy with him. "We want to make it good; we want to make it high. Fulkerson is right about aiming to please the women, but of course he caricatures the way of going about it."

For answer, Beaton flung out, "I can't go in for a thing I don't understand the plan of."

March took it for granted that he had wounded some exposed sensibility, of Beaton's. He continued still more deferentially: "Mr. Fulkerson's notion--I must say the notion is his, evolved from his syndicate experience--is that we shall do best in fiction to confine our selves to short stories, and make each number complete in itself. He found that the most successful things he could furnish his newspapers were short stories; we Americans are supposed to excel in writing them; and most people begin with them in fiction; and it's Mr. Fulkerson's idea to work unknown talent, as he says, and so he thinks he can not only get them easily, but can gradually form a school of short-story writers. I can't say I follow him altogether, but I respect his experience. We shall not despise translations of short stories, but otherwise the matter will all be original, and, of course, it won't all be short stories. We shall use sketches of travel, and essays, and little dramatic studies, and bits of biography and history; but all very light, and always short enough to be completed in a single number. Mr. Fulkerson believes in pictures, and most of the things would be capable of illustration."

"I see," said Beaton.

"I don't know but this is the whole affair," said March, beginning to stiffen a little at the young man's reticence.

"I understand. Thank you for taking the trouble to explain. Good-morning." Beaton bowed himself off, without offering to shake hands.

Fulkerson came in after a while from the outer office, and Mr. Dryfoos followed him. "Well, what do you think of our art editor?"

"Is he our art editor?" asked March. "I wasn't quite certain when he left."

"Did he take the books?"

"Yes, he took the books."

"I guess he's all right, then." Fulkerson added, in concession to the umbrage he detected in March.

"Beaton has his times of being the greatest ass in the solar system, but he usually takes it out in personal conduct. When it comes to work, he's a regular horse."

"He appears to have compromised for the present by being a perfect mule," said March.

"Well, he's in a transition state," Fulkerson allowed. "He's the man for us. He really understands what we want. You'll see; he'll catch on. That lurid glare of his will wear off in the course of time. He's really a good fellow when you take him off his guard; and he's full of ideas. He's spread out over a good deal of ground at present, and so he's pretty thin; but come to gather him up into a lump, there's a good deal of substance to him. Yes, there is. He's a first-rate critic, and he's a nice fellow with the other artists. They laugh at his universality, but they all like him. He's the best kind of a teacher when he condescends to it; and he's just the man to deal with our volunteer work. Yes, sir, he's a prize. Well, I must go now."

Fulkerson went out of the street door, and then came quickly back. "By-the-bye, March, I saw that old dynamiter of yours round at Beaton's room yesterday."

"What old dynamiter of mine?"

"That old one-handed Dutchman--friend of your youth--the one we saw at Maroni's--"

"Oh-Lindau!" said March, with a vague pang of self reproach for having thought of Lindau so little after the first flood of his tender feeling toward him was past.

"Yes, our versatile friend was modelling him as Judas Iscariot. Lindau makes a first-rate Judas, and Beaton has got a big thing in that head if he works the religious people right. But what I was thinking of was this--it struck me just as I was going out of the door: Didn't you tell me Lindau knew forty or fifty, different languages?"

"Four or five, yes."

"Well, we won't quarrel about the number. The question is, Why not work him in the field of foreign literature? You can't go over all their

reviews and magazines, and he could do the smelling for you, if you could trust his nose. Would he know a good thing?"

"I think he would," said March, on whom the scope of Fulkerson's suggestion gradually opened. "He used to have good taste, and he must know the ground. Why, it's a capital idea, Fulkerson! Lindau wrote very fair English, and he could translate, with a little revision."

"And he would probably work cheap. Well, hadn't you better see him about it? I guess it 'll be quite a windfall for him."

"Yes, it will. I'll look him up. Thank you for the suggestion, Fulkerson."

"Oh, don't mention it! I don't mind doing 'Every Other Week' a good turn now and then when it comes in my way." Fulkerson went out again, and this time March was finally left with Mr. Dryfoos.

"Mrs. March was very sorry not to be at home when your sisters called the other day. She wished me to ask if they had any afternoon in particular. There was none on your mother's card."

"No, sir," said the young man, with a flush of embarrassment that seemed habitual with him. "She has no day. She's at home almost every day. She hardly ever goes out."

"Might we come some evening?" March asked. "We should be very glad to do that, if she would excuse the informality. Then I could come with Mrs. March."

"Mother isn't very formal," said the young man. "She would be very glad to see you."

"Then we'll come some night this week, if you will let us. When do you expect your father back?"

"Not much before Christmas. He's trying to settle up some things at Moffitt."

"And what do you think of our art editor?" asked March, with a smile, for the change of subject.

"Oh, I don't know much about such things," said the young man, with another of his embarrassed flushes. "Mr. Fulkerson seems to feel sure that he is the one for us."

"Mr. Fulkerson seemed to think that I was the one for you, too," said March; and he laughed. "That's what makes me doubt his infallibility. But he couldn't do worse with Mr. Beaton."

Mr. Dryfoos reddened and looked down, as if unable or unwilling to cope with the difficulty of making a polite protest against March's self-depreciation. He said, after a moment: "It's new business to all of us

except Mr. Fulkerson. But I think it will succeed. I think we can do some good in it."

March asked rather absently, "Some good?" Then he added: "Oh yes; I think we can. What do you mean by good? Improve the public taste? Elevate the standard of literature? Give young authors and artists a chance?"

This was the only good that had ever been in March's mind, except the good that was to come in a material way from his success, to himself and to his family.

"I don't know," said the young man; and he looked down in a shamefaced fashion. He lifted his head and looked into March's face. "I suppose I was thinking that some time we might help along. If we were to have those sketches of yours about life in every part of New York--"

March's authorial vanity was tickled. "Fulkerson has been talking to you about them? He seemed to think they would be a card. He believes that there's no subject so fascinating to the general average of people throughout the country as life in New York City; and he liked my notion of doing these things." March hoped that Dryfoos would answer that Fulkerson was perfectly enthusiastic about his notion; but he did not need this stimulus, and, at any rate, he went on without it. "The fact is, it's something that struck my fancy the moment I came here; I found myself intensely interested in the place, and I began to make notes, consciously and unconsciously, at once. Yes, I believe I can get something quite attractive out of it. I don't in the least know what it will be yet, except that it will be very desultory; and I couldn't at all say when I can get at it. If we postpone the first number till February I might get a little paper into that. Yes, I think it might be a good thing for us," March said, with modest self-appreciation.

"If you can make the comfortable people understand how the uncomfortable people live, it will be a very good thing, Mr. March. Sometimes it seems to me that the only trouble is that we don't know one another well enough; and that the first thing is to do this." The young fellow spoke with the seriousness in which the beauty of his face resided. Whenever he laughed his face looked weak, even silly. It seemed to be a sense of this that made him hang his head or turn it away at such times.

"That's true," said March, from the surface only. "And then, those phases of low life are immensely picturesque. Of course, we must try to get the contrasts of luxury for the sake of the full effect. That won't be so easy. You can't penetrate to the dinner-party of a millionaire under the wing of a detective as you could to a carouse in Mulberry Street, or to his children's nursery with a philanthropist as you can to a street-boy's lodging-house." March laughed, and again the young man turned his head away. "Still, something can be done in that way by tact and patience."

VII.

That evening March went with his wife to return the call of the Dryfoos ladies. On their way up-town in the Elevated he told her of his talk with young Dryfoos. "I confess I was a little ashamed before him afterward for having looked at the matter so entirely from the aesthetic point of view. But of course, you know, if I went to work at those things with an ethical intention explicitly in mind, I should spoil them."

"Of course," said his wife. She had always heard him say something of this kind about such things.

He went on: "But I suppose that's just the point that such a nature as young Dryfoos's can't get hold of, or keep hold of. We're a queer lot, down there, Isabel--perfect menagerie. If it hadn't been that Fulkerson got us together, and really seems to know what he did it for, I should say he was the oddest stick among us. But when I think of myself and my own crankiness for the literary department; and young Dryfoos, who ought really to be in the pulpit, or a monastery, or something, for publisher; and that young Beaton, who probably hasn't a moral fibre in his composition, for the art man, I don't know but we could give Fulkerson odds and still beat him in oddity."

His wife heaved a deep sigh of apprehension, of renunciation, of monition. "Well, I'm glad you can feel so light about it, Basil."

"Light? I feel gay! With Fulkerson at the helm, I tell you the rocks and the lee shore had better keep out of the way." He laughed with pleasure in his metaphor. "Just when you think Fulkerson has taken leave of his senses he says or does something that shows he is on the most intimate and inalienable terms with them all the time. You know how I've been worrying over those foreign periodicals, and trying to get some translations from them for the first number? Well, Fulkerson has brought his centipedal mind to bear on the subject, and he's suggested that old German friend of mine I was telling you of--the one I met in the restaurant--the friend of my youth."

"Do you think he could do it?" asked Mrs. March, sceptically.

"He's a perfect Babel of strange tongues; and he's the very man for the work, and I was ashamed I hadn't thought of him myself, for I suspect he needs the work."

"Well, be careful how you get mixed up with him, then, Basil," said his wife, who had the natural misgiving concerning the friends of her husband's youth that all wives have. "You know the Germans are so unscrupulously dependent. You don't know anything about him now."

"I'm not afraid of Lindau," said March. "He was the best and kindest man I ever saw, the most high-minded, the most generous. He lost a hand in the war that helped to save us and keep us possible, and that stump of

his is character enough for me."

"Oh, you don't think I could have meant anything against him!" said Mrs. March, with the tender fervor that every woman who lived in the time of the war must feel for those who suffered in it. "All that I meant was that I hoped you would not get mixed up with him too much. You're so apt to be carried away by your impulses."

"They didn't carry me very far away in the direction of poor old Lindau, I'm ashamed to think," said March. "I meant all sorts of fine things by him after I met him; and then I forgot him, and I had to be reminded of him by Fulkerson."

She did not answer him, and he fell into a remorseful reverie, in which he rehabilitated Lindau anew, and provided handsomely for his old age. He got him buried with military honors, and had a shaft raised over him, with a medallion likeness by Beaton and an epitaph by himself, by the time they reached Forty-second Street; there was no time to write Lindau's life, however briefly, before the train stopped.

They had to walk up four blocks and then half a block across before they came to the indistinctive brownstone house where the Dryfooses lived. It was larger than some in the same block, but the next neighborhood of a huge apartment-house dwarfed it again. March thought he recognized the very flat in which he had disciplined the surly janitor, but he did not tell his wife; he made her notice the transition character of the street, which had been mostly built up in apartment-houses, with here and there a single dwelling dropped far down beneath and beside them, to that jag-toothed effect on the sky-line so often observable in such New York streets. "I don't know exactly what the old gentleman bought here for," he said, as they waited on the steps after ringing, "unless he expects to turn it into flats by-and-by. Otherwise, I don't believe he'll get his money back."

An Irish serving-man, with a certain surprise that delayed him, said the ladies were at home, and let the Marches in, and then carried their cards up-stairs. The drawing-room, where he said they could sit down while he went on this errand, was delicately, decorated in white and gold, and furnished with a sort of extravagant good taste; there was nothing to object to in the satin furniture, the pale, soft, rich carpet, the pictures, and the bronze and china bric-a-brac, except that their costliness was too evident; everything in the room meant money too plainly, and too much of it. The Marches recognized this in the hoarse whispers which people cannot get their voices above when they try to talk away the interval of waiting in such circumstances; they conjectured from what they had heard of the Dryfooses that this tasteful luxury in no wise expressed their civilization. "Though when you come to that," said March, "I don't know that Mrs. Green's gimcrackery expresses ours."

"Well, Basil, I didn't take the gimcrackery. That was your--"

The rustle of skirts on the stairs without arrested Mrs. March in the well-merited punishment which she never failed to inflict upon her

husband when the question of the gimcrackery--they always called it that--came up. She rose at the entrance of a bright-looking, pretty-looking, mature, youngish lady, in black silk of a neutral implication, who put out her hand to her, and said, with a very cheery, very ladylike accent, "Mrs. March?" and then added to both of them, while she shook hands with March, and before they could get the name out of their mouths: "No, not Miss Dryfoos! Neither of them; nor Mrs. Dryfoos. Mrs. Mandel. The ladies will be down in a moment. Won't you throw off your sacque, Mrs. March? I'm afraid it's rather warm here, coming from the outside."

"I will throw it back, if you'll allow me," said Mrs. March, with a sort of provisionality, as if, pending some uncertainty as to Mrs. Mandel's quality and authority, she did not feel herself justified in going further.

But if she did not know about Mrs. Mandel, Mrs. Mandel seemed to know about her. "Oh, well, do!" she said, with a sort of recognition of the propriety of her caution. "I hope you are feeling a little at home in New York. We heard so much of your trouble in getting a flat, from Mr. Fulkerson."

"Well, a true Bostonian doesn't give up quite so soon," said Mrs. March.

"But I will say New York doesn't seem so far away, now we're here."

"I'm sure you'll like it. Every one does." Mrs. Mandel added to March, "It's very sharp out, isn't it?"

"Rather sharp. But after our Boston winters I don't know but I ought to repudiate the word."

"Ah, wait till you have been here through March!" said Mrs. Mandel. She began with him, but skillfully transferred the close of her remark, and the little smile of menace that went with it, to his wife.

"Yes," said Mrs. March, "or April, either: Talk about our east winds!"

"Oh, I'm sure they can't be worse than our winds," Mrs. Mandel returned, caressingly.

"If we escape New York pneumonia," March laughed, "it will only be to fall a prey to New York malaria as soon as the frost is out of the ground."

"Oh, but you know," said Mrs. Mandel, "I think our malaria has really been slandered a little. It's more a matter of drainage--of plumbing. I don't believe it would be possible for malaria to get into this house, we've had it gone over so thoroughly."

Mrs. March said, while she tried to divine Mrs. Mandel's position from this statement, "It's certainly the first duty."

"If Mrs. March could have had her way, we should have had the drainage of

our whole ward put in order," said her husband, "before we ventured to take a furnished apartment for the winter."

Mrs. Mandel looked discreetly at Mrs. March for permission to laugh at this, but at the same moment both ladies became preoccupied with a second rustling on the stairs.

Two tall, well-dressed young girls came in, and Mrs. Mandel introduced, "Miss Dryfoos, Mrs. March; and Miss Mela Dryfoos, Mr. March," she added, and the girls shook hands in their several ways with the Marches.

Miss Dryfoos had keen black eyes, and her hair was intensely black. Her face, but for the slight inward curve of the nose, was regular, and the smallness of her nose and of her mouth did not weaken her face, but gave it a curious effect of fierceness, of challenge. She had a large black fan in her hand, which she waved in talking, with a slow, watchful nervousness. Her sister was blonde, and had a profile like her brother's; but her chin was not so salient, and the weak look of the mouth was not corrected by the spirituality or the fervor of his eyes, though hers were of the same mottled blue. She dropped into the low seat beside Mrs. Mandel, and intertwined her fingers with those of the hand which Mrs. Mandel let her have. She smiled upon the Marches, while Miss Dryfoos watched them intensely, with her eyes first on one and then on the other, as if she did not mean to let any expression of theirs escape her.

"My mother will be down in a minute," she said to Mrs. March.

"I hope we're not disturbing her. It is so good of you to let us come in the evening," Mrs. March replied.

"Oh, not at all," said the girl. "We receive in the evening."

"When we do receive," Miss Mela put in. "We don't always get the chance to." She began a laugh, which she checked at a smile from Mrs. Mandel, which no one could have seen to be reproofing.

Miss Dryfoos looked down at her fan, and looked up defiantly at Mrs. March. "I suppose you have hardly got settled. We were afraid we would disturb you when we called."

"Oh no! We were very sorry to miss your visit. We are quite settled in our new quarters. Of course, it's all very different from Boston."

"I hope it's more of a sociable place there," Miss Mela broke in again.

"I never saw such an unsociable place as New York. We've been in this house three months, and I don't believe that if we stayed three years any of the neighbors would call."

"I fancy proximity doesn't count for much in New York," March suggested.

Mrs. Mandel said: "That's what I tell Miss Mela. But she is a very social nature, and can't reconcile herself to the fact."

"No, I can't," the girl pouted. "I think it was twice as much fun in Moffitt. I wish I was there now."

"Yes," said March, "I think there's a great deal more enjoyment in those smaller places. There's not so much going on in the way of public amusements, and so people make more of one another. There are not so many concerts, theatres, operas--"

"Oh, they've got a splendid opera-house in Moffitt. It's just grand," said Miss Mela.

"Have you been to the opera here, this winter?" Mrs. March asked of the elder girl.

She was glaring with a frown at her sister, and detached her eyes from her with an effort. "What did you say?" she demanded, with an absent bluntness. "Oh yes. Yes! We went once. Father took a box at the Metropolitan."

"Then you got a good dose of Wagner, I suppose?" said March.

"What?" asked the girl.

"I don't think Miss Dryfoos is very fond of Wagner's music," Mrs. Mandel said. "I believe you are all great Wagnerites in Boston?"

"I'm a very bad Bostonian, Mrs. Mandel. I suspect myself of preferring Verdi," March answered.

Miss Dryfoos looked down at her fan again, and said, "I like 'Trovatore' the best."

"It's an opera I never get tired of," said March, and Mrs. March and Mrs. Mandel exchanged a smile of compassion for his simplicity. He detected it, and added: "But I dare say I shall come down with the Wagner fever in time. I've been exposed to some malignant cases of it."

"That night we were there," said Miss Mela, "they had to turn the gas down all through one part of it, and the papers said the ladies were awful mad because they couldn't show their diamonds. I don't wonder, if they all had to pay as much for their boxes as we did. We had to pay sixty dollars." She looked at the Marches for their sensation at this expense.

March said: "Well, I think I shall take my box by the month, then. It must come cheaper, wholesale."

"Oh no, it don't," said the girl, glad to inform him. "The people that own their boxes, and that had to give fifteen or twenty thousand dollars apiece for them, have to pay sixty dollars a night whenever there's a performance, whether they go or not."

"Then I should go every night," March said.

"Most of the ladies were low neck--"

March interposed, "Well, I shouldn't go low-neck."

The girl broke into a fondly approving laugh at his drolling. "Oh, I guess you love to train! Us girls wanted to go low neck, too; but father said we shouldn't, and mother said if we did she wouldn't come to the front of the box once. Well, she didn't, anyway. We might just as well 'a' gone low neck. She stayed back the whole time, and when they had that dance--the ballet, you know--she just shut her eyes. Well, Conrad didn't like that part much, either; but us girls and Mrs. Mandel, we brazened it out right in the front of the box. We were about the only ones there that went high neck. Conrad had to wear a swallow-tail; but father hadn't any, and he had to patch out with a white cravat. You couldn't see what he had on in the back o' the box, anyway."

Mrs. March looked at Miss Dryfoos, who was waving her fan more and more slowly up and down, and who, when she felt herself looked at, returned Mrs. March's smile, which she meant to be ingratiating and perhaps sympathetic, with a flash that made her start, and then ran her fierce eyes over March's face. "Here comes mother," she said, with a sort of breathlessness, as if speaking her thought aloud, and through the open door the Marches could see the old lady on the stairs.

She paused half-way down, and turning, called up: "Coonrod! Coonrod! You bring my shawl down with you."

Her daughter Mela called out to her, "Now, mother, Christine 'll give it to you for not sending Mike."

"Well, I don't know where he is, Mely, child," the mother answered back. "He ain't never around when he's wanted, and when he ain't, it seems like a body couldn't git shet of him, nohow."

"Well, you ought to ring for him!" cried Miss Mela, enjoying the joke.

Her mother came in with a slow step; her head shook slightly as she looked about the room, perhaps from nervousness, perhaps from a touch of palsy. In either case the fact had a pathos which Mrs. March confessed in the affection with which she took her hard, dry, large, old hand when she was introduced to her, and in the sincerity which she put into the hope that she was well.

"I'm just middlin'," Mrs. Dryfoos replied. "I ain't never so well, nowadays. I tell fawther I don't believe it agrees with me very well here, but he says I'll git used to it. He's away now, out at Moffitt," she said to March, and wavered on foot a moment before she sank into a chair. She was a tall woman, who had been a beautiful girl, and her gray hair had a memory of bloneness in it like Lindau's, March noticed. She wore a simple silk gown, of a Quakerly gray, and she held a handkerchief folded square, as it had come from the laundress. Something like the

Sabbath quiet of a little wooden meeting-house in thick Western woods expressed itself to him from her presence.

"Laws, mother!" said Miss Mela; "what you got that old thing on for? If I'd 'a' known you'd 'a' come down in that!"

"Coonrod said it was all right, Mely," said her mother.

Miss Mela explained to the Marches: "Mother was raised among the Dunkards, and she thinks it's wicked to wear anything but a gray silk even for dress-up."

"You hain't never heard o' the Dunkards, I reckon," the old woman said to Mrs. March. "Some folks calls 'em the Beardy Men, because they don't never shave; and they wash feet like they do in the Testament. My uncle was one. He raised me."

"I guess pretty much everybody's a Beardy Man nowadays, if he ain't a Dunkard!"

Miss Mela looked round for applause of her sally, but March was saying to his wife: "It's a Pennsylvania German sect, I believe--something like the Quakers. I used to see them when I was a boy."

"Aren't they something like the Mennists?" asked Mrs. Mandel.

"They're good people," said the old woman, "and the world 'd be a heap better off if there was more like 'em."

Her son came in and laid a soft shawl over her shoulders before he shook hands with the visitors. "I am glad you found your way here," he said to them.

Christine, who had been bending forward over her fan, now lifted herself up with a sigh and leaned back in her chair.

"I'm sorry my father isn't here," said the young man to Mrs. March. "He's never met you yet?"

"No; and I should like to see him. We hear a great deal about your father, you know, from Mr. Fulkerson."

"Oh, I hope you don't believe everything Mr. Fulkerson says about people," Mela cried. "He's the greatest person for carrying on when he gets going I ever saw. It makes Christine just as mad when him and mother gets to talking about religion; she says she knows he don't care anything more about it than the man in the moon. I reckon he don't try it on much with father."

"Your fawther ain't ever been a perfessor," her mother interposed; "but he's always been a good church-goin' man."

"Not since we come to New York," retorted the girl.

"He's been all broke up since he come to New York," said the old woman, with an aggrieved look.

Mrs. Mandel attempted a diversion. "Have you heard any of our great New York preachers yet, Mrs. March?"

"No, I haven't," Mrs. March admitted; and she tried to imply by her candid tone that she intended to begin hearing them the very next Sunday.

"There are a great many things here," said Conrad, "to take your thoughts off the preaching that you hear in most of the churches. I think the city itself is preaching the best sermon all the time."

"I don't know that I understand you," said March.

Mela answered for him. "Oh, Conrad has got a lot of notions that nobody can understand. You ought to see the church he goes to when he does go. I'd about as lief go to a Catholic church myself; I don't see a bit o' difference. He's the greatest crony with one of their preachers; he dresses just like a priest, and he says he is a priest." She laughed for enjoyment of the fact, and her brother cast down his eyes.

Mrs. March, in her turn, tried to take from it the personal tone which the talk was always assuming. "Have you been to the fall exhibition?" she asked Christine; and the girl drew herself up out of the abstraction she seemed sunk in.

"The exhibition?" She looked at Mrs. Mandel.

"The pictures of the Academy, you know," Mrs. Mandel explained. "Where I wanted you to go the day you had your dress tried on,"

"No; we haven't been yet. Is it good?" She had turned to Mrs. March again.

"I believe the fall exhibitions are never so good as the spring ones. But there are some good pictures."

"I don't believe I care much about pictures," said Christine. "I don't understand them."

"Ah, that's no excuse for not caring about them," said March, lightly. "The painters themselves don't, half the time."

The girl looked at him with that glance at once defiant and appealing, insolent and anxious, which he had noticed before, especially when she stole it toward himself and his wife during her sister's babble. In the light of Fulkerson's history of the family, its origin and its ambition, he interpreted it to mean a sense of her sister's folly and an ignorant will to override his opinion of anything incongruous in themselves and their surroundings. He said to himself that she was deathly proud--too proud to try to palliate anything, but capable of anything that would put

others under her feet. Her eyes seemed hopelessly to question his wife's social quality, and he fancied, with not unkindly interest, the inexperienced girl's doubt whether to treat them with much or little respect. He lost himself in fancies about her and her ideals, necessarily sordid, of her possibilities of suffering, of the triumphs and disappointments before her. Her sister would accept both with a lightness that would keep no trace of either; but in her they would sink lastingly deep. He came out of his reverie to find Mrs. Dryfoos saying to him, in her hoarse voice:

"I think it's a shame, some of the pictur's a body sees in the winders. They say there's a law ag'inst them things; and if there is, I don't understand why the police don't take up them that paints 'em. I hear 182 tell, since I been here, that there's women that goes to have pictur's took from them that way by men painters." The point seemed aimed at March, as if he were personally responsible for the scandal, and it fell with a silencing effect for the moment. Nobody seemed willing to take it up, and Mrs. Dryfoos went on, with an old woman's severity: "I say they ought to be all tarred and feathered and rode on a rail. They'd be drummed out of town in Moffitt."

Miss Mela said, with a crowing laugh: "I should think they would! And they wouldn't anybody go low neck to the opera-house there, either--not low neck the way they do here, anyway."

"And that pack of worthless hussies," her mother resumed, "that come out on the stage, and begun to kick"

"Laws, mother!" the girl shouted, "I thought you said you had your eyes shut!"

All but these two simpler creatures were abashed at the indecorum of suggesting in words the commonplaces of the theatre and of art.

"Well, I did, Mely, as soon as I could believe my eyes. I don't know what they're doin' in all their churches, to let such things go on," said the old woman. "It's a sin and a shame, I think. Don't you, Coonrod?"

A ring at the door cut short whatever answer he was about to deliver.

"If it's going to be company, Coonrod," said his mother, making an effort to rise, "I reckon I better go up-stairs."

"It's Mr. Fulkerson, I guess," said Conrad. "He thought he might come"; and at the mention of this light spirit Mrs. Dryfoos sank contentedly back in her chair, and a relaxation of their painful tension seemed to pass through the whole company. Conrad went to the door himself (the serving-man tentatively, appeared some minutes later) and let in Fulkerson's cheerful voice before his cheerful person.

"Ah, how dye do, Conrad? Brought our friend, Mr. Beaton, with me," those within heard him say; and then, after a sound of putting off overcoats, they saw him fill the doorway, with his feet set square and his arms

akimbo.

IX.

"Ah! hello! hello!" Fulkerson said, in recognition of the Marches.
"Regular gathering of the clans. How are you, Mrs. Dryfoos? How do you do, Mrs. Mandel, Miss Christine, Mela, Aunt Hitty, and all the folks? How you wuz?" He shook hands gayly all round, and took a chair next the old lady, whose hand he kept in his own, and left Conrad to introduce Beaton. But he would not let the shadow of Beaton's solemnity fall upon the company. He began to joke with Mrs. Dryfoos, and to match rheumatisms with her, and he included all the ladies in the range of appropriate pleasantries. "I've brought Mr. Beaton along to-night, and I want you to make him feel at home, like you do me, Mrs. Dryfoos. He hasn't got any rheumatism to speak of; but his parents live in Syracuse, and he's a kind of an orphan, and we've just adopted him down at the office. When you going to bring the young ladies down there, Mrs. Mandel, for a champagne lunch? I will have some hydro-Mela, and Christine it, heigh? How's that for a little starter? We dropped in at your place a moment, Mrs. March, and gave the young folks a few pointers about their studies. My goodness! it does me good to see a boy like that of yours; business, from the word go; and your girl just scoops my youthful affections. She's a beauty, and I guess she's good, too. Well, well, what a world it is! Miss Christine, won't you show Mr. Beaton that seal ring of yours? He knows about such things, and I brought him here to see it as much as anything. It's an intaglio I brought from the other side," he explained to Mrs. March, "and I guess you'll like to look at it. Tried to give it to the Dryfoos family, and when I couldn't, I sold it to 'em. Bound to see it on Miss Christine's hand somehow! Hold on! Let him see it where it belongs, first!"

He arrested the girl in the motion she made to take off the ring, and let her have the pleasure of showing her hand to the company with the ring on it. Then he left her to hear the painter's words about it, which he continued to deliver dissyllabically as he stood with her under a gas-jet, twisting his elastic figure and bending his head over the ring.

"Well, Mely, child," Fulkerson went on, with an open travesty of her mother's habitual address, "and how are you getting along? Mrs. Mandel hold you up to the proprieties pretty strictly? Well, that's right. You know you'd be roaming all over the pasture if she didn't."

The girl gurgled out her pleasure in his funning, and everybody took him on his own ground of privileged character. He brought them all together in their friendliness for himself, and before the evening was over he had inspired Mrs. Mandel to have them served with coffee, and had made both the girls feel that they had figured brilliantly in society, and that two young men had been devoted to them.

"Oh, I think he's just as lovely as he can live!" said Mela, as she stood

a moment with her sister on the scene of her triumph, where the others had left them after the departure of their guests.

"Who?" asked Christine, deeply. As she glanced down at her ring, her eyes burned with a softened fire.

She had allowed Beaton to change it himself from the finger where she had worn it to the finger on which he said she ought to wear it. She did not know whether it was right to let him, but she was glad she had done it.

"Who? Mr. Fulkerson, goosie-poosie! Not that old stuckup Mr. Beaton of yours!"

"He is proud," assented Christine, with a throb of exultation.

Beaton and Fulkerson went to the Elevated station with the Marches; but the painter said he was going to walk home, and Fulkerson let him go alone.

"One way is enough for me," he explained. "When I walk up, I don't walk down. Bye-bye, my son!" He began talking about Beaton to the Marches as they climbed the station stairs together. "That fellow puzzles me. I don't know anybody that I have such a desire to kick, and at the same time that I want to flatter up so much. Affect you that way?" he asked of March.

"Well, as far as the kicking goes, yes."

"And how is it with you, Mrs. March?"

"Oh, I want to flatter him up."

"No; really? Why? Hold on! I've got the change."

Fulkerson pushed March away from the ticket-office window; and made them his guests, with the inexorable American hospitality, for the ride downtown. "Three!" he said to the ticket-seller; and, when he had walked them before him out on the platform and dropped his tickets into the urn, he persisted in his inquiry, "Why?"

"Why, because you always want to flatter conceited people, don't you?" Mrs. March answered, with a laugh.

"Do you? Yes, I guess you do. You think Beaton is conceited?"

"Well, slightly, Mr. Fulkerson."

"I guess you're partly right," said Fulkerson, with a sigh, so unaccountable in its connection that they all laughed.

"An ideal 'busted'?" March suggested.

"No, not that, exactly," said Fulkerson. "But I had a notion maybe

Beaton wasn't conceited all the time."

"Oh!" Mrs. March exulted, "nobody could be so conceited all the time as Mr. Beaton is most of the time. He must have moments of the direst modesty, when he'd be quite flattery-proof."

"Yes, that's what I mean. I guess that's what makes me want to kick him. He's left compliments on my hands that no decent man would."

"Oh! that's tragical," said March.

"Mr. Fulkerson," Mrs. March began, with change of subject in her voice, "who is Mrs. Mandel?"

"Who? What do you think of her?" he rejoined. "I'll tell you about her when we get in the cars. Look at that thing! Ain't it beautiful?"

They leaned over the track and looked up at the next station, where the train, just starting, throbbled out the flame-shot steam into the white moonlight.

"The most beautiful thing in New York--the one always and certainly beautiful thing here," said March; and his wife sighed, "Yes, yes." She clung to him, and remained rapt by the sight till the train drew near, and then pulled him back in a panic.

"Well, there ain't really much to tell about her," Fulkerson resumed when they were seated in the car. "She's an invention of mine."

"Of yours?" cried Mrs. March.

"Of course!" exclaimed her husband.

"Yes--at least in her present capacity. She sent me a story for the syndicate, back in July some time, along about the time I first met old Dryfoos here. It was a little too long for my purpose, and I thought I could explain better how I wanted it cut in a call than I could in a letter. She gave a Brooklyn address, and I went to see her. I found her," said Fulkerson, with a vague defiance, "a perfect lady. She was living with an aunt over there; and she had seen better days, when she was a girl, and worse ones afterward. I don't mean to say her husband was a bad fellow; I guess he was pretty good; he was her music-teacher; she met him in Germany, and they got married there, and got through her property before they came over here. Well, she didn't strike me like a person that could make much headway in literature. Her story was well enough, but it hadn't much sand in it; kind of--well, academic, you know. I told her so, and she understood, and cried a little; but she did the best she could with the thing, and I took it and syndicated it. She kind of stuck in my mind, and the first time I went to see the Dryfooses they were stopping at a sort of family hotel then till they could find a house--"Fulkerson broke off altogether, and said, "I don't know as I know just how the Dryfooses struck you, Mrs. March?"

"Can't you imagine?" she answered, with a kindly smile.

"Yes; but I don't believe I could guess how they would have struck you last summer when I first saw them. My! oh my! there was the native earth for you. Mely is a pretty wild colt now, but you ought to have seen her before she was broken to harness.

"And Christine? Ever see that black leopard they got up there in the Central Park? That was Christine. Well, I saw what they wanted. They all saw it--nobody is a fool in all directions, and the Dryfooses are in their right senses a good deal of the time. Well, to cut a long story short, I got Mrs. Mandel to take 'em in hand--the old lady as well as the girls. She was a born lady, and always lived like one till she saw Mandel; and that something academic that killed her for a writer was just the very thing for them. She knows the world well enough to know just how much polish they can take on, and she don't try to put on a bit more. See?"

"Yes, I can see," said Mrs. March.

"Well, she took hold at once, as ready as a hospital-trained nurse; and there ain't anything readier on this planet. She runs the whole concern, socially and economically, takes all the care of housekeeping off the old lady's hands, and goes round with the girls. By-the-bye, I'm going to take my meals at your widow's, March, and Conrad's going to have his lunch there. I'm sick of browsing about."

"Mr. March's widow?" said his wife, looking at him with provisional severity.

"I have no widow, Isabel," he said, "and never expect to have, till I leave you in the enjoyment of my life-insurance. I suppose Fulkerson means the lady with the daughter who wanted to take us to board."

"Oh yes. How are they getting on, I do wonder?" Mrs. March asked of Fulkerson.

"Well, they've got one family to board; but it's a small one. I guess they'll pull through. They didn't want to take any day boarders at first, the widow said; I guess they have had to come to it."

"Poor things!" sighed Mrs. March. "I hope they'll go back to the country."

"Well, I don't know. When you've once tasted New York--You wouldn't go back to Boston, would you?"

"Instantly."

Fulkerson laughed out a tolerant incredulity.

Beaton lit his pipe when he found himself in his room, and sat down before the dull fire in his grate to think. It struck him there was a dull fire in his heart a great deal like it; and he worked out a fanciful analogy with the coals, still alive, and the ashes creeping over them, and the dead clay and cinders. He felt sick of himself, sick of his life and of all his works. He was angry with Fulkerson for having got him into that art department of his, for having bought him up; and he was bitter at fate because he had been obliged to use the money to pay some pressing debts, and had not been able to return the check his father had sent him. He pitied his poor old father; he ached with compassion for him; and he set his teeth and snarled with contempt through them for his own baseness. This was the kind of world it was; but he washed his hands of it. The fault was in human nature, and he reflected with pride that he had at least not invented human nature; he had not sunk so low as that yet. The notion amused him; he thought he might get a Satanic epigram out of it some way. But in the mean time that girl, that wild animal, she kept visibly, tangibly before him; if he put out his hand he might touch hers, he might pass his arm round her waist. In Paris, in a set he knew there, what an effect she would be with that look of hers, and that beauty, all out of drawing! They would recognize the flame quality in her. He imagined a joke about her being a fiery spirit, or nymph, naiad, whatever, from one of her native gas-wells. He began to sketch on a bit of paper from the table at his elbow vague lines that veiled and revealed a level, dismal landscape, and a vast flame against an empty sky, and a shape out of the flame that took on a likeness and floated detached from it. The sketch ran up the left side of the sheet and stretched across it. Beaton laughed out. Pretty good to let Fulkerson have that for the cover of his first number! In black and red it would be effective; it would catch the eye from the news-stands. He made a motion to throw it on the fire, but held it back and slid it into the table-drawer, and smoked on. He saw the dummy with the other sketch in the open drawer which he had brought away from Fulkerson's in the morning and slipped in there, and he took it out and looked at it. He made some criticisms in line with his pencil on it, correcting the drawing here and there, and then he respected it a little more, though he still smiled at the feminine quality--a young lady quality.

In spite of his experience the night he called upon the Leightons, Beaton could not believe that Alma no longer cared for him. She played at having forgotten him admirably, but he knew that a few months before she had been very mindful of him. He knew he had neglected them since they came to New York, where he had led them to expect interest, if not attention; but he was used to neglecting people, and he was somewhat less used to being punished for it--punished and forgiven. He felt that Alma had punished him so thoroughly that she ought to have been satisfied with her work and to have forgiven him in her heart afterward. He bore no resentment after the first tingling moments were-past; he rather admired her for it; and he would have been ready to go back half an hour later and accept pardon and be on the footing of last summer again. Even now he debated with himself whether it was too late to call; but, decidedly,

a quarter to ten seemed late. The next day he determined never to call upon the Leightons again; but he had no reason for this; it merely came into a transitory scheme of conduct, of retirement from the society of women altogether; and after dinner he went round to see them.

He asked for the ladies, and they all three received him, Alma not without a surprise that intimated itself to him, and her mother with no appreciable relenting; Miss Woodburn, with the needlework which she found easier to be voluble over than a book, expressed in her welcome a neutrality both cordial to Beaton and loyal to Alma.

"Is it snowing outdo's?" she asked, briskly, after the greetings were transacted. "Mah goodness!" she said, in answer to his apparent surprise at the question. "Ah mahght as well have stayed in the Soath, for all the winter Ah have seen in New York yet."

"We don't often have snow much before New-Year's," said Beaton.

"Miss Woodburn is wild for a real Northern winter," Mrs. Leighton explained.

"The othah naight Ah woke up and looked oat of the window and saw all the roofs covered with snow, and it turned oat to be nothing but moonlaght. Ah was never so disappointed in mah lahfe," said Miss Woodburn.

"If you'll come to St. Barnaby next summer, you shall have all the winter you want," said Alma.

"I can't let you slander St. Barnaby in that way," said Beaton, with the air of wishing to be understood as meaning more than he said.

"Yes?" returned Alma, coolly. "I didn't know you were so fond of the climate."

"I never think of it as a climate. It's a landscape. It doesn't matter whether it's hot or cold."

"With the thermometer twenty below, you'd find that it mattered," Alma persisted.

"Is that the way you feel about St. Barnaby, too, Mrs. Leighton?" Beaton asked, with affected desolation.

"I shall be glad enough to go back in the summer," Mrs. Leighton conceded.

"And I should be glad to go now," said Beaton, looking at Alma. He had the dummy of 'Every Other Week' in his hand, and he saw Alma's eyes wandering toward it whenever he glanced at her. "I should be glad to go anywhere to get out of a job I've undertaken," he continued, to Mrs. Leighton. "They're going to start some sort of a new illustrated magazine, and they've got me in for their art department. I'm not fit for it; I'd like to run away. Don't you want to advise me a little, Mrs."

Leighton? You know how much I value your taste, and I'd like to have you look at the design for the cover of the first number: they're going to have a different one for every number. I don't know whether you'll agree with me, but I think this is rather nice."

He faced the dummy round, and then laid it on the table before Mrs. Leighton, pushing some of her work aside to make room for it and standing over her while she bent forward to look at it.

Alma kept her place, away from the table.

"Mah goodness! Ho' exciting!" said Miss Woodburn. "May anybody look?"

"Everybody," said Beaton.

"Well, isn't it perfectly choming!" Miss Woodburn exclaimed. "Come and look at this, Miss Leighton," she called to Alma, who reluctantly approached.

What lines are these?" Mrs. Leighton asked, pointing to Beaton's pencil scratches.

"They're suggestions of modifications," he replied.

"I don't think they improve it much. What do you think, Alma?"

"Oh, I don't know," said the girl, constraining her voice to an effect of indifference and glancing carelessly down at the sketch. "The design might be improved; but I don't think those suggestions would do it."

"They're mine," said Beaton, fixing his eyes upon her with a beautiful sad dreaminess that he knew he could put into them; he spoke with a dreamy remoteness of tone--his wind-harp stop, Wetmore called it.

"I supposed so," said Alma, calmly.

"Oh, mah goodness!" cried Miss Woodburn. "Is that the way you awtusts talk to each othah? Well, Ah'm glad Ah'm not an awtust--unless I could do all the talking."

"Artists cannot tell a fib," Alma said, "or even act one," and she laughed in Beaton's upturned face.

He did not unbend his dreamy gaze. "You're quite right. The suggestions are stupid."

Alma turned to Miss Woodburn: "You hear? Even when we speak of our own work."

"Ah nevah hoad anything lahke it!"

"And the design itself?" Beaton persisted.

"Oh, I'm not an art editor," Alma answered, with a laugh of exultant evasion.

A tall, dark, grave-looking man of fifty, with a swarthy face and iron-gray mustache and imperial and goatee, entered the room. Beaton knew the type; he had been through Virginia sketching for one of the illustrated papers, and he had seen such men in Richmond. Miss Woodburn hardly needed to say, "May Ah introduce you to mah fathaw, Co'nel Woodburn, Mr. Beaton?"

The men shook hands, and Colonel Woodburn said, in that soft, gentle, slow Southern voice without our Northern contractions: "I am very glad to meet you, sir; happy to make yo' acquaintance. Do not move, madam," he said to Mrs. Leighton, who made a deprecatory motion to let him pass to the chair beyond her; "I can find my way." He bowed a bulk that did not lend itself readily to the devotion, and picked up the ball of yarn she had let drop out of her lap in half rising. "Yo' worsteds, madam."

"Yarn, yarn, Colonel Woodburn!" Alma shouted. "You're quite incorrigible. A spade is a spade!"

"But sometimes it is a trump, my dear young lady," said the Colonel, with unabated gallantry; "and when yo' mothah uses yarn, it is worsteds. But I respect worsteds even under the name of yarn: our ladies--my own mothah and sistahs--had to knit the socks we wore--all we could get in the woe."

"Yes, and aftah the woe," his daughter put in. "The knitting has not stopped yet in some places. Have you been much in the Soath, Mr. Beaton?"

Beaton explained just how much.

"Well, sir," said the Colonel, "then you have seen a country making gigantic struggles to retrieve its losses, sir. The South is advancing with enormous strides, sir."

"Too fast for some of us to keep up," said Miss Woodburn, in an audible aside. "The pace in Charlottesboag is pofectly killing, and we had to drop oat into a slow place like New York."

"The progress in the South is material now," said the Colonel; "and those of us whose interests are in another direction find ourselves--isolated--isolated, sir. The intellectual centres are still in the No'th, sir; the great cities draw the mental activity of the country to them, sir. Necessarily New York is the metropolis."

"Oh, everything comes here," said Beaton, impatient of the elder's ponderosity. Another sort of man would have sympathized with the Southerner's willingness to talk of himself, and led him on to speak of his plans and ideals. But the sort of man that Beaton was could not do this; he put up the dummy into the wrapper he had let drop on the floor beside him, and tied it round with string while Colonel Woodburn was talking. He got to his feet with the words he spoke and offered Mrs.

Leighton his hand.

"Must you go?" she asked, in surprise.

"I am on my way to a reception," he said. She had noticed that he was in evening dress; and now she felt the vague hurt that people invited nowhere feel in the presence of those who are going somewhere. She did not feel it for herself, but for her daughter; and she knew Alma would not have let her feel it if she could have prevented it. But Alma had left the room for a moment, and she tacitly indulged this sense of injury in her behalf.

"Please say good-night to Miss Leighton for me," Beaton continued. He bowed to Miss Woodburn, "Goodnight, Miss Woodburn," and to her father, bluntly, "Goodnight."

"Good-night, sir," said the Colonel, with a sort of severe suavity.

"Oh, isn't he choming!" Miss Woodburn whispered to Mrs. Leighton when Beaton left the room.

Alma spoke to him in the hall without. "You knew that was my design, Mr. Beaton. Why did you bring it?"

"Why?" He looked at her in gloomy hesitation.

Then he said: "You know why. I wished to talk it over with you, to serve you, please you, get back your good opinion. But I've done neither the one nor the other; I've made a mess of the whole thing."

Alma interrupted him. "Has it been accepted?"

"It will be accepted, if you will let it."

"Let it?" she laughed. "I shall be delighted." She saw him swayed a little toward her. "It's a matter of business, isn't it?"

"Purely. Good-night."

When Alma returned to the room, Colonel Woodburn was saying to Mrs. Leighton: "I do not contend that it is impossible, madam, but it is very difficult in a thoroughly commercialized society, like yours, to have the feelings of a gentleman. How can a business man, whose prosperity, whose earthly salvation, necessarily lies in the adversity of some one else, be delicate and chivalrous, or even honest? If we could have had time to perfect our system at the South, to eliminate what was evil and develop what was good in it, we should have had a perfect system. But the virus of commercialism was in us, too; it forbade us to make the best of a divine institution, and tempted us to make the worst. Now the curse is on the whole country; the dollar is the measure of every value, the stamp of every success. What does not sell is a failure; and what sells succeeds."

"The hobby is oat, mah deah," said Miss Woodburn, in an audible aside to Alma.

"Were you speaking of me, Colonel Woodburn?" Alma asked.

"Surely not, my dear young lady."

"But he's been saying that awtusts are just as greedy aboat money as anybody," said his daughter.

"The law of commercialism is on everything in a commercial society," the Colonel explained, softening the tone in which his convictions were presented. "The final reward of art is money, and not the pleasure of creating."

"Perhaps they would be willing to take it all oat in that if othah people would let them pay their bills in the pleasure of creating," his daughter teased.

"They are helpless, like all the rest," said her father, with the same deference to her as to other women. "I do not blame them."

"Oh, mah goodness! Didn't you say, sir, that Mr. Beaton had bad manners?"

Alma relieved a confusion which he seemed to feel in reference to her.

"Bad manners? He has no manners! That is, when he's himself. He has pretty good ones when he's somebody else."

Miss Woodburn began, "Oh, mah-" and then stopped herself. Alma's mother looked at her with distressed question, but the girl seemed perfectly cool and contented; and she gave her mind provisionally to a point suggested by Colonel Woodburn's talk.

"Still, I can't believe it was right to hold people in slavery, to whip them and sell them. It never did seem right to me," she added, in apology for her extreme sentiments to the gentleness of her adversary.

"I quite agree with you, madam," said the Colonel. "Those were the abuses of the institution. But if we had not been vitiated on the one hand and threatened on the other by the spirit of commercialism from the North--and from Europe, too--those abuses could have been eliminated, and the institution developed in the direction of the mild patriarchalism of the divine intention." The Colonel hitched his chair, which figured a hobby careering upon its hind legs, a little toward Mrs. Leighton and the girls approached their heads and began to whisper; they fell deferentially silent when the Colonel paused in his argument, and went on again when he went on.

At last they heard Mrs. Leighton saying, "And have you heard from the publishers about your book yet?"

Then Miss Woodburn cut in, before her father could answer: "The coase of commercialism is on that, too. They are trahing to fahnd oat whethah it

will pay."

"And they are right-quite right," said the Colonel. "There is no longer any other criterion; and even a work that attacks the system must be submitted to the tests of the system."

"The system won't accept destruction on any othah tomes," said Miss Woodburn, demurely.

XI.

At the reception, where two men in livery stood aside to let him pass up the outside steps of the house, and two more helped him off with his overcoat indoors, and a fifth miscalled his name into the drawing-room, the Syracuse stone-cutter's son met the niece of Mrs. Horn, and began at once to tell her about his evening at the Dryfooses'. He was in very good spirits, for so far as he could have been elated or depressed by his parting with Alma Leighton he had been elated; she had not treated his impudence with the contempt that he felt it deserved; she must still be fond of him; and the warm sense of this, by operation of an obscure but well-recognized law of the masculine being, disposed him to be rather fond of Miss Vance. She was a slender girl, whose semi-aesthetic dress flowed about her with an accentuation of her long forms, and redeemed them from censure by the very frankness with which it confessed them; nobody could have said that Margaret Vance was too tall. Her pretty little head, which she had an effect of choosing to have little in the same spirit of judicious defiance, had a good deal of reading in it; she was proud to know literary and artistic fashions as well as society fashions. She liked being singled out by an exterior distinction so obvious as Beaton's, and she listened with sympathetic interest to his account of those people. He gave their natural history reality by drawing upon his own; he reconstructed their plebeian past from the experiences of his childhood and his youth of the pre-Parisian period; and he had a pang of suicidal joy in insulting their ignorance of the world.

"What different kinds of people you meet!" said the girl at last, with an envious sigh. Her reading had enlarged the bounds of her imagination, if not her knowledge; the novels nowadays dealt so much with very common people, and made them seem so very much more worth while than the people one met.

She said something like this to Beaton. He answered: "You can meet the people I'm talking of very easily, if you want to take the trouble. It's what they came to New York for. I fancy it's the great ambition of their lives to be met."

"Oh yes," said Miss Vance, fashionably, and looked down; then she looked up and said, intellectually: "Don't you think it's a great pity? How much better for them to have stayed where they were and what they were!"

"Then you could never have had any chance of meeting them," said Beaton.
"I don't suppose you intend to go out to the gas country?"

"No," said Miss Vance, amused. "Not that I shouldn't like to go."

"What a daring spirit! You ought to be on the staff of 'Every Other Week,'" said Beaton.

"The staff-Every Other Week? What is it?"

"The missing link; the long-felt want of a tie between the Arts and the Dollars." Beaton gave her a very picturesque, a very dramatic sketch of the theory, the purpose, and the personnel of the new enterprise.

Miss Vance understood too little about business of any kind to know how it differed from other enterprises of its sort. She thought it was delightful; she thought Beaton must be glad to be part of it, though he had represented himself so bored, so injured, by Fulkerson's insisting upon having him. "And is it a secret? Is it a thing not to be spoken of?"

"'Tutt' altro! Fulkerson will be enraptured to have it spoken of in society. He would pay any reasonable bill for the advertisement."

"What a delightful creature! Tell him it shall all be spent in charity."

"He would like that. He would get two paragraphs out of the fact, and your name would go into the 'Literary Notes' of all the newspapers."

"Oh, but I shouldn't want my name used!" cried the girl, half horrified into fancying the situation real.

"Then you'd better not say anything about 'Every Other Week'. Fulkerson is preternaturally unscrupulous."

March began to think so too, at times. He was perpetually suggesting changes in the make-up of the first number, with a view to its greater vividness of effect. One day he came and said: "This thing isn't going to have any sort of get up and howl about it, unless you have a paper in the first number going for Bevens's novels. Better get Maxwell to do it."

"Why, I thought you liked Bevens's novels?"

"So I did; but where the good of 'Every Other Week' is concerned I am a Roman father. The popular gag is to abuse Bevens, and Maxwell is the man to do it. There hasn't been a new magazine started for the last three years that hasn't had an article from Maxwell in its first number cutting Bevens all to pieces. If people don't see it, they'll think 'Every Other Week' is some old thing."

March did not know whether Fulkerson was joking or not. He suggested,

"Perhaps they'll think it's an old thing if they do see it."

"Well, get somebody else, then; or else get Maxwell to write under an assumed name. Or--I forgot! He'll be anonymous under our system, anyway. Now there ain't a more popular racket for us to work in that first number than a good, swinging attack on Bevans. People read his books and quarrel over 'em, and the critics are all against him, and a regular flaying, with salt and vinegar rubbed in afterward, will tell more with people who like good old-fashioned fiction than anything else. I like Bevans's things, but, dad burn it! when it comes to that first number, I'd offer up anybody."

"What an immoral little wretch you are, Fulkerson!" said March, with a laugh.

Fulkerson appeared not to be very strenuous about the attack on the novelist. "Say!" he called out, gayly, "what should you think of a paper defending the late lamented system of slavery?"

"What do you mean, Fulkerson?" asked March, with a puzzled smile.

Fulkerson braced his knees against his desk, and pushed himself back, but kept his balance to the eye by canting his hat sharply forward." There's an old cock over there at the widow's that's written a book to prove that slavery was and is the only solution of the labor problem. He's a Southerner."

"I should imagine," March assented.

"He's got it on the brain that if the South could have been let alone by the commercial spirit and the pseudophilanthropy of the North, it would have worked out slavery into a perfectly ideal condition for the laborer, in which he would have been insured against want, and protected in all his personal rights by the state. He read the introduction to me last night. I didn't catch on to all the points--his daughter's an awfully pretty girl, and I was carrying that fact in my mind all the time, too, you know--but that's about the gist of it."

"Seems to regard it as a lost opportunity?" said March.

"Exactly! What a mighty catchy title, Neigh? Look well on the title-page."

"Well written?"

"I reckon so; I don't know. The Colonel read it mighty eloquently."

"It mightn't be such bad business," said March, in a muse. "Could you get me a sight of it without committing yourself?"

"If the Colonel hasn't sent it off to another publisher this morning. He just got it back with thanks yesterday. He likes to keep it travelling."

"Well, try it. I've a notion it might be a curious thing."

"Look here, March," said Fulkerson, with the effect of taking a fresh hold; "I wish you could let me have one of those New York things of yours for the first number. After all, that's going to be the great card."

"I couldn't, Fulkerson; I couldn't, really. I want to philosophize the material, and I'm too new to it all yet. I don't want to do merely superficial sketches."

"Of course! Of course! I understand that. Well, I don't want to hurry you. Seen that old fellow of yours yet? I think we ought to have that translation in the first number; don't you? We want to give 'em a notion of what we're going to do in that line."

"Yes," said March; "and I was going out to look up Lindau this morning. I've inquired at Maroni's, and he hasn't been there for several days. I've some idea perhaps he's sick. But they gave me his address, and I'm going to see."

"Well, that's right. We want the first number to be the keynote in every way."

March shook his head. "You can't make it so. The first number is bound to be a failure always, as far as the representative character goes. It's invariably the case. Look at the first numbers of all the things you've seen started. They're experimental, almost amateurish, and necessarily so, not only because the men that are making them up are comparatively inexperienced like ourselves, but because the material sent them to deal with is more or less consciously tentative. People send their adventurous things to a new periodical because the whole thing is an adventure. I've noticed that quality in all the volunteer contributions; it's in the articles that have been done to order even. No; I've about made up my mind that if we can get one good striking paper into the first number that will take people's minds off the others, we shall be doing all we can possible hope for. I should like," March added, less seriously, "to make up three numbers ahead, and publish the third one first."

Fulkerson dropped forward and struck his fist on the desk. "It's a first-rate idea. Why not do it?"

March laughed. "Fulkerson, I don't believe there's any quackish thing you wouldn't do in this cause. From time to time I'm thoroughly ashamed of being connected with such a charlatan."

Fulkerson struck his hat sharply backward. "Ah, dad burn it! To give that thing the right kind of start I'd walk up and down Broadway between two boards, with the title-page of Every Other Week facsimiled on one and my name and address on the--"

He jumped to his feet and shouted, "March, I'll do it!"

"What?"

"I'll hire a lot of fellows to make mud-turtles of themselves, and I'll have a lot of big facsimiles of the title-page, and I'll paint the town red!"

March looked aghast at him. "Oh, come, now, Fulkerson!"

"I mean it. I was in London when a new man had taken hold of the old Cornhill, and they were trying to boom it, and they had a procession of these mudturtles that reached from Charing Cross to Temple Bar. Cornhill Magazine. Sixpence. Not a dull page in it.' I said to myself then that it was the livest thing I ever saw. I respected the man that did that thing from the bottom of my heart. I wonder I ever forgot it. But it shows what a shaky thing the human mind is at its best."

"You infamous mountebank!", said March, with great amusement at Fulkerson's access; "you call that congeries of advertising instinct of yours the human mind at its best? Come, don't be so diffident, Fulkerson. Well, I'm off to find Lindau, and when I come back I hope Mr. Dryfoos will have you under control. I don't suppose you'll be quite sane again till after the first number is out. Perhaps public opinion will sober you then."

"Confound it, March! How do you think they will take it? I swear I'm getting so nervous I don't know half the time which end of me is up. I believe if we don't get that thing out by the first of February it 'll be the death of me."

"Couldn't wait till Washington's Birthday? I was thinking it would give the day a kind of distinction, and strike the public imagination, if--"

"No, I'll be dogged if I could!" Fulkerson lapsed more and more into the parlance of his early life in this season of strong excitement.

"I believe if Beaton lags any on the art leg I'll kill him."

"Well, I shouldn't mind your killing Beaton," said March, tranquilly, as he went out.

He went over to Third Avenue and took the Elevated down to Chatham Square. He found the variety of people in the car as unfailingly entertaining as ever. He rather preferred the East Side to the West Side lines, because they offered more nationalities, conditions, and characters to his inspection. They draw not only from the up-town American region, but from all the vast hive of populations swarming between them and the East River. He had found that, according to the hour, American husbands going to and from business, and American wives going to and from shopping, prevailed on the Sixth Avenue road, and that the most picturesque admixture to these familiar aspects of human nature were the brilliant eyes and complexions of the American Hebrews, who otherwise contributed to the effect of well-clad comfort and citizen-self-satisfaction of the crowd. Now and then he had found himself in a car mostly filled with Neapolitans from the constructions far up the

line, where he had read how they are worked and fed and housed like beasts; and listening to the jargon of their unintelligible dialect, he had occasion for pensive question within himself as to what notion these poor animals formed of a free republic from their experience of life under its conditions; and whether they found them practically very different from those of the immemorial brigandage and enforced complicity with rapine under which they had been born. But, after all, this was an infrequent effect, however massive, of travel on the West Side, whereas the East offered him continual entertainment in like sort. The sort was never quite so squalid. For short distances the lowest poverty, the hardest pressed labor, must walk; but March never entered a car without encountering some interesting shape of shabby adversity, which was almost always adversity of foreign birth. New York is still popularly supposed to be in the control of the Irish, but March noticed in these East Side travels of his what must strike every observer returning to the city after a prolonged absence: the numerical subordination of the dominant race. If they do not outvote them, the people of Germanic, of Slavonic, of Pelasgic, of Mongolian stock outnumber the prepotent Celts; and March seldom found his speculation centred upon one of these. The small eyes, the high cheeks, the broad noses, the puff lips, the bare, cue-filleted skulls, of Russians, Poles, Czechs, Chinese; the furtive glitter of Italians; the blonde dulness of Germans; the cold quiet of Scandinavians --fire under ice--were aspects that he identified, and that gave him abundant suggestion for the personal histories he constructed, and for the more public-spirited reveries in which he dealt with the future economy of our heterogeneous commonwealth. It must be owned that he did not take much trouble about this; what these poor people were thinking, hoping, fearing, enjoying, suffering; just where and how they lived; who and what they individually were--these were the matters of his waking dreams as he stared hard at them, while the train raced farther into the gay ugliness--the shapeless, graceful, reckless picturesqueness of the Bowery.

There were certain signs, certain facades, certain audacities of the prevailing hideousness that always amused him in that uproar to the eye which the strident forms and colors made. He was interested in the insolence with which the railway had drawn its erasing line across the Corinthian front of an old theatre, almost grazing its fluted pillars, and flouting its dishonored pediment. The colossal effigies of the fat women and the tuft-headed Circassian girls of cheap museums; the vistas of shabby cross streets; the survival of an old hip-roofed house here and there at their angles; the Swiss chalet, histrionic decorativeness of the stations in prospect or retrospect; the vagaries of the lines that narrowed together or stretched apart according to the width of the avenue, but always in wanton disregard of the life that dwelt, and bought and sold, and rejoiced or sorrowed, and clattered or crawled, around, below, above--were features of the frantic panorama that perpetually touched his sense of humor and moved his sympathy. Accident and then exigency seemed the forces at work to this extraordinary effect; the play of energies as free and planless as those that force the forest from the soil to the sky; and then the fierce struggle for survival, with the stronger life persisting over the deformity, the mutilation, the destruction, the decay of the weaker. The whole at moments seemed to him

lawless, godless; the absence of intelligent, comprehensive purpose in the huge disorder, and the violent struggle to subordinate the result to the greater good, penetrated with its dumb appeal the consciousness of a man who had always been too self-enwrapped to perceive the chaos to which the individual selfishness must always lead.

But there was still nothing definite, nothing better than a vague discomfort, however poignant, in his half recognition of such facts; and he descended the station stairs at Chatham Square with a sense of the neglected opportunities of painters in that locality. He said to himself that if one of those fellows were to see in Naples that turmoil of cars, trucks, and teams of every sort, intershot with foot-passengers going and coming to and from the crowded pavements, under the web of the railroad tracks overhead, and amid the spectacular approach of the streets that open into the square, he would have it down in his sketch-book at once. He decided simultaneously that his own local studies must be illustrated, and that he must come with the artist and show him just which bits to do, not knowing that the two arts can never approach the same material from the same point. He thought he would particularly like his illustrator to render the Dickensy, cockneyish quality of the, shabby-genteel ballad-seller of whom he stopped to ask his way to the street where Lindau lived, and whom he instantly perceived to be, with his stock in trade, the sufficient object of an entire study by himself. He had his ballads strung singly upon a cord against the house wall, and held down in piles on the pavement with stones and blocks of wood. Their control in this way intimated a volatility which was not perceptible in their sentiment. They were mostly tragical or doleful: some of them dealt with the wrongs of the working-man; others appealed to a gay experience of the high seas; but vastly the greater part to memories and associations of an Irish origin; some still uttered the poetry of plantation life in the artless accents of the end--man. Where they trusted themselves, with syntax that yielded promptly to any exigency of rhythmic art, to the ordinary American speech, it was to strike directly for the affections, to celebrate the domestic ties, and, above all, to embalm the memories of angel and martyr mothers whose dissipated sons deplored their sufferings too late. March thought this not at all a bad thing in them; he smiled in patronage of their simple pathos; he paid the tribute of a laugh when the poet turned, as he sometimes did, from his conception of angel and martyr motherhood, and portrayed the mother in her more familiar phases of virtue and duty, with the retributive shingle or slipper in her hand. He bought a pocketful of this literature, popular in a sense which the most successful book can never be, and enlisted the ballad vendor so deeply in the effort to direct him to Lindau's dwelling by the best way that he neglected another customer, till a sarcasm on his absent-mindedness stung him to retort, "I'm a-trying to answer a gentleman a civil question; that's where the absent-minded comes in."

It seemed for some reason to be a day of leisure with the Chinese dwellers in Mott Street, which March had been advised to take first. They stood about the tops of basement stairs, and walked two and two along the dirty pavement, with their little hands tucked into their sleeves across their breasts, aloof in immaculate cleanliness from the filth around them, and scrutinizing the scene with that cynical sneer of

faint surprise to which all aspects of our civilization seem to move their superiority. Their numbers gave character to the street, and rendered not them, but what was foreign to them, strange there; so that March had a sense of missionary quality in the old Catholic church, built long before their incursion was dreamed of. It seemed to have come to them there, and he fancied in the statued saint that looked down from its facade something not so much tolerant as tolerated, something propitiatory, almost deprecatory. It was a fancy, of course; the street was sufficiently peopled with Christian children, at any rate, swarming and shrieking at their games; and presently a Christian mother appeared, pushed along by two policemen on a handcart, with a gelatinous tremor over the paving and a gelatinous jouncing at the curbstones. She lay with her face to the sky, sending up an inarticulate lamentation; but the indifference of the officers forbade the notion of tragedy in her case. She was perhaps a local celebrity; the children left off their games, and ran gayly trooping after her; even the young fellow and young girl exchanging playful blows in a robust flirtation at the corner of a liquor store suspended their scuffle with a pleased interest as she passed. March understood the unwillingness of the poor to leave the worst conditions in the city for comfort and plenty in the country when he reflected upon this dramatic incident, one of many no doubt which daily occur to entertain them in such streets. A small town could rarely offer anything comparable to it, and the country never. He said that if life appeared so hopeless to him as it must to the dwellers in that neighborhood he should not himself be willing to quit its distractions, its alleviations, for the vague promise of unknown good in the distance somewhere.

But what charm could such a man as Lindau find in such a place? It could not be that he lived there because he was too poor to live elsewhere: with a shutting of the heart, March refused to believe this as he looked round on the abounding evidences of misery, and guiltily remembered his neglect of his old friend. Lindau could probably find as cheap a lodging in some decenter part of the town; and, in fact, there was some amelioration of the prevailing squalor in the quieter street which he turned into from Mott.

A woman with a tied-up face of toothache opened the door for him when he pulled, with a shiver of foreboding, the bell-knob, from which a yard of rusty crape dangled. But it was not Lindau who was dead, for the woman said he was at home, and sent March stumbling up the four or five dark flights of stairs that led to his tenement. It was quite at the top of the house, and when March obeyed the German-English "Komm!" that followed his knock, he found himself in a kitchen where a meagre breakfast was scattered in stale fragments on the table before the stove. The place was bare and cold; a half-empty beer bottle scarcely gave it a convivial air. On the left from this kitchen was a room with a bed in it, which seemed also to be a cobbler's shop: on the right, through a door that stood ajar, came the German-English voice again, saying this time, "Hier!"

XII.

March pushed the door open into a room like that on the left, but with a writing-desk instead of a cobbler's bench, and a bed, where Lindau sat propped up; with a coat over his shoulders and a skull-cap on his head, reading a book, from which he lifted his eyes to stare blankly over his spectacles at March. His hairy old breast showed through the night-shirt, which gaped apart; the stump of his left arm lay upon the book to keep it open.

"Ah, my dear young friend! Passil! Marge! Is it you?" he called out, joyously, the next moment.

"Why, are you sick, Lindau?" March anxiously scanned his face in taking his hand.

Lindau laughed. "No; I'm all right. Only a little lazy, and a little eggonomigal. It's easier to stay in bed sometimes as to keep a fire a-goin' all the time. Don't want to come too hard on the 'brafer Mann', you know:

"Braver Mann, er schafft mir zu essen."

You remember? Heine? You read Heine still? Who is your favorite poet now, Passil? You write some poetry yourself yet? No? Well, I am glad to see you. Brush those papers off of that chair. Well, it is good for your eyes. How did you find where I live?

"They told me at Maroni's," said March. He tried to keep his eyes on Lindau's face, and not see the discomfort of the room, but he was aware of the shabby and frowsy bedding, the odor of stale smoke, and the pipes and tobacco shreds mixed with the books and manuscripts strewn over the leaf of the writing-desk. He laid down on the mass the pile of foreign magazines he had brought under his arm. "They gave me another address first."

"Yes. I have just come here," said Lindau. "It is not very cozy, Neigh?"

"It might be gay," March admitted, with a smile. "Still," he added, soberly, "a good many people seem to live in this part of the town. Apparently they die here, too, Lindau. There is a crape on your outside door. I didn't know but it was for you."

"Not this time," said Lindau, in the same humor. "Perhaps some other time. We keep the undertakers bratty busy down here."

"Well," said March, "undertakers must live, even if the rest of us have to die to let them." Lindau laughed, and March went on: "But I'm glad it isn't your funeral, Lindau. And you say you're not sick, and so I don't see why we shouldn't come to business."

"Business?" Lindau lifted his eyebrows. "You come on business?"

"And pleasure combined," said March, and he went on to explain the service he desired at Lindau's hands.

The old man listened with serious attention, and with assenting nods that culminated in a spoken expression of his willingness to undertake the translations. March waited with a sort of mechanical expectation of his gratitude for the work put in his way, but nothing of the kind came from Lindau, and March was left to say, "Well, everything is understood, then; and I don't know that I need add that if you ever want any little advance on the work--"

"I will ask you," said Lindau, quietly, "and I thank you for that. But I can wait; I don't need any money just at present." As if he saw some appeal for greater frankness in March's eye, he went on: "I didn't come here because I was too poor to live anywhere else, and I don't stay in bed because I couldn't have a fire to keep warm if I wanted it. I'm not so padded off as Marmontel when he went to Paris. I'm a little luxurious, that is all. If I stay in bed it's so I can fling money away on some things else. Heigh?"

"But what are you living here for, Lindau?" March smiled at the irony lurking in Lindau's words.

"Well, you see, I found I was becoming a little too much of an aristocrat. I had a room over in Greenidge Village, among those pig-pugs over on the West Side, and I found"--Lindau's voice lost its jesting quality, and his face darkened--"that I was beginning to forget the poor!"

"I should have thought," said March, with impartial interest, "that you might have seen poverty enough, now and then, in Greenwich Village to remind you of its existence."

"Not like here," said Lindau. "And you must see it all the time--see it, hear it, smell it, taste it--or you forget it. That is what I come here for. I was becoming a puffed aristocrat. I thought I was not like these people down here, when I come down once to look around; I thought I must be some things else, and so I said I better take myself in time, and I come here among my brothers--the beavers and the thieves!" A noise made itself heard in the next room, as if the door were furtively opened, and a faint sound of tiptoeing and of hands clawing on a table.

"Thieves!" Lindau repeated, with a shout. "Little thieves, that gobble your breakfast. Ah! ha! ha!" A wild scurrying of feet, joyous cries and tittering, and a slamming door followed upon his explosion, and he resumed in the silence: "It is the children's cot-park from school. They come and steal what I leave there on my table. It's one of our little chokes; we understand one another; that's all right. Once the gobbler in the other room there he used to chase 'em; he couldn't understand their little tricks. Now the gobbler's dead, and he don't chase 'em any more. He was a Bohemian. Kind of crazy, I guess."

"Well, it's a sociable existence," March suggested. "But perhaps if you let them have the things without stealing--"

"Oh no, no! Most notd mage them too gonceitedt. They mostn't go and feel themselves petter than those boor millionairss that hadt to steal their money."

March smiled indulgently at his old friend's violence. "Oh, there are fagots and fagots, you know, Lindau; perhaps not all the millionaires are so guilty."

"Let us speak German!" cried Lindau, in his own tongue, pushing his book aside, and thrusting his skullcap back from his forehead. "How much money can a man honestly earn without wronging or oppressing some other man?"

"Well, if you'll let me answer in English," said March, "I should say about five thousand dollars a year. I name that figure because it's my experience that I never could earn more; but the experience of other men may be different, and if they tell me they can earn ten, or twenty, or fifty thousand a year, I'm not prepared to say they can't do it."

Lindau hardly waited for his answer. "Not the most gifted man that ever lived, in the practice of any art or science, and paid at the highest rate that exceptional genius could justly demand from those who have worked for their money, could ever earn a million dollars. It is the landlords and the merchant princes, the railroad kings and the coal barons (the oppressors to whom you instinctively give the titles of tyrants)--it is these that make the millions, but no man earns them. What artist, what physician, what scientist, what poet was ever a millionaire?"

"I can only think of the poet Rogers," said March, amused by Lindau's tirade. "But he was as exceptional as the other Rogers, the martyr, who died with warm feet." Lindau had apparently not understood his joke, and he went on, with the American ease of mind about everything: "But you must allow, Lindau, that some of those fellows don't do so badly with their guilty gains. Some of them give work to armies of poor people--"

Lindau furiously interrupted: "Yes, when they have gathered their millions together from the hunger and cold and nakedness and ruin and despair of hundreds of thousands of other men, they 'give work' to the poor! They give work! They allow their helpless brothers to earn enough to keep life in them! They give work! Who is it gives toil, and where will your rich men be when once the poor shall refuse to give toil? Why, you have come to give me work!"

March laughed outright. "Well, I'm not a millionaire, anyway, Lindau, and I hope you won't make an example of me by refusing to give toil. I dare say the millionaires deserve it, but I'd rather they wouldn't suffer in my person."

"No," returned the old man, mildly relaxing the fierce glare he had bent upon March. "No man deserves to suffer at the hands of another. I lose myself when I think of the injustice in the world. But I must not forget that I am like the worst of them."

"You might go up Fifth Avenue and live among the rich awhile, when you're in danger of that," suggested March. "At any rate," he added, by an impulse which he knew he could not justify to his wife, "I wish you'd come some day and lunch with their emissary. I've been telling Mrs. March about you, and I want her and the children to see you. Come over with these things and report." He put his hand on the magazines as he rose.

"I will come," said Lindau, gently.

"Shall I give you your book?" asked March.

"No; I gidd oap bretty soon."

"And--and--can you dress yourself?"

"I vhistle, 'and one of those liddle fellowss comess. We haf to dake gare of one another in a blace like this. Idt iss nodt like the worldt," said Lindau, gloomily.

March thought he ought to cheer him up. "Oh, it isn't such a bad world, Lindau! After all, the average of millionaires is small in it." He added, "And I don't believe there's an American living that could look at that arm of yours and not wish to lend you a hand for the one you gave us all." March felt this to be a fine turn, and his voice trembled slightly in saying it.

Lindau smiled grimly. "You think zo? I wouldn't moch like to drost 'em. I've drieved idt too often." He began to speak German again fiercely: "Besides, they owe me nothing. Do you think I knowingly gave my hand to save this oligarchy of traders and tricksters, this aristocracy of railroad wreckers and stock gamblers and mine-slave drivers and mill-serf owners? No; I gave it to the slave; the slave--ha! ha! ha!--whom I helped to unshackle to the common liberty of hunger and cold. And you think I would be the beneficiary of such a state of things?"

"I'm sorry to hear you talk so, Lindau," said March; "very sorry." He stopped with a look of pain, and rose to go. Lindau suddenly broke into a laugh and into English.

"Oh, well, it is only dalk, Passil, and it toes me goodt. My parg is worse than my pidte, I cuess. I pring these things roundt bretty soon. Good-bye, Passil, my tear poy. Auf wiedersehen!"

March went away thinking of what Lindau had said, but not for the impersonal significance of his words so much as for the light they cast upon Lindau himself. He thought the words violent enough, but in connection with what he remembered of the cheery, poetic, hopeful idealist, they were even more curious than lamentable. In his own life of comfortable reverie he had never heard any one talk so before, but he had read something of the kind now and then in blatant labor newspapers which he had accidentally fallen in with, and once at a strikers' meeting he had heard rich people denounced with the same frenzy. He had made his own reflections upon the tastelessness of the rhetoric, and the obvious buncombe of the motive, and he had not taken the matter seriously.

He could not doubt Lindau's sincerity, and he wondered how he came to that way of thinking. From his experience of himself he accounted for a prevailing literary quality in it; he decided it to be from Lindau's reading and feeling rather than his reflection. That was the notion he formed of some things he had met with in Ruskin to much the same effect; he regarded them with amusement as the chimeras of a rhetorician run away with by his phrases.

But as to Lindau, the chief thing in his mind was a conception of the droll irony of a situation in which so fervid a hater of millionaires should be working, indirectly at least, for the prosperity of a man like Dryfoos, who, as March understood, had got his money together out of every gambler's chance in speculation, and all a schemer's thrift from the error and need of others. The situation was not more incongruous, however, than all the rest of the 'Every Other Week' affair. It seemed to him that there were no crazy fortuities that had not tended to its existence, and as time went on, and the day drew near for the issue of the first number, the sense of this intensified till the whole lost at moments the quality of a waking fact, and came to be rather a fantastic fiction of sleep.

Yet the heterogeneous forces did co-operate to a reality which March could not deny, at least in their presence, and the first number was representative of all their nebulous intentions in a tangible form. As a result, it was so respectable that March began to respect these intentions, began to respect himself for combining and embodying them in the volume which appealed to him with a novel fascination, when the first advance copy was laid upon his desk. Every detail of it was tiresomely familiar already, but the whole had a fresh interest now. He now saw how extremely fit and effective Miss Leighton's decorative design for the cover was, printed in black and brick-red on the delicate gray tone of the paper. It was at once attractive and refined, and he credited Beaton with quite all he merited in working it over to the actual shape. The touch and the taste of the art editor were present throughout the number. As Fulkerson said, Beaton had caught on with the delicacy of a hummingbird and the tenacity of a bulldog to the virtues of their illustrative process, and had worked it for all it was worth. There were seven papers in the number, and a poem on the last page of the cover, and he had found some graphic comment for each. It was a larger proportion than would afterward be allowed, but for once in a way it was allowed. Fulkerson

said they could not expect to get their money back on that first number, anyway. Seven of the illustrations were Beaton's; two or three he got from practised hands; the rest were the work of unknown people which he had suggested, and then related and adapted with unfailing ingenuity to the different papers. He handled the illustrations with such sympathy as not to destroy their individual quality, and that indefinable charm which comes from good amateur work in whatever art. He rescued them from their weaknesses and errors, while he left in them the evidence of the pleasure with which a clever young man, or a sensitive girl, or a refined woman had done them. Inevitably from his manipulation, however, the art of the number acquired homogeneity, and there was nothing casual in its appearance. The result, March eagerly owned, was better than the literary result, and he foresaw that the number would be sold and praised chiefly for its pictures. Yet he was not ashamed of the literature, and he indulged his admiration of it the more freely because he had not only not written it, but in a way had not edited it. To be sure, he had chosen all the material, but he had not voluntarily put it all together for that number; it had largely put itself together, as every number of every magazine does, and as it seems more and more to do, in the experience of every editor. There had to be, of course, a story, and then a sketch of travel. There was a literary essay and a social essay; there was a dramatic trifle, very gay, very light; there was a dashing criticism on the new pictures, the new plays, the new books, the new fashions; and then there was the translation of a bit of vivid Russian realism, which the editor owed to Lindau's exploration of the foreign periodicals left with him; Lindau was himself a romanticist of the Victor Hugo sort, but he said this fragment of Dostoyevski was good of its kind. The poem was a bit of society verse, with a backward look into simpler and wholesomer experiences.

Fulkerson was extremely proud of the number; but he said it was too good --too good from every point of view. The cover was too good, and the paper was too good, and that device of rough edges, which got over the objection to uncut leaves while it secured their aesthetic effect, was a thing that he trembled for, though he rejoiced in it as a stroke of the highest genius. It had come from Beaton at the last moment, as a compromise, when the problem of the vulgar croppiness of cut leaves and the unpopularity of uncut leaves seemed to have no solution but suicide. Fulkerson was still morally crawling round on his hands and knees, as he said, in abject gratitude at Beaton's feet, though he had his qualms, his questions; and he declared that Beaton was the most inspired ass since Balaam's. "We're all asses, of course," he admitted, in semi-apology to March; "but we're no such asses as Beaton." He said that if the tasteful decorativeness of the thing did not kill it with the public outright, its literary excellence would give it the finishing stroke. Perhaps that might be overlooked in the impression of novelty which a first number would give, but it must never happen again. He implored March to promise that it should never happen again; he said their only hope was in the immediate cheapening of the whole affair. It was bad enough to give the public too much quantity for their money, but to throw in such quality as that was simply ruinous; it must be stopped. These were the expressions of his intimate moods; every front that he presented to the public wore a glow of lofty, of devout exultation. His pride in the number gushed out

in fresh bursts of rhetoric to every one whom he could get to talk with him about it. He worked the personal kindliness of the press to the utmost. He did not mind making himself ridiculous or becoming a joke in the good cause, as he called it. He joined in the applause when a humorist at the club feigned to drop dead from his chair at Fulkerson's introduction of the topic, and he went on talking that first number into the surviving spectators. He stood treat upon all occasions, and he lunched attaches of the press at all hours. He especially befriended the correspondents of the newspapers of other cities, for, as he explained to March, those fellows could give him any amount of advertising simply as literary gossip. Many of the fellows were ladies who could not be so summarily asked out to lunch, but Fulkerson's ingenuity was equal to every exigency, and he contrived somehow to make each of these feel that she had been possessed of exclusive information. There was a moment when March conjectured a willingness in Fulkerson to work Mrs. March into the advertising department, by means of a tea to these ladies and their friends which she should administer in his apartment, but he did not encourage Fulkerson to be explicit, and the moment passed. Afterward, when he told his wife about it, he was astonished to find that she would not have minded doing it for Fulkerson, and he experienced another proof of the bluntness of the feminine instincts in some directions, and of the personal favor which Fulkerson seemed to enjoy with the whole sex. This alone was enough to account for the willingness of these correspondents to write about the first number, but March accused him of sending it to their addresses with boxes of Jacqueminot roses and Huyler candy.

Fulkerson let him enjoy his joke. He said that he would do that or anything else for the good cause, short of marrying the whole circle of female correspondents.

March was inclined to hope that if the first number had been made too good for the country at large, the more enlightened taste of metropolitan journalism would invite a compensating favor for it in New York. But first Fulkerson and then the event proved him wrong. In spite of the quality of the magazine, and in spite of the kindness which so many newspaper men felt for Fulkerson, the notices in the New York papers seemed grudging and provisional to the ardor of the editor. A merit in the work was acknowledged, and certain defects in it for which March had trembled were ignored; but the critics astonished him by selecting for censure points which he was either proud of or had never noticed; which being now brought to his notice he still could not feel were faults. He owed to Fulkerson that if they had said so and so against it, he could have agreed with them, but that to say thus and so was preposterous; and that if the advertising had not been adjusted with such generous recognition of the claims of the different papers, he should have known the counting-room was at the bottom of it. As it was, he could only attribute it to perversity or stupidity. It was certainly stupid to condemn a magazine novelty like 'Every Other Week' for being novel; and to augur that if it failed, it would fail through its departure from the lines on which all the other prosperous magazines had been built, was in the last degree perverse, and it looked malicious. The fact that it was neither exactly a book nor a magazine ought to be for it and not against it, since it would invade no other field; it would prosper on no ground

but its own.

XIV.

The more March thought of the injustice of the New York press (which had not, however, attacked the literary quality of the number) the more bitterly he resented it; and his wife's indignation superheated his own. 'Every Other Week' had become a very personal affair with the whole family; the children shared their parents' disgust; Belle was outspoken in, her denunciations of a venal press. Mrs. March saw nothing but ruin ahead, and began tacitly to plan a retreat to Boston, and an establishment retrenched to the basis of two thousand a year. She shed some secret tears in anticipation of the privations which this must involve; but when Fulkerson came to see March rather late the night of the publication day, she nobly told him that if the worst came to the worst she could only have the kindest feeling toward him, and should not regard him as in the slightest degree responsible.

"Oh, hold on, hold on!" he protested. "You don't think we've made a failure, do you?"

"Why, of course," she faltered, while March remained gloomily silent.

"Well, I guess we'll wait for the official count, first. Even New York hasn't gone against us, and I guess there's a majority coming down to Harlem River that could sweep everything before it, anyway."

"What do you mean, Fulkerson?" March demanded, sternly.

"Oh, nothing! Only, the 'News Company' has ordered ten thousand now; and you know we had to give them the first twenty on commission."

"What do you mean?" March repeated; his wife held her breath.

"I mean that the first number is a booming success already, and that it's going to a hundred thousand before it stops. That unanimity and variety of censure in the morning papers, combined with the attractiveness of the thing itself, has cleared every stand in the city, and now if the favor of the country press doesn't turn the tide against us, our fortune's made." The Marches remained dumb. "Why, look here! Didn't I tell you those criticisms would be the making of us, when they first began to turn you blue this morning, March?"

"He came home to lunch perfectly sick," said Mrs. Marcli; "and I wouldn't let him go back again."

"Didn't I tell you so?" Fulkerson persisted.

March could not remember that he had, or that he had been anything but incoherently and hysterically jocose over the papers, but he said, "Yes,

yes--I think so."

"I knew it from the start," said Fulkerson. "The only other person who took those criticisms in the right spirit was Mother Dryfoos--I've just been bolstering up the Dryfoos family. She had them read to her by Mrs. Mandel, and she understood them to be all the most flattering prophecies of success. Well, I didn't read between the lines to that extent, quite; but I saw that they were going to help us, if there was anything in us, more than anything that could have been done. And there was something in us! I tell you, March, that seven-shooting self-cocking donkey of a Beaton has given us the greatest start! He's caught on like a mouse. He's made the thing awfully chic; it's jimmy; there's lots of dog about it. He's managed that process so that the illustrations look as expensive as first-class wood-cuts, and they're cheaper than chromos. He's put style into the whole thing."

"Oh yes," said March, with eager meekness, "it's Beaton that's done it."

Fulkerson read jealousy of Beaton in Mrs. March's face. "Beaton has given us the start because his work appeals to the eye. There's no denying that the pictures have sold this first number; but I expect the literature of this first number to sell the pictures of the second. I've been reading it all over, nearly, since I found how the cat was jumping; I was anxious about it, and I tell you, old man, it's good. Yes, sir! I was afraid maybe you had got it too good, with that Boston refinement of yours; but I reckon you haven't. I'll risk it. I don't see how you got so much variety into so few things, and all of them palpitant, all of 'em on the keen jump with actuality."

The mixture of American slang with the jargon of European criticism in Fulkerson's talk made March smile, but his wife did not seem to notice it in her exultation. "That is just what I say," she broke in. "It's perfectly wonderful. I never was anxious about it a moment, except, as you say, Mr. Fulkerson, I was afraid it might be too good."

They went on in an antiphony of praise till March said: "Really, I don't see what's left me but to strike for higher wages. I perceive that I'm indispensable."

"Why, old man, you're coming in on the divvy, you know," said Fulkerson.

They both laughed, and when Fulkerson was gone, Mrs. March asked her husband what a divvy was.

"It's a chicken before it's hatched."

"No! Truly?"

He explained, and she began to spend the divvy.

At Mrs. Leighton's Fulkerson gave Alma all the honor of the success; he told her mother that the girl's design for the cover had sold every number, and Mrs. Leighton believed him.

"Well, Ah think Ah maght have some of the glory," Miss Woodburn pouted.
"Where am Ah comin' in?"

"You're coming in on the cover of the next number," said Fulkerson.
"We're going to have your face there; Miss Leighton's going to sketch it in." He said this reckless of the fact that he had already shown them the design of the second number, which was Beaton's weird bit of gas-country landscape.

"Ah don't see why you don't wrahte the fiction for your magazine, Mr. Fulkerson," said the girl.

This served to remind Fulkerson of something. He turned to her father.
"I'll tell you what, Colonel Woodburn, I want Mr. March to see some chapters of that book of yours. I've been talking to him about it."

"I do not think it would add to the popularity of your periodical, sir," said the Colonel, with a stately pleasure in being asked. "My views of a civilization based upon responsible slavery would hardly be acceptable to your commercialized society."

"Well, not as a practical thing, of course," Fulkerson admitted. "But as something retrospective, speculative, I believe it would make a hit. There's so much going on now about social questions; I guess people would like to read it."

"I do not know that my work is intended to amuse people," said the Colonel, with some state.

"Mah goodness! Ah only wish it WAS, then," said his daughter; and she added: "Yes, Mr. Fulkerson, the Colonel will be very glad to submit po'tions of his woak to yo' edito'. We want to have some of the honaw. Perhaps we can say we helped to stop yo' magazine, if we didn't help to stawt it."

They all laughed at her boldness, and Fulkerson said: "It 'll take a good deal more than that to stop 'Every Other Week'. The Colonel's whole book couldn't do it." Then he looked unhappy, for Colonel Woodburn did not seem to enjoy his reassuring words; but Miss Woodburn came to his rescue. "You maght illustrate it with the po'trait of the awthoris daughtaw, if it's too late for the covah."

"Going to have that in every number, Miss Woodburn!" he cried.

"Oh, mah goodness!" she said, with mock humility.

Alma sat looking at her piquant head, black, unconsciously outlined against the lamp, as she sat working by the table. "Just keep still a moment!"

She got her sketch-block and pencils, and began to draw; Fulkerson tilted himself forward and looked over her shoulder; he smiled outwardly;

inwardly he was divided between admiration of Miss Woodburn's arch beauty and appreciation of the skill which reproduced it; at the same time he was trying to remember whether March had authorized him to go so far as to ask for a sight of Colonel Woodburn's manuscript. He felt that he had trespassed upon March's province, and he framed one apology to the editor for bringing him the manuscript, and another to the author for bringing it back.

"Most Ah hold raght still like it was a photograph?" asked Miss Woodburn. "Can Ah toak?"

"Talk all you want," said Alma, squinting her eyes. "And you needn't be either adamantine, nor yet--wooden."

"Oh, ho' very good of you! Well, if Ah can toak--go on, Mr. Fulkerson!"

"Me talk? I can't breathe till this thing is done!" sighed Fulkerson; at that point of his mental drama the Colonel was behaving rustily about the return of his manuscript, and he felt that he was looking his last on Miss Woodburn's profile.

"Is she getting it raght?" asked the girl.

"I don't know which is which," said Fulkerson.

"Oh, Ah hope Ah shall! Ah don't want to go round feelin' like a sheet of papah half the time."

"You could rattle on, just the same," suggested Alma.

"Oh, now! Jost listen to that, Mr. Fulkerson. Do you call that any way to toak to people?"

"You might know which you were by the color," Fulkerson began, and then he broke off from the personal consideration with a business inspiration, and smacked himself on the knee, "We could print it in color!"

Mrs. Leighton gathered up her sewing and held it with both hands in her lap, while she came round, and looked critically at the sketch and the model over her glasses. "It's very good, Alma," she said.

Colonel Woodburn remained restively on his side of the table. "Of course, Mr. Fulkerson, you were jesting, sir, when you spoke of printing a sketch of my daughter."

"Why, I don't know--If you object--?"

"I do, sir--decidedly," said the Colonel.

"Then that settles it, of course,--I only meant--"

"Indeed it doesn't!" cried the girl. "Who's to know who it's from? Ah'm jost set on havin' it printed! Ah'm going to appear as the head of

Slavery--in opposition to the head of Liberty."

"There'll be a revolution inside of forty-eight hours, and we'll have the Colonel's system going wherever a copy of 'Every Other Week' circulates," said Fulkerson.

"This sketch belongs to me," Alma interposed. "I'm not going to let it be printed."

"Oh, mah goodness!" said Miss Woodburn, laughing good-humoredly. "That's becose you were brought up to hate slavery."

"I should like Mr. Beaton to see it," said Mrs. Leighton, in a sort of absent tone. She added, to Fulkerson: "I rather expected he might be in to-night."

"Well, if he comes we'll leave it to Beaton," Fulkerson said, with relief in the solution, and an anxious glance at the Colonel, across the table, to see how he took that form of the joke. Miss Woodburn intercepted his glance and laughed, and Fulkerson laughed, too, but rather forlornly.

Alma set her lips primly and turned her head first on one side and then on the other to look at the sketch. "I don't think we'll leave it to Mr. Beaton, even if he comes."

"We left the other design for the cover to Beaton," Fulkerson insinuated. "I guess you needn't be afraid of him."

"Is it a question of my being afraid?" Alma asked; she seemed coolly intent on her drawing.

"Miss Leighton thinks he ought to be afraid of her," Miss Woodburn explained.

"It's a question of his courage, then?" said Alma.

"Well, I don't think there are many young ladies that Beaton's afraid of," said Fulkerson, giving himself the respite of this purely random remark, while he interrogated the faces of Mrs. Leighton and Colonel Woodburn for some light upon the tendency of their daughters' words.

He was not helped by Mrs. Leighton's saying, with a certain anxiety, "I don't know what you mean, Mr. Fulkerson."

"Well, you're as much in the dark as I am myself, then," said Fulkerson. "I suppose I meant that Beaton is rather--a--favorite, you know. The women like him."

Mrs. Leighton sighed, and Colonel Woodburn rose and left the room.

In the silence that followed, Fulkerson looked from one lady to the other with dismay. "I seem to have put my foot in it, somehow," he suggested, and Miss Woodburn gave a cry of laughter.

"Poo' Mr. Fulkerson! Poo' Mr. Fulkerson! Papa thoat you wanted him to go."

"Wanted him to go?" repeated Fulkerson.

"We always mention Mr. Beaton when we want to get rid of papa."

"Well, it seems to me that I have noticed that he didn't take much interest in Beaton, as a general topic. But I don't know that I ever saw it drive him out of the room before!"

"Well, he isn't always so bad," said Miss Woodburn. "But it was a case of hate at first sight, and it seems to be growin' on papa."

"Well, I can understand that," said Fulkerson. "The impulse to destroy Beaton is something that everybody has to struggle against at the start."

"I must say, Mr. Fulkerson," said Mrs. Leighton, in the tremor through which she nerved herself to differ openly with any one she liked, "I never had to struggle with anything of the kind, in regard to Mr. Beaton. He has always been most respectful and--and--considerate, with me, whatever he has been with others."

"Well, of course, Mrs. Leighton!" Fulkerson came back in a soothing tone. "But you see you're the rule that proves the exception. I was speaking of the way men felt about Beaton. It's different with ladies; I just said so."

"Is it always different?" Alma asked, lifting her head and her hand from her drawing, and staring at it absently.

Fulkerson pushed both his hands through his whiskers. "Look here! Look here!" he said. "Won't somebody start some other subject? We haven't had the weather up yet, have we? Or the opera? What is the matter with a few remarks about politics?"

"Why, Ah thoat you lahked to toak about the staff of yo' magazine," said Miss Woodburn.

"Oh, I do!" said Fulkerson. "But not always about the same member of it. He gets monotonous, when he doesn't get complicated. I've just come round from the Marches'," he added, to Mrs. Leighton.

"I suppose they've got thoroughly settled in their apartment by this time." Mrs. Leighton said something like this whenever the Marches were mentioned. At the bottom of her heart she had not forgiven them for not taking her rooms; she had liked their looks so much; and she was always hoping that they were uncomfortable or dissatisfied; she could not help wanting them punished a little.

"Well, yes; as much as they ever will be," Fulkerson answered.

"The Boston style is pretty different, you know; and the Marches are old-

fashioned folks, and I reckon they never went in much for bric-a-brac. They've put away nine or ten barrels of dragon candlesticks, but they keep finding new ones."

"Their landlady has just joined our class," said Alma. "Isn't her name Green? She happened to see my copy of 'Every Other Week', and said she knew the editor; and told me."

"Well, it's a little world," said Fulkerson. "You seem to be touching elbows with everybody. Just think of your having had our head translator for a model."

"Ah think that your whole publication revolves around the Leighton family," said Miss Woodburn.

"That's pretty much so," Fulkerson admitted. "Anyhow, the publisher seems disposed to do so."

"Are you the publisher? I thought it was Mr. Dryfoos," said Alma.

"It is."

"Oh!"

The tone and the word gave Fulkerson a discomfort which he promptly confessed. "Missed again."

The girls laughed, and he regained something of his lost spirits, and smiled upon their gayety, which lasted beyond any apparent reason for it.

Miss Woodburn asked, "And is Mr. Dryfoos senio' anything like ouah Mr. Dryfoos?"

"Not the least."

"But he's jost as exemplary?"

"Yes; in his way."

"Well, Ah wish Ah could see all those pinks of puffection togethah, once."

"Why, look here! I've been thinking I'd celebrate a little, when the old gentleman gets back. Have a little supper--something of that kind. How would you like to let me have your parlors for it, Mrs. Leighton? You ladies could stand on the stairs, and have a peep at us, in the bunch."

"Oh, mah! What a privilege! And will Miss Alma be there, with the othah contributors? Ah shall jost expah of envy!"

"She won't be there in person," said Fulkerson, "but she'll be represented by the head of the art department."

"Mah goodness! And who'll the head of the publishing department represent?"

"He can represent you," said Alma.

"Well, Ah want to be represented, someho'."

"We'll have the banquet the night before you appear on the cover of our fourth number," said Fulkerson.

"Ah thoat that was doubly fo'bidden," said Miss Woodburn. "By the stern parent and the envious awtust."

"We'll get Beaton to get round them, somehow. I guess we can trust him to manage that."

Mrs. Leighton sighed her resentment of the implication.

"I always feel that Mr. Beaton doesn't do himself justice," she began.

Fulkerson could not forego the chance of a joke. "Well, maybe he would rather temper justice with mercy in a case like his." This made both the younger ladies laugh. "I judge this is my chance to get off with my life," he added, and he rose as he spoke. "Mrs. Leighton, I am about the only man of my sex who doesn't thirst for Beaton's blood most of the time. But I know him and I don't. He's more kinds of a good fellow than people generally understand. He doesn't wear his heart upon his sleeve—not his ulster sleeve, anyway. You can always count me on your side when it's a question of finding Beaton not guilty if he'll leave the State."

Alma set her drawing against the wall, in rising to say goodnight to Fulkerson. He bent over on his stick to look at it. "Well, it's beautiful," he sighed, with unconscious sincerity.

Alma made him a courtesy of mock modesty. "Thanks to Miss Woodburn!"

"Oh no! All she had to do was simply to stay put."

"Don't you think Ah might have improved it if Ah had, looked better?" the girl asked, gravely.

"Oh, you couldn't!" said Fulkerson, and he went off triumphant in their applause and their cries of "Which? which?"

Mrs. Leighton sank deep into an accusing gloom when at last she found herself alone with her daughter. "I don't know what you are thinking about, Alma Leighton. If you don't like Mr. Beaton--"

"I don't."

"You don't? You know better than that. You know that, you did care for him."

"Oh! that's a very different thing. That's a thing that can be got over."

"Got over!" repeated Mrs. Leighton, aghast.

"Of course, it can! Don't be romantic, mamma. People get over dozens of such fancies. They even marry for love two or three times."

"Never!" cried her mother, doing her best to feel shocked; and at last looking it.

Her looking it had no effect upon Alma. "You can easily get over caring for people; but you can't get over liking them--if you like them because they are sweet and good. That's what lasts. I was a simple goose, and he imposed upon me because he was a sophisticated goose. Now the case is reversed."

"He does care for you, now. You can see it. Why do you encourage him to come here?"

"I don't," said Alma. "I will tell him to keep away if you like. But whether he comes or goes, it will be the same."

"Not to him, Alma! He is in love with you!"

"He has never said so."

"And you would really let him say so, when you intend to refuse him?"

"I can't very well refuse him till he does say so."

This was undeniable. Mrs. Leighton could only demand, in an awful tone, "May I ask why--if you cared for him; and I know you care for him still you will refuse him?"

Alma laughed. "Because--because I'm wedded to my Art, and I'm not going to commit bigamy, whatever I do."

"Alma!"

"Well, then, because I don't like him--that is, I don't believe in him, and don't trust him. He's fascinating, but he's false and he's fickle. He can't help it, I dare say."

"And you are perfectly hard. Is it possible that you were actually pleased to have Mr. Fulkerson tease you about Mr. Dryfoos?"

"Oh, good-night, now, mamma! This is becoming personal"

Artists never do anything like other people
Ballast of her instinctive despondency
Clinging persistence of such natures
Dividend: It's a chicken before it's hatched
Gayety, which lasted beyond any apparent reason for it
Hopeful recklessness
How much can a man honestly earn without wronging or oppressing
I cannot endure this--this hopefulness of yours
If you dread harm enough it is less likely to happen
It must be your despair that helps you to bear up
Marry for love two or three times
No man deserves to suffer at the hands of another
Patience with mediocrity putting on the style of genius
Person talks about taking lessons, as if they could learn it
Say when he is gone that the woman gets along better without him
Shouldn't care for the disgrace of being poor--its inconvenience
Timidity of the elder in the presence of the younger man

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by William Dean Howells

A HAZARD OF NEW FORTUNES

By William Dean Howells

PART THIRD

I.

The scheme of a banquet to celebrate the initial success of 'Every Other Week' expanded in Fulkerson's fancy into a series. Instead of the publishing and editorial force, with certain of the more representative artists and authors sitting down to a modest supper in Mrs. Leighton's parlors, he conceived of a dinner at Delmonico's, with the principal literary and artistic people throughout the country as guests, and an inexhaustible hospitality to reporters and correspondents, from whom paragraphs, prophetic and historic, would flow weeks before and after the first of the series. He said the thing was a new departure in magazines; it amounted to something in literature as radical as the American Revolution in politics: it was the idea of self government in the arts; and it was this idea that had never yet been fully developed in regard to it. That was what must be done in the speeches at the dinner, and the

speeches must be reported. Then it would go like wildfire. He asked March whether he thought Mr. Depew could be got to come; Mark Twain, he was sure, would come; he was a literary man. They ought to invite Mr. Evarts, and the Cardinal and the leading Protestant divines. His ambition stopped at nothing, nothing but the question of expense; there he had to wait the return of the elder Dryfoos from the West, and Dryfoos was still delayed at Moffitt, and Fulkerson openly confessed that he was afraid he would stay there till his own enthusiasm escaped in other activities, other plans.

Fulkerson was as little likely as possible to fall under a superstitious subjection to another man; but March could not help seeing that in this possible measure Dryfoos was Fulkerson's fetish. He did not revere him, March decided, because it was not in Fulkerson's nature to revere anything; he could like and dislike, but he could not respect. Apparently, however, Dryfoos daunted him somehow; and besides the homage which those who have not pay to those who have, Fulkerson rendered Dryfoos the tribute of a feeling which March could only define as a sort of bewilderment. As well as March could make out, this feeling was evoked by the spectacle of Dryfoos's unfailing luck, which Fulkerson was fond of dazzling himself with. It perfectly consisted with a keen sense of whatever was sordid and selfish in a man on whom his career must have had its inevitable effect. He liked to philosophize the case with March, to recall Dryfoos as he was when he first met him still somewhat in the sap, at Moffitt, and to study the processes by which he imagined him to have dried into the hardened speculator, without even the pretence to any advantage but his own in his ventures. He was aware of painting the character too vividly, and he warned March not to accept it exactly in those tints, but to subdue them and shade it for himself. He said that where his advantage was not concerned, there was ever so much good in Dryfoos, and that if in some things he had grown inflexible, he had expanded in others to the full measure of the vast scale on which he did business. It had seemed a little odd to March that a man should put money into such an enterprise as 'Every Other Week' and go off about other affairs, not only without any sign of anxiety, but without any sort of interest. But Fulkerson said that was the splendid side of Dryfoos. He had a courage, a magnanimity, that was equal to the strain of any such uncertainty. He had faced the music once for all, when he asked Fulkerson what the thing would cost in the different degrees of potential failure; and then he had gone off, leaving everything to Fulkerson and the younger Dryfoos, with the instruction simply to go ahead and not bother him about it. Fulkerson called that pretty tall for an old fellow who used to bewail the want of pigs and chickens to occupy his mind. He alleged it as another proof of the versatility of the American mind, and of the grandeur of institutions and opportunities that let every man grow to his full size, so that any man in America could run the concern if necessary. He believed that old Dryfoos could step into Bismarck's shoes and run the German Empire at ten days' notice, or about as long as it would take him to go from New York to Berlin. But Bismarck would not know anything about Dryfoos's plans till Dryfoos got ready to show his hand. Fulkerson himself did not pretend to say what the old man had been up to since he went West. He was at Moffitt first, and then he was at Chicago, and then he had gone out to Denver to look after some mines he

had out there, and a railroad or two; and now he was at Moffitt again. He was supposed to be closing up his affairs there, but nobody could say.

Fulkerson told March the morning after Dryfoos returned that he had not only not pulled out at Moffitt, but had gone in deeper, ten times deeper than ever. He was in a royal good-humor, Fulkerson reported, and was going to drop into the office on his way up from the Street (March understood Wall Street) that afternoon. He was tickled to death with 'Every Other Week' so far as it had gone, and was anxious to pay his respects to the editor.

March accounted for some rhetoric in this, but let it flatter him, and prepared himself for a meeting about which he could see that Fulkerson was only less nervous than he had shown himself about the public reception of the first number. It gave March a disagreeable feeling of being owned and of being about to be inspected by his proprietor; but he fell back upon such independence as he could find in the thought of those two thousand dollars of income beyond the caprice of his owner, and maintained an outward serenity.

He was a little ashamed afterward of the resolution it had cost him to do so. It was not a question of Dryfoos's physical presence: that was rather effective than otherwise, and carried a suggestion of moneyed indifference to convention in the gray business suit of provincial cut, and the low, wide-brimmed hat of flexible black felt. He had a stick with an old-fashioned top of buckhorn worn smooth and bright by the palm of his hand, which had not lost its character in fat, and which had a history of former work in its enlarged knuckles, though it was now as soft as March's, and must once have been small even for a man of Mr. Dryfoos's stature; he was below the average size. But what struck March was the fact that Dryfoos seemed furtively conscious of being a country person, and of being aware that in their meeting he was to be tried by other tests than those which would have availed him as a shrewd speculator. He evidently had some curiosity about March, as the first of his kind whom he had encountered; some such curiosity as the country school trustee feels and tries to hide in the presence of the new schoolmaster. But the whole affair was, of course, on a higher plane; on one side Dryfoos was much more a man of the world than March was, and he probably divined this at once, and rested himself upon the fact in a measure. It seemed to be his preference that his son should introduce them, for he came upstairs with Conrad, and they had fairly made acquaintance before Fulkerson joined them.

Conrad offered to leave them at once, but his father made him stay. "I reckon Mr. March and I haven't got anything so private to talk about that we want to keep it from the other partners. Well, Mr. March, are you getting used to New York yet? It takes a little time."

"Oh yes. But not so much time as most places. Everybody belongs more or less in New York; nobody has to belong here altogether."

"Yes, that is so. You can try it, and go away if you don't like it a good deal easier than you could from a smaller place. Wouldn't make so

much talk, would it?" He glanced at March with a jocose light in his shrewd eyes. "That is the way I feel about it all the time: just visiting. Now, it wouldn't be that way in Boston, I reckon?"

"You couldn't keep on visiting there your whole life," said March.

Dryfoos laughed, showing his lower teeth in a way that was at once simple and fierce. "Mr. Fulkerson didn't hardly know as he could get you to leave. I suppose you got used to it there. I never been in your city."

"I had got used to it; but it was hardly my city, except by marriage. My wife's a Bostonian."

"She's been a little homesick here, then," said Dryfoos, with a smile of the same quality as his laugh.

"Less than I expected," said March. "Of course, she was very much attached to our old home."

"I guess my wife won't ever get used to New York," said Dryfoos, and he drew in his lower lip with a sharp sigh. "But my girls like it; they're young. You never been out our way yet, Mr. March? Out West?"

"Well, only for the purpose of being born, and brought up. I used to live in Crawfordsville, and then Indianapolis."

"Indianapolis is bound to be a great place," said Dryfoos. "I remember now, Mr. Fulkerson told me you was from our State." He went on to brag of the West, as if March were an Easterner and had to be convinced. "You ought to see all that country. It's a great country."

"Oh yes," said March, "I understand that." He expected the praise of the great West to lead up to some comment on 'Every Other Week'; and there was abundant suggestion of that topic in the manuscripts, proofs of letter-press and illustrations, with advance copies of the latest number strewn over his table.

But Dryfoos apparently kept himself from looking at these things. He rolled his head about on his shoulders to take in the character of the room, and said to his son, "You didn't change the woodwork, after all."

"No; the architect thought we had better let it be, unless we meant to change the whole place. He liked its being old-fashioned."

"I hope you feel comfortable here, Mr. March," the old man said, bringing his eyes to bear upon him again after their tour of inspection.

"Too comfortable for a working-man," said March, and he thought that this remark must bring them to some talk about his work, but the proprietor only smiled again.

"I guess I sha'n't lose much on this house," he returned, as if musing aloud. "This down-town property is coming up. Business is getting in on

all these side streets. I thought I paid a pretty good price for it, too." He went on to talk of real estate, and March began to feel a certain resentment at his continued avoidance of the only topic in which they could really have a common interest. "You live down this way somewhere, don't you?" the old man concluded.

"Yes. I wished to be near my work." March was vexed with himself for having recurred to it; but afterward he was not sure but Dryfoos shared his own diffidence in the matter, and was waiting for him to bring it openly into the talk. At times he seemed wary and masterful, and then March felt that he was being examined and tested; at others so simple that March might well have fancied that he needed encouragement, and desired it. He talked of his wife and daughters in a way that invited March to say friendly things of his family, which appeared to give the old man first an undue pleasure and then a final distrust. At moments he turned, with an effect of finding relief in it, to his son and spoke to him across March of matters which he was unacquainted with; he did not seem aware that this was rude, but the young man must have felt it so; he always brought the conversation back, and once at some cost to himself when his father made it personal.

"I want to make a regular New York business man out of that fellow," he said to March, pointing at Conrad with his stick. "You s'pose I'm ever going to do it?"

"Well, I don't know," said March, trying to fall in with the joke. "Do you mean nothing but a business man?"

The old man laughed at whatever latent meaning he fancied in this, and said: "You think he would be a little too much for me there? Well, I've seen enough of 'em to know it don't always take a large pattern of a man to do a large business. But I want him to get the business training, and then if he wants to go into something else he knows what the world is, anyway. Heigh?"

"Oh yes!" March assented, with some compassion for the young man reddening patiently under his father's comment.

Dryfoos went on as if his son were not in hearing. "Now that boy wanted to be a preacher. What does a preacher know about the world he preaches against when he's been brought up a preacher? He don't know so much as a bad little boy in his Sunday-school; he knows about as much as a girl. I always told him, You be a man first, and then you be a preacher, if you want to. Heigh?"

"Precisely." March began to feel some compassion for himself in being witness of the young fellow's discomfort under his father's homily.

"When we first come to New York, I told him, Now here's your chance to see the world on a big scale. You know already what work and saving and steady habits and sense will bring a man, to; you don't want to go round among the rich; you want to go among the poor, and see what laziness and drink and dishonesty and foolishness will bring men to. And I guess he

knows, about as well as anybody; and if he ever goes to preaching he'll know what he's preaching about." The old man smiled his fierce, simple smile, and in his sharp eyes March fancied contempt of the ambition he had balked in his son. The present scene must have been one of many between them, ending in meek submission on the part of the young man, whom his father, perhaps without realizing his cruelty, treated as a child. March took it hard that he should be made to suffer in the presence of a co-ordinate power like himself, and began to dislike the old man out of proportion to his offence, which might have been mere want of taste, or an effect of mere embarrassment before him. But evidently, whatever rebellion his daughters had carried through against him, he had kept his dominion over this gentle spirit unbroken. March did not choose to make any response, but to let him continue, if he would, entirely upon his own impulse.

II.

A silence followed, of rather painful length. It was broken by the cheery voice of Fulkerson, sent before him to herald Fulkerson's cheery person. "Well, I suppose you've got the glorious success of 'Every Other Week' down pretty cold in your talk by this time. I should have been up sooner to join you, but I was nipping a man for the last page of the cover. I guess we'll have to let the Muse have that for an advertisement instead of a poem the next time, March. Well, the old gentleman given you boys your scolding?" The person of Fulkerson had got into the room long before he reached this question, and had planted itself astride a chair. Fulkerson looked over the chairback, now at March, and now at the elder Dryfoos as he spoke.

March answered him. "I guess we must have been waiting for you, Fulkerson. At any rate, we hadn't got to the scolding yet."

"Why, I didn't suppose Mr. Dryfoos could 'a' held in so long. I understood he was awful mad at the way the thing started off, and wanted to give you a piece of his mind, when he got at you. I inferred as much from a remark that he made." March and Dryfoos looked foolish, as men do when made the subject of this sort of merry misrepresentation.

"I reckon my scolding will keep awhile yet," said the old man, dryly.

"Well, then, I guess it's a good chance to give Mr. Dryfoos an idea of what we've really done--just while we're resting, as Artemus Ward says. Heigh, March?"

"I will let you blow the trumpet, Fulkerson. I think it belongs strictly to the advertising department," said March. He now distinctly resented the old man's failure to say anything to him of the magazine; he made his inference that it was from a suspicion of his readiness to presume upon a recognition of his share in the success, and he was determined to second no sort of appeal for it.

"The advertising department is the heart and soul of every business," said Fulkerson, hardily, "and I like to keep my hand in with a little practise on the trumpet in private. I don't believe Mr. Dryfoos has got any idea of the extent of this thing. He's been out among those Rackensackens, where we were all born, and he's read the notices in their seven by nine dailies, and he's seen the thing selling on the cars, and he thinks he appreciates what's been done. But I should just like to take him round in this little old metropolis awhile, and show him 'Every Other Week' on the centre tables of the millionaires--the Vanderbilts and the Astors--and in the homes of culture and refinement everywhere, and let him judge for himself. It's the talk of the clubs and the dinner-tables; children cry for it; it's the Castoria of literature and the Pearlline of art, the 'Won't-be-happy-till-he-gets-it-of every en lightened man, woman, and child in this vast city. I knew we could capture the country; but, my goodness! I didn't expect to have New York fall into our hands at a blow. But that's just exactly what New York has done. Every Other Week supplies the long-felt want that's been grinding round in New York and keeping it awake nights ever since the war. It's the culmination of all the high and ennobling ideals of the past."

"How much," asked Dryfoos, "do you expect to get out of it the first year, if it keeps the start it's got?"

"Comes right down to business, every time!" said Fulkerson, referring the characteristic to March with a delighted glance. "Well, sir, if everything works right, and we get rain enough to fill up the springs, and it isn't a grasshopper year, I expect to clear above all expenses something in the neighborhood of twenty-five thousand dollars."

"Humph! And you are all going to work a year--editor, manager, publisher, artists, writers, printers, and the rest of 'em--to clear twenty-five thousand dollars?--I made that much in half a day in Moffitt once. I see it made in half a minute in Wall Street, sometimes." The old man presented this aspect of the case with a good-natured contempt, which included Fulkerson and his enthusiasm in an obvious liking.

His son suggested, "But when we make that money here, no one loses it."

"Can you prove that?" His father turned sharply upon him. "Whatever is won is lost. It's all a game; it don't make any difference what you bet on. Business is business, and a business man takes his risks with his eyes open."

"Ah, but the glory!" Fulkerson insinuated with impudent persiflage. "I hadn't got to the glory yet, because it's hard to estimate it; but put the glory at the lowest figure, Mr. Dryfoos, and add it to the twenty-five thousand, and you've got an annual income from 'Every Other Week' of dollars enough to construct a silver railroad, double-track, from this office to the moon. I don't mention any of the sister planets because I like to keep within bounds."

Dryfoos showed his lower teeth for pleasure in Fulkerson's fooling, and

said, "That's what I like about you, Mr. Fulkerson--you always keep within bounds."

"Well, I ain't a shrinking Boston violet, like March, here. More sunflower in my style of diffidence; but I am modest, I don't deny it," said Fulkerson. "And I do hate to have a thing overstated."

"And the glory--you do really think there's something in the glory that pays?"

"Not a doubt of it! I shouldn't care for the paltry return in money," said Fulkerson, with a burlesque of generous disdain, "if it wasn't for the glory along with it."

"And how should you feel about the glory, if there was no money along with it?"

"Well, sir, I'm happy to say we haven't come to that yet."

"Now, Conrad, here," said the old man, with a sort of pathetic rancor, "would rather have the glory alone. I believe he don't even care much for your kind of glory, either, Mr. Fulkerson."

Fulkerson ran his little eyes curiously over Conrad's face and then March's, as if searching for a trace there of something gone before which would enable him to reach Dryfoos's whole meaning. He apparently resolved to launch himself upon conjecture. "Oh, well, we know how Conrad feels about the things of this world, anyway. I should like to take 'em on the plane of another sphere, too, sometimes; but I noticed a good while ago that this was the world I was born into, and so I made up my mind that I would do pretty much what I saw the rest of the folks doing here below. And I can't see but what Conrad runs the thing on business principles in his department, and I guess you'll find it so if you look into it. I consider that we're a whole team and big dog under the wagon with you to draw on for supplies, and March, here, at the head of the literary business, and Conrad in the counting-room, and me to do the heavy lying in the advertising part. Oh, and Beaton, of course, in the art. I 'most forgot Beaton--Hamlet with Hamlet left out."

Dryfoos looked across at his son. "Wasn't that the fellow's name that was there last night?"

"Yes," said Conrad.

The old man rose. "Well, I reckon I got to be going. You ready to go up-town, Conrad?"

"Well, not quite yet, father."

The old man shook hands with March, and went downstairs, followed by his son.

Fulkerson remained.

"He didn't jump at the chance you gave him to compliment us all round, Fulkerson," said March, with a smile not wholly of pleasure.

Fulkerson asked, with as little joy in the grin he had on, "Didn't he say anything to you before I came in?"

"Not a word."

"Dogged if I know what to make of it," sighed Fulkerson, "but I guess he's been having a talk with Conrad that's soured on him. I reckon maybe he came back expecting to find that boy reconciled to the glory of this world, and Conrad's showed himself just as set against it as ever."

"It might have been that," March admitted, pensively. "I fancied something of the kind myself from words the old man let drop."

Fulkerson made him explain, and then he said:

"That's it, then; and it's all right. Conrad 'll come round in time; and all we've got to do is to have patience with the old man till he does. I know he likes you." Fulkerson affirmed this only interrogatively, and looked so anxiously to March for corroboration that March laughed.

"He dissembled his love," he said; but afterward, in describing to his wife his interview with Mr. Dryfoos, he was less amused with this fact.

When she saw that he was a little cast down by it, she began to encourage him. "He's just a common, ignorant man, and probably didn't know how to express himself. You may be perfectly sure that he's delighted with the success of the magazine, and that he understands as well as you do that he owes it all to you."

"Ah, I'm not so sure. I don't believe a man's any better for having made money so easily and rapidly as Dryfoos has done, and I doubt if he's any wiser. I don't know just the point he's reached in his evolution from grub to beetle, but I do know that so far as it's gone the process must have involved a bewildering change of ideals and criterions. I guess he's come to despise a great many things that he once respected, and that intellectual ability is among them--what we call intellectual ability. He must have undergone a moral deterioration, an atrophy of the generous instincts, and I don't see why it shouldn't have reached his mental make-up. He has sharpened, but he has narrowed; his sagacity has turned into suspicion, his caution to meanness, his courage to ferocity. That's the way I philosophize a man of Dryfoos's experience, and I am not very proud when I realize that such a man and his experience are the ideal and ambition of most Americans. I rather think they came pretty near being mine, once."

"No, dear, they never did," his wife protested.

"Well, they're not likely to be in the future. The Dryfoos feature of 'Every Other Week' is thoroughly distasteful to me."

"Why, but he hasn't really got anything to do with it, has he, beyond furnishing the money?"

"That's the impression that Fulkerson has allowed us to get. But the man that holds the purse holds the reins. He may let us guide the horse, but when he likes he can drive. If we don't like his driving, then we can get down."

Mrs. March was less interested in this figure of speech than in the personal aspects involved. "Then you think Mr. Fulkerson has deceived you?"

"Oh no!" said her husband, laughing. "But I think he has deceived himself, perhaps."

"How?" she pursued.

"He may have thought he was using Dryfoos, when Dryfoos was using him, and he may have supposed he was not afraid of him when he was very much so. His courage hadn't been put to the test, and courage is a matter of proof, like proficiency on the fiddle, you know: you can't tell whether you've got it till you try."

"Nonsense! Do you mean that he would ever sacrifice you to Mr. Dryfoos?"

"I hope he may not be tempted. But I'd rather be taking the chances with Fulkerson alone than with Fulkerson and Dryfoos to back him. Dryfoos seems, somehow, to take the poetry and the pleasure out of the thing."

Mrs. March was a long time silent. Then she began, "Well, my dear, I never wanted to come to New York--"

"Neither did I," March promptly put in.

"But now that we're here," she went on, "I'm not going to have you letting every little thing discourage you. I don't see what there was in Mr. Dryfoos's manner to give you any anxiety. He's just a common, stupid, inarticulate country person, and he didn't know how to express himself, as I said in the beginning, and that's the reason he didn't say anything."

"Well, I don't deny you're right about it."

"It's dreadful," his wife continued, "to be mixed up with such a man and his family, but I don't believe he'll ever meddle with your management, and, till he does, all you need do is to have as little to do with him as possible, and go quietly on your own way."

"Oh, I shall go on quietly enough," said March. "I hope I sha'n't begin going stealthily."

"Well, my dear," said Mrs. March, "just let me know when you're tempted

to do that. If ever you sacrifice the smallest grain of your honesty or your self-respect to Mr. Dryfoos, or anybody else, I will simply renounce you."

"In view of that I'm rather glad the management of 'Every Other Week' involves tastes and not convictions," said March.

III.

That night Dryfoos was wakened from his after-dinner nap by the sound of gay talk and nervous giggling in the drawing-room. The talk, which was Christine's, and the giggling, which was Mela's, were intershot with the heavier tones of a man's voice; and Dryfoos lay awhile on the leathern lounge in his library, trying to make out whether he knew the voice. His wife sat in a deep chair before the fire, with her eyes on his face, waiting for him to wake.

"Who is that out there?" he asked, without opening his eyes.

"Indeed, indeed, I don't know, Jacob," his wife answered. "I reckon it's just some visitor of the girls'."

"Was I snoring?"

"Not a bit. You was sleeping as quiet! I did hate to have 'em wake you, and I was just goin' out to shoo them. They've been playin' something, and that made them laugh."

"I didn't know but I had snored," said the old man, sitting up.

"No," said his wife. Then she asked, wistfully, "Was you out at the old place, Jacob?"

"Yes."

"Did it look natural?"

"Yes; mostly. They're sinking the wells down in the woods pasture."

"And--the children's graves?"

"They haven't touched that part. But I reckon we got to have 'em moved to the cemetery. I bought a lot."

The old woman began softly to weep. "It does seem too hard that they can't be let to rest in peace, pore little things. I wanted you and me to lay there, too, when our time come, Jacob. Just there, back o' the beehives and under them shoomakes--my, I can see the very place! And I don't believe I'll ever feel at home anywheres else. I woon't know where I am when the trumpet sounds. I have to think before I can tell where

the east is in New York; and what if I should git faced the wrong way when I raise? Jacob, I wonder you could sell it!" Her head shook, and the firelight shone on her tears as she searched the folds of her dress for her pocket.

A peal of laughter came from the drawing-room, and then the sound of chords struck on the piano.

"Hush! Don't you cry, 'Liz'beth!" said Dryfoos. "Here; take my handkerchief. I've got a nice lot in the cemetery, and I'm goin' to have a monument, with two lambs on it--like the one you always liked so much. It ain't the fashion, any more, to have family buryin' grounds; they're collectin' 'em into the cemeteries, all round."

"I reckon I got to bear it," said his wife, muffling her face in his handkerchief. "And I suppose the Lord kin find me, wherever I am. But I always did want to lay just there. You mind how we used to go out and set there, after milkin', and watch the sun go down, and talk about where their angels was, and try to figger it out?"

"I remember, 'Liz'beth."

The man's voice in the drawing-room sang a snatch of French song, insolent, mocking, salient; and then Christine's attempted the same strain, and another cry of laughter from Mela followed.

"Well, I always did expect to lay there. But I reckon it's all right. It won't be a great while, now, anyway. Jacob, I don't believe I'm a-goin' to live very long. I know it don't agree with me here."

"Oh, I guess it does, 'Liz'beth. You're just a little pulled down with the weather. It's coming spring, and you feel it; but the doctor says you're all right. I stopped in, on the way up, and he says so."

"I reckon he don't know everything," the old woman persisted: "I've been runnin' down ever since we left Moffitt, and I didn't feel any too well there, even. It's a very strange thing, Jacob, that the richer you git, the less you ain't able to stay where you want to, dead or alive."

"It's for the children we do it," said Dryfoos. "We got to give them their chance in the world."

"Oh, the world! They ought to bear the yoke in their youth, like we done. I know it's what Coonrod would like to do."

Dryfoos got upon his feet. "If Coonrod 'll mind his own business, and do what I want him to, he'll have yoke enough to bear." He moved from his wife, without further effort to comfort her, and pattered heavily out into the dining-room. Beyond its obscurity stretched the glitter of the deep drawing-room. His feet, in their broad; flat slippers, made no sound on the dense carpet, and he came unseen upon the little group there near the piano. Mela perched upon the stool with her back to the keys, and Beaton bent over Christine, who sat with a banjo in her lap, letting

him take her hands and put them in the right place on the instrument. Her face was radiant with happiness, and Mela was watching her with foolish, unselfish pleasure in her bliss.

There was nothing wrong in the affair to a man of Dryfoos's traditions and perceptions, and if it had been at home in the farm sitting-room, or even in his parlor at Moffitt, he would not have minded a young man's placing his daughter's hands on a banjo, or even holding them there; it would have seemed a proper, attention from him if he was courting her. But here, in such a house as this, with the daughter of a man who had made as much money as he had, he did not know but it was a liberty. He felt the angry doubt of it which beset him in regard to so many experiences of his changed life; he wanted to show his sense of it, if it was a liberty, but he did not know how, and he did not know that it was so. Besides, he could not help a touch of the pleasure in Christine's happiness which Mela showed; and he would have gone back to the library, if he could, without being discovered.

But Beaton had seen him, and Dryfoos, with a nonchalant nod to the young man, came forward. "What you got there, Christine?"

"A banjo," said the girl, blushing in her father's presence.

Mela gurgled. "Mr. Beaton is learnun' her the first position."

Beaton was not embarrassed. He was in evening dress, and his face, pointed with its brown beard, showed extremely handsome above the expanse of his broad, white shirt-front. He gave back as nonchalant a nod as he had got, and, without further greeting to Dryfoos, he said to Christine: "No, no. You must keep your hand and arm so." He held them in position. "There! Now strike with your right hand. See?"

"I don't believe I can ever learn," said the girl, with a fond upward look at him.

"Oh yes, you can," said Beaton.

They both ignored Dryfoos in the little play of protests which followed, and he said, half jocosely, half suspiciously, "And is the banjo the fashion, now?" He remembered it as the emblem of low-down show business, and associated it with end-men and blackened faces and grotesque shirt-collars.

"It's all the rage," Mela shouted, in answer for all. "Everybody plays it. Mr. Beaton borrowed this from a lady friend of his."

"Humph! Pity I got you a piano, then," said Dryfoos. "A banjo would have been cheaper."

Beaton so far admitted him to the conversation as to seem reminded of the piano by his mentioning it. He said to Mela, "Oh, won't you just strike those chords?" and as Mela wheeled about and beat the keys he took the banjo from Christine and sat down with it. "This way!" He strummed it,

and murmured the tune Dryfoos had heard him singing from the library, while he kept his beautiful eyes floating on Christine's. "You try that, now; it's very simple."

"Where is Mrs. Mandel?" Dryfoos demanded, trying to assert himself.

Neither of the girls seemed to have heard him at first in the chatter they broke into over what Beaton proposed. Then Mela said, absently, "Oh, she had to go out to see one of her friends that's sick," and she struck the piano keys. "Come; try it, Chris!"

Dryfoos turned about unheeded and went back to the library. He would have liked to put Beaton out of his house, and in his heart he burned against him as a contumacious hand; he would have liked to discharge him from the art department of 'Every Other Week' at once. But he was aware of not having treated Beaton with much ceremony, and if the young man had returned his behavior in kind, with an electrical response to his own feeling, had he any right to complain? After all, there was no harm in his teaching Christine the banjo.

His wife still sat looking into the fire. "I can't see," she said, "as we've got a bit more comfort of our lives, Jacob, because we've got such piles and piles of money. I wisht to gracious we was back on the farm this minute. I wisht you had held out ag'inst the childern about sellin' it; 'twould 'a' bin the best thing fur 'em, I say. I believe in my soul they'll git spoiled here in New York. I kin see a change in 'em a'ready--in the girls."

Dryfoos stretched himself on the lounge again. "I can't see as Coonrod is much comfort, either. Why ain't he here with his sisters? What does all that work of his on the East Side amount to? It seems as if he done it to cross me, as much as anything." Dryfoos complained to his wife on the basis of mere affectional habit, which in married life often survives the sense of intellectual equality. He did not expect her to reason with him, but there was help in her listening, and though she could only soothe his fretfulness with soft answers which were often wide of the purpose, he still went to her for solace. "Here, I've gone into this newspaper business, or whatever it is, on his account, and he don't seem any more satisfied than ever. I can see he hain't got his heart in it."

"The pore boy tries; I know he does, Jacob; and he wants to please you. But he give up a good deal when he give up bein' a preacher; I s'pose we ought to remember that."

"A preacher!" sneered Dryfoos. "I reckon bein' a preacher wouldn't satisfy him now. He had the impudence to tell me this afternoon that he would like to be a priest; and he threw it up to me that he never could be because I'd kept him from studyin'."

"He don't mean a Catholic priest--not a Roman one, Jacob," the old woman explained, wistfully. "He's told me all about it. They ain't the kind o' Catholics we been used to; some sort of 'Piscopalians; and they do a heap o' good amongst the poor folks over there. He says we ain't got any

idea how folks lives in them tenement houses, hundreds of 'em in one house, and whole families in a room; and it burns in his heart to help 'em like them Fathers, as be calls 'em, that gives their lives to it. He can't be a Father, he says, because he can't git the eddication now; but he can be a Brother; and I can't find a word to say ag'inst it, when it gits to talkin', Jacob."

"I ain't saying anything against his priests, 'Liz'beth," said Dryfoos. "They're all well enough in their way; they've given up their lives to it, and it's a matter of business with them, like any other. But what I'm talking about now is Coonrod. I don't object to his doin' all the charity he wants to, and the Lord knows I've never been stingy with him about it. He might have all the money he wants, to give round any way he pleases."

"That's what I told him once, but he says money ain't the thing--or not the only thing you got to give to them poor folks. You got to give your time and your knowledge and your love--I don't know what all you got to give yourself, if you expect to help 'em. That's what Coonrod says."

"Well, I can tell him that charity begins at home," said Dryfoos, sitting up in his impatience. "And he'd better give himself to us a little--to his old father and mother. And his sisters. What's he doin' goin' off there to his meetings, and I don't know what all, an' leavin' them here alone?"

"Why, ain't Mr. Beaton with 'em?" asked the old woman. "I thought I heard his voice."

"Mr. Beaton! Of course he is! And who's Mr. Beaton, anyway?"

"Why, ain't he one of the men in Coonrod's office? I thought I heard--"

"Yes, he is! But who is he? What's he doing round here? Is he makin' up to Christine?"

"I reckon he is. From Mely's talk, she's about crazy over the fellow. Don't you like him, Jacob?"

"I don't know him, or what he is. He hasn't got any manners. Who brought him here? How'd he come to come, in the first place?"

"Mr. Fulkerson brung him, I believe," said the old woman, patiently.

"Fulkerson!" Dryfoos snorted. "Where's Mrs. Mandel, I should like to know? He brought her, too. Does she go traipsin' off this way every evening?"

"No, she seems to be here pretty regular most o' the time. I don't know how we could ever git along without her, Jacob; she seems to know just what to do, and the girls would be ten times as outbreakin' without her. I hope you ain't thinkin' o' turnin' her off, Jacob?"

Dryfoos did not think it necessary to answer such a question. "It's all Fulkerson, Fulkerson, Fulkerson. It seems to me that Fulkerson about runs this family. He brought Mrs. Mandel, and he brought that Beaton, and he brought that Boston fellow! I guess I give him a dose, though; and I'll learn Fulkerson that he can't have everything his own way. I don't want anybody to help me spend my money. I made it, and I can manage it. I guess Mr. Fulkerson can bear a little watching now. He's been travelling pretty free, and he's got the notion he's driving, maybe. I'm a-going to look after that book a little myself."

"You'll kill yourself, Jacob," said his wife, "tryin' to do so many things. And what is it all fur? I don't see as we're better off, any, for all the money. It's just as much care as it used to be when we was all there on the farm together. I wisht we could go back, Ja--"

"We can't go back!" shouted the old man, fiercely. "There's no farm any more to go back to. The fields is full of gas-wells and oil-wells and hell-holes generally; the house is tore down, and the barn's goin'--"

"The barn!" gasped the old woman. "Oh, my!"

"If I was to give all I'm worth this minute, we couldn't go back to the farm, any more than them girls in there could go back and be little children. I don't say we're any better off, for the money. I've got more of it now than I ever had; and there's no end to the luck; it pours in. But I feel like I was tied hand and foot. I don't know which way to move; I don't know what's best to do about anything. The money don't seem to buy anything but more and more care and trouble. We got a big house that we ain't at home in; and we got a lot of hired girls round under our feet that hinder and don't help. Our children don't mind us, and we got no friends or neighbors. But it had to be. I couldn't help but sell the farm, and we can't go back to it, for it ain't there. So don't you say anything more about it, 'Liz'beth."

"Pore Jacob!" said his wife. "Well, I woon't, dear."

IV

It was clear to Beaton that Dryfoos distrusted him; and the fact heightened his pleasure in Christine's liking for him. He was as sure of this as he was of the other, though he was not so sure of any reason for his pleasure in it. She had her charm; the charm of wildness to which a certain wildness in himself responded; and there were times when his fancy contrived a common future for them, which would have a prosperity forced from the old fellow's love of the girl. Beaton liked the idea of this compulsion better than he liked the idea of the money; there was something a little repulsive in that; he imagined himself rejecting it; he almost wished he was enough in love with the girl to marry her without it; that would be fine. He was taken with her in a certain measure, in a certain way; the question was in what measure, in what way.

It was partly to escape from this question that he hurried down-town, and decided to spend with the Leightons the hour remaining on his hands before it was time to go to the reception for which he was dressed. It seemed to him important that he should see Alma Leighton. After all, it was her charm that was most abiding with him; perhaps it was to be final. He found himself very happy in his present relations with her. She had dropped that barrier of pretences and ironical surprise. It seemed to him that they had gone back to the old ground of common artistic interest which he had found so pleasant the summer before. Apparently she and her mother had both forgiven his neglect of them in the first months of their stay in New York; he was sure that Mrs. Leighton liked him as well as ever, and, if there was still something a little provisional in Alma's manner at times, it was something that piqued more than it discouraged; it made him curious, not anxious.

He found the young ladies with Fulkerson when he rang. He seemed to be amusing them both, and they were both amused beyond the merit of so small a pleasantry, Beaton thought, when Fulkerson said: "Introduce myself, Mr. Beaton: Mr. Fulkerson of 'Every Other Week.' Think I've met you at our place." The girls laughed, and Alma explained that her mother was not very well, and would be sorry not to see him. Then she turned, as he felt, perversely, and went on talking with Fulkerson and left him to Miss Woodburn.

She finally recognized his disappointment: "Ah don't often get a chance at you, Mr. Beaton, and Ah'm just goin' to toak yo' to death. Yo' have been Soath yo'self, and yo' know ho' we do toak."

"I've survived to say yes," Beaton admitted.

"Oh, now, do you think we toak so much mo' than you do in the No'th?" the young lady deprecated.

"I don't know. I only know you can't talk too much for me. I should like to hear you say Soath and house and about for the rest of my life."

"That's what Ah call raght personal, Mr. Beaton. Now Ah'm goin' to be personal, too." Miss Woodburn flung out over her lap the square of cloth she was embroidering, and asked him: "Don't you think that's beautiful? Now, as an awtust--a great awtust?"

"As a great awtust, yes," said Beaton, mimicking her accent. "If I were less than great I might have something to say about the arrangement of colors. You're as bold and original as Nature."

"Really? Oh, now, do tell me yo' favo'ite colo', Mr. Beaton."

"My favorite color? Bless my soul, why should I prefer any? Is blue good, or red wicked? Do people have favorite colors?" Beaton found himself suddenly interested.

"Of co'se they do," answered the girl. "Don't awtusts?"

"I never heard of one that had--consciously."

"Is it possible? I supposed they all had. Now mah favo'ite colo' is gawnet. Don't you think it's a pretty colo'?"

"It depends upon how it's used. Do you mean in neckties?" Beaton stole a glance at the one Fulkerson was wearing.

Miss Woodburn laughed with her face bowed upon her wrist. "Ah do think you gentlemen in the No'th awe ten tahms as lahvely as the ladies."

"Strange," said Beaton. "In the South--Soath, excuse me! I made the observation that the ladies were ten times as lively as the gentlemen. What is that you're working?"

"This?" Miss Woodburn gave it another flirt, and looked at it with a glance of dawning recognition. "Oh, this is a table-covah. Wouldn't you lahke to see where it's to go?"

"Why, certainly."

"Well, if you'll be raght good I'll let yo' give me some professional advass about putting something in the co'ners or not, when you have seen it on the table."

She rose and led the way into the other room. Beaton knew she wanted to talk with him about something else; but he waited patiently to let her play her comedy out. She spread the cover on the table, and he advised her, as he saw she wished, against putting anything in the corners; just run a line of her stitch around the edge, he said.

"Mr. Fulkerson and Ah, why, we've been having a regular faght aboat it," she commented. "But we both agreed, fahnally, to leave it to you; Mr. Fulkerson said you'd be sure to be raght. Ah'm so glad you took mah sahde. But he's a great admahrer of yours, Mr. Beaton," she concluded, demurely, suggestively.

"Is he? Well, I'm a great admirer of Fulkerson," said Beaton, with a capricious willingness to humor her wish to talk about Fulkerson.

"He's a capital fellow; generous, magnanimous, with quite an ideal of friendship and an eye single to the main chance all the time. He would advertise 'Every Other Week' on his family vault."

Miss Woodburn laughed, and said she should tell him what Beaton had said.

"Do. But he's used to defamation from me, and he'll think you're joking."

"Ah suppose," said Miss Woodburn, "that he's quahte the tahpe of a New York business man." She added, as if it followed logically, "He's so different from what I thought a New York business man would be."

"It's your Virginia tradition to despise business," said Beaton, rudely.

Miss Woodburn laughed again. "Despise it? Mah goodness! we want to get into it and work it for all it's worth,' as Mr. Fulkerson says. That tradition is all past. You don't know what the South is now. Ah suppose mah fathaw despises business, but he's a tradition himself, as Ah tell him." Beaton would have enjoyed joining the young lady in anything she might be going to say in derogation of her father, but he restrained himself, and she went on more and more as if she wished to account for her father's habitual hauteur with Beaton, if not to excuse it. "Ah tell him he don't understand the rising generation. He was brought up in the old school, and he thinks we're all just like he was when he was young, with all those ideals of chivalry and family; but, mah goodness! it's money that counts nowadays in the South, just like it does everywhere else. Ah suppose, if we could have slavery back in the fawm mah fathaw thinks it could have been brought up to, when the commercial spirit wouldn't let it alone, it would be the best thing; but we can't have it back, and Ah tell him we had better have the commercial spirit as the next best thing."

Miss Woodburn went on, with sufficient loyalty and piety, to expose the difference of her own and her father's ideals, but with what Beaton thought less reference to his own unsympathetic attention than to a knowledge finally of the personnel and material of 'Every Other Week.' and Mr. Fulkerson's relation to the enterprise. "You must excuse my asking so many questions, Mr. Beaton. You know it's all mah doing that we are here in New York. Ah just told mah fathaw that if he was even going to do anything with his writings, he had got to come North, and Ah made him come. Ah believe he'd have stayed in the South all his life. And now Mr. Fulkerson wants him to let his editor see some of his writings, and Ah wanted to know something about the magazine. We are a great deal excited about it in this house, you know, Mr. Beaton," she concluded, with a look that now transferred the interest from Fulkerson to Alma. She led the way back to the room where they were sitting, and went up to triumph over Fulkerson with Beaton's decision about the table-cover.

Alma was left with Beaton near the piano, and he began to talk about the Dryfooses as he sat down on the piano-stool. He said he had been giving Miss Dryfoos a lesson on the banjo; he had borrowed the banjo of Miss Vance. Then he struck the chord he had been trying to teach Christine, and played over the air he had sung.

"How do you like that?" he asked, whirling round.

"It seems rather a disrespectful little tune, somehow," said Alma, placidly.

Beaton rested his elbow on the corner of the piano and gazed dreamily at her. "Your perceptions are wonderful. It is disrespectful. I played it, up there, because I felt disrespectful to them."

"Do you claim that as a merit?"

"No, I state it as a fact. How can you respect such people?"

"You might respect yourself, then," said the girl. "Or perhaps that wouldn't be so easy, either."

"No, it wouldn't. I like to have you say these things to me," said Beaton, impartially.

"Well, I like to say them," Alma returned.

"They do me good."

"Oh, I don't know that that was my motive."

"There is no one like you--no one," said Beaton, as if apostrophizing her in her absence. "To come from that house, with its assertions of money-- you can hear it chink; you can smell the foul old banknotes; it stifles you--into an atmosphere like this, is like coming into another world."

"Thank you," said Alma. "I'm glad there isn't that unpleasant odor here; but I wish there was a little more of the chinking."

"No, no! Don't say that!" he implored. "I like to think that there is one soul uncontaminated by the sense of money in this big, brutal, sordid city."

"You mean two," said Alma, with modesty. "But if you stifle at the Dryfooses', why do you go there?"

"Why do I go?" he mused. "Don't you believe in knowing all the natures, the types, you can? Those girls are a strange study: the young one is a simple, earthly creature, as common as an oat-field and the other a sort of sylvan life: fierce, flashing, feline--"

Alma burst out into a laugh. "What apt alliteration! And do they like being studied? I should think the sylvan life might--scratch."

"No," said Beaton, with melancholy absence, "it only-purrs."

The girl felt a rising indignation. "Well, then, Mr. Beaton, I should hope it would scratch, and bite, too. I think you've no business to go about studying people, as you do. It's abominable."

"Go on," said the young man. "That Puritan conscience of yours! It appeals to the old Covenanter strain in me--like a voice of pre-existence. Go on--"

"Oh, if I went on I should merely say it was not only abominable, but contemptible."

"You could be my guardian angel, Alma," said the young man, making his eyes more and more slumbrous and dreamy.

"Stuff! I hope I have a soul above buttons!"

He smiled, as she rose, and followed her across the room. "Good-night; Mr. Beaton," she said.

Miss Woodburn and Fulkerson came in from the other room. "What! You're not going, Beaton?"

"Yes; I'm going to a reception. I stopped in on my way."

"To kill time," Alma explained.

"Well," said Fulkerson, gallantly, "this is the last place I should like to do it. But I guess I'd better be going, too. It has sometimes occurred to me that there is such a thing as staying too late. But with Brother Beaton, here, just starting in for an evening's amusement, it does seem a little early yet. Can't you urge me to stay, somebody?"

The two girls laughed, and Miss Woodburn said:

"Mr. Beaton is such a butterfly of fashion! Ah wish Ah was on mah way to a pawty. Ah feel quahte envious."

"But he didn't say it to make you," Alma explained, with meek softness.

"Well, we can't all be swells. Where is your party, anyway, Beaton?" asked Fulkerson. "How do you manage to get your invitations to those things? I suppose a fellow has to keep hinting round pretty lively, Neigh?"

Beaton took these mockeries serenely, and shook hands with Miss Woodburn, with the effect of having already shaken hands with Alma. She stood with hers clasped behind her.

V.

Beaton went away with the smile on his face which he had kept in listening to Fulkerson, and carried it with him to the reception. He believed that Alma was vexed with him for more personal reasons than she had implied; it flattered him that she should have resented what he told her of the Dryfooses. She had scolded him in their behalf apparently; but really because he had made her jealous by his interest, of whatever kind, in some one else. What followed, had followed naturally. Unless she had been quite a simpleton she could not have met his provisional love-making on any other terms; and the reason why Beaton chiefly liked Alma Leighton was that she was not a simpleton. Even up in the country, when she was overawed by his acquaintance, at first, she was not very deeply overawed, and at times she was not overawed at all. At such times she astonished him by taking his most solemn histrionics

with flippant incredulity, and even burlesquing them. But he could see, all the same, that he had caught her fancy, and he admired the skill with which she punished his neglect when they met in New York. He had really come very near forgetting the Leightons; the intangible obligations of mutual kindness which hold some men so fast, hung loosely upon him; it would not have hurt him to break from them altogether; but when he recognized them at last, he found that it strengthened them indefinitely to have Alma ignore them so completely. If she had been sentimental, or softly reproachful, that would have been the end; he could not have stood it; he would have had to drop her. But when she met him on his own ground, and obliged him to be sentimental, the game was in her hands. Beaton laughed, now, when he thought of that, and he said to himself that the girl had grown immensely since she had come to New York; nothing seemed to have been lost upon her; she must have kept her eyes uncommonly wide open. He noticed that especially in their talks over her work; she had profited by everything she had seen and heard; she had all of Wetmore's ideas pat; it amused Beaton to see how she seized every useful word that he dropped, too, and turned him to technical account whenever she could. He liked that; she had a great deal of talent; there was no question of that; if she were a man there could be no question of her future. He began to construct a future for her; it included provision for himself, too; it was a common future, in which their lives and work were united.

He was full of the glow of its prosperity when he met Margaret Vance at the reception.

The house was one where people might chat a long time together without publicly committing themselves to an interest in each other except such a grew out of each other's ideas. Miss Vance was there because she united in her catholic sympathies or ambitions the objects of the fashionable people and of the aesthetic people who met there on common ground. It was almost the only house in New York where this happened often, and it did not happen very often there. It was a literary house, primarily, with artistic qualifications, and the frequenters of it were mostly authors and artists; Wetmore, who was always trying to fit everything with a phrase, said it was the unfrequenters who were fashionable. There was great ease there, and simplicity; and if there was not distinction, it was not for want of distinguished people, but because there seems to be some solvent in New York life that reduces all men to a common level, that touches everybody with its potent magic and brings to the surface the deeply underlying nobody. The effect for some temperaments, for consciousness, for egotism, is admirable; for curiosity, for hero worship, it is rather baffling. It is the spirit of the street transferred to the drawing-room; indiscriminating, levelling, but doubtless finally wholesome, and witnessing the immensity of the place, if not consenting to the grandeur of reputations or presences.

Beaton now denied that this house represented a salon at all, in the old sense; and he held that the salon was impossible, even undesirable, with us, when Miss Vance sighed for it. At any rate, he said that this turmoil of coming and going, this bubble and babble, this cackling and hissing of conversation was not the expression of any such civilization

as had created the salon. Here, he owned, were the elements of intellectual delightfulness, but he said their assemblage in such quantity alone denied the salon; there was too much of a good thing. The French word implied a long evening of general talk among the guests, crowned with a little chicken at supper, ending at cock-crow. Here was tea, with milk or with lemon-baths of it and claret-cup for the hardier spirits throughout the evening. It was very nice, very pleasant, but it was not the little chicken--not the salon. In fact, he affirmed, the salon descended from above, out of the great world, and included the aesthetic world in it. But our great world--the rich people, were stupid, with no wish to be otherwise; they were not even curious about authors and artists. Beaton fancied himself speaking impartially, and so he allowed himself to speak bitterly; he said that in no other city in the world, except Vienna, perhaps, were such people so little a part of society.

"It isn't altogether the rich people's fault," said Margaret; and she spoke impartially, too. "I don't believe that the literary men and the artists would like a salon that descended to them. Madame Geoffrin, you know, was very plebeian; her husband was a business man of some sort."

"He would have been a howling swell in New York," said Beaton, still impartially.

Wetmore came up to their corner, with a scroll of bread and butter in one hand and a cup of tea in the other. Large and fat, and clean-shaven, he looked like a monk in evening dress.

"We were talking about salons," said Margaret.

"Why don't you open a salon yourself?" asked Wetmore, breathing thickly from the anxiety of getting through the crowd without spilling his tea.

"Like poor Lady Barberina Lemon?" said the girl, with a laugh. "What a good story! That idea of a woman who couldn't be interested in any of the arts because she was socially and traditionally the material of them! We can, never reach that height of nonchalance in this country."

"Not if we tried seriously?" suggested the painter. "I've an idea that if the Americans ever gave their minds to that sort of thing, they could take the palm--or the cake, as Beaton here would say--just as they do in everything else. When we do have an aristocracy, it will be an aristocracy that will go ahead of anything the world has ever seen. Why don't somebody make a beginning, and go in openly for an ancestry, and a lower middle class, and an hereditary legislature, and all the rest? We've got liveries, and crests, and palaces, and caste feeling. We're all right as far as we've gone, and we've got the money to go any length."

"Like your natural-gas man, Mr. Beaton," said the girl, with a smiling glance round at him.

"Ah!" said Wetmore, stirring his tea, "has Beaton got a natural-gas man?"

"My natural-gas man," said Beaton, ignoring Wetmore's question, "doesn't know how to live in his palace yet, and I doubt if he has any caste feeling. I fancy his family believe themselves victims of it. They say --one of the young ladies does--that she never saw such an unsociable place as New York; nobody calls."

"That's good!" said Wetmore. "I suppose they're all ready for company, too: good cook, furniture, servants, carriages?"

"Galore," said Beaton.

"Well, that's too bad. There's a chance for you, Miss Vance. Doesn't your philanthropy embrace the socially destitute as well as the financially? Just think of a family like that, without a friend, in a great city! I should think common charity had a duty there--not to mention the uncommon."

He distinguished that kind as Margaret's by a glance of ironical deference. She had a repute for good works which was out of proportion to the works, as it always is, but she was really active in that way, under the vague obligation, which we now all feel, to be helpful. She was of the church which seems to have found a reversion to the imposing ritual of the past the way back to the early ideals of Christian brotherhood.

"Oh, they seem to have Mr. Beaton," Margaret answered, and Beaton felt obscurely flattered by her reference to his patronage of the Dryfooses.

He explained to Wetmore: "They have me because they partly own me. Dryfoos is Fulkerson's financial backer in 'Every Other Week'."

"Is that so? Well, that's interesting, too. Aren't you rather astonished, Miss Vance, to see what a petty thing Beaton is making of that magazine of his?"

"Oh," said Margaret, "it's so very nice, every way; it makes you feel as if you did have a country, after all. It's as chic--that detestable little word!--as those new French books."

"Beaton modelled it on them. But you mustn't suppose he does everything about 'Every Other Week'; he'd like you to. Beaton, you haven't come up to that cover of your first number, since. That was the design of one of my pupils, Miss Vance--a little girl that Beaton discovered down in New Hampshire last summer."

"Oh yes. And have you great hopes of her, Mr. Wetmore?"

"She seems to have more love of it and knack for it than any one of her sex I've seen yet. It really looks like a case of art for art's sake, at times. But you can't tell. They're liable to get married at any moment, you know. Look here, Beaton, when your natural-gas man gets to the picture-buying stage in his development, just remember your old

friends, will you? You know, Miss Vance, those new fellows have their regular stages. They never know what to do with their money, but they find out that people buy pictures, at one point. They shut your things up in their houses where nobody comes, and after a while they overeat themselves--they don't know what, else to do--and die of apoplexy, and leave your pictures to a gallery, and then they see the light. It's slow, but it's pretty sure. Well, I see Beaton isn't going to move on, as he ought to do; and so I must. He always was an unconventional creature."

Wetmore went away, but Beaton remained, and he outstayed several other people who came up to speak to Miss Vance. She was interested in everybody, and she liked the talk of these clever literary, artistic, clerical, even theatrical people, and she liked the sort of court with which they recognized her fashion as well as her cleverness; it was very pleasant to be treated intellectually as if she were one of themselves, and socially as if she was not habitually the same, but a sort of guest in Bohemia, a distinguished stranger. If it was Arcadia rather than Bohemia, still she felt her quality of distinguished stranger. The flattery of it touched her fancy, and not her vanity; she had very little vanity. Beaton's devotion made the same sort of appeal; it was not so much that she liked him as she liked being the object of his admiration. She was a girl of genuine sympathies, intellectual rather than sentimental. In fact, she was an intellectual person, whom qualities of the heart saved from being disagreeable, as they saved her on the other hand from being worldly or cruel in her fashionableness. She had read a great many books, and had ideas about them, quite courageous and original ideas; she knew about pictures--she had been in Wetmore's class; she was fond of music; she was willing to understand even politics; in Boston she might have been agnostic, but in New York she was sincerely religious; she was very accomplished; and perhaps it was her goodness that prevented her feeling what was not best in Beaton.

"Do you think," she said, after the retreat of one of the comers and goers left her alone with him again, "that those young ladies would like me to call on them?"

"Those young ladies?" Beaton echoed. "Miss Leighton and--"

"No; I have been there with my aunt's cards already."

"Oh yes," said Beaton, as if he had known of it; he admired the pluck and pride with which Alma had refrained from ever mentioning the fact to him, and had kept her mother from mentioning it, which must have been difficult.

"I mean the Miss Dryfooses. It seems really barbarous, if nobody goes near them. We do all kinds of things, and help all kinds of people in some ways, but we let strangers remain strangers unless they know how to make their way among us."

"The Dryfooses certainly wouldn't know how to make their way among you," said Beaton, with a sort of dreamy absence in his tone.

Miss Vance went on, speaking out the process of reasoning in her mind, rather than any conclusions she had reached. "We defend ourselves by trying to believe that they must have friends of their own, or that they would think us patronizing, and wouldn't like being made the objects of social charity; but they needn't really suppose anything of the kind."

"I don't imagine they would," said Beaton. "I think they'd be only too happy to have you come. But you wouldn't know what to do with each other, indeed, Miss Vance."

"Perhaps we shall like each other," said the girl, bravely, "and then we shall know. What Church are they of?"

"I don't believe they're of any," said Beaton. "The mother was brought up a Dunkard."

"A Dunkard?"

Beaton told what he knew of the primitive sect, with its early Christian polity, its literal interpretation of Christ's ethics, and its quaint ceremonial of foot-washing; he made something picturesque of that.

"The father is a Mammon-worshipper, pure and simple. I suppose the young ladies go to church, but I don't know where. They haven't tried to convert me."

"I'll tell them not to despair--after I've converted them," said Miss Vance. "Will you let me use you as a 'point d'appui', Mr. Beaton?"

"Any way you like. If you're really going to see them, perhaps I'd better make a confession. I left your banjo with them, after I got it put in order."

"How very nice! Then we have a common interest already."

"Do you mean the banjo, or--"

"The banjo, decidedly. Which of them plays?"

"Neither. But the eldest heard that the banjo was 'all the rage,' as the youngest says. Perhaps you can persuade them that good works are the rage, too."

Beaton had no very lively belief that Margaret would go to see the Dryfooses; he did so few of the things he proposed that he went upon the theory that others must be as faithless. Still, he had a cruel amusement in figuring the possible encounter between Margaret Vance, with her intellectual elegance, her eager sympathies and generous ideals, and those girls with their rude past, their false and distorted perspective, their sordid and hungry selfishness, and their faith in the omnipotence of their father's wealth wounded by their experience of its present social impotence. At the bottom of his heart he sympathized with them rather than with her; he was more like them.

People had ceased coming, and some of them were going. Miss Vance said she must go, too, and she was about to rise, when the host came up with March; Beaton turned away.

"Miss Vance, I want to introduce Mr. March, the editor of 'Every Other Week.' You oughtn't to be restricted to the art department. We literary fellows think that arm of the service gets too much of the glory nowadays." His banter was for Beaton, but he was already beyond ear-shot, and the host went on:

Mr. March can talk with you about your favorite Boston. He's just turned his back on it."

"Oh, I hope not!" said Miss Vance. "I can't imagine anybody voluntarily leaving Boston."

"I don't say he's so bad as that," said the host, committing March to her. "He came to New York because he couldn't help it--like the rest of us. I never know whether that's a compliment to New York or not."

They talked Boston a little while, without finding that they had common acquaintance there; Miss Vance must have concluded that society was much larger in Boston than she had supposed from her visits there, or else that March did not know many people in it. But she was not a girl to care much for the inferences that might be drawn from such conclusions; she rather prided herself upon despising them; and she gave herself to the pleasure of being talked to as if she were of March's own age. In the glow of her sympathetic beauty and elegance he talked his best, and tried to amuse her with his jokes, which he had the art of tingeing with a little seriousness on one side. He made her laugh; and he flattered her by making her think; in her turn she charmed him so much by enjoying what he said that he began to brag of his wife, as a good husband always does when another woman charms him; and she asked, Oh was Mrs. March there; and would he introduce her?

She asked Mrs. March for her address, and whether she had a day; and she said she would come to see her, if she would let her. Mrs. March could not be so enthusiastic about her as March was, but as they walked home together they talked the girl over, and agreed about her beauty and her amiability. Mrs. March said she seemed very unspoiled for a person who must have been so much spoiled. They tried to analyze her charm, and they succeeded in formulating it as a combination of intellectual fashionableness and worldly innocence. "I think," said Mrs. March, "that city girls, brought up as she must have been, are often the most innocent of all. They never imagine the wickedness of the world, and if they marry happily they go through life as innocent as children. Everything combines to keep them so; the very hollowness of society shields them. They are the loveliest of the human race. But perhaps the rest have to pay too much for them."

"For such an exquisite creature as Miss Vance," said March, "we couldn't pay too much."

A wild laughing cry suddenly broke upon the air at the street-crossing in front of them. A girl's voice called out: "Run, run, Jen! The copper is after you." A woman's figure rushed stumbling across the way and into the shadow of the houses, pursued by a burly policeman.

"Ah, but if that's part of the price?"

They went along fallen from the gay spirit of their talk into a silence which he broke with a sigh. "Can that poor wretch and the radiant girl we left yonder really belong to the same system of things? How impossible each makes the other seem!"

VI.

Mrs. Horn believed in the world and in society and its unwritten constitution devoutly, and she tolerated her niece's benevolent activities as she tolerated her aesthetic sympathies because these things, however oddly, were tolerated--even encouraged--by society; and they gave Margaret a charm. They made her originality interesting. Mrs. Horn did not intend that they should ever go so far as to make her troublesome; and it was with a sense of this abeyant authority of her aunt's that the girl asked her approval of her proposed call upon the Dryfooses. She explained as well as she could the social destitution of these opulent people, and she had of course to name Beaton as the source of her knowledge concerning them.

"Did Mr. Beaton suggest your calling on them?"

"No; he rather discouraged it."

"And why do you think you ought to go in this particular instance? New York is full of people who don't know anybody."

Margaret laughed. "I suppose it's like any other charity: you reach the cases you know of. The others you say you can't help, and you try to ignore them."

"It's very romantic," said Mrs. Horn. "I hope you've counted the cost; all the possible consequences."

Margaret knew that her aunt had in mind their common experience with the Leightons, whom, to give their common conscience peace, she had called upon with her aunt's cards and excuses, and an invitation for her Thursdays, somewhat too late to make the visit seem a welcome to New York. She was so coldly received, not so much for herself as in her quality of envoy, that her aunt experienced all the comfort which vicarious penance brings. She did not perhaps consider sufficiently her niece's guiltlessness in the expiation. Margaret was not with her at St. Barnaby in the fatal fortnight she passed there, and never saw the

Leightons till she went to call upon them. She never complained: the strain of asceticism, which mysteriously exists in us all, and makes us put peas, boiled or unboiled, in our shoes, gave her patience with the snub which the Leightons presented her for her aunt. But now she said, with this in mind: "Nothing seems simpler than to get rid of people if you don't want them. You merely have to let them alone."

"It isn't so pleasant, letting them alone," said Mrs. Horn.

"Or having them let you alone," said Margaret; for neither Mrs. Leighton nor Alma had ever come to enjoy the belated hospitality of Mrs. Horn's Thursdays.

"Yes, or having them let you alone," Mrs. Horn courageously consented. "And all that I ask you, Margaret, is to be sure that you really want to know these people."

"I don't," said the girl, seriously, "in the usual way."

"Then the question is whether you do in the un usual way. They will build a great deal upon you," said Mrs. Horn, realizing how much the Leightons must have built upon her, and how much out of proportion to her desert they must now dislike her; for she seemed to have had them on her mind from the time they came, and had always meant to recognize any reasonable claim they had upon her.

"It seems very odd, very sad," Margaret returned, "that you never could act unselfishly in society affairs. If I wished to go and see those girls just to do them a pleasure, and perhaps because if they're strange and lonely, I might do them good, even--it would be impossible."

"Quite," said her aunt. "Such a thing would be quixotic. Society doesn't rest upon any such basis. It can't; it would go to pieces, if people acted from unselfish motives."

"Then it's a painted savage!" said the girl. "All its favors are really bargains. It's gifts are for gifts back again."

"Yes, that is true," said Mrs. Horn, with no more sense of wrong in the fact than the political economist has in the fact that wages are the measure of necessity and not of merit. "You get what you pay for. It's a matter of business." She satisfied herself with this formula, which she did not invent, as fully as if it were a reason; but she did not dislike her niece's revolt against it. That was part of Margaret's originality, which pleased her aunt in proportion to her own conventionality; she was really a timid person, and she liked the show of courage which Margaret's magnanimity often reflected upon her. She had through her a repute, with people who did not know her well, for intellectual and moral qualities; she was supposed to be literary and charitable; she almost had opinions and ideals, but really fell short of their possession. She thought that she set bounds to the girl's originality because she recognized them. Margaret understood this better than her aunt, and knew that she had consulted her about going to see the

Dryfooses out of deference, and with no expectation of luminous instruction. She was used to being a law to herself, but she knew what she might and might not do, so that she was rather a by-law. She was the kind of girl that might have fancies for artists and poets, but might end by marrying a prosperous broker, and leavening a vast lump of moneyed and fashionable life with her culture, generosity, and good-will. The intellectual interests were first with her, but she might be equal to sacrificing them; she had the best heart, but she might know how to harden it; if she was eccentric, her social orbit was defined; comets themselves traverse space on fixed lines. She was like every one else, a congeries of contradictions and inconsistencies, but obedient to the general expectation of what a girl of her position must and must not finally be. Provisionally, she was very much what she liked to be.

VII

Margaret Vance tried to give herself some reason for going to call upon the Dryfooses, but she could find none better than the wish to do a kind thing. This seemed queerer and less and less sufficient as she examined it, and she even admitted a little curiosity as a harmless element in her motive, without being very well satisfied with it. She tried to add a slight sense of social duty, and then she decided to have no motive at all, but simply to pay her visit as she would to any other eligible strangers she saw fit to call upon. She perceived that she must be very careful not to let them see that any other impulse had governed her; she determined, if possible, to let them patronize her; to be very modest and sincere and diffident, and, above all, not to play a part. This was easy, compared with the choice of a manner that should convey to them the fact that she was not playing a part. When the hesitating Irish serving-man had acknowledged that the ladies were at home, and had taken her card to them, she sat waiting for them in the drawing-room. Her study of its appointments, with their impersonal costliness, gave her no suggestion how to proceed; the two sisters were upon her before she had really decided, and she rose to meet them with the conviction that she was going to play a part for want of some chosen means of not doing so. She found herself, before she knew it, making her banjo a property in the little comedy, and professing so much pleasure in the fact that Miss Dryfoos was taking it up; she had herself been so much interested by it. Anything, she said, was a relief from the piano; and then, between the guitar and the banjo, one must really choose the banjo, unless one wanted to devote one's whole natural life to the violin. Of course, there was the mandolin; but Margaret asked if they did not feel that the bit of shell you struck it with interposed a distance between you and the real soul of the instrument; and then it did have such a faint, mosquito little tone! She made much of the question, which they left her to debate alone while they gazed solemnly at her till she characterized the tone of the mandolin, when Mela broke into a large, coarse laugh.

"Well, that's just what it does sound like," she explained defiantly to her sister. "I always feel like it was going to settle somewhere, and I

want to hit myself a slap before it begins to bite. I don't see what ever brought such a thing into fashion."

Margaret had not expected to be so powerfully seconded, and she asked, after gathering herself together, "And you are both learning the banjo?" "My, no!" said Mela, "I've gone through enough with the piano. Christine is learnun' it."

"I'm so glad you are making my banjo useful at the outset, Miss Dryfoos." Both girls stared at her, but found it hard to cope with the fact that this was the lady friend whose banjo Beaton had lent them. "Mr. Beaton mentioned that he had left it here. I hope you'll keep it as long as you find it useful."

At this amiable speech even Christine could not help thanking her. "Of course," she said, "I expect to get another, right off. Mr. Beaton is going to choose it for me."

"You are very fortunate. If you haven't a teacher yet I should so like to recommend mine."

Mela broke out in her laugh again. "Oh, I guess Christine's pretty well suited with the one she's got," she said, with insinuation. Her sister gave her a frowning glance, and Margaret did not tempt her to explain.

"Then that's much better," she said. "I have a kind of superstition in such matters; I don't like to make a second choice. In a shop I like to take the first thing of the kind I'm looking for, and even if I choose further I come back to the original."

"How funny!" said Mela. "Well, now, I'm just the other way. I always take the last thing, after I've picked over all the rest. My luck always seems to be at the bottom of the heap. Now, Christine, she's more like you. I believe she could walk right up blindfolded and put her hand on the thing she wants every time."

"I'm like father," said Christine, softened a little by the celebration of her peculiarity. "He says the reason so many people don't get what they want is that they don't want it bad enough. Now, when I want a thing, it seems to me that I want it all through."

"Well, that's just like father, too," said Mela. "That's the way he done when he got that eighty-acre piece next to Moffitt that he kept when he sold the farm, and that's got some of the best gas-wells on it now that there is anywhere." She addressed the explanation to her sister, to the exclusion of Margaret, who, nevertheless, listened with a smiling face and a resolutely polite air of being a party to the conversation. Mela rewarded her amiability by saying to her, finally, "You've never been in the natural-gas country, have you?"

"Oh no! And I should so much like to see it!" said Margaret, with a fervor that was partly, voluntary.

"Would you? Well, we're kind of sick of it, but I suppose it would strike a stranger."

"I never got tired of looking at the big wells when they lit them up," said Christine. "It seems as if the world was on fire."

"Yes, and when you see the surface-gas burnun' down in the woods, like it used to by our spring-house-so still, and never spreadun' any, just like a bed of some kind of wild flowers when you ketch sight of it a piece off."

They began to tell of the wonders of their strange land in an antiphony of reminiscences and descriptions; they unconsciously imputed a merit to themselves from the number and violence of the wells on their father's property; they bragged of the high civilization of Moffitt, which they compared to its advantage with that of New York. They became excited by Margaret's interest in natural gas, and forgot to be suspicious and envious.

She said, as she rose, "Oh, how much I should like to see it all!" Then she made a little pause, and added:

"I'm so sorry my aunt's Thursdays are over; she never has them after Lent, but we're to have some people Tuesday evening at a little concert which a musical friend is going to give with some other artists. There won't be any banjos, I'm afraid, but there'll be some very good singing, and my aunt would be so glad if you could come with your mother."

She put down her aunt's card on the table near her, while Mela gurgled, as if it were the best joke: "Oh, my! Mother never goes anywhere; you couldn't get her out for love or money." But she was herself overwhelmed with a simple joy at Margaret's politeness, and showed it in a sensuous way, like a child, as if she had been tickled. She came closer to Margaret and seemed about to fawn physically upon her.

"Ain't she just as lovely as she can live?" she demanded of her sister when Margaret was gone.

"I don't know," said Christine. "I guess she wanted to know who Mr. Beaton had been lending her banjo to."

"Pshaw! Do you suppose she's in love with him?" asked Mela, and then she broke into her hoarse laugh at the look her sister gave her. "Well, don't eat me, Christine! I wonder who she is, anyway? I'm goun' to git it out of Mr. Beaton the next time he calls. I guess she's somebody. Mrs. Mandel can tell. I wish that old friend of hers would hurry up and git well--or something. But I guess we appeared about as well as she did. I could see she was afraid of you, Christine. I reckon it's gittun' around a little about father; and when it does I don't believe we shall want for callers. Say, are you goun'? To that concert of theirs?"

"I don't know. Not till I know who they are first."

"Well, we've got to hump ourselves if we're goun' to find out before Tuesday."

As she went home Margaret felt wrought in her that most incredible of the miracles, which, nevertheless, any one may make his experience. She felt kindly to these girls because she had tried to make them happy, and she hoped that in the interest she had shown there had been none of the poison of flattery. She was aware that this was a risk she ran in such an attempt to do good. If she had escaped this effect she was willing to leave the rest with Providence.

VIII.

The notion that a girl of Margaret Vance's traditions would naturally form of girls like Christine and Mela Dryfoos would be that they were abashed in the presence of the new conditions of their lives, and that they must receive the advance she had made them with a certain grateful humility. However they received it, she had made it upon principle, from a romantic conception of duty; but this was the way she imagined they would receive it, because she thought that she would have done so if she had been as ignorant and unbred as they. Her error was in arguing their attitude from her own temperament, and endowing them, for the purposes of argument, with her perspective. They had not the means, intellectual or moral, of feeling as she fancied. If they had remained at home on the farm where they were born, Christine would have grown up that embodiment of impassioned suspicion which we find oftenest in the narrowest spheres, and Mela would always have been a good-natured simpleton; but they would never have doubted their equality with the wisest and the finest. As it was, they had not learned enough at school to doubt it, and the splendor of their father's success in making money had blinded them forever to any possible difference against them. They had no question of themselves in the social abeyance to which they had been left in New York. They had been surprised, mystified; it was not what they had expected; there must be some mistake.

They were the victims of an accident, which would be repaired as soon as the fact of their father's wealth had got around. They had been steadfast in their faith, through all their disappointment, that they were not only better than most people by virtue of his money, but as good as any; and they took Margaret's visit, so far as they, investigated its motive, for a sign that at last it was beginning to get around; of course, a thing could not get around in New York so quick as it could in a small place. They were confirmed in their belief by the sensation of Mrs. Mandel when she returned to duty that afternoon, and they consulted her about going to Mrs. Horn's musicale. If she had felt any doubt at the name for there were Horns and Horns--the address on the card put the matter beyond question; and she tried to make her charges understand what a precious chance had befallen them. She did not succeed; they had not the premises, the experience, for a sufficient impression; and she undid her work in part by the effort to explain that Mrs. Horn's standing was

independent of money; that though she was positively rich, she was comparatively poor. Christine inferred that Miss Vance had called because she wished to be the first to get in with them since it had begun to get around. This view commended itself to Mela, too, but without warping her from her opinion that Miss Vance was all the same too sweet for anything. She had not so vivid a consciousness of her father's money as Christine had; but she reposed perhaps all the more confidently upon its power. She was far from thinking meanly of any one who thought highly of her for it; that seemed so natural a result as to be amiable, even admirable; she was willing that any such person should get all the good there was in such an attitude toward her.

They discussed the matter that night at dinner before their father and mother, who mostly sat silent at their meals; the father frowning absently over his plate, with his head close to it, and making play into his mouth with the back of his knife (he had got so far toward the use of his fork as to despise those who still ate from the edge of their knives), and the mother partly missing hers at times in the nervous tremor that shook her face from side to side.

After a while the subject of Mela's hoarse babble and of Christine's high-pitched, thin, sharp forays of assertion and denial in the field which her sister's voice seemed to cover, made its way into the old man's consciousness, and he perceived that they were talking with Mrs. Mandel about it, and that his wife was from time to time offering an irrelevant and mistaken comment. He agreed with Christine, and silently took her view of the affair some time before he made any sign of having listened. There had been a time in his life when other things besides his money seemed admirable to him. He had once respected himself for the hard-headed, practical common sense which first gave him standing among his country neighbors; which made him supervisor, school trustee, justice of the peace, county commissioner, secretary of the Moffitt County Agricultural Society. In those days he had served the public with disinterested zeal and proud ability; he used to write to the Lake Shore Farmer on agricultural topics; he took part in opposing, through the Moffitt papers, the legislative waste of the people's money; on the question of selling a local canal to the railroad company, which killed that fine old State work, and let the dry ditch grow up to grass, he might have gone to the Legislature, but he contented himself with defeating the Moffitt member who had voted for the job. If he opposed some measures for the general good, like high schools and school libraries, it was because he lacked perspective, in his intense individualism, and suspected all expense of being spendthrift. He believed in good district schools, and he had a fondness, crude but genuine, for some kinds of reading--history, and forensics of an elementary sort.

With his good head for figures he doubted doctors and despised preachers; he thought lawyers were all rascals, but he respected them for their ability; he was not himself litigious, but he enjoyed the intellectual encounters of a difficult lawsuit, and he often attended a sitting of the fall term of court, when he went to town, for the pleasure of hearing the speeches. He was a good citizen, and a good husband. As a good father,

he was rather severe with his children, and used to whip them, especially the gentle Conrad, who somehow crossed him most, till the twins died. After that he never struck any of them; and from the sight of a blow dealt a horse he turned as if sick. It was a long time before he lifted himself up from his sorrow, and then the will of the man seemed to have been breached through his affections. He let the girls do as they pleased--the twins had been girls; he let them go away to school, and got them a piano. It was they who made him sell the farm. If Conrad had only had their spirit he could have made him keep it, he felt; and he resented the want of support he might have found in a less yielding spirit than his son's.

His moral decay began with his perception of the opportunity of making money quickly and abundantly, which offered itself to him after he sold his farm. He awoke to it slowly, from a desolation in which he tasted the last bitter of homesickness, the utter misery of idleness and listlessness. When he broke down and cried for the hard-working, wholesome life he had lost, he was near the end of this season of despair, but he was also near the end of what was best in himself. He devolved upon a meaner ideal than that of conservative good citizenship, which had been his chief moral experience: the money he had already made without effort and without merit bred its unholy self-love in him; he began to honor money, especially money that had been won suddenly and in large sums; for money that had been earned painfully, slowly, and in little amounts, he had only pity and contempt. The poison of that ambition to go somewhere and be somebody which the local speculators had instilled into him began to work in the vanity which had succeeded his somewhat scornful self-respect; he rejected Europe as the proper field for his expansion; he rejected Washington; he preferred New York, whither the men who have made money and do not yet know that money has made them, all instinctively turn. He came where he could watch his money breed more money, and bring greater increase of its kind in an hour of luck than the toil of hundreds of men could earn in a year. He called it speculation, stocks, the Street; and his pride, his faith in himself, mounted with his luck. He expected, when he had sated his greed, to begin to spend, and he had formulated an intention to build a great house, to add another to the palaces of the country-bred millionaires who have come to adorn the great city. In the mean time he made little account of the things that occupied his children, except to fret at the ungrateful indifference of his son to the interests that could alone make a man of him. He did not know whether his daughters were in society or not; with people coming and going in the house he would have supposed they must be so, no matter who the people were; in some vague way he felt that he had hired society in Mrs. Mandel, at so much a year. He never met a superior himself except now and then a man of twenty or thirty millions to his one or two, and then he felt his soul creep within him, without a sense of social inferiority; it was a question of financial inferiority; and though Dryfoos's soul bowed itself and crawled, it was with a gambler's admiration of wonderful luck. Other men said these many-millioned millionaires were smart, and got their money by sharp practices to which lesser men could not attain; but Dryfoos believed that he could compass the same ends, by the same means, with the same chances; he respected their money, not them.

When he now heard Mrs. Mandel and his daughters talking of that person, whoever she was, that Mrs. Mandel seemed to think had honored his girls by coming to see them, his curiosity was pricked as much as his pride was galled.

"Well, anyway," said Mela, "I don't care whether Christine's goon' or not; I am. And you got to go with me, Mrs. Mandel."

"Well, there's a little difficulty," said Mrs. Mandel, with her unfailing dignity and politeness. "I haven't been asked, you know."

"Then what are we goun' to do?" demanded Mela, almost crossly. She was physically too amiable, she felt too well corporeally, ever to be quite cross. "She might 'a' knowed--well known--we couldn't 'a' come alone, in New York. I don't see why, we couldn't. I don't call it much of an invitation."

"I suppose she thought you could come with your mother," Mrs. Mandel suggested.

"She didn't say anything about mother: Did she, Christine? Or, yes, she did, too. And I told her she couldn't git mother out. Don't you remember?"

"I didn't pay much attention," said Christine. "I wasn't certain we wanted to go."

"I reckon you wasn't goun' to let her see that we cared much," said Mela, half reproachful, half proud of this attitude of Christine. "Well, I don't see but what we got to stay at home." She laughed at this lame conclusion of the matter.

"Perhaps Mr. Conrad--you could very properly take him without an express invitation--" Mrs. Mandel began.

Conrad looked up in alarm and protest. "I--I don't think I could go that evening--"

"What's the reason?" his father broke in, harshly. "You're not such a sheep that you're afraid to go into company with your sisters? Or are you too good to go with them?"

"If it's to be anything like that night when them hussies come out and danced that way," said Mrs. Dryfoos, "I don't blame Coonrod for not wantun' to go. I never saw the beat of it."

Mela sent a yelling laugh across the table to her mother. "Well, I wish Miss Vance could 'a' heard that! Why, mother, did you think it like the ballet?"

"Well, I didn't know, Mely, child," said the old woman. "I didn't know what it was like. I hain't never been to one, and you can't be too

keerful where you go, in a place like New York."

"What's the reason you can't go?" Dryfoos ignored the passage between his wife and daughter in making this demand of his son, with a sour face.

"I have an engagement that night--it's one of our meetings."

"I reckon you can let your meeting go for one night," said Dryfoos.

"It can't be so important as all that, that you must disappoint your sisters."

"I don't like to disappoint those poor creatures. They depend so much upon the meetings--"

"I reckon they can stand it for one night," said the old man. He added, "The poor ye have with you always."

"That's so, Coonrod," said his mother. "It's the Saviour's own words."

"Yes, mother. But they're not meant just as father used them."

"How do you know how they were meant? Or how I used them?" cried the father. "Now you just make your plans to go with the girls, Tuesday night. They can't go alone, and Mrs. Mandel can't go with them."

"Pshaw!" said Mela. "We don't want to take Conrad away from his meetun', do we, Chris?"

"I don't know," said Christine, in her high, fine voice. "They could get along without him for one night, as father says."

"Well, I'm not a-goun' to take him," said Mela. "Now, Mrs. Mandel, just think out some other way. Say! What's the reason we couldn't get somebody else to take us just as well? Ain't that rutable?"

"It would be allowable--"

"Allowable, I mean," Mela corrected herself.

"But it might look a little significant, unless it was some old family friend."

"Well, let's get Mr. Fulkerson to take us. He's the oldest family friend we got."

"I won't go with Mr. Fulkerson," said Christine, serenely.

"Why, I'm sure, Christine," her mother pleaded, "Mr. Fulkerson is a very good young man, and very nice appearun'."

Mela shouted, "He's ten times as pleasant as that old Mr. Beaton of Christine's!"

Christine made no effort to break the constraint that fell upon the table at this sally, but her father said: "Christine is right, Mela. It wouldn't do for you to go with any other young man. Conrad will go with you."

"I'm not certain I want to go, yet," said Christine.

"Well, settle that among yourselves. But if you want to go, your brother will go with you."

"Of course, Coonrod 'll go, if his sisters wants him to," the old woman pleaded. "I reckon it ain't agoun' to be anything very bad; and if it is, Coonrod, why you can just git right up and come out."

"It will be all right, mother. And I will go, of course."

"There, now, I knowed you would, Coonrod. Now, fawther!" This appeal was to make the old man say something in recognition of Conrad's sacrifice.

"You'll always find," he said, "that it's those of your own household that have the first claim on you."

"That's so, Coonrod," urged his mother. "It's Bible truth. Your fawther ain't a peffesser, but he always did read his Bible. Search the Scriptures. That's what it means."

"Laws!" cried Mely, "a body can see, easy enough from mother, where Conrad's wantun' to be a preacher comes from. I should 'a' thought she'd 'a' wanted to been one herself."

"Let your women keep silence in the churches," said the old woman, solemnly.

"There you go again, mother! I guess if you was to say that to some of the lady ministers nowadays, you'd git yourself into trouble." Mela looked round for approval, and gurgled out a hoarse laugh.

IX.

The Dryfooses went late to Mrs. Horn's musicale, in spite of Mrs. Mandel's advice. Christine made the delay, both because she wished to show Miss Vance that she was (not) anxious, and because she had some vague notion of the distinction of arriving late at any sort of entertainment. Mrs. Mandel insisted upon the difference between this musicale and an ordinary reception; but Christine rather fancied disturbing a company that had got seated, and perhaps making people rise and stand, while she found her way to her place, as she had seen them do for a tardy comer at the theatre.

Mela, whom she did not admit to her reasons or feelings always, followed her with the servile admiration she had for all that Christine did; and she took on trust as somehow successful the result of Christine's obstinacy, when they were allowed to stand against the wall at the back of the room through the whole of the long piece begun just before they came in. There had been no one to receive them; a few people, in the rear rows of chairs near them, turned their heads to glance at them, and then looked away again. Mela had her misgivings; but at the end of the piece Miss Vance came up to them at once, and then Mela knew that she had her eyes on them all the time, and that Christine must have been right. Christine said nothing about their coming late, and so Mela did not make any excuse, and Miss Vance seemed to expect none. She glanced with a sort of surprise at Conrad, when Christine introduced him; Mela did not know whether she liked their bringing him, till she shook hands with him, and said: "Oh, I am very glad indeed! Mr. Dryfoos and I have met before." Without explaining where or when, she led them to her aunt and presented them, and then said, "I'm going to put you with some friends of yours," and quickly seated them next the Marches. Mela liked that well enough; she thought she might have some joking with Mr. March, for all his wife was so stiff; but the look which Christine wore seemed to forbid, provisionally at least, any such recreation. On her part, Christine was cool with the Marches. It went through her mind that they must have told Miss Vance they knew her; and perhaps they had boasted of her intimacy. She relaxed a little toward them when she saw Beaton leaning against the wall at the end of the row next Mrs. March. Then she conjectured that he might have told Miss Vance of her acquaintance with the Marches, and she bent forward and nodded to Mrs. March across Conrad, Mela, and Mr. March. She conceived of him as a sort of hand of her father's, but she was willing to take them at their apparent social valuation for the time. She leaned back in her chair, and did not look up at Beaton after the first furtive glance, though she felt his eyes on her.

The music began again almost at once, before Mela had time to make Conrad tell her where Miss Vance had met him before. She would not have minded interrupting the music; but every one else seemed so attentive, even Christine, that she had not the courage. The concert went onto an end without realizing for her the ideal of pleasure which one ought to find in society. She was not exacting, but it seemed to her there were very few young men, and when the music was over, and their opportunity came to be sociable, they were not very sociable. They were not introduced, for one thing; but it appeared to Mela that they might have got introduced, if they had any sense; she saw them looking at her, and she was glad she had dressed so much; she was dressed more than any other lady there, and either because she was the most dressed of any person there, or because it had got around who her father was, she felt that she had made an impression on the young men. In her satisfaction with this, and from her good nature, she was contented to be served with her refreshments after the concert by Mr. March, and to remain joking with him. She was at her ease; she let her hoarse voice out in her largest laugh; she accused him, to the admiration of those near, of getting her into a perfect gale. It appeared to her, in her own pleasure, her mission to illustrate to the rather subdued people about her what a good time really was, so that they

could have it if they wanted it. Her joy was crowned when March modestly professed himself unworthy to monopolize her, and explained how selfish he felt in talking to a young lady when there were so many young men dying to do so.

"Oh, pshaw, dyun', yes!" cried Mela, tasting the irony. "I guess I see them!"

He asked if he might really introduce a friend of his to her, and she said, Well, yes, if he thought he could live to get to her; and March brought up a man whom he thought very young and Mela thought very old. He was a contributor to 'Every Other Week,' and so March knew him; he believed himself a student of human nature in behalf of literature, and he now set about studying Mela. He tempted her to express her opinion on all points, and he laughed so amiably at the boldness and humorous vigor of her ideas that she was delighted with him. She asked him if he was a New-Yorker by birth; and she told him she pitied him, when he said he had never been West. She professed herself perfectly sick of New York, and urged him to go to Moffitt if he wanted to see a real live town. He wondered if it would do to put her into literature just as she was, with all her slang and brag, but he decided that he would have to subdue her a great deal: he did not see how he could reconcile the facts of her conversation with the facts of her appearance: her beauty, her splendor of dress, her apparent right to be where she was. These things perplexed him; he was afraid the great American novel, if true, must be incredible. Mela said he ought to hear her sister go on about New York when they first came; but she reckoned that Christine was getting so she could put up with it a little better, now. She looked significantly across the room to the place where Christine was now talking with Beaton; and the student of human nature asked, Was she here? and, Would she introduce him? Mela said she would, the first chance she got; and she added, They would be much pleased to have him call. She felt herself to be having a beautiful time, and she got directly upon such intimate terms with the student of human nature that she laughed with him about some peculiarities of his, such as his going so far about to ask things he wanted to know from her; she said she never did believe in beating about the bush much. She had noticed the same thing in Miss Vance when she came to call that day; and when the young man owned that he came rather a good deal to Mrs. Horn's house, she asked him, Well, what sort of a girl was Miss Vance, anyway, and where did he suppose she had met her brother? The student of human nature could not say as to this, and as to Miss Vance he judged it safest to treat of the non-society side of her character, her activity in charity, her special devotion to the work among the poor on the East Side, which she personally engaged in.

"Oh, that's where Conrad goes, too!" Mela interrupted. "I'll bet anything that's where she met him. I wish I could tell Christine! But I suppose she would want to kill me, if I was to speak to her now."

The student of human nature said, politely, "Oh, shall I take you to her?"

Mela answered, "I guess you better not!" with a laugh so significant that he could not help his inferences concerning both Christine's absorption in the person she was talking with and the habitual violence of her temper. He made note of how Mela helplessly spoke of all her family by their names, as if he were already intimate with them; he fancied that if he could get that in skillfully, it would be a valuable color in his study; the English lord whom she should astonish with it began to form himself out of the dramatic nebulosity in his mind, and to whirl on a definite orbit in American society. But he was puzzled to decide whether Mela's willingness to take him into her confidence on short notice was typical or personal: the trait of a daughter of the natural-gas millionaire, or a foible of her own.

Beaton talked with Christine the greater part of the evening that was left after the concert. He was very grave, and took the tone of a fatherly friend; he spoke guardedly of the people present, and moderated the severity of some of Christine's judgments of their looks and costumes. He did this out of a sort of unreasoned allegiance to Margaret, whom he was in the mood of wishing to please by being very kind and good, as she always was. He had the sense also of atoning by this behavior for some reckless things he had said before that to Christine; he put on a sad, reproving air with her, and gave her the feeling of being held in check.

She chafed at it, and said, glancing at Margaret in talk with her brother, "I don't think Miss Vance is so very pretty, do you?"

"I never think whether she's pretty or not," said Becton, with dreamy, affectation. "She is merely perfect. Does she know your brother?"

"So she says. I didn't suppose Conrad ever went anywhere, except to tenement-houses."

"It might have been there," Becton suggested. "She goes among friendless people everywhere."

"Maybe that's the reason she came to see us!" said Christine.

Becton looked at her with his smouldering eyes, and felt the wish to say, "Yes, it was exactly that," but he only allowed himself to deny the possibility of any such motive in that case. He added: "I am so glad you know her, Miss Dryfoos. I never met Miss Vance without feeling myself better and truer, somehow; or the wish to be so."

"And you think we might be improved, too?" Christine retorted. "Well, I must say you're not very flattering, Mr. Becton, anyway."

Becton would have liked to answer her according to her cattishness, with a good clawing sarcasm that would leave its smart in her pride; but he was being good, and he could not change all at once. Besides, the girl's attitude under the social honor done her interested him. He was sure she had never been in such good company before, but he could see that she was not in the least affected by the experience. He had told her who this

person and that was; and he saw she had understood that the names were of consequence; but she seemed to feel her equality with them all. Her serenity was not obviously akin to the savage stoicism in which Beaton hid his own consciousness of social inferiority; but having won his way in the world so far by his talent, his personal quality, he did not conceive the simple fact in her case. Christine was self-possessed because she felt that a knowledge of her father's fortune had got around, and she had the peace which money gives to ignorance; but Beaton attributed her poise to indifference to social values. This, while he inwardly sneered at it, avenged him upon his own too keen sense of them, and, together with his temporary allegiance to Margaret's goodness, kept him from retaliating Christine's vulgarity. He said, "I don't see how that could be," and left the question of flattery to settle itself.

The people began to go away, following each other up to take leave of Mrs. Horn. Christine watched them with unconcern, and either because she would not be governed by the general movement, or because she liked being with Beaton, gave no sign of going. Mela was still talking to the student of human nature, sending out her laugh in deep gurgles amid the unimaginable confidences she was making him about herself, her family, the staff of 'Every Other Week,' Mrs. Mandel, and the kind of life they had all led before she came to them. He was not a blind devotee of art for art's sake, and though he felt that if one could portray Mela just as she was she would be the richest possible material, he was rather ashamed to know some of the things she told him; and he kept looking anxiously about for a chance of escape. The company had reduced itself to the Dryfoos groups and some friends of Mrs. Horn's who had the right to linger, when Margaret crossed the room with Conrad to Christine and Beaton.

"I'm so glad, Miss Dryfoos, to find that I was not quite a stranger to you all when I ventured to call, the other day. Your brother and I are rather old acquaintances, though I never knew who he was before. I don't know just how to say we met where he is valued so much. I suppose I mustn't try to say how much," she added, with a look of deep regard at him.

Conrad blushed and stood folding his arms tight over his breast, while his sister received Margaret's confession with the suspicion which was her first feeling in regard to any new thing. What she concluded was that this girl was trying to get in with them, for reasons of her own. She said: "Yes; it's the first I ever heard of his knowing you. He's so much taken up with his meetings, he didn't want to come to-night."

Margaret drew in her lip before she answered, without apparent resentment of the awkwardness or ungraciousness, whichever she found it: "I don't wonder! You become so absorbed in such work that you think nothing else is worth while. But I'm glad Mr. Dryfoos could come with you; I'm so glad you could all come; I knew you would enjoy the music. Do sit down--"

"No," said Christine, bluntly; "we must be going. Mela!" she called out, "come!"

The last group about Mrs. Horn looked round, but Christine advanced upon them undismayed, and took the hand Mrs. Horn promptly gave her. "Well, I must bid you good-night."

"Oh, good-night," murmured the elder lady. "So very kind of you to come."

"I've had the best kind of a time," said Mela, cordially. "I hain't laughed so much, I don't know when."

"Oh, I'm glad you enjoyed it," said Mrs. Horn, in the same polite murmur she had used with Christine; but she said nothing to either sister about any future meeting.

They were apparently not troubled. Mela said over her shoulder to the student of human nature, "The next time I see you I'll give it to you for what you said about Moffitt."

Margaret made some entreating paces after them, but she did not succeed in covering the retreat of the sisters against critical conjecture. She could only say to Conrad, as if recurring to the subject, "I hope we can get our friends to play for us some night. I know it isn't any real help, but such things take the poor creatures out of themselves for the time being, don't you think?"

"Oh yes," he answered. "They're good in that way." He turned back hesitatingly to Mrs. Horn, and said, with a blush, "I thank you for a happy evening."

"Oh, I am very glad," she replied, in her murmur.

One of the old friends of the house arched her eyebrows in saying good-night, and offered the two young men remaining seats home in her carriage. Beaton gloomily refused, and she kept herself from asking the student of human nature, till she had got him into her carriage, "What is Moffitt, and what did you say about it?"

"Now you see, Margaret," said Mrs. Horn, with bated triumph, when the people were all gone.

"Yes, I see," the girl consented. "From one point of view, of course it's been a failure. I don't think we've given Miss Dryfoos a pleasure, but perhaps nobody could. And at least we've given her the opportunity of enjoying herself."

"Such people," said Mrs. Horn, philosophically, "people with their money, must of course be received sooner or later. You can't keep them out. Only, I believe I would rather let some one else begin with them. The Leightons didn't come?"

"I sent them cards. I couldn't call again."

Mrs. Horn sighed a little. "I suppose Mr. Dryfoos is one of your fellow-philanthropists?"

"He's one of the workers," said Margaret. "I met him several times at the Hall, but I only knew his first name. I think he's a great friend of Father Benedict; he seems devoted to the work. Don't you think he looks good?"

"Very," said Mrs. Horn, with a color of censure in her assent. "The younger girl seemed more amiable than her sister. But what manners!"

"Dreadful!" said Margaret, with knit brows, and a pursed mouth of humorous suffering. "But she appeared to feel very much at home."

"Oh, as to that, neither of them was much abashed. Do you suppose Mr. Beaton gave the other one some hints for that quaint dress of hers? I don't imagine that black and lace is her own invention. She seems to have some sort of strange fascination for him."

"She's very picturesque," Margaret explained. "And artists see points in people that the rest of us don't."

"Could it be her money?" Mrs. Horn insinuated. "He must be very poor."

"But he isn't base," retorted the girl, with a generous indignation that made her aunt smile.

"Oh no; but if he fancies her so picturesque, it doesn't follow that he would object to her being rich."

"It would with a man like Mr. Beaton!"

"You are an idealist, Margaret. I suppose your Mr. March has some disinterested motive in paying court to Miss Mela--Pamela, I suppose, is her name. He talked to her longer than her literature would have lasted."

"He seems a very kind person," said Margaret.

"And Mr. Dryfoos pays his salary?"

"I don't know anything about that. But that wouldn't make any difference with him."

Mrs. Horn laughed out at this security; but she was not displeased by the nobleness which it came from. She liked Margaret to be high-minded, and was really not distressed by any good that was in her.

The Marches walked home, both because it was not far, and because they must spare in carriage hire at any rate. As soon as they were out of the house, she applied a point of conscience to him.

"I don't see how you could talk to that girl so long, Basil, and make her

laugh so."

"Why, there seemed no one else to do it, till I thought of Kendricks."

"Yes, but I kept thinking, Now he's pleasant to her because he thinks it's to his interest. If she had no relation to 'Every Other Week,' he wouldn't waste his time on her."

"Isabel," March complained, "I wish you wouldn't think of me in he, him, and his; I never personalize you in my thoughts: you remain always a vague unindividualized essence, not quite without form and void, but nounless and pronounless. I call that a much more beautiful mental attitude toward the object of one's affections. But if you must he and him and his me in your thoughts, I wish you'd have more kindly thoughts of me."

"Do you deny that it's true, Basil?"

"Do you believe that it's true, Isabel?"

"No matter. But could you excuse it if it were?"

"Ah, I see you'd have been capable of it in my, place, and you're ashamed."

"Yes," sighed the wife, "I'm afraid that I should. But tell me that you wouldn't, Basil!"

"I can tell you that I wasn't. But I suppose that in a real exigency, I could truckle to the proprietary Dryfooses as well as you."

"Oh no; you mustn't, dear! I'm a woman, and I'm dreadfully afraid. But you must always be a man, especially with that horrid old Mr. Dryfoos. Promise me that you'll never yield the least point to him in a matter of right and wrong!"

"Not if he's right and I'm wrong?"

"Don't trifle, dear! You know what I mean. Will you promise?"

"I'll promise to submit the point to you, and let you do the yielding. As for me, I shall be adamant. Nothing I like better."

"They're dreadful, even that poor, good young fellow, who's so different from all the rest; he's awful, too, because you feel that he's a martyr to them."

"And I never did like martyrs a great deal," March interposed.

"I wonder how they came to be there," Mrs. March pursued, unmindful of his joke.

"That is exactly what seemed to be puzzling Miss Mela about us. She

asked, and I explained as well as I could; and then she told me that Miss Vance had come to call on them and invited them; and first they didn't know how they could come till they thought of making Conrad bring them. But she didn't say why Miss Vance called on them. Mr. Dryfoos doesn't employ her on 'Every Other Week.' But I suppose she has her own vile little motive."

"It can't be their money; it can't be!" sighed Mrs. March.

"Well, I don't know. We all respect money."

"Yes, but Miss Vance's position is so secure. She needn't pay court to those stupid, vulgar people."

"Well, let's console ourselves with the belief that she would, if she needed. Such people as the Dryfooses are the raw material of good society. It isn't made up of refined or meritorious people--professors and litterateurs, ministers and musicians, and their families. All the fashionable people there to-night were like the Dryfooses a generation or two ago. I dare say the material works up faster now, and in a season or two you won't know the Dryfooses from the other plutocrats. THEY will--a little better than they do now; they'll see a difference, but nothing radical, nothing painful. People who get up in the world by service to others--through letters, or art, or science--may have their modest little misgivings as to their social value, but people that rise by money--especially if their gains are sudden--never have. And that's the kind of people that form our nobility; there's no use pretending that we haven't a nobility; we might as well pretend we haven't first-class cars in the presence of a vestibuled Pullman. Those girls had no more doubt of their right to be there than if they had been duchesses: we thought it was very nice of Miss Vance to come and ask us, but they didn't; they weren't afraid, or the least embarrassed; they were perfectly natural--like born aristocrats. And you may be sure that if the plutocracy that now owns the country ever sees fit to take on the outward signs of an aristocracy--titles, and arms, and ancestors--it won't falter from any inherent question of its worth. Money prizes and honors itself, and if there is anything it hasn't got, it believes it can buy it."

Well, Basil," said his wife, "I hope you won't get infected with Lindau's ideas of rich people. Some of them are very good and kind."

"Who denies that? Not even Lindau himself. It's all right. And the great thing is that the evening's enjoyment is over. I've got my society smile off, and I'm radiantly happy. Go on with your little pessimistic diatribes, Isabel; you can't spoil my pleasure."

"I could see," said Mela, as she and Christine drove home together, "that she was as jealous as she could be, all the time you was talkun' to Mr. Beaton. She pretended to be talkun' to Conrad, but she kep' her eye on you pretty close, I can tell you. I bet she just got us there to see how him and you would act together. And I reckon she was satisfied. He's dead gone on you, Chris."

Christine listened with a dreamy pleasure to the flatteries with which Mela plied her in the hope of some return in kind, and not at all because she felt spitefully toward Miss Vance, or in anywise wished her ill. "Who was that fellow with you so long?" asked Christine. "I suppose you turned yourself inside out to him, like you always do."

Mela was transported by the cruel ingratitude. "It's a lie! I didn't tell him a single thing."

Conrad walked home, choosing to do so because he did not wish to hear his sisters' talk of the evening, and because there was a tumult in his spirit which he wished to let have its way. In his life with its single purpose, defeated by stronger wills than his own, and now struggling partially to fulfil itself in acts of devotion to others, the thought of women had entered scarcely more than in that of a child. His ideals were of a virginal vagueness; faces, voices, gestures had filled his fancy at times, but almost passionately; and the sensation that he now indulged was a kind of worship, ardent, but reverent and exalted. The brutal experiences of the world make us forget that there are such natures in it, and that they seem to come up out of the lowly earth as well as down from the high heaven. In the heart of this man well on toward thirty there had never been left the stain of a base thought; not that suggestion and conjecture had not visited him, but that he had not entertained them, or in any-wise made them his. In a Catholic age and country, he would have been one of those monks who are sainted after death for the angelic purity of their lives, and whose names are invoked by believers in moments of trial, like San Luigi Gonzaga. As he now walked along thinking, with a lover's beatified smile on his face, of how Margaret Vance had spoken and looked, he dramatized scenes in which he approved himself to her by acts of goodness and unselfishness, and died to please her for the sake of others. He made her praise him for them, to his face, when he disclaimed their merit, and after his death, when he could not. All the time he was poignantly sensible of her grace, her elegance, her style; they seemed to intoxicate him; some tones of her voice thrilled through his nerves, and some looks turned his brain with a delicious, swooning sense of her beauty; her refinement bewildered him. But all this did not admit the idea of possession, even of aspiration. At the most his worship only set her beyond the love of other men as far as beyond his own.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Affectional habit

Brag of his wife, as a good husband always does

But when we make that money here, no one loses it

Courage hadn't been put to the test

Family buryin' grounds

Homage which those who have not pay to those who have

Hurry up and git well--or something

Made money and do not yet know that money has made them
Society: All its favors are really bargains
Wages are the measure of necessity and not of merit
Without realizing his cruelty, treated as a child

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by William Dean Howells

A HAZARD OF NEW FORTUNES

By William Dean Howells

PART FOURTH

I.

Not long after Lent, Fulkerson set before Dryfoos one day his scheme for a dinner in celebration of the success of 'Every Other Week.' Dryfoos had never meddled in any manner with the conduct of the periodical; but Fulkerson easily saw that he was proud of his relation to it, and he proceeded upon the theory that he would be willing to have this relation known: On the days when he had been lucky in stocks, he was apt to drop in at the office on Eleventh Street, on his way up-town, and listen to Fulkerson's talk. He was on good enough terms with March, who revised his first impressions of the man, but they had not much to say to each other, and it seemed to March that Dryfoos was even a little afraid of him, as of a piece of mechanism he had acquired, but did not quite understand; he left the working of it to Fulkerson, who no doubt bragged of it sufficiently. The old man seemed to have as little to say to his son; he shut himself up with Fulkerson, where the others could hear the manager begin and go on with an unstinted flow of talk about 'Every Other Week;' for Fulkerson never talked of anything else if he could help it, and was always bringing the conversation back to it if it strayed:

The day he spoke of the dinner he rose and called from his door: "March, I say, come down here a minute, will you? Conrad, I want you, too."

The editor and the publisher found the manager and the proprietor seated on opposite sides of the table. "It's about those funeral baked meats, you know," Fulkerson explained, "and I was trying to give Mr. Dryfoos some idea of what we wanted to do. That is, what I wanted to do," he continued, turning from March to Dryfoos. "March, here, is opposed to it, of course. He'd like to publish 'Every Other Week' on the sly; keep

it out of the papers, and off the newsstands; he's a modest Boston petunia, and he shrinks from publicity; but I am not that kind of herb myself, and I want all the publicity we can get--beg, borrow, or steal--for this thing. I say that you can't work the sacred rites of hospitality in a better cause, and what I propose is a little dinner for the purpose of recognizing the hit we've made with this thing. My idea was to strike you for the necessary funds, and do the thing on a handsome scale. The term little dinner is a mere figure of speech. A little dinner wouldn't make a big talk, and what we want is the big talk, at present, if we don't lay up a cent. My notion was that pretty soon after Lent, now, when everybody is feeling just right, we should begin to send out our paragraphs, affirmative, negative, and explanatory, and along about the first of May we should sit down about a hundred strong, the most distinguished people in the country, and solemnize our triumph. There it is in a nutshell. I might expand and I might expound, but that's the sum and substance of it."

Fulkerson stopped, and ran his eyes eagerly over the faces of his three listeners, one after the other. March was a little surprised when Dryfoos turned to him, but that reference of the question seemed to give Fulkerson particular pleasure: "What do you think, Mr. March?"

The editor leaned back in his chair. "I don't pretend to have Mr. Fulkerson's genius for advertising; but it seems to me a little early yet. We might celebrate later when we've got more to celebrate. At present we're a pleasing novelty, rather than a fixed fact."

"Ah, you don't get the idea!" said Fulkerson. "What we want to do with this dinner is to fix the fact."

"Am I going to come in anywhere?" the old man interrupted.

"You're going to come in at the head of the procession! We are going to strike everything that is imaginative and romantic in the newspaper soul with you and your history and your fancy for going in for this thing. I can start you in a paragraph that will travel through all the newspapers, from Maine to Texas and from Alaska to Florida. We have had all sorts of rich men backing up literary enterprises, but the natural-gas man in literature is a new thing, and the combination of your picturesque past and your aesthetic present is something that will knock out the sympathies of the American public the first round. I feel," said Fulkerson, with a tremor of pathos in his voice, "that 'Every Other Week' is at a disadvantage before the public as long as it's supposed to be my enterprise, my idea. As far as I'm known at all, I'm known simply as a syndicate man, and nobody in the press believes that I've got the money to run the thing on a grand scale; a suspicion of insolvency must attach to it sooner or later, and the fellows on the press will work up that impression, sooner or later, if we don't give them something else to work up. Now, as soon as I begin to give it away to the correspondents that you're in it, with your untold millions--that, in fact, it was your idea from the start, that you originated it to give full play to the humanitarian tendencies of Conrad here, who's always had these theories of co-operation, and longed to realize them for the benefit of our

struggling young writers and artists--"

March had listened with growing amusement to the mingled burlesque and earnest of Fulkerson's self-sacrificing impudence, and with wonder as to how far Dryfoos was consenting to his preposterous proposition, when Conrad broke out: "Mr. Fulkerson, I could not allow you to do that. It would not be true; I did not wish to be here; and--and what I think--what I wish to do--that is something I will not let any one put me in a false position about. No!" The blood rushed into the young man's gentle face, and he met his father's glance with defiance.

Dryfoos turned from him to Fulkerson without speaking, and Fulkerson said, caressingly: "Why, of course, Coonrod! I know how you feel, and I shouldn't let anything of that sort go out uncontradicted afterward. But there isn't anything in these times that would give us better standing with the public than some hint of the way you feel about such things. The public expects to be interested, and nothing would interest it more than to be told that the success of 'Every Other Week' sprang from the first application of the principle of Live and let Live to a literary enterprise. It would look particularly well, coming from you and your father, but if you object, we can leave that part out; though if you approve of the principle I don't see why you need object. The main thing is to let the public know that it owes this thing to the liberal and enlightened spirit of one of the foremost capitalists of the country; and that his purposes are not likely to be betrayed in the hands of his son, I should get a little cut made from a photograph of your father, and supply it gratis with the paragraphs."

"I guess," said the old man, "we will get along without the cut."

Fulkerson laughed. "Well, well! Have it your own way, But the sight of your face in the patent outsides of the country press would be worth half a dozen subscribers in every school district throughout the length and breadth of this fair land."

"There was a fellow," Dryfoos explained, in an aside to March, "that was getting up a history of Moffitt, and he asked me to let him put a steel engraving of me in. He said a good many prominent citizens were going to have theirs in, and his price was a hundred and fifty dollars. I told him I couldn't let mine go for less than two hundred, and when he said he could give me a splendid plate for that money, I said I should want it cash, You never saw a fellow more astonished when he got it through him. that I expected him to pay the two hundred."

Fulkerson laughed in keen appreciation of the joke. "Well, sir, I guess 'Every Other Week' will pay you that much. But if you won't sell at any price, all right; we must try to worry along without the light of your countenance on, the posters, but we got to have it for the banquet."

"I don't seem to feel very hungry, yet," said the old man, dryly.

"Oh, 'l'appetit vient en mangeant', as our French friends say. You'll be hungry enough when you see the preliminary Little Neck clam. It's too

late for oysters."

"Doesn't that fact seem to point to a postponement till they get back, sometime in October," March suggested,

"No, no!" said Fulkerson, "you don't catch on to the business end of this thing, my friends. You're proceeding on something like the old exploded idea that the demand creates the supply, when everybody knows, if he's watched the course of modern events, that it's just as apt to be the other way. I contend that we've got a real substantial success to celebrate now; but even if we hadn't, the celebration would do more than anything else to create the success, if we got it properly before the public. People will say: Those fellows are not fools; they wouldn't go and rejoice over their magazine unless they had got a big thing in it. And the state of feeling we should produce in the public mind would make a boom of perfectly unprecedented grandeur for E. O. W. Heigh?"

He looked sunnily from one to the other in succession. The elder Dryfoos said, with his chin on the top of his stick, "I reckon those Little Neck clams will keep."

"Well, just as you say," Fulkerson cheerfully assented. "I understand you to agree to the general principle of a little dinner?"

"The smaller the better," said the old man.

"Well, I say a little dinner because the idea of that seems to cover the case, even if we vary the plan a little. I had thought of a reception, maybe, that would include the lady contributors and artists, and the wives and daughters of the other contributors. That would give us the chance to ring in a lot of society correspondents and get the thing written up in first-class shape. By-the-way!" cried Fulkerson, slapping himself on the leg, "why not have the dinner and the reception both?"

"I don't understand," said Dryfoos.

"Why, have a select little dinner for ten or twenty choice spirits of the male persuasion, and then, about ten o'clock, throw open your palatial drawing-rooms and admit the females to champagne, salads, and ices. It is the very thing! Come!"

"What do you think of it, Mr. March?" asked Dryfoos, on whose social inexperience Fulkerson's words projected no very intelligible image, and who perhaps hoped for some more light.

"It's a beautiful vision," said March, "and if it will take more time to realize it I think I approve. I approve of anything that will delay Mr. Fulkerson's advertising orgie."

"Then," Fulkerson pursued, "we could have the pleasure of Miss Christine and Miss Mela's company; and maybe Mrs. Dryfoos would look in on us in the course of the evening. There's no hurry, as Mr. March suggests, if we can give the thing this shape. I will cheerfully adopt the idea of my

honorable colleague."

March laughed at his impudence, but at heart he was ashamed of Fulkerson for proposing to make use of Dryfoos and his house in that way.

He fancied something appealing in the look that the old man turned on him, and something indignant in Conrad's flush; but probably this was only his fancy. He reflected that neither of them could feel it as people of more worldly knowledge would, and he consoled himself with the fact that Fulkerson was really not such a charlatan as he seemed. But it went through his mind that this was a strange end for all Dryfoos's money-making to come to; and he philosophically accepted the fact of his own humble fortunes when he reflected how little his money could buy for such a man. It was an honorable use that Fulkerson was putting it to in 'Every Other Week;' it might be far more creditably spent on such an enterprise than on horses, or wines, or women, the usual resources of the brute rich; and if it were to be lost, it might better be lost that way than in stocks. He kept a smiling face turned to Dryfoos while these irreverent considerations occupied him, and hardened his heart against father and son and their possible emotions.

The old man rose to put an end to the interview. He only repeated, "I guess those clams will keep till fall."

But Fulkerson was apparently satisfied with the progress he had made; and when he joined March for the stroll homeward after office hours, he was able to detach his mind from the subject, as if content to leave it.

"This is about the best part of the year in New York," he said; In some of the areas the grass had sprouted, and the tender young foliage had loosened itself froze the buds on a sidewalk tree here and there; the soft air was full of spring, and the delicate sky, far aloof, had the look it never wears at any other season. "It ain't a time of year to complain much of, anywhere; but I don't want anything better than the month of May in New York. Farther South it's too hot, and I've been in Boston in May when that east wind of yours made every nerve in my body get up and howl. I reckon the weather has a good deal to do with the local temperament. The reason a New York man takes life so easily with all his rush is that his climate don't worry him. But a Boston man must be rasped the whole while by the edge in his air. That accounts for his sharpness; and when he's lived through twenty-five or thirty Boston Mays, he gets to thinking that Providence has some particular use for him, or he wouldn't have survived, and that makes him conceited. See?"

"I see," said March. "But I don't know how you're going to work that idea into an advertisement, exactly."

"Oh, pahaw, now, March! You don't think I've got that on the brain all the time?"

"You were gradually leading up to 'Every Other Week', somehow."

"No, sir; I wasn't. I was just thinking what a different creature a Massachusetts man is from a Virginian, And yet I suppose they're both as

pure English stock as you'll get anywhere in America. Marsh, I think Colonel Woodburn's paper is going to make a hit."

"You've got there! When it knocks down the sale about one-half, I shall know it's made a hit."

"I'm not afraid," said Fulkerson. "That thing is going to attract attention. It's well written--you can take the pomposity out of it, here and there and it's novel. Our people like a bold strike, and it's going to shake them up tremendously to have serfdom advocated on high moral grounds as the only solution of the labor problem. You see, in the first place, he goes for their sympathies by the way he portrays the actual relations of capital and labor; he shows how things have got to go from bad to worse, and then he trots out his little old hobby, and proves that if slavery had not been interfered with, it would have perfected itself in the interest of humanity. He makes a pretty strong plea for it."

March threw back his head and laughed. "He's converted you! I swear, Fulkerson, if we had accepted and paid for an article advocating cannibalism as the only resource for getting rid of the superfluous poor, you'd begin to believe in it."

Fulkerson smiled in approval of the joke, and only said: "I wish you could meet the colonel in the privacy of the domestic circle, March. You'd like him. He's a splendid old fellow; regular type. Talk about spring!

"You ought to see the widow's little back yard these days. You know that glass gallery just beyond the dining-room? Those girls have got the pot-plants out of that, and a lot more, and they've turned the edges of that back yard, along the fence, into a regular bower; they've got sweet peas planted, and nasturtiums, and we shall be in a blaze of glory about the beginning of June. Fun to see 'em work in the garden, and the bird bossing the job in his cage under the cherry-tree. Have to keep the middle of the yard for the clothesline, but six days in the week it's a lawn, and I go over it with a mower myself. March, there ain't anything like a home, is there? Dear little cot of your own, heigh? I tell you, March, when I get to pushing that mower round, and the colonel is smoking his cigar in the gallery, and those girls are pottering over the flowers, one of these soft evenings after dinner, I feel like a human being. Yes, I do. I struck it rich when I concluded to take my meals at the widow's. For eight dollars a week I get good board, refined society, and all the advantages of a Christian home. By-the-way, you've never had much talk with Miss Woodburn, have you, March?"

"Not so much as with Miss Woodburn's father."

"Well, he is rather apt to scoop the conversation. I must draw his fire, sometime, when you and Mrs. March are around, and get you a chance with Miss Woodburn."

"I should like that better, I believe," said March.

"Well, I shouldn't wonder if you did. Curious, but Miss Woodburn isn't at all your idea of a Southern girl. She's got lots of go; she's never idle a minute; she keeps the old gentleman in first-class shape, and she don't believe a bit in the slavery solution of the labor problem; says she's glad it's gone, and if it's anything like the effects of it, she's glad it went before her time. No, sir, she's as full of snap as the liveliest kind of a Northern girl. None of that sunny Southern languor you read about."

"I suppose the typical Southerner, like the typical anything else, is pretty difficult to find," said March. "But perhaps Miss Woodburn represents the new South. The modern conditions must be producing a modern type."

"Well, that's what she and the colonel both say. They say there ain't anything left of that Walter Scott dignity and chivalry in the rising generation; takes too much time. You ought to see her sketch the old-school, high-and-mighty manners, as they survive among some of the antiques in Charlottesville. If that thing could be put upon the stage it would be a killing success. Makes the old gentleman laugh in spite of himself. But he's as proud of her as Punch, anyway. Why don't you and Mrs. March come round oftener? Look here! How would it do to have a little excursion, somewhere, after the spring fairly gets in its work?"

"Reporters present?"

"No, no! Nothing of that kind; perfectly sincere and disinterested enjoyment."

"Oh, a few handbills to be scattered around: 'Buy Every Other Week,' 'Look out for the next number of 'Every Other Week,' 'Every Other Week at all the news-stands.' Well, I'll talk it over with Mrs. March. I suppose there's no great hurry."

March told his wife of the idyllic mood in which he had left Fulkerson at the widow's door, and she said he must be in love.

"Why, of course! I wonder I didn't think of that. But Fulkerson is such an impartial admirer of the whole sex that you can't think of his liking one more than another. I don't know that he showed any unjust partiality, though, in his talk of 'those girls,' as he called them. And I always rather fancied that Mrs. Mandel--he's done so much for her, you know; and she is such a well-balanced, well-preserved person, and so lady-like and correct----"

"Fulkerson had the word for her: academic. She's everything that instruction and discipline can make of a woman; but I shouldn't think they could make enough of her to be in love with."

"Well, I don't know. The academic has its charm. There are moods in which I could imagine myself in love with an academic person. That regularity of line; that reasoned strictness of contour; that neatness of pose; that slightly conventional but harmonious grouping of the emotions

and morals--you can see how it would have its charm, the Wedgwood in human nature? I wonder where Mrs. Mandel keeps her urn and her willow."

"I should think she might have use for them in that family, poor thing!" said Mrs. March.

"Ah, that reminds me," said her husband, "that we had another talk with the old gentleman, this afternoon, about Fulkerson's literary, artistic, and advertising orgie, and it's postponed till October."

"The later the better, I should think," said Mrs. March, who did not really think about it at all, but whom the date fixed for it caused to think of the intervening time. "We have got to consider what we will do about the summer, before long, Basil."

"Oh, not yet, not yet," he pleaded; with that man's willingness to abide in the present, which is so trying to a woman. "It's only the end of April."

"It will be the end of June before we know. And these people wanting the Boston house another year complicates it. We can't spend the summer there, as we planned."

"They oughtn't to have offered us an increased rent; they have taken an advantage of us."

"I don't know that it matters," said Mrs. March. "I had decided not to go there."

"Had you? This is a surprise."

"Everything is a surprise to you, Basil, when it happens."

"True; I keep the world fresh, that way."

"It wouldn't have been any change to go from one city to another for the summer. We might as well have stayed in New York."

"Yes, I wish we had stayed," said March, idly humoring a conception of the accomplished fact. "Mrs. Green would have let us have the gimcrackery very cheap for the summer months; and we could have made all sorts of nice little excursions and trips off and been twice as well as if we had spent the summer away."

"Nonsense! You know we couldn't spend the summer in New York."

"I know I could."

"What stuff! You couldn't manage."

"Oh yes, I could. I could take my meals at Fulkerson's widow's; or at Maroni's, with poor old Lindau: he's got to dining there again. Or, I could keep house, and he could dine with me here."

There was a teasing look in March's eyes, and he broke into a laugh, at the firmness with which his wife said: "I think if there is to be any housekeeping, I will stay, too; and help to look after it. I would try not intrude upon you and your guest."

"Oh, we should be only too glad to have you join us," said March, playing with fire.

"Very well, then, I wish you would take him off to Maroni's, the next time he comes to dine here!" cried his wife.

The experiment of making March's old friend free of his house had not given her all the pleasure that so kind a thing ought to have afforded so good a woman. She received Lindau at first with robust benevolence, and the high resolve not to let any of his little peculiarities alienate her from a sense of his claim upon her sympathy and gratitude, not only as a man who had been so generously fond of her husband in his youth, but a hero who had suffered for her country. Her theory was that his mutilation must not be ignored, but must be kept in mind as a monument of his sacrifice, and she fortified Bella with this conception, so that the child bravely sat next his maimed arm at table and helped him to dishes he could not reach, and cut up his meat for him. As for Mrs. March herself, the thought of his mutilation made her a little faint; she was not without a bewildered resentment of its presence as a sort of oppression. She did not like his drinking so much of March's beer, either; it was no harm, but it was somehow unworthy, out of character with a hero of the war. But what she really could not reconcile herself to was the violence of Lindau's sentiments concerning the whole political and social fabric. She did not feel sure that he should be allowed to say such things before the children, who had been nurtured in the faith of Bunker Hill and Appomattox, as the beginning and the end of all possible progress in human rights. As a woman she was naturally an aristocrat, but as an American she was theoretically a democrat; and it astounded, it alarmed her, to hear American democracy denounced as a shuffling evasion. She had never cared much for the United States Senate, but she doubted if she ought to sit by when it was railed at as a rich man's club. It shocked her to be told that the rich and poor were not equal before the law in a country where justice must be paid for at every step in fees and costs, or where a poor man must go to war in his own person, and a rich man might hire someone to go in his. Mrs. March felt that this rebellious mind in Lindau really somehow outlawed him from sympathy, and retroactively undid his past suffering for the country: she had always particularly valued that provision of the law, because in forecasting all the possible mischances that might befall her own son, she had been comforted by the thought that if there ever was another war, and Tom were drafted, his father could buy him a substitute. Compared with such blasphemy as this, Lindau's declaration that there was not equality of opportunity in America, and that fully one-half the people were debarred their right to the pursuit of happiness by the hopeless conditions of their lives, was flattering praise. She could not listen to such things in silence, though, and it did not help matters when Lindau met her arguments with facts and reasons which she felt she was

merely not sufficiently instructed to combat, and he was not quite gentlemanly to urge. "I am afraid for the effect on the children," she said to her husband. "Such perfectly distorted ideas--Tom will be ruined by them."

"Oh, let Tom find out where they're false," said March. "It will be good exercise for his faculties of research. At any rate, those things are getting said nowadays; he'll have to hear them sooner or later."

"Had he better hear them at home?" demanded his wife.

"Why, you know, as you're here to refute them, Isabel," he teased, "perhaps it's the best place. But don't mind poor old Lindau, my dear. He says himself that his parg is worse than his pidte, you know."

"Ah, it's too late now to mind him," she sighed. In a moment of rash good feeling, or perhaps an exalted conception of duty, she had herself proposed that Lindau should come every week and read German with Tom; and it had become a question first how they could get him to take pay for it, and then how they could get him to stop it. Mrs. March never ceased to wonder at herself for having brought this about, for she had warned her husband against making any engagement with Lindau which would bring him regularly to the house: the Germans stuck so, and were so unscrupulously dependent. Yet, the deed being done, she would not ignore the duty of hospitality, and it was always she who made the old man stay to their Sunday-evening tea when he lingered near the hour, reading Schiller and Heine and Uhland with the boy, in the clean shirt with which he observed the day; Lindau's linen was not to be trusted during the week. She now concluded a season of mournful reflection by saying, "He will get you into trouble, somehow, Basil."

"Well, I don't know how, exactly. I regard Lindau as a political economist of an unusual type; but I shall not let him array me against the constituted authorities. Short of that, I think I am safe."

"Well, be careful, Basil; be careful. You know you are so rash."

"I suppose I may continue to pity him? He is such a poor, lonely old fellow. Are you really sorry he's come into our lives, my dear?"

"No, no; not that. I feel as you do about it; but I wish I felt easier about him--sure, that is, that we're not doing wrong to let him keep on talking so."

"I suspect we couldn't help it," March returned, lightly. "It's one of what Lindau calls his 'brincibles' to say what he thinks."

II.

The Marches had no longer the gross appetite for novelty which urges

youth to a surfeit of strange scenes, experiences, ideas; and makes travel, with all its annoyances and fatigues, an inexhaustible delight. But there is no doubt that the chief pleasure of their life in New York was from its quality of foreignness: the flavor of olives, which, once tasted, can never be forgotten. The olives may not be of the first excellence; they may be a little stale, and small and poor, to begin with, but they are still olives, and the fond palate craves them.

The sort which grew in New York, on lower Sixth Avenue and in the region of Jefferson Market and on the soft exposures south of Washington Square, were none the less acceptable because they were of the commonest Italian variety.

The Marches spent a good deal of time and money in a grocery of that nationality, where they found all the patriotic comestibles and potables, and renewed their faded Italian with the friendly family in charge. Italian table d'hotes formed the adventure of the week, on the day when Mrs. March let her domestics go out, and went herself to dine abroad with her husband and children; and they became adepts in the restaurants where they were served, and which they varied almost from dinner to dinner. The perfect decorum of these places, and their immunity from offence in any, emboldened the Marches to experiment in Spanish restaurants, where red pepper and beans insisted in every dinner, and where once they chanced upon a night of 'olla podrida', with such appeals to March's memory of a boyish ambition to taste the dish that he became poetic and then pensive over its cabbage and carrots, peas and bacon. For a rare combination of international motives they prized most the table d'hote of a French lady, who had taken a Spanish husband in a second marriage, and had a Cuban negro for her cook, with a cross-eyed Alsatian for waiter, and a slim young South-American for cashier. March held that some thing of the catholic character of these relations expressed itself in the generous and tolerant variety of the dinner, which was singularly abundant for fifty cents, without wine. At one very neat French place he got a dinner at the same price with wine, but it was not so abundant; and March inquired in fruitless speculation why the table d'hote of the Italians, a notoriously frugal and abstemious people, should be usually more than you wanted at seventy-five cents and a dollar, and that of the French rather less at half a dollar. He could not see that the frequenters were greatly different at the different places; they were mostly Americans, of subdued manners and conjecturably subdued fortunes, with here and there a table full of foreigners. There was no noise and not much smoking anywhere; March liked going to that neat French place because there Madame sat enthroned and high behind a 'comptoir' at one side of the room, and every body saluted her in going out. It was there that a gentle-looking young couple used to dine, in whom the Marches became effectlessly interested, because they thought they looked like that when they were young. The wife had an aesthetic dress, and defined her pretty head by wearing her back-hair pulled up very tight under her bonnet; the husband had dreamy eyes set wide apart under a pure forehead. "They are artists, August, I think," March suggested to the waiter, when he had vainly asked about them. "Oh, hartis, cedenly," August consented; but Heaven knows whether they were, or what they were: March never learned.

This immunity from acquaintance, this touch-and go quality in their New York sojourn, this almost loss of individuality at times, after the intense identification of their Boston life, was a relief, though Mrs. March had her misgivings, and questioned whether it were not perhaps too relaxing to the moral fibre. March refused to explore his conscience; he allowed that it might be so; but he said he liked now and then to feel his personality in that state of solution. They went and sat a good deal in the softening evenings among the infants and dotards of Latin extraction in Washington Square, safe from all who ever knew them, and enjoyed the advancing season, which thickened the foliage of the trees and flattered out of sight the church warden's Gothic of the University Building. The infants were sometimes cross, and cried in their weary mothers' or little sisters' arms; but they did not disturb the dotards, who slept, some with their heads fallen forward, and some with their heads fallen back; March arbitrarily distinguished those with the drooping faces as tipsy and ashamed to confront the public.

The small Italian children raced up and down the asphalt paths, playing American games of tag and hide-and-whoop; larger boys passed ball, in training for potential championships. The Marches sat and mused, or quarrelled fitfully about where they should spend the summer, like sparrows, he once said, till the electric lights began to show distinctly among the leaves, and they looked round and found the infants and dotards gone and the benches filled with lovers. That was the signal for the Marches to go home. He said that the spectacle of so much courtship as the eye might take in there at a glance was not, perhaps, oppressive, but the thought that at the same hour the same thing was going on all over the country, wherever two young fools could get together, was more than he could bear; he did not deny that it was natural, and, in a measure, authorized, but he declared that it was hackneyed; and the fact that it must go on forever, as long as the race lasted, made him tired.

At home, generally, they found that the children had not missed them, and were perfectly safe. It was one of the advantages of a flat that they could leave the children there whenever they liked without anxiety. They liked better staying there than wandering about in the evening with their parents, whose excursions seemed to them somewhat aimless, and their pleasures insipid. They studied, or read, or looked out of the window at the street sights; and their mother always came back to them with a pang for their lonesomeness. Bella knew some little girls in the house, but in a ceremonious way; Tom had formed no friendships among the boys at school such as he had left in Boston; as nearly as he could explain, the New York fellows carried canes at an age when they would have had them broken for them by the other boys at Boston; and they were both sissyish and fast. It was probably prejudice; he never could say exactly what their demerits were, and neither he nor Bella was apparently so homesick as they pretended, though they answered inquirers, the one that New York was a hole, and the other that it was horrid, and that all they lived for was to get back to Boston. In the mean time they were thrown much upon each other for society, which March said was well for both of them; he did not mind their cultivating a little gloom and the sense of a common wrong; it made them better comrades, and it was providing them with amusing reminiscences for the future. They really enjoyed Bohemianizing in that harmless way: though Tom had his doubts of its respectability; he

was very punctilious about his sister, and went round from his own school every day to fetch her home from hers. The whole family went to the theatre a good deal, and enjoyed themselves together in their desultory explorations of the city.

They lived near Greenwich Village, and March liked strolling through its quaintness toward the waterside on a Sunday, when a hereditary Sabbatarianism kept his wife at home; he made her observe that it even kept her at home from church. He found a lingering quality of pure Americanism in the region, and he said the very bells called to worship in a nasal tone. He liked the streets of small brick houses, with here and there one painted red, and the mortar lines picked out in white, and with now and then a fine wooden portal of fluted pillars and a bowed transom. The rear of the tenement-houses showed him the picturesqueness of clothes-lines fluttering far aloft, as in Florence; and the new apartment-houses, breaking the old sky-line with their towering stories, implied a life as alien to the American manner as anything in continental Europe. In fact, foreign faces and foreign tongues prevailed in Greenwich Village, but no longer German or even Irish tongues or faces. The eyes and earrings of Italians twinkled in and out of the alleyways and basements, and they seemed to abound even in the streets, where long ranks of trucks drawn up in Sunday rest along the curbstones suggested the presence of a race of sturdier strength than theirs. March liked the swarthy, strange visages; he found nothing menacing for the future in them; for wickedness he had to satisfy himself as he could with the sneering, insolent, clean-shaven mug of some rare American of the b'hoys type, now almost as extinct in New York as the dodo or the volunteer fireman. When he had found his way, among the ash-barrels and the groups of decently dressed church-goers, to the docks, he experienced a sufficient excitement in the recent arrival of a French steamer, whose sheds were thronged with hacks and express-wagons, and in a tacit inquiry into the emotions of the passengers, fresh from the cleanliness of Paris, and now driving up through the filth of those streets.

Some of the streets were filthier than others; there was at least a choice; there were boxes and barrels of kitchen offal on all the sidewalks, but not everywhere manure-heaps, and in some places the stench was mixed with the more savory smell of cooking. One Sunday morning, before the winter was quite gone, the sight of the frozen refuse melting in heaps, and particularly the loathsome edges of the rotting ice near the gutters, with the strata of waste-paper and straw litter, and egg-shells and orange peel, potato-skins and cigar-stumps, made him unhappy. He gave a whimsical shrug for the squalor of the neighboring houses, and said to himself rather than the boy who was with him: "It's curious, isn't it, how fond the poor people are of these unpleasant thoroughfares? You always find them living in the worst streets."

"The burden of all the wrong in the world comes on the poor," said the boy. "Every sort of fraud and swindling hurts them the worst. The city wastes the money it's paid to clean the streets with, and the poor have to suffer, for they can't afford to pay twice, like the rich."

March stopped short. "Hallo, Tom! Is that your wisdom?"

"It's what Mr. Lindau says," answered the boy, doggedly, as if not pleased to have his ideas mocked at, even if they were second-hand.

"And you didn't tell him that the poor lived in dirty streets because they liked them, and were too lazy and worthless to have them cleaned?"

"No; I didn't."

"I'm surprised. What do you think of Lindau, generally speaking, Tom?"

"Well, sir, I don't like the way he talks about some things. I don't suppose this country is perfect, but I think it's about the best there is, and it don't do any good to look at its drawbacks all the time."

"Sound, my son," said March, putting his hand on the boy's shoulder and beginning to walk on. "Well?"

"Well, then, he says that it isn't the public frauds only that the poor have to pay for, but they have to pay for all the vices of the rich; that when a speculator fails, or a bank cashier defaults, or a firm suspends, or hard times come, it's the poor who have to give up necessities where the rich give up luxuries."

"Well, well! And then?"

"Well, then I think the crank comes in, in Mr. Lindau. He says there's no need of failures or frauds or hard times. It's ridiculous. There always have been and there always will be. But if you tell him that, it seems to make him perfectly furious."

March repeated the substance of this talk to his wife. "I'm glad to know that Tom can see through such ravings. He has lots of good common sense."

It was the afternoon of the same Sunday, and they were sauntering up Fifth Avenue, and admiring the wide old double houses at the lower end; at one corner they got a distinct pleasure out of the gnarled elbows that a pollarded wistaria leaned upon the top of a garden wall--for its convenience in looking into the street, he said. The line of these comfortable dwellings, once so fashionable, was continually broken by the facades of shops; and March professed himself vulgarized by a want of style in the people they met in their walk to Twenty-third Street.

"Take me somewhere to meet my fellow-exclusives, Isabel," he demanded. "I pine for the society of my peers."

He hailed a passing omnibus, and made his wife get on the roof with him.

"Think of our doing such a thing in Boston!" she sighed, with a little shiver of satisfaction in her immunity from recognition and comment.

"You wouldn't be afraid to do it in London or Paris?"

"No; we should be strangers there--just as we are in New York. I wonder how long one could be a stranger here."

"Oh, indefinitely, in our way of living. The place is really vast, so much larger than it used to seem, and so heterogeneous."

When they got down very far up-town, and began to walk back by Madison Avenue, they found themselves in a different population from that they dwelt among; not heterogeneous at all; very homogeneous, and almost purely American; the only qualification was American Hebrew. Such a well-dressed, well-satisfied, well-fed looking crowd poured down the broad sidewalks before the handsome, stupid houses that March could easily pretend he had got among his fellow-plutocrats at last. Still he expressed his doubts whether this Sunday afternoon parade, which seemed to be a thing of custom, represented the best form among the young people of that region; he wished he knew; he blamed himself for becoming of a fastidious conjecture; he could not deny the fashion and the richness and the indigeneity of the spectacle; the promenaders looked New-Yorky; they were the sort of people whom you would know for New-Yorkers elsewhere, --so well equipped and so perfectly kept at all points. Their silk hats shone, and their boots; their frocks had the right distension behind, and their bonnets perfect poise and distinction.

The Marches talked of these and other facts of their appearance, and curiously questioned whether this were the best that a great material civilization could come to; it looked a little dull. The men's faces were shrewd and alert, and yet they looked dull; the women's were pretty and knowing, and yet dull. It was, probably, the holiday expression of the vast, prosperous commercial class, with unlimited money, and no ideals that money could not realize; fashion and comfort were all that they desired to compass, and the culture that furnishes showily, that decorates and that tells; the culture, say, of plays and operas, rather than books.

Perhaps the observers did the promenaders injustice; they might not have been as common-minded as they looked. "But," March said, "I understand now why the poor people don't come up here and live in this clean, handsome, respectable quarter of the town; they would be bored to death. On the whole, I think I should prefer Mott Street myself."

In other walks the Marches tried to find some of the streets they had wandered through the first day of their wedding journey in New York, so long ago. They could not make sure of them; but once they ran down to the Battery, and easily made sure of that, though not in its old aspect. They recalled the hot morning, when they sauntered over the trodden weed that covered the sickly grass-plots there, and sentimentalized the sweltering paupers who had crept out of the squalid tenements about for a breath of air after a sleepless night. Now the paupers were gone, and where the old mansions that had fallen to their use once stood, there towered aloft and abroad those heights and masses of many-storied brick-work for which architecture has yet no proper form and aesthetics no name. The trees and shrubs, all in their young spring green, blew briskly over the guarded turf in the south wind that came up over the

water; and in the well-paved alleys the ghosts of eighteenth-century fashion might have met each other in their old haunts, and exchanged stately congratulations upon its vastly bettered condition, and perhaps puzzled a little over the colossal lady on Bedloe's Island, with her lifted torch, and still more over the curving tracks and chalet-stations of the Elevated road. It is an outlook of unrivalled beauty across the bay, that smokes and flashes with the innumerable stacks and sails of commerce, to the hills beyond, where the moving forest of masts halts at the shore, and roots itself in the groves of the many villaged uplands. The Marches paid the charming prospects a willing duty, and rejoiced in it as generously as if it had been their own. Perhaps it was, they decided. He said people owned more things in common than they were apt to think; and they drew the consolations of proprietorship from the excellent management of Castle Garden, which they penetrated for a moment's glimpse of the huge rotunda, where the immigrants first set foot on our continent. It warmed their hearts, so easily moved to any cheap sympathy, to see the friendly care the nation took of these humble guests; they found it even pathetic to hear the proper authority calling out the names of such as had kin or acquaintance waiting there to meet them. No one appeared troubled or anxious; the officials had a conscientious civility; the government seemed to manage their welcome as well as a private company or corporation could have done. In fact, it was after the simple strangers had left the government care that March feared their woes might begin; and he would have liked the government to follow each of them to his home, wherever he meant to fix it within our borders. He made note of the looks of the licensed runners and touters waiting for the immigrants outside the government premises; he intended to work them up into a dramatic effect in some sketch, but they remained mere material in his memorandum-book, together with some quaint old houses on the Sixth Avenue road, which he had noticed on the way down. On the way up, these were superseded in his regard by some hip-roof structures on the Ninth Avenue, which he thought more Dutch-looking. The perspectives of the cross-streets toward the river were very lively, with their turmoil of trucks and cars and carts and hacks and foot passengers, ending in the chimneys and masts of shipping, and final gleams of dancing water. At a very noisy corner, clangorous with some sort of ironworking, he made his wife enjoy with him the quiet sarcasm of an inn that called itself the Home-like Hotel, and he speculated at fantastic length on the gentle associations of one who should have passed his youth under its roof.

III.

First and last, the Marches did a good deal of travel on the Elevated roads, which, he said, gave you such glimpses of material aspects in the city as some violent invasion of others' lives might afford in human nature. Once, when the impulse of adventure was very strong in them, they went quite the length of the West Side lines, and saw the city pushing its way by irregular advances into the country. Some spaces, probably held by the owners for that rise in value which the industry of

others providentially gives to the land of the wise and good, it left vacant comparatively far down the road, and built up others at remoter points. It was a world of lofty apartment houses beyond the Park, springing up in isolated blocks, with stretches of invaded rusticity between, and here and there an old country-seat standing dusty in its budding vines with the ground before it in rocky upheaval for city foundations. But wherever it went or wherever it paused, New York gave its peculiar stamp; and the adventurers were amused to find One Hundred and Twenty-fifth Street inchoately like Twenty-third Street and Fourteenth Street in its shops and shoppers. The butchers' shops and milliners' shops on the avenue might as well have been at Tenth as at One Hundredth Street.

The adventurers were not often so adventurous. They recognized that in their willingness to let their fancy range for them, and to let speculation do the work of inquiry, they were no longer young. Their point of view was singularly unchanged, and their impressions of New York remained the same that they had been fifteen years before: huge, noisy, ugly, kindly, it seemed to them now as it seemed then. The main difference was that they saw it more now as a life, and then they only regarded it as a spectacle; and March could not release himself from a sense of complicity with it, no matter what whimsical, or alien, or critical attitude he took. A sense of the striving and the suffering deeply possessed him; and this grew the more intense as he gained some knowledge of the forces at work—forces of pity, of destruction, of perdition, of salvation. He wandered about on Sunday not only through the streets, but into this tabernacle and that, as the spirit moved him, and listened to those who dealt with Christianity as a system of economics as well as a religion. He could not get his wife to go with him; she listened to his report of what he heard, and trembled; it all seemed fantastic and menacing. She lamented the literary peace, the intellectual refinement of the life they had left behind them; and he owned it was very pretty, but he said it was not life—it was death-in-life. She liked to hear him talk in that strain of virtuous self-denunciation, but she asked him, "Which of your prophets are you going to follow?" and he answered: "All—all! And a fresh one every Sunday." And so they got their laugh out of it at last, but with some sadness at heart, and with a dim consciousness that they had got their laugh out of too many things in life.

What really occupied and compassed his activities, in spite of his strenuous reveries of work beyond it, was his editorship. On its social side it had not fulfilled all the expectations which Fulkerson's radiant sketch of its duties and relations had caused him to form of it. Most of the contributions came from a distance; even the articles written in New York reached him through the post, and so far from having his valuable time, as they called it, consumed in interviews with his collaborators, he rarely saw any of them. The boy on the stairs, who was to fence him from importunate visitors, led a life of luxurious disoccupation, and whistled almost uninterruptedly. When any one came, March found himself embarrassed and a little anxious. The visitors were usually young men, terribly respectful, but cherishing, as he imagined, ideals and opinions chasmally different from his; and he felt in their presence something

like an anachronism, something like a fraud. He tried to freshen up his sympathies on them, to get at what they were really thinking and feeling, and it was some time before he could understand that they were not really thinking and feeling anything of their own concerning their art, but were necessarily, in their quality of young, inexperienced men, mere acceptants of older men's thoughts and feelings, whether they were tremendously conservative, as some were, or tremendously progressive, as others were. Certain of them called themselves realists, certain romanticists; but none of them seemed to know what realism was, or what romanticism; they apparently supposed the difference a difference of material. March had imagined himself taking home to lunch or dinner the aspirants for editorial favor whom he liked, whether he liked their work or not; but this was not an easy matter. Those who were at all interesting seemed to have engagements and preoccupations; after two or three experiments with the bashful sort--those who had come up to the metropolis with manuscripts in their hands, in the good old literary tradition--he wondered whether he was otherwise like them when he was young like them. He could not flatter himself that he was not; and yet he had a hope that the world had grown worse since his time, which his wife encouraged:

Mrs. March was not eager to pursue the hospitalities which she had at first imagined essential to the literary prosperity of 'Every Other Week'; her family sufficed her; she would willingly have seen no one out of it but the strangers at the weekly table-d'hote dinner, or the audiences at the theatres. March's devotion to his work made him reluctant to delegate it to any one; and as the summer advanced, and the question of where to go grew more vexed, he showed a man's base willingness to shirk it for himself by not going anywhere. He asked his wife why she did not go somewhere with the children, and he joined her in a search for non-malarial regions on the map when she consented to entertain this notion. But when it came to the point she would not go; he offered to go with her then, and then she would not let him. She said she knew he would be anxious about his work; he protested that he could take it with him to any distance within a few hours, but she would not be persuaded. She would rather he stayed; the effect would be better with Mr. Fulkerson; they could make excursions, and they could all get off a week or two to the seashore near Boston--the only real seashore--in August. The excursions were practically confined to a single day at Coney Island; and once they got as far as Boston on the way to the seashore near Boston; that is, Mrs. March and the children went; an editorial exigency kept March at the last moment. The Boston streets seemed very queer and clean and empty to the children, and the buildings little; in the horse-cars the Boston faces seemed to arraign their mother with a down-drawn severity that made her feel very guilty. She knew that this was merely the Puritan mask, the cast of a dead civilization, which people of very amiable and tolerant minds were doomed to wear, and she sighed to think that less than a year of the heterogeneous gayety of New York should have made her afraid of it. The sky seemed cold and gray; the east wind, which she had always thought so delicious in summer, cut her to the heart. She took her children up to the South End, and in the pretty square where they used to live they stood before their alienated home, and looked up at its close-shuttered windows. The tenants must

have been away, but Mrs. March had not the courage to ring and make sure, though she had always promised herself that she would go all over the house when she came back, and see how they had used it; she could pretend a desire for something she wished to take away. She knew she could not bear it now; and the children did not seem eager. She did not push on to the seaside; it would be forlorn there without their father; she was glad to go back to him in the immense, friendly homelessness of New York, and hold him answerable for the change, in her heart or her mind, which made its shapeless tumult a refuge and a consolation.

She found that he had been giving the cook a holiday, and dining about hither and thither with Fulkerson. Once he had dined with him at the widow's (as they always called Mrs. Leighton), and then had spent the evening there, and smoked with Fulkerson and Colonel Woodburn on the gallery overlooking the back yard. They were all spending the summer in New York. The widow had got so good an offer for her house at St. Barnaby for the summer that she could not refuse it; and the Woodburns found New York a watering-place of exemplary coolness after the burning Augusts and Septembers of Charlottesville.

"You can stand it well enough in our climate, sir," the colonel explained, "till you come to the September heat, that sometimes runs well into October; and then you begin to lose your temper, sir. It's never quite so hot as it is in New York at times, but it's hot longer, sir." He alleged, as if something of the sort were necessary, the example of a famous Southwestern editor who spent all his summers in a New York hotel as the most luxurious retreat on the continent, consulting the weather forecasts, and running off on torrid days to the mountains or the sea, and then hurrying back at the promise of cooler weather. The colonel had not found it necessary to do this yet; and he had been reluctant to leave town, where he was working up a branch of the inquiry which had so long occupied him, in the libraries, and studying the great problem of labor and poverty as it continually presented itself to him in the streets. He said that he talked with all sorts of people, whom he found monstrously civil, if you took them in the right way; and he went everywhere in the city without fear and apparently without danger. March could not find out that he had ridden his hobby into the homes of want which he visited, or had proposed their enslavement to the inmates as a short and simple solution of the great question of their lives; he appeared to have contented himself with the collection of facts for the persuasion of the cultivated classes. It seemed to March a confirmation of this impression that the colonel should address his deductions from these facts so unsparingly to him; he listened with a respectful patience, for which Fulkerson afterward personally thanked him. Fulkerson said it was not often the colonel found such a good listener; generally nobody listened but Mrs. Leighton, who thought his ideas were shocking, but honored him for holding them so conscientiously. Fulkerson was glad that March, as the literary department, had treated the old gentleman so well, because there was an open feud between him and the art department. Beaton was outrageously rude, Fulkerson must say; though as for that, the old colonel seemed quite able to take care of himself, and gave Beaton an unqualified contempt in return for his unmannerliness. The worst of it was, it distressed the old lady so; she admired Beaton as

much as she respected the colonel, and she admired Beaton, Fulkerson thought, rather more than Miss Leighton did; he asked March if he had noticed them together. March had noticed them, but without any very definite impression except that Beaton seemed to give the whole evening to the girl. Afterward he recollected that he had fancied her rather harassed by his devotion, and it was this point that he wished to present for his wife's opinion.

"Girls often put on that air," she said. "It's one of their ways of teasing. But then, if the man was really very much in love, and she was only enough in love to be uncertain of herself, she might very well seem troubled. It would be a very serious question. Girls often don't know what to do in such a case."

"Yes," said March, "I've often been glad that I was not a girl, on that account. But I guess that on general principles Beaton is not more in love than she is. I couldn't imagine that young man being more in love with anybody, unless it was himself. He might be more in love with himself than any one else was."

"Well, he doesn't interest me a great deal, and I can't say Miss Leighton does, either. I think she can take care of herself. She has herself very well in hand."

"Why so censorious?" pleaded March. "I don't defend her for having herself in hand; but is it a fault?"

Mrs. March did not say. She asked, "And how does Mr. Fulkerson's affair get on?"

"His affair? You really think it is one? Well, I've fancied so myself, and I've had an idea of some time asking him; Fulkerson strikes one as truly domesticable, conjugable at heart; but I've waited for him to speak."

"I should think so."

"Yes. He's never opened on the subject yet. Do you know, I think Fulkerson has his moments of delicacy."

"Moments! He's all delicacy in regard to women."

"Well, perhaps so. There is nothing in them to rouse his advertising instincts."

IV

The Dryfoos family stayed in town till August. Then the father went West again to look after his interests; and Mrs. Mandel took the two girls to one of the great hotels in Saratoga. Fulkerson said that he had never

seen anything like Saratoga for fashion, and Mrs. Mandel remembered that in her own young ladyhood this was so for at least some weeks of the year. She had been too far withdrawn from fashion since her marriage to know whether it was still so or not. In this, as in so many other matters, the Dryfoos family helplessly relied upon Fulkerson, in spite of Dryfoos's angry determination that he should not run the family, and in spite of Christine's doubt of his omniscience; if he did not know everything, she was aware that he knew more than herself. She thought that they had a right to have him go with them to Saratoga, or at least go up and engage their rooms beforehand; but Fulkerson did not offer to do either, and she did not quite see her way to commanding his services. The young ladies took what Mela called splendid dresses with them; they sat in the park of tall, slim trees which the hotel's quadrangle enclosed, and listened to the music in the morning, or on the long piazza in the afternoon and looked at the driving in the street, or in the vast parlors by night, where all the other ladies were, and they felt that they were of the best there. But they knew nobody, and Mrs. Mandel was so particular that Mela was prevented from continuing the acquaintance even of the few young men who danced with her at the Saturday-night hops. They drove about, but they went to places without knowing why, except that the carriage man took them, and they had all the privileges of a proud exclusivism without desiring them. Once a motherly matron seemed to perceive their isolation, and made overtures to them, but then desisted, as if repelled by Christine's suspicion, or by Mela's too instant and hilarious good-fellowship, which expressed itself in hoarse laughter and in a flow of talk full of topical and syntactical freedom. From time to time she offered to bet Christine that if Mr. Fulkerson was only there they would have a good time; she wondered what they were all doing in New York, where she wished herself; she rallied her sister about Beaton, and asked her why she did not write and tell him to come up there.

Mela knew that Christine had expected Beaton to follow them. Some banter had passed between them to this effect; he said he should take them in on his way home to Syracuse. Christine would not have hesitated to write to him and remind him of his promise; but she had learned to distrust her literature with Beaton since he had laughed at the spelling in a scrap of writing which dropped out of her music-book one night. She believed that he would not have laughed if he had known it was hers; but she felt that she could hide better the deficiencies which were not committed to paper; she could manage with him in talking; she was too ignorant of her ignorance to recognize the mistakes she made then. Through her own passion she perceived that she had some kind of fascination for him; she was graceful, and she thought it must be that; she did not understand that there was a kind of beauty in her small, irregular features that piqued and haunted his artistic sense, and a look in her black eyes beyond her intelligence and intention. Once he sketched her as they sat together, and flattered the portrait without getting what he wanted in it; he said he must try her some time in color; and he said things which, when she made Mela repeat them, could only mean that he admired her more than anybody else. He came fitfully, but he came often, and she rested content in a girl's indefiniteness concerning the affair; if her thought went beyond lovemaking to marriage, she believed that she could have him

if she wanted him. Her father's money counted in this; she divined that Beaton was poor; but that made no difference; she would have enough for both; the money would have counted as an irresistible attraction if there had been no other.

The affair had gone on in spite of the sidelong looks of restless dislike with which Dryfoos regarded it; but now when Beaton did not come to Saratoga it necessarily dropped, and Christine's content with it. She bore the trial as long as she could; she used pride and resentment against it; but at last she could not bear it, and with Mela's help she wrote a letter, bantering Beaton on his stay in New York, and playfully boasting of Saratoga. It seemed to them both that it was a very bright letter, and would be sure to bring him; they would have had no scruple about sending it but for the doubt they had whether they had got some of the words right. Mela offered to bet Christine anything she dared that they were right, and she said, Send it anyway; it was no difference if they were wrong. But Christine could not endure to think of that laugh of Beaton's, and there remained only Mrs. Mandel as authority on the spelling. Christine dreaded her authority on other points, but Mela said she knew she would not interfere, and she undertook to get round her. Mrs. Mandel pronounced the spelling bad, and the taste worse; she forbade them to send the letter; and Mela failed to get round her, though she threatened, if Mrs. Mandel would not tell her how to spell the wrong words, that she would send the letter as it was; then Mrs. Mandel said that if Mr. Beaton appeared in Saratoga she would instantly take them both home. When Mela reported this result, Christine accused her of having mismanaged the whole business; she quarrelled with her, and they called each other names. Christine declared that she would not stay in Saratoga, and that if Mrs. Mandel did not go back to New York with her she should go alone. They returned the first week in September; but by that time Beaton had gone to see his people in Syracuse.

Conrad Dryfoos remained at home with his mother after his father went West. He had already taken such a vacation as he had been willing to allow himself, and had spent it on a charity farm near the city, where the fathers with whom he worked among the poor on the East Side in the winter had sent some of their wards for the summer. It was not possible to keep his recreation a secret at the office, and Fulkerson found a pleasure in figuring the jolly time Brother Conrad must have teaching farm work among those paupers and potential reprobates. He invented details of his experience among them, and March could not always help joining in the laugh at Conrad's humorless helplessness under Fulkerson's burlesque denunciation of a summer outing spent in such dissipation.

They had time for a great deal of joking at the office during the season of leisure which penetrates in August to the very heart of business, and they all got on terms of greater intimacy if not greater friendliness than before. Fulkerson had not had so long to do with the advertising side of human nature without developing a vein of cynicism, of no great depth, perhaps, but broad, and underlying his whole point of view; he made light of Beaton's solemnity, as he made light of Conrad's humanity. The art editor, with abundant sarcasm, had no more humor than the publisher, and was an easy prey in the manager's hands; but when he had

been led on by Fulkerson's flatteries to make some betrayal of egotism, he brooded over it till he had thought how to revenge himself in elaborate insult. For Beaton's talent Fulkerson never lost his admiration; but his joke was to encourage him to give himself airs of being the sole source of the magazine's prosperity. No bait of this sort was too obvious for Beaton to swallow; he could be caught with it as often as Fulkerson chose; though he was ordinarily suspicious as to the motives of people in saying things. With March he got on no better than at first. He seemed to be lying in wait for some encroachment of the literary department on the art department, and he met it now and then with anticipative reprisal. After these rebuffs, the editor delivered him over to the manager, who could turn Beaton's contrary-mindedness to account by asking the reverse of what he really wanted done. This was what Fulkerson said; the fact was that he did get on with Beaton and March contented himself with musing upon the contradictions of a character at once so vain and so offensive, so fickle and so sullen, so conscious and so simple.

After the first jarring contact with Dryfoos, the editor ceased to feel the disagreeable fact of the old man's mastery of the financial situation. None of the chances which might have made it painful occurred; the control of the whole affair remained in Fulkerson's hands; before he went West again, Dryfoos had ceased to come about the office, as if, having once worn off the novelty of the sense of owning a literary periodical, he was no longer interested in it.

Yet it was a relief, somehow, when he left town, which he did not do without coming to take a formal leave of the editor at his office. He seemed willing to leave March with a better impression than he had hitherto troubled himself to make; he even said some civil things about the magazine, as if its success pleased him; and he spoke openly to March of his hope that his son would finally become interested in it to the exclusion of the hopes and purposes which divided them. It seemed to March that in the old man's warped and toughened heart he perceived a disappointed love for his son greater than for his other children; but this might have been fancy. Lindau came in with some copy while Dryfoos was there, and March introduced them. When Lindau went out, March explained to Dryfoos that he had lost his hand in the war; and he told him something of Lindau's career as he had known it. Dryfoos appeared greatly pleased that 'Every Other Week' was giving Lindau work. He said that he had helped to enlist a good many fellows for the war, and had paid money to fill up the Moffitt County quota under the later calls for troops. He had never been an Abolitionist, but he had joined the Anti-Nebraska party in '55, and he had voted for Fremont and for every Republican President since then.

At his own house March saw more of Lindau than of any other contributor, but the old man seemed to think that he must transact all his business with March at his place of business. The transaction had some peculiarities which perhaps made this necessary. Lindau always expected to receive his money when he brought his copy, as an acknowledgment of the immediate right of the laborer to his hire; and he would not take it in a check because he did not approve of banks, and regarded the whole

system of banking as the capitalistic manipulation of the people's money. He would receive his pay only from March's hand, because he wished to be understood as working for him, and honestly earning money honestly earned; and sometimes March inwardly winced a little at letting the old man share the increase of capital won by such speculation as Dryfoos's, but he shook off the feeling. As the summer advanced, and the artists and classes that employed Lindau as a model left town one after another, he gave largely of his increasing leisure to the people in the office of 'Every Other Week.' It was pleasant for March to see the respect with which Conrad Dryfoos always used him, for the sake of his hurt and his gray beard. There was something delicate and fine in it, and there was nothing unkindly on Fulkerson's part in the hostilities which usually passed between himself and Lindau. Fulkerson bore himself reverently at times, too, but it was not in him to keep that up, especially when Lindau appeared with more beer aboard than, as Fulkerson said, he could manage shipshape. On these occasions Fulkerson always tried to start him on the theme of the unduly rich; he made himself the champion of monopolies, and enjoyed the invectives which Lindau heaped upon him as a slave of capital; he said that it did him good.

One day, with the usual show of writhing under Lindau's scorn, he said, "Well, I understand that although you despise me now, Lindau--"

"I ton't desbise you," the old man broke in, his nostrils swelling and his eyes flaming with excitement, "I bity you."

"Well, it seems to come to the same thing in the end," said Fulkerson. "What I understand is that you pity me now as the slave of capital, but you would pity me a great deal more if I was the master of it."

"How you mean?"

"If I was rich."

"That would tebendt," said Lindau, trying to control himself. "If you hat inheritedt your money, you might pe innocent; but if you hat mate it, efery man that resbectedt himself would haf to ask how you mate it, and if you hat mate moch, he would know--"

"Hold on; hold on, now, Lindau! Ain't that rather un-American doctrine? We're all brought up, ain't we, to honor the man that made his money, and look down--or try to look down; sometimes it's difficult on the fellow that his father left it to?"

The old man rose and struck his breast. "On Amerigan!" he roared, and, as he went on, his accent grew more and more uncertain. "What iss Amerigan? Dere iss no Ameriga any more! You start here free and brafe, and you glaim for efery man de right to life, liperty, and de bursuit of habbiness. And where haf you entedt? No man that vorks vith his handts among you has the liperty to bursue his habbiness. He iss the slafe of some richer man, some gompany, some gorporation, dat crindt him down to the least he can lif on, and that rops him of the marchin of his earnings that he knight pe habby on. Oh, you Amerigans, you haf cot it down

goldt, as you say! You ton't puy foters; you puy lechislatures and gongressmen; you puy gourts; you puy gombetitors; you pay infentors not to infent; you atfertise, and the gounting-room sees dat de etitorial-room toesn't tink."

"Yes, we've got a little arrangement of that sort with March here," said Fulkerson.

"Oh, I am sawry," said the old man, contritely, "I meant noting bersonal. I ton't tink we are all cuilty or gorrubt, and efen among the rich there are goodt men. But gabidal"--his passion rose again "where you find gabidal, millions of money that a man hass cot togeder in fife, ten, twenty years, you findt the smell of tears and ploodt! Dat iss what I say. And you cot to loog oudt for yourself when you meet a rich man whether you meet an honest man."

"Well," said Fulkerson, "I wish I was a subject of suspicion with you, Lindau. By-the-way," he added, "I understand that you think capital was at the bottom of the veto of that pension of yours."

"What bension? What fetto?"--The old man flamed up again. "No bension of mine was efer fettoedt. I renounce my bension, begause I would sgorn to dake money from a goferment that I ton't peliefe in any more. Where you hear that story?"

"Well, I don't know," said Fulkerson, rather embarrassed. "It's common talk."

"It's a gommon lie, then! When the time gome dat dis iss a free gountry again, then I dake a bension again for my woundts; but I would sdarfe before I dake a bension now from a republic dat iss bought oap by monobolies, and ron by drusts and gompines, and railroadts andt oil gompanies."

"Look out, Lindau," said Fulkerson. "You bite yourself mit dat dog some day." But when the old man, with a ferocious gesture of renunciation, whirled out of the place, he added: "I guess I went a little too far that time. I touched him on a sore place; I didn't mean to; I heard some talk about his pension being vetoed from Miss Leighton." He addressed these exculpations to March's grave face, and to the pitying deprecation in the eyes of Conrad Dryfoos, whom Lindau's roaring wrath had summoned to the door. "But I'll make it all right with him the next time he comes. I didn't know he was loaded, or I wouldn't have monkeyed with him."

"Lindau does himself injustice when he gets to talking in that way," said March. "I hate to hear him. He's as good an American as any of us; and it's only because he has too high an ideal of us--"

"Oh, go on! Rub it in--rub it in!" cried Fulkerson, clutching his hair in suffering, which was not altogether burlesque. "How did I know he had renounced his 'bension'? Why didn't you tell me?"

"I didn't know it myself. I only knew that he had none, and I didn't

ask, for I had a notion that it might be a painful subject."

Fulkerson tried to turn it off lightly. "Well, he's a noble old fellow; pity he drinks." March would not smile, and Fulkerson broke out: "Dog on it! I'll make it up to the old fool the next time he comes. I don't like that dynamite talk of his; but any man that's given his hand to the country has got mine in his grip for good. Why, March! You don't suppose I wanted to hurt his feelings, do you?"

"Why, of course not, Fulkerson."

But they could not get away from a certain ruefulness for that time, and in the evening Fulkerson came round to March's to say that he had got Lindau's address from Conrad, and had looked him up at his lodgings.

"Well, there isn't so much bric-a-brac there, quite, as Mrs. Green left you; but I've made it all right with Lindau, as far as I'm concerned. I told him I didn't know when I spoke that way, and I honored him for sticking to his 'brinciples'; I don't believe in his 'brinciples'; and we wept on each other's necks--at least, he did. Dogged if he didn't kiss me before I knew what he was up to. He said I was his chenerous gong friendt, and he begged my barton if he had said anything to wound me. I tell you it was an affecting scene, March; and rats enough round in that old barracks where he lives to fit out a first-class case of delirium tremens. What does he stay there for? He's not obliged to?"

Lindau's reasons, as March repeated them, affected Fulkerson as deliciously comical; but after that he confined his pleasantries at the office to Beaton and Conrad Dryfoos, or, as he said, he spent the rest of the summer in keeping Lindau smoothed up.

It is doubtful if Lindau altogether liked this as well. Perhaps he missed the occasions Fulkerson used to give him of bursting out against the millionaires; and he could not well go on denouncing as the slafe of gabidal a man who had behaved to him as Fulkerson had done, though Fulkerson's servile relations to capital had been in nowise changed by his nople gconduct.

Their relations continued to wear this irksome character of mutual forbearance; and when Dryfoos returned in October and Fulkerson revived the question of that dinner in celebration of the success of 'Every Other Week,' he carried his complaisance to an extreme that alarmed March for the consequences.

V.

"You see," Fulkerson explained, "I find that the old man has got an idea of his own about that banquet, and I guess there's some sense in it. He wants to have a preliminary little dinner, where we can talk the thing up first-half a dozen of us; and he wants to give us the dinner at his

house. Well, that's no harm. I don't believe the old man ever gave a dinner, and he'd like to show off a little; there's a good deal of human nature in the old man, after all. He thought of you, of course, and Colonel Woodburn, and Beaton, and me at the foot of the table; and Conrad; and I suggested Kendricks: he's such a nice little chap; and the old man himself brought up the idea of Lindau. He said you told him something about him, and he asked why couldn't we have him, too; and I jumped at it."

"Have Lindau to dinner?" asked March.

"Certainly; why not? Father Dryfoos has a notion of paying the old fellow a compliment for what he done for the country. There won't be any trouble about it. You can sit alongside of him, and cut up his meat for him, and help him to things--"

"Yes, but it won't do, Fulkerson! I don't believe Lindau ever had on a dress-coat in his life, and I don't believe his 'brincibles' would let him wear one."

"Well, neither had Dryfoos, for the matter of that. He's as high-principled as old Pan-Electric himself, when it comes to a dress-coat," said Fulkerson. "We're all going to go in business dress; the old man stipulated for that."

"It isn't the dress-coat alone," March resumed. "Lindau and Dryfoos wouldn't get on. You know they're opposite poles in everything. You mustn't do it. Dryfoos will be sure to say something to outrage Lindau's 'brincibles,' and there'll be an explosion. It's all well enough for Dryfoos to feel grateful to Lindau, and his wish to honor him does him credit; but to have Lindau to dinner isn't the way. At the best, the old fellow would be very unhappy in such a house; he would have a bad conscience; and I should be sorry to have him feel that he'd been recreant to his 'brincibles'; they're about all he's got, and whatever we think of them, we're bound to respect his fidelity to them." March warmed toward Lindau in taking this view of him. "I should feel ashamed if I didn't protest against his being put in a false position. After all, he's my old friend, and I shouldn't like to have him do himself injustice if he is a crank."

"Of course," said Fulkerson, with some trouble in his face.

"I appreciate your feeling. But there ain't any danger," he added, buoyantly. "Anyhow, you spoke too late, as the Irishman said to the chicken when he swallowed him in a fresh egg. I've asked Lindau, and he's accepted with blayzure; that's what he says."

March made no other comment than a shrug.

"You'll see," Fulkerson continued, "it 'll go off all right. I'll engage to make it, and I won't hold anybody else responsible."

In the course of his married life March had learned not to censure the irretrievable; but this was just what his wife had not learned; and she

poured out so much astonishment at what Fulkerson had done, and so much disapproval, that March began to palliate the situation a little.

"After all, it isn't a question of life and death; and, if it were, I don't see how it's to be helped now."

"Oh, it's not to be helped now. But I am surprised at Mr. Fulkerson."

"Well, Fulkerson has his moments of being merely human, too."

Mrs. March would not deign a direct defence of her favorite. "Well, I'm glad there are not to be ladies."

"I don't know. Dryfoos thought of having ladies, but it seems your infallible Fulkerson overruled him. Their presence might have kept Lindau and our host in bounds."

It had become part of the Marches' conjugal joke for him to pretend that she could allow nothing wrong in Fulkerson, and he now laughed with a mocking air of having expected it when she said: "Well, then, if Mr. Fulkerson says he will see that it all comes out right, I suppose you must trust his tact. I wouldn't trust yours, Basil. The first wrong step was taken when Mr. Lindau was asked to help on the magazine."

"Well, it was your infallible Fulkerson that took the step, or at least suggested it. I'm happy to say I had totally forgotten my early friend."

Mrs. March was daunted and silenced for a moment. Then she said: "Oh, pshaw! You know well enough he did it to please you."

"I'm very glad he didn't do it to please you, Isabel," said her husband, with affected seriousness. "Though perhaps he did."

He began to look at the humorous aspect of the affair, which it certainly had, and to comment on the singular incongruities which 'Every Other Week' was destined to involve at every moment of its career.

"I wonder if I'm mistaken in supposing that no other periodical was ever like it. Perhaps all periodicals are like it. But I don't believe there's another publication in New York that could bring together, in honor of itself, a fraternity and equality crank like poor old Lindau, and a belated sociological crank like Woodburn, and a truculent speculator like old Dryfoos, and a humanitarian dreamer like young Dryfoos, and a sentimentalist like me, and a nondescript like Beaton, and a pure advertising essence like Fulkerson, and a society spirit like Kendricks. If we could only allow one another to talk uninterruptedly all the time, the dinner would be the greatest success in the world, and we should come home full of the highest mutual respect. But I suspect we can't manage that--even your infallible Fulkerson couldn't work it--and I'm afraid that there'll be some listening that'll spoil the pleasure of the time."

March was so well pleased with this view of the case that he suggested the idea involved to Fulkerson. Fulkerson was too good a fellow not to

laugh at another man's joke, but he laughed a little ruefully, and he seemed worn with more than one kind of care in the interval that passed between the present time and the night of the dinner.

Dryfoos necessarily depended upon him for advice concerning the scope and nature of the dinner, but he received the advice suspiciously, and contested points of obvious propriety with pertinacious stupidity. Fulkerson said that when it came to the point he would rather have had the thing, as he called it, at Delmonico's or some other restaurant; but when he found that Dryfoos's pride was bound up in having it at his own house, he gave way to him. Dryfoos also wanted his woman-cook to prepare the dinner, but Fulkerson persuaded him that this would not do; he must have it from a caterer. Then Dryfoos wanted his maids to wait at table, but Fulkerson convinced him that this would be incongruous at a man's dinner. It was decided that the dinner should be sent in from Frescobaldi's, and Dryfoos went with Fulkerson to discuss it with the caterer. He insisted upon having everything explained to him, and the reason for having it, and not something else in its place; and he treated Fulkerson and Frescobaldi as if they were in league to impose upon him. There were moments when Fulkerson saw the varnish of professional politeness cracking on the Neapolitan's volcanic surface, and caught a glimpse of the lava fires of the cook's nature beneath; he trembled for Dryfoos, who was walking rough-shod over him in the security of an American who had known how to make his money, and must know how to spend it; but he got him safely away at last, and gave Frescobaldi a wink of sympathy for his shrug of exhaustion as they turned to leave him.

It was at first a relief and then an anxiety with Fulkerson that Lindau did not come about after accepting the invitation to dinner, until he appeared at Dryfoos's house, prompt to the hour. There was, to be sure, nothing to bring him; but Fulkerson was uneasily aware that Dryfoos expected to meet him at the office, and perhaps receive some verbal acknowledgment of the honor done him. Dryfoos, he could see, thought he was doing all his invited guests a favor; and while he stood in a certain awe of them as people of much greater social experience than himself, regarded them with a kind of contempt, as people who were going to have a better dinner at his house than they could ever afford to have at their own. He had finally not spared expense upon it; after pushing Frescobaldi to the point of eruption with his misgivings and suspicions at the first interview, he had gone to him a second time alone, and told him not to let the money stand between him and anything he would like to do. In the absence of Frescobaldi's fellow-conspirator he restored himself in the caterer's esteem by adding whatever he suggested; and Fulkerson, after trembling for the old man's niggardliness, was now afraid of a fantastic profusion in the feast. Dryfoos had reduced the scale of the banquet as regarded the number of guests, but a confusing remembrance of what Fulkerson had wished to do remained with him in part, and up to the day of the dinner he dropped in at Frescobaldi's and ordered more dishes and more of them. He impressed the Italian as an American original of a novel kind; and when he asked Fulkerson how Dryfoos had made his money, and learned that it was primarily in natural gas, he made note of some of his eccentric tastes as peculiarities that were to be caressed in any future natural-gas millionaire who might fall

into his hands. He did not begrudge the time he had to give in explaining to Dryfoos the relation of the different wines to the different dishes; Dryfoos was apt to substitute a costlier wine where he could for a cheaper one, and he gave Frescobaldi carte blanche for the decoration of the table with pieces of artistic confectionery. Among these the caterer designed one for a surprise to his patron and a delicate recognition of the source of his wealth, which he found Dryfoos very willing to talk about, when he intimated that he knew what it was.

Dryfoos left it to Fulkerson to invite the guests, and he found ready acceptance of his politeness from Kendricks, who rightly regarded the dinner as a part of the 'Every Other Week' business, and was too sweet and kind-hearted, anyway, not to seem very glad to come. March was a matter of course; but in Colonel Woodburn, Fulkerson encountered a reluctance which embarrassed him the more because he was conscious of having, for motives of his own, rather strained a point in suggesting the colonel to Dryfoos as a fit subject for invitation. There had been only one of the colonel's articles printed as yet, and though it had made a sensation in its way, and started the talk about that number, still it did not fairly constitute him a member of the staff, or even entitle him to recognition as a regular contributor. Fulkerson felt so sure of pleasing him with Dryfoos's message that he delivered it in full family council at the widow's. His daughter received it with all the enthusiasm that Fulkerson had hoped for, but the colonel said, stiffly, "I have not the pleasure of knowing Mr. Dryfoos." Miss Woodburn appeared ready to fall upon him at this, but controlled herself, as if aware that filial authority had its limits, and pressed her lips together without saying anything.

"Yes, I know," Fulkerson admitted. "But it isn't a usual case. Mr. Dryfoos don't go in much for the conventionalities; I reckon he don't know much about 'em, come to boil it down; and he hoped"--here Fulkerson felt the necessity of inventing a little--"that you would excuse any want of ceremony; it's to be such an informal affair, anyway; we're all going in business dress, and there ain't going to be any ladies. He'd have come himself to ask you, but he's a kind of a bashful old fellow. It's all right, Colonel Woodburn."

"I take it that it is, sir," said the colonel, courteously, but with unabated state, "coming from you. But in these matters we have no right to burden our friends with our decisions."

"Of course, of course," said Fulkerson, feeling that he had been delicately told to mind his own business.

"I understand," the colonel went on, "the relation that Mr. Dryfoos bears to the periodical in which you have done me the honor to print my papah, but this is a question of passing the bounds of a purely business connection, and of eating the salt of a man whom you do not definitely know to be a gentleman."

"Mah goodness!" his daughter broke in. "If you bah your own salt with his money--"

"It is supposed that I earn his money before I buy my salt with it," returned her father, severely. "And in these times, when money is got in heaps, through the natural decay of our nefarious commercialism, it behooves a gentleman to be scrupulous that the hospitality offered him is not the profusion of a thief with his booty. I don't say that Mr. Dryfoos's good-fortune is not honest. I simply say that I know nothing about it, and that I should prefer to know something before I sat down at his board."

"You're all right, colonel," said Fulkerson, "and so is Mr. Dryfoos. I give you my word that there are no flies on his personal integrity, if that's what you mean. He's hard, and he'd push an advantage, but I don't believe he would take an unfair one. He's speculated and made money every time, but I never heard of his wrecking a railroad or belonging to any swindling company or any grinding monopoly. He does chance it in stocks, but he's always played on the square, if you call stocks gambling."

"May I, think this over till morning?" asked the colonel.

"Oh, certainly, certainly," said Fulkerson, eagerly. "I don't know as there's any hurry."

Miss Woodburn found a chance to murmur to him before he went: "He'll come. And Ah'm so much oblahged, Mr. Fulkerson. Ah jost know it's all you' doing, and it will give papa a chance to toak to some new people, and get away from us evahlastin' women for once."

"I don't see why any one should want to do that," said Fulkerson, with grateful gallantry. "But I'll be dogged," he said to March when he told him about this odd experience, "if I ever expected to find Colonel Woodburn on old Lindau's ground. He did come round handsomely this morning at breakfast and apologized for taking time to think the invitation over before he accepted. 'You understand,' he says, 'that if it had been to the table of some friend not so prosperous as Mr. Dryfoos --your friend Mr. March, for instance--it would have been sufficient to know that he was your friend. But in these days it is a duty that a gentleman owes himself to consider whether he wishes to know a rich man or not. The chances of making money disreputably are so great that the chances are against a man who has made money if he's made a great deal of it.'"

March listened with a face of ironical insinuation. "That was very good; and he seems to have had a good deal of confidence in your patience and in your sense of his importance to the occasion--"

"No, no," Fulkerson protested, "there's none of that kind of thing about the colonel. I told him to take time to think it over; he's the simplest-hearted old fellow in the world."

"I should say so. After all, he didn't give any reason he had for accepting. But perhaps the young lady had the reason."

"Pshaw, March!" said Fulkerson.

VI.

So far as the Dryfoos family was concerned, the dinner might as well have been given at Frescobaldi's rooms. None of the ladies appeared. Mrs. Dryfoos was glad to escape to her own chamber, where she sat before an autumnal fire, shaking her head and talking to herself at times, with the foreboding of evil which old women like her make part of their religion. The girls stood just out of sight at the head of the stairs, and disputed which guest it was at each arrival; Mrs. Mandel had gone to her room to write letters, after beseeching them not to stand there. When Kendricks came, Christine gave Mela a little pinch, equivalent to a little mocking shriek; for, on the ground of his long talk with Mela at Mrs. Horn's, in the absence of any other admirer, they based a superstition of his interest in her; when Beaton came, Mela returned the pinch, but awkwardly, so that it hurt, and then Christine involuntarily struck her.

Frescobaldi's men were in possession everywhere they had turned the cook out of her kitchen and the waitress out of her pantry; the reluctant Irishman at the door was supplemented by a vivid Italian, who spoke French with the guests, and said, "Bien, Monsieur," and "toute suite," and "Merci!" to all, as he took their hats and coats, and effused a hospitality that needed no language but the gleam of his eyes and teeth and the play of his eloquent hands. From his professional dress-coat, lustrous with the grease spotted on it at former dinners and parties, they passed to the frocks of the elder and younger Dryfoos in the drawing-room, which assumed informality for the affair, but did not put their wearers wholly at their ease. The father's coat was of black broadcloth, and he wore it unbuttoned; the skirts were long, and the sleeves came down to his knuckles; he shook hands with his guests, and the same dryness seemed to be in his palm and throat, as he huskily asked each to take a chair. Conrad's coat was of modern texture and cut, and was buttoned about him as if it concealed a bad conscience within its lapels; he met March with his entreating smile, and he seemed no more capable of coping with the situation than his father. They both waited for Fulkerson, who went about and did his best to keep life in the party during the half-hour that passed before they sat down at dinner. Beaton stood gloomily aloof, as if waiting to be approached on the right basis before yielding an inch of his ground; Colonel Woodburn, awaiting the moment when he could sally out on his hobby, kept himself intrenched within the dignity of a gentleman, and examined askance the figure of old Lindau as he stared about the room, with his fine head up, and his empty sleeve dangling over his wrist. March felt obliged to him for wearing a new coat in the midst of that hostile luxury, and he was glad to see Dryfoos make up to him and begin to talk with him, as if he wished to show him particular respect, though it might have been because he was less afraid of him than of the others. He heard Lindau saying, "Boat, the name is Choarman?" and Dryfoos beginning to explain his Pennsylvania

Dutch origin, and he suffered himself, with a sigh of relief, to fall into talk with Kendricks, who was always pleasant; he was willing to talk about something besides himself, and had no opinions that he was not ready to hold in abeyance for the time being out of kindness to others. In that group of impassioned individualities, March felt him a refuge and comfort--with his harmless dilettante intention of some day writing a novel, and his belief that he was meantime collecting material for it.

Fulkerson, while breaking the ice for the whole company, was mainly engaged in keeping Colonel Woodburn thawed out. He took Kendricks away from March and presented him to the colonel as a person who, like himself, was looking into social conditions; he put one hand on Kendricks's shoulder, and one on the colonel's, and made some flattering joke, apparently at the expense of the young fellow, and then left them. March heard Kendricks protest in vain, and the colonel say, gravely: "I do not wonder, sir, that these things interest you. They constitute a problem which society must solve or which will dissolve society," and he knew from that formula, which the colonel had, once used with him, that he was laying out a road for the exhibition of the hobby's paces later.

Fulkerson came back to March, who had turned toward Conrad Dryfoos, and said, "If we don't get this thing going pretty soon, it 'll be the death of me," and just then Frescobaldi's butler came in and announced to Dryfoos that dinner was served. The old man looked toward Fulkerson with a troubled glance, as if he did not know what to do; he made a gesture to touch Lindau's elbow. Fulkerson called out, "Here's Colonel Woodburn, Mr. Dryfoos," as if Dryfoos were looking for him; and he set the example of what he was to do by taking Lindau's arm himself. "Mr. Lindau is going to sit at my end of the table, alongside of March. Stand not upon the order of your going, gentlemen, but fall in at once." He contrived to get Dryfoos and the colonel before him, and he let March follow with Kendricks. Conrad came last with Beaton, who had been turning over the music at the piano, and chafing inwardly at the whole affair. At the table Colonel Woodburn was placed on Dryfoos's right, and March on his left. March sat on Fulkerson's right, with Lindau next him; and the young men occupied the other seats.

"Put you next to March, Mr. Lindau," said Fulkerson, "so you can begin to put Apollinaris in his champagne-glass at the right moment; you know his little weakness of old; sorry to say it's grown on him."

March laughed with kindly acquiescence in Fulkerson's wish to start the gayety, and Lindau patted him on the shoulder. "I know his weakness. If he ligs a class of vine, it iss because his loaf includes efen his enemy, as Shakespeare galled it."

"Ah, but Shakespeare couldn't have been thinking of champagne," said Kendricks.

"I suppose, sir," Colonel Woodburn interposed, with lofty courtesy, "champagne could hardly have been known in his day."

"I suppose not, colonel," returned the younger man, deferentially.

"He seemed to think that sack and sugar might be a fault; but he didn't mention champagne."

"Perhaps he felt there was no question about that," suggested Beaton, who then felt that he had not done himself justice in the sally.

"I wonder just when champagne did come in," said March.

"I know when it ought to come in," said Fulkerson. "Before the soup!"

They all laughed, and gave themselves the air of drinking champagne out of tumblers every day, as men like to do. Dryfoos listened uneasily; he did not quite understand the allusions, though he knew what Shakespeare was, well enough; Conrad's face expressed a gentle deprecation of joking on such a subject, but he said nothing.

The talk ran on briskly through the dinner. The young men tossed the ball back and forth; they made some wild shots, but they kept it going, and they laughed when they were hit. The wine loosed Colonel Woodburn's tongue; he became very companionable with the young fellows; with the feeling that a literary dinner ought to have a didactic scope, he praised Scott and Addison as the only authors fit to form the minds of gentlemen.

Kendricks agreed with him, but wished to add the name of Flaubert as a master of style. "Style, you know," he added, "is the man."

"Very true, sir; you are quite right, sir," the colonel assented; he wondered who Flaubert was.

Beaton praised Baudelaire and Maupassant; he said these were the masters. He recited some lurid verses from Baudelaire; Lindau pronounced them a disgrace to human nature, and gave a passage from Victor Hugo on Louis Napoleon, with his heavy German accent, and then he quoted Schiller. "Ach, boat that is a peaudifool! Not zo?" he demanded of March.

"Yes, beautiful; but, of course, you know I think there's nobody like Heine!"

Lindau threw back his great old head and laughed, showing a want of teeth under his mustache. He put his hand on March's back. "This poy--he was a poy den--wars so gracy to pekin reading Heine that he gommence with the tictionary bevore he knows any Grammar, and ve bick it out vort by vort togeder."

"He was a pretty cay poy in those days, heigh, Lindau?" asked Fulkerson, burlesquing the old man's accent, with an impudent wink that made Lindau himself laugh. "But in the dark ages, I mean, there in Indianapolis. Just how long ago did you old codgers meet there, anyway?" Fulkerson saw the restiveness in Dryfoos's eye at the purely literary course the talk had taken; he had intended it to lead up that way to business, to 'Every Other Week;' but he saw that it was leaving Dryfoos too far out, and he wished to get it on the personal ground, where everybody is at home.

"Ledt me zee," mused Lindau. "Wass it in fifty-nine or zixty, Passil? Idt wass a year or dwo pefore the war proke oudt, anyway."

"Those were exciting times," said Dryfoos, making his first entry into the general talk. "I went down to Indianapolis with the first company from our place, and I saw the red-shirts pouring in everywhere. They had a song,

"Oh, never mind the weather, but git over double trouble,
For we're bound for the land of Canaan."

The fellows locked arms and went singin' it up and down four or five abreast in the moonlight; crowded everybody' else off the sidewalk."

"I remember, I remember," said Lindau, nodding his head slowly up and down. "A coodt many off them nefer come pack from that landt of Ganaan, Mr. Dryfoos?"

"You're right, Mr. Lindau. But I reckon it was worth it--the country we've got now. Here, young man!" He caught the arm of the waiter who was going round with the champagne bottle. "Fill up Mr. Lindau's glass, there. I want to drink the health of those old times with him. Here's to your empty sleeve, Mr. Lindau. God bless it! No offence to you, Colonel Woodburn," said Dryfoos, turning to him before he drank.

"Not at all, sir, not at all," said the colonel. "I will drink with you, if you will permit me."

"We'll all drink--standing!" cried Fulkerson. "Help March to get up, somebody! Fill high the bowl with Samian Apollinaris for Coonrod! Now, then, hurrah for Lindau!"

They cheered, and hammered on the table with the butts of their knife-handles. Lindau remained seated. The tears came into his eyes; he said, "I thank you, chendlemen," and hiccoughed.

"I'd 'a' went into the war myself," said Dryfoos, "but I was raisin' a family of young children, and I didn't see how I could leave my farm. But I helped to fill up the quota at every call, and when the volunteering stopped I went round with the subscription paper myself; and we offered as good bounties as any in the State. My substitute was killed in one of the last skirmishes--in fact, after Lee's surrender--and I've took care of his family, more or less, ever since."

"By-the-way, March," said Fulkerson, "what sort of an idea would it be to have a good war story--might be a serial--in the magazine? The war has never fully panned out in fiction yet. It was used a good deal just after it was over, and then it was dropped. I think it's time to take it up again. I believe it would be a card."

It was running in March's mind that Dryfoos had an old rankling shame in his heart for not having gone into the war, and that he had often made

that explanation of his course without having ever been satisfied with it. He felt sorry for him; the fact seemed pathetic; it suggested a dormant nobleness in the man.

Beaton was saying to Fulkerson: "You might get a series of sketches by substitutes; the substitutes haven't been much heard from in the war literature. How would 'The Autobiography of a Substitute' do? You might follow him up to the moment he was killed in the other man's place, and inquire whether he had any right to the feelings of a hero when he was only hired in the place of one. Might call it 'The Career of a Deputy Hero.'"

"I fancy," said March, "that there was a great deal of mixed motive in the men who went into the war as well as in those who kept out of it. We canonized all that died or suffered in it, but some of them must have been self-seeking and low-minded, like men in other vocations." He found himself saying this in Dryfoos's behalf; the old man looked at him gratefully at first, he thought, and then suspiciously.

Lindau turned his head toward him and said: "You are right, Passil; you are right. I have seen on the field of battle the worst exhibitions of human baseness--jealousy, vanity, egotistic pride. I have seen men in the face of death itself governed by motives as low as--as business motives."

"Well," said Fulkerson, "it would be a grand thing for 'Every Other Week' if we could get some of those ideas worked up into a series. It would make a lot of talk."

Colonel Woodburn ignored him in saying, "I think, Major Lindau--"

"High brevete; brevet corporal," the old man interrupted, in rejection of the title.

Hendricks laughed and said, with a glance of appreciation at Lindau, "Brevet corporal is good."

Colonel Woodburn frowned a little, and passed over the joke. "I think Mr. Lindau is right. Such exhibitions were common to both sides, though if you gentlemen will pardon me for saying so, I think they were less frequent on ours. We were fighting more immediately for existence. We were fewer than you were, and we knew it; we felt more intensely that if each were not for all, then none was for any."

The colonel's words made their impression. Dryfoos said, with authority, "That is so."

"Colonel Woodburn," Fulkerson called out, "if you'll work up those ideas into a short paper--say, three thousand words--I'll engage to make March take it."

The colonel went on without replying: "But Mr. Lindau is right in characterizing some of the motives that led men to the cannon's mouth as

no higher than business motives, and his comparison is the most forcible that he could have used. I was very much struck by it."

The hobby was out, the colonel was in the saddle with so firm a seat that no effort sufficed to dislodge him. The dinner went on from course to course with barbaric profusion, and from time to time Fulkerson tried to bring the talk back to 'Every Other Week.' But perhaps because that was only the ostensible and not the real object of the dinner, which was to bring a number of men together under Dryfoos's roof, and make them the witnesses of his splendor, make them feel the power of his wealth, Fulkerson's attempts failed. The colonel showed how commercialism was the poison at the heart of our national life; how we began as a simple, agricultural people, who had fled to these shores with the instinct, divinely implanted, of building a state such as the sun never shone upon before; how we had conquered the wilderness and the savage; how we had flung off, in our struggle with the mother-country, the trammels of tradition and precedent, and had settled down, a free nation, to the practice of the arts of peace; how the spirit of commercialism had stolen insidiously upon us, and the infernal impulse of competition had embroiled us in a perpetual warfare of interests, developing the worst passions of our nature, and teaching us to trick and betray and destroy one another in the strife for money, till now that impulse had exhausted itself, and we found competition gone and the whole economic problem in the hands of monopolies--the Standard Oil Company, the Sugar Trust, the Rubber Trust, and what not. And now what was the next thing? Affairs could not remain as they were; it was impossible; and what was the next thing?

The company listened for the main part silently. Dryfoos tried to grasp the idea of commercialism as the colonel seemed to hold it; he conceived of it as something like the dry-goods business on a vast scale, and he knew he had never been in that. He did not like to hear competition called infernal; he had always supposed it was something sacred; but he approved of what Colonel Woodburn said of the Standard Oil Company; it was all true; the Standard Oil has squeezed Dryfoos once, and made him sell it a lot of oil-wells by putting down the price of oil so low in that region that he lost money on every barrel he pumped.

All the rest listened silently, except Lindau; at every point the colonel made against the present condition of things he said more and more fiercely, "You are right, you are right." His eyes glowed, his hand played with his knife-hilt. When the colonel demanded, "And what is the next thing?" he threw himself forward, and repeated: "Yes, sir! What is the next thing?"

"Natural gas, by thunder!" shouted Fulkerson.

One of the waiters had profited by Lindau's posture to lean over him and put down in the middle of the table a structure in white sugar. It expressed Frescobaldi's conception of a derrick, and a touch of nature had been added in the flame of brandy, which burned luridly up from a small pit in the centre of the base, and represented the gas in combustion as it issued from the ground. Fulkerson burst into a roar of

laughter with the words that recognized Frescobaldi's personal tribute to Dryfoos. Everybody rose and peered over at the thing, while he explained the work of sinking a gas-well, as he had already explained it to Frescobaldi. In the midst of his lecture he caught sight of the caterer himself, where he stood in the pantry doorway, smiling with an artist's anxiety for the effect of his masterpiece.

"Come in, come in, Frescobaldi! We want to congratulate you," Fulkerson called to him. "Here, gentlemen! Here's Frescobaldi's health."

They all drank; and Frescobaldi, smiling brilliantly and rubbing his hands as he bowed right and left, permitted himself to say to Dryfoos: "You are please; no? You like?"

"First-rate, first-rate!" said the old man; but when the Italian had bowed himself out and his guests had sunk into their seats again, he said dryly to Fulkerson, "I reckon they didn't have to torpedo that well, or the derrick wouldn't look quite so nice and clean."

"Yes," Fulkerson answered, "and that ain't quite the style--that little wiggly-waggly blue flame--that the gas acts when you touch off a good vein of it. This might do for weak gas"; and he went on to explain:

"They call it weak gas when they tap it two or three hundred feet down; and anybody can sink a well in his back yard and get enough gas to light and heat his house. I remember one fellow that had it blazing up from a pipe through a flower-bed, just like a jet of water from a fountain. My, my, my! You fel--you gentlemen--ought to go out and see that country, all of you. Wish we could torpedo this well, Mr. Dryfoos, and let 'em see how it works! Mind that one you torpedoed for me? You know, when they sink a well," he went on to the company, "they can't always most generally sometimes tell whether they're goin' to get gas or oil or salt water. Why, when they first began to bore for salt water out on the Kanawha, back about the beginning of the century, they used to get gas now and then, and then they considered it a failure; they called a gas-well a blower, and give it up in disgust; the time wasn't ripe for gas yet. Now they bore away sometimes till they get half-way to China, and don't seem to strike anything worth speaking of. Then they put a dynamite torpedo down in the well and explode it. They have a little bar of iron that they call a Go-devil, and they just drop it down on the business end of the torpedo, and then stand from under, if you please! You hear a noise, and in about half a minute you begin to see one, and it begins to rain oil and mud and salt water and rocks and pitchforks and adoptive citizens; and when it clears up the derrick's painted--got a coat on that 'll wear in any climate. That's what our honored host meant. Generally get some visiting lady, when there's one round, to drop the Go-devil. But that day we had to put up with Conrad here. They offered to let me drop it, but I declined. I told 'em I hadn't much practice with Go-devils in the newspaper syndicate business, and I wasn't very well myself, anyway. Astonishing," Fulkerson continued, with the air of relieving his explanation by an anecdote, "how reckless they get using dynamite when they're torpedoing wells. We stopped at one place where a fellow was handling the cartridges pretty freely, and Mr. Dryfoos

happened to caution him a little, and that ass came up with one of 'em in his hand, and began to pound it on the buggy-wheel to show us how safe it was. I turned green, I was so scared; but Mr. Dryfoos kept his color, and kind of coaxed the fellow till he quit. You could see he was the fool kind, that if you tried to stop him he'd keep on hammering that cartridge, just to show that it wouldn't explode, till he blew you into Kingdom Come. When we got him to go away, Mr. Dryfoos drove up to his foreman. 'Pay Sheney off, and discharge him on the spot,' says he. 'He's too safe a man to have round; he knows too much about dynamite.' I never saw anybody so cool."

Dryfoos modestly dropped his head under Fulkerson's flattery and, without lifting it, turned his eyes toward Colonel Woodburn. "I had all sorts of men to deal with in developing my property out there, but I had very little trouble with them, generally speaking."

"Ah, ah! you foundt the laboring-man reasonable--dractable--tocile?" Lindau put in.

"Yes, generally speaking," Dryfoos answered. "They mostly knew which side of their bread was buttered. I did have one little difficulty at one time. It happened to be when Mr. Fulkerson was out there. Some of the men tried to form a union--"

"No, no!" cried Fulkerson. "Let me tell that! I know you wouldn't do yourself justice, Mr. Dryfoos, and I want 'em to know how a strike can be managed, if you take it in time. You see, some of those fellows got a notion that there ought to be a union among the working-men to keep up wages, and dictate to the employers, and Mr. Dryfoos's foreman was the ringleader in the business. They understood pretty well that as soon as he found it out that foreman would walk the plank, and so they watched out till they thought they had Mr. Dryfoos just where they wanted him-- everything on the keen jump, and every man worth his weight in diamonds --and then they came to him, and--told him to sign a promise to keep that foreman to the end of the season, or till he was through with the work on the Dryfoos and Hendry Addition, under penalty of having them all knock off. Mr. Dryfoos smelled a mouse, but he couldn't tell where the mouse was; he saw that they did have him, and he signed, of course. There wasn't anything really against the fellow, anyway; he was a first-rate man, and he did his duty every time; only he'd got some of those ideas into his head, and they turned it. Mr. Dryfoos signed, and then he laid low."

March saw Lindau listening with a mounting intensity, and heard him murmur in German, "Shameful! shameful!"

Fulkerson went on: "Well, it wasn't long before they began to show their hand, but Mr. Dryfoos kept dark. He agreed to everything; there never was such an obliging capitalist before; there wasn't a thing they asked of him that he didn't do, with the greatest of pleasure, and all went merry as a marriage-bell till one morning a whole gang of fresh men marched into the Dryfoos and Hendry Addition, under the escort of a dozen Pinkertons with repeating rifles at half-cock, and about fifty fellows

found themselves out of a job. You never saw such a mad set."

"Pretty neat," said Kendricks, who looked at the affair purely from an aesthetic point of view. "Such a coup as that would tell tremendously in a play."

"That was vile treason," said Lindau in German to March. "He's an infamous traitor! I cannot stay here. I must go."

He struggled to rise, while March held him by the coat, and implored him under his voice: "For Heaven's sake, don't, Lindau! You owe it to yourself not to make a scene, if you come here." Something in it all affected him comically; he could not help laughing.

The others were discussing the matter, and seemed not to have noticed Lindau, who controlled himself and sighed: "You are right. I must have patience."

Beaton was saying to Dryfoos, "Pity your Pinkertons couldn't have given them a few shots before they left."

"No, that wasn't necessary," said Dryfoos. "I succeeded in breaking up the union. I entered into an agreement with other parties not to employ any man who would not swear that he was non-union. If they had attempted violence, of course they could have been shot. But there was no fear of that. Those fellows can always be depended upon to cut one another's throats in the long run."

"But sometimes," said Colonel Woodburn, who had been watching throughout. for a chance to mount his hobby again, "they make a good deal of trouble first. How was it in the great railroad strike of '77?"

"Well, I guess there was a little trouble that time, colonel," said Fulkerson. "But the men that undertake to override the laws and paralyze the industries of a country like this generally get left in the end."

"Yes, sir, generally; and up to a certain point, always. But it's the exceptional that is apt to happen, as well as the unexpected. And a little reflection will convince any gentleman here that there is always a danger of the exceptional in your system. The fact is, those fellows have the game in their own hands already. A strike of the whole body of the Brotherhood of Engineers alone would starve out the entire Atlantic seaboard in a week; labor insurrection could make head at a dozen given points, and your government couldn't move a man over the roads without the help of the engineers."

"That is so," said Kendrick, struck by the dramatic character of the conjecture. He imagined a fiction dealing with the situation as something already accomplished.

"Why don't some fellow do the Battle of Dorking act with that thing?" said Fulkerson. "It would be a card."

"Exactly what I was thinking, Mr. Fulkerson," said Kendrick.

Fulkerson laughed. "Telepathy--clear case of mind transference. Better see March, here, about it. I'd like to have it in 'Every Other Week.' It would make talk."

"Perhaps it might set your people to thinking as well as talking," said the colonel.

"Well, sir," said Dryfoos, setting his lips so tightly together that his imperial stuck straight outward, "if I had my way, there wouldn't be any Brotherhood of Engineers, nor any other kind of labor union in the whole country."

"What!" shouted Lindau. "You would sobbress the unionss of the voarking-men?"

"Yes, I would."

"And what would you do with the unionss of the gabidalist--the drosts--and gompines, and boolss? Would you dake the righdt from one and gif it to the odder?"

"Yes, sir, I would," said Dryfoos, with a wicked look at him.

Lindau was about to roar back at him with some furious protest, but March put his hand on his shoulder imploringly, and Lindau turned to him to say in German: "But it is infamous--infamous! What kind of man is this? Who is he? He has the heart of a tyrant."

Colonel Woodburn cut in. "You couldn't do that, Mr. Dryfoos, under your system. And if you attempted it, with your conspiracy laws, and that kind of thing, it might bring the climax sooner than you expected. Your commercialized society has built its house on the sands. It will have to go. But I should be sorry if it went before its time."

"You are righdt, sir," said Lindau. "It would be a bity. I hobe it will last till it feelss its rottenness, like Herodt. Boat, when its hour gomes, when it trope to bieces with the veight off its own gorrubtion--what then?"

"It's not to be supposed that a system of things like this can drop to pieces of its own accord, like the old Republic of Venice," said the colonel. "But when the last vestige of commercial society is gone, then we can begin to build anew; and we shall build upon the central idea, not of the false liberty you now worship, but of responsibility--responsibility. The enlightened, the moneyed, the cultivated class shall be responsible to the central authority--emperor, duke, president; the name does not matter--for the national expense and the national defence, and it shall be responsible to the working-classes of all kinds for homes and lands and implements, and the opportunity to labor at all times.

"The working-classes shall be responsible to the leisure class for the

support of its dignity in peace, and shall be subject to its command in war. The rich shall warrant the poor against planless production and the ruin that now follows, against danger from without and famine from within, and the poor--"

"No, no, no!" shouted Lindau. "The State shall do that--the whole beople. The men who voark shall have and shall eat; and the men that will not voark, they shall sdarfe. But no man need sdarfe. He will go to the State, and the State will see that he haf voark, and that he haf foodt. All the roadts and mills and mines and landts shall be the beople's and be ron by the beople for the beople. There shall be no rich and no boor; and there shall not be war any more, for what bower wouldt dare to addack a beople bound togeder in a broderhood like that?"

"Lion and lamb act," said Fulkerson, not well knowing, after so much champagne, what words he was using.

No one noticed him, and Colonel Woodburn said coldly to Lindau, "You are talking paternalism, sir."

"And you are dalking feutalism!" retorted the old man.

The colonel did not reply. A silence ensued, which no one broke till Fulkerson said: "Well, now, look here. If either one of these millenniums was brought about, by force of arms, or otherwise, what would become of 'Every Other Week'? Who would want March for an editor? How would Beaton sell his pictures? Who would print Mr. Kendricks's little society verses and short stories? What would become of Conrad and his good works?" Those named grinned in support of Fulkerson's diversion, but Lindau and the colonel did not speak; Dryfoos looked down at his plate, frowning.

A waiter came round with cigars, and Fulkerson took one. "Ah," he said, as he bit off the end, and leaned over to the emblematic masterpiece, where the brandy was still feebly flickering, "I wonder if there's enough natural gas left to light my cigar." His effort put the flame out and knocked the derrick over; it broke in fragments on the table. Fulkerson cackled over the ruin: "I wonder if all Moffitt will look that way after labor and capital have fought it out together. I hope this ain't ominous of anything personal, Dryfoos?"

"I'll take the risk of it," said the old man, harshly.

He rose mechanically, and Fulkerson said to Frescobaldi's man, "You can bring us the coffee in the library."

The talk did not recover itself there. Landau would not sit down; he refused coffee, and dismissed himself with a haughty bow to the company; Colonel Woodburn shook hands elaborately all round, when he had smoked his cigar; the others followed him. It seemed to March that his own good-night from Dryfoos was dry and cold.

VII.

March met Fulkerson on the steps of the office next morning, when he arrived rather later than his wont. Fulkerson did not show any of the signs of suffering from the last night's pleasure which painted themselves in March's face. He flitted his hand gayly in the air, and said, "How's your poor head?" and broke into a knowing laugh. "You don't seem to have got up with the lark this morning. The old gentleman is in there with Conrad, as bright as a biscuit; he's beat you down. Well, we did have a good time, didn't we? And old Lindau and the colonel, didn't they have a good time? I don't suppose they ever had a chance before to give their theories quite so much air. Oh, my! how they did ride over us! I'm just going down to see Beaton about the cover of the Christmas number. I think we ought to try it in three or four colors, if we are going to observe the day at all." He was off before March could pull himself together to ask what Dryfoos wanted at the office at that hour of the morning; he always came in the afternoon on his way up-town.

The fact of his presence renewed the sinister misgivings with which March had parted from him the night before, but Fulkerson's cheerfulness seemed to gainsay them; afterward March did not know whether to attribute this mood to the slipperiness that he was aware of at times in Fulkerson, or to a cynical amusement he might have felt at leaving him alone to the old man, who mounted to his room shortly after March had reached it.

A sort of dumb anger showed itself in his face; his jaw was set so firmly that he did not seem able at once to open it. He asked, without the ceremonies of greeting, "What does that one-armed Dutchman do on this book?"

"What does he do?" March echoed, as people are apt to do with a question that is mandatory and offensive.

"Yes, sir, what does he do? Does he write for it?"

"I suppose you mean Lindau," said March. He saw no reason for refusing to answer Dryfoos's demand, and he decided to ignore its terms. "No, he doesn't write for it in the usual way. He translates for it; he examines the foreign magazines, and draws my attention to anything he thinks of interest. But I told you about this before--"

"I know what you told me, well enough. And I know what he is. He is a red-mouthed labor agitator. He's one of those foreigners that come here from places where they've never had a decent meal's victuals in their lives, and as soon as they get their stomachs full, they begin to make trouble between our people and their hands. There's where the strikes come from, and the unions and the secret societies. They come here and break our Sabbath, and teach their atheism. They ought to be hung! Let 'em go back if they don't like it over here. They want to ruin the country."

March could not help smiling a little at the words, which came fast enough now in the hoarse staccato of Dryfoos's passion. "I don't know whom you mean by they, generally speaking; but I had the impression that poor old Lindau had once done his best to save the country. I don't always like his way of talking, but I know that he is one of the truest and kindest souls in the world; and he is no more an atheist than I am. He is my friend, and I can't allow him to be misunderstood."

"I don't care what he is," Dryfoos broke out, "I won't have him round. He can't have any more work from this office. I want you to stop it. I want you to turn him off."

March was standing at his desk, as he had risen to receive Dryfoos when he entered. He now sat down, and began to open his letters.

"Do you hear?" the old man roared at him. "I want you to turn him off."

"Excuse me, Mr. Dryfoos," said March, succeeding in an effort to speak calmly, "I don't know you, in such a matter as this. My arrangements as editor of 'Every Other Week' were made with Mr. Fulkerson. I have always listened to any suggestion he has had to make."

"I don't care for Mr. Fulkerson? He has nothing to do with it," retorted Dryfoos; but he seemed a little daunted by March's position.

"He has everything to do with it as far as I am concerned," March answered, with a steadiness that he did not feel. "I know that you are the owner of the periodical, but I can't receive any suggestion from you, for the reason that I have given. Nobody but Mr. Fulkerson has any right to talk with me about its management."

Dryfoos glared at him for a moment, and demanded, threateningly: "Then you say you won't turn that old loafer off? You say that I have got to keep on paying my money out to buy beer for a man that would cut my throat if he got the chance?"

"I say nothing at all, Mr. Dryfoos," March answered. The blood came into his face, and he added: "But I will say that if you speak again of Mr. Lindau in those terms, one of us must leave this room. I will not hear you."

Dryfoos looked at him with astonishment; then he struck his hat down on his head, and stamped out of the room and down the stairs; and a vague pity came into March's heart that was not altogether for himself. He might be the greater sufferer in the end, but he was sorry to have got the better of that old man for the moment; and he felt ashamed of the anger into which Dryfoos's anger had surprised him. He knew he could not say too much in defence of Lindau's generosity and unselfishness, and he had not attempted to defend him as a political economist. He could not have taken any ground in relation to Dryfoos but that which he held, and he felt satisfied that he was right in refusing to receive instructions or commands from him. Yet somehow he was not satisfied with the whole

affair, and not merely because his present triumph threatened his final advantage, but because he felt that in his heat he had hardly done justice to Dryfoos's rights in the matter; it did not quite console him to reflect that Dryfoos had himself made it impossible. He was tempted to go home and tell his wife what had happened, and begin his preparations for the future at once. But he resisted this weakness and kept mechanically about his work, opening the letters and the manuscripts before him with that curious double action of the mind common in men of vivid imaginations. It was a relief when Conrad Dryfoos, having apparently waited to make sure that his father would not return, came up from the counting-room and looked in on March with a troubled face.

"Mr. March," he began, "I hope father hasn't been saying anything to you that you can't overlook. I know he was very much excited, and when he is excited he is apt to say things that he is sorry for."

The apologetic attitude taken for Dryfoos, so different from any attitude the peremptory old man would have conceivably taken for himself, made March smile. "Oh no. I fancy the boot is on the other leg. I suspect I've said some things your father can't overlook, Conrad." He called the young man by his Christian name partly to distinguish him from his father, partly from the infection of Fulkerson's habit, and partly from a kindness for him that seemed naturally to express itself in that way.

"I know he didn't sleep last night, after you all went away," Conrad pursued, "and of course that made him more irritable; and he was tried a good deal by some of the things that Mr. Lindau said."

"I was tried a good deal myself," said March. "Lindau ought never to have been there."

"No." Conrad seemed only partially to assent.

"I told Mr. Fulkerson so. I warned him that Lindau would be apt to break out in some way. It wasn't just to him, and it wasn't just to your father, to ask him."

"Mr. Fulkerson had a good motive," Conrad gently urged. "He did it because he hurt his feelings that day about the pension."

"Yes, but it was a mistake. He knew that Lindau was inflexible about his principles, as he calls them, and that one of his first principles is to denounce the rich in season and out of season. I don't remember just what he said last night; and I really thought I'd kept him from breaking out in the most offensive way. But your father seems very much incensed."

"Yes, I know," said Conrad.

"Of course, I don't agree with Lindau. I think there are as many good, kind, just people among the rich as there are among the poor, and that they are as generous and helpful. But Lindau has got hold of one of those partial truths that hurt worse than the whole truth, and--"

"Partial truth!" the young man interrupted. "Didn't the Saviour himself say, 'How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God?'"

"Why, bless my soul!" cried March. "Do you agree with Lindau?"

"I agree with the Lord Jesus Christ," said the young man, solemnly, and a strange light of fanaticism, of exaltation, came into his wide blue eyes. "And I believe He meant the kingdom of heaven upon this earth, as well as in the skies."

March threw himself back in his chair and looked at him with a kind of stupefaction, in which his eye wandered to the doorway, where he saw Fulkerson standing, it seemed to him a long time, before he heard him saying: "Hello, hello! What's the row? Conrad pitching into you on old Lindau's account, too?"

The young man turned, and, after a glance at Fulkerson's light, smiling face, went out, as if in his present mood he could not bear the contact of that persiflant spirit.

March felt himself getting provisionally very angry again. "Excuse me, Fulkerson, but did you know when you went out what Mr. Dryfoos wanted to see me for?"

"Well, no, I didn't exactly," said Fulkerson, taking his usual seat on a chair and looking over the back of it at March. "I saw he was on his car about something, and I thought I'd better not monkey with him much. I supposed he was going to bring you to book about old Lindau, somehow." Fulkerson broke into a laugh.

March remained serious. "Mr. Dryfoos," he said, willing to let the simple statement have its own weight with Fulkerson, and nothing more, "came in here and ordered me to discharge Lindau from his employment on the magazine--to turn him off, as he put it."

"Did he?" asked Fulkerson, with unbroken cheerfulness. "The old man is business, every time. Well, I suppose you can easily get somebody else to do Lindau's work for you. This town is just running over with half-starved linguists. What did you say?"

"What did I say?" March echoed. "Look here, Fulkerson; you may regard this as a joke, but I don't. I'm not used to being spoken to as if I were the foreman of a shop, and told to discharge a sensitive and cultivated man like Lindau, as if he were a drunken mechanic; and if that's your idea of me--"

"Oh, hello, now, March! You mustn't mind the old man's way. He don't mean anything by it--he don't know any better, if you come to that."

"Then I know better," said March. "I refused to receive any instructions from Mr. Dryfoos, whom I don't know in my relations with 'Every Other

Week,' and I referred him to you."

"You did?" Fulkerson whistled. "He owns the thing!"

"I don't care who owns the thing," said March. "My negotiations were with you alone from the beginning, and I leave this matter with you. What do you wish done about Lindau?"

"Oh, better let the old fool drop," said Fulkerson. "He'll light on his feet somehow, and it will save a lot of rumpus."

"And if I decline to let him drop?"

"Oh, come, now, March; don't do that," Fulkerson began.

"If I decline to let him drop," March repeated, "what will you do?"

"I'll be dogged if I know what I'll do," said Fulkerson. "I hope you won't take that stand. If the old man went so far as to speak to you about it, his mind is made up, and we might as well knock under first as last."

"And do you mean to say that you would not stand by me in what I considered my duty-in a matter of principle?"

"Why, of course, March," said Fulkerson, coaxingly, "I mean to do the right thing. But Dryfoos owns the magazine--"

"He doesn't own me," said March, rising. "He has made the little mistake of speaking to me as if he did; and when"--March put on his hat and took his overcoat down from its nail--"when you bring me his apologies, or come to say that, having failed to make him understand they were necessary, you are prepared to stand by me, I will come back to this desk. Otherwise my resignation is at your service."

He started toward the door, and Fulkerson intercepted him. "Ah, now, look here, March! Don't do that! Hang it all, don't you see where it leaves me? Now, you just sit down a minute and talk it over. I can make you see--I can show you--Why, confound the old Dutch beer-buzzer! Twenty of him wouldn't be worth the trouble he's makin'. Let him go, and the old man 'll come round in time."

"I don't think we've understood each other exactly, Mr. Fulkerson," said March, very haughtily. "Perhaps we never can; but I'll leave you to think it out."

He pushed on, and Fulkerson stood aside to let him pass, with a dazed look and a mechanical movement. There was something comic in his rueful bewilderment to March, who was tempted to smile, but he said to himself that he had as much reason to be unhappy as Fulkerson, and he did not smile. His indignation kept him hot in his purpose to suffer any consequence rather than submit to the dictation of a man like Dryfoos; he felt keenly the degradation of his connection with him, and all his

resentment of Fulkerson's original uncandor returned; at the same time his heart ached with foreboding. It was not merely the work in which he had constantly grown happier that he saw taken from him; but he felt the misery of the man who stakes the security and plenty and peace of home upon some cast, and knows that losing will sweep from him most that most men find sweet and pleasant in life. He faced the fact, which no good man can front without terror, that he was risking the support of his family, and for a point of pride, of honor, which perhaps he had no right to consider in view of the possible adversity. He realized, as every hireling must, no matter how skillfully or gracefully the tie is contrived for his wearing, that he belongs to another, whose will is his law. His indignation was shot with abject impulses to go back and tell Fulkerson that it was all right, and that he gave up. To end the anguish of his struggle he quickened his steps, so that he found he was reaching home almost at a run.

VIII.

He must have made more clatter than he supposed with his key at the apartment door, for his wife had come to let him in when he flung it open. "Why, Basil," she said, "what's brought you back? Are you sick? You're all pale. Well, no wonder! This is the last of Mr. Fulkerson's dinners you shall go to. You're not strong enough for it, and your stomach will be all out of order for a week. How hot you are! and in a drip of perspiration! Now you'll be sick." She took his hat away, which hung dangling in his hand, and pushed him into a chair with tender impatience. "What is the matter? Has anything happened?"

"Everything has happened," he said, getting his voice after one or two husky endeavors for it; and then he poured out a confused and huddled statement of the case, from which she only got at the situation by prolonged cross-questioning.

At the end she said, "I knew Lindau would get you into trouble."

This cut March to the heart. "Isabel!" he cried, reproachfully.

"Oh, I know," she retorted, and the tears began to come. "I don't wonder you didn't want to say much to me about that dinner at breakfast. I noticed it; but I thought you were just dull, and so I didn't insist. I wish I had, now. If you had told me what Lindau had said, I should have known what would have come of it, and I could have advised you--"

"Would you have advised me," March demanded, curiously, "to submit to bullying like that, and meekly consent to commit an act of cruelty against a man who had once been such a friend to me?"

"It was an unlucky day when you met him. I suppose we shall have to go. And just when we had got used to New York, and begun to like it. I don't know where we shall go now; Boston isn't like home any more; and we

couldn't live on two thousand there; I should be ashamed to try. I'm sure I don't know where we can live on it. I suppose in some country village, where there are no schools, or anything for the children. I don't know what they'll say when we tell them, poor things."

Every word was a stab in March's heart, so weakly tender to his own; his wife's tears, after so much experience of the comparative lightness of the griefs that weep themselves out in women, always seemed wrung from his own soul; if his children suffered in the least through him, he felt like a murderer. It was far worse than he could have imagined, the way his wife took the affair, though he had imagined certain words, or perhaps only looks, from her that were bad enough. He had allowed for trouble, but trouble on his account: a sympathy that might burden and embarrass him; but he had not dreamed of this merely domestic, this petty, this sordid view of their potential calamity, which left him wholly out of the question, and embraced only what was most crushing and desolating in the prospect. He could not bear it. He caught up his hat again, and, with some hope that his wife would try to keep him, rushed out of the house. He wandered aimlessly about, thinking the same exhausting thoughts over and over, till he found himself horribly hungry; then he went into a restaurant for his lunch, and when he paid he tried to imagine how he should feel if that were really his last dollar.

He went home toward the middle of the afternoon, basely hoping that Fulkerson had sent him some conciliatory message, or perhaps was waiting there for him to talk it over; March was quite willing to talk it over now. But it was his wife who again met him at the door, though it seemed another woman than the one he had left weeping in the morning.

"I told the children," she said, in smiling explanation of his absence from lunch, "that perhaps you were detained by business. I didn't know but you had gone back to the office."

"Did you think I would go back there, Isabel?" asked March, with a haggard look. "Well, if you say so, I will go back, and do what Dryfoos ordered me to do. I'm sufficiently cowed between him and you, I can assure you."

"Nonsense," she said. "I approve of everything you did. But sit down, now, and don't keep walking that way, and let me see if I understand it perfectly. Of course, I had to have my say out."

She made him go all over his talk with Dryfoos again, and report his own language precisely. From time to time, as she got his points, she said, "That was splendid," "Good enough for him!" and "Oh, I'm so glad you said that to him!" At the end she said:

"Well, now, let's look at it from his point of view. Let's be perfectly just to him before we take another step forward."

"Or backward," March suggested, ruefully. "The case is simply this: he owns the magazine."

"Of course."

"And he has a right to expect that I will consider his pecuniary interests--"

"Oh, those detestable pecuniary interests! Don't you wish there wasn't any money in the world?"

"Yes; or else that there was a great deal more of it. And I was perfectly willing to do that. I have always kept that in mind as one of my duties to him, ever since I understood what his relation to the magazine was."

"Yes, I can bear witness to that in any court of justice. You've done it a great deal more than I could, Basil. And it was just the same way with those horrible insurance people."

"I know," March went on, trying to be proof against her flatteries, or at least to look as if he did not deserve praise; "I know that what Lindau said was offensive to him, and I can understand how he felt that he had a right to punish it. All I say is that he had no right to punish it through me."

"Yes," said Mrs. March, askingly.

"If it had been a question of making 'Every Other Week' the vehicle of Lindau's peculiar opinions--though they're not so very peculiar; he might have got the most of them out of Ruskin--I shouldn't have had any ground to stand on, or at least then I should have had to ask myself whether his opinions would be injurious to the magazine or not."

"I don't see," Mrs. March interpolated, "how they could hurt it much worse than Colonel Woodburn's article crying up slavery."

"Well," said March, impartially, "we could print a dozen articles praising the slavery it's impossible to have back, and it wouldn't hurt us. But if we printed one paper against the slavery which Lindau claims still exists, some people would call us bad names, and the counting-room would begin to feel it. But that isn't the point. Lindau's connection with 'Every Other Week' is almost purely mechanical; he's merely a translator of such stories and sketches as he first submits to me, and it isn't at all a question of his opinions hurting us, but of my becoming an agent to punish him for his opinions. That is what I wouldn't do; that's what I never will do."

"If you did," said his wife, "I should perfectly despise you. I didn't understand how it was before. I thought you were just holding out against Dryfoos because he took a dictatorial tone with you, and because you wouldn't recognize his authority. But now I'm with you, Basil, every time, as that horrid little Fulkerson says. But who would ever have supposed he would be so base as to side against you?"

"I don't know," said March, thoughtfully, "that we had a right to expect

anything else. Fulkerson's standards are low; they're merely business standards, and the good that's in him is incidental and something quite apart from his morals and methods. He's naturally a generous and right-minded creature, but life has taught him to truckle and trick, like the rest of us."

"It hasn't taught you that, Basil."

"Don't be so sure. Perhaps it's only that I'm a poor scholar. But I don't know, really, that I despise Fulkerson so much for his course this morning as for his gross and fulsome flatteries of Dryfoos last night. I could hardly stomach it."

His wife made him tell her what they were, and then she said, "Yes, that was loathsome; I couldn't have believed it of Mr. Fulkerson."

"Perhaps he only did it to keep the talk going, and to give the old man a chance to say something," March leniently suggested. "It was a worse effect because he didn't or couldn't follow up Fulkerson's lead."

"It was loathsome, all the same," his wife insisted. "It's the end of Mr. Fulkerson, as far as I'm concerned."

"I didn't tell you before," March resumed, after a moment, "of my little interview with Conrad Dryfoos after his father left," and now he went on to repeat what had passed between him and the young man.

"I suspect that he and his father had been having some words before the old man came up to talk with me, and that it was that made him so furious."

"Yes, but what a strange position for the son of such a man to take! Do you suppose he says such things to his father?"

"I don't know; but I suspect that in his meek way Conrad would say what he believed to anybody. I suppose we must regard him as a kind of crank."

"Poor young fellow! He always makes me feel sad, somehow. He has such a pathetic face. I don't believe I ever saw him look quite happy, except that night at Mrs. Horn's, when he was talking with Miss Vance; and then he made me feel sadder than ever."

"I don't envy him the life he leads at home, with those convictions of his. I don't see why it wouldn't be as tolerable there for old Lindau himself."

"Well, now," said Mrs. March, "let us put them all out of our minds and see what we are going to do ourselves."

They began to consider their ways and means, and how and where they should live, in view of March's severance of his relations with 'Every Other Week.' They had not saved anything from the first year's salary;

they had only prepared to save; and they had nothing solid but their two thousand to count upon. But they built a future in which they easily lived on that and on what March earned with his pen. He became a free lance, and fought in whatever cause he thought just; he had no ties, no chains. They went back to Boston with the heroic will to do what was most distasteful; they would have returned to their own house if they had not rented it again; but, any rate, Mrs. March helped out by taking boarders, or perhaps only letting rooms to lodgers. They had some hard struggles, but they succeeded.

"The great thing," she said, "is to be right. I'm ten times as happy as if you had come home and told me that you had consented to do what Dryfoos asked and he had doubled your salary."

"I don't think that would have happened in any event," said March, dryly.

"Well, no matter. I just used it for an example."

They both experienced a buoyant relief, such as seems to come to people who begin life anew on whatever terms. "I hope we are young enough yet, Basil," she said, and she would not have it when he said they had once been younger.

They heard the children's knock on the door; they knocked when they came home from school so that their mother might let them in. "Shall we tell them at once?" she asked, and ran to open for them before March could answer.

They were not alone. Fulkerson, smiling from ear to ear, was with them. "Is March in?" he asked.

"Mr. March is at home, yes," she said very haughtily. "He's in his study," and she led the way there, while the children went to their rooms.

"Well, March," Fulkerson called out at sight of him, "it's all right! The old man has come down."

"I suppose if you gentlemen are going to talk business--" Mrs. March began.

"Oh, we don't want you to go away," said Fulkerson. "I reckon March has told you, anyway."

"Yes, I've told her," said March. "Don't go, Isabel. What do you mean, Fulkerson?"

"He's just gone on up home, and he sent me round with his apologies. He sees now that he had no business to speak to you as he did, and he withdraws everything. He'd 'a' come round himself if I'd said so, but I told him I could make it all right."

Fulkerson looked so happy in having the whole affair put right, and the

Marches knew him to be so kindly affected toward them, that they could not refuse for the moment to share his mood. They felt themselves slipping down from the moral height which they had gained, and March made a clutch to stay himself with the question, "And Lindau?"

"Well," said Fulkerson, "he's going to leave Lindau to me. You won't have anything to do with it. I'll let the old fellow down easy."

"Do you mean," asked March, "that Mr. Dryfoos insists on his being dismissed?"

"Why, there isn't any dismissing about it," Fulkerson argued. "If you don't send him any more work, he won't do any more, that's all. Or if he comes round, you can--He's to be referred to me."

March shook his head, and his wife, with a sigh, felt herself plucked up from the soft circumstance of their lives, which she had sunk back into so quickly, and set beside him on that cold peak of principle again.

"It won't do, Fulkerson. It's very good of you, and all that, but it comes to the same thing in the end. I could have gone on without any apology from Mr. Dryfoos; he transcended his authority, but that's a minor matter. I could have excused it to his ignorance of life among gentlemen; but I can't consent to Lindau's dismissal--it comes to that, whether you do it or I do it, and whether it's a positive or a negative thing--because he holds this opinion or that."

"But don't you see," said Fulkerson, "that it's just Lindau's opinions the old man can't stand? He hasn't got anything against him personally. I don't suppose there's anybody that appreciates Lindau in some ways more than the old man does."

"I understand. He wants to punish him for his opinions. Well, I can't consent to that, directly or indirectly. We don't print his opinions, and he has a perfect right to hold them, whether Mr. Dryfoos agrees with them or not."

Mrs. March had judged it decorous for her to say nothing, but she now went and sat down in the chair next her husband.

"Ah, dog on it!" cried Fulkerson, rumpling his hair with both his hands. "What am I to do? The old man says he's got to go."

"And I don't consent to his going," said March.

"And you won't stay if he goes."

Fulkerson rose. "Well, well! I've got to see about it. I'm afraid the old man won't stand it, March; I am, indeed. I wish you'd reconsider. I--I'd take it as a personal favor if you would. It leaves me in a fix. You see I've got to side with one or the other."

March made no reply to this, except to say, "Yes, you must stand by him, or you must stand by me."

"Well, well! Hold on awhile! I'll see you in the morning. Don't take any steps--"

"Oh, there are no steps to take," said March, with a melancholy smile. "The steps are stopped; that's all." He sank back into his chair when Fulkerson was gone and drew a long breath. "This is pretty rough. I thought we had got through it."

"No," said his wife. "It seems as if I had to make the fight all over again."

"Well, it's a good thing it's a holy war."

"I can't bear the suspense. Why didn't you tell him outright you wouldn't go back on any terms?"

"I might as well, and got the glory. He'll never move Dryfoos. I suppose we both would like to go back, if we could."

"Oh, I suppose so."

They could not regain their lost exaltation, their lost dignity. At dinner Mrs. March asked the children how they would like to go back to Boston to live.

"Why, we're not going, are we?" asked Tom, without enthusiasm.

"I was just wondering how you felt about it, now," she said, with an underlook at her husband.

"Well, if we go back," said Bella, "I want to live on the Back Bay. It's awfully Micky at the South End."

"I suppose I should go to Harvard," said Tom, "and I'd room out at Cambridge. It would be easier to get at you on the Back Bay."

The parents smiled ruefully at each other, and, in view of these grand expectations of his children, March resolved to go as far as he could in meeting Dryfoos's wishes. He proposed the theatre as a distraction from the anxieties that he knew were pressing equally on his wife. "We might go to the 'Old Homestead,'" he suggested, with a sad irony, which only his wife felt.

"Oh yes, let's!" cried Bella.

While they were getting ready, some one rang, and Bella went to the door, and then came to tell her father that it was Mr. Lindau. "He says he wants to see you just a moment. He's in the parlor, and he won't sit down, or anything."

"What can he want?" groaned Mrs. March, from their common dismay.

March apprehended a storm in the old man's face. But he only stood in the middle of the room, looking very sad and grave. "You are Going outd," he said. "I won't geep you long. I haf come to pring pack dose macassines and dis mawney. I can't do any more voark for you; and I can't geep the mawney you haf baid me a'ready. It iss not hawnest mawney --that hass been earned py voark; it iss mawney that hass peen mate py sbeculation, and the obbression off lapor, and the necessity of the boor, py a man--Here it is, efery tollar, efery zent. Dake it; I feel as if dere vas bloodt on it."

"Why, Lindau," March began, but the old man interrupted him.

"Ton't dalk to me, Passil! I could not haf believedt it of you. When you know how I feel about dose tings, why tidn't you dell me whose mawney you bay outd to me? Ach, I ton't plame you--I ton't rebroach you. You haf nefer thought of it; boat I have thought, and I should be Guilty, I must share that man's Guilt, if I gept hiss mawney. If you hat toldt me at the peginning--if you hat peen frank with meboat it iss all righdt; you can go on; you ton't see dese tings as I see them; and you haf cot a family, and I am a free man. I voark to myself, and when I ton't voark, I sdarfe to myself. But. I geep my handts glean, voark or sdarfe. Gif him hiss mawney pack! I am sawry for him; I would not hoart hiss feelings, boat I could not pear to douch him, and hiss mawney iss like boison!"

March tried to reason with Lindau, to show him the folly, the injustice, the absurdity of his course; it ended in their both getting angry, and in Lindau's going away in a whirl of German that included Basil in the guilt of the man whom Lindau called his master.

"Well," said Mrs. March. "He is a crank, and I think you're well rid of him. Now you have no quarrel with that horrid old Dryfoos, and you can keep right on."

"Yes," said March, "I wish it didn't make me feel so sneaking. What a long day it's been! It seems like a century since I got up."

"Yes, a thousand years. Is there anything else left to happen?"

"I hope not. I'd like to go to bed."

"Why, aren't you going to the theatre?" wailed Bella, coming in upon her father's desperate expression.

"The theatre? Oh yes, certainly! I meant after we got home," and March amused himself at the puzzled countenance of the child. "Come on! Is Tom ready?"

Fulkerson parted with the Marches in such trouble of mind that he did not feel able to meet that night the people whom he usually kept so gay at Mrs. Leighton's table. He went to Maroni's for his dinner, for this reason and for others more obscure. He could not expect to do anything more with Dryfoos at once; he knew that Dryfoos must feel that he had already made an extreme concession to March, and he believed that if he was to get anything more from him it must be after Dryfoos had dined. But he was not without the hope, vague and indefinite as it might be, that he should find Lindau at Maroni's, and perhaps should get some concession from him, some word of regret or apology which he could report to Dryfoos, and at least make the means of reopening the affair with him; perhaps Lindau, when he knew how matters stood, would back down altogether, and for March's sake would withdraw from all connection with 'Every Other Week' himself, and so leave everything serene. Fulkerson felt capable, in his desperation, of delicately suggesting such a course to Lindau, or even of plainly advising it: he did not care for Lindau a great deal, and he did care a great deal for the magazine.

But he did not find Lindau at Maroni's; he only found Beaton. He sat looking at the doorway as Fulkerson entered, and Fulkerson naturally came and took a place at his table. Something in Beaton's large-eyed solemnity of aspect invited Fulkerson to confidence, and he said, as he pulled his napkin open and strung it, still a little damp (as the scanty, often-washed linen at Maroni's was apt to be), across his knees, "I was looking for you this morning, to talk with you about the Christmas number, and I was a good deal worked up because I couldn't find you; but I guess I might as well have spared myself my emotions."

"Why?" asked Beaton, briefly.

"Well, I don't know as there's going to be any Christmas number."

"Why?" Beaton asked again.

"Row between the financial angel and the literary editor about the chief translator and polyglot smeller."

"Lindau?"

"Lindau is his name."

"What does the literary editor expect after Lindau's expression of his views last night?"

"I don't know what he expected, but the ground he took with the old man was that, as Lindau's opinions didn't characterize his work on the magazine, he would not be made the instrument of punishing him for them the old man wanted him turned off, as he calls it."

"Seems to be pretty good ground," said Beaton, impartially, while he speculated, with a dull trouble at heart, on the effect the row would have on his own fortunes. His late visit home had made him feel that the claim of his family upon him for some repayment of help given could not

be much longer delayed; with his mother sick and his father growing old, he must begin to do something for them, but up to this time he had spent his salary even faster than he had earned it. When Fulkerson came in he was wondering whether he could get him to increase it, if he threatened to give up his work, and he wished that he was enough in love with Margaret Vance, or even Christine Dryfoos, to marry her, only to end in the sorrowful conviction that he was really in love with Alma Leighton, who had no money, and who had apparently no wish to be married for love, even. "And what are you going to do about it?" he asked, listlessly.

"Be dogged if I know what I'm going to do about it," said Fulkerson.

"I've been round all day, trying to pick up the pieces--row began right after breakfast this morning--and one time I thought I'd got the thing all put together again. I got the old man to say that he had spoken to March a little too authoritatively about Lindau; that, in fact, he ought to have communicated his wishes through me; and that he was willing to have me get rid of Lindau, and March needn't have anything to do with it. I thought that was pretty white, but March says the apologies and regrets are all well enough in their way, but they leave the main question where they found it."

"What is the main question?" Beaton asked, pouring himself out some Chianti. As he set the flask down he made the reflection that if he would drink water instead of Chianti he could send his father three dollars a week, on his back debts, and he resolved to do it.

"The main question, as March looks at it, is the question of punishing Lindau for his private opinions; he says that if he consents to my bouncing the old fellow it's the same as if he bounced him."

"It might have that complexion in some lights," said Beaton. He drank off his Chianti, and thought he would have it twice a week, or make Maroni keep the half-bottles over for him, and send his father two dollars. "And what are you going to do now?"

"That's what I don't know," said Fulkerson, ruefully. After a moment he said, desperately, "Beaton, you've got a pretty good head; why don't you suggest something?"

"Why don't you let March go?" Beaton suggested.

"Ah, I couldn't," said Fulkerson. "I got him to break up in Boston and come here; I like him; nobody else could get the hang of the thing like he has; he's--a friend." Fulkerson said this with the nearest approach he could make to seriousness, which was a kind of unhappiness.

Beaton shrugged. "Oh, if you can afford to have ideals, I congratulate you. They're too expensive for me. Then, suppose you get rid of Dryfoos?"

Fulkerson laughed forlornly. "Go on, Bildad. Like to sprinkle a few ashes over my boils? Don't mind me!"

They both sat silent a little while, and then Beaton said, "I suppose you haven't seen Dryfoos the second time?"

"No. I came in here to gird up my loins with a little dinner before I tackled him. But something seems to be the matter with Maroni's cook. I don't want anything to eat."

"The cooking's about as bad as usual," said Beaton. After a moment he added, ironically, for he found Fulkerson's misery a kind of relief from his own, and was willing to protract it as long as it was amusing, "Why not try an envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary?"

"What do you mean?"

"Get that other old fool to go to Dryfoos for you!"

"Which other old fool? The old fools seem to be as thick as flies."

"That Southern one."

"Colonel Woodburn?"

"Mmmm."

"He did seem to rather take to the colonel!" Fulkerson mused aloud.

"Of course he did. Woodburn, with his idiotic talk about patriarchal slavery, is the man on horseback to Dryfoos's muddy imagination. He'd listen to him abjectly, and he'd do whatever Woodburn told him to do." Beaton smiled cynically.

Fulkerson got up and reached for his coat and hat. "You've struck it, old man." The waiter came up to help him on with his coat; Fulkerson slipped a dollar in his hand. "Never mind the coat; you can give the rest of my dinner to the poor, Paolo. Beaton, shake! You've saved my life, little boy, though I don't think you meant it." He took Beaton's hand and solemnly pressed it, and then almost ran out of the door.

They had just reached coffee at Mrs. Leighton's when he arrived and sat down with them and began to put some of the life of his new hope into them. His appetite revived, and, after protesting that he would not take anything but coffee, he went back and ate some of the earlier courses. But with the pressure of his purpose driving him forward, he did not conceal from Miss Woodburn, at least, that he was eager to get her apart from the rest for some reason. When he accomplished this, it seemed as if he had contrived it all himself, but perhaps he had not wholly contrived it.

"I'm so glad to get a chance to speak to you alone," he said at once; and while she waited for the next word he made a pause, and then said, desperately, "I want you to help me; and if you can't help me, there's no help for me."

"Mah goodness," she said, "is the case so bad as that? What in the world is the trouble?"

"Yes, it's a bad case," said Fulkerson. "I want your father to help me."

"Oh, I thoat you said me!"

"Yes; I want you to help me with your father. I suppose I ought to go to him at once, but I'm a little afraid of him."

"And you awe not afraid of me? I don't think that's very flattering, Mr. Fulkerson. You ought to think Ah'm twahce as awful as papa."

"Oh, I do! You see, I'm quite paralyzed before you, and so I don't feel anything."

"Well, it's a pretty lahvely kyand of paralysis. But--go on."

"I will--I will. If I can only begin."

"Pohaps Ah maght begin fo' you."

"No, you can't. Lord knows, I'd like to let you. Well, it's like this."

Fulkerson made a clutch at his hair, and then, after another hesitation, he abruptly laid the whole affair before her. He did not think it necessary to state the exact nature of the offence Lindau had given Dryfoos, for he doubted if she could grasp it, and he was profuse of his excuses for troubling her with the matter, and of wonder at himself for having done so. In the rapture of his concern at having perhaps made a fool of himself, he forgot why he had told her; but she seemed to like having been confided in, and she said, "Well, Ah don't see what you can do with you' ahdeals of friendship except stand bah Mr. Mawch."

"My ideals of friendship? What do you mean?"

"Oh, don't you suppose we know? Mr. Beaton said you we' a pofect Bahyard in friendship, and you would sacrifice anything to it."

"Is that so?" said Fulkerson, thinking how easily he could sacrifice Lindau in this case. He had never supposed before that he was chivalrous in such matters, but he now began to see it in that light, and he wondered that he could ever have entertained for a moment the idea of throwing March over.

"But Ah most say," Miss Woodburn went on, "Ah don't envy you you' next interview with Mr. Dryfoos. Ah suppose you'll have to see him at once aboat it."

The conjecture recalled Fulkerson to the object of his confidences.

"Ah, there's where your help comes in. I've exhausted all the influence I have with Dryfoos--"

"Good gracious, you don't expect Ah could have any!"

They both laughed at the comic dismay with which she conveyed the preposterous notion; and Fulkerson said, "If I judged from myself, I should expect you to bring him round instantly."

"Oh, thank you, Mr. Fulkerson," she said, with mock meekness.

"Not at all. But it isn't Dryfoos I want you to help me with; it's your father. I want your father to interview Dryfoos for me, and I-I'm afraid to ask him."

"Poo' Mr. Fulkerson!" she said, and she insinuated something through her burlesque compassion that lifted him to the skies. He swore in his heart that the woman never lived who was so witty, so wise, so beautiful, and so good. "Come raght with me this minute, if the cyoast's clea'." She went to the door of the diningroom and looked in across its gloom to the little gallery where her father sat beside a lamp reading his evening paper; Mrs. Leighton could be heard in colloquy with the cook below, and Alma had gone to her room. She beckoned Fulkerson with the hand outstretched behind her, and said, "Go and ask him."

"Alone!" he palpitated.

"Oh, what a cyowahd!" she cried, and went with him. "Ah suppose you'll want me to tell him aboat it."

"Well, I wish you'd begin, Miss Woodburn," he said. "The fact is, you know, I've been over it so much I'm kind of sick of the thing."

Miss Woodburn advanced and put her hand on her father's shoulder. "Look heah, papa! Mr. Fulkerson wants to ask you something, and he wants me to do it fo' him."

The colonel looked up through his glasses with the sort of ferocity elderly men sometimes have to put on in order to keep their glasses from falling off. His daughter continued: "He's got into an awful difficulty with his edito' and his proprieto', and he wants you to pacify them."

"I do not know whethah I understand the case exactly," said the colonel, "but Mr. Fulkerson may command me to the extent of my ability."

"You don't understand it aftah what Ah've said?" cried the girl. "Then Ah don't see but what you'll have to explain it you'self, Mr. Fulkerson."

"Well, Miss Woodburn has been so luminous about it, colonel," said Fulkerson, glad of the joking shape she had given the affair, "that I can only throw in a little side-light here and there."

The colonel listened as Fulkerson went on, with a grave diplomatic satisfaction. He felt gratified, honored, even, he said, by Mr. Fulkerson's appeal to him; and probably it gave him something of the high joy that an affair of honor would have brought him in the days when he

had arranged for meetings between gentlemen. Next to bearing a challenge, this work of composing a difficulty must have been grateful. But he gave no outward sign of his satisfaction in making a resume of the case so as to get the points clearly in his mind.

"I was afraid, sir," he said, with the state due to the serious nature of the facts, "that Mr. Lindau had given Mr. Dryfoos offence by some of his questions at the dinner-table last night."

"Perfect red rag to a bull," Fulkerson put in; and then he wanted to withdraw his words at the colonel's look of displeasure.

"I have no reflections to make upon Mr. Landau," Colonel Woodburn continued, and Fulkerson felt grateful to him for going on; "I do not agree with Mr. Lindau; I totally disagree with him on sociological points; but the course of the conversation had invited him to the expression of his convictions, and he had a right to express them, so far as they had no personal bearing."

"Of course," said Fulkerson, while Miss Woodburn perched on the arm of her father's chair.

"At the same time, sir, I think that if Mr. Dryfoos felt a personal censure in Mr. Lindau's questions concerning his suppression of the strike among his workmen, he had a right to resent it."

"Exactly," Fulkerson assented.

"But it must be evident to you, sir, that a high-spirited gentleman like Mr. March--I confess that my feelings are with him very warmly in the matter--could not submit to dictation of the nature you describe."

"Yes, I see," said Fulkerson; and, with that strange duplex action of the human mind, he wished that it was his hair, and not her father's, that Miss Woodburn was poking apart with the corner of her fan.

"Mr. Lindau," the colonel concluded, "was right from his point of view, and Mr. Dryfoos was equally right. The position of Mr. March is perfectly correct--"

His daughter dropped to her feet from his chair-arm. "Mah goodness! If nobody's in the wrong, ho' awe you evah going to get the mattah straight?"

"Yes, you see," Fulkerson added, "nobody can give in."

"Pardon me," said the colonel, "the case is one in which all can give in."

"I don't know which 'll begin," said Fulkerson.

The colonel rose. "Mr. Lindau must begin, sir. We must begin by seeing Mr. Lindau, and securing from him the assurance that in the expression of

his peculiar views he had no intention of offering any personal offence to Mr. Dryfoos. If I have formed a correct estimate of Mr. Lindau, this will be perfectly simple."

Fulkerson shook his head. "But it wouldn't help. Dryfoos don't care a rap whether Lindau meant any personal offence or not. As far as that is concerned, he's got a hide like a hippopotamus. But what he hates is Lindau's opinions, and what he says is that no man who holds such opinions shall have any work from him. And what March says is that no man shall be punished through him for his opinions, he don't care what they are."

The colonel stood a moment in silence. "And what do you expect me to do under the circumstances?"

"I came to you for advice--I thought you might suggest----?"

"Do you wish me to see Mr. Dryfoos?"

"Well, that's about the size of it," Fulkerson admitted. "You see, colonel," he hastened on, "I know that you have a great deal of influence with him; that article of yours is about the only thing he's ever read in 'Every Other Week,' and he's proud of your acquaintance. Well, you know"--and here Fulkerson brought in the figure that struck him so much in Beaton's phrase and had been on his tongue ever since--"you're the man on horseback to him; and he'd be more apt to do what you say than if anybody else said it."

"You are very good, sir," said the colonel, trying to be proof against the flattery, "but I am afraid you overrate my influence." Fulkerson let him ponder it silently, and his daughter governed her impatience by holding her fan against her lips. Whatever the process was in the colonel's mind, he said at last: "I see no good reason for declining to act for you, Mr. Fulkerson, and I shall be very happy if I can be of service to you. But"--he stopped Fulkerson from cutting in with precipitate thanks--"I think I have a right, sir, to ask what your course will be in the event of failure?"

"Failure?" Fulkerson repeated, in dismay.

"Yes, sir. I will not conceal from you that this mission is one not wholly agreeable to my feelings."

"Oh, I understand that, colonel, and I assure you that I appreciate, I--"

"There is no use trying to blink the fact, sir, that there are certain aspects of Mr. Dryfoos's character in which he is not a gentleman. We have alluded to this fact before, and I need not dwell upon it now: I may say, however, that my misgivings were not wholly removed last night."

"No," Fulkerson assented; though in his heart he thought the old man had behaved very well.

"What I wish to say now is that I cannot consent to act for you, in this matter, merely as an intermediary whose failure would leave the affair in state quo."

"I see," said Fulkerson.

"And I should like some intimation, some assurance, as to which party your own feelings are with in the difference."

The colonel bent his eyes sharply on Fulkerson; Miss Woodburn let hers fall; Fulkerson felt that he was being tested, and he said, to gain time, "As between Lindau and Dryfoos?" though he knew this was not the point.

"As between Mr. Dryfoos and Mr. March," said the colonel.

Fulkerson drew a long breath and took his courage in both hands. "There can't be any choice for me in such a case. I'm for March, every time."

The colonel seized his hand, and Miss Woodburn said, "If there had been any choice fo' you in such a case, I should never have let papa stir a step with you."

"Why, in regard to that," said the colonel, with a, literal application of the idea, "was it your intention that we should both go?"

"Well, I don't know; I suppose it was."

"I think it will be better for me to go alone," said the colonel; and, with a color from his experience in affairs of honor, he added: "In these matters a principal cannot appear without compromising his dignity. I believe I have all the points clearly in mind, and I think I should act more freely in meeting Mr. Dryfoos alone."

Fulkerson tried to hide the eagerness with which he met these agreeable views. He felt himself exalted in some sort to the level of the colonel's sentiments, though it would not be easy to say whether this was through the desperation bred of having committed himself to March's side, or through the buoyant hope he had that the colonel would succeed in his mission.

"I'm not afraid to talk with Dryfoos about it," he said.

"There is no question of courage," said the colonel. "It is a question of dignity--of personal dignity."

"Well, don't let that delay you, papa," said his daughter, following him to the door, where she found him his hat, and Fulkerson helped him on with his overcoat. "Ah shall be jost wald to know ho' it's toned oat."

"Won't you let me go up to the house with you?" Fulkerson began.

"I needn't go in--"

"I prefer to go alone," said the colonel. "I wish to turn the points over in my mind, and I am afraid you would find me rather dull company."

He went out, and Fulkerson returned with Miss Woodburn to the drawing-room, where she said the Leightons were. They, were not there, but she did not seem disappointed.

"Well, Mr. Fulkerson," she said, "you have got an ahdeal of friendship, sure enough."

"Me?" said Fulkerson. "Oh, my Lord! Don't you see I couldn't do anything else? And I'm scared half to death, anyway. If the colonel don't bring the old man round, I reckon it's all up with me. But he'll fetch him. And I'm just prostrated with gratitude to you, Miss Woodburn."

She waved his thanks aside with her fan. "What do you mean by its being all up with you?"

"Why, if the old man sticks to his position, and I stick to March, we've both got to go overboard together. Dryfoos owns the magazine; he can stop it, or he can stop us, which amounts to the same thing, as far as we're concerned."

"And then what?" the girl pursued.

"And then, nothing--till we pick ourselves up."

"Do you mean that Mr. Dryfoos will put you both oat of your places?"

"He may."

"And Mr. Mawch takes the risk of that jost fo' a principle?"

"I reckon."

"And you do it jost fo' an ahdeal?"

"It won't do to own it. I must have my little axe to grind, somewhere."

"Well, men awe splendid," sighed the girl. "Ah will say it."

"Oh, they're not so much better than women," said Fulkerson, with a nervous jocosity. "I guess March would have backed down if it hadn't been for his wife. She was as hot as pepper about it, and you could see that she would have sacrificed all her husband's relations sooner than let him back down an inch from the stand he had taken. It's pretty easy for a man to stick to a principle if he has a woman to stand by him. But when you come to play it alone--"

"Mr. Fulkerson," said the girl, solemnly, "Ah will stand bah you in this, if all the woald tones against you." The tears came into her eyes, and she put out her hand to him.

"You will?" he shouted, in a rapture. "In every way--and always--as long as you live? Do you mean it?" He had caught her hand to his breast and was grappling it tight there and drawing her to him.

The changing emotions chased one another through her heart and over her face: dismay, shame, pride, tenderness. "You don't believe," she said, hoarsely, "that Ah meant that?"

"No, but I hope you do mean it; for if you don't, nothing else means anything."

There was no space, there was only a point of wavering. "Ah do mean it."

When they lifted their eyes from each other again it was half-past ten. "No' you most go," she said.

"But the colonel--our fate?"

"The co'nel is often oat late, and Ah'm not afraid of ouah fate, no' that we've taken it into ouah own hands." She looked at him with dewy eyes of trust, of inspiration.

"Oh, it's going to come out all right," he said. "It can't come out wrong now, no matter what happens. But who'd have thought it, when I came into this house, in such a state of sin and misery, half an hour ago--"

"Three houahs and a half ago!" she said. "No! you most jost go. Ah'm tahed to death. Good-night. You can come in the mawning to see-papa." She opened the door and pushed him out with enrapturing violence, and he ran laughing down the steps into her father's arms.

"Why, colonel! I was just going up to meet you." He had really thought he would walk off his exultation in that direction.

"I am very sorry to say, Mr. Fulkerson," the colonel began, gravely, "that Mr. Dryfoos adheres to his position."

"Oh, all right," said Fulkerson, with unabated joy. "It's what I expected. Well, my course is clear; I shall stand by March, and I guess the world won't come to an end if he bounces us both. But I'm everlastingly obliged to you, Colonel Woodburn, and I don't know what to say to you. I--I won't detain you now; it's so late. I'll see you in the morning. Good-ni--"

Fulkerson did not realize that it takes two to part. The colonel laid hold of his arm and turned away with him. "I will walk toward your place with you. I can understand why you should be anxious to know the particulars of my interview with Mr. Dryfoos"; and in the statement which followed he did not spare him the smallest. It outlasted their walk and detained them long on the steps of the 'Every Other Week' building. But at the end Fulkerson let himself in with his key as light of heart as if

he had been listening to the gayest promises that fortune could make.

By the tune he met March at the office next morning, a little, but only a very little, misgiving saddened his golden heaven. He took March's hand with high courage, and said, "Well, the old man sticks to his point, March." He added, with the sense of saying it before Miss Woodburn: "And I stick by you. I've thought it all over, and I'd rather be right with you than wrong with him."

"Well, I appreciate your motive, Fulkerson," said March. "But perhaps-- perhaps we can save over our heroics for another occasion. Lindau seems to have got in with his, for the present."

He told him of Lindau's last visit, and they stood a moment looking at each other rather queerly. Fulkerson was the first to recover his spirits. "Well," he said, cheerily, "that let's us out."

"Does it? I'm not sure it lets me out," said March; but he said this in tribute to his crippled self-respect rather than as a forecast of any action in the matter.

"Why, what are you going to do?" Fulkerson asked. "If Lindau won't work for Dryfoos, you can't make him."

March sighed. "What are you going to do with this money?" He glanced at the heap of bills he had flung on the table between them.

Fulkerson scratched his head. "Ah, dogged if I know: Can't we give it to the deserving poor, somehow, if we can find 'em?"

"I suppose we've no right to use it in any way. You must give it to Dryfoos."

"To the deserving rich? Well, you can always find them. I reckon you don't want to appear in the transaction! I don't, either; but I guess I must." Fulkerson gathered up the money and carried it to Conrad. He directed him to account for it in his books as conscience-money, and he enjoyed the joke more than Conrad seemed to do when he was told where it came from.

Fulkerson was able to wear off the disagreeable impression the affair left during the course of the fore-noon, and he met Miss Woodburn with all a lover's buoyancy when he went to lunch. She was as happy as he when he told her how fortunately the whole thing had ended, and he took her view that it was a reward of his courage in having dared the worst. They both felt, as the newly plighted always do, that they were in the best relations with the beneficent powers, and that their felicity had been especially looked to in the disposition of events. They were in a glow of rapturous content with themselves and radiant worship of each other; she was sure that he merited the bright future opening to them both, as much as if he owed it directly to some noble action of his own; he felt that he was indebted for the favor of Heaven entirely to the still incredible accident of her preference of him over other men.

Colonel Woodburn, who was not yet in the secret of their love, perhaps failed for this reason to share their satisfaction with a result so unexpectedly brought about. The blessing on their hopes seemed to his ignorance to involve certain sacrifices of personal feeling at which he hinted in suggesting that Dryfoos should now be asked to make some abstract concessions and acknowledgments; his daughter hastened to deny that these were at all necessary; and Fulkerson easily explained why. The thing was over; what was the use of opening it up again?

"Perhaps none," the colonel admitted. But he added, "I should like the opportunity of taking Mr. Lindau's hand in the presence of Mr. Dryfoos and assuring him that I considered him a man of principle and a man of honor--a gentleman, sir, whom I was proud and happy to have known."

"Well, Ah've no doabt," said his daughter, demurely, "that you'll have the chance some day; and we would all lahke to join you. But at the same tahme, Ah think Mr. Fulkerson is well oat of it fo' the present."

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Anticipative reprisal

Buttoned about him as if it concealed a bad conscience

Courtship

Got their laugh out of too many things in life

Had learned not to censure the irretrievable

Had no opinions that he was not ready to hold in abeyance

Ignorant of her ignorance

It don't do any good to look at its drawbacks all the time

Justice must be paid for at every step in fees and costs

Life has taught him to truckle and trick

Man's willingness to abide in the present

No longer the gross appetite for novelty

No right to burden our friends with our decisions

Travel, with all its annoyances and fatigues

Typical anything else, is pretty difficult to find

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By William Dean Howells

PART FIFTH

I.

Superficially, the affairs of 'Every Other Week' settled into their wonted form again, and for Fulkerson they seemed thoroughly reinstated. But March had a feeling of impermanency from what had happened, mixed with a fantastic sense of shame toward Lindau. He did not sympathize with Lindau's opinions; he thought his remedy for existing evils as wildly impracticable as Colonel Woodburn's. But while he thought this, and while he could justly blame Fulkerson for Lindau's presence at Dryfoos's dinner, which his zeal had brought about in spite of March's protests, still he could not rid himself of the reproach of uncandor with Lindau. He ought to have told him frankly about the ownership of the magazine, and what manner of man the man was whose money he was taking. But he said that he never could have imagined that he was serious in his preposterous attitude in regard to a class of men who embody half the prosperity of the country; and he had moments of revolt against his own humiliation before Lindau, in which he found it monstrous that he should return Dryfoos's money as if it had been the spoil of a robber. His wife agreed with him in these moments, and said it was a great relief not to have that tiresome old German coming about. They had to account for his absence evasively to the children, whom they could not very well tell that their father was living on money that Lindau disdained to take, even though Lindau was wrong and their father was right. This heightened Mrs. March's resentment toward both Lindau and Dryfoos, who between them had placed her husband in a false position. If anything, she resented Dryfoos's conduct more than Lindau's. He had never spoken to March about the affair since Lindau had renounced his work, or added to the apologetic messages he had sent by Fulkerson. So far as March knew, Dryfoos had been left to suppose that Lindau had simply stopped for some reason that did not personally affect him. They never spoke of him, and March was too proud to ask either Fulkerson or Conrad whether the old man knew that Lindau had returned his money. He avoided talking to Conrad, from a feeling that if he did he should involuntarily lead him on to speak of his differences with his father. Between himself and Fulkerson, even, he was uneasily aware of a want of their old perfect friendliness. Fulkerson had finally behaved with honor and courage; but his provisional reluctance had given March the measure of Fulkerson's character in one direction, and he could not ignore the fact that it was smaller than he could have wished.

He could not make out whether Fulkerson shared his discomfort or not. It certainly wore away, even with March, as time passed, and with Fulkerson, in the bliss of his fortunate love, it was probably far more transient, if it existed at all. He advanced into the winter as

radiantly as if to meet the spring, and he said that if there were any pleasanter month of the year than November, it was December, especially when the weather was good and wet and muddy most of the time, so that you had to keep indoors a long while after you called anywhere.

Colonel Woodburn had the anxiety, in view of his daughter's engagement, when she asked his consent to it, that such a dreamer must have in regard to any reality that threatens to affect the course of his reveries. He had not perhaps taken her marriage into account, except as a remote contingency; and certainly Fulkerson was not the kind of son-in-law that he had imagined in dealing with that abstraction. But because he had nothing of the sort definitely in mind, he could not oppose the selection of Fulkerson with success; he really knew nothing against him, and he knew, many things in his favor; Fulkerson inspired him with the liking that every one felt for him in a measure; he amused him, he cheered him; and the colonel had been so much used to leaving action of all kinds to his daughter that when he came to close quarters with the question of a son-in-law he felt helpless to decide it, and he let her decide it, as if it were still to be decided when it was submitted to him. She was competent to treat it in all its phases: not merely those of personal interest, but those of duty to the broken Southern past, sentimentally dear to him, and practically absurd to her. No such South as he remembered had ever existed to her knowledge, and no such civilization as he imagined would ever exist, to her belief, anywhere. She took the world as she found it, and made the best of it. She trusted in Fulkerson; she had proved his magnanimity in a serious emergency; and in small things she was willing fearlessly to chance it with him. She was not a sentimentalist, and there was nothing fantastic in her expectations; she was a girl of good sense and right mind, and she liked the immediate practicality as well as the final honor of Fulkerson. She did not idealize him, but in the highest effect she realized him; she did him justice, and she would not have believed that she did him more than justice if she had sometimes known him to do himself less.

Their engagement was a fact to which the Leighton household adjusted itself almost as simply as the lovers themselves; Miss Woodburn told the ladies at once, and it was not a thing that Fulkerson could keep from March very long. He sent word of it to Mrs. March by her husband; and his engagement perhaps did more than anything else to confirm the confidence in him which had been shaken by his early behavior in the Lindau episode, and not wholly restored by his tardy fidelity to March. But now she felt that a man who wished to get married so obviously and entirely for love was full of all kinds of the best instincts, and only needed the guidance of a wife, to become very noble. She interested herself intensely in balancing the respective merits of the engaged couple, and after her call upon Miss Woodburn in her new character she prided herself upon recognizing the worth of some strictly Southern qualities in her, while maintaining the general average of New England superiority. She could not reconcile herself to the Virginian custom illustrated in her having been christened with the surname of Madison; and she said that its pet form of Mad, which Fulkerson promptly invented, only made it more ridiculous.

Fulkerson was slower in telling Beaton. He was afraid, somehow, of Beaton's taking the matter in the cynical way; Miss Woodburn said she would break off the engagement if Beaton was left to guess it or find it out by accident, and then Fulkerson plucked up his courage. Beaton received the news with gravity, and with a sort of melancholy meekness that strongly moved Fulkerson's sympathy, and made him wish that Beaton was engaged, too.

It made Beaton feel very old; it somehow left him behind and forgotten; in a manner, it made him feel trifled with. Something of the unfriendliness of fate seemed to overcast his resentment, and he allowed the sadness of his conviction that he had not the means to marry on to tinge his recognition of the fact that Alma Leighton would not have wanted him to marry her if he had. He was now often in that martyr mood in which he wished to help his father; not only to deny himself Chianti, but to forego a fur-lined overcoat which he intended to get for the winter. He postponed the moment of actual sacrifice as regarded the Chianti, and he bought the overcoat in an anguish of self-reproach. He wore it the first evening after he got it in going to call upon the Leightons, and it seemed to him a piece of ghastly irony when Alma complimented his picturesqueness in it and asked him to let her sketch him.

"Oh, you can sketch me," he said, with so much gloom that it made her laugh.

"If you think it's so serious, I'd rather not."

"No, no! Go ahead! How do you want me?"

Oh, fling yourself down on a chair in one of your attitudes of studied negligence; and twist one corner of your mustache with affected absence of mind."

"And you think I'm always studied, always affected?"

"I didn't say so."

"I didn't ask you what you said."

"And I won't tell you what I think."

"Ah, I know what you think."

"What made you ask, then?" The girl laughed again with the satisfaction of her sex in cornering a man.

Beaton made a show of not deigning to reply, and put himself in the pose she suggested, frowning.

"Ah, that's it. But a little more animation--"

"As when a great thought strikes along the brain,

And flushes all the cheek."

She put her forehead down on the back of her hand and laughed again.
"You ought to be photographed. You look as if you were sitting for it."

Beaton said: "That's because I know I am being photographed, in one way. I don't think you ought to call me affected. I never am so with you; I know it wouldn't be of any use."

"Oh, Mr. Beaton, you flatter."

"No, I never flatter you."

"I meant you flattered yourself."

"How?"

"Oh, I don't know. Imagine."

"I know what you mean. You think I can't be sincere with anybody."

"Oh no, I don't."

"What do you think?"

"That you can't--try." Alma gave another victorious laugh.

Miss Woodburn and Fulkerson would once have both feigned a great interest in Alma's sketching Beaton, and made it the subject of talk, in which they approached as nearly as possible the real interest of their lives. Now they frankly remained away in the dining-room, which was very cozy after the dinner had disappeared; the colonel sat with his lamp and paper in the gallery beyond; Mrs. Leighton was about her housekeeping affairs, in the content she always felt when Alma was with Beaton.

"They seem to be having a pretty good time in there," said Fulkerson, detaching himself from his own absolute good time as well as he could.

"At least Alma does," said Miss Woodburn.

"Do you think she cares for him?"

"Quahte as moch as he desoves."

"What makes you all down on Beaton around here? He's not such a bad fellow."

"We awe not all doan on him. Mrs. Leighton isn't doan on him."

"Oh, I guess if it was the old lady, there wouldn't be much question about it."

They both laughed, and Alma said, "They seem to be greatly amused with

something in there."

"Me, probably," said Beaton. "I seem to amuse everybody to-night."

"Don't you always?"

"I always amuse you, I'm afraid, Alma."

She looked at him as if she were going to snub him openly for using her name; but apparently she decided to do it covertly. "You didn't at first. I really used to believe you could be serious, once."

"Couldn't you believe it again? Now?"

"Not when you put on that wind-harp stop."

"Wetmore has been talking to you about me. He would sacrifice his best friend to a phrase. He spends his time making them."

"He's made some very pretty ones about you."

"Like the one you just quoted?"

"No, not exactly. He admires you ever so much. He says" She stopped, teasingly.

"What?"

"He says you could be almost anything you wished, if you didn't wish to be everything."

"That sounds more like the school of Wetmore. That's what you say, Alma. Well, if there were something you wished me to be, I could be it."

"We might adapt Kingsley: 'Be good, sweet man, and let who will be clever.'" He could not help laughing. She went on: "I always thought that was the most patronizing and exasperating thing ever addressed to a human girl; and we've had to stand a good deal in our time. I should like to have it applied to the other 'sect' a while. As if any girl that was a girl would be good if she had the remotest chance of being clever."

"Then you wouldn't wish me to be good?" Beaton asked.

"Not if you were a girl."

"You want to shock me. Well, I suppose I deserve it. But if I were one-tenth part as good as you are, Alma, I should have a lighter heart than I have now. I know that I'm fickle, but I'm not false, as you think I am."

"Who said I thought you were false?"

"No one," said Beaton. "It isn't necessary, when you look it--live it."

"Oh, dear! I didn't know I devoted my whole time to the subject."

"I know I'm despicable. I could tell you something--the history of this day, even--that would make you despise me." Beaton had in mind his purchase of the overcoat, which Alma was getting in so effectively, with the money he ought to have sent his father. "But," he went on, darkly, with a sense that what he was that moment suffering for his selfishness must somehow be a kind of atonement, which would finally leave him to the guiltless enjoyment of the overcoat, "you wouldn't believe the depths of baseness I could descend to."

"I would try," said Alma, rapidly shading the collar, "if you'd give me some hint."

Beaton had a sudden wish to pour out his remorse to her, but he was afraid of her laughing at him. He said to himself that this was a very wholesome fear, and that if he could always have her at hand he should not make a fool of himself so often. A man conceives of such an office as the very noblest for a woman; he worships her for it if he is magnanimous. But Beaton was silent, and Alma put back her head for the right distance on her sketch. "Mr. Fulkerson thinks you are the sublimest of human beings for advising him to get Colonel Woodburn to interview Mr. Dryfoos about Lindau. What have you ever done with your Judas?"

"I haven't done anything with it. Nadel thought he would take hold of it at one time, but he dropped it again. After all, I don't suppose it could be popularized. Fulkerson wanted to offer it as a premium to subscribers for 'Every Other Week,' but I sat down on that."

Alma could not feel the absurdity of this, and she merely said, "'Every Other Week' seems to be going on just the same as ever."

"Yes, the trouble has all blown over, I believe. Fulkerson," said Beaton, with a return to what they were saying, "has managed the whole business very well. But he exaggerates the value of my advice."

"Very likely," Alma suggested, vaguely. "Or, no! Excuse me! He couldn't, he couldn't!" She laughed delightedly at Beaton's foolish look of embarrassment.

He tried to recover his dignity in saying, "He's 'a very good fellow, and he deserves his happiness."

"Oh, indeed!" said Alma, perversely. "Does any one deserve happiness?"

"I know I don't," sighed Beaton.

"You mean you don't get it."

"I certainly don't get it."

"Ah, but that isn't the reason."

"What is?"

"That's the secret of the universe," She bit in her lower lip, and looked at him with eyes, of gleaming fun.

"Are you never serious?" he asked.

"With serious people always."

"I am serious; and you have the secret of my happiness--" He threw himself impulsively forward in his chair.

"Oh, pose, pose!" she cried.

"I won't pose," he answered, "and you have got to listen to me. You know I'm in love with you; and I know that once you cared for me. Can't that time--won't it--come back again? Try to think so, Alma!"

"No," she said, briefly and seriously enough.

"But that seems impossible. What is it I've done what have you against me?"

"Nothing. But that time is past. I couldn't recall it if I wished. Why did you bring it up? You've broken your word. You know I wouldn't have let you keep coming here if you hadn't promised never to refer to it."

"How could I help it? With that happiness near us--Fulkerson--"

"Oh, it's that? I might have known it!"

"No, it isn't that--it's something far deeper. But if it's nothing you have against me, what is it, Alma, that keeps you from caring for me now as you did then? I haven't changed."

"But I have. I shall never care for you again, Mr. Beaton; you might as well understand it once for all. Don't think it's anything in yourself, or that I think you unworthy of me. I'm not so self-satisfied as that; I know very well that I'm not a perfect character, and that I've no claim on perfection in anybody else. I think women who want that are fools; they won't get it, and they don't deserve it. But I've learned a good deal more about myself than I knew in St. Barnaby, and a life of work, of art, and of art alone that's what I've made up my mind to."

"A woman that's made up her mind to that has no heart to hinder her!"

"Would a man have that had done so?"

"But I don't believe you, Alma. You're merely laughing at me. And, besides, with me you needn't give up art. We could work together. You know how much I admire your talent. I believe I could help it--serve it; I would be its willing slave, and yours, Heaven knows!"

"I don't want any slave--nor any slavery. I want to be free always. Now do you see? I don't care for you, and I never could in the old way; but I should have to care for some one more than I believe I ever shall to give up my work. Shall we go on?" She looked at her sketch.

"No, we shall not go on," he said, gloomily, as he rose.

"I suppose you blame me," she said, rising too.

"Oh no! I blame no one--or only myself. I threw my chance away."

"I'm glad you see that; and I'm glad you did it. You don't believe me, of course. Why do men think life can be only the one thing to women? And if you come to the selfish view, who are the happy women? I'm sure that if work doesn't fail me, health won't, and happiness won't."

"But you could work on with me--"

"Second fiddle. Do you suppose I shouldn't be woman enough to wish my work always less and lower than yours? At least I've heart enough for that!"

"You've heart enough for anything, Alma. I was a fool to say you hadn't."

"I think the women who keep their hearts have an even chance, at least, of having heart--"

"Ah, there's where you're wrong!"

"But mine isn't mine to give you, anyhow. And now I don't want you ever to speak to me about this again."

"Oh, there's no danger!" he cried, bitterly. "I shall never willingly see you again."

"That's as you like, Mr. Beaton. We've had to be very frank, but I don't see why we shouldn't be friends. Still, we needn't, if you don't like."

"And I may come--I may come here--as--as usual?"

"Why, if you can consistently," she said, with a smile, and she held out her hand to him.

He went home dazed, and feeling as if it were a bad joke that had been put upon him. At least the affair went so deep that it estranged the aspect of his familiar studio. Some of the things in it were not very familiar; he had spent lately a great deal on rugs, on stuffs, on Japanese bric-a-brac. When he saw these things in the shops he had felt that he must have them; that they were necessary to him; and he was partly in debt for them, still without having sent any of his earnings to pay his father. As he looked at them now he liked to fancy something

weird and conscious in them as the silent witnesses of a broken life. He felt about among some of the smaller objects on the mantel for his pipe. Before he slept he was aware, in the luxury of his despair, of a remote relief, an escape; and, after all, the understanding he had come to with Alma was only the explicit formulation of terms long tacit between them. Beaton would have been puzzled more than he knew if she had taken him seriously. It was inevitable that he should declare himself in love with her; but he was not disappointed at her rejection of his love; perhaps not so much as he would have been at its acceptance, though he tried to think otherwise, and to give himself airs of tragedy. He did not really feel that the result was worse than what had gone before, and it left him free.

But he did not go to the Leightons again for so long a time that Mrs. Leighton asked Alma what had happened. Alma told her.

"And he won't come any more?" her mother sighed, with reserved censure.

"Oh, I think he will. He couldn't very well come the next night. But he has the habit of coming, and with Mr. Beaton habit is everything--even the habit of thinking he's in love with some one."

"Alma," said her mother, "I don't think it's very nice for a girl to let a young man keep coming to see her after she's refused him."

"Why not, if it amuses him and doesn't hurt the girl?"

"But it does hurt her, Alma. It--it's indelicate. It isn't fair to him; it gives him hopes."

"Well, mamma, it hasn't happened in the given case yet. If Mr. Beaton comes again, I won't see him, and you can forbid him the house."

"If I could only feel sure, Alma," said her mother, taking up another branch of the inquiry, "that you really knew your own mind, I should be easier about it."

"Then you can rest perfectly quiet, mamma. I do know my own mind; and, what's worse, I know Mr. Beaton's mind."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that he spoke to me the other night simply because Mr. Fulkerson's engagement had broken him all up."

"What expressions!" Mrs. Leighton lamented.

"He let it out himself," Alma went on. "And you wouldn't have thought it was very flattering yourself. When I'm made love to, after this, I prefer to be made love to in an off-year, when there isn't another engaged couple anywhere about."

"Did you tell him that, Alma?"

"Tell him that! What do you mean, mamma? I may be indelicate, but I'm not quite so indelicate as that."

"I didn't mean you were indelicate, really, Alma, but I wanted to warn you. I think Mr. Beaton was very much in earnest."

"Oh, so did he!"

"And you didn't?"

"Oh yes, for the time being. I suppose he's very much in earnest with Miss Vance at times, and with Miss Dryfoos at others. Sometimes he's a painter, and sometimes he's an architect, and sometimes he's a sculptor. He has too many gifts--too many tastes."

"And if Miss Vance and Miss Dryfoos--"

"Oh, do say Sculpture and Architecture, mamma! It's getting so dreadfully personal!"

"Alma, you know that I only wish to get at your real feeling in the matter."

"And you know that I don't want to let you--especially when I haven't got any real feeling in the matter. But I should think--speaking in the abstract entirely--that if either of those arts was ever going to be in earnest about him, it would want his exclusive devotion for a week at least."

"I didn't know," said Mrs. Leighton, "that he was doing anything now at the others. I thought he was entirely taken up with his work on 'Every Other Week.'"

"Oh, he is! he is!"

"And you certainly can't say, my dear, that he hasn't been very kind--very useful to you, in that matter."

"And so I ought to have said yes out of gratitude? Thank you, mamma! I didn't know you held me so cheap."

"You know whether I hold you cheap or not, Alma. I don't want you to cheapen yourself. I don't want you to trifle with any one. I want you to be honest with yourself."

"Well, come now, mamma! Suppose you begin. I've been perfectly honest with myself, and I've been honest with Mr. Beaton. I don't care for him, and I've told him I didn't; so he may be supposed to know it. If he comes here after this, he'll come as a plain, unostentatious friend of the family, and it's for you to say whether he shall come in that capacity or not. I hope you won't trifle with him, and let him get the notion that he's coming on any other basis."

Mrs. Leighton felt the comfort of the critical attitude far too keenly to abandon it for anything constructive. She only said, "You know very well, Alma, that's a matter I can have nothing to do with."

"Then you leave him entirely to me?"

"I hope you will regard his right to candid and open treatment."

"He's had nothing but the most open and candid treatment from me, mamma. It's you that wants to play fast and loose with him. And, to tell you the truth, I believe he would like that a good deal better; I believe that, if there's anything he hates, it's openness and candor." Alma laughed, and put her arms round her mother, who could not help laughing a little, too.

II.

The winter did not renew for Christine and Mela the social opportunity which the spring had offered. After the musicale at Mrs. Horn's, they both made their party-call, as Mela said, in due season; but they did not find Mrs. Horn at home, and neither she nor Miss Vance came to see them after people returned to town in the fall. They tried to believe for a time that Mrs. Horn had not got their cards; this pretence failed them, and they fell back upon their pride, or rather Christine's pride. Mela had little but her good-nature to avail her in any exigency, and if Mrs. Horn or Miss Vance had come to call after a year of neglect, she would have received them as amiably as if they had not lost a day in coming. But Christine had drawn a line beyond which they would not have been forgiven; and she had planned the words and the behavior with which she would have punished them if they had appeared then. Neither sister imagined herself in anywise inferior to them; but Christine was suspicious, at least, and it was Mela who invented the hypothesis of the lost cards. As nothing happened to prove or to disprove the fact, she said, "I move we put Coonrod up to gittun' it out of Miss Vance, at some of their meetun's."

"If you do," said Christine, "I'll kill you."

Christine, however, had the visits of Beaton to console her, and, if these seemed to have no definite aim, she was willing to rest in the pleasure they gave her vanity; but Mela had nothing. Sometimes she even wished they were all back on the farm.

"It would be the best thing for both of you," said Mrs. Dryfoos, in answer to such a burst of desperation. "I don't think New York is any place for girls."

"Well, what I hate, mother," said Mela, "is, it don't seem to be any place for young men, either." She found this so good when she had said

it that she laughed over it till Christine was angry.

"A body would think there had never been any joke before."

"I don't see as it's a joke," said Mrs. Dryfoos. "It's the plain truth."

"Oh, don't mind her, mother," said Mela. "She's put out because her old Mr. Beaton ha'r't been round for a couple o' weeks. If you don't watch out, that fellow 'll give you the slip yit, Christine, after all your pains."

"Well, there ain't anybody to give you the slip, Mela," Christine clawed back.

"No; I ha'n't ever set my traps for anybody." This was what Mela said for want of a better retort; but it was not quite true. When Kendricks came with Beaton to call after her father's dinner, she used all her cunning to ensnare him, and she had him to herself as long as Beaton stayed; Dryfoos sent down word that he was not very well and had gone to bed. The novelty of Mela had worn off for Kendricks, and she found him, as she frankly told him, not half as entertaining as he was at Mrs. Horn's; but she did her best with him as the only flirtable material which had yet come to her hand. It would have been her ideal to have the young men stay till past midnight, and her father come down-stairs in his stocking-feet and tell them it was time to go. But they made a visit of decorous brevity, and Kendricks did not come again. She met him afterward, once, as she was crossing the pavement in Union Square to get into her coupe, and made the most of him; but it was necessarily very little, and so he passed out of her life without having left any trace in her heart, though Mela had a heart that she would have put at the disposition of almost any young man that wanted it. Kendricks himself, Manhattan cockney as he was, with scarcely more out look into the average American nature than if he had been kept a prisoner in New York society all his days, perceived a property in her which forbade him as a man of conscience to trifle with her; something earthly good and kind, if it was simple and vulgar. In revising his impressions of her, it seemed to him that she would come even to better literary effect if this were recognized in her; and it made her sacred, in spite of her willingness to fool and to be fooled, in her merely human quality. After all, he saw that she wished honestly to love and to be loved, and the lures she threw out to that end seemed to him pathetic rather than ridiculous; he could not join Beaton in laughing at her; and he did not like Beaton's laughing at the other girl, either. It seemed to Kendricks, with the code of honor which he mostly kept to himself because he was a little ashamed to find there were so few others like it, that if Beaton cared nothing for the other girl--and Christine appeared simply detestable to Kendricks--he had better keep away from her, and not give her the impression he was in love with her. He rather fancied that this was the part of a gentleman, and he could not have penetrated to that aesthetic and moral complexity which formed the consciousness of a nature like Beaton's and was chiefly a torment to itself; he could not have conceived of the wayward impulses indulged at every moment in little things till the straight highway was traversed and well-nigh lost under their tangle.

To do whatever one likes is finally to do nothing that one likes, even though one continues to do what one will; but Kendricks, though a sage of twenty-seven, was still too young to understand this.

Beaton scarcely understood it himself, perhaps because he was not yet twenty-seven. He only knew that his will was somehow sick; that it spent itself in caprices, and brought him no happiness from the fulfilment of the most vehement wish. But he was aware that his wishes grew less and less vehement; he began to have a fear that some time he might have none at all. It seemed to him that if he could once do something that was thoroughly distasteful to himself, he might make a beginning in the right direction; but when he tried this on a small scale, it failed, and it seemed stupid. Some sort of expiation was the thing he needed, he was sure; but he could not think of anything in particular to expiate; a man could not expiate his temperament, and his temperament was what Beaton decided to be at fault. He perceived that it went deeper than even fate would have gone; he could have fulfilled an evil destiny and had done with it, however terrible. His trouble was that he could not escape from himself; and, for the most part, he justified himself in refusing to try. After he had come to that distinct understanding with Alma Leighton, and experienced the relief it really gave him, he thought for a while that if it had fallen out otherwise, and she had put him in charge of her destiny, he might have been better able to manage his own. But as it was, he could only drift, and let all other things take their course. It was necessary that he should go to see her afterward, to show her that he was equal to the event; but he did not go so often, and he went rather oftener to the Dryfooses; it was not easy to see Margaret Vance, except on the society terms. With much sneering and scorning, he fulfilled the duties to Mrs. Horn without which he knew he should be dropped from her list; but one might go to many of her Thursdays without getting many words with her niece. Beaton hardly knew whether he wanted many; the girl kept the charm of her innocent stylishness; but latterly she wanted to talk more about social questions than about the psychical problems that young people usually debate so personally. Son of the working-people as he was, Beaton had never cared anything about such matters; he did not know about them or wish to know; he was perhaps too near them. Besides, there was an embarrassment, at least on her part, concerning the Dryfooses. She was too high-minded to blame him for having tempted her to her failure with them by his talk about them; but she was conscious of avoiding them in her talk. She had decided not to renew the effort she had made in the spring; because she could not do them good as fellow-creatures needing food and warmth and work, and she would not try to befriend them socially; she had a horror of any such futile sentimentality. She would have liked to account to Beaton in this way for a course which she suspected he must have heard their comments upon, but she did not quite know how to do it; she could not be sure how much or how little he cared for them. Some tentative approaches which she made toward explanation were met with such eager disclaim of personal interest that she knew less than before what to think; and she turned the talk from the sisters to the brother, whom it seemed she still continued to meet in their common work among the poor.

"He seems very different," she ventured.

"Oh, quite," said Beaton. "He's the kind of person that you might suppose gave the Catholics a hint for the cloistral life; he's a cloistered nature--the nature that atones and suffers for. But he's awfully dull company, don't you think? I never can get anything out of him."

"He's very much in earnest."

"Remorselessly. We've got a profane and mundane creature there at the office who runs us all, and it's shocking merely to see the contact of the tyro natures. When Fulkerson gets to joking Dryfoos--he likes to put his joke in the form of a pretence that Dryfoos is actuated by a selfish motive, that he has an eye to office, and is working up a political interest for himself on the East Side--it's something inexpressible."

"I should think so," said Miss Vance, with such lofty disapproval that Beaton felt himself included in it for having merely told what caused it. He could not help saying, in natural rebellion, "Well, the man of one idea is always a little ridiculous."

"When his idea is right?" she demanded. "A right idea can't be ridiculous."

"Oh, I only said the man that held it was. He's flat; he has no relief, no projection."

She seemed unable to answer, and he perceived that he had silenced her to his own, disadvantage. It appeared to Beaton that she was becoming a little too exacting for comfort in her idealism. He put down the cup of tea he had been tasting, and said, in his solemn staccato: "I must go. Good-bye!" and got instantly away from her, with an effect he had of having suddenly thought of something imperative.

He went up to Mrs. Horn for a moment's hail and farewell, and felt himself subtly detained by her through fugitive passages of conversation with half a dozen other people. He fancied that at crises of this strange interview Mrs. Horn was about to become confidential with him, and confidential, of all things, about her niece. She ended by not having palpably been so. In fact, the concern in her mind would have been difficult to impart to a young man, and after several experiments Mrs. Horn found it impossible to say that she wished Margaret could somehow be interested in lower things than those which occupied her. She had watched with growing anxiety the girl's tendency to various kinds of self-devotion. She had dark hours in which she even feared her entire withdrawal from the world in a life of good works. Before now, girls had entered the Protestant sisterhoods, which appeal so potently to the young and generous imagination, and Margaret was of just the temperament to be influenced by them. During the past summer she had been unhappy at her separation from the cares that had engrossed her more and more as their stay in the city drew to an end in the spring, and she had hurried her aunt back to town earlier in the fall than she would have chosen to come. Margaret had her correspondents among the working-women whom she

befriended. Mrs. Horn was at one time alarmed to find that Margaret was actually promoting a strike of the button-hole workers. This, of course, had its ludicrous side, in connection with a young lady in good society, and a person of even so little humor as Mrs. Horn could not help seeing it. At the same time, she could not help foreboding the worst from it; she was afraid that Margaret's health would give way under the strain, and that if she did not go into a sisterhood she would at least go into a decline. She began the winter with all such counteractive measures as she could employ. At an age when such things weary, she threw herself into the pleasures of society with the hope of dragging Margaret after her; and a sympathetic witness must have followed with compassion her course from ball to ball, from reception to reception, from parlor-reading to parlor-reading, from musicale to musicale, from play to play, from opera to opera. She tasted, after she had practically renounced them, the bitter and the insipid flavors of fashionable amusement, in the hope that Margaret might find them sweet, and now at the end she had to own to herself that she had failed. It was coming Lent again, and the girl had only grown thinner and more serious with the diversions that did not divert her from the baleful works of beneficence on which Mrs. Horn felt that she was throwing her youth away. Margaret could have borne either alone, but together they were wearing her out. She felt it a duty to undergo the pleasures her aunt appointed for her, but she could not forego the other duties in which she found her only pleasure.

She kept up her music still because she could employ it at the meetings for the entertainment, and, as she hoped, the elevation of her working-women; but she neglected the other aesthetic interests which once occupied her; and, at sight of Beaton talking with her, Mrs. Horn caught at the hope that he might somehow be turned to account in reviving Margaret's former interest in art. She asked him if Mr. Wetmore had his classes that winter as usual; and she said she wished Margaret could be induced to go again: Mr. Wetmore always said that she did not draw very well, but that she had a great deal of feeling for it, and her work was interesting. She asked, were the Leightons in town again; and she murmured a regret that she had not been able to see anything of them, without explaining why; she said she had a fancy that if Margaret knew Miss Leighton, and what she was doing, it might stimulate her, perhaps. She supposed Miss Leighton was still going on with her art? Beaton said, Oh yes, he believed so.

But his manner did not encourage Mrs. Horn to pursue her aims in that direction, and she said, with a sigh, she wished he still had a class; she always fancied that Margaret got more good from his instruction than from any one else's.

He said that she was very good; but there was really nobody who knew half as much as Wetmore, or could make any one understand half as much. Mrs. Horn was afraid, she said, that Mr. Wetmore's terrible sincerity discouraged Margaret; he would not let her have any illusions about the outcome of what she was doing; and did not Mr. Beaton think that some illusion was necessary with young people? Of course, it was very nice of Mr. Wetmore to be so honest, but it did not always seem to be the wisest thing. She begged Mr. Beaton to try to think of some one who would be a

little less severe. Her tone assumed a deeper interest in the people who were coming up and going away, and Beaton perceived that he was dismissed.

He went away with vanity flattered by the sense of having been appealed to concerning Margaret, and then he began to chafe at what she had said of Wetmore's honesty, apropos of her wish that he still had a class himself. Did she mean, confound her? that he was insincere, and would let Miss Vance suppose she had more talent than she really had? The more Beaton thought of this, the more furious he became, and the more he was convinced that something like it had been unconsciously if not consciously in her mind. He framed some keen retorts, to the general effect that with the atmosphere of illusion preserved so completely at home, Miss Vance hardly needed it in her art studies. Having just determined never to go near Mrs. Horn's Thursdays again, he decided to go once more, in order to plant this sting in her capacious but somewhat callous bosom; and he planned how he would lead the talk up to the point from which he should launch it.

In the mean time he felt the need of some present solace, such as only unqualified worship could give him; a cruel wish to feel his power in some direction where, even if it were resisted, it could not be overcome, drove him on. That a woman who was to Beaton the embodiment of artificiality should intimate, however innocently--the innocence made it all the worse--that he was less honest than Wetmore, whom he knew to be so much more honest, was something that must be retaliated somewhere before his self-respect could be restored. It was only five o'clock, and he went on up-town to the Dryfooses', though he had been there only the night before last. He asked for the ladies, and Mrs. Mandel received him.

"The young ladies are down-town shopping," she said, "but I am very glad of the opportunity of seeing you alone, Mr. Beaton. You know I lived several years in Europe."

"Yes," said Beaton, wondering what that could have to do with her pleasure in seeing him alone. "I believe so?" He involuntarily gave his words the questioning inflection.

"You have lived abroad, too, and so you won't find what I am going to ask so strange. Mr. Beaton, why do you come so much to this house?" Mrs. Mandel bent forward with an aspect of ladylike interest and smiled.

Beaton frowned. "Why do I come so much?"

"Yes."

"Why do I--Excuse me, Mrs. Mandel, but will you allow me to ask why you ask?"

"Oh, certainly. There's no reason why I shouldn't say, for I wish you to be very frank with me. I ask because there are two young ladies in this house; and, in a certain way, I have to take the place of a mother to

them. I needn't explain why; you know all the people here, and you understand. I have nothing to say about them, but I should not be speaking to you now if they were not all rather helpless people. They do not know the world they have come to live in here, and they cannot help themselves or one another. But you do know it, Mr. Beaton, and I am sure you know just how much or how little you mean by coming here. You are either interested in one of these young girls or you are not. If you are, I have nothing more to say. If you are not--" Mrs. Mandel continued to smile, but the smile had grown more perfunctory, and it had an icy gleam.

Beaton looked at her with surprise that he gravely kept to himself. He had always regarded her as a social nullity, with a kind of pity, to be sure, as a civilized person living among such people as the Dryfooses, but not without a humorous contempt; he had thought of her as Mandel, and sometimes as Old Mandel, though she was not half a score of years his senior, and was still well on the sunny side of forty. He reddened, and then turned an angry pallor. "Excuse me again, Mrs. Mandel. Do you ask this from the young ladies?"

"Certainly not," she said, with the best temper, and with something in her tone that convicted Beaton of vulgarity, in putting his question of her authority in the form of a sneer. "As I have suggested, they would hardly know how to help themselves at all in such a matter. I have no objection to saying that I ask it from the father of the young ladies. Of course, in and for myself I should have no right to know anything about your affairs. I assure you the duty of knowing isn't very pleasant." The little tremor in her clear voice struck Beaton as something rather nice.

"I can very well believe that, Mrs. Mandel," he said, with a dreamy sadness in his own. He lifted his eyes and looked into hers. "If I told you that I cared nothing about them in the way you intimate?"

"Then I should prefer to let you characterize your own conduct in continuing to come here for the year past, as you have done, and tacitly leading them on to infer differently." They both mechanically kept up the fiction of plurality in speaking of Christine, but there was no doubt in the mind of either which of the young ladies the other meant. A good many thoughts went through Beaton's mind, and none of them were flattering. He had not been unconscious that the part he had played toward this girl was ignoble, and that it had grown meaner as the fancy which her beauty had at first kindled in him had grown cooler. He was aware that of late he had been amusing himself with her passion in a way that was not less than cruel, not because he wished to do so, but because he was listless and wished nothing. He rose in saying: "I might be a little more lenient than you think, Mrs. Mandel; but I won't trouble you with any palliating theory. I will not come any more."

He bowed, and Mrs. Mandel said, "Of course, it's only your action that I am concerned with."

She seemed to him merely triumphant, and he could not conceive what it

had cost her to nerve herself up to her too easy victory. He left Mrs. Mandel to a far harder lot than had fallen to him, and he went away hating her as an enemy who had humiliated him at a moment when he particularly needed exalting. It was really very simple for him to stop going to see Christine Dryfoos, but it was not at all simple for Mrs. Mandel to deal with the consequences of his not coming. He only thought how lightly she had stopped him, and the poor woman whom he had left trembling for what she had been obliged to do embodied for him the conscience that accused him of unpleasant things.

"By heavens! this is piling it up," he said to himself through his set teeth, realizing how it had happened right on top of that stupid insult from Mrs. Horn. Now he should have to give up his place on 'Every Other Week; he could not keep that, under the circumstances, even if some pretence were not made to get rid of him; he must hurry and anticipate any such pretence; he must see Fulkerson at once; he wondered where he should find him at that hour. He thought, with bitterness so real that it gave him a kind of tragical satisfaction, how certainly he could find him a little later at Mrs. Leighton's; and Fulkerson's happiness became an added injury.

The thing had, of course, come about just at the wrong time. There never had been a time when Beaton needed money more, when he had spent what he had and what he expected to have so recklessly. He was in debt to Fulkerson personally and officially for advance payments of salary. The thought of sending money home made him break into a scoffing laugh, which he turned into a cough in order to deceive the passers. What sort of face should he go with to Fulkerson and tell him that he renounced his employment on 'Every Other Week;' and what should he do when he had renounced it? Take pupils, perhaps; open a class? A lurid conception of a class conducted on those principles of shameless flattery at which Mrs. Horn had hinted--he believed now she had meant to insult him--presented itself. Why should not he act upon the suggestion? He thought with loathing for the whole race of women--dabblers in art. How easy the thing would be: as easy as to turn back now and tell that old fool's girl that he loved her, and rake in half his millions. Why should not he do that? No one else cared for him; and at a year's end, probably, one woman would be like another as far as the love was concerned, and probably he should not be more tired if the woman were Christine Dryfoos than if she were Margaret Vance. He kept Alma Leighton out of the question, because at the bottom of his heart he believed that she must be forever unlike every other woman to him.

The tide of his confused and aimless reverie had carried him far downtown, he thought; but when he looked up from it to see where he was he found himself on Sixth Avenue, only a little below Thirty-ninth Street, very hot and blown; that idiotic fur overcoat was stifling. He could not possibly walk down to Eleventh; he did not want to walk even to the Elevated station at Thirty-fourth; he stopped at the corner to wait for a surface-car, and fell again into his bitter fancies. After a while he roused himself and looked up the track, but there was no car coming. He found himself beside a policeman, who was lazily swinging his club by its thong from his wrist.

"When do you suppose a car will be along?" he asked, rather in a general sarcasm of the absence of the cars than in any special belief that the policeman could tell him.

The policeman waited to discharge his tobacco-juice into the gutter. "In about a week," he said, nonchalantly.

"What's the matter?" asked Beaton, wondering what the joke could be.

"Strike," said the policeman. His interest in Beaton's ignorance seemed to overcome his contempt of it. "Knocked off everywhere this morning except Third Avenue and one or two cross-town lines." He spat again and kept his bulk at its incline over the gutter to glance at a group of men on the corner below: They were neatly dressed, and looked like something better than workingmen, and they had a holiday air of being in their best clothes.

"Some of the strikers?" asked Beaton.

The policeman nodded.

"Any trouble yet?"

"There won't be any trouble till we begin to move the cars," said the policeman.

Beaton felt a sudden turn of his rage toward the men whose action would now force him to walk five blocks and mount the stairs of the Elevated station. "If you'd take out eight or ten of those fellows," he said, ferociously, "and set them up against a wall and shoot them, you'd save a great deal of bother."

"I guess we sha'n't have to shoot much," said the policeman, still swinging his locust. "Anyway, we shant begin it. If it comes to a fight, though," he said, with a look at the men under the scooping rim of his helmet, "we can drive the whole six thousand of 'em into the East River without pullin' a trigger."

"Are there six thousand in it?"

"About."

"What do the infernal fools expect to live on?"

"The interest of their money, I suppose," said the officer, with a grin of satisfaction in his irony. "It's got to run its course. Then they'll come back with their heads tied up and their tails between their legs, and plead to be taken on again."

"If I was a manager of the roads," said Beaton, thinking of how much he was already inconvenienced by the strike, and obscurely connecting it as one of the series with the wrongs he had suffered at the hands of Mrs.

Horn and Mrs. Mandel, "I would see them starve before I'd take them back --every one of them."

"Well," said the policeman, impartially, as a man might whom the companies allowed to ride free, but who had made friends with a good many drivers and conductors in the course of his free riding, "I guess that's what the roads would like to do if they could; but the men are too many for them, and there ain't enough other men to take their places."

"No matter," said Beaton, severely. "They can bring in men from other places."

"Oh, they'll do that fast enough," said the policeman.

A man came out of the saloon on the corner where the strikers were standing, noisy drunk, and they began, as they would have said, to have some fun with him. The policeman left Beaton, and sauntered slowly down toward the group as if in the natural course of an afternoon ramble. On the other side of the street Beaton could see another officer sauntering up from the block below. Looking up and down the avenue, so silent of its horse-car bells, he saw a policeman at every corner. It was rather impressive.

III.

The strike made a good deal of talk in the office of 'Every Other Week' that is, it made Fulkerson talk a good deal. He congratulated himself that he was not personally incommoded by it, like some of the fellows who lived uptown, and had not everything under one roof, as it were. He enjoyed the excitement of it, and he kept the office boy running out to buy the extras which the newsmen came crying through the street almost every hour with a lamentable, unintelligible noise. He read not only the latest intelligence of the strike, but the editorial comments on it, which praised the firm attitude of both parties, and the admirable measures taken by the police to preserve order. Fulkerson enjoyed the interviews with the police captains and the leaders of the strike; he equally enjoyed the attempts of the reporters to interview the road managers, which were so graphically detailed, and with such a fine feeling for the right use of scare-heads as to have almost the value of direct expression from them, though it seemed that they had resolutely refused to speak. He said, at second-hand from the papers, that if the men behaved themselves and respected the rights of property, they would have public sympathy with them every time; but just as soon as they began to interfere with the roads' right to manage their own affairs in their own way, they must be put down with an iron hand; the phrase "iron hand" did Fulkerson almost as much good as if it had never been used before. News began to come of fighting between the police and the strikers when the roads tried to move their cars with men imported from Philadelphia, and then Fulkerson rejoiced at the splendid courage of the police. At the same time, he believed what the strikers said, and that the trouble

was not made by them, but by gangs of roughs acting without their approval. In this juncture he was relieved by the arrival of the State Board of Arbitration, which took up its quarters, with a great many scare-heads, at one of the principal hotels, and invited the roads and the strikers to lay the matter in dispute before them; he said that now we should see the working of the greatest piece of social machinery in modern times. But it appeared to work only in the alacrity of the strikers to submit their grievance. The road; were as one road in declaring that there was nothing to arbitrate, and that they were merely asserting their right to manage their own affairs in their own way. One of the presidents was reported to have told a member of the Board, who personally summoned him, to get out and to go about his business. Then, to Fulkerson's extreme disappointment, the august tribunal, acting on behalf of the sovereign people in the interest of peace, declared itself powerless, and got out, and would, no doubt, have gone about its business if it had had any. Fulkerson did not know what to say, perhaps because the extras did not; but March laughed at this result.

"It's a good deal like the military manoeuvre of the King of France and his forty thousand men. I suppose somebody told him at the top of the hill that there was nothing to arbitrate, and to get out and go about his business, and that was the reason he marched down after he had marched up with all that ceremony. What amuses me is to find that in an affair of this kind the roads have rights and the strikers have rights, but the public has no rights at all. The roads and the strikers are allowed to fight out a private war in our midst as thoroughly and precisely a private war as any we despise the Middle Ages for having tolerated-- as any street war in Florence or Verona--and to fight it out at our pains and expense, and we stand by like sheep and wait till they get tired. It's a funny attitude for a city of fifteen hundred thousand inhabitants."

"What would you do?" asked Fulkerson, a good deal daunted by this view of the case.

"Do? Nothing. Hasn't the State Board of Arbitration declared itself powerless? We have no hold upon the strikers; and we're so used to being snubbed and disobliged by common carriers that we have forgotten our hold on the roads and always allow them to manage their own affairs in their own way, quite as if we had nothing to do with them and they owed us no services in return for their privileges."

"That's a good deal so," said Fulkerson, disordering his hair. "Well, it's nuts for the colonel nowadays. He says if he was boss of this town he would seize the roads on behalf of the people, and man 'em with policemen, and run 'em till the managers had come to terms with the strikers; and he'd do that every time there was a strike."

"Doesn't that rather savor of the paternalism he condemned in Lindau?" asked March.

"I don't know. It savors of horse sense."

"You are pretty far gone, Fulkerson. I thought you were the most engaged man I ever saw; but I guess you're more father-in-lawed. And before you're married, too."

"Well, the colonel's a glorious old fellow, March. I wish he had the power to do that thing, just for the fun of looking on while he waltzed in. He's on the keen jump from morning till night, and he's up late and early to see the row. I'm afraid he'll get shot at some of the fights; he sees them all; I can't get any show at them: haven't seen a brickbat shied or a club swung yet. Have you?"

"No, I find I can philosophize the situation about as well from the papers, and that's what I really want to do, I suppose. Besides, I'm solemnly pledged by Mrs. March not to go near any sort of crowd, under penalty of having her bring the children and go with me. Her theory is that we must all die together; the children haven't been at school since the strike began. There's no precaution that Mrs. March hasn't used. She watches me whenever I go out, and sees that I start straight for this office."

Fulkerson laughed and said: "Well, it's probably the only thing that's saved your life. Have you seen anything of Beaton lately?"

"No. You don't mean to say he's killed!"

"Not if he knows it. But I don't know--What do you say, March? What's the reason you couldn't get us up a paper on the strike?"

"I knew it would fetch round to 'Every Other Week,' somehow."

"No, but seriously. There 'll be plenty of news paper accounts. But you could treat it in the historical spirit--like something that happened several centuries ago; De Foe's Plague of London style. Heigh? What made me think of it was Beaton. If I could get hold of him, you two could go round together and take down its aesthetic aspects. It's a big thing, March, this strike is. I tell you it's imposing to have a private war, as you say, fought out this way, in the heart of New York, and New York not minding, it a bit. See? Might take that view of it. With your descriptions and Beaton's sketches--well, it would just be the greatest card! Come! What do you say?"

"Will you undertake to make it right with Mrs. March if I'm killed and she and the children are not killed with me?"

"Well, it would be difficult. I wonder how it would do to get Kendricks to do the literary part?"

"I've no doubt he'd jump at the chance. I've yet to see the form of literature that Kendricks wouldn't lay down his life for."

"Say!" March perceived that Fulkerson was about to vent another inspiration, and smiled patiently. "Look here! What's the reason we couldn't get one of the strikers to write it up for us?"

"Might have a symposium of strikers and presidents," March suggested.

"No; I'm in earnest. They say some of those fellows--especially the foreigners--are educated men. I know one fellow--a Bohemian--that used to edit a Bohemian newspaper here. He could write it out in his kind of Dutch, and we could get Lindau to translate it."

"I guess not," said March, dryly.

"Why not? He'd do it for the cause, wouldn't he? Suppose you put it up on him the next time you see him."

"I don't see Lindau any more," said March. He added, "I guess he's renounced me along with Mr. Dryfoos's money."

"Pshaw! You don't mean he hasn't been round since?"

"He came for a while, but he's left off coming now. I don't feel particularly gay about it," March said, with some resentment of Fulkerson's grin. "He's left me in debt to him for lessons to the children."

Fulkerson laughed out. "Well, he is the greatest old fool! Who'd 'a' thought he'd 'a' been in earnest with those 'brincibles' of his? But I suppose there have to be just such cranks; it takes all kinds to make a world."

"There has to be one such crank, it seems," March partially assented. "One's enough for me."

"I reckon this thing is nuts for Lindau, too," said Fulkerson. "Why, it must act like a schooner of beer on him all the while, to see 'gabidal' embarrassed like it is by this strike. It must make old Lindau feel like he was back behind those barricades at Berlin. Well, he's a splendid old fellow; pity he drinks, as I remarked once before."

When March left the office he did not go home so directly as he came, perhaps because Mrs. March's eye was not on him. He was very curious about some aspects of the strike, whose importance, as a great social convulsion, he felt people did not recognize; and, with his temperance in everything, he found its negative expressions as significant as its more violent phases. He had promised his wife solemnly that he would keep away from these, and he had a natural inclination to keep his promise; he had no wish to be that peaceful spectator who always gets shot when there is any firing on a mob. He interested himself in the apparent indifference of the mighty city, which kept on about its business as tranquilly as if the private war being fought out in its midst were a vague rumor of Indian troubles on the frontier; and he realized how there might once have been a street feud of forty years in Florence without interfering materially with the industry and prosperity of the city. On Broadway there was a silence where a jangle and clatter of horse-car bells and hoofs had been, but it was not very noticeable; and on the

avenues, roofed by the elevated roads, this silence of the surface tracks was not noticeable at all in the roar of the trains overhead. Some of the cross-town cars were beginning to run again, with a policeman on the rear of each; on the Third Avenue line, operated by non-union men, who had not struck, there were two policemen beside the driver of every car, and two beside the conductor, to protect them from the strikers. But there were no strikers in sight, and on Second Avenue they stood quietly about in groups on the corners. While March watched them at a safe distance, a car laden with policemen came down the track, but none of the strikers offered to molest it. In their simple Sunday best, March thought them very quiet, decent-looking people, and he could well believe that they had nothing to do with the riotous outbreaks in other parts of the city. He could hardly believe that there were any such outbreaks; he began more and more to think them mere newspaper exaggerations in the absence of any disturbance, or the disposition to it, that he could see. He walked on to the East River

Avenues A, B, and C presented the same quiet aspect as Second Avenue; groups of men stood on the corners, and now and then a police-laden car was brought unmolested down the tracks before them; they looked at it and talked together, and some laughed, but there was no trouble.

March got a cross-town car, and came back to the West Side. A policeman, looking very sleepy and tired, lounged on the platform.

"I suppose you'll be glad when this cruel war is over," March suggested, as he got in.

The officer gave him a surly glance and made him no answer.

His behavior, from a man born to the joking give and take of our life, impressed March. It gave him a fine sense of the ferocity which he had read of the French troops putting on toward the populace just before the coup d'etat; he began to feel like the populace; but he struggled with himself and regained his character of philosophical observer. In this character he remained in the car and let it carry him by the corner where he ought to have got out and gone home, and let it keep on with him to one of the farthest tracks westward, where so much of the fighting was reported to have taken place. But everything on the way was as quiet as on the East Side.

Suddenly the car stopped with so quick a turn of the brake that he was half thrown from his seat, and the policeman jumped down from the platform and ran forward.

IV

Dryfoos sat at breakfast that morning with Mrs. Mandel as usual to pour out his coffee. Conrad had gone down-town; the two girls lay abed much later than their father breakfasted, and their mother had gradually grown

too feeble to come down till lunch. Suddenly Christine appeared at the door. Her face was white to the edges of her lips, and her eyes were blazing.

"Look here, father! Have you been saying anything to Mr. Beaton?"

The old man looked up at her across his coffee-cup through his frowning brows. "No."

Mrs. Mandel dropped her eyes, and the spoon shook in her hand.

"Then what's the reason he don't come here any more?" demanded the girl; and her glance darted from her father to Mrs. Mandel. "Oh, it's you, is it? I'd like to know who told you to meddle in other people's business?"

"I did," said Dryfoos, savagely. "I told her to ask him what he wanted here, and he said he didn't want anything, and he stopped coming. That's all. I did it myself."

"Oh, you did, did you?" said the girl, scarcely less insolently than she had spoken to Mrs. Mandel. "I should like to know what you did it for? I'd like to know what made you think I wasn't able to take care of myself. I just knew somebody had been meddling, but I didn't suppose it was you. I can manage my own affairs in my own way, if you please, and I'll thank you after this to leave me to myself in what don't concern you."

"Don't concern me? You impudent jade!" her father began.

Christine advanced from the doorway toward the table; she had her hands closed upon what seemed trinkets, some of which glittered and dangled from them. She said, "Will you go to him and tell him that this meddlesome minx, here, had no business to say anything about me to him, and you take it all back?"

"No!" shouted the old man. "And if--"

"That's all I want of you!" the girl shouted in her turn. "Here are your presents." With both hands she flung the jewels--pins and rings and earrings and bracelets--among the breakfast-dishes, from which some of them sprang to the floor. She stood a moment to pull the intaglio ring from the finger where Beaton put it a year ago, and dashed that at her father's plate. Then she whirled out of the room, and they heard her running up-stairs.

The old man made a start toward her, but he fell back in his chair before she was gone, and, with a fierce, grinding movement of his jaws, controlled himself. "Take--take those things up," he gasped to Mrs. Mandel. He seemed unable to rise again from his chair; but when she asked him if he were unwell, he said no, with an air of offence, and got quickly to his feet. He mechanically picked up the intaglio ring from the table while he stood there, and put it on his little finger; his hand was not much bigger than Christine's. "How do you suppose she found it

out?" he asked, after a moment.

"She seems to have merely suspected it," said Mrs. Mandel, in a tremor, and with the fright in her eyes which Christine's violence had brought there.

"Well, it don't make any difference. She had to know, somehow, and now she knows." He started toward the door of the library, as if to go into the hall, where his hat and coat hung.

"Mr. Dryfoos," palpitated Mrs. Mandel, "I can't remain here, after the language your daughter has used to me--I can't let you leave me--I--I'm afraid of her--"

"Lock yourself up, then," said the old man, rudely. He added, from the hall before he went out, "I reckon she'll quiet down now."

He took the Elevated road. The strike seemed a vary far-off thing, though the paper he bought to look up the stockmarket was full of noisy typography about yesterday's troubles on the surface lines. Among the millions in Wall Street there was some joking and some swearing, but not much thinking, about the six thousand men who had taken such chances in their attempt to better their condition. Dryfoos heard nothing of the strike in the lobby of the Stock Exchange, where he spent two or three hours watching a favorite stock of his go up and go down under the betting. By the time the Exchange closed it had risen eight points, and on this and some other investments he was five thousand dollars richer than he had been in the morning. But he had expected to be richer still, and he was by no means satisfied with his luck. All through the excitement of his winning and losing had played the dull, murderous rage he felt toward the child who had defied him, and when the game was over and he started home his rage mounted into a sort of frenzy; he would teach her, he would break her. He walked a long way without thinking, and then waited for a car. None came, and he hailed a passing coupe.

"What has got all the cars?" he demanded of the driver, who jumped down from his box to open the door for him and get his direction.

"Been away?" asked the driver. "Hasn't been any car along for a week. Strike."

"Oh yes," said Dryfoos. He felt suddenly giddy, and he remained staring at the driver after he had taken his seat.

The man asked, "Where to?"

Dryfoos could not think of his street or number, and he said, with uncontrollable fury: "I told you once! Go up to West Eleventh, and drive along slow on the south side; I'll show you the place."

He could not remember the number of 'Every Other Week' office, where he suddenly decided to stop before he went home. He wished to see Fulkerson, and ask him something about Beaton: whether he had been about

lately, and whether he had dropped any hint of what had happened concerning Christine; Dryfoos believed that Fulkerson was in the fellow's confidence.

There was nobody but Conrad in the counting-room, whither Dryfoos returned after glancing into Fulkerson's empty office. "Where's Fulkerson?" he asked, sitting down with his hat on.

"He went out a few moments ago," said Conrad, glancing at the clock. "I'm afraid he isn't coming back again today, if you wanted to see him."

Dryfoos twisted his head sidewise and upward to indicate March's room. "That other fellow out, too?"

"He went just before Mr. Fulkerson," answered Conrad.

"Do you generally knock off here in the middle of the afternoon?" asked the old man.

"No," said Conrad, as patiently as if his father had not been there a score of times and found the whole staff of Every Other leek at work between four and five. "Mr. March, you know, always takes a good deal of his work home with him, and I suppose Mr. Fulkerson went out so early because there isn't much doing to-day. Perhaps it's the strike that makes it dull."

"The strike-yes! It's a pretty piece of business to have everything thrown out because a parcel of lazy hounds want a chance to lay off and get drunk." Dryfoos seemed to think Conrad would make some answer to this, but the young man's mild face merely saddened, and he said nothing. "I've got a coupe out there now that I had to take because I couldn't get a car. If I had my way I'd have a lot of those vagabonds hung. They're waiting to get the city into a snarl, and then rob the houses--pack of dirty, worthless whelps. They ought to call out the militia, and fire into 'em. Clubbing is too good for them." Conrad was still silent, and his father sneered, "But I reckon you don't think so."

"I think the strike is useless," said Conrad.

"Oh, you do, do you? Comin' to your senses a little. Gettin' tired walkin' so much. I should like to know what your gentlemen over there on the East Side think about the strike, anyway."

The young fellow dropped his eyes. "I am not authorized to speak for them."

"Oh, indeed! And perhaps you're not authorized to speak for yourself?"

"Father, you know we don't agree about these things. I'd rather not talk--"

"But I'm goin' to make you talk this time!" cried Dryfoos, striking the arm of the chair he sat in with the side of his fist. A maddening

thought of Christine came over him. "As long as you eat my bread, you have got to do as I say. I won't have my children telling me what I shall do and sha'n't do, or take on airs of being holier than me. Now, you just speak up! Do you think those loafers are right, or don't you? Come!"

Conrad apparently judged it best to speak. "I think they were very foolish to strike--at this time, when the Elevated roads can do the work."

"Oh, at this time, heigh! And I suppose they think over there on the East Side that it 'd been wise to strike before we got the Elevated." Conrad again refused to answer, and his father roared, "What do you think?"

"I think a strike is always bad business. It's war; but sometimes there don't seem any other way for the workingmen to get justice. They say that sometimes strikes do raise the wages, after a while."

"Those lazy devils were paid enough already," shrieked the old man.

"They got two dollars a day. How much do you think they ought to 'a' got? Twenty?"

Conrad hesitated, with a beseeching look at his father. But he decided to answer. "The men say that with partial work, and fines, and other things, they get sometimes a dollar, and sometimes ninety cents a day."

"They lie, and you know they lie," said his father, rising and coming toward him. "And what do you think the upshot of it all will be, after they've ruined business for another week, and made people hire hacks, and stolen the money of honest men? How is it going to end?"

"They will have to give in."

"Oh, give in, heigh! And what will you say then, I should like to know? How will you feel about it then? Speak!"

"I shall feel as I do now. I know you don't think that way, and I don't blame you--or anybody. But if I have got to say how I shall feel, why, I shall feel sorry they didn't succeed, for I believe they have a righteous cause, though they go the wrong way to help themselves."

His father came close to him, his eyes blazing, his teeth set. "Do you dare so say that to me?"

"Yes. I can't help it. I pity them; my whole heart is with those poor men."

"You impudent puppy!" shouted the old man. He lifted his hand and struck his son in the face. Conrad caught his hand with his own left, and, while the blood began to trickle from a wound that Christine's intaglio ring had made in his temple, he looked at him with a kind of grieving

wonder, and said, "Father!"

The old man wrenched his fist away and ran out of the house. He remembered his address now, and he gave it as he plunged into the coupe. He trembled with his evil passion, and glared out of the windows at the passers as he drove home; he only saw Conrad's mild, grieving, wondering eyes, and the blood slowly trickling from the wound in his temple.

Conrad went to the neat-set bowl in Fulkerson's comfortable room and washed the blood away, and kept bathing the wound with the cold water till it stopped bleeding. The cut was not deep, and he thought he would not put anything on it. After a while he locked up the office and started out, he hardly knew where. But he walked on, in the direction he had taken, till he found himself in Union Square, on the pavement in front of Brentano's. It seemed to him that he heard some one calling gently to him, "Mr. Dryfoos!"

V.

Conrad looked confusedly around, and the same voice said again, "Mr. Dryfoos!" and he saw that it was a lady speaking to him from a coupe beside the curbing, and then he saw that it was Miss Vance.

She smiled when, he gave signs of having discovered her, and came up to the door of her carriage. "I am so glad to meet you. I have been longing to talk to somebody; nobody seems to feel about it as I do. Oh, isn't it horrible? Must they fail? I saw cars running on all the lines as I came across; it made me sick at heart. Must those brave fellows give in? And everybody seems to hate them so--I can't bear it." Her face was estranged with excitement, and there were traces of tears on it. "You must think me almost crazy to stop you in the street this way; but when I caught sight of you I had to speak. I knew you would sympathize--I knew you would feel as I do. Oh, how can anybody help honoring those poor men for standing by one another as they do? They are risking all they have in the world for the sake of justice! Oh, they are true heroes! They are staking the bread of their wives and children on the dreadful chance they've taken! But no one seems to understand it. No one seems to see that they are willing to suffer more now than other poor men may suffer less hereafter. And those wretched creatures that are coming in to take their places--those traitors--"

"We can't blame them for wanting to earn a living, Miss Vance," said Conrad.

"No, no! I don't blame them. Who am I, to do such a thing? It's we--people like me, of my class--who make the poor betray one another. But this dreadful fighting--this hideous paper is full of it!" She held up an extra, crumpled with her nervous reading. "Can't something be done to stop it? Don't you think that if some one went among them, and tried to make them see how perfectly hopeless it was to resist the companies

and drive off the new men, he might do some good? I have wanted to go and try; but I am a woman, and I mustn't! I shouldn't be afraid of the strikers, but I'm afraid of what people would say!" Conrad kept pressing his handkerchief to the cut in his temple, which he thought might be bleeding, and now she noticed this. "Are you hurt, Mr. Dryfoos? You look so pale."

"No, it's nothing--a little scratch I've got."

"Indeed, you look pale. Have you a carriage? How will you get home? Will you get in here with me and let me drive you?"

"No, no," said Conrad, smiling at her excitement. "I'm perfectly well--"

"And you don't think I'm foolish and wicked for stopping you here and talking in this way? But I know you feel as I do!"

"Yes, I feel as you do. You are right--right in every way--I mustn't keep you--Good-bye." He stepped back to bow, but she put her beautiful hand out of the window, and when he took it she wrung his hand hard.

"Thank you, thank you! You are good and you are just! But no one can do anything. It's useless!"

The type of irreproachable coachman on the box whose respectability had suffered through the strange behavior of his mistress in this interview drove quickly off at her signal, and Conrad stood a moment looking after the carriage. His heart was full of joy; it leaped; he thought it would burst. As he turned to walk away it seemed to him as if he mounted upon the air. The trust she had shown him, the praise she had given him, that crush of the hand: he hoped nothing, he formed no idea from it, but it all filled him with love that cast out the pain and shame he had been suffering. He believed that he could never be unhappy any more; the hardness that was in his mind toward his father went out of it; he saw how sorely he had tried him; he grieved that he had done it, but the means, the difference of his feeling about the cause of their quarrel, he was solemnly glad of that since she shared it. He was only sorry for his father. "Poor father!" he said under his breath as he went along. He explained to her about his father in his reverie, and she pitied his father, too.

He was walking over toward the West Side, aimlessly at first, and then at times with the longing to do something to save those mistaken men from themselves forming itself into a purpose. Was not that what she meant when she bewailed her woman's helplessness? She must have wished him to try if he, being a man, could not do something; or if she did not, still he would try, and if she heard of it she would recall what she had said and would be glad he had understood her so. Thinking of her pleasure in what he was going to do, he forgot almost what it was; but when he came to a street-car track he remembered it, and looked up and down to see if there were any turbulent gathering of men whom he might mingle with and help to keep from violence. He saw none anywhere; and then suddenly, as if at the same moment, for in his exalted mood all events had a dream-

like simultaneity, he stood at the corner of an avenue, and in the middle of it, a little way off, was a street-car, and around the car a tumult of shouting, cursing, struggling men. The driver was lashing his horses forward, and a policeman was at their heads, with the conductor, pulling them; stones, clubs, brickbats hailed upon the car, the horses, the men trying to move them. The mob closed upon them in a body, and then a patrol-wagon whirled up from the other side, and a squad of policemen leaped out and began to club the rioters. Conrad could see how they struck them under the rims of their hats; the blows on their skulls sounded as if they had fallen on stone; the rioters ran in all directions.

One of the officers rushed up toward the corner where Conrad stood, and then he saw at his side a tall, old man, with a long, white beard, who was calling out at the policemen: "Ah, yes! Glup the strikers--gif it to them! Why don't you co and glup the bresidents that insoalt your lawss, and gick your Boart of Arpidration out-of-toors? Glup the strikers--they cot no friendts! They cot no money to pribe you, to dreat you!"

The officer lifted his club, and the old man threw his left arm up to shield his head. Conrad recognized Zindau, and now he saw the empty sleeve dangle in the air over the stump of his wrist. He heard a shot in that turmoil beside the car, and something seemed to strike him in the breast. He was going to say to the policeman: "Don't strike him! He's an old soldier! You see he has no hand!" but he could not speak, he could not move his tongue. The policeman stood there; he saw his face: it was not bad, not cruel; it was like the face of a statue, fixed, perdurable--a mere image of irresponsible and involuntary authority. Then Conrad fell forward, pierced through the heart by that shot fired from the car.

March heard the shot as he scrambled out of his car, and at the same moment he saw Lindau drop under the club of the policeman, who left him where he fell and joined the rest of the squad in pursuing the rioters. The fighting round the car in the avenue ceased; the driver whipped his horses into a gallop, and the place was left empty.

March would have liked to run; he thought how his wife had implored him to keep away from the rioting; but he could not have left Lindau lying there if he would. Something stronger than his will drew him to the spot, and there he saw Conrad, dead beside the old man.

VI.

In the cares which Mrs. March shared with her husband that night she was supported partly by principle, but mainly by the, potent excitement which bewildered Conrad's family and took all reality from what had happened. It was nearly midnight when the Marches left them and walked away toward the Elevated station with Fulkerson. Everything had been done, by that time, that could be done; and Fulkerson was not without that satisfaction

in the business-like despatch of all the details which attends each step in such an affair and helps to make death tolerable even to the most sorely stricken. We are creatures of the moment; we live from one little space to another; and only one interest at a time fills these. Fulkerson was cheerful when they got into the street, almost gay; and Mrs. March experienced a rebound from her depression which she felt that she ought not to have experienced. But she condoned the offence a little in herself, because her husband remained so constant in his gravity; and, pending the final accounting he must make her for having been where he could be of so much use from the first instant of the calamity, she was tenderly, gratefully proud of all the use he had been to Conrad's family, and especially his miserable old father. To her mind, March was the principal actor in the whole affair, and much more important in having seen it than those who had suffered in it. In fact, he had suffered incomparably.

"Well, well," said Fulkerson. "They'll get along now. We've done all we could, and there's nothing left but for them to bear it. Of course it's awful, but I guess it 'll come out all right. I mean," he added, "they'll pull through now."

"I suppose," said March, "that nothing is put on us that we can't bear. But I should think," he went on, musingly, "that when God sees what we poor finite creatures can bear, hemmed round with this eternal darkness of death, He must respect us."

"Basil!" said his wife. But in her heart she drew nearer to him for the words she thought she ought to rebuke him for.

"Oh, I know," he said, "we school ourselves to despise human nature. But God did not make us despicable, and I say, whatever end He meant us for, He must have some such thrill of joy in our adequacy to fate as a father feels when his son shows himself a man. When I think what we can be if we must, I can't believe the least of us shall finally perish."

"Oh, I reckon the Almighty won't scoop any of us," said Fulkerson, with a piety of his own.

"That poor boy's father!" sighed Mrs. March. "I can't get his face out of my sight. He looked so much worse than death."

"Oh, death doesn't look bad," said March. "It's life that looks so in its presence. Death is peace and pardon. I only wish poor old Lindau was as well out of it as Conrad there."

"Ah, Lindau! He has done harm enough," said Mrs. March. "I hope he will be careful after this."

March did not try to defend Lindau against her theory of the case, which inexorably held him responsible for Conrad's death.

"Lindau's going to come out all right, I guess," said Fulkerson. "He was

first-rate when I saw him at the hospital to-night." He whispered in March's ear, at a chance he got in mounting the station stairs: "I didn't like to tell you there at the house, but I guess you'd better know. They had to take Lindau's arm off near the shoulder. Smashed all to pieces by the clubbing."

In the house, vainly rich and foolishly unfit for them, the bereaved family whom the Marches had just left lingered together, and tried to get strength to part for the night. They were all spent with the fatigue that comes from heaven to such misery as theirs, and they sat in a torpor in which each waited for the other to move, to speak.

Christine moved, and Mela spoke. Christine rose and went out of the room without saying a word, and they heard her going up-stairs. Then Mela said:

"I reckon the rest of us better be gown' too, father. Here, let's git mother started."

She put her arm round her mother, to lift her from her chair, but the old man did not stir, and Mela called Mrs. Mandel from the next room. Between them they raised her to her feet.

"Ain't there anybody agoin' to set up with it?" she asked, in her hoarse pipe. "It appears like folks hain't got any feelin's in New York. Woon't some o' the neighbors come and offer to set up, without waitin' to be asked?"

"Oh, that's all right, mother. The men 'll attend to that. Don't you bother any," Mela coaxed, and she kept her arm round her mother, with tender patience.

"Why, Mely, child! I can't feel right to have it left to hirelin's so. But there ain't anybody any more to see things done as they ought. If Coonrod was on'y here--"

"Well, mother, you are pretty mixed!" said Mela, with a strong tendency to break into her large guffaw. But she checked herself and said: "I know just how you feel, though. It keeps acomun' and agoun'; and it's so and it ain't so, all at once; that's the plague of it. Well, father! Ain't you gown' to come?"

"I'm goin' to stay, Mela," said the old man, gently, without moving. "Get your mother to bed, that's a good girl."

"You goin' to set up with him, Jacob?" asked the old woman.

"Yes, 'Liz'beth, I'll set up. You go to bed."

"Well, I will, Jacob. And I believe it 'll do you good to set up. I wished I could set up with you; but I don't seem to have the stren'th I did when the twins died. I must git my sleep, so's to--I don't like very well to have you broke of your rest, Jacob, but there don't appear

to be anybody else. You wouldn't have to do it if Coonrod was here.
There I go ag'in! Mercy! mercy!"

"Well, do come along, then, mother," said Mela; and she got her out of the room, with Mrs. Mandel's help, and up the stairs.

From the top the old woman called down, "You tell Coonrod--" She stopped, and he heard her groan out, "My Lord! my Lord!"

He sat, one silence in the dining-room, where they had all lingered together, and in the library beyond the hireling watcher sat, another silence. The time passed, but neither moved, and the last noise in the house ceased, so that they heard each other breathe, and the vague, remote rumor of the city invaded the inner stillness. It grew louder toward morning, and then Dryfoos knew from the watcher's deeper breathing that he had fallen into a doze.

He crept by him to the drawing-room, where his son was; the place was full of the awful sweetness of the flowers that Fulkerson had brought, and that lay above the pulseless breast. The old man turned up a burner in the chandelier, and stood looking on the majestic serenity of the dead face.

He could not move when he saw his wife coming down the stairway in the hall. She was in her long, white flannel bed gown, and the candle she carried shook with her nervous tremor. He thought she might be walking in her sleep, but she said, quite simply, "I woke up, and I couldn't git to sleep ag'in without comin' to have a look." She stood beside their dead son with him. "well, he's beautiful, Jacob. He was the prettiest baby! And he was always good, Coonrod was; I'll say that for him. I don't believe he ever give me a minute's care in his whole life. I reckon I liked him about the best of all the children; but I don't know as I ever done much to show it. But you was always good to him, Jacob; you always done the best for him, ever since he was a little feller. I used to be afraid you'd spoil him sometimes in them days; but I guess you're glad now for every time you didn't cross him. I don't suppose since the twins died you ever hit him a lick." She stooped and peered closer at the face. "Why, Jacob, what's that there by his pore eye?" Dryfoos saw it, too, the wound that he had feared to look for, and that now seemed to redden on his sight. He broke into a low, wavering cry, like a child's in despair, like an animal's in terror, like a soul's in the anguish of remorse.

VII.

The evening after the funeral, while the Marches sat together talking it over, and making approaches, through its shadow, to the question of their own future, which it involved, they were startled by the twitter of the electric bell at their apartment door. It was really not so late as the children's having gone to bed made it seem; but at nine o'clock it was

too late for any probable visitor except Fulkerson. It might be he, and March was glad to postpone the impending question to his curiosity concerning the immediate business Fulkerson might have with him. He went himself to the door, and confronted there a lady deeply veiled in black and attended by a very decorous serving-woman.

"Are you alone, Mr. March--you and Mrs. March?" asked the lady, behind her veil; and, as he hesitated, she said: "You don't know me! Miss Vance"; and she threw back her veil, showing her face wan and agitated in the dark folds. "I am very anxious to see you--to speak with you both. May I come in?"

"Why, certainly, Miss Vance," he answered, still too much stupefied by her presence to realize it.

She promptly entered, and saying, with a glance at the hall chair by the door, "My maid can sit here?" followed him to the room where he had left his wife.

Mrs. March showed herself more capable of coping with the fact. She welcomed Miss Vance with the liking they both felt for the girl, and with the sympathy which her troubled face inspired.

"I won't tire you with excuses for coming, Mrs. March," she said, "for it was the only thing left for me to do; and I come at my aunt's suggestion." She added this as if it would help to account for her more on the conventional plane, and she had the instinctive good taste to address herself throughout to Mrs. March as much as possible, though what she had to say was mainly for March. "I don't know how to begin--I don't know how to speak of this terrible affair. But you know what I mean. I feel as if I had lived a whole lifetime since it happened. I don't want you to pity me for it," she said, forestalling a politeness from Mrs. March. "I'm the last one to be thought of, and you mustn't mind me if I try to make you. I came to find out all of the truth that I can, and when I know just what that is I shall know what to do. I have read the inquest; it's all burned into my brain. But I don't care for that--for myself: you must let me say such things without minding me. I know that your husband--that Mr. March was there; I read his testimony; and I wished to ask him--to ask him--" She stopped and looked distractedly about. "But what folly! He must have said everything he knew--he had to." Her eyes wandered to him from his wife, on whom she had kept them with instinctive tact.

"I said everything--yes," he replied. "But if you would like to know--"

"Perhaps I had better tell you something first. I had just parted with him--it couldn't have been more than half an hour--in front of Brentano's; he must have gone straight to his death. We were talking, and I--I said, Why didn't some one go among the strikers and plead with them to be peaceable, and keep them from attacking the new men. I knew that he felt as I did about the strikers: that he was their friend. Did you see--do you know anything that makes you think he had been trying to do that?"

"I am sorry," March began, "I didn't see him at all till--till I saw him lying dead."

"My husband was there purely by accident," Mrs. March put in. "I had begged and entreated him not to go near the striking anywhere. And he had just got out of the car, and saw the policeman strike that wretched Lindau--he's been such an anxiety to me ever since we have had anything to do with him here; my husband knew him when he was a boy in the West. Mr. March came home from it all perfectly prostrated; it made us all sick! Nothing so horrible ever came into our lives before. I assure you it was the most shocking experience."

Miss Vance listened to her with that look of patience which those who have seen much of the real suffering of the world--the daily portion of the poor--have for the nervous woes of comfortable people. March hung his head; he knew it would be useless to protest that his share of the calamity was, by comparison, infinitesimally small.

After she had heard Mrs. March to the end even of her repetitions, Miss Vance said, as if it were a mere matter of course that she should have looked the affair up, "Yes, I have seen Mr. Lindau at the hospital--"

"My husband goes every day to see him," Mrs. March interrupted, to give a final touch to the conception of March's magnanimity throughout.

"The poor man seems to have been in the wrong at the time," said Miss Vance.

"I could almost say he had earned the right to be wrong. He's a man of the most generous instincts, and a high ideal of justice, of equity--too high to be considered by a policeman with a club in his hand," said March, with a bold defiance of his wife's different opinion of Lindau. "It's the policeman's business, I suppose, to club the ideal when he finds it inciting a riot."

"Oh, I don't blame Mr. Lindau; I don't blame the policeman; he was as much a mere instrument as his club was. I am only trying to find out how much I am to blame myself. I had no thought of Mr. Dryfoos's going there--of his attempting to talk with the strikers and keep them quiet; I was only thinking, as women do, of what I should try to do if I were a man.

"But perhaps he understood me to ask him to go--perhaps my words sent him to his death."

She had a sort of calm in her courage to know the worst truth as to her responsibility that forbade any wish to flatter her out of it. "I'm afraid," said March, "that is what can never be known now." After a moment he added: "But why should you wish to know? If he went there as a peacemaker, he died in a good cause, in such a way as he would wish to die, I believe."

"Yes," said the girl; "I have thought of that. But death is awful; we must not think patiently, forgivingly of sending any one to their death in the best cause."--"I fancy life was an awful thing to Conrad Dryfoos," March replied. "He was thwarted and disappointed, without even pleasing the ambition that thwarted and disappointed him. That poor old man, his father, warped him from his simple, lifelong wish to be a minister, and was trying to make a business man of him. If it will be any consolation to you to know it, Miss Vance, I can assure you that he was very unhappy, and I don't see how he could ever have been happy here."

"It won't," said the girl, steadily. "If people are born into this world, it's because they were meant to live in it. It isn't a question of being happy here; no one is happy, in that old, selfish way, or can be; but he could have been of great use."

"Perhaps he was of use in dying. Who knows? He may have been trying to silence Lindau."

"Oh, Lindau wasn't worth it!" cried Mrs. March.

Miss Vance looked at her as if she did not quite understand. Then she turned to March. "He might have been unhappy, as we all are; but I know that his life here would have had a higher happiness than we wish for or aim for." The tears began to run silently down her cheeks.

"He looked strangely happy that day when he left me. He had hurt himself somehow, and his face was bleeding from a scratch; he kept his handkerchief up; he was pale, but such a light came into his face when he shook hands--ah, I know he went to try and do what I said!" They were all silent, while she dried her eyes and then put her handkerchief back into the pocket from which she had suddenly pulled it, with a series of vivid, young-ladyish gestures, which struck March by their incongruity with the occasion of their talk, and yet by their harmony with the rest of her elegance. "I am sorry, Miss Vance," he began, "that I can't really tell you anything more--"

"You are very kind," she said, controlling herself and rising quickly. "I thank you--thank you both very much." She turned to Mrs. March and shook hands with her and then with him. "I might have known--I did know that there wasn't anything more for you to tell. But at least I've found out from you that there was nothing, and now I can begin to bear what I must. How are those poor creatures--his mother and father, his sisters? Some day, I hope, I shall be ashamed to have postponed them to the thought of myself; but I can't pretend to be yet. I could not come to the funeral; I wanted to."

She addressed her question to Mrs. March, who answered: "I can understand. But they were pleased with the flowers you sent; people are, at such times, and they haven't many friends."

"Would you go to see them?" asked the girl. "Would you tell them what I've told you?"

Mrs. March looked at her husband.

"I don't see what good it would do. They wouldn't understand. But if it would relieve you--"

"I'll wait till it isn't a question of self-relief," said the girl.

"Good-bye!"

She left them to long debate of the event. At the end Mrs. March said, "She is a strange being; such a mixture of the society girl and the saint."

Her husband answered: "She's the potentiality of several kinds of fanatic. She's very unhappy, and I don't see how she's to be happier about that poor fellow. I shouldn't be surprised if she did inspire him to attempt something of that kind."

"Well, you got out of it very well, Basil. I admired the way you managed. I was afraid you'd say something awkward."

"Oh, with a plain line of truth before me, as the only possible thing, I can get on pretty well. When it comes to anything decorative, I'd rather leave it to you, Isabel."

She seemed insensible of his jest. "Of course, he was in love with her. That was the light that came into his face when he was going to do what he thought she wanted him to do."

"And she--do you think that she was--"

"What an idea! It would have been perfectly grotesque!"

VIII.

Their affliction brought the Dryfooses into humaner relations with the Marches, who had hitherto regarded them as a necessary evil, as the odious means of their own prosperity. Mrs. March found that the women of the family seemed glad of her coming, and in the sense of her usefulness to them all she began to feel a kindness even for Christine. But she could not help seeing that between the girl and her father there was an unsettled account, somehow, and that it was Christine and not the old man who was holding out. She thought that their sorrow had tended to refine the others. Mela was much more subdued, and, except when she abandoned herself to a childish interest in her mourning, she did nothing to shock Mrs. March's taste or to seem unworthy of her grief. She was very good to her mother, whom the blow had left unchanged, and to her father, whom it had apparently fallen upon with crushing weight. Once, after visiting their house, Mrs. March described to March a little scene between Dryfoos and Mela, when he came home from Wall Street, and the girl met him at the door with a kind of country simpleness, and took his hat and stick, and

brought him into the room where Mrs. March sat, looking tired and broken. She found this look of Dryfoos's pathetic, and dwelt on the sort of stupefaction there was in it; he must have loved his son more than they ever realized. "Yes," said March, "I suspect he did. He's never been about the place since that day; he was always dropping in before, on his way up-town. He seems to go down to Wall Street every day, just as before, but I suppose that's mechanical; he wouldn't know what else to do; I dare say it's best for him. The sanguine Fulkerson is getting a little anxious about the future of 'Every Other Week.' Now Conrad's gone, he isn't sure the old man will want to keep on with it, or whether he'll have to look up another Angel. He wants to get married, I imagine, and he can't venture till this point is settled."

"It's a very material point to us too, Basil," said Mrs. March.

"Well, of course. I hadn't overlooked that, you may be sure. One of the things that Fulkerson and I have discussed is a scheme for buying the magazine. Its success is pretty well assured now, and I shouldn't be afraid to put money into it--if I had the money."

"I couldn't let you sell the house in Boston, Basil!"

"And I don't want to. I wish we could go back and live in it and get the rent, too! It would be quite a support. But I suppose if Dryfoos won't keep on, it must come to another Angel. I hope it won't be a literary one, with a fancy for running my department."

"Oh, I guess whoever takes the magazine will be glad enough to keep you!"

"Do you think so? Well, perhaps. But I don't believe Fulkerson would let me stand long between him and an Angel of the right description."

"Well, then, I believe he would. And you've never seen anything, Basil, to make you really think that Mr. Fulkerson didn't appreciate you to the utmost."

"I think I came pretty near an undervaluation in that Lindau trouble. I shall always wonder what put a backbone into Fulkerson just at that crisis. Fulkerson doesn't strike me as the stuff of a moral hero."

"At any rate, he was one," said Mrs. March, "and that's quite enough for me."

March did not answer. "What a noble thing life is, anyway! Here I am, well on the way to fifty, after twenty-five years of hard work, looking forward to the potential poor-house as confidently as I did in youth. We might have saved a little more than we have saved; but the little more wouldn't avail if I were turned out of my place now; and we should have lived sordidly to no purpose. Some one always has you by the throat, unless you have some one else in your grip. I wonder if that's the attitude the Almighty intended His respectable creatures to take toward one another! I wonder if He meant our civilization, the battle we fight in, the game we trick in! I wonder if He considers it final, and if the

kingdom of heaven on earth, which we pray for--"

"Have you seen Lindau to-day?" Mrs. March asked.

"You inferred it from the quality of my piety?" March laughed, and then suddenly sobered. "Yes, I saw him. It's going rather hard with him, I'm afraid. The amputation doesn't heal very well; the shock was very great, and he's old. It'll take time. There's so much pain that they have to keep him under opiates, and I don't think he fully knew me. At any rate, I didn't get my piety from him to-day."

"It's horrible! Horrible!" said Mrs. March. "I can't get over it! After losing his hand in the war, to lose his whole arm now in this way! It does seem too cruel! Of course he oughtn't to have been there; we can say that. But you oughtn't to have been there, either, Basil."

"Well, I wasn't exactly advising the police to go and club the railroad presidents."

"Neither was poor Conrad Dryfoos."

"I don't deny it. All that was distinctly the chance of life and death. That belonged to God; and no doubt it was law, though it seems chance. But what I object to is this economic chance-world in which we live, and which we men seem to have created. It ought to be law as inflexible in human affairs as the order of day and night in the physical world that if a man will work he shall both rest and eat, and shall not be harassed with any question as to how his repose and his provision shall come. Nothing less ideal than this satisfies the reason. But in our state of things no one is secure of this. No one is sure of finding work; no one is sure of not losing it. I may have my work taken away from me at any moment by the caprice, the mood, the indigestion of a man who has not the qualification for knowing whether I do it well, or ill. At my time of life--at every time of life--a man ought to feel that if he will keep on doing his duty he shall not suffer in himself or in those who are dear to him, except through natural causes. But no man can feel this as things are now; and so we go on, pushing and pulling, climbing and crawling, thrusting aside and trampling underfoot; lying, cheating, stealing; and then we get to the end, covered with blood and dirt and sin and shame, and look back over the way we've come to a palace of our own, or the poor-house, which is about the only possession we can claim in common with our brother-men, I don't think the retrospect can be pleasing."

"I know, I know!" said his wife. "I think of those things, too, Basil. Life isn't what it seems when you look forward to it. But I think people would suffer less, and wouldn't have to work so hard, and could make all reasonable provision for the future, if they were not so greedy and so foolish."

"Oh, without doubt! We can't put it all on the conditions; we must put some of the blame on character. But conditions make character; and people are greedy and foolish, and wish to have and to shine, because having and shining are held up to them by civilization as the chief good

of life. We all know they are not the chief good, perhaps not good at all; but if some one ventures to say so, all the rest of us call him a fraud and a crank, and go moiling and toiling on to the palace or the poor-house. We can't help it. If one were less greedy or less foolish, some one else would have and would shine at his expense. We don't toil and toil to ourselves alone; the palace or the poor-house is not merely for ourselves, but for our children, whom we've brought up in the superstition that having and shining is the chief good. We dare not teach them otherwise, for fear they may falter in the fight when it comes their turn, and the children of others will crowd them out of the palace into the poor-house. If we felt sure that honest work shared by all would bring them honest food shared by all, some heroic few of us, who did not wish our children to rise above their fellows--though we could not bear to have them fall below--might trust them with the truth. But we have no such assurance, and so we go on trembling before Dryfooses and living in gimcrackeries."

"Basil, Basil! I was always willing to live more simply than you. You know I was!"

"I know you always said so, my dear. But how many bell-ratchets and speaking-tubes would you be willing to have at the street door below? I remember that when we were looking for a flat you rejected every building that had a bell-ratchet or a speaking-tube, and would have nothing to do with any that had more than an electric button; you wanted a hall-boy, with electric buttons all over him. I don't blame you. I find such things quite as necessary as you do."

"And do you mean to say, Basil," she asked, abandoning this unprofitable branch of the inquiry, "that you are really uneasy about your place? that you are afraid Mr. Dryfoos may give up being an Angel, and Mr. Fulkerson may play you false?"

"Play me false? Oh, it wouldn't be playing me false. It would be merely looking out for himself, if the new Angel had editorial tastes and wanted my place. It's what any one would do."

"You wouldn't do it, Basil!"

"Wouldn't I? Well, if any one offered me more salary than 'Every Other Week' pays--say, twice as much--what do you think my duty to my suffering family would be? It's give and take in the business world, Isabel; especially take. But as to being uneasy, I'm not, in the least. I've the spirit of a lion, when it comes to such a chance as that. When I see how readily the sensibilities of the passing stranger can be worked in New York, I think of taking up the role of that desperate man on Third Avenue who went along looking for garbage in the gutter to eat. I think I could pick up at least twenty or thirty cents a day by that little game, and maintain my family in the affluence it's been accustomed to."

"Basil!" cried his wife. "You don't mean to say that man was an impostor! And I've gone about, ever since, feeling that one such case in a million, the bare possibility of it, was enough to justify all that

Lindau said about the rich and the poor!"

March laughed teasingly. "Oh, I don't say he was an impostor. Perhaps he really was hungry; but, if he wasn't, what do you think of a civilization that makes the opportunity of such a fraud? that gives us all such a bad conscience for the need which is that we weaken to the need that isn't? Suppose that poor fellow wasn't personally founded on fact: nevertheless, he represented the truth; he was the ideal of the suffering which would be less effective if realistically treated. That man is a great comfort to me. He probably rioted for days on that quarter I gave him; made a dinner very likely, or a champagne supper; and if 'Every Other Week' wants to get rid of me, I intend to work that racket. You can hang round the corner with Bella, and Tom can come up to me in tears, at stated intervals, and ask me if I've found anything yet. To be sure, we might be arrested and sent up somewhere. But even in that extreme case we should be provided for. Oh no, I'm not afraid of losing my place! I've merely a sort of psychological curiosity to know how men like Dryfoos and Fulkerson will work out the problem before them."

IX.

It was a curiosity which Fulkerson himself shared, at least concerning Dryfoos. "I don't know what the old man's going to do," he said to March the day after the Marches had talked their future over. "Said anything to you yet?"

"No, not a word."

"You're anxious, I suppose, same as I am. Fact is," said Fulkerson, blushing a little, "I can't ask to have a day named till I know where I am in connection with the old man. I can't tell whether I've got to look out for something else or somebody else. Of course, it's full soon yet."

"Yes," March said, "much sooner than it seems to us. We're so anxious about the future that we don't remember how very recent the past is."

"That's something so. The old man's hardly had time yet to pull himself together. Well, I'm glad you feel that way about it, March. I guess it's more of a blow to him than we realize. He was a good deal bound up in Coonrod, though he didn't always use him very well. Well, I reckon it's apt to happen so oftentimes; curious how cruel love can be. Heigh? We're an awful mixture, March!"

"Yes, that's the marvel and the curse, as Browning says."

"Why, that poor boy himself," pursued Fulkerson, had streaks of the mule in him that could give odds to Beaton, and he must have tried the old man by the way he would give in to his will and hold out against his judgment. I don't believe he ever budged a hairs-breadth from his original position about wanting to be a preacher and not wanting to be a

business man. Well, of course! I don't think business is all in all; but it must have made the old man mad to find that without saying anything, or doing anything to show it, and after seeming to come over to his ground, and really coming, practically, Coonrod was just exactly where he first planted himself, every time."

"Yes, people that have convictions are difficult. Fortunately, they're rare."

"Do you think so? It seems to me that everybody's got convictions. Beaton himself, who hasn't a principle to throw at a dog, has got convictions the size of a barn. They ain't always the same ones, I know, but they're always to the same effect, as far as Beaton's being Number One is concerned. The old man's got convictions or did have, unless this thing lately has shaken him all up--and he believes that money will do everything. Colonel Woodburn's got convictions that he wouldn't part with for untold millions. Why, March, you got convictions yourself!"

"Have I?" said March. "I don't know what they are."

"Well, neither do I; but I know you were ready to kick the trough over for them when the old man wanted us to bounce Lindau that time."

"Oh yes," said March; he remembered the fact; but he was still uncertain just what the convictions were that he had been so staunch for.

"I suppose we could have got along without you," Fulkerson mused aloud. "It's astonishing how you always can get along in this world without the man that is simply indispensable. Makes a fellow realize that he could take a day off now and then without deranging the solar system a great deal. Now here's Coonrod--or, rather, he isn't. But that boy managed his part of the schooner so well that I used to tremble when I thought of his getting the better of the old man and going into a convent or something of that kind; and now here he is, snuffed out in half a second, and I don't believe but what we shall be sailing along just as chipper as usual inside of thirty days. I reckon it will bring the old man to the point when I come to talk with him about who's to be put in Coonrod's place. I don't like very well to start the subject with him; but it's got to be done some time."

"Yes," March admitted. "It's terrible to think how unnecessary even the best and wisest of us is to the purposes of Providence. When I looked at that poor young fellow's face sometimes--so gentle and true and pure--I used to think the world was appreciably richer for his being in it. But are we appreciably poorer for his being out of it now?"

"No, I don't reckon we are," said Fulkerson. "And what a lot of the raw material of all kinds the Almighty must have, to waste us the way He seems to do. Think of throwing away a precious creature like Coonrod Dryfoos on one chance in a thousand of getting that old fool of a Lindau out of the way of being clubbed! For I suppose that was what Coonrod was up to. Say! Have you been round to see Lindau to-day?"

Something in the tone or the manner of Fulkerson startled March. "No! I haven't seen him since yesterday."

"Well, I don't know," said Fulkerson. "I guess I saw him a little while after you did, and that young doctor there seemed to feel kind of worried about him."

"Or not worried, exactly; they can't afford to let such things worry them, I suppose; but--"

"He's worse?" asked March.

"Oh, he didn't say so. But I just wondered if you'd seen him to-day."

"I think I'll go now," said March, with a pang at heart. He had gone every day to see Lindau, but this day he had thought he would not go, and that was why his heart smote him. He knew that if he were in Lindau's place Lindau would never have left his side if he could have helped it. March tried to believe that the case was the same, as it stood now; it seemed to him that he was always going to or from the hospital; he said to himself that it must do Lindau harm to be visited so much. But he knew that this was not true when he was met at the door of the ward where Lindau lay by the young doctor, who had come to feel a personal interest in March's interest in Lindau.

He smiled without gayety, and said, "He's just going."

"What! Discharged?"

"Oh no. He has been failing very fast since you saw him yesterday, and now--" They had been walking softly and talking softly down the aisle between the long rows of beds. "Would you care to see him?"

The doctor made a slight gesture toward the white canvas screen which in such places forms the death-chamber of the poor and friendless. "Come round this way--he won't know you! I've got rather fond of the poor old fellow. He wouldn't have a clergyman--sort of agnostic, isn't he? A good many of these Germans are--but the young lady who's been coming to see him--"

They both stopped. Lindau's grand, patriarchal head, foreshortened to their view, lay white upon the pillow, and his broad, white beard flowed upon the sheet, which heaved with those long last breaths. Beside his bed Margaret Vance was kneeling; her veil was thrown back, and her face was lifted; she held clasped between her hands the hand of the dying man; she moved her lips inaudibly.

In spite of the experience of the whole race from time immemorial, when death comes to any one we know we helplessly regard it as an incident of life, which will presently go on as before. Perhaps this is an instinctive perception of the truth that it does go on somewhere; but we have a sense of death as absolutely the end even for earth only if it relates to some one remote or indifferent to us. March tried to project Lindau to the necessary distance from himself in order to realize the fact in his case, but he could not, though the man with whom his youth had been associated in a poetic friendship had not actually reentered the region of his affection to the same degree, or in any like degree. The changed conditions forbade that. He had a soreness of heart concerning him; but he could not make sure whether this soreness was grief for his death, or remorse for his own uncandor with him about Dryfoos, or a foreboding of that accounting with his conscience which he knew his wife would now exact of him down to the last minutest particular of their joint and several behavior toward Lindau ever since they had met him in New York.

He felt something knock against his shoulder, and he looked up to have his hat struck from his head by a horse's nose. He saw the horse put his foot on the hat, and he reflected, "Now it will always look like an accordion," and he heard the horse's driver address him some sarcasms before he could fully awaken to the situation. He was standing bareheaded in the middle of Fifth Avenue and blocking the tide of carriages flowing in either direction. Among the faces put out of the carriage windows he saw that of Dryfoos looking from a coupe. The old man knew him, and said, "Jump in here, Mr. March"; and March, who had mechanically picked up his hat, and was thinking, "Now I shall have to tell Isabel about this at once, and she will never trust me on the street again without her," mechanically obeyed. Her confidence in him had been undermined by his being so near Conrad when he was shot; and it went through his mind that he would get Dryfoos to drive him to a hatter's, where he could buy a new hat, and not be obliged to confess his narrow escape to his wife till the incident was some days old and she could bear it better. It quite drove Lindau's death out of his mind for the moment; and when Dryfoos said if he was going home he would drive up to the first cross-street and turn back with him, March said he would be glad if he would take him to a hat-store. The old man put his head out again and told the driver to take them to the Fifth Avenue Hotel. "There's a hat-store around there somewhere, seems to me," he said; and they talked of March's accident as well as they could in the rattle and clatter of the street till they reached the place. March got his hat, passing a joke with the hatter about the impossibility of pressing his old hat over again, and came out to thank Dryfoos and take leave of him.

"If you ain't in any great hurry," the old man said, "I wish you'd get in here a minute. I'd like to have a little talk with you."

"Oh, certainly," said March, and he thought: "It's coming now about what he intends to do with 'Every Other Week.' Well, I might as well have all the misery at once and have it over."

Dryfoos called up to his driver, who bent his head down sidewise to

listen: "Go over there on Madison Avenue, onto that asphalt, and keep drivin' up and down till I stop you. I can't hear myself think on these pavements," he said to March. But after they got upon the asphalt, and began smoothly rolling over it, he seemed in no haste to begin. At last he said, "I wanted to talk with you about that--that Dutchman that was at my dinner--Lindau," and March's heart gave a jump with wonder whether he could already have heard of Lindau's death; but in an instant he perceived that this was impossible. "I been talkin' with Fulkerson about him, and he says they had to take the balance of his arm off."

March nodded; it seemed to him he could not speak. He could not make out from the close face of the old man anything of his motive. It was set, but set as a piece of broken mechanism is when it has lost the power to relax itself. There was no other history in it of what the man had passed through in his son's death.

"I don't know," Dryfoos resumed, looking aside at the cloth window-strap, which he kept fingering, "as you quite understood what made me the maddest. I didn't tell him I could talk Dutch, because I can't keep it up with a regular German; but my father was Pennsylvania Dutch, and I could understand what he was saying to you about me. I know I had no business to understand it, after I let him think I couldn't but I did, and I didn't like very well to have a man callin' me a traitor and a tyrant at my own table. Well, I look at it differently now, and I reckon I had better have tried to put up with it; and I would, if I could have known--" He stopped with a quivering lip, and then went on: "Then, again, I didn't like his talkin' that paternalism of his. I always heard it was the worst kind of thing for the country; I was brought up to think the best government was the one that governs the least; and I didn't want to hear that kind of talk from a man that was livin' on my money. I couldn't bear it from him. Or I thought I couldn't before--before--" He stopped again, and gulped. "I reckon now there ain't anything I couldn't bear." March was moved by the blunt words and the mute stare forward with which they ended. "Mr. Dryfoos, I didn't know that you understood Lindau's German, or I shouldn't have allowed him he wouldn't have allowed himself--to go on. He wouldn't have knowingly abused his position of guest to censure you, no matter how much he condemned you." "I don't care for it now," said Dryfoos. "It's all past and gone, as far as I'm concerned; but I wanted you to see that I wasn't tryin' to punish him for his opinions, as you said."

"No; I see now," March assented, though he thought, his position still justified. "I wish--"

"I don't know as I understand much about his opinions, anyway; but I ain't ready to say I want the men dependent on me to manage my business for me. I always tried to do the square thing by my hands; and in that particular case out there I took on all the old hands just as fast as they left their Union. As for the game I came on them, it was dog eat dog, anyway."

March could have laughed to think how far this old man was from even conceiving of Lindau's point of view, and how he was saying the worst of

himself that Lindau could have said of him. No one could have characterized the kind of thing he had done more severely than he when he called it dog eat dog.

"There's a great deal to be said on both sides," March began, hoping to lead up through this generality to the fact of Lindau's death; but the old man went on:

"Well, all I wanted him to know is that I wasn't trying to punish him for what he said about things in general. You naturally got that idea, I reckon; but I always went in for lettin' people say what they please and think what they please; it's the only way in a free country."

"I'm afraid, Mr. Dryfoos, that it would make little difference to Lindau now--"

"I don't suppose he bears malice for it," said Dryfoos, "but what I want to do is to have him told so. He could understand just why I didn't want to be called hard names, and yet I didn't object to his thinkin' whatever he pleased. I'd like him to know--"

"No one can speak to him, no one can tell him," March began again, but again Dryfoos prevented him from going on.

"I understand it's a delicate thing; and I'm not askin' you to do it. What I would really like to do--if you think he could be prepared for it, some way, and could stand it--would be to go to him myself, and tell him just what the trouble was. I'm in hopes, if I done that, he could see how I felt about it."

A picture of Dryfoos going to the dead Lindau with his vain regrets presented itself to March, and he tried once more to make the old man understand. "Mr. Dryfoos," he said, "Lindau is past all that forever," and he felt the ghastly comedy of it when Dryfoos continued, without heeding him

"I got a particular reason why I want him to believe it wasn't his ideas I objected to--them ideas of his about the government carryin' everything on and givin' work. I don't understand 'em exactly, but I found a writin'--among--my son's-things" (he seemed to force the words through his teeth), "and I reckon he--thought--that way. Kind of a diary--where he--put down--his thoughts. My son and me--we differed about a good-many things." His chin shook, and from time to time he stopped. "I wasn't very good to him, I reckon; I crossed him where I guess I got no business to cross him; but I thought everything of--Coonrod. He was the best boy, from a baby, that ever was; just so patient and mild, and done whatever he was told. I ought to 'a' let him been a preacher! Oh, my son! my son!" The sobs could not be kept back any longer; they shook the old man with a violence that made March afraid for him; but he controlled himself at last with a series of hoarse sounds like barks. "Well, it's all past and gone! But as I understand you from what you saw, when Coonrod was--killed, he was tryin' to save that old man from trouble?"

Yes, yes! It seemed so to me."

"That 'll do, then! I want you to have him come back and write for the book when he gets well. I want you to find out and let me know if there's anything I can do for him. I'll feel as if I done it--for my--son. I'll take him into my own house, and do for him there, if you say so, when he gets so he can be moved. I'll wait on him myself. It's what Coonrod 'd do, if he was here. I don't feel any hardness to him because it was him that got Coonrod killed, as you might say, in one sense of the term; but I've tried to think it out, and I feel like I was all the more beholden to him because my son died tryin' to save him. Whatever I do, I'll be doin' it for Coonrod, and that's enough for me." He seemed to have finished, and he turned to March as if to hear what he had to say.

March hesitated. "I'm afraid, Mr. Dryfoos--Didn't Fulkerson tell you that Lindau was very sick?"

"Yes, of course. But he's all right, he said."

Now it had to come, though the fact had been latterly playing fast and loose with March's consciousness. Something almost made him smile; the willingness he had once felt to give this old man pain; then he consoled himself by thinking that at least he was not obliged to meet Dryfoos's wish to make atonement with the fact that Lindau had renounced him, and would on no terms work for such a man as he, or suffer any kindness from him. In this light Lindau seemed the harder of the two, and March had the momentary force to say

"Mr. Dryfoos--it can't be. Lindau--I have just come from him--is dead."

XI.

"How did he take it? How could he bear it? Oh, Basil! I wonder you could have the heart to say it to him. It was cruel!"

"Yes, cruel enough, my dear," March owned to his wife, when they talked the matter over on his return home. He could not wait till the children were out of the way, and afterward neither he nor his wife was sorry that he had spoken of it before them. The girl cried plentifully for her old friend who was dead, and said she hated Mr. Dryfoos, and then was sorry for him, too; and the boy listened to all, and spoke with a serious sense that pleased his father. "But as to how he took it," March went on to answer his wife's question about Dryfoos--"how do any of us take a thing that hurts? Some of us cry out, and some of us don't. Dryfoos drew a kind of long, quivering breath, as a child does when it grieves--there's something curiously simple and primitive about him--and didn't say anything. After a while he asked me how he could see the people at the hospital about the remains; I gave him my card to the young doctor there that had charge of Lindau. I suppose he was still carrying forward his plan of reparation in his mind--to the dead for the dead. But how

useless! If he could have taken the living Lindau home with him, and cared for him all his days, what would it have profited the gentle creature whose life his worldly ambition vexed and thwarted here? He might as well offer a sacrifice at Conrad's grave. Children," said March, turning to them, "death is an exile that no remorse and no love can reach. Remember that, and be good to every one here on earth, for your longing to retrieve any harshness or unkindness to the dead will be the very ecstasy of anguish to you. I wonder," he mused, "if one of the reasons why we're shut up to our ignorance of what is to be hereafter isn't because if we were sure of another world we might be still more brutal to one another here, in the hope of making reparation somewhere else. Perhaps, if we ever come to obey the law of love on earth, the mystery of death will be taken away."

"Well"--the ancestral Puritanism spoke in Mrs. March--" these two old men have been terribly punished. They have both been violent and wilful, and they have both been punished. No one need ever tell me there is not a moral government of the universe!"

March always disliked to hear her talk in this way, which did both her head and heart injustice. "And Conrad," he said, "what was he punished for?"

"He?" she answered, in an exaltation--" he suffered for the sins of others."

"Ah, well, if you put it in that way, yes. That goes on continually. That's another mystery."

He fell to brooding on it, and presently he heard his son saying, "I suppose, papa, that Mr. Lindau died in a bad cause?"

March was startled. He had always been so sorry for Lindau, and admired his courage and generosity so much, that he had never fairly considered this question. "Why, yes," he answered; "he died in the cause of disorder; he was trying to obstruct the law. No doubt there was a wrong there, an inconsistency and an injustice that he felt keenly; but it could not be reached in his way without greater wrong."

"Yes; that's what I thought," said the boy. "And what's the use of our ever fighting about anything in America? I always thought we could vote anything we wanted."

"We can, if we're honest, and don't buy and sell one another's votes," said his father. "And men like Lindau, who renounce the American means as hopeless, and let their love of justice hurry them into sympathy with violence--yes, they are wrong; and poor Lindau did die in a bad cause, as you say, Tom."

"I think Conrad had no business there, or you, either, Basil," said his wife.

"Oh, I don't defend myself," said March. "I was there in the cause of

literary curiosity and of conjugal disobedience. But Conrad--yes, he had some business there: it was his business to suffer there for the sins of others. Isabel, we can't throw aside that old doctrine of the Atonement yet. The life of Christ, it wasn't only in healing the sick and going about to do good; it was suffering for the sins of others. That's as great a mystery as the mystery of death. Why should there be such a principle in the world? But it's been felt, and more or less dumbly, blindly recognized ever since Calvary. If we love mankind, pity them, we even wish to suffer for them. That's what has created the religious orders in all times--the brotherhoods and sisterhoods that belong to our day as much as to the mediaeval past. That's what is driving a girl like Margaret Vance, who has everything that the world can offer her young beauty, on to the work of a Sister of Charity among the poor and the dying."

"Yes, yes!" cried Mrs. March. "How--how did she look there, Basil?" She had her feminine misgivings; she was not sure but the girl was something of a poseuse, and enjoyed the picturesqueness, as well as the pain; and she wished to be convinced that it was not so.

"Well," she said, when March had told again the little there was to tell, "I suppose it must be a great trial to a woman like Mrs. Horn to have her niece going that way."

"The way of Christ?" asked March, with a smile.

"Oh, Christ came into the world to teach us how to live rightly in it, too. If we were all to spend our time in hospitals, it would be rather dismal for the homes. But perhaps you don't think the homes are worth minding?" she suggested, with a certain note in her voice that he knew.

He got up and kissed her. "I think the gimcrackeries are." He took the hat he had set down on the parlor table on coming in, and started to put it in the hall, and that made her notice it.

"You've been getting a new hat!"

"Yes," he hesitated; "the old one had got--was decidedly shabby."

"Well, that's right. I don't like you to wear them too long. Did you leave the old one to be pressed?"

"Well, the hatter seemed to think it was hardly worth pressing," said March. He decided that for the present his wife's nerves had quite all they could bear.

XII.

It was in a manner grotesque, but to March it was all the more natural for that reason, that Dryfoos should have Lindau's funeral from his

house. He knew the old man to be darkly groping, through the payment of these vain honors to the dead, for some atonement to his son, and he imagined him finding in them such comfort as comes from doing all one can, even when all is useless.

No one knew what Lindau's religion was, and in default they had had the Anglican burial service read over him; it seems so often the refuge of the homeless dead. Mrs. Dryfoos came down for the ceremony. She understood that it was for Coonrod's sake that his father wished the funeral to be there; and she confided to Mrs. March that she believed Coonrod would have been pleased. "Coonrod was a member of the 'Piscopal Church; and fawther's doin' the whole thing for Coonrod as much as for anybody. He thought the world of Coonrod, fawther did. Mela, she kind of thought it would look queer to have two funerals from the same house, hand-runnin', as you might call it, and one of 'em no relation, either; but when she saw how fawther was bent on it, she give in. Seems as if she was tryin' to make up to fawther for Coonrod as much as she could. Mela always was a good child, but nobody can ever come up to Coonrod."

March felt all the grotesqueness, the hopeless absurdity of Dryfoos's endeavor at atonement in these vain obsequies to the man for whom he believed his son to have died; but the effort had its magnanimity, its pathos, and there was a poetry that appealed to him in the reconciliation through death of men, of ideas, of conditions, that could only have gone warring on in life. He thought, as the priest went on with the solemn liturgy, how all the world must come together in that peace which, struggle and strive as we may, shall claim us at last. He looked at Dryfoos, and wondered whether he would consider these rites a sufficient tribute, or whether there was enough in him to make him realize their futility, except as a mere sign of his wish to retrieve the past. He thought how we never can atone for the wrong we do; the heart we have grieved and wounded cannot kindle with pity for us when once it is stilled; and yet we can put our evil from us with penitence, and somehow, somewhere, the order of loving kindness, which our passion or our wilfulness has disturbed, will be restored.

Dryfoos, through Fulkerson, had asked all the more intimate contributors of 'Every Other Week' to come. Beaton was absent, but Fulkerson had brought Miss Woodburn, with her father, and Mrs. Leighton and Alma, to fill up, as he said. Mela was much present, and was official with the arrangement of the flowers and the welcome of the guests. She imparted this impersonality to her reception of Kendricks, whom Fulkerson met in the outer hall with his party, and whom he presented in whisper to them all. Kendricks smiled under his breath, as it were, and was then mutely and seriously polite to the Leightons. Alma brought a little bunch of flowers, which were lost in those which Dryfoos had ordered to be unsparingly provided.

It was a kind of satisfaction to Mela to have Miss Vance come, and reassuring as to how it would look to have the funeral there; Miss Vance would certainly not have come unless it had been all right; she had come, and had sent some Easter lilies.

"Ain't Christine coming down?" Fulkerson asked Mela.

"No, she ain't a bit well, and she ain't been, ever since Coonrod died. I don't know, what's got over her," said Mela. She added, "Well, I should 'a' thought Mr. Beaton would 'a' made out to 'a' come!"

"Beaton's peculiar," said Fulkerson. "If he thinks you want him he takes a pleasure in not letting you have him."

"Well, goodness knows, I don't want him," said the girl.

Christine kept her room, and for the most part kept her bed; but there seemed nothing definitely the matter with her, and she would not let them call a doctor. Her mother said she reckoned she was beginning to feel the spring weather, that always perfectly pulled a body down in New York; and Mela said if being as cross as two sticks was any sign of spring-fever, Christine had it bad. She was faithfully kind to her, and submitted to all her humors, but she recompensed herself by the freest criticism of Christine when not in actual attendance on her. Christine would not suffer Mrs. Mandel to approach her, and she had with her father a sullen submission which was not resignation. For her, apparently, Conrad had not died, or had died in vain.

"Pshaw!" said Mela, one morning when she came to breakfast, "I reckon if we was to send up an old card of Mr. Beaton's she'd rattle down-stairs fast enough. If she's sick, she's love-sick. It makes me sick to see her."

Mela was talking to Mrs. Mandel, but her father looked up from his plate and listened. Mela went on: "I don't know what's made the fellow quit comun'. But he was an aggravatun' thing, and no more dependable than water. It's just like Air. Fulkerson said, if he thinks you want him he'll take a pleasure in not lettun' you have him. I reckon that's what's the matter with Christine. I believe in my heart the girl 'll die if she don't git him."

Mela went on to eat her breakfast with her own good appetite. She now always came down to keep her father company, as she said, and she did her best to cheer and comfort him. At least she kept the talk going, and she had it nearly all to herself, for Mrs. Mandel was now merely staying on provisionally, and, in the absence of any regrets or excuses from Christine, was looking ruefully forward to the moment when she must leave even this ungentle home for the chances of the ruder world outside.

The old man said nothing at table, but, when Mela went up to see if she could do anything for Christine, he asked Mrs. Mandel again about all the facts of her last interview with Beaton.

She gave them as fully as she could remember them, and the old man made no comment on them. But he went out directly after, and at the 'Every Other Week' office he climbed the stairs to Fulkerson's room and asked for Beaton's address. No one yet had taken charge of Conrad's work, and Fulkerson was running the thing himself, as he said, till he could talk

with Dryfoos about it. The old man would not look into the empty room where he had last seen his son alive; he turned his face away and hurried by the door.

XIII.

The course of public events carried Beaton's private affairs beyond the reach of his simple first intention to renounce his connection with 'Every Other Week.' In fact, this was not perhaps so simple as it seemed, and long before it could be put in effect it appeared still simpler to do nothing about the matter--to remain passive and leave the initiative to Dryfoos, to maintain the dignity of unconsciousness and let recognition of any change in the situation come from those who had caused the change. After all, it was rather absurd to propose making a purely personal question the pivot on which his relations with 'Every Other Week' turned. He took a hint from March's position and decided that he did not know Dryfoos in these relations; he knew only Fulkerson, who had certainly had nothing to do with Mrs. Mandel's asking his intentions. As he reflected upon this he became less eager to look Fulkerson up and make the magazine a partner of his own sufferings. This was the soberer mood to which Beaton trusted that night even before he slept, and he awoke fully confirmed in it. As he examined the offence done him in the cold light of day, he perceived that it had not come either from Mrs. Mandel, who was visibly the faltering and unwilling instrument of it, or from Christine, who was altogether ignorant of it, but from Dryfoos, whom he could not hurt by giving up his place. He could only punish Fulkerson by that, and Fulkerson was innocent. Justice and interest alike dictated the passive course to which Beaton inclined; and he reflected that he might safely leave the punishment of Dryfoos to Christine, who would find out what had happened, and would be able to take care of herself in any encounter of tempers with her father.

Beaton did not go to the office during the week that followed upon this conclusion; but they were used there to these sudden absences of his, and, as his work for the time was in train, nothing was made of his staying away, except the sarcastic comment which the thought of him was apt to excite in the literary department. He no longer came so much to the Leightons, and Fulkerson was in no state of mind to miss any one there except Miss Woodburn, whom he never missed. Beaton was left, then, unmolestedly awaiting the course of destiny, when he read in the morning paper, over his coffee at Maroni's, the deeply scare-headed story of Conrad's death and the clubbing of Lindau. He probably cared as little for either of them as any man that ever saw them; but he felt a shock, if not a pang, at Conrad's fate, so out of keeping with his life and character. He did not know what to do; and he did nothing. He was not asked to the funeral, but he had not expected that, and, when Fulkerson brought him notice that Lindau was also to be buried from Dryfoos's house, it was without his usual sullen vindictiveness that he kept away. In his sort, and as much as a man could who was necessarily so much taken up with himself, he was sorry for Conrad's father; Beaton had a peculiar

tenderness for his own father, and he imagined how his father would feel if it were he who had been killed in Conrad's place, as it might very well have been; he sympathized with himself in view of the possibility; and for once they were mistaken who thought him indifferent and merely brutal in his failure to appear at Lindau's obsequies.

He would really have gone if he had known how to reconcile his presence in that house with the terms of his effective banishment from it; and he was rather forgivingly finding himself wronged in the situation, when Dryfoos knocked at the studio door the morning after Lindau's funeral. Beaton roared out, "Come in!" as he always did to a knock if he had not a model; if he had a model he set the door slightly ajar, and with his palette on his thumb frowned at his visitor and told him he could not come in. Dryfoos fumbled about for the knob in the dim passageway outside, and Beaton, who had experience of people's difficulties with it, suddenly jerked the door open. The two men stood confronted, and at first sight of each other their quiescent dislike revived. Each would have been willing to turn away from the other, but that was not possible. Beaton snorted some sort of inarticulate salutation, which Dryfoos did not try to return; he asked if he could see him alone for a minute or two, and Beaton bade him come in, and swept some paint-blotched rags from the chair which he told him to take. He noticed, as the old man sank tremulously into it, that his movement was like that of his own father, and also that he looked very much like Christine. Dryfoos folded his hands tremulously on the top of his horn-handled stick, and he was rather finely haggard, with the dark hollows round his black eyes and the fall of the muscles on either side of his chin. He had forgotten to take his soft, wide-brimmed hat off; and Beaton felt a desire to sketch him just as he sat.

Dryfoos suddenly pulled himself together from the dreary absence into which he fell at first. "Young man," he began, "maybe I've come here on a fool's errand," and Beaton rather fancied that beginning.

But it embarrassed him a little, and he said, with a shy glance aside, "I don't know what you mean."

"I reckon," Dryfoos answered, quietly, "you got your notion, though. I set that woman on to speak to you the way she done. But if there was anything wrong in the way she spoke, or if you didn't feel like she had any right to question you up as if we suspected you of anything mean, I want you to say so."

Beaton said nothing, and the old man went on.

"I ain't very well up in the ways of the world, and I don't pretend to be. All I want is to be fair and square with everybody. I've made mistakes, though, in my time--" He stopped, and Beaton was not proof against the misery of his face, which was twisted as with some strong physical ache. "I don't know as I want to make any more, if I can help it. I don't know but what you had a right to keep on comin', and if you had I want you to say so. Don't you be afraid but what I'll take it in the right way. I don't want to take advantage of anybody, and I don't ask you to say any more than that."

Beaton did not find the humiliation of the man who had humiliated him so sweet as he could have fancied it might be. He knew how it had come about, and that it was an effect of love for his child; it did not matter by what ungracious means she had brought him to know that he loved her better than his own will, that his wish for her happiness was stronger than his pride; it was enough that he was now somehow brought to give proof of it. Beaton could not be aware of all that dark coil of circumstance through which Dryfoos's present action evolved itself; the worst of this was buried in the secret of the old man's heart, a worm of perpetual torment. What was apparent to another was that he was broken by the sorrow that had fallen upon him, and it was this that Beaton respected and pitied in his impulse to be frank and kind in his answer.

"No, I had no right to keep coming to your house in the way I did, unless--unless I meant more than I ever said." Beaton added: "I don't say that what you did was usual--in this country, at any rate; but I can't say you were wrong. Since you speak to me about the matter, it's only fair to myself to say that a good deal goes on in life without much thinking of consequences. That's the way I excuse myself."

"And you say Mrs. Mandel done right?" asked Dryfoos, as if he wished simply to be assured of a point of etiquette.

"Yes, she did right. I've nothing to complain of."

"That's all I wanted to know," said Dryfoos; but apparently he had not finished, and he did not go, though the silence that Beaton now kept gave him a chance to do so. He began a series of questions which had no relation to the matter in hand, though they were strictly personal to Beaton. "What countryman are you?" he asked, after a moment.

"What countryman?" Beaton frowned back at him.

"Yes, are you an American by birth?"

"Yes; I was born in Syracuse."

"Protestant?"

"My father is a Scotch Seceder."

"What business is your father in?"

Beaton faltered and blushed; then he answered:

"He's in the monument business, as he calls it. He's a tombstone cutter." Now that he was launched, Beaton saw no reason for not declaring, "My father's always been a poor man, and worked with his own hands for his living." He had too slight esteem socially for Dryfoos to conceal a fact from him that he might have wished to blink with others.

"Well, that's right," said Dryfoos. "I used to farm it myself. I've got a good pile of money together, now. At first it didn't come easy; but now it's got started it pours in and pours in; it seems like there was no end to it. I've got well on to three million; but it couldn't keep me from losin' my son. It can't buy me back a minute of his life; not all the money in the world can do it!"

He grieved this out as if to himself rather than to Beaton, who, scarcely ventured to say, "I know--I am very sorry--"

"How did you come," Dryfoos interrupted, "to take up paintin'?"

"Well, I don't know," said Beaton, a little scornfully. "You don't. take a thing of that kind up, I fancy. I always wanted to paint."

"Father try to stop you?"

"No. It wouldn't have been of any use. Why--"

"My son, he wanted to be a preacher, and I did stop him or I thought I did. But I reckon he was a preacher, all the same, every minute of his life. As you say, it ain't any use to try to stop a thing like that. I reckon if a child has got any particular bent, it was given to it; and it's goin' against the grain, it's goin' against the law, to try to bend it some other way. There's lots of good business men, Mr. Beaton, twenty of 'em to every good preacher?"

"I imagine more than twenty," said Beaton, amused and touched through his curiosity as to what the old man was driving at by the quaint simplicity of his speculations.

"Father ever come to the city?"

"No; he never has the time; and my mother's an invalid."

"Oh! Brothers and sisters?"

"Yes; we're a large family."

"I lost two little fellers--twins," said Dryfoos, sadly. "But we hain't ever had but just the five. Ever take portraits?"

"Yes," said Beaton, meeting this zigzag in the queries as seriously as the rest. "I don't think I am good at it."

Dryfoos got to his feet. "I wish you'd paint a likeness of my son. You've seen him plenty of times. We won't fight about the price, don't you be afraid of that."

Beaton was astonished, and in a mistaken way he was disgusted. He saw that Dryfoos was trying to undo Mrs. Mandel's work practically, and get him to come again to his house; that he now conceived of the offence given him as condoned, and wished to restore the former situation. He

knew that he was attempting this for Christine's sake, but he was not the man to imagine that Dryfoos was trying not only to tolerate him, but to like him; and, in fact, Dryfoos was not wholly conscious himself of this end. What they both understood was that Dryfoos was endeavoring to get at Beaton through Conrad's memory; but with one this was its dedication to a purpose of self sacrifice, and with the other a vulgar and shameless use of it.

"I couldn't do it," said Beaton. "I couldn't think of attempting it."

"Why not?" Dryfoos persisted. "We got some photographs of him; he didn't like to sit very well; but his mother got him to; and you know how he looked."

"I couldn't do it--I couldn't. I can't even consider it. I'm very sorry. I would, if it were possible. But it isn't possible."

"I reckon if you see the photographs once"

"It isn't that, Mr. Dryfoos. But I'm not in the way of that kind of thing any more."

"I'd give any price you've a mind to name--"

"Oh, it isn't the money!" cried Beaton, beginning to lose control of himself.

The old man did not notice him. He sat with his head fallen forward, and his chin resting on his folded hands. Thinking of the portrait, he saw Conrad's face before him, reproachful, astonished, but all gentle as it looked when Conrad caught his hand that day after he struck him; he heard him say, "Father!" and the sweat gathered on his forehead. "Oh, my God!" he groaned. "No; there ain't anything I can do now."

Beaton did not know whether Dryfoos was speaking to him or not. He started toward him. "Are you ill?"

"No, there ain't anything the matter," said the old man. "But I guess I'll lay down on your settee a minute." He tottered with Beaton's help to the aesthetic couch covered with a tiger-skin, on which Beaton had once thought of painting a Cleopatra; but he could never get the right model. As the old man stretched himself out on it, pale and suffering, he did not look much like a Cleopatra, but Beaton was struck with his effectiveness, and the likeness between him and his daughter; she would make a very good Cleopatra in some ways. All the time, while these thoughts passed through his mind, he was afraid Dryfoos would die. The old man fetched his breath in gasps, which presently smoothed and lengthened into his normal breathing. Beaton got him a glass of wine, and after tasting it he sat up.

"You've got to excuse me," he said, getting back to his characteristic grimness with surprising suddenness, when once he began to recover himself. "I've been through a good deal lately; and sometimes it ketches

me round the heart like a pain."

In his life of selfish immunity from grief, Beaton could not understand this experience that poignant sorrow brings; he said to himself that Dryfoos was going the way of angina pectoris; as he began shuffling off the tiger-skin he said: "Had you better get up? Wouldn't you like me to call a doctor?"

"I'm all right, young man." Dryfoos took his hat and stick from him, but he made for the door so uncertainly that Beaton put his hand under his elbow and helped him out, and down the stairs, to his coupe.

"Hadn't you better let me drive home with you?" he asked.

"What?" said Dryfoos, suspiciously.

Beaton repeated his question.

"I guess I'm able to go home alone," said Dryfoos, in a surly tone, and he put his head out of the window and called up "Home!" to the driver, who immediately started off and left Beaton standing beside the curbstone.

XIV.

Beaton wasted the rest of the day in the emotions and speculations which Dryfoos's call inspired. It was not that they continuously occupied him, but they broke up the train of other thoughts, and spoiled him for work; a very little spoiled Beaton for work; he required just the right mood for work. He comprehended perfectly well that Dryfoos had made him that extraordinary embassy because he wished him to renew his visits, and he easily imagined the means that had brought him to this pass. From what he knew of that girl he did not envy her father his meeting with her when he must tell her his mission had failed. But had it failed? When Beaton came to ask himself this question, he could only perceive that he and Dryfoos had failed to find any ground of sympathy, and had parted in the same dislike with which they had met. But as to any other failure, it was certainly tacit, and it still rested with him to give it effect.

He could go back to Dryfoos's house, as freely as before, and it was clear that he was very much desired to come back. But if he went back it was also clear that he must go back with intentions more explicit than before, and now he had to ask himself just how much or how little he had meant by going there. His liking for Christine had certainly not increased, but the charm, on the other hand, of holding a leopardess in leash had not yet palled upon him. In his life of inconstancies, it was a pleasure to rest upon something fixed, and the man who had no control over himself liked logically enough to feel his control of some one else. The fact cannot other wise be put in terms, and the attraction which Christine Dryfoos had for him, apart from this, escapes from all terms, as anything purely and merely passion must. He had seen from the first

that she was a cat, and so far as youth forecasts such things, he felt that she would be a shrew. But he had a perverse sense of her beauty, and he knew a sort of life in which her power to molest him with her temper could be reduced to the smallest proportions, and even broken to pieces. Then the consciousness of her money entered. It was evident that the old man had mentioned his millions in the way of a hint to him of what he might reasonably expect if he would turn and be his son-in-law. Beaton did not put it to himself in those words; and in fact his cogitations were not in words at all. It was the play of cognitions, of sensations, formlessly tending to the effect which can only be very clumsily interpreted in language. But when he got to this point in them, Beaton rose to magnanimity and in a flash of dramatic reverie disposed of a part of Dryfoos's riches in placing his father and mother, and his brothers and sisters, beyond all pecuniary anxiety forever. He had no shame, no scruple in this, for he had been a pensioner upon others ever since a Syracusan amateur of the arts had detected his talent and given him the money to go and study abroad. Beaton had always considered the money a loan, to be repaid out of his future success; but he now never dreamt of repaying it; as the man was rich, he had even a contempt for the notion of repaying him; but this did not prevent him from feeling very keenly the hardships he put his father to in borrowing money from him, though he never repaid his father, either. In this reverie he saw himself sacrificed in marriage with Christine Dryfoos, in a kind of admiring self-pity, and he was melted by the spectacle of the dignity with which he suffered all the lifelong trials ensuing from his unselfishness. The fancy that Alma Leighton came bitterly to regret him, contributed to soothe and flatter him, and he was not sure that Margaret Vance did not suffer a like loss in him.

There had been times when, as he believed, that beautiful girl's high thoughts had tended toward him; there had been looks, gestures, even words, that had this effect to him, or that seemed to have had it; and Beaton saw that he might easily construe Mrs. Horn's confidential appeal to him to get Margaret interested in art again as something by no means necessarily offensive, even though it had been made to him as to a master of illusion. If Mrs. Horn had to choose between him and the life of good works to which her niece was visibly abandoning herself, Beaton could not doubt which she would choose; the only question was how real the danger of a life of good works was.

As he thought of these two girls, one so charming and the other so divine, it became indefinitely difficult to renounce them for Christine Dryfoos, with her sultry temper and her earthbound ideals. Life had been so flattering to Beaton hitherto that he could not believe them both finally indifferent; and if they were not indifferent, perhaps he did not wish either of them to be very definite. What he really longed for was their sympathy; for a man who is able to walk round quite ruthlessly on the feelings of others often has very tender feelings of his own, easily lacerated, and eagerly responsive to the caresses of compassion. In this frame Beaton determined to go that afternoon, though it was not Mrs. Horn's day, and call upon her in the hope of possibly seeing Miss Vance alone. As he continued in it, he took this for a sign and actually went. It did not fall out at once as he wished, but he got Mrs. Horn to talking

again about her niece, and Mrs. Horn again regretted that nothing could be done by the fine arts to reclaim Margaret from good works.

"Is she at home? Will you let me see her?" asked Beacon, with something of the scientific interest of a physician inquiring for a patient whose symptoms have been rehearsed to him. He had not asked for her before.

"Yes, certainly," said Mrs. Horn, and she went herself to call Margaret, and she did not return with her. The girl entered with the gentle grace peculiar to her; and Beaton, bent as he was on his own consolation, could not help being struck with the spiritual exaltation of her look. At sight of her, the vague hope he had never quite relinquished, that they might be something more than aesthetic friends, died in his heart. She wore black, as she often did; but in spite of its fashion her dress received a nun-like effect from the pensive absence of her face. "Decidedly," thought Beaton, "she is far gone in good works."

But he rose, all the same, to meet her on the old level, and he began at once to talk to her of the subject he had been discussing with her aunt. He said frankly that they both felt she had unjustifiably turned her back upon possibilities which she ought not to neglect.

"You know very well," she answered, "that I couldn't do anything in that way worth the time I should waste on it. Don't talk of it, please. I suppose my aunt has been asking you to say this, but it's no use. I'm sorry it's no use, she wishes it so much; but I'm not sorry otherwise. You can find the pleasure at least of doing good work in it; but I couldn't find anything in it but a barren amusement. Mr. Wetmore is right; for me, it's like enjoying an opera, or a ball."

"That's one of Wetmore's phrases. He'd sacrifice anything to them."

She put aside the whole subject with a look. "You were not at Mr. Dryfoos's the other day. Have you seen them, any of them, lately?"

"I haven't been there for some time, no," said Beaton, evasively. But he thought if he was to get on to anything, he had better be candid. "Mr. Dryfoos was at my studio this morning. He's got a queer notion. He wants me to paint his son's portrait."

She started. "And will you--"

"No, I couldn't do such a thing. It isn't in my way. I told him so. His son had a beautiful face an antique profile; a sort of early Christian type; but I'm too much of a pagan for that sort of thing."

"Yes."

"Yes," Beaton continued, not quite liking her assent after he had invited it. He had his pride in being a pagan, a Greek, but it failed him in her presence, now; and he wished that she had protested he was none. "He was a singular creature; a kind of survival; an exile in our time and place. I don't know: we don't quite expect a saint to be rustic; but with all

his goodness Conrad Dryfoos was a country person. If he were not dying for a cause you could imagine him milking." Beaton intended a contempt that came from the bitterness of having himself once milked the family cow.

His contempt did not reach Miss Vance. "He died for a cause," she said. "The holiest."

"Of labor?"

"Of peace. He was there to persuade the strikers to be quiet and go home."

"I haven't been quite sure," said Beaton. "But in any case he had no business there. The police were on hand to do the persuading."

"I can't let you talk so!" cried the girl. "It's shocking! Oh, I know it's the way people talk, and the worst is that in the sight of the world it's the right way. But the blessing on the peacemakers is not for the policemen with their clubs."

Beaton saw that she was nervous; he made his reflection that she was altogether too far gone in good works for the fine arts to reach her; he began to think how he could turn her primitive Christianity to the account of his modern heathenism. He had no deeper design than to get flattered back into his own favor far enough to find courage for some sort of decisive step. In his heart he was trying to will whether he should or should not go back to Dryfoos's house. It could not be from the caprice that had formerly taken him; it must be from a definite purpose; again he realized this. "Of course; you are right," he said. "I wish I could have answered that old man differently. I fancy he was bound up in his son, though he quarrelled with him, and crossed him. But I couldn't do it; it wasn't possible." He said to himself that if she said "No," now, he would be ruled by her agreement with him; and if she disagreed with him, he would be ruled still by the chance, and would go no more to the Dryfooses'. He found himself embarrassed to the point of blushing when she said nothing, and left him, as it were, on his own hands. "I should like to have given him that comfort; I fancy he hasn't much comfort in life; but there seems no comfort in me."

He dropped his head in a fit attitude for compassion; but she poured no pity upon it.

"There is no comfort for us in ourselves," she said. "It's hard to get outside; but there's only despair within. When we think we have done something for others, by some great effort, we find it's all for our own vanity."

"Yes," said Beaton. "If I could paint pictures for righteousness' sake, I should have been glad to do Conrad Dryfoos for his father. I felt sorry for him. Did the rest seem very much broken up? You saw them all?"

"Not all. Miss Dryfoos was ill, her sister said. It's hard to tell how much people suffer. His mother seemed bewildered. The younger sister is a simple creature; she looks like him; I think she must have something of his spirit."

"Not much spirit of any kind, I imagine," said Beaton. "But she's amiably material. Did they say Miss Dryfoos was seriously ill?"

"No. I supposed she might be prostrated by her brother's death."

"Does she seem that kind of person to you, Miss Vance?" asked Beaton.

"I don't know. I haven't tried to see so much of them as I might, the past winter. I was not sure about her when I met her; I've never seen much of people, except in my own set, and the--very poor. I have been afraid I didn't understand her. She may have a kind of pride that would not let her do herself justice."

Beaton felt the unconscious dislike in the endeavor of praise. "Then she seems to you like a person whose life--its trials, its chances--would make more of than she is now?"

"I didn't say that. I can't judge of her at all; but where we don't know, don't you think we ought to imagine the best?"

"Oh yes," said Beaton. "I didn't know but what I once said of them might have prejudiced you against them. I have accused myself of it." He always took a tone of conscientiousness, of self-censure, in talking with Miss Vance; he could not help it.

"Oh no. And I never allowed myself to form any judgment of her. She is very pretty, don't you think, in a kind of way?"

"Very."

"She has a beautiful brunette coloring: that flourey white and the delicate pink in it. Her eyes are beautiful."

"She's graceful, too," said Beaton. "I've tried her in color; but I didn't make it out."

"I've wondered sometimes," said Miss Vance, "whether that elusive quality you find in some people you try to paint doesn't characterize them all through. Miss Dryfoos might be ever so much finer and better than we would find out in the society way that seems the only way."

"Perhaps," said Beaton, gloomily; and he went away profoundly discouraged by this last analysis of Christine's character. The angelic imperviousness of Miss Vance to properties of which his own wickedness was so keenly aware in Christine might have made him laugh, if it had not been such a serious affair with him. As it was, he smiled to think how very differently Alma Leighton would have judged her from Miss Vance's premises. He liked that clear vision of Alma's even when it pierced his

own disguises. Yes, that was the light he had let die out, and it might have shone upon his path through life. Beaton never felt so poignantly the disadvantage of having on any given occasion been wanting to his own interests through his self-love as in this. He had no one to blame but himself for what had happened, but he blamed Alma for what might happen in the future because she shut out the way of retrieval and return. When he thought of the attitude she had taken toward him, it seemed incredible, and he was always longing to give her a final chance to reverse her final judgment. It appeared to him that the time had come for this now, if ever.

XV.

While we are still young we feel a kind of pride, a sort of fierce pleasure, in any important experience, such as we have read of or heard of in the lives of others, no matter how painful. It was this pride, this pleasure, which Beaton now felt in realizing that the toils of fate were about him, that between him and a future of which Christine Dryfoos must be the genius there was nothing but the will, the mood, the fancy of a girl who had not given him the hope that either could ever again be in his favor. He had nothing to trust to, in fact, but his knowledge that he had once had them all; she did not deny that; but neither did she conceal that he had flung away his power over them, and she had told him that they never could be his again. A man knows that he can love and wholly cease to love, not once merely, but several times; he recognizes the fact in regard to himself, both theoretically and practically; but in regard to women he cherishes the superstition of the romances that love is once for all, and forever. It was because Beaton would not believe that Alma Leighton, being a woman, could put him out of her heart after suffering him to steal into it, that he now hoped anything from her, and she had been so explicit when they last spoke of that affair that he did not hope much. He said to himself that he was going to cast himself on her mercy, to take whatever chance of life, love, and work there was in her having the smallest pity on him. If she would have none, then there was but one thing he could do: marry Christine and go abroad. He did not see how he could bring this alternative to bear upon Alma; even if she knew what he would do in case of a final rejection, he had grounds for fearing she would not care; but he brought it to bear upon himself, and it nerved him to a desperate courage. He could hardly wait for evening to come, before he went to see her; when it came, it seemed to have come too soon. He had wrought himself thoroughly into the conviction that he was in earnest, and that everything depended upon her answer to him, but it was not till he found himself in her presence, and alone with her, that he realized the truth of his conviction. Then the influences of her grace, her gayety, her arch beauty, above all, her good sense, penetrated his soul like a subtle intoxication, and he said to himself that he was right; he could not live without her; these attributes of hers were what he needed to win him, to cheer him, to charm him, to guide him. He longed so to please her, to ingratiate himself with her, that he attempted to be light like her in his talk, but lapsed into abysmal

absences and gloomy recesses of introspection.

"What are you laughing at?" he asked, suddenly starting from one of these.

"What you are thinking of."

"It's nothing to laugh at. Do you know what I'm thinking of?"

"Don't tell, if it's dreadful."

"Oh, I dare say you wouldn't think it's dreadful," he said, with bitterness. "It's simply the case of a man who has made a fool of himself and sees no help of retrieval in himself."

"Can any one else help a man unmake a fool of himself?" she asked, with a smile.

"Yes. In a case like this."

"Dear me! This is very interesting."

She did not ask him what the case was, but he was launched now, and he pressed on. "I am the man who has made a fool of himself--"

"Oh!"

"And you can help me out if you will. Alma, I wish you could see me as I really am."

"Do you, Mr. Beacon? Perhaps I do."

"No; you don't. You formulated me in a certain way, and you won't allow for the change that takes place in every one. You have changed; why shouldn't I?"

"Has this to do with your having made a fool of yourself?"

"Yes."

"Oh! Then I don't see how you have changed."

She laughed, and he too, ruefully. "You're cruel. Not but what I deserve your mockery. But the change was not from the capacity of making a fool of myself. I suppose I shall always do that more or less--unless you help me. Alma! Why can't you have a little compassion? You know that I must always love you."

"Nothing makes me doubt that like your saying it, Mr. Beaton. But now you've broken your word--"

"You are to blame for that. You knew I couldn't keep it!"

"Yes, I'm to blame. I was wrong to let you come--after that. And so I forgive you for speaking to me in that way again. But it's perfectly impossible and perfectly useless for me to hear you any more on that subject; and so-good-bye!"

She rose, and he perforce with her. "And do you mean it?" he asked. "Forever?"

"Forever. This is truly the last time I will ever see you if I can help it. Oh, I feel sorry enough for you!" she said, with a glance at his face. "I do believe you are in earnest. But it's too late now. Don't let us talk about it any more! But we shall, if we meet, and so,--"

"And so good-bye! Well, I've nothing more to say, and I might as well say that. I think you've been very good to me. It seems to me as if you had been--shall I say it?--trying to give me a chance. Is that so?" She dropped her eyes and did not answer.

"You found it was no use! Well, I thank you for trying. It's curious to think that I once had your trust, your regard, and now I haven't it. You don't mind my remembering that I had? It'll be some little consolation, and I believe it will be some help. I know I can't retrieve the past now. It is too late. It seems too preposterous--perfectly lurid--that I could have been going to tell you what a tangle I'd got myself in, and to ask you to help untangle me. I must choke in the infernal coil, but I'd like to have the sweetness of your pity in it--whatever it is."

She put out her hand. "Whatever it is, I do pity you; I said that."

"Thank you." He kissed the band she gave him and went.

He had gone on some such terms before; was it now for the last time? She believed it was. She felt in herself a satiety, a fatigue, in which his good looks, his invented airs and poses, his real trouble, were all alike repulsive. She did not acquit herself of the wrong of having let him think she might yet have liked him as she once did; but she had been honestly willing to see whether she could. It had mystified her to find that when they first met in New York, after their summer in St. Barnaby, she cared nothing for him; she had expected to punish him for his neglect, and then fancy him as before, but she did not. More and more she saw him selfish and mean, weak-willed, narrow-minded, and hard-hearted; and aimless, with all his talent. She admired his talent in proportion as she learned more of artists, and perceived how uncommon it was; but she said to herself that if she were going to devote herself to art, she would do it at first-hand. She was perfectly serene and happy in her final rejection of Beaton; he had worn out not only her fancy, but her sympathy, too.

This was what her mother would not believe when Alma reported the interview to her; she would not believe it was the last time they should meet; death itself can hardly convince us that it is the last time of anything, of everything between ourselves and the dead. "Well, Alma," she said, "I hope you'll never regret what you've done."

"You may be sure I shall not regret it. If ever I'm low-spirited about anything, I'll think of giving Mr. Beaton his freedom, and that will cheer me up."

"And don't you expect to get married? Do you intend to be an old maid?" demanded her mother, in the bonds of the superstition women have so long been under to the effect that every woman must wish to get married, if for no other purpose than to avoid being an old maid.

"Well, mamma," said Alma, "I intend being a young one for a few years yet; and then I'll see. If I meet the right person, all well and good; if not, not. But I shall pick and choose, as a man does; I won't merely be picked and chosen."

"You can't help yourself; you may be very glad if you are picked and chosen."

"What nonsense, mamma! A girl can get any man she wants, if she goes about it the right way. And when my 'fated fairy prince' comes along, I shall just simply make furious love to him and grab him. Of course, I shall make a decent pretence of talking in my sleep. I believe it's done that way more than half the time. The fated fairy prince wouldn't see the princess in nine cases out of ten if she didn't say something; he would go mooning along after the maids of honor."

Mrs. Leighton tried to look unspeakable horror; but she broke down and laughed. "Well, you are a strange girl, Alma."

"I don't know about that. But one thing I do know, mamma, and that is that Prince Beaton isn't the F. F. P. for me. How strange you are, mamma! Don't you think it would be perfectly disgusting to accept a person you didn't care for, and let him go on and love you and marry you? It's sickening."

"Why, certainly, Alma. It's only because I know you did care for him once--"

"And now I don't. And he didn't care for me once, and now he does. And so we're quits."

"If I could believe--"

"You had better brace up and try, mamma; for as Mr. Fulkerson says, it's as sure as guns. From the crown of his head to the sole of his foot, he's loathsome to me; and he keeps getting loathsomer. Ugh! Goodnight!"

XVI.

"Well, I guess she's given him the grand bounce at last," said Fulkerson

to March in one of their moments of confidence at the office. "That's Mad's inference from appearances--and disappearances; and some little hints from Alma Leighton."

"Well, I don't know that I have any criticisms to offer," said March.

"It may be bad for Beaton, but it's a very good thing for Miss Leighton. Upon the whole, I believe I congratulate her."

"Well, I don't know. I always kind of hoped it would turn out the other way. You know I always had a sneaking fondness for the fellow."

"Miss Leighton seems not to have had."

"It's a pity she hadn't. I tell you, March, it ain't so easy for a girl to get married, here in the East, that she can afford to despise any chance."

"Isn't that rather a low view of it?"

"It's a common-sense view. Beaton has the making of a first-rate fellow in him. He's the raw material of a great artist and a good citizen. All he wants is somebody to take him in hand and keep him from makin' an ass of himself and kickin' over the traces generally, and ridin' two or three horses bareback at once."

"It seems a simple problem, though the metaphor is rather complicated," said March. "But talk to Miss Leighton about it. I haven't given Beaton the grand bounce."

He began to turn over the manuscripts on his table, and Fulkerson went away. But March found himself thinking of the matter from time to time during the day, and he spoke to his wife about it when he went home. She surprised him by taking Fulkerson's view of it.

"Yes, it's a pity she couldn't have made up her mind to have him. It's better for a woman to be married."

"I thought Paul only went so far as to say it was well. But what would become of Miss Leighton's artistic career if she married?"

"Oh, her artistic career!" said Mrs. March, with matronly contempt of it.

"But look here!" cried her husband. "Suppose she doesn't like him?"

"How can a girl of that age tell whether she likes any one or not?"

"It seems to me you were able to tell at that age, Isabel. But let's examine this thing. (This thing! I believe Fulkerson is characterizing my whole parlance, as well as your morals.) Why shouldn't we rejoice as much at a non-marriage as a marriage? When we consider the enormous risks people take in linking their lives together, after not half so much thought as goes to an ordinary horse trade, I think we ought to be glad whenever they don't do it. I believe that this popular demand for the

matrimony of others comes from our novel-reading. We get to thinking that there is no other happiness or good-fortune in life except marriage; and it's offered in fiction as the highest premium for virtue, courage, beauty, learning, and saving human life. We all know it isn't. We know that in reality marriage is dog cheap, and anybody can have it for the asking--if he keeps asking enough people. By-and-by some fellow will wake up and see that a first-class story can be written from the anti-marriage point of view; and he'll begin with an engaged couple, and devote his novel to disengaging them and rendering them separately happy ever after in the denouement. It will make his everlasting fortune."

"Why don't you write it, Basil?" she asked. "It's a delightful idea. You could do it splendidly."

He became fascinated with the notion. He developed it in detail; but at the end he sighed and said: "With this 'Every Other Week' work on my hands, of course I can't attempt a novel. But perhaps I sha'n't have it long."

She was instantly anxious to know what he meant, and the novel and Miss Leighton's affair were both dropped out of their thoughts. "What do you mean? Has Mr. Fulkerson said anything yet?"

"Not a word. He knows no more about it than I do. Dryfoos hasn't spoken, and we're both afraid to ask him. Of course, I couldn't ask him."

"No."

"But it's pretty uncomfortable, to be kept hanging by the gills so, as Fulkerson says."

"Yes, we don't know what to do."

March and Fulkerson said the same to each other; and Fulkerson said that if the old man pulled out, he did not know what would happen. He had no capital to carry the thing on, and the very fact that the old man had pulled out would damage it so that it would be hard to get anybody else to put it. In the mean time Fulkerson was running Conrad's office-work, when he ought to be looking after the outside interests of the thing; and he could not see the day when he could get married.

"I don't know which it's worse for, March: you or me. I don't know, under the circumstances, whether it's worse to have a family or to want to have one. Of course--of course! We can't hurry the old man up. It wouldn't be decent, and it would be dangerous. We got to wait."

He almost decided to draw upon Dryfoos for some money; he did not need any, but, he said maybe the demand would act as a hint upon him. One day, about a week after Alma's final rejection of Beaton, Dryfoos came into March's office. Fulkerson was out, but the old man seemed not to have tried to see him.

He put his hat on the floor by his chair, after he sat down, and looked at March awhile with his old eyes, which had the vitreous glitter of old eyes stimulated to sleeplessness. Then he said, abruptly, "Mr. March, how would you like to take this thing off my hands?"

"I don't understand, exactly," March began; but of course he understood that Dryfoos was offering to let him have 'Every Other Week' on some terms or other, and his heart leaped with hope.

The old man knew he understood, and so he did not explain. He said: "I am going to Europe, to take my family there. The doctor thinks it might do my wife some good; and I ain't very well myself, and my girls both want to go; and so we're goin'. If you want to take this thing off my hands, I reckon I can let you have it in 'most any shape you say. You're all settled here in New York, and I don't suppose you want to break up, much, at your time of life, and I've been thinkin' whether you wouldn't like to take the thing."

The word, which Dryfoos had now used three times, made March at last think of Fulkerson; he had been filled too full of himself to think of any one else till he had mastered the notion of such wonderful good fortune as seemed about falling to him. But now he did think of Fulkerson, and with some shame and confusion; for he remembered how, when Dryfoos had last approached him there on the business of his connection with 'Every Other Week,' he had been very haughty with him, and told him that he did not know him in this connection. He blushed to find how far his thoughts had now run without encountering this obstacle of etiquette.

"Have you spoken to Mr. Fulkerson?" he asked.

"No, I hain't. It ain't a question of management. It's a question of buying and selling. I offer the thing to you first. I reckon Fulkerson couldn't get on very well without you."

March saw the real difference in the two cases, and he was glad to see it, because he could act more decisively if not hampered by an obligation to consistency. "I am gratified, of course, Mr. Dryfoos; extremely gratified; and it's no use pretending that I shouldn't be happy beyond bounds to get possession of 'Every Other Week.' But I don't feel quite free to talk about it apart from Mr. Fulkerson."

"Oh, all right!" said the old man, with quick offence.

March hastened to say: "I feel bound to Mr. Fulkerson in every way. He got me to come here, and I couldn't even seem to act without him."

He put it questioningly, and the old man answered:

"Yes, I can see that. When 'll he be in? I can wait." But he looked impatient.

"Very soon, now," said March, looking at his watch. "He was only to be gone a moment," and while he went on to talk with Dryfoos, he wondered

why the old man should have come first to speak with him, and whether it was from some obscure wish to make him reparation for displeasures in the past, or from a distrust or dislike of Fulkerson. Whichever light he looked at it in, it was flattering.

"Do you think of going abroad soon?" he asked.

"What? Yes--I don't know--I reckon. We got our passage engaged. It's on one of them French boats. We're goin' to Paris."

"Oh! That will be interesting to the young ladies."

"Yes. I reckon we're goin' for them. 'Tain't likely my wife and me would want to pull up stakes at our age," said the old man, sorrowfully.

"But you may find it do you good, Mr. Dryfoos," said March, with a kindness that was real, mixed as it was with the selfish interest he now had in the intended voyage.

"Well, maybe, maybe," sighed the old man; and he dropped his head forward. "It don't make a great deal of difference what we do or we don't do, for the few years left."

"I hope Mrs. Dryfoos is as well as usual," said March, finding the ground delicate and difficult.

"Middlin', middlin'," said the old man. "My daughter Christine, she ain't very well."

"Oh," said March. It was quite impossible for him to affect a more explicit interest in the fact. He and Dryfoos sat silent for a few moments, and he was vainly casting about in his thought for something else which would tide them over the interval till Fulkerson came, when he heard his step on the stairs.

"Hello, hello!" he said. "Meeting of the clans!" It was always a meeting of the clans, with Fulkerson, or a field day, or an extra session, or a regular conclave, whenever he saw people of any common interest together. "Hain't seen you here for a good while, Mr. Dryfoos. Did think some of running away with 'Every Other Week' one while, but couldn't seem to work March up to the point."

He gave Dryfoos his hand, and pushed aside the papers on the corner of March's desk, and sat down there, and went on briskly with the nonsense he could always talk while he was waiting for another to develop any matter of business; he told March afterward that he scented business in the air as soon as he came into the room where he and Dryfoos were sitting.

Dryfoos seemed determined to leave the word to March, who said, after an inquiring look at him, "Mr. Dryfoos has been proposing to let us have 'Every Other Week,' Fulkerson."

"Well, that's good; that suits yours truly; March & Fulkerson, publishers and proprietors, won't pretend it don't, if the terms are all right."

"The terms," said the old man, "are whatever you want 'em. I haven't got any more use for the concern--" He gulped, and stopped; they knew what he was thinking of, and they looked down in pity. He went on: "I won't put any more money in it; but what I've put in a'ready can stay; and you can pay me four per cent."

He got upon his feet; and March and Fulkerson stood, too.

"Well, I call that pretty white," said Fulkerson. "It's a bargain as far as I'm concerned. I suppose you'll want to talk it over with your wife, March?"

"Yes; I shall," said March. "I can see that it's a great chance; but I want to talk it over with my wife."

"Well, that's right," said the old man. "Let me hear from you tomorrow."

He went out, and Fulkerson began to dance round the room. He caught March about his stalwart girth and tried to make him waltz; the office-boy came to the door and looked on with approval.

"Come, come, you idiot!" said March, rooting himself to the carpet.

"It's just throwing the thing into our mouths," said Fulkerson. "The wedding will be this day week. No cards! Teedle-lumpty-diddle! Teedle-lumpty-dee! What do you suppose he means by it, March?" he asked, bringing himself soberly up, of a sudden. "What is his little game? Or is he crazy? It don't seem like the Dryfoos of my previous acquaintance."

"I suppose," March suggested, "that he's got money enough, so that he don't care for this--"

"Pshaw! You're a poet! Don't you know that the more money that kind of man has got, the more he cares for money? It's some fancy of his--like having Lindau's funeral at his house--By Jings, March, I believe you're his fancy!"

"Oh, now! Don't you be a poet, Fulkerson!"

"I do! He seemed to take a kind of shine to you from the day you wouldn't turn off old Lindau; he did, indeed. It kind of shook him up. It made him think you had something in you. He was deceived by appearances. Look here! I'm going round to see Mrs. March with you, and explain the thing to her. I know Mrs. March! She wouldn't believe you knew what you were going in for. She has a great respect for your mind, but she don't think you've got any sense. Heigh?"

"All right," said March, glad of the notion; and it was really a comfort to have Fulkerson with him to develop all the points; and it was

delightful to see how clearly and quickly she seized them; it made March proud of her. She was only angry that they had lost any time in coming to submit so plain a case to her.

Mr. Dryfoos might change his mind in the night, and then everything would be lost. They must go to him instantly, and tell him that they accepted; they must telegraph him.

"Might as well send a district messenger; he'd get there next week," said Fulkerson. "No, no! It'll all keep till to-morrow, and be the better for it. If he's got this fancy for March, as I say, he ain't agoing to change it in a single night. People don't change their fancies for March in a lifetime. Heigh?"

When Fulkerson turned up very early at the office next morning, as March did, he was less strenuous about Dryfoos's fancy for March. It was as if Miss Woodburn might have blown cold upon that theory, as something unjust to his own merit, for which she would naturally be more jealous than he.

March told him what he had forgotten to tell him the day before, though he had been trying, all through their excited talk, to get it in, that the Dryfooses were going abroad.

"Oh, ho!" cried Fulkerson. "That's the milk in the cocoanut, is it? Well, I thought there must be something."

But this fact had not changed Mrs. March at all in her conviction that it was Mr. Dryfoos's fancy for her husband which had moved him to make him this extraordinary offer, and she reminded him that it had first been made to him, without regard to Fulkerson. "And perhaps," she went on, "Mr. Dryfoos has been changed---softened; and doesn't find money all in all any more. He's had enough to change him, poor old man!"

"Does anything from without change us?" her husband mused aloud. "We're brought up to think so by the novelists, who really have the charge of people's thinking, nowadays. But I doubt it, especially if the thing outside is some great event, something cataclysmal, like this tremendous sorrow of Dryfoos's."

"Then what is it that changes us?" demanded his wife, almost angry with him for his heresy.

"Well, it won't do to say, the Holy Spirit indwelling. That would sound like cant at this day. But the old fellows that used to say that had some glimpses of the truth. They knew that it is the still, small voice that the soul heeds, not the deafening blasts of doom. I suppose I should have to say that we didn't change at all. We develop. There's the making of several characters in each of us; we are each several characters, and sometimes this character has the lead in us, and sometimes that. From what Fulkerson has told me of Dryfoos, I should say he had always had the potentiality of better things in him than he has ever been yet; and perhaps the time has come for the good to have its chance. The growth in one direction has stopped; it's begun in another;

that's all. The man hasn't been changed by his son's death; it stunned, it benumbed him; but it couldn't change him. It was an event, like any other, and it had to happen as much as his being born. It was forecast from the beginning of time, and was as entirely an effect of his coming into the world--"

"Basil! Basil!" cried his wife. "This is fatalism!"

"Then you think," he said, "that a sparrow falls to the ground without the will of God?" and he laughed provokingly. But he went on more soberly: "I don't know what it all means Isabel though I believe it means good. What did Christ himself say? That if one rose from the dead it would not avail. And yet we are always looking for the miraculous! I believe that unhappy old man truly grieves for his son, whom he treated cruelly without the final intention of cruelty, for he loved him and wished to be proud of him; but I don't think his death has changed him, any more than the smallest event in the chain of events remotely working through his nature from the beginning. But why do you think he's changed at all? Because he offers to sell me Every Other Week on easy terms? He says himself that he has no further use for the thing; and he knows perfectly well that he couldn't get his money out of it now, without an enormous shrinkage. He couldn't appear at this late day as the owner, and sell it to anybody but Fulkerson and me for a fifth of what it's cost him. He can sell it to us for all it's cost him; and four per cent. is no bad interest on his money till we can pay it back. It's a good thing for us; but we have to ask whether Dryfoos has done us the good, or whether it's the blessing of Heaven. If it's merely the blessing of Heaven, I don't propose being grateful for it."

March laughed again, and his wife said, "It's disgusting."

"It's business," he assented. "Business is business; but I don't say it isn't disgusting. Lindau had a low opinion of it."

"I think that with all his faults Mr. Dryfoos is a better man than Lindau," she proclaimed.

"Well, he's certainly able to offer us a better thing in 'Every Other Week,'" said March.

She knew he was enamoured of the literary finish of his cynicism, and that at heart he was as humbly and truly grateful as she was for the good-fortune opening to them.

XVII.

Beaton was at his best when he parted for the last time with Alma Leighton, for he saw then that what had happened to him was the necessary consequence of what he had been, if not what he had done. Afterward he lost this clear vision; he began to deny the fact; he drew upon his

knowledge of life, and in arguing himself into a different frame of mind he alleged the case of different people who had done and been much worse things than he, and yet no such disagreeable consequence had befallen them. Then he saw that it was all the work of blind chance, and he said to himself that it was this that made him desperate, and willing to call evil his good, and to take his own wherever he could find it. There was a great deal that was literary and factitious and tawdry in the mood in which he went to see Christine Dryfoos, the night when the Marches sat talking their prospects over; and nothing that was decided in his purpose. He knew what the drift of his mind was, but he had always preferred to let chance determine his events, and now since chance had played him such an ill turn with Alma, he left it the whole responsibility. Not in terms, but in effect, this was his thought as he walked on up-town to pay the first of the visits which Dryfoos had practically invited him to resume. He had an insolent satisfaction in having delayed it so long; if he was going back he was going back on his own conditions, and these were to be as hard and humiliating as he could make them. But this intention again was inchoate, floating, the stuff of an intention, rather than intention; an expression of temperament chiefly.

He had been expected before that. Christine had got out of Mela that her father had been at Beaton's studio; and then she had gone at the old man and got from him every smallest fact of the interview there. She had flung back in his teeth the good-will toward herself with which he had gone to Beaton. She was furious with shame and resentment; she told him he had made bad worse, that he had made a fool of himself to no end; she spared neither his age nor his grief-broken spirit, in which his will could not rise against hers. She filled the house with her rage, screaming it out upon him; but when her fury was once spent, she began to have some hopes from what her father had done. She no longer kept her bed; every evening she dressed herself in the dress Beaton admired the most, and sat up till a certain hour to receive him. She had fixed a day in her own mind before which, if he came, she would forgive him all he had made her suffer: the mortification, the suspense, the despair. Beyond this, she had the purpose of making her father go to Europe; she felt that she could no longer live in America, with the double disgrace that had been put upon her.

Beaton rang, and while the servant was coming the insolent caprice seized him to ask for the young ladies instead of the old man, as he had supposed of course he should do. The maid who answered the bell, in the place of the reluctant Irishman of other days, had all his hesitation in admitting that the young ladies were at home.

He found Mela in the drawing-room. At sight of him she looked scared; but she seemed to be reassured by his calm. He asked if he was not to have the pleasure of seeing Miss Dryfoos, too; and Mela said she reckoned the girl had gone up-stairs to tell her. Mela was in black, and Beaton noted how well the solid sable became her rich red-blonde beauty; he wondered what the effect would be with Christine.

But she, when she appeared, was not in mourning. He fancied that she

wore the lustrous black silk, with the breadths of white Venetian lace about the neck which he had praised, because he praised it. Her cheeks burned with a Jacqueminot crimson; what should be white in her face was chalky white. She carried a plumed ostrich fan, black and soft, and after giving him her hand, sat down and waved it to and fro slowly, as he remembered her doing the night they first met. She had no ideas, except such as related intimately to herself, and she had no gabble, like Mela; and she let him talk. It was past the day when she promised herself she would forgive him; but as he talked on she felt all her passion for him revive, and the conflict of desires, the desire to hate, the desire to love, made a dizzying whirl in her brain. She looked at him, half doubting whether he was really there or not. He had never looked so handsome, with his dreamy eyes floating under his heavy overhanging hair, and his pointed brown beard defined against his lustrous shirtfront. His mellowly modulated, mysterious voice lulled her; when Mela made an errand out of the room, and Beaton crossed to her and sat down by her, she shivered.

"Are you cold?" he asked, and she felt the cruel mockery and exultant consciousness of power in his tone, as perhaps a wild thing feels captivity in the voice of its keeper. But now, she said she would still forgive him if he asked her.

Mela came back, and the talk fell again to the former level; but Beaton had not said anything that really meant what she wished, and she saw that he intended to say nothing. Her heart began to burn like a fire in her breast.

"You been tellun' him about our gown' to Europe?" Mela asked.

"No," said Christine, briefly, and looking at the fan spread out on her lap.

Beaton asked when; and then he rose, and said if it was so soon, he supposed he should not see them again, unless he saw them in Paris; he might very likely run over during the summer. He said to himself that he had given it a fair trial with Christine, and he could not make it go.

Christine rose, with a kind of gasp; and mechanically followed him to the door of the drawing-room; Mela came, too; and while he was putting on his overcoat, she gurgled and bubbled in good-humor with all the world. Christine stood looking at him, and thinking how still handsomer he was in his overcoat; and that fire burned fiercer in her. She felt him more than life to her and knew him lost, and the frenzy, that makes a woman kill the man she loves, or fling vitriol to destroy the beauty she cannot have for all hers, possessed her lawless soul. He gave his hand to Mela, and said, in his wind-harp stop, "Good-bye."

As he put out his hand to Christine, she pushed it aside with a scream of rage; she flashed at him, and with both hands made a feline pass at the face he bent toward her. He sprang back, and after an instant of stupefaction he pulled open the door behind him and ran out into the street.

"Well, Christine Dryfoos!" said Mela, "Sprang at him like a wild-cat!"

"I, don't care," Christine shrieked. "I'll tear his eyes out!" She flew up-stairs to her own room, and left the burden of the explanation to Mela, who did it justice.

Beaton found himself, he did not know how, in his studio, reeking with perspiration and breathless. He must almost have run. He struck a match with a shaking hand, and looked at his face in the glass. He expected to see the bleeding marks of her nails on his cheeks, but he could see nothing. He grovelled inwardly; it was all so low and coarse and vulgar; it was all so just and apt to his deserts.

There was a pistol among the dusty bric-a-brac on the mantel which he had kept loaded to fire at a cat in the area. He took it and sat looking into the muzzle, wishing it might go off by accident and kill him. It slipped through his hand and struck the floor, and there was a report; he sprang into the air, feeling that he had been shot. But he found himself still alive, with only a burning line along his cheek, such as one of Christine's finger-nails might have left.

He laughed with cynical recognition of the fact that he had got his punishment in the right way, and that his case was not to be dignified into tragedy.

XVIII.

The Marches, with Fulkerson, went to see the Dryfooses off on the French steamer. There was no longer any business obligation on them to be civil, and there was greater kindness for that reason in the attention they offered. 'Every Other Week' had been made over to the joint ownership of March and Fulkerson, and the details arranged with a hardness on Dryfoos's side which certainly left Mrs. March with a sense of his incomplete regeneration. Yet when she saw him there on the steamer, she pitied him; he looked wearied and bewildered; even his wife, with her twitching head, and her prophecies of evil, croaked hoarsely out, while she clung to Mrs. March's hand where they sat together till the leave-takers were ordered ashore, was less pathetic. Mela was looking after both of them, and trying to cheer them in a joyful excitement. "I tell 'em it's goun' to add ten years to both their lives," she said. "The voyage 'll do their healths good; and then, we're gittun' away from that miser'ble pack o' servants that was eatun' us up, there in New York. I hate the place!" she said, as if they had already left it. "Yes, Mrs. Mandel's goun', too," she added, following the direction of Mrs. March's eyes where they noted Mrs. Mandel, speaking to Christine on the other side of the cabin. "Her and Christine had a kind of a spat, and she was goun' to leave, but here only the other day, Christine offered to make it up with her, and now they're as thick as thieves. Well, I reckon we couldn't very well 'a' got along without her.

She's about the only one that speaks French in this family."

Mrs. March's eyes still dwelt upon Christine's face; it was full of a furtive wildness. She seemed to be keeping a watch to prevent herself from looking as if she were looking for some one. "Do you know," Mrs. March said to her husband as they jingled along homeward in the Christopher Street bob-tail car, "I thought she was in love with that detestable Mr. Beaton of yours at one time; and that he was amusing himself with her."

"I can bear a good deal, Isabel," said March, "but I wish you wouldn't attribute Beaton to me. He's the invention of that Mr. Fulkerson of yours."

"Well, at any rate, I hope, now, you'll both get rid of him, in the reforms you're going to carry out."

These reforms were for a greater economy in the management of 'Every Other Week;' but in their very nature they could not include the suppression of Beaton. He had always shown himself capable and loyal to the interests of the magazine, and both the new owners were glad to keep him. He was glad to stay, though he made a gruff pretence of indifference, when they came to look over the new arrangement with him. In his heart he knew that he was a fraud; but at least he could say to himself with truth that he had not now the shame of taking Dryfoos's money.

March and Fulkerson retrenched at several points where it had seemed indispensable to spend, as long as they were not spending their own: that was only human. Fulkerson absorbed Conrad's department into his, and March found that he could dispense with Kendricks in the place of assistant which he had lately filled since Fulkerson had decided that March was overworked. They reduced the number of illustrated articles, and they systematized the payment of contributors strictly according to the sales of each number, on their original plan of co-operation: they had got to paying rather lavishly for material without reference to the sales.

Fulkerson took a little time to get married, and went on his wedding journey out to Niagara, and down the St. Lawrence to Quebec over the line of travel that the Marches had taken on their wedding journey. He had the pleasure of going from Montreal to Quebec on the same boat on which he first met March.

They have continued very good friends, and their wives are almost without the rivalry that usually embitters the wives of partners. At first Mrs. March did not like Mrs. Fulkerson's speaking of her husband as the Ownah, and March as the Edito'; but it appeared that this was only a convenient method of recognizing the predominant quality in each, and was meant neither to affirm nor to deny anything. Colonel Woodburn offered as his contribution to the celebration of the copartnership, which Fulkerson could not be prevented from dedicating with a little dinner, the story of Fulkerson's magnanimous behavior in regard to Dryfoos at that crucial

moment when it was a question whether he should give up Dryfoos or give up March. Fulkerson winced at it; but Mrs. March told her husband that now, whatever happened, she should never have any misgivings of Fulkerson again; and she asked him if he did not think he ought to apologize to him for the doubts with which he had once inspired her. March said that he did not think so.

The Fulkersons spent the summer at a seaside hotel in easy reach of the city; but they returned early to Mrs. Leighton's, with whom they are to board till spring, when they are going to fit up Fulkerson's bachelor apartment for housekeeping. Mrs. March, with her Boston scruple, thinks it will be odd, living over the 'Every Other Week' offices; but there will be a separate street entrance to the apartment; and besides, in New York you may do anything.

The future of the Leightons promises no immediate change. Kendricks goes there a good deal to see the Fulkersons, and Mrs. Fulkerson says he comes to see Alma. He has seemed taken with her ever since he first met her at Dryfoos's, the day of Lindau's funeral, and though Fulkerson objects to dating a fancy of that kind from an occasion of that kind, he justly argues with March that there can be no harm in it, and that we are liable to be struck by lightning any time. In the mean while there is no proof that Alma returns Kendricks's interest, if he feels any. She has got a little bit of color into the fall exhibition; but the fall exhibition is never so good as the spring exhibition. Wetmore is rather sorry she has succeeded in this, though he promoted her success. He says her real hope is in black and white, and it is a pity for her to lose sight of her original aim of drawing for illustration.

News has come from Paris of the engagement of Christine Dryfoos. There the Dryfooses met with the success denied them in New York; many American plutocrats must await their apotheosis in Europe, where society has them, as it were, in a translation. Shortly after their arrival they were celebrated in the news papers as the first millionaire American family of natural-gas extraction who had arrived in the capital of civilization; and at a French watering-place Christine encountered her fate--a nobleman full of present debts and of duels in the past. Fulkerson says the old man can manage the debtor, and Christine can look out for the duellist. "They say those fellows generally whip their wives. He'd better not try it with Christine, I reckon, unless he's practised with a panther."

One day, shortly after their return to town in the autumn from the brief summer outing they permitted themselves, the Marches met Margaret Vance. At first they did not know her in the dress of the sisterhood which she wore; but she smiled joyfully, almost gayly, on seeing them, and though she hurried by with the sister who accompanied her, and did not stay to speak, they felt that the peace that passeth understanding had looked at them from her eyes.

"Well, she is at rest, there can't be any doubt of that," he said, as he glanced round at the drifting black robe which followed her free, nun-like walk.

"Yes, now she can do all the good she likes," sighed his wife.

"I wonder--I wonder if she ever told his father about her talk with poor Conrad that day he was shot?"

"I don't know. I don't care. In any event, it would be right. She did nothing wrong. If she unwittingly sent him to his death, she sent him to die for God's sake, for man's sake."

"Yes--yes. But still--"

"Well, we must trust that look of hers."

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Affected absence of mind
Be good, sweet man, and let who will be clever
Comfort of the critical attitude
Conscience weakens to the need that isn't
Death is an exile that no remorse and no love can reach
Death is peace and pardon
Did not idealize him, but in the highest effect she realized him
Does any one deserve happiness
Does anything from without change us?
Europe, where society has them, as it were, in a translation
Favorite stock of his go up and go down under the betting
Hemmed round with this eternal darkness of death
Indispensable
Love of justice hurry them into sympathy with violence
Married for no other purpose than to avoid being an old maid
Nervous woes of comfortable people
Novelists, who really have the charge of people's thinking
People that have convictions are difficult
Rejoice as much at a non-marriage as a marriage
Respect for your mind, but she don't think you've got any sense
Superstition of the romances that love is once for all
Superstition that having and shining is the chief good
To do whatever one likes is finally to do nothing that one likes
Took the world as she found it, and made the best of it
What we can be if we must
When you look it--live it
Would sacrifice his best friend to a phrase

[NOTE: Several chapter heading numerals are out of order or missing in this 1899 edition, however the text is all present in the three volumes. D.W.]

[NOTE: There is a short list of bookmarks, or pointers, at the end of the file for those who may wish to sample the author's ideas before making an entire meal of them. D.W.]

THEIR SILVER WEDDING JOURNEY.

By William Dean Howells

Part I.

I.

"You need the rest," said the Business End; "and your wife wants you to go, as well as your doctor. Besides, it's your Sabbatical year, and you, could send back a lot of stuff for the magazine."

"Is that your notion of a Sabbatical year?" asked the editor.

"No; I throw that out as a bait to your conscience. You needn't write a line while you're gone. I wish you wouldn't for your own sake; although every number that hasn't got you in it is a back number for me."

"That's very nice of you, Fulkerson," said the editor. "I suppose you realize that it's nine years since we took 'Every Other Week' from Dryfoos?"

"Well, that makes it all the more Sabbatical," said Fulkerson. "The two extra years that you've put in here, over and above the old style Sabbatical seven, are just so much more to your credit. It was your right to go, two years ago, and now it's your duty. Couldn't you look at it in that light?"

"I dare say Mrs. March could," the editor assented. "I don't believe she could be brought to regard it as a pleasure on any other terms."

"Of course not," said Fulkerson. "If you won't take a year, take three months, and call it a Sabbatical summer; but go, anyway. You can make up half a dozen numbers ahead, and Tom, here, knows your ways so well that you needn't think about 'Every Other Week' from the time you start till the time you try to bribe the customs inspector when you get back. I can

take a hack at the editing myself, if Tom's inspiration gives out, and put a little of my advertising fire into the thing." He laid his hand on the shoulder of the young fellow who stood smiling by, and pushed and shook him in the liking there was between them. "Now you go, March! Mrs. Fulkerson feels just as I do about it; we had our outing last year, and we want Mrs. March and you to have yours. You let me go down and engage your passage, and--"

"No, no!" the editor rebelled. "I'll think about it;" but as he turned to the work he was so fond of and so weary of, he tried not to think of the question again, till he closed his desk in the afternoon, and started to walk home; the doctor had said he ought to walk, and he did so, though he longed to ride, and looked wistfully at the passing cars.

He knew he was in a rut, as his wife often said; but if it was a rut, it was a support too; it kept him from wobbling: She always talked as if the flowery fields of youth lay on either side of the dusty road he had been going so long, and he had but to step aside from it, to be among the butterflies and buttercups again; he sometimes indulged this illusion, himself, in a certain ironical spirit which caressed while it mocked the notion. They had a tacit agreement that their youth, if they were ever to find it again, was to be looked for in Europe, where they met when they were young, and they had never been quite without the hope of going back there, some day, for a long sojourn. They had not seen the time when they could do so; they were dreamers, but, as they recognized, even dreaming is not free from care; and in his dream March had been obliged to work pretty steadily, if not too intensely. He had been forced to forego the distinctly literary ambition with which he had started in life because he had their common living to make, and he could not make it by writing graceful verse, or even graceful prose. He had been many years in a sufficiently distasteful business, and he had lost any thought of leaving it when it left him, perhaps because his hold on it had always been rather lax, and he had not been able to conceal that he disliked it. At any rate, he was supplanted in his insurance agency at Boston by a subordinate in his office, and though he was at the same time offered a place of nominal credit in the employ of the company, he was able to decline it in grace of a chance which united the charm of congenial work with the solid advantage of a better salary than he had been getting for work he hated. It was an incredible chance, but it was rendered appreciably real by the necessity it involved that they should leave Boston, where they had lived all their married life, where Mrs. March as well as their children was born, and where all their tender and familiar ties were, and come to New York, where the literary enterprise which formed his chance was to be founded.

It was then a magazine of a new sort, which his business partner had imagined in such leisure as the management of a newspaper syndicate afforded him, and had always thought of getting March to edit. The magazine which is also a book has since been realized elsewhere on more or less prosperous terms, but not for any long period, and 'Every Other Week' was apparently--the only periodical of the kind conditioned for survival. It was at first backed by unlimited capital, and it had the instant favor of a popular mood, which has since changed, but which did

not change so soon that the magazine had not time to establish itself in a wide acceptance. It was now no longer a novelty, it was no longer in the maiden blush of its first success, but it had entered upon its second youth with the reasonable hope of many years of prosperity before it. In fact it was a very comfortable living for all concerned, and the Marches had the conditions, almost dismayingly perfect, in which they had often promised themselves to go and be young again in Europe, when they rebelled at finding themselves elderly in America. Their daughter was married, and so very much to her mother's mind that she did not worry about her, even though she lived so far away as Chicago, still a wild frontier town to her Boston imagination; and their son, as soon as he left college, had taken hold on 'Every Other Week', under his father's instruction, with a zeal and intelligence which won him Fulkerson's praise as a chip of the old block. These two liked each other, and worked into each other's hands as cordially and aptly as Fulkerson and March had ever done. It amused the father to see his son offering Fulkerson the same deference which the Business End paid to seniority in March himself; but in fact, Fulkerson's forehead was getting, as he said, more intellectual every day; and the years were pushing them all along together.

Still, March had kept on in the old rut, and one day he fell down in it. He had a long sickness, and when he was well of it, he was so slow in getting his grip of work again that he was sometimes deeply discouraged. His wife shared his depression, whether he showed or whether he hid it, and when the doctor advised his going abroad, she abetted the doctor with all the strength of a woman's hygienic intuitions. March himself willingly consented, at first; but as soon as he got strength for his work, he began to temporize and to demur. He said that he believed it would do him just as much good to go to Saratoga, where they always had such a good time, as to go to Carlsbad; and Mrs. March had been obliged several times to leave him to his own undoing; she always took him more vigorously in hand afterwards.

II.

When he got home from the 'Every Other Week' office, the afternoon of that talk with the Business End, he wanted to laugh with his wife at Fulkerson's notion of a Sabbatical year. She did not think it was so very droll; she even urged it seriously against him, as if she had now the authority of Holy Writ for forcing him abroad; she found no relish of absurdity in the idea that it was his duty to take this rest which had been his right before.

He abandoned himself to a fancy which had been working to the surface of his thought. "We could call it our Silver Wedding Journey, and go round to all the old places, and see them in the reflected light of the past."

"Oh, we could!" she responded, passionately; and he had now the delicate responsibility of persuading her that he was joking.

He could think of nothing better than a return to Fulkerson's absurdity. "It would be our Silver Wedding Journey just as it would be my Sabbatical year--a good deal after date. But I suppose that would make it all the more silvery."

She faltered in her elation. "Didn't you say a Sabbatical year yourself?" she demanded.

"Fulkerson said it; but it was a figurative expression."

"And I suppose the Silver Wedding Journey was a figurative expression too!"

"It was a notion that tempted me; I thought you would enjoy it. Don't you suppose I should be glad too, if we could go over, and find ourselves just as we were when we first met there?"

"No; I don't believe now that you care anything about it."

"Well, it couldn't be done, anyway; so that doesn't matter."

"It could be done, if you were a mind to think so. And it would be the greatest inspiration to you. You are always longing for some chance to do original work, to get away from your editing, but you've let the time slip by without really trying to do anything; I don't call those little studies of yours in the magazine anything; and now you won't take the chance that's almost forcing itself upon you. You could write an original book of the nicest kind; mix up travel and fiction; get some love in."

"Oh, that's the stalest kind of thing!"

"Well, but you could see it from a perfectly new point of view. You could look at it as a sort of dispassionate witness, and treat it humorously--of course it is ridiculous--and do something entirely fresh."

"It wouldn't work. It would be carrying water on both shoulders. The fiction would kill the travel, the travel would kill the fiction; the love and the humor wouldn't mingle any more than oil and vinegar."

"Well, and what is better than a salad?"

"But this would be all salad-dressing, and nothing to put it on." She was silent, and he yielded to another fancy. "We might imagine coming upon our former selves over there, and travelling round with them--a wedding journey 'en partie carree'."

"Something like that. I call it a very poetical idea," she said with a sort of provisionality, as if distrusting another ambush.

"It isn't so bad," he admitted. "How young we were, in those days!"

"Too young to know what a good time we were having," she said, relaxing her doubt for the retrospect. "I don't feel as if I really saw Europe, then; I was too inexperienced, too ignorant, too simple. I would like to go, just to make sure that I had been." He was smiling again in the way he had when anything occurred to him that amused him, and she demanded, "What is it?"

"Nothing. I was wishing we could go in the consciousness of people who actually hadn't been before--carry them all through Europe, and let them see it in the old, simple-hearted American way."

She shook her head. "You couldn't! They've all been!"

"All but about sixty or seventy millions," said March.

"Well, those are just the millions you don't know, and couldn't imagine."

"I'm not so sure of that."

"And even if you could imagine them, you couldn't make them interesting. All the interesting ones have been, anyway."

"Some of the uninteresting ones too. I used, to meet some of that sort over there. I believe I would rather chance it for my pleasure with those that hadn't been."

"Then why not do it? I know you could get something out of it."

"It might be a good thing," he mused, "to take a couple who had passed their whole life here in New York, too poor and too busy ever to go; and had a perfect famine for Europe all the time. I could have them spend their Sunday afternoons going aboard the different boats, and looking up their accommodations. I could have them sail, in imagination, and discover an imaginary Europe, and give their grotesque misconceptions of it from travels and novels against a background of purely American experience. We needn't go abroad to manage that. I think it would be rather nice."

"I don't think it would be nice in the least," said Mrs. March, "and if you don't want to talk seriously, I would rather not talk at all."

"Well, then, let's talk about our Silver Wedding Journey."

"I see. You merely want to tease and I am not in the humor for it."

She said this in a great many different ways, and then she was really silent. He perceived that she was hurt; and he tried to win her back to good-humor. He asked her if she would not like to go over to Hoboken and look at one of the Hanseatic League steamers, some day; and she refused. When he sent the next day and got a permit to see the boat; she consented to go.

III.

He was one of those men who live from the inside outward; he often took a hint for his actions from his fancies; and now because he had fancied some people going to look at steamers on Sundays, he chose the next Sunday himself for their visit to the Hanseatic boat at Hoboken. To be sure it was a leisure day with him, but he might have taken the afternoon of any other day, for that matter, and it was really that invisible thread of association which drew him.

The Colmannia had been in long enough to have made her toilet for the outward voyage, and was looking her best. She was tipped and edged with shining brass, without and within, and was red-carpeted and white-painted as only a ship knows how to be. A little uniformed steward ran before the visitors, and showed them through the dim white corridors into typical state-rooms on the different decks; and then let them verify their first impression of the grandeur of the dining-saloon, and the luxury of the ladies' parlor and music-room. March made his wife observe that the tables and sofas and easy-chairs, which seemed so carelessly scattered about, were all suggestively screwed fast to the floor against rough weather; and he amused himself with the heavy German browns and greens and coppers in the decorations, which he said must have been studied in color from sausage, beer, and spinach, to the effect of those large march-panes in the roof. She laughed with him at the tastelessness of the race which they were destined to marvel at more and more; but she made him own that the stewardesses whom they saw were charmingly like serving-maids in the 'Fliegende Blatter'; when they went ashore she challenged his silence for some assent to her own conclusion that the Colmannia was perfect.

"She has only one fault," he assented. "She's a ship."

"Yes," said his wife, "and I shall want to look at the Norumbia before I decide."

Then he saw that it was only a question which steamer they should take, and not whether they should take any. He explained, at first gently and afterwards savagely, that their visit to the Colmannia was quite enough for him, and that the vessel was not built that he would be willing to cross the Atlantic in.

When a man has gone so far as that he has committed himself to the opposite course in almost so many words; and March was neither surprised nor abashed when he discovered himself, before they reached home, offering his wife many reasons why they should go to Europe. She answered to all, No, he had made her realize the horror of it so much that she was glad to give it up. She gave it up, with the best feeling; all that she would ask of him was that he should never mention Europe to her again. She could imagine how much he disliked to go, if such a ship as the Colmannia did not make him want to go.

At the bottom of his heart he knew that he had not used her very well. He had kindled her fancy with those notions of a Sabbatical year and a Silver Wedding Journey, and when she was willing to renounce both he had persisted in taking her to see the ship, only to tell her afterwards that he would not go abroad on any account. It was by a psychological juggle which some men will understand that he allowed himself the next day to get the sailings of the Norumbia from the steamship office; he also got a plan of the ship showing the most available staterooms, so that they might be able to choose between her and the Colmannia from all the facts.

IV.

From this time their decision to go was none the less explicit because so perfectly tacit.

They began to amass maps and guides. She got a Baedeker for Austria and he got a Bradshaw for the continent, which was never of the least use there, but was for the present a mine of unavailable information. He got a phrase-book, too, and tried to rub up his German. He used to read German, when he was a boy, with a young enthusiasm for its romantic poetry, and now, for the sake of Schiller and Uhland and Heine, he held imaginary conversations with a barber, a bootmaker, and a banker, and tried to taste the joy which he had not known in the language of those poets for a whole generation. He perceived, of course, that unless the barber, the bootmaker, and the banker answered him in terms which the author of the phrase-book directed them to use, he should not get on with them beyond his first question; but he did not allow this to spoil his pleasure in it. In fact, it was with a tender emotion that he realized how little the world, which had changed in everything else so greatly, had changed in its ideal of a phrase-book.

Mrs. March postponed the study of her Baedeker to the time and place for it; and addressed herself to the immediate business of ascertaining the respective merits of the Colmannia and Norumbia. She carried on her researches solely among persons of her own sex; its experiences were alone of that positive character which brings conviction, and she valued them equally at first or second hand. She heard of ladies who would not cross in any boat but the Colmannia, and who waited for months to get a room on her; she talked with ladies who said that nothing would induce them to cross in her. There were ladies who said she had twice the motion that the Norumbia had, and the vibration from her twin screws was frightful; it always was, on those twin-screw boats, and it did not affect their testimony with Mrs. March that the Norumbia was a twin-screw boat too. It was repeated to her in the third or fourth degree of hearsay that the discipline on the Colmannia was as perfect as that on the Cunarders; ladies whose friends had tried every line assured her that the table of the Norumbia was almost as good as the table of the French boats. To the best of the belief of lady witnesses still living who had friends on board, the Colmannia had once got aground, and the Norumbia

had once had her bridge carried off by a tidal wave; or it might be the Colmannia; they promised to ask and let her know. Their lightest word availed with her against the most solemn assurances of their husbands, fathers, or brothers, who might be all very well on land, but in navigation were not to be trusted; they would say anything from a reckless and culpable optimism. She obliged March all the same to ask among them, but she recognized their guilty insincerity when he came home saying that one man had told him you could have played croquet on the deck of the Colmannia the whole way over when he crossed, and another that he never saw the racks on in three passages he had made in the Norumbia.

The weight of evidence was, he thought, in favor of the Norumbia, but when they went another Sunday to Hoboken, and saw the ship, Mrs. March liked her so much less than the Colmannia that she could hardly wait for Monday to come; she felt sure all the good rooms on the Colmannia would be gone before they could engage one.

From a consensus of the nerves of all the ladies left in town so late in the season, she knew that the only place on any steamer where your room ought to be was probably just where they could not get it. If you went too high, you felt the rolling terribly, and people tramping up and down on the promenade under your window kept you awake the whole night; if you went too low, you felt the engine thump, thump, thump in your head the whole way over. If you went too far forward, you got the pitching; if you went aft, on the kitchen side, you got the smell of the cooking. The only place, really, was just back of the dining-saloon on the south side of the ship; it was smooth there, and it was quiet, and you had the sun in your window all the way over. He asked her if he must take their room there or nowhere, and she answered that he must do his best, but that she would not be satisfied with any other place.

In his despair he went down to the steamer office, and took a room which one of the clerks said was the best. When he got home, it appeared from reference to the ship's plan that it was the very room his wife had wanted from the beginning, and she praised him as if he had used a wisdom beyond his sex in getting it.

He was in the enjoyment of his unmerited honor when a belated lady came with her husband for an evening call, before going into the country. At sight of the plans of steamers on the Marches' table, she expressed the greatest wonder and delight that they were going to Europe. They had supposed everybody knew it, by this time, but she said she had not heard a word of it; and she went on with some felicitations which March found rather unduly filial. In getting a little past the prime of life he did not like to be used with too great consideration of his years, and he did not think that he and his wife were so old that they need be treated as if they were going on a golden wedding journey, and heaped with all sorts of impertinent prophecies of their enjoying it so much and being so much the better for the little outing! Under his breath, he confounded this lady for her impudence; but he schooled himself to let her rejoice at their going on a Hanseatic boat, because the Germans were always so careful of you. She made her husband agree with her, and it came out

that he had crossed several times on both the Colmannia and the Norumbia. He volunteered to say that the Colmannia, was a capital sea-boat; she did not have her nose under water all the time; she was steady as a rock; and the captain and the kitchen were simply out of sight; some people did call her unlucky.

"Unlucky?" Mrs. March echoed, faintly. "Why do they call her unlucky?"

"Oh, I don't know. People will say anything about any boat. You know she broke her shaft, once, and once she got caught in the ice."

Mrs. March joined him in deriding the superstition of people, and she parted gayly with this over-good young couple. As soon as they were gone, March knew that she would say: "You must change that ticket, my dear. We will go in the Norumbia."

"Suppose I can't get as good a room on the Norumbia?"

"Then we must stay."

In the morning after a night so bad that it was worse than no night at all, she said she would go to the steamship office with him and question them up about the Colmannia. The people there had never heard she was called an unlucky boat; they knew of nothing disastrous in her history. They were so frank and so full in their denials, and so kindly patient of Mrs. March's anxieties, that he saw every word was carrying conviction of their insincerity to her. At the end she asked what rooms were left on the Norumbia, and the clerk whom they had fallen to looked through his passenger list with a shaking head. He was afraid there was nothing they would like.

"But we would take anything," she entreated, and March smiled to think of his innocence in supposing for a moment that she had ever dreamed of not going.

"We merely want the best," he put in. "One flight up, no noise or dust, with sun in all the windows, and a place for fire on rainy days."

They must be used to a good deal of American joking which they do not understand, in the foreign steamship offices. The clerk turned unsmilingly to one of his superiors and asked him some question in German which March could not catch, perhaps because it formed no part of a conversation with a barber, a bootmaker or a banker. A brief drama followed, and then the clerk pointed to a room on the plan of the Norumbia and said it had just been given up, and they could have it if they decided to take it at once.

They looked, and it was in the very place of their room on the Colmannia; it was within one of being the same number. It was so providential, if it was providential at all, that they were both humbly silent a moment; even Mrs. March was silent. In this supreme moment she would not prompt her husband by a word, a glance, and it was from his own free will that he said, "We will take it."

He thought it was his free will, but perhaps one's will is never free; and this may have been an instance of pure determinism from all the events before it. No event that followed affected it, though the day after they had taken their passage on the *Norumbia* he heard that she had once been in the worst sort of storm in the month of August. He felt obliged to impart the fact to his wife, but she said that it proved nothing for or against the ship, and confounded him more by her reason than by all her previous unreason. Reason is what a man is never prepared for in women; perhaps because he finds it so seldom in men.

V.

During nearly the whole month that now passed before the date of sailing it seemed to March that in some familiar aspects New York had never been so interesting. He had not easily reconciled himself to the place after his many years of Boston; but he had got used to the ugly grandeur, to the noise and the rush, and he had divined more and more the careless good-nature and friendly indifference of the vast, sprawling, ungainly metropolis. There were happy moments when he felt a poetry unintentional and unconscious in it, and he thought there was no point more favorable for the sense of this than Stuyvesant Square, where they had a flat. Their windows looked down into its tree-tops, and across them to the truncated towers of St. George's, and to the plain red-brick, white-trimmed front of the Friends' Meeting House; he came and went between his dwelling and his office through the two places that form the square, and after dinner his wife and he had a habit of finding seats by one of the fountains in Livingston Place, among the fathers and mothers of the hybrid East Side children swarming there at play. The elders read their English or Italian or German or Yiddish journals, or gossiped, or merely sat still and stared away the day's fatigue; while the little ones raced in and out among them, crying and laughing, quarrelling and kissing. Sometimes a mother darted forward and caught her child from the brink of the basin; another taught hers to walk, holding it tightly up behind by its short skirts; another publicly nursed her baby to sleep.

While they still dreamed, but never thought, of going to Europe, the Marches often said how European all this was; if these women had brought their knitting or sewing it would have been quite European; but as soon as they had decided to go, it all began to seem poignantly American. In like manner, before the conditions of their exile changed, and they still pined for the Old World, they contrived a very agreeable illusion of it by dining now and then at an Austrian restaurant in Union Square; but later when they began to be homesick for the American scenes they had not yet left, they had a keener retrospective joy in the strictly New York sunset they were bowed out into.

The sunsets were uncommonly characteristic that May in Union Square. They were the color of the red stripes in the American flag, and when they were seen through the delirious architecture of the Broadway side,

or down the perspective of the cross-streets, where the elevated trains silhouetted themselves against their pink, they imparted a feeling of pervasive Americanism in which all impression of alien savors and civilities was lost. One evening a fire flamed up in Hoboken, and burned for hours against the west, in the lurid crimson tones of a conflagration as memorably and appealingly native as the colors of the sunset.

The weather for nearly the whole month was of a mood familiar enough in our early summer, and it was this which gave the sunsets their vitreous pink. A thrilling coolness followed a first blaze of heat, and in the long respite the thoughts almost went back to winter flannels. But at last a hot wave was telegraphed from the West, and the week before the *Norumbia* sailed was an anguish of burning days and breathless nights, which fused all regrets and reluctances in the hope of escape, and made the exiles of two continents long for the sea, with no care for either shore.

VI.

Their steamer was to sail early; they were up at dawn because they had scarcely lain down, and March crept out into the square for a last breath of its morning air before breakfast. He was now eager to be gone; he had broken with habit, and he wished to put all traces of the past out of sight. But this was curiously like all other early mornings in his consciousness, and he could not alienate himself from the wonted environment. He stood talking on every-day terms of idle speculation with the familiar policeman, about a stray parrot in the top of one of the trees, where it screamed and clawed at the dead branch to which it clung. Then he went carelessly indoors again as if he were secure of reading the reporter's story of it in that next day's paper which he should not see.

The sense of an inseverable continuity persisted through the breakfast, which was like other breakfasts in the place they would be leaving in summer shrouds just as they always left it at the end of June. The illusion was even heightened by the fact that their son was to be in the apartment all summer, and it would not be so much shut up as usual. The heavy trunks had been sent to the ship by express the afternoon before, and they had only themselves and their stateroom baggage to transport to Hoboken; they came down to a carriage sent from a neighboring livery-stable, and exchanged good-mornings with a driver they knew by name.

March had often fancied it a chief advantage of living in New York that you could drive to the steamer and start for Europe as if you were starting for Albany; he was in the enjoyment of this advantage now, but somehow it was not the consolation he had expected. He knew, of course, that if they had been coming from Boston, for instance, to sail in the *Norumbia*, they would probably have gone on board the night before, and sweltered through its heat among the strange smells and noises of the dock and wharf, instead of breakfasting at their own table, and smoothly

bowling down the asphalt on to the ferryboat, and so to the very foot of the gangway at the ship's side, all in the cool of the early morning. But though he had now the cool of the early morning on these conditions, there was by no means enough of it.

The sun was already burning the life out of the air, with the threat of another day of the terrible heat that had prevailed for a week past; and that last breakfast at home had not been gay, though it had been lively, in a fashion, through Mrs. March's efforts to convince her son that she did not want him to come and see them off. Of, her daughter's coming all the way from Chicago there was no question, and she reasoned that if he did not come to say good-by on board it would be the same as if they were not going.

"Don't you want to go?" March asked with an obscure resentment.

"I don't want to seem to go," she said, with the calm of those who have logic on their side.

As she drove away with her husband she was not so sure of her satisfaction in the feat she had arranged, though when she saw the ghastly partings of people on board, she was glad she had not allowed her son to come. She kept saying this to herself, and when they climbed to the ship from the wharf, and found themselves in the crowd that choked the saloons and promenades and passages and stairways and landings, she said it more than once to her husband.

She heard weary elders pattering empty politenesses of farewell with friends who had come to see them off, as they stood withdrawn in such refuges as the ship's architecture afforded, or submitted to be pushed and twirled about by the surging throng when they got in its way. She pitied these in their affliction, which she perceived that they could not lighten or shorten, but she had no patience with the young girls, who broke into shrieks of nervous laughter at the coming of certain young men, and kept laughing and beckoning till they made the young men see them; and then stretched their hands to them and stood screaming and shouting to them across the intervening heads and shoulders. Some girls, of those whom no one had come to bid good-by, made themselves merry, or at least noisy, by rushing off to the dining-room and looking at the cards on the bouquets heaping the tables, to find whether any one had sent them flowers. Others whom young men had brought bunches of violets hid their noses in them, and dropped their fans and handkerchiefs and card-cases, and thanked the young men for picking them up. Others, had got places in the music-room, and sat there with open boxes of long-stemmed roses in their laps, and talked up into the faces of the men, with becoming lifts and slants of their eyes and chins. In the midst of the turmoil children struggled against people's feet and knees, and bewildered mothers flew at the ship's officers and battered them with questions alien to their respective functions as they amiably stifled about in their thick uniforms.

Sailors, slung over the ship's side on swinging seats, were placidly smearing it with paint at that last moment; the bulwarks were thickly set

with the heads and arms of passengers who were making signs to friends on shore, or calling messages to them that lost themselves in louder noises midway. Some of the women in the steerage were crying; they were probably not going to Europe for pleasure like the first-cabin passengers, or even for their health; on the wharf below March saw the face of one young girl twisted with weeping, and he wished he had not seen it. He turned from it, and looked into the eyes of his son, who was laughing at his shoulder. He said that he had to come down with a good-by letter from his sister, which he made an excuse for following them; but he had always meant to see them off, he owned. The letter had just come with a special delivery stamp, and it warned them that she had sent another good-by letter with some flowers on board. Mrs. March scolded at them both, but with tears in her eyes, and in the renewed stress of parting which he thought he had put from him, March went on taking note, as with alien senses, of the scene before him, while they all talked on together, and repeated the nothings they had said already.

A rank odor of beet-root sugar rose from the far-branching sheds where some freight steamers of the line lay, and seemed to mingle chemically with the noise which came up from the wharf next to the Norumbia. The mass of spectators deepened and dimmed away into the shadow of the roofs, and along their front came files of carriages and trucks and carts, and discharged the arriving passengers and their baggage, and were lost in the crowd, which they penetrated like slow currents, becoming clogged and arrested from time to time, and then beginning to move again.

The passengers incessantly mounted by the canvas-draped galleries leading, fore and aft, into the ship. Bareheaded, blue-jacketed, brass-buttoned stewards dodged skillfully in and out among them with their hand-bags, holdalls, hat-boxes, and state-room trunks, and ran before them into the different depths and heights where they hid these burdens, and then ran back for more. Some of the passengers followed them and made sure that their things were put in the right places; most of them remained wedged among the earlier comers, or pushed aimlessly in and out of the doors of the promenades.

The baggage for the hold continually rose in huge blocks from the wharf, with a loud clucking of the tackle, and sank into the open maw of the ship, momentarily gathering herself for her long race seaward, with harsh hissings and rattlings and gurglings. There was no apparent reason why it should all or any of it end, but there came a moment when there began to be warnings that were almost threats of the end. The ship's whistle sounded, as if marking a certain interval; and Mrs. March humbly entreated, sternly commanded, her son to go ashore, or else be carried to Europe. They disputed whether that was the last signal or not; she was sure it was, and she appealed to March, who was moved against his reason. He affected to talk calmly with his son, and gave him some last charges about 'Every Other Week'.

Some people now interrupted their leave-taking; but the arriving passengers only arrived more rapidly at the gang-ways; the bulks of baggage swung more swiftly into the air. A bell rang, and there rose women's cries, "Oh, that is the shore-bell!" and men's protests, "It is

only the first bell! "More and more began to descend the gangways, fore and aft, and soon outnumbered those who were coming aboard.

March tried not to be nervous about his son's lingering; he was ashamed of his anxiety; but he said in a low voice, "Better be off, Tom."

His mother now said she did not care if Tom were really carried to Europe; and at last he said, Well, he guessed he must go ashore, as if there had been no question of that before; and then she clung to him and would not let him go; but she acquired merit with herself at last by pushing him into the gangway with her own hands: he nodded and waved his hat from its foot, and mixed with the crowd.

Presently there was hardly any one coming aboard, and the sailors began to undo the lashings of the gangways from the ship's side; files of men on the wharf laid hold of their rails; the stewards guarding their approach looked up for the signal to come aboard; and in vivid pantomime forbade some belated leavetakers to ascend. These stood aside, exchanging bows and grins with the friends whom they could not reach; they all tried to make one another hear some last words. The moment came when the saloon gangway was detached; then it was pulled ashore, and the section of the bulwarks opening to it was locked, not to be unlocked on this side of the world. An indefinable impulse communicated itself to the steamer: while it still seemed motionless it moved. The thick spread of faces on the wharf, which had looked at times like some sort of strange flowers in a level field, broke into a universal tremor, and the air above them was filled with hats and handkerchiefs, as if with the flight of birds rising from the field.

The Marches tried to make out their son's face; they believed that they did; but they decided that they had not seen him, and his mother said that she was glad; it would only have made it harder to bear, though she was glad he had come over to say good-by it had seemed so unnatural that he should not, when everybody else was saying good-by.

On the wharf color was now taking the place of form; the scene ceased to have the effect of an instantaneous photograph; it was like an impressionistic study. As the ship swung free of the shed and got into the stream, the shore lost reality. Up to a certain moment, all was still New York, all was even Hoboken; then amidst the grotesque and monstrous shows of the architecture on either shore March felt himself at sea and on the way to Europe.

The fact was accented by the trouble people were already making with the deck-steward about their steamer chairs, which they all wanted put in the best places, and March, with a certain heart-ache, was involuntarily verifying the instant in which he ceased to be of his native shores, while still in full sight of them, when he suddenly reverted to them, and as it were landed on them again in an incident that held him breathless. A man, bareheaded, and with his arms flung wildly abroad, came flying down the promenade from the steerage. "Capitan! Capitan! There is a woman!" he shouted in nondescript English. "She must go hout! She must go hout!" Some vital fact imparted itself to the ship's command and

seemed to penetrate to the ship's heart; she stopped, as if with a sort of majestic relenting. A tug panted to her side, and lifted a ladder to it; the bareheaded man, and a woman gripping a baby in her arms, sprawled safely down its rungs to the deck of the tug, and the steamer moved seaward again.

"What is it? Oh, what is it?" his wife demanded of March's share of their common ignorance. A young fellow passing stopped, as if arrested by the tragic note in her voice, and explained that the woman had left three little children locked up in her tenement while she came to bid some friends on board good-by.

He passed on, and Mrs. March said, "What a charming face he had!" even before she began to wreak upon that wretched mother the overwrought sympathy which makes good women desire the punishment of people who have escaped danger. She would not hear any excuse for her. "Her children oughtn't to have been out of her mind for an instant."

"Don't you want to send back a line to ours by the pilot?" March asked.

She started from him. "Oh, was I really beginning to forget them?"

In the saloon where people were scattered about writing pilot's letters she made him join her in an impassioned epistle of farewell, which once more left none of the nothings unsaid that they had many times reiterated. She would not let him put the stamp on, for fear it would not stick, and she had an agonizing moment of doubt whether it ought not to be a German stamp; she was not pacified till the steward in charge of the mail decided.

"I shouldn't have forgiven myself," March said, "if we hadn't let Tom know that twenty minutes after he left us we were still alive and well."

"It's to Bella, too," she reasoned.

He found her making their state-room look homelike with their familiar things when he came with their daughter's steamer letter and the flowers and fruit she had sent. She said, Very well, they would all keep, and went on with her unpacking. He asked her if she did not think these home things made it rather ghastly, and she said if he kept on in that way she should certainly go back on the pilot-boat. He perceived that her nerves were spent. He had resisted the impulse to an ill-timed joke about the life-preservers under their berths when the sound of the breakfast-horn, wavering first in the distance, found its way nearer and clearer down their corridor.

VII.

In one of the many visits to the steamship office which his wife's anxieties obliged him to make, March had discussed the question of seats

in the dining-saloon. At first he had his ambition for the captain's table, but they convinced him more easily than he afterwards convinced Mrs. March that the captain's table had become a superstition of the past, and conferred no special honor. It proved in the event that the captain of the *Norumbia* had the good feeling to dine in a lower saloon among the passengers who paid least for their rooms. But while the Marches were still in their ignorance of this, they decided to get what adventure they could out of letting the head steward put them where he liked, and they came in to breakfast with a careless curiosity to see what he had done for them.

There seemed scarcely a vacant place in the huge saloon; through the oval openings in the centre they looked down into the lower saloon and up into the music-room, as thickly thronged with breakfasters. The tables were brightened with the bouquets and the floral designs of ships, anchors, harps, and doves sent to the lady passengers, and at one time the Marches thought they were going to be put before a steam-yacht realized to the last detail in blue and white violets. The ports of the saloon were open, and showed the level sea; the ship rode with no motion except the tremor from her screws. The sound of talking and laughing rose with the clatter of knives and forks and the clash of crockery; the homely smell of the coffee and steak and fish mixed with the spice of the roses and carnations; the stewards ran hither and thither, and a young foolish joy of travel welled up in the elderly hearts of the pair. When the head steward turned out the swivel-chairs where they were to sit they both made an inclination toward the people already at table, as if it had been a company at some far-forgotten table d'hote in the later sixties. The head steward seemed to understand as well as speak English, but the table-stewards had only an effect of English, which they eked out with "Bleace!" for all occasions of inquiry, apology, or reassurance, as the equivalent of their native "Bitte!" Otherwise there was no reason to suppose that they did not speak German, which was the language of a good half of the passengers. The stewards looked English, however, in conformity to what seems the ideal of every kind of foreign seafaring people, and that went a good way toward making them intelligible.

March, to whom his wife mainly left their obeisance, made it so tentative that if it should meet no response he could feel that it had been nothing more than a forward stoop, such as was natural in sitting down. He need not really have taken this precaution; those whose eyes he caught more or less nodded in return.

A nice-looking boy of thirteen or fourteen, who had the place on the left of the lady in the sofa seat under the port, bowed with almost magisterial gravity, and made the lady on the sofa smile, as if she were his mother and understood him. March decided that she had been some time a widow; and he easily divined that the young couple on her right had been so little time husband and wife that they would rather not have it known. Next them was a young lady whom he did not at first think so good-looking as she proved later to be, though she had at once a pretty nose, with a slight upward slant at the point, long eyes under fallen lashes, a straight forehead, not too high, and a mouth which perhaps the exigencies of breakfasting did not allow all its characteristic charm.

She had what Mrs. March thought interesting hair, of a dull black, roughly rolled away from her forehead and temples in a fashion not particularly becoming to her, and she had the air of not looking so well as she might if she had chosen. The elderly man on her right, it was easy to see, was her father; they had a family likeness, though his fair hair, now ashen with age, was so different from hers. He wore his beard cut in the fashion of the Second Empire, with a Louis Napoleonic mustache, imperial, and chin tuft; his neat head was cropt close; and there was something Gallic in its effect and something remotely military: he had blue eyes, really less severe than he meant, though he frowned a good deal, and managed them with glances of a staccato quickness, as if challenging a potential disagreement with his opinions.

The gentleman on his right, who sat at the head of the table, was of the humorous, subironical American expression, and a smile at the corner of his kindly mouth, under an iron-gray full beard cut short, at once questioned and tolerated the new-comers as he glanced at them. He responded to March's bow almost as decidedly as the nice boy, whose mother he confronted at the other end of the table, and with his comely bulk formed an interesting contrast to her vivid slightness. She was brilliantly dark, behind the gleam of the gold-rimmed glasses perched on her pretty nose.

If the talk had been general before the Marches came, it did not at once renew itself in that form. Nothing was said while they were having their first struggle with the table-stewards, who repeated the order as if to show how fully they had misunderstood it. The gentleman at the head of the table intervened at last, and then, "I'm obliged to you," March said, for your German. I left mine in a phrase-book in my other coat pocket."

"Oh, I wasn't speaking German," said the other. "It was merely their kind of English."

The company were in the excitement of a novel situation which disposes people to acquaintance, and this exchange of small pleasantries made every one laugh, except the father and daughter; but they had the effect of being tacitly amused.

The mother of the nice boy said to Mrs. March, "You may not get what you ordered, but it will be good."

"Even if you don't know what it is!" said the young bride, and then blushed, as if she had been too bold.

Mrs. March liked the blush and the young bride for it, and she asked, "Have you ever been on one of these German boats before? They seem very comfortable."

"Oh, dear, no! we've never been on any boat before." She made a little patted mouth of deprecation, and added, simple-heartedly, "My husband was going out on business, and he thought he might as well take me along."

The husband seemed to feel himself brought in by this, and said he did

not see why they should not make it a pleasure-trip, too. They put themselves in a position to be patronized by their deference, and in the pauses of his talk with the gentleman at the head of the table, March heard his wife abusing their inexperience to be unsparingly instructive about European travel. He wondered whether she would be afraid to own that it was nearly thirty years since she had crossed the ocean; though that might seem recent to people who had never crossed at all.

They listened with respect as she boasted in what an anguish of wisdom she had decided between the Colmannia and the Norumbia. The wife said she did not know there was such a difference in steamers, but when Mrs. March perfervidly assured her that there was all the difference in the world, she submitted and said she supposed she ought to be thankful that they, had hit upon the right one. They had telegraphed for berths and taken what was given them; their room seemed to be very nice.

"Oh," said Mrs. March, and her husband knew that she was saying it to reconcile them to the inevitable, "all the rooms on the Norumbia are nice. The only difference is that if they are on the south side you have the sun."

"I'm not sure which is the south side," said the bride. "We seem to have been going west ever since we started, and I feel as if we should reach home in the morning if we had a good night. Is the ocean always so smooth as this?"

"Oh, dear, no!" said Mrs. March. "It's never so smooth as this," and she began to be outrageously authoritative about the ocean weather. She ended by declaring that the June passages were always good, and that if the ship kept a southerly course they would have no fogs and no icebergs. She looked round, and caught her husband's eye. "What is it? Have I been bragging? Well, you understand," she added to the bride, "I've only been over once, a great while ago, and I don't really know anything about it," and they laughed together. "But I talked so much with people after we decided to go, that I feel as if I had been a hundred times."

"I know," said the other lady, with caressing intelligence. "That is just the way with--" She stopped, and looked at the young man whom the head steward was bringing up to take the vacant place next to March. He came forward, stuffing his cap into the pocket of his blue serge sack, and smiled down on the company with such happiness in his gay eyes that March wondered what chance at this late day could have given any human creature his content so absolute, and what calamity could be lurking round the corner to take it out of him. The new-comer looked at March as if he knew him, and March saw at a second glance that he was the young fellow who had told him about the mother put off after the start. He asked him whether there was any change in the weather yet outside, and he answered eagerly, as if the chance to put his happiness into the mere sound of words were a favor done him, that their ship had just spoken one of the big Hanseatic mailboats, and she had signalled back that she had met ice; so that they would probably keep a southerly course, and not have it cooler till they were off the Banks.

The mother of the boy said, "I thought we must be off the Banks when I came out of my room, but it was only the electric fan at the foot of the stairs."

"That was what I thought," said Mrs. March. "I almost sent my husband back for my shawl!" Both the ladies laughed and liked each other for their common experience.

The gentleman at the head of the table said, "They ought to have fans going there by that pillar, or else close the ports. They only let in heat."

They easily conformed to the American convention of jocosity in their talk; it perhaps no more represents the individual mood than the convention of dulness among other people; but it seemed to make the young man feel at home.

"Why, do you think it's uncomfortably warm?" he asked, from what March perceived to be a meteorology of his own. He laughed and added, "It is pretty summerlike," as if he had not thought of it before. He talked of the big mail-boat, and said he would like to cross on such a boat as that, and then he glanced at the possible advantage of having your own steam-yacht like the one which he said they had just passed, so near that you could see what a good time the people were having on board. He began to speak to the Marches; his talk spread to the young couple across the table; it visited the mother on the sofa in a remark which she might ignore without apparent rejection, and without really avoiding the boy, it glanced off toward the father and daughter, from whom it fell, to rest with the gentleman at the head of the table.

It was not that the father and daughter had slighted his overture, if it was so much as that, but that they were tacitly preoccupied, or were of some philosophy concerning their fellow-breakfasters which did not suffer them, for the present, at least, to share in the common friendliness.

This is an attitude sometimes produced in people by a sense of just, or even unjust, superiority; sometimes by serious trouble; sometimes by transient annoyance. The cause was not so deep-seated but Mrs. March, before she rose from her place, believed that she had detected a slant of the young lady's eyes, from under her lashes, toward the young man; and she leaped to a conclusion concerning them in a matter where all logical steps are impertinent. She did not announce her arrival at this point till the young man had overtaken her before she got out of the saloon, and presented the handkerchief she had dropped under the table.

He went away with her thanks, and then she said to her husband, "Well, he's perfectly charming, and I don't wonder she's taken with him; that kind of cold girl would be, though I'm not sure that she is cold. She's interesting, and you could see that he thought so, the more he looked at her; I could see him looking at her from the very first instant; he couldn't keep his eyes off her; she piqued his curiosity, and made him wonder about her."

"Now, look here, Isabel! This won't do. I can stand a good deal, but I

sat between you and that young fellow, and you couldn't tell whether he was looking at that girl or not."

"I could! I could tell by the expression of her face."

"Oh, well! If it's gone as far as that with you, I give it up. When are you going to have them married?"

"Nonsense! I want you to find out who all those people are. How are you going to do it?"

"Perhaps the passenger list will say," he suggested.

VIII.

The list did not say of itself, but with the help of the head steward's diagram it said that the gentleman at the head of the table was Mr. R. M. Kenby; the father and the daughter were Mr. E. B. Triscoe and Miss Triscoe; the bridal pair were Mr. and Mrs. Leffers; the mother and her son were Mrs. Adding and Mr. Roswell Adding; the young man who came in last was Mr. L. J. Burnamy. March carried the list, with these names carefully checked and rearranged on a neat plan of the table, to his wife in her steamer chair, and left her to make out the history and the character of the people from it. In this sort of conjecture long experience had taught him his futility, and he strolled up and down and looked at the life about him with no wish to penetrate it deeply.

Long Island was now a low yellow line on the left. Some fishing-boats flickered off the shore; they met a few sail, and left more behind; but already, and so near one of the greatest ports of the world, the spacious solitude of the ocean was beginning. There was no swell; the sea lay quite flat, with a fine mesh of wrinkles on its surface, and the sun flamed down upon it from a sky without a cloud. With the light fair wind, there was no resistance in the sultry air, the thin, dun smoke from the smoke-stack fell about the decks like a stifling veil.

The promenades, were as uncomfortably crowded as the sidewalk of Fourteenth Street on a summer's day, and showed much the social average of a New York shopping thoroughfare. Distinction is something that does not always reveal itself at first sight on land, and at sea it is still more retractive. A certain democracy of looks and clothes was the most notable thing to March in the apathetic groups and detached figures. His criticism disabled the saloon passengers of even so much personal appeal as he imagined in some of the second-cabin passengers whom he saw across their barrier; they had at least the pathos of their exclusion, and he could wonder if they felt it or envied him. At Hoboken he had seen certain people coming on board who looked like swells; but they had now either retired from the crowd, or they had already conformed to the prevailing type. It was very well as a type; he was of it himself; but he wished that beauty as well as distinction had not been so lost in it.

In fact, he no longer saw so much beauty anywhere as he once did. It might be that he saw life more truly than when he was young, and that his glasses were better than his eyes had been; but there were analogies that forbade his thinking so, and he sometimes had his misgivings that the trouble was with his glasses. He made what he could of a pretty girl who had the air of not meaning to lose a moment from flirtation, and was luring her fellow-passengers from under her sailor hat. She had already attached one of them; and she was hooking out for more. She kept moving herself from the waist up, as if she worked there on a pivot, showing now this side and now that side of her face, and visiting the admirer she had secured with a smile as from the lamp of a revolving light as she turned.

While he was dwelling upon this folly, with a sense of impersonal pleasure in it as complete through his years as if he were already a disembodied spirit, the pulse of the engines suddenly ceased, and he joined the general rush to the rail, with a fantastic expectation of seeing another distracted mother put off; but it was only the pilot leaving the ship. He was climbing down the ladder which hung over the boat, rising and sinking on the sea below, while the two men in her held her from the ship's side with their oars; in the offing lay the white steam-yacht which now replaces the picturesque pilot-sloop of other times. The *Norumbia's* screws turned again under half a head of steam; the pilot dropped from the last rung of the ladder into the boat, and caught the bundle of letters tossed after him. Then his men let go the line that was towing their craft, and the incident of the steamer's departure was finally closed. It had been dramatically heightened perhaps by her final impatience to be off at some added risks to the pilot and his men, but not painfully so, and March smiled to think how men whose lives are all of dangerous chances seem always to take as many of them as they can.

He heard a girl's fresh voice saying at his shoulder, "Well, now we are off; and I suppose you're glad, papa!"

"I'm glad we're not taking the pilot on, at least," answered the elderly man whom the girl had spoken to; and March turned to see the father and daughter whose reticence at the breakfast table had interested him. He wondered that he had left her out of the account in estimating the beauty of the ship's passengers: he saw now that she was not only extremely pretty, but as she moved away she was very graceful; she even had distinction. He had fancied a tone of tolerance, and at the same time of reproach in her voice, when she spoke, and a tone of defiance and not very successful denial in her father's; and he went back with these impressions to his wife, whom he thought he ought to tell why the ship had stopped.

She had not noticed the ship's stopping, in her study of the passenger list, and she did not care for the pilot's leaving; but she seemed to think his having overheard those words of the father and daughter an event of prime importance. With a woman's willingness to adapt the means to the end she suggested that he should follow them up and try to overhear something more; she only partially realized the infamy of her

suggestion when he laughed in scornful refusal.

"Of course I don't want you to eavesdrop, but I do want you to find out about them. And about Mr. Burnamy, too. I can wait, about the others, or manage for myself, but these are driving me to distraction. Now, will you?"

He said he would do anything he could with honor, and at one of the earliest turns he made on the other side of the ship he was smilingly halted by Mr. Burnamy, who asked to be excused, and then asked if he were not Mr. March of 'Every Other Week'; he had seen the name on the passenger list, and felt sure it must be the editor's. He seemed so trustfully to expect March to remember his own name as that of a writer from whom he had accepted a short poem, yet unprinted, that the editor feigned to do so until he really did dimly recall it. He even recalled the short poem, and some civil words he said about it caused Burnamy to overrun in confidences that at once touched and amused him.

IX.

Burnamy, it seemed, had taken passage on the Norumbia because he found, when he arrived in New York the day before, that she was the first boat out. His train was so much behind time that when he reached the office of the Hanseatic League it was nominally shut, but he pushed in by sufferance of the janitor, and found a berth, which had just been given up, in one of the saloon-deck rooms. It was that or nothing; and he felt rich enough to pay for it himself if the Bird of Prey, who had cabled him to come out to Carlsbad as his secretary, would not stand the difference between the price and that of the lower-deck six-in-a-room berth which he would have taken if he had been allowed a choice.

With the three hundred dollars he had got for his book, less the price of his passage, changed into German bank-notes and gold pieces, and safely buttoned in the breast pocket of his waistcoat, he felt as safe from pillage as from poverty when he came out from buying his ticket; he covertly pressed his arm against his breast from time to time, for the joy of feeling his money there and not from any fear of finding it gone. He wanted to sing, he wanted to dance; he could not believe it was he, as he rode up the lonely length of Broadway in the cable-car, between the wild, irregular walls of the canyon which the cable-cars have all to themselves at the end of a summer afternoon.

He went and dined, and he thought he dined well, at a Spanish-American restaurant, for fifty cents, with a half-bottle of California claret included. When he came back to Broadway he was aware that it was stiflingly hot in the pinkish twilight, but he took a cable-car again in lack of other pastime, and the motion served the purpose of a breeze, which he made the most of by keeping his hat off. It did not really matter to him whether it was hot or cool; he was imparadised in weather which had nothing to do with the temperature. Partly because he was born

to such weather, in the gayety of soul which amused some people with him, and partly because the world was behaving as he had always expected, he was opulently content with the present moment. But he thought very tolerantly of the future, and he confirmed himself in the decision he had already made, to stick to Chicago when he came back to America. New York was very well, and he had no sentiment about Chicago; but he had got a foothold there; he had done better with an Eastern publisher, he believed, by hailing from the West, and he did not believe it would hurt him with the Eastern public to keep on hailing from the West.

He was glad of a chance to see Europe, but he did not mean to come home so dazzled as to see nothing else against the American sky. He fancied, for he really knew nothing, that it was the light of Europe, not its glare that he wanted, and he wanted it chiefly on his material, so as to see it more and more objectively. It was his power of detachment from this that had enabled him to do his sketches in the paper with such charm as to lure a cash proposition from a publisher when he put them together for a book, but he believed that his business faculty had much to do with his success; and he was as proud of that as of the book itself. Perhaps he was not so very proud of the book; he was at least not vain of it; he could, detach himself from his art as well as his material.

Like all literary temperaments he was of a certain hardness, in spite of the susceptibilities that could be used to give coloring to his work. He knew this well enough, but he believed that there were depths of unprofessional tenderness in his nature. He was good to his mother, and he sent her money, and wrote to her in the little Indiana town where he had left her when he came to Chicago. After he got that invitation from the Bird of Prey, he explored his heart for some affection that he had not felt for him before, and he found a wish that his employer should not know it was he who had invented that nickname for him. He promptly avowed this in the newspaper office which formed one of the eyries of the Bird of Prey, and made the fellows promise not to give him away. He failed to move their imagination when he brought up as a reason for softening toward him that he was from Burnamy's own part of Indiana, and was a benefactor of Tippecanoe University, from which Burnamy was graduated. But they, relished the cynicism of his attempt; and they were glad of his good luck, which he was getting square and not rhomboid, as most people seem to get their luck. They liked him, and some of them liked him for his clean young life as well as for his cleverness. His life was known to be as clean as a girl's, and he looked like a girl with his sweet eyes, though he had rather more chin than most girls.

The conductor came to reverse his seat, and Burnamy told him he guessed he would ride back with him as far as the cars to the Hoboken Ferry, if the conductor would put him off at the right place. It was nearly nine o'clock, and he thought he might as well be going over to the ship, where he had decided to pass the night. After he found her, and went on board, he was glad he had not gone sooner. A queasy odor of drainage stole up from the waters of the dock, and mixed with the rank, gross sweetness of the bags of beet-root sugar from the freight-steamers; there was a coming and going of carts and trucks on the wharf, and on the ship a rattling of chains and a clucking of pulleys, with sudden outbreaks and then sudden

silences of trampling sea-boots. Burnamy looked into the dining-saloon and the music-room, with the notion of trying for some naps there; then he went to his state-room. His room-mate, whoever he was to be, had not come; and he kicked off his shoes and threw off his coat and tumbled into his berth.

He meant to rest awhile, and then get up and spend the night in receiving impressions. He could not think of any one who had done the facts of the eve of sailing on an Atlantic liner. He thought he would use the material first in a letter to the paper and afterwards in a poem; but he found himself unable to grasp the notion of its essential relation to the choice between chicken croquettes and sweetbreads as entrees of the restaurant dinner where he had been offered neither; he knew that he had begun to dream, and that he must get up. He was just going to get up, when he woke to a sense of freshness in the air, penetrating from the new day outside. He looked at his watch and found it was quarter past six; he glanced round the state-room and saw that he had passed the night alone in it. Then he splashed himself hastily at the basin next his berth, and jumped into his clothes, and went on deck, anxious to lose no feature or emotion of the ship's departure.

When she was fairly off he returned to his room to change the thick coat he had put on at the instigation of the early morning air. His room-mate was still absent, but he was now represented by his state-room baggage, and Burnamy tried to infer him from it. He perceived a social quality in his dress-coat case, capacious gladstone, hat-box, rug, umbrella, and sole-leather steamer trunk which he could not attribute to his own equipment. The things were not so new as his; they had an effect of polite experience, with a foreign registry and customs label on them here and there. They had been chosen with both taste and knowledge, and Burnamy would have said that they were certainly English things, if it had not been for the initials U. S. A. which followed the name of E. B. Triscoe on the end of the steamer trunk showing itself under the foot of the lower berth.

The lower berth had fallen to Burnamy through the default of the passenger whose ticket he had got at the last hour; the clerk in the steamer office had been careful to impress him with this advantage, and he now imagined a trespass on his property. But he reassured himself by a glance at his ticket, and went out to watch the ship's passage down the stream and through the Narrows. After breakfast he came to his room again, to see what could be done from his valise to make him look better in the eyes of a girl whom he had seen across the table; of course he professed a much more general purpose. He blamed himself for not having got at least a pair of the white tennis-shoes which so many of the passengers were wearing; his russet shoes had turned shabby on his feet; but there was a pair of enamelled leather boots in his bag which he thought might do.

His room was in the group of cabins on the upper deck; he had already missed his way to it once by mistaking the corridor which it opened into; and he was not sure that he was not blundering again when he peered down the narrow passage where he supposed it was. A lady was standing at an

open state-room door, resting her hands against the jambs and leaning forward with her head within and talking to some one there. Before he could draw back and try another corridor he heard her say: "Perhaps he's some young man, and wouldn't care."

Burnamy could not make out the answer that came from within. The lady spoke again in a tone of reluctant assent, "No, I don't suppose you could; but if he understood, perhaps he would offer."

She drew her head out of the room, stepping back a pace, and lingering a moment at the threshold. She looked round over her shoulder and discovered Burnamy, where he stood hesitating at the head of the passage. She ebbed before him, and then flowed round him in her instant escape; with some murmured incoherencies about speaking to her father, she vanished in a corridor on the other side of the ship, while he stood staring into the doorway of his room.

He had seen that she was the young lady for whom he had come to put on his enamelled shoes, and he saw that the person within was the elderly gentleman who had sat next her at breakfast. He begged his pardon, as he entered, and said he hoped he should not disturb him. "I'm afraid I left my things all over the place, when I got up this morning."

The other entreated him not to mention it and went on taking from his hand-bag a variety of toilet appliances which the sight of made Burnamy vow to keep his own simple combs and brushes shut in his valise all the way over. "You slept on board, then," he suggested, arresting himself with a pair of low shoes in his hand; he decided to put them in a certain pocket of his steamer bag.

"Oh, yes," Burnamy laughed, nervously: "I came near oversleeping, and getting off to sea without knowing it; and I rushed out to save myself, and so--"

He began to gather up his belongings while he followed the movements of Mr. Triscoe with a wistful eye. He would have liked to offer his lower berth to this senior of his, when he saw him arranging to take possession of the upper; but he did not quite know how to manage it. He noticed that as the other moved about he limped slightly, unless it were rather a weary easing of his person from one limb to the other. He stooped to pull his trunk out from under the berth, and Burnamy sprang to help him.

"Let me get that out for you!" He caught it up and put it on the sofa under the port. "Is that where you want it?"

"Why, yes," the other assented. "You're very good," and as he took out his key to unlock the trunk he relented a little farther to the intimacies of the situation. "Have you arranged with the bath-steward yet? It's such a full boat."

"No, I haven't," said Burnamy, as if he had tried and failed; till then he had not known that there was a bath-steward. "Shall I get him for you?"

"No; no. Our bedroom-steward will send him, I dare say, thank you."

Mr. Triscoe had got his trunk open, and Burnamy had no longer an excuse for lingering. In his defeat concerning the bath-steward, as he felt it to be, he had not the courage, now, to offer the lower berth. He went away, forgetting to change his shoes; but he came back, and as soon as he got the enamelled shoes on, and shut the shabby russet pair in his bag, he said, abruptly: "Mr. Triscoe, I wish you'd take the lower berth. I got it at the eleventh hour by some fellow's giving it up, and it isn't as if I'd bargained for it a month ago."

The elder man gave him one of his staccato glances in which Burnamy fancied suspicion and even resentment. But he said, after the moment of reflection which he gave himself, "Why, thank you, if you don't mind, really."

"Not at all!" cried the young man. "I should like the upper berth better. We'll, have the steward change the sheets."

"Oh, I'll see that he does that," said Mr. Triscoe. "I couldn't allow you to take any trouble about it." He now looked as if he wished Burnamy would go, and leave him to his domestic arrangements.

X.

In telling about himself Burnamy touched only upon the points which he believed would take his listener's intelligent fancy, and he stopped so long before he had tired him that March said he would like to introduce him to his wife. He saw in the agreeable young fellow an image of his own youth, with some differences which, he was willing to own, were to the young fellow's advantage. But they were both from the middle West; in their native accent and their local tradition they were the same; they were the same in their aspirations; they were of one blood in their literary impulse to externate their thoughts and emotions.

Burnamy answered, with a glance at his enamelled shoes, that he would be delighted, and when her husband brought him up to her, Mrs. March said she was always glad to meet the contributors to the magazine, and asked him whether he knew Mr. Kendricks, who was her favorite. Without giving him time to reply to a question that seemed to depress him, she said that she had a son who must be nearly his own age, and whom his father had left in charge of 'Every Other Week' for the few months they were to be gone; that they had a daughter married and living in Chicago. She made him sit down by her in March's chair, and before he left them March heard him magnanimously asking whether Mr. Kendricks was going to do something more for the magazine soon. He sauntered away and did not know how quickly Burnamy left this question to say, with the laugh and blush which became him in her eyes:

"Mrs. March, there is something I should like to tell you about, if you will let me."

"Why, certainly, Mr. Burnamy," she began, but she saw that he did not wish her to continue.

"Because," he went on, "it's a little matter that I shouldn't like to go wrong in."

He told her of his having overheard what Miss Triscoe had said to her father, and his belief that she was talking about the lower berth. He said he would have wished to offer it, of course, but now he was afraid they might think he had overheard them and felt obliged to do it.

"I see," said Mrs. March, and she added, thoughtfully, "She looks like rather a proud girl."

"Yes," the young fellow sighed.

"She is very charming," she continued, thoughtfully, but not so judicially.

"Well," Burnamy owned, "that is certainly one of the complications," and they laughed together.

She stopped herself after saying, "I see what you mean," and suggested, "I think I should be guided by circumstances. It needn't be done at once, I suppose."

"Well," Burnamy began, and then he broke out, with a laugh of embarrassment, "I've done it already."

"Oh! Then it wasn't my advice, exactly, that you wanted."

"No!"

"And how did he take it?"

"He said he should be glad to make the exchange if I really didn't mind." Burnamy had risen restlessly, and she did not ask him to stay. She merely said:

"Oh, well, I'm glad it turned out so nicely."

"I'm so glad you think it was the thing to do." He managed to laugh again, but he could not hide from her that he was not feeling altogether satisfied. "Would you like me to send Mr. March, if I see him?" he asked, as if he did not know on what other terms to get away.

"Do, please!" she entreated, and it seemed to her that he had hardly left her when her husband came up. "Why, where in the world did he find you so soon?"

"Did you send him for me? I was just hanging round for him to go." March sank into the chair at her side. "Well, is he going to marry her?"

"Oh, you may laugh! But there is something very exciting!" She told him what had happened, and of her belief that Burnamy's handsome behavior had somehow not been met in kind.

March gave himself the pleasure of an immense laugh. "It seems to me that this Mr. Burnamy of yours wanted a little more gratitude than he was entitled to. Why shouldn't he have offered him the lower berth? And why shouldn't the old gentleman have taken it just as he did? Did you want him to make a counteroffer of his daughter's hand? If he does, I hope Mr. Burnamy won't come for your advice till after he's accepted her."

"He wasn't very candid. I hoped you would speak about that. Don't you think it was rather natural, though?"

"For him, very likely. But I think you would call it sinuous in some one you hadn't taken a fancy to."

"No, no. I wish to be just. I don't see how he could have come straight at it. And he did own up at last." She asked him what Burnamy had done for the magazine, and he could remember nothing but that one small poem, yet unprinted; he was rather vague about its value, but said it had temperament.

"He has temperament, too," she commented, and she had made him tell her everything he knew, or could be forced to imagine about Burnamy, before she let the talk turn to other things.

The life of the promenade had already settled into seafaring form; the steamer chairs were full, and people were reading or dozing in them with an effect of long habit. Those who would be walking up and down had begun their walks; some had begun going in and out of the smoking-room; ladies who were easily affected by the motion were lying down in the music-room. Groups of both sexes were standing at intervals along the rail, and the promenaders were obliged to double on a briefer course or work slowly round them. Shuffleboard parties at one point and ring-toss parties at another were forming among the young people. It was as lively and it was as dull as it would be two thousand miles at sea. It was not the least cooler, yet; but if you sat still you did not suffer.

In the prompt monotony the time was already passing swiftly. The deck-steward seemed hardly to have been round with tea and bouillon, and he had not yet gathered up all the empty cups, when the horn for lunch sounded. It was the youngest of the table-stewards who gave the summons to meals; and whenever the pretty boy appeared with his bugle, funny passengers gathered round him to make him laugh, and stop him from winding it. His part of the joke was to fulfill his duty with gravity, and only to give way to a smile of triumph as he walked off.

XI.

At lunch, in the faded excitement of their first meeting, the people at the Marches' table did not renew the premature intimacy of their breakfast talk. Mrs. March went to lie down in her berth afterwards, and March went on deck without her. He began to walk to and from the barrier between the first and second cabin promenades; lingering near it, and musing pensively, for some of the people beyond it looked as intelligent and as socially acceptable, even to their clothes, as their pecuniary betters of the saloon.

There were two women, a mother and daughter, whom he fancied to be teachers, by their looks, going out for a little rest, or perhaps for a little further study to fit them more perfectly for their work. They gazed wistfully across at him whenever he came up to the barrier; and he feigned a conversation with them and tried to convince them that the stamp of inferiority which their poverty put upon them was just, or if not just, then inevitable. He argued with them that the sort of barrier which here prevented their being friends with him, if they wished it, ran invisibly through society everywhere but he felt ashamed before their kind, patient, intelligent faces, and found himself wishing to excuse the fact he was defending. Was it any worse, he asked them, than their not being invited to the entertainments of people in upper Fifth Avenue? He made them own that if they were let across that barrier the whole second cabin would have a logical right to follow; and they were silenced. But they continued to gape at him with their sincere, gentle eyes whenever he returned to the barrier in his walk, till he could bear it no longer, and strolled off toward the steerage.

There was more reason why the passengers there should be penned into a little space of their own in the sort of pit made by the narrowing deck at the bow. They seemed to be all foreigners, and if any had made their fortunes in our country they were hiding their prosperity in the return to their own. They could hardly have come to us more shabby and squalid than they were going away; but he thought their average less apathetic than that of the saloon passengers, as he leaned over the rail and looked down at them. Some one had brought out an electric battery, and the lumpish boys and slattern girls were shouting and laughing as they writhed with the current. A young mother seated flat on the deck, with her bare feet stuck out, inattentively nursed her babe, while she laughed and shouted with the rest; a man with his head tied in a shawl walked about the pen and smiled grotesquely with the well side of his toothache-swollen face. The owner of the battery carried it away, and a group of little children, with blue eyes and yellow hair, gathered in the space he had left, and looked up at a passenger near March who was eating some plums and cherries which he had brought from the luncheon table. He began to throw the fruit down to them, and the children scrambled for it.

An elderly man, with a thin, grave, aquiline face, said, "I shouldn't want a child of mine down there."

"No," March responded, "it isn't quite what one would choose for one's

own. It's astonishing, though, how we reconcile ourselves to it in the case of others."

"I suppose it's something we'll have to get used to on the other side," suggested the stranger.

"Well," answered March, "you have some opportunities to get used to it on this side, if you happen to live in New York," and he went on to speak of the raggedness which often penetrated the frontier of comfort where he lived in Stuyvesant Square, and which seemed as glad of alms in food or money as this poverty of the steerage.

The other listened restively like a man whose ideals are disturbed.

"I don't believe I should like to live in New York, much," he said, and March fancied that he wished to be asked where he did live. It appeared that he lived in Ohio, and he named his town; he did not brag of it, but he said it suited him. He added that he had never expected to go to Europe, but that he had begun to run down lately, and his doctor thought he had better go out and try Carlsbad.

March said, to invite his further confidence, that this was exactly his own case. The Ohio man met the overture from a common invalidism as if it detracted from his own distinction; and he turned to speak of the difficulty, he had in arranging his affairs for leaving home. His heart opened a little with the word, and he said how comfortable he and his wife were in their house, and how much they both hated to shut it up. When March offered him his card, he said he had none of his own with him, but that his name was Eltwin. He betrayed a simple wish to have March realize the local importance he had left behind him; and it was not hard to comply; March saw a Grand Army button in the lapel of his coat, and he knew that he was in the presence of a veteran.

He tried to guess his rank; in telling his wife about him, when he went down to find her just before dinner, but he ended with a certain sense of affliction. "There are too many elderly invalids on this ship. I knock against people of my own age everywhere. Why aren't your youthful lovers more in evidence, my dear? I don't believe they are lovers, and I begin to doubt if they're young even."

"It wasn't very satisfactory at lunch, certainly," she owned. "But I know it will be different at dinner." She was putting herself together after a nap that had made up for the lost sleep of the night before. "I want you to look very nice, dear. Shall you dress for dinner?" she asked her husband's image in the state-room glass which she was preoccupying.

"I shall dress in my pea-jacket and sea-boots," it answered.

"I have heard that they always dress for dinner on the big Cunard and White Star boats, when it's good weather," she went on, placidly. "I shouldn't want those people to think you were not up in the convenances."

They both knew that she meant the reticent father and daughter, and March flung out, "I shouldn't want them to think you weren't. There's such a thing as overdoing."

She attacked him at another point. "What has annoyed you? What else have you been doing?"

"Nothing. I've been reading most of the afternoon."

"The Maiden Knight?"

This was the book which nearly everybody had brought on board. It was just out, and had caught an instant favor, which swelled later to a tidal wave. It depicted a heroic girl in every trying circumstance of mediaeval life, and gratified the perennial passion of both sexes for historical romance, while it flattered woman's instinct of superiority by the celebration of her unintermitted triumphs, ending in a preposterous and wholly superfluous self-sacrifice.

March laughed for pleasure in her guess, and she pursued, "I suppose you didn't waste time looking if anybody had brought the last copy of 'Every Other Week'?"

"Yes, I did; and I found the one you had left in your steamer chair--for advertising purposes, probably."

"Mr. Burnamy has another," she said. "I saw it sticking out of his pocket this morning."

"Oh, yes. He told me he had got it on the train from Chicago to see if it had his poem in it. He's an ingenuous soul--in some ways."

"Well, that is the very reason why you ought to find out whether the men are going to dress, and let him know. He would never think of it himself."

"Neither would I," said her husband.

"Very well, if you wish to spoil his chance at the outset," she sighed.

She did not quite know whether to be glad or not that the men were all in sacks and cutaways at dinner; it saved her, from shame for her husband and Mr. Burnamy; but it put her in the wrong. Every one talked; even the father and daughter talked with each other, and at one moment Mrs. March could not be quite sure that the daughter had not looked at her when she spoke. She could not be mistaken in the remark which the father addressed to Burnamy, though it led to nothing.

The dinner was uncommonly good, as the first dinner out is apt to be; and it went gayly on from soup to fruit, which was of the American abundance and variety, and as yet not of the veteran freshness imparted by the ice-closet. Everybody was eating it, when by a common consciousness they were aware of alien witnesses. They looked up as by a single impulse, and saw at the port the gaunt face of a steerage passenger staring down upon their luxury; he held on his arm a child that shared his regard with yet hungrier eyes. A boy's nose showed itself as if tiptoed to the height of the man's elbow; a young girl peered over his other arm.

The passengers glanced at one another; the two table-stewards, with their napkins in their hands, smiled vaguely, and made some indefinite movements.

The bachelor at the head of the table broke the spell. "I'm glad it didn't begin with the Little Neck clams!"

"Probably they only let those people come for the dessert," March suggested.

The widow now followed the direction of the other eyes; and looked up over her shoulder; she gave a little cry, and shrank down. The young bride made her petted mouth, in appeal to the company; her husband looked severe, as if he were going to do something, but refrained, not to make a scene. The reticent father threw one of his staccato glances at the port, and Mrs. March was sure that she saw the daughter steal a look at Burnamy.

The young fellow laughed. "I don't suppose there's anything to be done about it, unless we pass out a plate."

Mr. Kenby shook his head. "It wouldn't do. We might send for the captain. Or the chief steward."

The faces at the port vanished. At other ports profiles passed and repassed, as if the steerage passengers had their promenade under them, but they paused no more.

The Marches went up to their steamer chairs, and from her exasperated nerves Mrs. March denounced the arrangement of the ship which had made such a cruel thing possible.

"Oh," he mocked, "they had probably had a good substantial meal of their own, and the scene of our banquet was of the quality of a picture, a purely aesthetic treat. But supposing it wasn't, we're doing something like it every day and every moment of our lives. The Norumbia is a piece of the whole world's civilization set afloat, and passing from shore to shore with unchanged classes, and conditions. A ship's merely a small stage, where we're brought to close quarters with the daily drama of humanity."

"Well, then," she protested, "I don't like being brought to close quarters with the daily drama of humanity, as you call it. And I don't

believe that the large English ships are built so that the steerage passengers can stare in at the saloon windows while one is eating; and I'm sorry we came on the Norumbia."

"Ah, you think the Norumbia doesn't hide anything," he began, and he was going to speak of the men in the furnace pits of the steamer, how they fed the fires in a welding heat, and as if they had perished in it crept out on the forecastle like blanched phantasms of toil; but she interposed in time.

"If there's anything worse, for pity's sake don't tell me," she entreated, and he forebore.

He sat thinking how once the world had not seemed to have even death in it, and then how as he had grown older death had come into it more and more, and suffering was lurking everywhere, and could hardly be kept out of sight. He wondered if that young Burnamy now saw the world as he used to see it, a place for making verse and making love, and full of beauty of all kinds waiting to be fitted with phrases. He had lived a happy life; Burnamy would be lucky if he should live one half as happy; and yet if he could show him his whole happy life, just as it had truly been, must not the young man shrink from such a picture of his future?

"Say something," said his wife. "What are you thinking about?"

"Oh, Burnamy," he answered, honestly enough.

"I was thinking about the children," she said. "I am glad Bella didn't try to come from Chicago to see us off; it would have been too silly; she is getting to be very sensible. I hope Tom won't take the covers off the furniture when he has the fellows in to see him."

"Well, I want him to get all the comfort he can out of the place, even if the moths eat up every stick of furniture."

"Yes, so do I. And of course you're wishing that you were there with him!" March laughed guiltily. "Well, perhaps it was a crazy thing for us to start off alone for Europe, at our age."

"Nothing of the kind," he retorted in the necessity he perceived for staying her drooping spirits. "I wouldn't be anywhere else on any account. Isn't it perfectly delicious? It puts me in mind of that night on the Lake Ontario boat, when we were starting for Montreal. There was the same sort of red sunset, and the air wasn't a bit softer than this."

He spoke of a night on their wedding-journey when they were still new enough from Europe to be comparing everything at home with things there.

"Well, perhaps we shall get into the spirit of it again," she said, and they talked a long time of the past.

All the mechanical noises were muffled in the dull air, and the wash of the ship's course through the waveless sea made itself pleasantly heard.

In the offing a steamer homeward bound swam smoothly by, so close that her lights outlined her to the eye; she sent up some signal rockets that soared against the purple heaven in green and crimson, and spoke to the Norumbia in the mysterious mute phrases of ships that meet in the dark.

Mrs. March wondered what had become of Burnamy; the promenades were much freer now than they had been since the ship sailed; when she rose to go below, she caught sight of Burnamy walking the deck transversely with some lady. She clutched her husband's arm and stayed him in rich conjecture.

"Do you suppose he can have got her to walking with him already?"

They waited till Burnamy and his companion came in sight again. She was tilting forward, and turning from the waist, now to him and now from him.

"No; it's that pivotal girl," said March; and his wife said, "Well, I'm glad he won't be put down by them."

In the music-room sat the people she meant, and at the instant she passed on down the stairs, the daughter was saying to the father, "I don't see why you didn't tell me sooner, papa."

"It was such an unimportant matter that I didn't think to mention it. He offered it, and I took it; that was all. What difference could it have made to you?"

"None. But one doesn't like to do any one an injustice."

"I didn't know you were thinking anything about it."

"No, of course not."

XIII.

The voyage of the Norumbia was one of those which passengers say they have never seen anything like, though for the first two or three days out neither the doctor nor the deck-steward could be got, to prophesy when the ship would be in. There was only a day or two when it could really be called rough, and the sea-sickness was confined to those who seemed wilful sufferers; they lay on the cushioned benches around the stairs-landing, and subsisted on biscuit and beef tea without qualifying the monotonous well-being of the other passengers, who passed without noticing them.

The second morning there was rain, and the air freshened, but the leaden sea lay level as before. The sun shone in the afternoon; with the sunset the fog came thick and white; the ship lowed dismally through the night; from the dense folds of the mist answering noises called back to her. Just before dark two men in a dory shouted up to her close under her

bows, and then melted out of sight; when the dark fell the lights of fishing-schooners were seen, and their bells pealed; once loud cries from a vessel near at hand made themselves heard. Some people in the dining-saloon sang hymns; the smoking-room was dense with cigar fumes, and the card-players dealt their hands in an atmosphere emulous of the fog without.

The Norumbia was off the Banks, and the second day of fog was cold as if icebergs were haunting the opaque pallor around her. In the ranks of steamer chairs people lay like mummies in their dense wrappings; in the music-room the little children of travel discussed the different lines of steamers on which they had crossed, and babes of five and seven disputed about the motion on the Cunarders and White Stars; their nurses tried in vain to still them in behalf of older passengers trying to write letters there.

By the next morning the ship had run out of the fog; and people who could keep their feet said they were glad of the greater motion which they found beyond the Banks. They now talked of the heat of the first days out, and how much they had suffered; some who had passed the night on board before sailing tried to impart a sense of their misery in trying to sleep.

A day or two later a storm struck the ship, and the sailors stretched canvas along the weather promenade and put up a sheathing of boards across the bow end to keep off the rain. Yet a day or two more and the sea had fallen again and there was dancing on the widest space of the lee promenade.

The little events of the sea outside the steamer offered themselves in their poor variety. Once a ship in the offing, with all its square sails set, lifted them like three white towers from the deep. On the rim of the ocean the length of some westward liner blocked itself out against the horizon, and swiftly trailed its smoke out of sight. A few tramp steamers, lounging and lunging through the trough of the sea, were overtaken and left behind; an old brigantine passed so close that her rusty iron sides showed plain, and one could discern the faces of the people on board.

The steamer was oftenest without the sign of any life beyond her. One day a small bird beat the air with its little wings, under the roof of the promenade, and then flittered from sight over the surface, of the waste; a school of porpoises, stiff and wooden in their rise, plunged clumsily from wave to wave. The deep itself had sometimes the unreality, the artificiality of the canvas sea of the theatre. Commonly it was livid and cold in color; but there was a morning when it was delicately misted, and where the mist left it clear, it was blue and exquisitely iridescent under the pale sun; the wrinkled waves were finely pitted by the falling spray. These were rare moments; mostly, when it was not like painted canvas, it was hard like black rock, with surfaces of smooth cleavage. Where it met the sky it lay flat and motionless, or in the rougher weather carved itself along the horizon in successions of surges.

If the sun rose clear, it was overcast in a few hours; then the clouds broke and let a little sunshine through, to close again before the dim evening thickened over the waters. Sometimes the moon looked through the ragged curtain of vapors; one night it seemed to shine till morning, and shook a path of quicksilver from the horizon to the ship. Through every change, after she had left the fog behind, the steamer drove on with the pulse of her engines (that stopped no more than a man's heart stops) in a course which had nothing to mark it but the spread of the furrows from her sides, and the wake that foamed from her stern to the western verge of the sea.

The life of the ship, like the life of the sea, was a sodden monotony, with certain events which were part of the monotony. In the morning the little steward's bugle called the passengers from their dreams, and half an hour later called them to their breakfast, after such as chose had been served with coffee by their bedroom-stewards. Then they went on deck, where they read, or dozed in their chairs, or walked up and down, or stood in the way of those who were walking; or played shuffleboard and ring-toss; or smoked, and drank whiskey and aerated waters over their cards and papers in the smoking-room; or wrote letters in the saloon or the music-room. At eleven o'clock they spoiled their appetites for lunch with tea or bouillon to the music of a band of second-cabin stewards; at one, a single blast of the bugle called them to lunch, where they glutted themselves to the torpor from which they afterwards drowsed in their berths or chairs. They did the same things in the afternoon that they had done in the forenoon; and at four o'clock the deck-stewards came round with their cups and saucers, and their plates of sandwiches, again to the music of the band. There were two bugle-calls for dinner, and after dinner some went early to bed, and some sat up late and had grills and toast. At twelve the lights were put out in the saloons and the smoking-rooms.

There were various smells which stored themselves up in the consciousness to remain lastingly relative to certain moments and places: a whiff of whiskey and tobacco that exhaled from the door of the smoking-room; the odor of oil and steam rising from the open skylights over the engine-room; the scent of stale bread about the doors of the dining-saloon.

The life was like the life at a sea-side hotel, only more monotonous. The walking was limited; the talk was the tentative talk of people aware that there was no refuge if they got tired of one another. The flirting itself, such as there was of it, must be carried on in the glare of the pervasive publicity; it must be crude and bold, or not be at all.

There seemed to be very little of it. There were not many young people on board of saloon quality, and these were mostly girls. The young men were mainly of the smoking-room sort; they seldom risked themselves among the steamer chairs. It was gayer in the second cabin, and gayer yet in the steerage, where robust emotions were operated by the accordion. The passengers there danced to its music; they sang to it and laughed to it unabashed under the eyes of the first-cabin witnesses clustered along the rail above the pit where they took their rude pleasures.

With March it came to his spending many hours of each long, swift day in his berth with a book under the convenient electric light. He was safe there from the acquaintances which constantly formed themselves only to fall into disintegration, and cling to him afterwards as inorganic particles of weather-guessing, and smoking-room gossip about the ship's run.

In the earliest hours of the voyage he thought that he saw some faces of the great world, the world of wealth and fashion; but these afterward vanished, and left him to wonder where they hid themselves. He did not meet them even in going to and from his meals; he could only imagine them served in those palatial state-rooms whose interiors the stewards now and then rather obtruded upon the public. There were people whom he encountered in the promenades when he got up for the sunrise, and whom he never saw at other times; at midnight he met men prowling in the dark whom he never met by day. But none of these were people of the great world. Before six o'clock they were sometimes second-cabin passengers, whose barrier was then lifted for a little while to give them the freedom of the saloon promenade.

From time to time he thought he would look up his Ohioan, and revive from a closer study of him his interest in the rare American who had never been to Europe. But he kept with his elderly wife, who had the effect of withholding him from March's advances. Young Mr. and Mrs. Leffers threw off more and more their disguise of a long-married pair, and became frankly bride and groom. They seldom talked with any one else, except at table; they walked up and down together, smiling into each others faces; they sat side by side in their steamer chairs; one shawl covered them both, and there was reason to believe that they were holding each other's hands under it.

Mrs. Adding often took the chair beside Mrs. March when her husband was straying about the ship or reading in his berth; and the two ladies must have exchanged autobiographies, for Mrs. March was able to tell him just how long Mrs. Adding had been a widow, what her husband died of, and what had been done to save him; how she was now perfectly wrapt up in her boy, and was taking him abroad, with some notion of going to Switzerland, after the summer's travel, and settling down with him at school there. She and Mrs. March became great friends; and Rose, as his mother called him, attached himself reverently to March, not only as a celebrity of the first grade in his quality of editor of 'Every Other Week', but as a sage of wisdom and goodness, with whom he must not lose the chance of counsel upon almost every hypothesis and exigency of life.

March could not bring himself to place Burnamy quite where he belonged in contemporary literature, when Rose put him very high in virtue of the poem which he heard Burnamy was going to have printed in 'Every Other Week', and of the book which he was going to have published; and he let the boy bring to the young fellow the flattery which can come to any author but once, in the first request for his autograph that Burnamy confessed to have had. They were so near in age, though they were ten years apart, that Rose stood much more in awe of Burnamy than of others much more his seniors. He was often in the company of Kenby, whom he

valued next to March as a person acquainted with men; he consulted March upon Kenby's practice of always taking up the language of the country he visited, if it were only for a fortnight; and he conceived a higher opinion of him from March's approval.

Burnamy was most with Mrs. March, who made him talk about himself when he supposed he was talking about literature, in the hope that she could get him to talk about the Triscoes; but she listened in vain as he poured out-his soul in theories of literary art, and in histories of what he had written and what he meant to write. When he passed them where they sat together, March heard the young fellow's perpetually recurring I, I, I, my, my, my, me, me, me; and smiled to think how she was suffering under the drip-drip of his innocent egotism.

She bore in a sort of scientific patience his attentions to the pivotal girl, and Miss Triscoe's indifference to him, in which a less penetrating scrutiny could have detected no change from meal to meal. It was only at table that she could see them together, or that she could note any break in the reserve of the father and daughter. The signs of this were so fine that when she reported them March laughed in scornful incredulity. But at breakfast the third day out, the Triscoes, with the authority of people accustomed to social consideration, suddenly turned to the Marches, and began to make themselves agreeable; the father spoke to March of 'Every Other Week', which he seemed to know of in its relation to him; and the young girl addressed herself to Mrs. March's motherly sense not the less acceptably because indirectly. She spoke of going out with her father for an indefinite time, as if it were rather his wish than hers, and she made some inquiries about places in Germany; they had never been in Germany. They had some idea of Dresden; but the idea of Dresden with its American colony seemed rather tiresome; and did Mrs. March know anything about Weimar?

Mrs. March was obliged to say that she knew nothing about anyplace in Germany; and she explained perhaps too fully where and why she was going with her husband. She fancied a Boston note in that scorn for the tiresomeness of Dresden; but the girl's style was of New York rather than of Boston, and her accent was not quite of either place. Mrs. March began to try the Triscoes in this place and in that, to divine them and to class them. She had decided from the first that they were society people, but they were cultivated beyond the average of the few swells whom she had met; and there had been nothing offensive in their manner of holding themselves aloof from the other people at the table; they had a right to do that if they chose.

When the young Lefferses came in to breakfast, the talk went on between these and the Marches; the Triscoes presently left the table, and Mrs. March rose soon after, eager for that discussion of their behavior which March knew he should not be able to postpone.

He agreed with her that they were society people, but she could not at once accept his theory that they had themselves been the objects of an advance from them because of their neutral literary quality, through which they were of no social world, but potentially common to any. Later

she admitted this, as she said, for the sake of argument, though what she wanted him to see, now, was that this was all a step of the girl's toward finding out something about Burnamy.

The same afternoon, about the time the deck-steward was making his round with his cups, Miss Triscoe abruptly advanced upon her from a neighboring corner of the bulkhead, and asked, with the air of one accustomed to have her advances gratefully received, if she might sit by her. The girl took March's vacant chair, where she had her cup of bouillon, which she continued to hold untasted in her hand after the first sip. Mrs. March did the same with hers, and at the moment she had got very tired of doing it, Burnamy came by, for the hundredth time that day, and gave her a hundredth bow with a hundredth smile. He perceived that she wished to get rid of her cup, and he sprang to her relief.

"May I take yours too?" he said very passively to Miss Triscoe.

"You are very good." she answered, and gave it.

Mrs. March with a casual air suggested, "Do you know Mr. Burnamy, Miss Triscoe?" "The girl said a few civil things, but Burnamy did not try to make talk with her while he remained a few moments before Mrs. March. The pivotal girl came in sight, tilting and turning in a rare moment of isolation at the corner of the music-room, and he bowed abruptly, and hurried off to join her.

Miss Triscoe did not linger; she alleged the necessity of looking up her father, and went away with a smile so friendly that Mrs. March might easily have construed it to mean that no blame attached itself to her in Miss Triscoe's mind.

"Then you don't feel that it was a very distinct success?" her husband asked on his return.

"Not on the surface," she said.

"Better let ill enough alone," he advised.

She did not heed him. "All the same she cares for him. The very fact that she was so cold shows that."

"And do you think her being cold will make him care for her?"

"If she wants it to."

XIV.

At dinner that day the question of 'The Maiden Knight' was debated among the noises and silences of the band. Young Mrs. Leffers had brought the book to the table with her; she said she had not been able to lay it down

before the last horn sounded; in fact she could have been seen reading it to her husband where he sat under the same shawl, the whole afternoon.

"Don't you think it's perfectly fascinating," she asked Mrs. Adding, with her petted mouth.

"Well," said the widow, doubtfully, "it's nearly a week since I read it, and I've had time to get over the glow."

"Oh, I could just read it forever!" the bride exclaimed.

"I like a book," said her husband, "that takes me out of myself. I don't want to think when I'm reading."

March was going to attack this ideal, but he reflected in time that Mr. Leffers had really stated his own motive in reading. He compromised. "Well, I like the author to do my thinking for me."

"Yes," said the other, "that is what I mean."

"The question is whether 'The Maiden Knight' fellow does it," said Kenby, taking duck and pease from the steward at his shoulder.

"What my wife likes in it is to see what one woman can do and be single-handed," said March.

"No," his wife corrected him, "what a man thinks she can."

"I suppose," said Mr. Triscoe, unexpectedly, "that we're like the English in our habit of going off about a book like a train of powder."

"If you'll say a row of bricks," March assented, "I'll agree with you. It's certainly Anglo-Saxon to fall over one another as we do, when we get going. It would be interesting to know just how much liking there is in the popularity of a given book."

"It's like the run of a song, isn't it?" Kenby suggested. "You can't stand either, when it reaches a given point."

He spoke to March and ignored Triscoe, who had hitherto ignored the rest of the table.

"It's very curious," March said. "The book or the song catches a mood, or feeds a craving, and when one passes or the other is glutted--"

"The discouraging part is," Triscoe put in, still limiting himself to the Marches, "that it's never a question of real taste. The things that go down with us are so crude, so coarsely spiced; they tickle such a vulgar palate--Now in France, for instance," he suggested.

"Well, I don't know," returned the editor. "After all, we eat a good deal of bread, and we drink more pure water than any other people. Even when we drink it iced, I fancy it isn't so bad as absinthe."

The young bride looked at him gratefully, but she said, "If we can't get ice-water in Europe, I don't know what Mr. Leffers will do," and the talk threatened to pass among the ladies into a comparison of American and European customs.

Burnamy could not bear to let it. "I don't pretend to be very well up in French literature," he began, "but I think such a book as 'The Maiden Knight' isn't such a bad piece of work; people are liking a pretty well-built story when they like it. Of course it's sentimental, and it begs the question a good deal; but it imagines something heroic in character, and it makes the reader imagine it too. The man who wrote that book may be a donkey half the time, but he's a genius the other half. By-and-by he'll do something--after he's come to see that his 'Maiden Knight' was a fool--that I believe even you won't be down on, Mr. March, if he paints a heroic type as powerfully as he does in this book."

He spoke with the authority of a journalist, and though he deferred to March in the end, he deferred with authority still. March liked him for coming to the defence of a young writer whom he had not himself learned to like yet. "Yes," he said, "if he has the power you say, and can keep it after he comes to his artistic consciousness!"

Mrs. Leffers, as if she thought things were going her way, smiled; Rose Adding listened with shining eyes expectantly fixed on March; his mother viewed his rapture with tender amusement. The steward was at Kenby's shoulder with the salad and his entreatings "Bleace!" and Triscoe seemed to be questioning whether he should take any notice of Burnamy's general disagreement. He said at last: "I'm afraid we haven't the documents. You don't seem to have cared much for French books, and I haven't read 'The Maiden Knight'." He added to March: "But I don't defend absinthe. Ice-water is better. What I object to is our indiscriminate taste both for raw whiskey--and for milk-and-water."

No one took up the question again, and it was Kenby who spoke next. "The doctor thinks, if this weather holds, that we shall be into Plymouth Wednesday morning. I always like to get a professional opinion on the ship's run."

In the evening, as Mrs. March was putting away in her portfolio the journal-letter which she was writing to send back from Plymouth to her children, Miss Triscoe drifted to the place where she sat at their table in the dining-room by a coincidence which they both respected as casual.

"We had quite a literary dinner," she remarked, hovering for a moment near the chair which she later sank into. "It must have made you feel very much at home. Or perhaps you're so tired of it at home that you don't talk about books."

"We always talk shop, in some form or other," said Mrs. March.

"My husband never tires of it. A good many of the contributors come to us, you know."

"It must be delightful," said the girl. She added as if she ought to excuse herself for neglecting an advantage that might have been hers if she had chosen, "I'm sorry one sees so little of the artistic and literary set. But New York is such a big place."

New York people seem to be very fond of it," said Mrs. March. "Those who have always lived there."

"We haven't always lived there," said the girl. "But I think one has a good time there--the best time a girl can have. It's all very well coming over for the summer; one has to spend the summer somewhere. Are you going out for a long time?"

"Only for the summer. First to Carlsbad."

"Oh, yes. I suppose we shall travel about through Germany, and then go to Paris. We always do; my father is very fond of it."

"You must know it very well," said Mrs. March, aimlessly.

"I was born there,--if that means knowing it. I lived there--till I was eleven years old. We came home after my mother died."

"Oh!" said Mrs. March.

The girl did not go further into her family history; but by one of those leaps which seem to women as logical as other progressions, she arrived at asking, "Is Mr. Burnamy one of the contributors?"

Mrs. March laughed. "He is going to be, as soon as his poem is printed."

"Poem?"

"Yes. Mr. March thinks it's very good."

"I thought he spoke very nicely about 'The Maiden Knight'. And he has been very nice to papa. You know they have the same room."

"I think Mr. Burnamy told me," Mrs. March said.

The girl went on. "He had the lower berth, and he gave it up to papa; he's done everything but turn himself out of doors."

"I'm sure he's been very glad," Mrs. March ventured on Burnamy's behalf, but very softly, lest if she breathed upon these budding confidences they should shrink and wither away.

"I always tell papa that there's no country like America for real unselfishness; and if they're all like that, in Chicago!" The girl stopped, and added with a laugh, "But I'm always quarrelling with papa about America."

"We have a daughter living in Chicago," said Mrs. March, alluringly.

But Miss Triscoe refused the bait, either because she had said all she meant, or because she had said all she would, about Chicago, which Mrs. March felt for the present to be one with Burnamy. She gave another of her leaps. "I don't see why people are so anxious to get it like Europe, at home. They say that there was a time when there were no chaperons before hoops, you know." She looked suggestively at Mrs. March, resting one slim hand on the table, and controlling her skirt with the other, as if she were getting ready to rise at any moment. "When they used to sit on their steps."

"It was very pleasant before hoops--in every way," said Mrs. March. "I was young, then; and I lived in Boston, where I suppose it was always simpler than in New York. I used to sit on our steps. It was delightful for girls--the freedom."

"I wish I had lived before hoops," said Miss Triscoe.

"Well, there must be places where it's before hoops yet: Seattle, and Portland, Oregon, for all I know," Mrs. March suggested. "And there must be people in that epoch everywhere."

"Like that young lady who twists and turns?" said Miss Triscoe, giving first one side of her face and then the other. "They have a good time. I suppose if Europe came to us in one way it had to come in another. If it came in galleries and all that sort of thing, it had to come in chaperons. You'll think I'm a great extremist, Mrs. March; but sometimes I wish there was more America instead of less. I don't believe it's as bad as people say. Does Mr. March," she asked, taking hold of the chair with one hand, to secure her footing from any caprice of the sea, while she gathered her skirt more firmly into the other, as she rose, "does he think that America is going--all wrong?"

"All wrong? How?"

"Oh, in politics, don't you know. And government, and all that. And bribing. And the lower classes having everything their own way. And the horrid newspapers. And everything getting so expensive; and no regard for family, or anything of that kind."

Mrs. March thought she saw what Miss Triscoe meant, but she answered, still cautiously, "I don't believe he does always. Though there are times when he is very much disgusted. Then he says that he is getting too old--and we always quarrel about that--to see things as they really are. He says that if the world had been going the way that people over fifty have always thought it was going, it would have gone to smash in the time of the anthropoidal apes."

"Oh, yes: Darwin," said Miss Triscoe, vaguely. "Well, I'm glad he doesn't give it up. I didn't know but I was holding out just because I had argued so much, and was doing it out of--opposition. Goodnight!" She called her salutation gayly over her shoulder, and Mrs. March watched her gliding out of the saloon with a graceful tilt to humor the slight

roll of the ship, and a little lurch to correct it, once or twice, and wondered if Burnamy was afraid of her; it seemed to her that if she were a young man she should not be afraid of Miss Triscoe.

The next morning, just after she had arranged herself in her steamer chair, he approached her, bowing and smiling, with the first of his many bows and smiles for the day, and at the same time Miss Triscoe came toward her from the opposite direction. She nodded brightly to him, and he gave her a bow and smile too; he always had so many of them to spare.

"Here is your chair!" Mrs. March called to her, drawing the shawl out of the chair next her own. "Mr. March is wandering about the ship somewhere."

"I'll keep it for him," said Miss Triscoe, and as Burnamy offered to take the shawl that hung in the hollow of her arm, she let it slip into his hand with an "Oh; thank you," which seemed also a permission for him to wrap it about her in the chair.

He stood talking before the ladies, but he looked up and down the promenade. The pivotal girl showed herself at the corner of the music-room, as she had done the day before. At first she revolved there as if she were shedding her light on some one hidden round the corner; then she moved a few paces farther out and showed herself more obviously alone. Clearly she was there for Burnamy to come and walk with her; Mrs. March could see that, and she felt that Miss Triscoe saw it too. She waited for her to dismiss him to his flirtation; but Miss Triscoe kept chatting on, and he kept answering, and making no motion to get away. Mrs. March began to be as sorry for her as she was ashamed for him. Then she heard him saying, "Would you like a turn or two?" and Miss Triscoe answering, "Why, yes, thank you," and promptly getting out of her chair as if the pains they had both been at to get her settled in it were all nothing.

She had the composure to say, "You can leave your shawl with me, Miss Triscoe," and to receive her fervent, "Oh, thank you," before they sailed off together, with inhuman indifference to the girl at the corner of the music-room. Then she sank into a kind of triumphal collapse, from which she roused herself to point her husband to the chair beside her when he happened along.

He chose to be perverse about her romance. "Well, now, you had better let them alone. Remember Kendricks." He meant one of their young friends whose love-affair they had promoted till his happy marriage left them in lasting doubt of what they had done. "My sympathies are all with the pivotal girl. Hadn't she as much right to him, for the time being, or for good and all, as Miss Triscoe?"

"That depends upon what you think of Burnamy."

"Well, I don't like to see a girl have a young man snatched away from her just when she's made sure of him. How do you suppose she is feeling now?"

"She isn't feeling at all. She's letting her revolving light fall upon half a dozen other young men by this time, collectively or consecutively. All that she wants to make sure of is that they're young men--or old ones, even."

March laughed, but not altogether at what his wife said. "I've been having a little talk with Papa Triscoe, in the smoking-room."

"You smell like it," said his wife, not to seem too eager: "Well?"

"Well, Papa Triscoe seems to be in a pout. He doesn't think things are going as they should in America. He hasn't been consulted, or if he has, his opinion hasn't been acted upon."

"I think he's horrid," said Mrs. March. "Who are they?"

"I couldn't make out, and I couldn't ask. But I'll tell you what I think."

"What?"

"That there's no chance for, Burnamy. He's taking his daughter out to marry her to a crowned head."

XV.

It was this afternoon that the dance took place on the south promenade. Everybody came and looked, and the circle around the waltzers was three or four deep. Between the surrounding heads and shoulders, the hats of the young ladies wheeling and whirling, and the faces of the men who were wheeling and whirling them, rose and sank with the rhythm of their steps. The space allotted to the dancing was walled to seaward with canvas, and was prettily treated with German, and American flags: it was hard to go wrong with flags, Miss Triscoe said, securing herself under Mrs. March's wing.

Where they stood they could see Burnamy's face, flashing and flushing in the dance; at the end of the first piece he came to them, and remained talking and laughing till the music began again.

"Don't you want to try it?" he asked abruptly of Miss Triscoe.

"Isn't it rather--public?" she asked back.

Mrs. March could feel the hand which the girl had put through her arm thrill with temptation; but Burnamy could not.

"Perhaps it is rather obvious," he said, and he made a long glide over the deck to the feet of the pivotal girl, anticipating another young man who was rapidly advancing from the opposite quarter. The next moment her

hat and his face showed themselves in the necessary proximity to each other within the circle.

"How well she dances!" said Miss Triscoe.

"Do you think so? She looks as if she had been wound up and set going."

"She's very graceful," the girl persisted.

The day ended with an entertainment in the saloon for one of the marine charities which address themselves to the hearts and pockets of passengers on all steamers. There were recitations in English and German, and songs from several people who had kindly consented, and ever more piano performance. Most of those who took part were of the race gifted in art and finance; its children excelled in the music, and its fathers counted the gate-money during the last half of the programme, with an audible clinking of the silver on the table before them.

Miss Triscoe was with her father, and Mrs. March was herself chaperoned by Mr. Burnamy: her husband had refused to come to the entertainment. She hoped to leave Burnamy and Miss Triscoe together before the evening ended; but Miss Triscoe merely stopped with her father, in quitting the saloon, to laugh at some features of the entertainment, as people who take no part in such things do; Burnamy stood up to exchange some unimpassioned words with her, and then they said good-night.

The next morning, at five o'clock, the Norumbia came to anchor in the pretty harbor of Plymouth. In the cool early light the town lay distinct along the shore, quaint with its small English houses, and stately with come public edifices of unknown function on the uplands; a country-seat of aristocratic aspect showed itself on one of the heights; on another the tower of a country church peered over the tree-tops; there were lines of fortifications, as peaceful, at their distance, as the stone walls dividing the green fields. The very iron-clads in the harbor close at hand contributed to the amiable gayety of the scene under the pale blue English sky, already broken with clouds from which the flush of the sunrise had not quite faded. The breath of the land came freshly out over the water; one could almost smell the grass and the leaves. Gulls wheeled and darted over the crisp water; the tones of the English voices on the tender were pleasant to the ear, as it fussed and scuffled to the ship's side. A few score of the passengers left her; with their baggage they formed picturesque groups on the tender's deck, and they set out for the shore waving their hands and their handkerchiefs to the friends they left clustering along the rail of the Norumbia. Mr. and Mrs. Leffers bade March farewell, in the final fondness inspired by his having coffee with them before they left the ship; they said they hated to leave.

The stop had roused everybody, and the breakfast tables were promptly filled, except such as the passengers landing at Plymouth had vacated; these were stripped of their cloths, and the remaining commensals placed at others. The seats of the Lefferses were given to March's old Ohio friend and his wife. He tried to engage them in the tally which began to be general in the excitement of having touched land; but they shyly held

aloof.

Some English newspapers had come aboard from the tug, and there was the usual good-natured adjustment of the American self-satisfaction, among those who had seen them, to the ever-surprising fact that our continent is apparently of no interest to Europe. There were some meagre New York stock-market quotations in the papers; a paragraph in fine print announced the lynching of a negro in Alabama; another recorded a coal-mining strike in Pennsylvania.

"I always have to get used to it over again," said Kenby. "This is the twentieth time I have been across, and I'm just as much astonished as I was the first, to find out that they don't want to know anything about us here."

"Oh," said March, "curiosity and the weather both come from the west. San Francisco wants to know about Denver, Denver about Chicago, Chicago about New York, and New York about London; but curiosity never travels the other way any more than a hot wave or a cold wave."

"Ah, but London doesn't care a rap about Vienna," said Kenby.

"Well, some pressures give out before they reach the coast, on our own side. It isn't an infallible analogy."

Triscoe was fiercely chewing a morsel, as if in haste to take part in the discussion. He gulped it, and broke out. "Why should they care about us, anyway?"

March lightly ventured, "Oh, men and brothers, you know."

"That isn't sufficient ground. The Chinese are men and brothers; so are the South-Americans and Central-Africans, and Hawaiians; but we're not impatient for the latest news about them. It's civilization that interests civilization."

"I hope that fact doesn't leave us out in the cold with the barbarians?" Burnamy put in, with a smile.

"Do you think we are civilized?" retorted the other.

"We have that superstition in Chicago," said Burnamy. He added, still smiling, "About the New-Yorkers, I mean."

"You're more superstitious in Chicago than I supposed. New York is an anarchy, tempered by vigilance committees."

"Oh, I don't think you can say that," Kenby cheerfully protested, "since the Reformers came in. Look at our streets!"

"Yes, our streets are clean, for the time being, and when we look at them we think we have made a clean sweep in our manners and morals. But how long do you think it will be before Tammany will be in the saddle again?"

"Oh, never in the world!" said the optimistic head of the table.

"I wish I had your faith; or I should if I didn't feel that it is one of the things that help to establish Tammanys with us. You will see our Tammany in power after the next election." Kenby laughed in a large-hearted incredulity; and his laugh was like fuel to the other's flame.

"New York is politically a mediaeval Italian republic, and it's morally a frontier mining-town. Socially it's--" He stopped as if he could not say what.

"I think it's a place where you have a very nice time, papa," said his daughter, and Burnamy smiled with her; not because he knew anything about it.

Her father went on as if he had not heard her. "It's as vulgar and crude as money can make it. Nothing counts but money, and as soon as there's enough, it counts for everything. In less than a year you'll have Tammany in power; it won't be more than a year till you'll have it in society."

"Oh no! Oh no!" came from Kenby. He did not care much for society, but he vaguely respected it as the stronghold of the proprieties and the amenities.

"Isn't society a good place for Tammany to be in?" asked March in the pause Triscoe let follow upon Kenby's laugh.

"There's no reason why it shouldn't be. Society is as bad as all the rest of it. And what New York is, politically, morally, and socially, the whole country wishes to be and tries to be."

There was that measure of truth in the words which silences; no one could find just the terms of refutation.

"Well," said Kenby at last, "it's a good thing there are so many lines to Europe. We've still got the right to emigrate."

"Yes, but even there we don't escape the abuse of our infamous newspapers for exercising a man's right to live where he chooses. And there is no country in Europe--except Turkey, or Spain--that isn't a better home for an honest man than the United States."

The Ohioan had once before cleared his throat as if he were going to speak. Now, he leaned far enough forward to catch Triscoe's eye, and said, slowly and distinctly: "I don't know just what reason you have to feel as you do about the country. I feel differently about it myself--perhaps because I fought for it."

At first, the others were glad of this arrogance; it even seemed an answer; but Burnamy saw Miss Triscoe's cheek, flush, and then he doubted its validity.

Triscoe nervously crushed a biscuit in his hand, as if to expend a violent impulse upon it. He said, coldly, "I was speaking from that stand-point."

The Ohioan shrank back in his seat, and March felt sorry for him, though he had put himself in the wrong. His old hand trembled beside his plate, and his head shook, while his lips formed silent words; and his shy wife was sharing his pain and shame.

Kenby began to talk about the stop which the Norumbia was to make at Cherbourg, and about what hour the next day they should all be in Cuxhaven. Miss Triscoe said they had never come on the Hanseatic Line before, and asked several questions. Her father did not speak again, and after a little while he rose without waiting for her to make the move from table; he had punctiliously deferred to her hitherto. Eltwin rose at the same time, and March feared that he might be going to provoke another defeat, in some way.

Eltwin lifted his voice, and said, trying to catch Triscoe's eye, "I think I ought to beg your pardon, sir. I do beg your pardon."

March perceived that Eltwin wished to make the offer of his reparation as distinct as his aggression had been; and now he quaked for Triscoe, whose daughter he saw glance apprehensively at her father as she swayed aside to let the two men come together.

"That is all right, Colonel--"

"Major," Eltwin conscientiously interposed.

"Major," Triscoe bowed; and he put out his hand and grasped the hand which had been tremulously rising toward him. "There can't be any doubt of what we did, no matter what we've got."

"No, no!" said the other, eagerly. "That was what I meant, sir. I don't think as you do; but I believe that a man who helped to save the country has a right to think what he pleases about it."

Triscoe said, "That is all right, my dear sir. May I ask your regiment?"

The Marches let the old fellows walk away together, followed by the wife of the one and the daughter of the other. They saw the young girl making some graceful overtures of speech to the elder woman as they went.

"That was rather fine, my dear," said Mrs. March.

"Well, I don't know. It was a little too dramatic, wasn't it? It wasn't what I should have expected of real life."

"Oh, you spoil everything! If that's the spirit you're going through Europe in!"

"It isn't. As soon as I touch European soil I shall reform."

XVI.

That was not the first time General Triscoe had silenced question of his opinions with the argument he had used upon Eltwin, though he was seldom able to use it so aptly. He always found that people suffered, his belief in our national degeneration much more readily when they knew that he had left a diplomatic position in Europe (he had gone abroad as secretary of a minor legation) to come home and fight for the Union. Some millions of other men had gone into the war from the varied motives which impelled men at that time; but he was aware that he had distinction, as a man of property and a man of family, in doing so. His family had improved as time passed, and it was now so old that back of his grandfather it was lost in antiquity. This ancestor had retired from the sea and become a merchant in his native Rhode Island port, where his son established himself as a physician, and married the daughter of a former slave-trader whose social position was the highest in the place; Triscoe liked to mention his maternal grandfather when he wished a listener to realize just how anomalous his part in a war against slavery was; it heightened the effect of his pose.

He fought gallantly through the war, and he was brevetted Brigadier-General at the close. With this honor, and with the wound which caused an almost imperceptible limp in his gait, he won the heart of a rich New York girl, and her father set him up in a business, which was not long in going to pieces in his hands. Then the young couple went to live in Paris, where their daughter was born, and where the mother died when the child was ten years old. A little later his father-in-law died, and Triscoe returned to New York, where he found the fortune which his daughter had inherited was much less than he somehow thought he had a right to expect.

The income from her fortune was enough to live on, and he did not go back to Paris, where, in fact, things were not so much to his mind under the Republic as they had been under the Second Empire. He was still willing to do something for his country, however, and he allowed his name to be used on a citizen's ticket in his district; but his provision-man was sent to Congress instead. Then he retired to Rhode Island and attempted to convert his shore property into a watering-place; but after being attractively plotted and laid out with streets and sidewalks, it allured no one to build on it except the birds and the chipmonks, and he came back to New York, where his daughter had remained in school.

One of her maternal aunts made her a coming-out tea, after she left school; and she entered upon a series of dinners, dances, theatre parties, and receptions of all kinds; but the tide of fairy gold pouring through her fingers left no engagement-ring on them. She had no duties, but she seldom got out of humor with her pleasures; she had some odd tastes of her own, and in a society where none but the most serious books were ever seriously mentioned she was rather fond of good ones, and had

romantic ideas of a life that she vaguely called bohemian. Her character was never tested by anything more trying than the fear that her father might take her abroad to live; he had taken her abroad several times for the summer.

The dreaded trial did not approach for several years after she had ceased to be a bud; and then it came when her father was again willing to serve his country in diplomacy, either at the Hague, or at Brussels, or even at Berne. Reasons of political geography prevented his appointment anywhere, but General Triscoe having arranged his affairs for going abroad on the mission he had expected, decided to go without it. He was really very fit for both of the offices he had sought, and so far as a man can deserve public place by public service, he had deserved it. His pessimism was uncommonly well grounded, and if it did not go very deep, it might well have reached the bottom of his nature.

His daughter had begun to divine him at the early age when parents suppose themselves still to be mysteries to their children. She did not think it necessary ever to explain him to others; perhaps she would not have found it possible; and now after she parted from Mrs. Eltwin and went to sit down beside Mrs. March she did not refer to her father. She said how sweet she had found the old lady from Ohio; and what sort of place did Mrs. March suppose it was where Mrs. Eltwin lived? They seemed to have everything there, like any place. She had wanted to ask Mrs. Eltwin if they sat on their steps; but she had not quite dared.

Burnamy came by, slowly, and at Mrs. March's suggestion he took one of the chairs on her other side, to help her and Miss Triscoe look at the Channel Islands and watch the approach of the steamer to Cherbourg, where the Norumbia was to land again. The young people talked across Mrs. March to each other, and said how charming the islands were, in their gray-green insubstantiality, with valleys furrowing them far inward, like airy clefts in low banks of clouds. It seemed all the nicer not to know just which was which; but when the ship drew nearer to Cherbourg, he suggested that they could see better by going round to the other side of the ship. Miss Triscoe, as at the other times when she had gone off with Burnamy, marked her allegiance, to Mrs. March by leaving a wrap with her.

Every one was restless in breaking with the old life at sea. There had been an equal unrest when the ship first sailed; people had first come aboard in the demoralization of severing their ties with home, and they shrank from forming others. Then the charm of the idle, eventless life grew upon them, and united them in a fond reluctance from the inevitable end.

Now that the beginning of the end had come, the pangs of disintegration were felt in all the once-more-repellant particles. Burnamy and Miss Triscoe, as they hung upon the rail, owned to each other that they hated to have the voyage over. They had liked leaving Plymouth and being at sea again; they wished that they need not be reminded of another debarkation by the energy of the crane in hoisting the Cherbourg baggage from the hold.

They approved of the picturesqueness of three French vessels of war that passed, dragging their kraken shapes low through the level water. At Cherbourg an emotional French tender came out to the ship, very different in her clamorous voices and excited figures from the steady self-control of the English tender at Plymouth; and they thought the French fortifications much more on show than the English had been. Nothing marked their youthful date so much to the Marches, who presently joined them, as their failure to realize that in this peaceful sea the great battle between the Kearsarge and the Alabama was fought. The elder couple tried to affect their imaginations with the fact which reanimated the spectre of a dreadful war for themselves; but they had to pass on and, leave the young people unmoved.

Mrs. March wondered if they noticed the debarkation of the pivotal girl, whom she saw standing on the deck of the tender, with her hands at her waist, and giving now this side and now that side of her face to the young men waving their hats to her from the rail of the ship. Burnamy was not of their number, and he seemed not to know that the girl was leaving him finally to Miss Triscoe. If Miss Triscoe knew it she did nothing the whole of that long, last afternoon to profit by the fact. Burnamy spent a great part of it in the chair beside Mrs. March, and he showed an intolerable resignation to the girl's absence.

"Yes," said March, taking the place Burnamy left at last, "that terrible patience of youth!"

"Patience? Folly! Stupidity! They ought to be together every instant! Do they suppose that life is full of such chances? Do they think that fate has nothing to do but--"

She stopped for a fit climax, and he suggested, "Hang round and wait on them?"

"Yes! It's their one chance in a life-time, probably."

"Then you've quite decided that they're in love?" He sank comfortably back, and put up his weary legs on the chair's extension with the conviction that love had no such joy as that to offer.

"I've decided that they're intensely interested in each other."

"Then what more can we ask of them? And why do you care what they do or don't do with their chance? Why do you wish their love well, if it's that? Is marriage such a very certain good?"

"It isn't all that it might be, but it's all that there is. What would our lives have been without it?" she retorted.

"Oh, we should have got on. It's such a tremendous risk that we, ought to go round begging people to think twice, to count a hundred, or a nonillion, before they fall in love to the marrying-point. I don't mind their flirting; that amuses them; but marrying is a different thing. I doubt if Papa Triscoe would take kindly to the notion of a son-in-law

he hadn't selected himself, and his daughter doesn't strike me as a young lady who has any wisdom to throw away on a choice. She has her little charm; her little gift of beauty, of grace, of spirit, and the other things that go with her age and sex; but what could she do for a fellow like Burnamy, who has his way to make, who has the ladder of fame to climb, with an old mother at the bottom of it to look after? You wouldn't want him to have an eye on Miss Triscoe's money, even if she had money, and I doubt if she has much. It's all very pretty to have a girl like her fascinated with a youth of his simple traditions; though Burnamy isn't altogether pastoral in his ideals, and he looks forward to a place in the very world she belongs to. I don't think it's for us to promote the affair."

"Well, perhaps you're right," she sighed. "I will let them alone from this out. Thank goodness, I shall not have them under my eyes very long."

"Oh, I don't think there's any harm done yet," said her husband, with a laugh.

At dinner there seemed so little harm of the kind he meant that she suffered from an illogical disappointment. The young people got through the meal with no talk that seemed inductive; Burnamy left the table first, and Miss Triscoe bore his going without apparent discouragement; she kept on chatting with March till his wife took him away to their chairs on deck.

There were a few more ships in sight than there were in mid-ocean; but the late twilight thickened over the North Sea quite like the night after they left New York, except that it was colder; and their hearts turned to their children, who had been in abeyance for the week past, with a remorseful pang. "Well, she said, "I wish we were going to be in New York to-morrow, instead of Hamburg."

"Oh, no! Oh, no!" he protested. "Not so bad as that, my dear. This is the last night, and it's hard to manage, as the last night always is. I suppose the last night on earth--"

"Basil!" she implored.

"Well, I won't, then. But what I want is to see a Dutch lugger. I've never seen a Dutch lugger, and--"

She suddenly pressed his arm, and in obedience to the signal he was silent; though it seemed afterwards that he ought to have gone on talking as if he did not see Burnamy and Miss Triscoe swinging slowly by. They were walking close together, and she was leaning forward and looking up into his face while he talked.

"Now," Mrs. March whispered, long after they were out of hearing, "let us go instantly. I wouldn't for worlds have them see us here when they get found again. They would feel that they had to stop and speak, and that would spoil everything. Come!"

XVII.

Burnamy paused in a flow of autobiography, and modestly waited for Miss Triscoe's prompting. He had not to wait long.

"And then, how soon did you think of printing your things in a book?"

"Oh, about as soon as they began to take with the public."

"How could you tell that they were-taking?"

"They were copied into other papers, and people talked about them."

"And that was what made Mr. Stoller want you to be his secretary?"

"I don't believe it was. The theory in the office was that he didn't think much of them; but he knows I can write shorthand, and put things into shape."

"What things?"

"Oh--ideas. He has a notion of trying to come forward in politics. He owns shares in everything but the United States Senate--gas, electricity, railroads, aldermen, newspapers--and now he would like some Senate. That's what I think."

She did not quite understand, and she was far from knowing that this cynic humor expressed a deadlier pessimism than her father's fiercest accusals of the country. "How fascinating it is!" she said, innocently.

"And I suppose they all envy your coming out?"

"In the office?"

"Yes. I should envy, them--staying."

Burnamy laughed. "I don't believe they envy me. It won't be all roses for me--they know that. But they know that I can take care of myself if it isn't." He remembered something one of his friends in the office had said of the painful surprise the Bird of Prey would feel if he ever tried his beak on him in the belief that he was soft.

She abruptly left the mere personal question. "And which would you rather write: poems or those kind of sketches?"

"I don't know," said Burnamy, willing to talk of himself on any terms.

"I suppose that prose is the thing for our time, rather more; but there are things you can't say in prose. I used to write a great deal of verse in college; but I didn't have much luck with editors till Mr. March took

this little piece for 'Every Other Week'."

"Little? I thought it was a long poem!"

Burnamy laughed at the notion. "It's only eight lines."

"Oh!" said the girl. "What is it about?"

He yielded to the temptation with a weakness which he found incredible in a person of his make. "I can repeat it if you won't give me away to Mrs. March."

"Oh, no indeed!" He said the lines over to her very simply and well. "They are beautiful--beautiful!"

"Do you think so?" he gasped, in his joy at her praise.

"Yes, lovely. Do you know, you are the first literary man--the only literary man--I ever talked with. They must go out--somewhere! Papa must meet them at his clubs. But I never do; and so I'm making the most of you."

"You can't make too much of me, Miss Triscoe," said Burnamy.

She would not mind his mocking. "That day you spoke about 'The Maiden Knight', don't you know, I had never heard any talk about books in that way. I didn't know you were an author then."

"Well, I'm not much of an author now," he said, cynically, to retrieve his folly in repeating his poem to her.

"Oh, that will do for you to say. But I know what Mrs. March thinks."

He wished very much to know what Mrs. March thought, too; 'Every Other Week' was such a very good place that he could not conscientiously neglect any means of having his work favorably considered there; if Mrs. March's interest in it would act upon her husband, ought not he to know just how much she thought of him as a writer? "Did she like the poem."

Miss Triscoe could not recall that Mrs. March had said anything about the poem, but she launched herself upon the general current of Mrs. March's liking for Burnamy. "But it wouldn't do to tell you all she said!"

This was not what he hoped, but he was richly content when she returned to his personal history. "And you didn't know any one when, you went up to Chicago from--"

"Tippecanoe? Not exactly that. I wasn't acquainted with any one in the office, but they had printed some things of mine, and they were willing to let me try my hand. That was all I could ask."

"Of course! You knew you could do the rest. Well, it is like a romance. A woman couldn't have such an adventure as that!" sighed the girl.

"But women do!" Burnamy retorted. "There is a girl writing on the paper now--she's going to do the literary notices while I'm gone--who came to Chicago from Ann Arbor, with no more chance than I had, and who's made her way single-handed from interviewing up."

"Oh," said Miss Triscoe, with a distinct drop in her enthusiasm.
"Is she nice?"

"She's mighty clever, and she's nice enough, too, though the kind of journalism that women do isn't the most dignified. And she's one of the best girls I know, with lots of sense."

"It must be very interesting," said Miss Triscoe, with little interest in the way she said it. "I suppose you're quite a little community by yourselves."

"On the paper?"

"Yes."

"Well, some of us know one another, in the office, but most of us don't. There's quite a regiment of people on a big paper. If you'd like to come out," Burnamy ventured, "perhaps you could get the Woman's Page to do."

"What's that?"

"Oh, fashion; and personal gossip about society leaders; and recipes for dishes and diseases; and correspondence on points of etiquette."

He expected her to shudder at the notion, but she merely asked, "Do women write it?"

He laughed reminiscently. "Well, not always. We had one man who used to do it beautifully--when he was sober. The department hasn't had any permanent head since."

He was sorry he had said this, but it did not seem to shock her, and no doubt she had not taken it in fully. She abruptly left the subject.

"Do you know what time we really get in to-morrow?"

"About one, I believe--there's a consensus of stewards to that effect, anyway." After a pause he asked, "Are you likely to be in Carlsbad?"

"We are going to Dresden, first, I believe. Then we may go on down to Vienna. But nothing is settled, yet."

"Are you going direct to Dresden?"

"I don't know. We may stay in Hamburg a day or two."

"I've got to go straight to Carlsbad. There's a sleeping-car that will get me there by morning: Mr. Stoller likes zeal. But I hope you'll let me be of use to you any way I can, before we part tomorrow."

"You're very kind. You've been very good already--to papa."

He protested that he had not been at all good. "But he's used to taking care of himself on the other side. Oh, it's this side, now!"

"So it is! How strange that seems! It's actually Europe. But as long as we're at sea, we can't realize it. Don't you hate to have experiences slip through your fingers?"

"I don't know. A girl doesn't have many experiences of her own; they're always other people's."

This affected Burnamy as so profound that he did not question its truth. He only suggested, "Well; sometimes they make other people have the experiences."

Whether Miss Triscoe decided that this was too intimate or not she left the question. "Do you understand German?"

"A little. I studied it at college, and I've cultivated a sort of beer-garden German in Chicago. I can ask for things."

"I can't, except in French, and that's worse than English, in Germany, I hear."

"Then you must let me be your interpreter up to the last moment. Will you?"

She did not answer. "It must be rather late, isn't it?" she asked. He let her see his watch, and she said, "Yes, it's very late," and led the way within. "I must look after my packing; papa's always so prompt, and I must justify myself for making him let me give up my maid when we left home; we expect to get one in Dresden. Good-night!"

Burnamy looked after her drifting down their corridor, and wondered whether it would have been a fit return for her expression of a sense of novelty in him as a literary man if he had told her that she was the first young lady he had known who had a maid. The fact awed him; Miss Triscoe herself did not awe him so much.

XVIII.

The next morning was merely a transitional period, full of turmoil and disorder, between the broken life of the sea and the untried life of the shore. No one attempted to resume the routine of the voyage. People went and came between their rooms and the saloons and the decks, and were no longer careful to take their own steamer chairs when they sat down for a moment.

In the cabins the berths were not made up, and those who remained below

had to sit on their hard edges, or on the sofas, which were cumbered with, hand-bags and rolls of shawls. At an early hour after breakfast the bedroom stewards began to get the steamer trunks out and pile them in the corridors; the servants all became more caressingly attentive; and people who had left off settling the amount of the fees they were going to give, anxiously conferred together. The question whether you ought ever to give the head steward anything pressed crucially at the early lunch, and Kenby brought only a partial relief by saying that he always regarded the head steward as an officer of the ship. March made the experiment of offering him six marks, and the head steward took them quite as if he were not an officer of the ship. He also collected a handsome fee for the music, which is the tax levied on all German ships beyond the tolls exacted on the steamers of other nations.

After lunch the flat shore at Cuxhaven was so near that the summer cottages of the little watering-place showed through the warm drizzle much like the summer cottages of our own shore, and if it had not been for the strange, low sky, the Americans might easily have fancied themselves at home again.

Every one waited on foot while the tender came out into the stream where the Norumbia had dropped anchor. People who had brought their hand-baggage with them from their rooms looked so much safer with it that people who had left theirs to their stewards had to go back and pledge them afresh not to forget it. The tender came alongside, and the transfer of the heavy trunks began, but it seemed such an endless work that every one sat down in some other's chair. At last the trunks were all on the tender, and the bareheaded stewards began to run down the gangways with the hand-baggage. "Is this Hoboken?" March murmured in his wife's ear, with a bewildered sense of something in the scene like the reversed action of the cinematograph.

On the deck of the tender there was a brief moment of reunion among the companions of the voyage, the more intimate for their being crowded together under cover from the drizzle which now turned into a dashing rain. Burnamy's smile appeared, and then Mrs. March recognized Miss Triscoe and her father in their travel dress; they were not far from Burnamy's smile, but he seemed rather to have charge of the Eltwins, whom he was helping look after their bags and bundles. Rose Adding was talking with Kenby, and apparently asking his opinion of something; Mrs. Adding sat near them tranquilly enjoying her son.

Mrs. March made her husband identify their baggage, large and small, and after he had satisfied her, he furtively satisfied himself by a fresh count that it was all there. But he need not have taken the trouble; their long, calm bedroom-steward was keeping guard over it; his eyes expressed a contemptuous pity for their anxiety, whose like he must have been very tired of. He brought their handbags into the customs-room at the station where they landed; and there took a last leave and a last fee with unexpected cordiality.

Again their companionship suffered eclipse in the distraction which the customs inspectors of all countries bring to travellers; and again they

were united during the long delay in the waiting-room, which was also the restaurant. It was full of strange noises and figures and odors--the shuffling of feet, the clash of crockery, the explosion of nervous German voices, mixed with the smell of beer and ham, and the smoke of cigars. Through it all pierced the wail of a postman standing at the door with a letter in his hand and calling out at regular intervals, "Krahmay, Krahmay! "When March could bear it no longer he went up to him and shouted, "Crane! Crane!" and the man bowed gratefully, and began to cry, "Kren! Kren!" But whether Mr. Crane got his letter or not, he never knew.

People were swarming at the window of the telegraph-office, and sending home cablegrams to announce their safe arrival; March could not forbear cabling to his son, though he felt it absurd. There was a great deal of talking, but no laughing, except among the Americans, and the girls behind the bar who tried to understand, what they wanted, and then served them with what they chose for them. Otherwise the Germans, though voluble, were unsmiling, and here on the threshold of their empire the travellers had their first hint of the anxious mood which seems habitual with these amiable people.

Mrs. Adding came screaming with glee to March where he sat with his wife, and leaned over her son to ask, "Do you know what lese-majesty is? Rose is afraid I've committed it!"

"No, I don't," said March. "But it's the unpardonable sin. What have you been doing?"

"I asked the official at the door when our train would start, and when he said at half past three, I said, 'How tiresome!' Rose says the railroads belong to the state here, and that if I find fault with the time-table, it's constructive censure of the Emperor, and that's lese-majesty." She gave way to her mirth, while the boy studied March's face with an appealing smile.

"Well, I don't think you'll be arrested this time, Mrs. Adding; but I hope it will be a warning to Mrs. March. She's been complaining of the coffee."

"Indeed I shall say what I like," said Mrs. March. "I'm an American."

"Well, you'll find you're a German, if you like to say anything disagreeable about the coffee in the restaurant of the Emperor's railroad station; the first thing you know I shall be given three months on your account."

Mrs. Adding asked: "Then they won't punish ladies? There, Rose! I'm safe, you see; and you're still a minor, though you are so wise for your years."

She went back to her table, where Kenby came and sat down by her.

"I don't know that I quite like her playing on that sensitive child,"

said Mrs. March. "And you've joined with her in her joking. Go and speak, to him!"

The boy was slowly following his mother, with his head fallen. March overtook him, and he started nervously at the touch of a hand on his shoulder, and then looked gratefully up into the man's face. March tried to tell him what the crime of lese-majesty was, and he said: "Oh, yes. I understood that. But I got to thinking; and I don't want my mother to take any risks."

"I don't believe she will, really, Rose. But I'll speak to her, and tell her she can't be too cautious."

"Not now, please!" the boy entreated.

"Well, I'll find another chance," March assented. He looked round and caught a smiling nod from Burnamy, who was still with the Eltwins; the Triscoes were at a table by themselves; Miss Triseoe nodded too, but her father appeared not to see March. "It's all right, with Rose," he said, when he sat down again by his wife; "but I guess it's all over with Burnamy," and he told her what he had seen. "Do you think it came to any displeasure between them last night? Do you suppose he offered himself, and she--"

"What nonsense!" said Mrs. March, but she was not at peace. "It's her father who's keeping her away from him."

"I shouldn't mind that. He's keeping her away from us, too." But at that moment Miss Triscoe as if she had followed his return from afar, came over to speak to his wife. She said they were going on to Dresden that evening, and she was afraid they might have no chance to see each other on the train or in Hamburg. March, at this advance, went to speak with her father; he found him no more reconciled to Europe than America.

"They're Goths," he said of the Germans. "I could hardly get that stupid brute in the telegraph-office to take my despatch."

On his way back to his wife March met Miss Triscoe; he was not altogether surprised to meet Burnamy with her, now. The young fellow asked if he could be of any use to him, and then he said he would look him up in the train. He seemed in a hurry, but when he walked away with Miss Triscoe he did not seem in a hurry.

March remarked upon the change to his wife, and she sighed, "Yes, you can see that as far as they're concerned."

"It's a great pity that there should be parents to complicate these affairs," he said. "How simple it would be if there were no parties to them but the lovers! But nature is always insisting upon fathers and mothers, and families on both sides."

XIX.

The long train which they took at last was for the Norumbia's people alone, and it was of several transitional and tentative types of cars. Some were still the old coach-body carriages; but most were of a strange corridor arrangement, with the aide at the aide, and the seats crossing from it, with compartments sometimes rising to the roof, and sometimes rising half-way. No two cars seemed quite alike, but all were very comfortable; and when the train began to run out through the little sea-side town into the country, the old delight of foreign travel began. Most of the houses were little and low and gray, with ivy or flowering vines covering their walls to their browntiled roofs; there was here and there a touch of Northern Gothic in the architecture; but usually where it was pretentious it was in the mansard taste, which was so bad with us a generation ago, and is still very bad in Cuxhaven.

The fields, flat and wide, were dotted with familiar shapes of Holstein cattle, herded by little girls, with their hair in yellow pigtales. The gray, stormy sky hung low, and broke in fitful rains; but perhaps for the inclement season of mid-summer it was not very cold. Flowers were blooming along the embankments and in the rank green fields with a dogged energy; in the various distances were groups of trees embowering cottages and even villages, and always along the ditches and watercourses were double lines of low willows. At the first stop the train made, the passengers flocked to the refreshment-booth, prettily arranged beside the station, where the abundance of the cherries and strawberries gave proof that vegetation was in other respects superior to the elements. But it was not of the profusion of the sausages, and the ham which openly in slices or covertly in sandwiches claimed its primacy in the German affections; every form of this was flanked by tall glasses of beer.

A number of the natives stood by and stared unsmiling at the train, which had broken out in a rash of little American flags at every window. This boyish display, which must have made the Americans themselves laugh, if their sense of humor had not been lost in their impassioned patriotism, was the last expression of unity among the Norumbia's passengers, and they met no more in their sea-solidarity. Of their table acquaintance the Marches saw no one except Burnamy, who came through the train looking for them. He said he was in one of the rear cars with the Eltwins, and was going to Carlsbad with them in the sleeping-car train leaving Hamburg at seven. He owned to having seen the Triscoes since they had left Cuxhaven; Mrs. March would not suffer herself to ask him whether they were in the same carriage with the Eltwins. He had got a letter from Mr. Stoller at Cuxhaven, and he begged the Marches to let him engage rooms for them at the hotel where he was going to stay with him.

After they reached Hamburg they had flying glimpses of him and of others in the odious rivalry to get their baggage examined first which seized upon all, and in which they no longer knew one another, but selfishly struggled for the good-will of porters and inspectors. There was really no such haste; but none could govern themselves against the general frenzy. With the porter he secured March conspired and perspired to win

the attention of a cold but not unkindly inspector. The officer opened one trunk, and after a glance at it marked all as passed, and then there ensued a heroic strife with the porter as to the pieces which were to go to the Berlin station for their journey next day, and the pieces which were to go to the hotel overnight. At last the division was made; the Marches got into a cab of the first class; and the porter, crimson and steaming at every pore from the physical and intellectual strain, went back into the station.

They had got the number of their cab from the policeman who stands at the door of all large German stations and supplies the traveller with a metallic check for the sort of vehicle he demands. They were not proud, but it seemed best not to risk a second-class cab in a strange city, and when their first-class cab came creaking and limping out of the rank, they saw how wise they had been, if one of the second class could have been worse.

As they rattled away from the station they saw yet another kind of turnout, which they were destined to see more and more in the German lands. It was that team of a woman harnessed with a dog to a cart which the women of no other country can see without a sense of personal insult. March tried to take the humorous view, and complained that they had not been offered the choice of such an equipage by the policeman, but his wife would not be amused. She said that no country which suffered such a thing could be truly civilized, though he made her observe that no city in the world, except Boston or Brooklyn, was probably so thoroughly trolleyed as Hamburg. The hum of the electric car was everywhere, and everywhere the shriek of the wires overhead; batlike flights of connecting plates traversed all the perspectives through which they drove to the pleasant little hotel they had chosen.

XX.

On one hand their windows looked toward a basin of the Elbe, where stately white swans were sailing; and on the other to the new Rathaus, over the trees that deeply shaded the perennial mud of a cold, dim public garden, where water-proof old women and impervious nurses sat, and children played in the long twilight of the sour, rain-soaked summer of the fatherland. It was all picturesque, and within-doors there was the novelty of the meagre carpets and stalwart furniture of the Germans, and their beds, which after so many ages of Anglo-Saxon satire remain immutably preposterous. They are apparently imagined for the stature of sleepers who have shortened as they broadened; their pillows are triangularly shaped to bring the chin tight upon the breast under the bloated feather bulk which is meant for covering, and which rises over the sleeper from a thick substratum of cotton coverlet, neatly buttoned into the upper sheet, with the effect of a portly waistcoat.

The hotel was illumined by the kindly splendor of the uniformed portier, who had met the travellers at the door, like a glowing vision of the

past, and a friendly air diffused itself through the whole house. At the dinner, which, if not so cheap as they had somehow hoped, was by no means bad, they took counsel with the English-speaking waiter as to what entertainment Hamburg could offer for the evening, and by the time they had drunk their coffee they had courage for the Circus Renz, which seemed to be all there was.

The conductor of the trolley-car, which they hailed at the street corner, stopped it and got off the platform, and stood in the street until they were safely aboard, without telling them to step lively, or pulling them up the steps; or knuckling them in the back to make them move forward. He let them get fairly seated before he started the car, and so lost the fun of seeing them lurch and stagger violently, and wildly clutch each other for support. The Germans have so little sense of humor that probably no one in the car would have been amused to see the strangers flung upon the floor. No one apparently found it droll that the conductor should touch his cap to them when he asked for their fare; no one smiled at their efforts to make him understand where they wished to go, and he did not wink at the other passengers in trying to find out. Whenever the car stopped he descended first, and did not remount till the dismounting passenger had taken time to get well away from it. When the Marches got into the wrong car in coming home, and were carried beyond their street, the conductor would not take their fare.

The kindly civility which environed them went far to alleviate the inclemency of the climate; it began to rain as soon as they left the shelter of the car, but a citizen of whom they asked the nearest way to the Circus Renz was so anxious to have them go aright that they did not mind the wet, and the thought of his goodness embittered March's self-reproach for under-tipping the sort of gorgeous heyduk, with a staff like a drum-major's, who left his place at the circus door to get their tickets. He brought them back with a magnificent bow, and was then as visibly disappointed with the share of the change returned to him as a child would have been.

They went to their places with the sting of his disappointment rankling in their hearts. "One ought always to overpay them," March sighed, "and I will do it from this time forth; we shall not be much the poorer for it. That heyduk is not going to get off with less than a mark when we come out." As an earnest of his good faith he gave the old man who showed them to their box a tip that made him bow double, and he bought every conceivable libretto and play-bill offered him at prices fixed by his remorse.

"One ought to do it," he said. "We are of the quality of good geniuses to these poor souls; we are Fortune in disguise; we are money found in the road. It is an accursed system, but they are more its victims than we." His wife quite agreed with him, and with the same good conscience between them they gave themselves up to the pure joy which the circus, of all modern entertainments, seems alone to inspire. The house was full from floor to roof when they came in and every one was intent upon the two Spanish clowns, Lui-Lui and Soltamontes, whose drolleries spoke the universal language of circus humor, and needed no translation into either

German or English. They had missed by an event or two the more patriotic attraction of "Miss Darlings, the American Star," as she was billed in English, but they were in time for one of those equestrian performances which leave the spectator almost exanimate from their prolixity, and the pantomimic piece which closed the evening.

This was not given until nearly the whole house had gone out and stayed itself with beer and cheese and ham and sausage, in the restaurant which purveys these light refreshments in the summer theatres all over Germany. When the people came back gorged to the throat, they sat down in the right mood to enjoy the allegory of "The Enchanted Mountain's Fantasy; the Mountain episodes; the High-interesting Sledges-Courses on the Steep Acclivities; the Amazing-Up-rush of the thence plunging-Four Trains, which arrive with Lightnings-swiftness at the Top of the over-40-feet-high Mountain-the Highest Triumph of the To-day's Circus-Art; the Sledge-journey in the Wizard-mountain, and the Fairy Ballet in the Realm of the Ghost-prince, with Gold and Silver, Jewel, Bloomghosts, Gnomes, Gnomesses, and Dwarfs, in never-till-now-seen Splendor of Costume." The Marches were happy in this allegory, and happier in the ballet, which is everywhere delightfully innocent, and which here appealed with the large flat feet and the plain good faces of the 'coryphees' to all that was simplest and sweetest in their natures. They could not have resisted, if they had wished, that environment, of good-will; and if it had not been for the disappointed heyduk, they would have got home from their evening at the Circus Renz without a pang.

They looked for him everywhere when they came out, but he had vanished, and they were left with a regret which, if unavailing, was not too poignant. In spite of it they had still an exhilaration in their release from the companionship of their fellow-voyagers which they analyzed as the psychical revulsion from the strain of too great interest in them. Mrs. March declared that for the present, at least, she wanted Europe quite to themselves; and she said that not even for the pleasure of seeing Burnamy and Miss Triscoe come into their box together world she have suffered an American trespass upon their exclusive possession of the Circus Renz.

In the audience she had seen German officers for the first time in Hamburg, and she meant, if unremitting question could bring out the truth, to know why she had not met any others. She had read much of the prevalence and prepotence of the German officers who would try to push her off the sidewalk, till they realized that she was an American woman, and would then submit to her inflexible purpose of holding it. But she had been some seven or eight hours in Hamburg, and nothing of the kind had happened to her, perhaps because she had hardly yet walked a block in the city streets, but perhaps also because there seemed to be very few officers or military of any kind in Hamburg.

Their absence was plausibly explained, the next morning, by the young German friend who came in to see the Marches at breakfast. He said Hamburg had been so long a free republic that the presence of a large imperial garrison was distasteful to the people, and as a matter of fact there were very few soldiers quartered there, whether the authorities chose to indulge the popular grudge or not. He was himself in a joyful flutter of spirits, for he had just the day before got his release from military service. He gave them a notion of what the rapture of a man relieved from death might be, and he was as radiantly happy in the ill health which had got him his release as if it had been the greatest blessing of heaven. He bubbled over with smiling regrets that he should be leaving his home for the first stage of the journey which he was to take in search of strength, just as they had come, and he pressed them to say if there were not something that he could do for them.

"Yes," said Mrs. March, with a promptness surprising to her husband, who could think of nothing; "tell us where Heinrich Heine lived when he was in Hamburg. My husband has always had a great passion for him and wants to look him up everywhere."

March had forgotten that Heine ever lived in Hamburg, and the young man had apparently never known it. His face fell; he wished to make Mrs. March believe that it was only Heine's uncle who had lived there; but she was firm; and when he had asked among the hotel people he came back gladly owning that he was wrong, and that the poet used to live in Königstrasse, which was very near by, and where they could easily know the house by his bust set in its front. The portier and the head waiter shared his ecstasy in so easily obliging the friendly American pair, and joined him in minutely instructing the driver when they shut them into their carriage.

They did not know that his was almost the only laughing face they should see in the serious German Empire; just as they did not know that it rained there every day. As they drove off in the gray drizzle with the unfounded hope that sooner or later the weather would be fine, they bade their driver be very slow in taking them through Königstrasse, so that he should by no means miss Heine's dwelling, and he duly stopped in front of a house bearing the promised bust. They dismounted in order to revere it more at their ease, but the bust proved, by an irony bitterer than the sick, heart-breaking, brilliant Jew could have imagined in his cruelest moment, to be that of the German Milton, the respectable poet Klopstock, whom Heine abhorred and mocked so pitilessly.

In fact it was here that the good, much-forgotten Klopstock dwelt, when he came home to live with a comfortable pension from the Danish government; and the pilgrims to the mistaken shrine went asking about among the neighbors in Königstrasse, for some manner of house where Heine might have lived; they would have been willing to accept a flat, or any sort of two-pair back. The neighbors were somewhat moved by the anxiety of the strangers; but they were not so much moved as neighbors in Italy would have been. There was no eager and smiling sympathy in the little crowd that gathered to see what was going on; they were patient of question and kind in their helpless response, but they were not gay.

To a man they had not heard of Heine; even the owner of a sausage and blood-pudding shop across the way had not heard of him; the clerk of a stationer-and-bookseller's next to the butcher's had heard of him, but he had never heard that he lived in Konigstrasse; he never had heard where he lived in Hamburg.

The pilgrims to the fraudulent shrine got back into their carriage, and drove sadly away, instructing their driver with the rigidity which their limited German favored, not to let any house with a bust in its front escape him. He promised, and took his course out through Konigstrasse, and suddenly they found themselves in a world of such old and quaintness that they forgot Heine as completely as any of his countrymen had done. They were in steep and narrow streets, that crooked and turned with no apparent purpose of leading anywhere, among houses that looked down upon them with an astonished stare from the leaden-sashed windows of their timber-laced gables. The facades with their lattices stretching in bands quite across them, and with their steep roofs climbing high in successions of blinking dormers, were more richly mediaeval than anything the travellers had ever dreamt of before, and they feasted themselves upon the unimagined picturesqueness with a leisurely minuteness which brought responsive gazers everywhere to the windows; windows were set ajar; shop doors were darkened by curious figures from within, and the traffic of the tortuous alleys was interrupted by their progress. They could not have said which delighted them more--the houses in the immediate foreground, or the sharp high gables in the perspectives and the background; but all were like the painted scenes of the stage, and they had a pleasant difficulty in realizing that they were not persons in some romantic drama.

The illusion remained with them and qualified the impression which Hamburg made by her much-trolleyed Bostonian effect; by the decorous activity and Parisian architecture of her business streets; by the turmoil of her quays, and the innumerable masts and chimneys of her shipping. At the heart of all was that quaintness, that picturesqueness of the past, which embodied the spirit of the old Hanseatic city, and seemed the expression of the home-side of her history. The sense of this gained strength from such slight study of her annals as they afterwards made, and assisted the digestion of some morsels of tough statistics. In the shadow of those Gothic houses the fact that Hamburg was one of the greatest coffee marts and money marts of the world had a romantic glamour; and the fact that in the four years from 1870 till 1874 a quarter of a million emigrants sailed on her ships for the United States seemed to stretch a nerve of kindred feeling from those mediaeval streets through the whole shabby length of Third Avenue.

It was perhaps in this glamour, or this feeling of commercial solidarity, that March went to have a look at the Hamburg Bourse, in the beautiful new Rathhaus. It was not undergoing repairs, it was too new for that; but it was in construction, and so it fulfilled the function of a public edifice, in withholding its entire interest from the stranger. He could not get into the Senate Chamber; but the Bourse was free to him, and when he stepped within, it rose at him with a roar of voices and of feet like the New York Stock Exchange. The spectacle was not so frantic; people

were not shaking their fists or fingers in each other's noses; but they were all wild in the tamer German way, and he was glad to mount from the Bourse to the poor little art gallery upstairs, and to shut out its clamor. He was not so glad when he looked round on these, his first, examples of modern German art. The custodian led him gently about and said which things were for sale, and it made his heart ache to see how bad they were, and to think that, bad as they were, he could not buy any of them.

XXII.

In the start from Cuxhaven the passengers had the irresponsible ease of people ticketed through, and the steamship company had still the charge of their baggage. But when the Marches left Hamburg for Leipsic (where they had decided to break the long pull to Carlsbad), all the anxieties of European travel, dimly remembered from former European days, offered themselves for recognition. A porter vanished with their hand-baggage before they could note any trait in him for identification; other porters made away with their trunks; and the interpreter who helped March buy his tickets, with a vocabulary of strictly railroad English, had to help him find the pieces in the baggage-room, curiously estranged in a mountain of alien boxes. One official weighed them; another obliged him to pay as much in freight as for a third passenger, and gave him an illegible scrap of paper which recorded their number and destination. The interpreter and the porters took their fees with a professional effect of dissatisfaction, and he went to wait with his wife amidst the smoking and eating and drinking in the restaurant. They burst through with the rest when the doors were opened to the train, and followed a glimpse of the porter with their hand-bags, as he ran down the platform, still bent upon escaping them, and brought him to bay at last in a car where he had got very good seats for them, and sank into their places, hot and humiliated by their needless tumult.

As they cooled, they recovered their self-respect, and renewed a youthful joy in some of the long-estranged facts. The road was rougher than the roads at home; but for much less money they had the comfort, without the unavailing splendor, of a Pullman in their second-class carriage. Mrs. March had expected to be used with the severity on the imperial railroads which she had failed to experience from the military on the Hamburg sidewalks, but nothing could be kinder than the whole management toward her. Her fellow-travellers were not lavish of their rights, as Americans are; what they got, that they kept; and in the run from Hamburg to Leipsic she had several occasions to observe that no German, however young or robust, dreams of offering a better place, if he has one, to a lady in grace to her sex or age; if they got into a carriage too late to secure a forward-looking seat, she rode backward to the end of that stage. But if they appealed to their fellow-travellers for information about changes, or stops, or any of the little facts that they wished to make sure of, they were enlightened past possibility of error. At the point where they might have gone wrong the explanations were renewed with

a thoughtfulness which showed that their anxieties had not been forgotten. She said she could not see how any people could be both so selfish and so sweet, and her husband seized the advantage of saying something offensive:

"You women are so pampered in America that you are astonished when you are treated in Europe like the mere human beings you are."

She answered with unexpected reasonableness:

"Yes, there's something in that; but when the Germans have taught us how despicable we are as women, why do they treat us so well as human beings?"

This was at ten o'clock, after she had ridden backward a long way, and at last, within an hour of Leipsic, had got a seat confronting him. The darkness had now hidden the landscape, but the impression of its few simple elements lingered pleasantly in their sense: long levels, densely wooded with the precise, severely disciplined German forests, and checkered with fields of grain and grass, soaking under the thin rain that from time to time varied the thin sunshine.

The villages and peasants' cottages were notably few; but there was here and there a classic or a gothic villa, which, at one point, an English-speaking young lady turned from her Tauchnitz novel to explain as the seat of some country gentleman; the land was in large holdings, and this accounted for the sparsity of villages and cottages.

She then said that she was a German teacher of English, in Hamburg, and was going home to Potsdam for a visit. She seemed like a German girl out of 'The Initials', and in return for this favor Mrs. March tried to invest herself with some romantic interest as an American. She failed to move the girl's fancy, even after she had bestowed on her an immense bunch of roses which the young German friend in Hamburg had sent to them just before they left their hotel. She failed, later, on the same ground with the pleasant-looking English woman who got into their carriage at Magdeburg, and talked over the 'London Illustrated News' with an English-speaking Fraulein in her company; she readily accepted the fact of Mrs. March's nationality, but found nothing wonderful in it, apparently; and when she left the train she left Mrs. March to recall with fond regret the old days in Italy when she first came abroad, and could make a whole carriage full of Italians break into ohs and ahs by saying that she was an American, and telling how far she had come across the sea.

"Yes," March assented, "but that was a great while ago, and Americans were much rarer than they are now in Europe. The Italians are so much more sympathetic than the Germans and English, and they saw that you wanted to impress them. Heaven knows how little they cared! And then, you were a very pretty young girl in those days; or at least I thought so."

"Yes," she sighed, "and now I'm a plain old woman."

"Oh, not quite so bad as that."

"Yes, I am! Do you think they would have cared more if it had been Miss Triscoe?"

"Not so much as if it had been the pivotal girl. They would have found her much more their ideal of the American woman; and even she would have had to have been here thirty years ago."

She laughed a little ruefully. "Well, at any rate, I should like to know how Miss Triscoe would have affected them."

"I should much rather know what sort of life that English woman is living here with her German husband; I fancied she had married rank. I could imagine how dull it must be in her little Saxon town, from the way she clung to her Illustrated News, and explained the pictures of the royalties to her friend. There is romance for you!"

They arrived at Leipsic fresh and cheerful after their five hours' journey, and as in a spell of their travelled youth they drove up through the academic old town, asleep under its dimly clouded sky, and silent except for the trolley-cars that prowled its streets with their feline purr, and broke at times into a long, shrill caterwaul. A sense of the past imparted itself to the well-known encounter with the portier and the head waiter at the hotel door, to the payment of the driver, to the endeavor of the secretary to have them take the most expensive rooms in the house, and to his compromise upon the next most, where they found themselves in great comfort, with electric lights and bells, and a quick succession of fee-taking call-boys in dress-coats too large for them. The spell was deepened by the fact, which March kept at the bottom of his consciousness for the present, that one of their trunks was missing. This linked him more closely to the travel of other days, and he spent the next forenoon in a telegraphic search for the estray, with emotions tinged by the melancholy of recollection, but in the security that since it was somewhere in the keeping of the state railway, it would be finally restored to him.

XXIII.

Their windows, as they saw in the morning, looked into a large square of aristocratic physiognomy, and of a Parisian effect in architecture, which afterwards proved characteristic of the town, if not quite so characteristic as to justify the passion of Leipsic for calling itself Little Paris. The prevailing tone was of a gray tending to the pale yellow of the Tauchnitz editions with which the place is more familiarly associated in the minds of English-speaking travellers. It was rather more sombre than it might have been if the weather had been fair; but a quiet rain was falling dreamily that morning, and the square was provided with a fountain which continued to dribble in the rare moments when the rain forgot itself. The place was better shaded than need be in that

sunless land by the German elms that look like ours and it was sufficiently stocked with German statues, that look like no others. It had a monument, too, of the sort with which German art has everywhere disfigured the kindly fatherland since the war with France. These monuments, though they are so very ugly, have a sort of pathos as records of the only war in which Germany unaided has triumphed against a foreign foe, but they are as tiresome as all such memorial pomps must be. It is not for the victories of a people that any other people can care. The wars come and go in blood and tears; but whether they are bad wars, or what are comically called good wars, they are of one effect in death and sorrow, and their fame is an offence to all men not concerned in them, till time has softened it to a memory

"Of old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago."

It was for some such reason that while the Marches turned with instant satiety from the swelling and strutting sculpture which celebrated the Leipsic heroes of the war of 1870, they had heart for those of the war of 1813; and after their noonday dinner they drove willingly, in a pause of the rain, out between yellowing harvests of wheat and oats to the field where Napoleon was beaten by the Russians, Austrians and Prussians (it always took at least three nations to beat the little wretch) fourscore years before. Yet even there Mrs. March was really more concerned for the sparsity of corn-flowers in the grain, which in their modern character of Kaiserblumen she found strangely absent from their loyal function; and March was more taken with the notion of the little gardens which his guide told him the citizens could have in the suburbs of Leipsic and enjoy at any trolley-car distance from their homes. He saw certain of these gardens in groups, divided by low, unenvious fences, and sometimes furnished with summer-houses, where the tenant could take his pleasure in the evening air, with his family. The guide said he had such a garden himself, at a rent of seven dollars a year, where he raised vegetables and flowers, and spent his peaceful leisure; and March fancied that on the simple domestic side of their life, which this fact gave him a glimpse of, the Germans were much more engaging than in their character of victors over either the First or the Third Napoleon. But probably they would not have agreed with him, and probably nations will go on making themselves cruel and tiresome till humanity at last prevails over nationality.

He could have put the case to the guide himself; but though the guide was imaginably liberated to a cosmopolitan conception of things by three years' service as waiter in English hotels, where he learned the language, he might not have risen to this. He would have tried, for he was a willing and kindly soul, though he was not a 'valet de place' by profession. There seemed in fact but one of that useless and amusing race (which is everywhere falling into decay through the rivalry of the perfected Baedeker,) left in Leipsic, and this one was engaged, so that the Marches had to devolve upon their ex-waiter, who was now the keeper of a small restaurant. He gladly abandoned his business to the care of his wife, in order to drive handsomely about in his best clothes, with strangers who did not exact too much knowledge from him. In his zeal to

do something he possessed himself of March's overcoat when they dismounted at their first gallery, and let fall from its pocket his prophylactic flask of brandy, which broke with a loud crash on the marble floor in the presence of several masterpieces, and perfumed the whole place. The masterpieces were some excellent works of Luke Kranach, who seemed the only German painter worth looking at when there were any Dutch or Italian pictures near, but the travellers forgot the name and nature of the Kranachs, and remembered afterwards only the shattered fragments of the brandy-flask, just how they looked on the floor, and the fumes, how they smelt, that rose from the ruin.

It might have been a warning protest of the veracities against what they were doing; but the madness of sight-seeing, which spoils travel, was on them, and they delivered themselves up to it as they used in their ignorant youth, though now they knew its futility so well. They spared themselves nothing that they had time for, that day, and they felt falsely guilty for their omissions, as if they really had been duties to art and history which must be discharged, like obligations to one's maker and one's neighbor.

They had a touch of genuine joy in the presence of the beautiful old Rathhaus, and they were sensible of something like a genuine emotion in passing the famous and venerable university; the very air of Leipzig is redolent of printing and publication, which appealed to March in his quality of editor, and they could not fail of an impression of the quiet beauty of the town, with its regular streets of houses breaking into suburban villas of an American sort, and intersected with many canals, which in the intervals of the rain were eagerly navigated by pleasure boats, and contributed to the general picturesqueness by their frequent bridges, even during the drizzle. There seemed to be no churches to do, and as it was a Sunday, the galleries were so early closed against them that they were making a virtue as well as a pleasure of the famous scene of Napoleon's first great defeat.

By a concert between their guide and driver their carriage drew up at the little inn by the road-side, which is also a museum stocked with relics from the battle-field, and with objects of interest relating to it. Old muskets, old swords, old shoes and old coats, trumpets, drums, gun-carriages, wheels, helmets, cannon balls, grape-shot, and all the murderous rubbish which battles come to at last, with proclamations, autographs, caricatures and likenesses of Napoleon, and effigies of all the other generals engaged, and miniatures and jewels of their womenkind, filled room after room, through which their owner vaunted his way, with a loud pounding voice and a bad breath. When he wished them to enjoy some gross British satire or clumsy German gibe at Bonaparte's expense, and put his face close to begin the laugh, he was something so terrible that March left the place with a profound if not a reasoned regret that the French had not won the battle of Leipzig. He walked away musing pensively upon the traveller's inadequacy to the ethics of history when a breath could so sway him against his convictions; but even after he had cleansed his lungs with some deep respirations he found himself still a Bonapartist in the presence of that stone on the rising ground where Napoleon sat to watch the struggle on the vast plain, and see his empire

slipping through his blood-stained fingers. It was with difficulty that he could keep from revering the hat and coat which are sculptured on the stone, but it was well that he succeeded, for he could not make out then or afterwards whether the habiliments represented were really Napoleon's or not, and they might have turned out to be Barclay de Tolly's.

While he stood trying to solve this question of clothes he was startled by the apparition of a man climbing the little slope from the opposite quarter, and advancing toward them. He wore the imperial crossed by the pointed mustache once so familiar to a world much the worse for them, and March had the shiver of a fine moment in which he fancied the Third Napoleon rising to view the scene where the First had looked his coming ruin in the face.

"Why, it's Miss Triscoe!" cried his wife, and before March had noticed the approach of another figure, the elder and the younger lady had rushed upon each other, and encountered with a kiss. At the same time the visage of the last Emperor resolved itself into the face of General Triscoe, who gave March his hand in a more tempered greeting.

The ladies began asking each other of their lives since their parting two days before, and the men strolled a few paces away toward the distant prospect of Leipsic, which at that point silhouettes itself in a noble stretch of roofs and spires and towers against the horizon.

General Triscoe seemed no better satisfied with Germany than he had been on first stepping ashore at Cuxhaven. He might still have been in a pout with his own country, but as yet he had not made up with any other; and he said, "What a pity Napoleon didn't thrash the whole dunderheaded lot! His empire would have been a blessing to them, and they would have had some chance of being civilized under the French. All this unification of nationalities is the great humbug of the century. Every stupid race thinks it's happy because it's united, and civilization has been set back a hundred years by the wars that were fought to bring the unions about; and more wars will have to be fought to keep them up. What a farce it is! What's become of the nationality of the Danes in Schleswig-Holstein, or the French in the Rhine Provinces, or the Italians in Savoy?"

March had thought something like this himself, but to have it put by General Triscoe made it offensive. "I don't know. Isn't it rather quarrelling with the course of human events to oppose accomplished facts? The unifications were bound to be, just as the separations before them were. And so far they have made for peace, in Europe at least, and peace is civilization. Perhaps after a great many ages people will come together through their real interests, the human interests; but at present it seems as if nothing but a romantic sentiment of patriotism can unite them. By-and-by they may find that there is nothing in it."

"Perhaps," said the general, discontentedly. "I don't see much promise of any kind in the future."

"Well, I don't know. When you think of the solid militarism of Germany, you seem remanded to the most hopeless moment of the Roman Empire; you

think nothing can break such a force; but my guide says that even in Leipsic the Socialists outnumber all the other parties, and the army is the great field of the Socialist propaganda. The army itself may be shaped into the means of democracy--even of peace."

"You're very optimistic," said Triscoe, curtly. "As I read the signs, we are not far from universal war. In less than a year we shall make the break ourselves in a war with Spain." He looked very fierce as he prophesied, and he dotted March over with his staccato glances.

"Well, I'll allow that if Tammany comes in this year, we shall have war with Spain. You can't ask more than that, General Triscoe?"

Mrs. March and Miss Triscoe had not said a word of the 'battle of Leipsic', or of the impersonal interests which it suggested to the men. For all these, they might still have been sitting in their steamer chairs on the promenade of the Norumbia at a period which seemed now of geological remoteness. The girl accounted for not being in Dresden by her father's having decided not to go through Berlin but to come by way of Leipsic, which he thought they had better see; they had come without stopping in Hamburg. They had not enjoyed Leipsic much; it had rained the whole day before, and they had not gone out. She asked when Mrs. March was going on to Carlsbad, and Mrs. March answered, the next morning; her husband wished to begin his cure at once.

Then Miss Triscoe pensively wondered if Carlsbad would do her father any good; and Mrs. March discreetly inquired General Triscoe's symptoms.

"Oh, he hasn't any. But I know he can't be well--with his gloomy opinions."

"They may come from his liver," said Mrs. March. "Nearly everything of that kind does. I know that Mr. March has been terribly depressed at times, and the doctor said it was nothing but his liver; and Carlsbad is the great place for that, you know."

"Perhaps I can get papa to run over some day, if he doesn't like Dresden. It isn't very far, is it?"

They referred to Mrs. March's Baedeker together, and found that it was five hours.

"Yes, that is what I thought," said Miss Triscoe, with a carelessness which convinced Mrs. March she had looked up the fact already.

"If you decide to come, you must let us get rooms for you at our hotel. We're going to Pupp's; most of the English and Americans go to the hotels on the Hill, but Pupp's is in the thick of it in the lower town; and it's very gay, Mr. Kenby says; he's been there often. Mr. Burnamy is to get our rooms."

"I don't suppose I can get papa to go," said Miss Triscoe, so insincerely that Mrs. March was sure she had talked over the different routes; to

Carlsbad with Burnamy--probably on the way from Cuxhaven. She looked up from digging the point of her umbrella in the ground. "You didn't meet him here this morning?"

Mrs. March governed herself to a calm which she respected in asking, "Has Mr. Burnamy been here?"

"He came on with Mr. and Mrs. Eltwin, when we did, and they all decided to stop over a day. They left on the twelve-o'clock train to-day."

Mrs. March perceived that the girl had decided not to let the facts betray themselves by chance, and she treated them as of no significance.

"No, we didn't see him," she said, carelessly.

The two men came walking slowly towards them, and Miss Triscoe said, "We're going to Dresden this evening, but I hope we shall meet somewhere, Mrs. March."

"Oh, people never lose sight of each other in Europe; they can't; it's so little!"

"Agatha," said the girl's father, "Mr. March tells me that the museum over there is worth seeing."

"Well," the girl assented, and she took a winning leave of the Marches, and moved gracefully away with her father.

"I should have thought it was Agnes," said Mrs. March, following them with her eyes before she turned upon her husband. "Did he tell you Burnamy had been here? Well, he has! He has just gone on to Carlsbad. He made, those poor old Eltwins stop over with him, so he could be with her."

"Did she say that?"

"No, but of course he did."

"Then it's all settled?"

"No, it isn't settled. It's at the most interesting point."

"Well, don't read ahead. You always want to look at the last page."

"You were trying to look at the last page yourself," she retorted, and she would have liked to punish him for his complex dishonesty toward the affair; but upon the whole she kept her temper with him, and she made him agree that Miss Triscoe's getting her father to Carlsbad was only a question of time.

They parted heart's-friends with their ineffectual guide, who was affectionately grateful for the few marks they gave him, at the hotel door; and they were in just the mood to hear men singing in a farther

room when they went down to supper. The waiter, much distracted from their own service by his duties to it, told them it was the breakfast party of students which they had heard beginning there about noon. The revellers had now been some six hours at table, and he said they might not rise before midnight; they had just got to the toasts, which were apparently set to music.

The students of right remained a vivid color in the impression of the university town. They pervaded the place, and decorated it with their fantastic personal taste in coats and trousers, as well as their corps caps of green, white, red, and blue, but above all blue. They were not easily distinguishable from the bicyclers who were holding one of the dull festivals of their kind in Leipsic that day, and perhaps they were sometimes both students and bicyclers. As bicyclers they kept about in the rain, which they seemed not to mind; so far from being disheartened, they had spirits enough to take one another by the waist at times and waltz in the square before the hotel. At one moment of the holiday some chiefs among them drove away in carriages; at supper a winner of prizes sat covered with badges and medals; another who went by the hotel streamed with ribbons; and an elderly man at his side was bespattered with small knots and ends of them, as if he had been in an explosion of ribbons somewhere. It seemed all to be as exciting for them, and it was as tedious for the witnesses, as any gala of students and bicyclers at home.

Mrs. March remained with an unrequited curiosity concerning their different colors and different caps, and she tried to make her husband find out what they severally meant; he pretended a superior interest in the nature of a people who had such a passion for uniforms that they were not content with its gratification in their immense army, but indulged it in every pleasure and employment of civil life. He estimated, perhaps not very accurately, that only one man out of ten in Germany wore citizens' dress; and of all functionaries he found that the dogs of the women-and-dog teams alone had no distinctive dress; even the women had their peasant costume.

There was an industrial fair open at Leipsic which they went out of the city to see after supper, along with a throng of Leipsickers, whom an hour's interval of fine weather tempted forth on the trolley; and with the help of a little corporal, who took a fee for his service with the eagerness of a civilian, they got wheeled chairs, and renewed their associations with the great Chicago Fair in seeing the exposition from them. This was not, March said, quite the same as being drawn by a woman-and-dog team, which would have been the right means of doing a German fair; but it was something to have his chair pushed by a slender young girl, whose stalwart brother applied his strength to the chair of the lighter traveller; and it was fit that the girl should reckon the common hire, while the man took the common tip. They made haste to leave the useful aspects of the fair, and had themselves trundled away to the Colonial Exhibit, where they vaguely expected something like the agreeable corruptions of the Midway Plaisance. The idea of her colonial progress with which Germany is trying to affect the home-keeping imagination of her people was illustrated by an encampment of savages

from her Central-African possessions. They were getting their supper at the moment the Marches saw them, and were crouching, half naked, around the fires under the kettles, and shivering from the cold, but they were not very characteristic of the imperial expansion, unless perhaps when an old man in a red blanket suddenly sprang up with a knife in his hand and began to chase a boy round the camp. The boy was lighter-footed, and easily outran the sage, who tripped at times on his blanket. None of the other Central Africans seemed to care for the race, and without waiting for the event, the American spectators ordered themselves trundled away to another idle feature of the fair, where they hoped to amuse themselves with the image of Old Leipsic.

This was so faithfully studied from the past in its narrow streets and Gothic houses that it was almost as picturesque as the present epoch in the old streets of Hamburg. A drama had just begun to be represented on a platform of the public square in front of a fourteenth-century beer-house, with people talking from the windows round, and revellers in the costume of the period drinking beer and eating sausages at tables in the open air. Their eating and drinking were genuine, and in the midst of it a real rain began, to pour down upon them, without affecting them any more than if they had been Germans of the nineteenth century. But it drove the Americans to a shelter from which they could not see the play, and when it held up, they made their way back to their hotel.

Their car was full of returning pleasers, some of whom were happy beyond the sober wont of the fatherland. The conductor took a special interest in his tipsy passengers, trying to keep them in order, and genially entreating them to be quiet when they were too obstreperous. From time to time he got some of them off, and then, when he remounted the car, he appealed to the remaining passengers for their sympathy with an innocent smile, which the Americans, still strange to the unjoyous physiognomy of the German Empire, failed to value at its rare worth.

Before he slept that night March tried to assemble from the experiences and impressions of the day some facts which he would not be ashamed of as a serious observer of life in Leipsic, and he remembered that their guide had said house-rent was very low. He generalized from the guide's content with his fee that the Germans were not very rapacious; and he became quite irrelevantly aware that in Germany no man's clothes fitted him, or seemed expected to fit him; that the women dressed somewhat better, and were rather pretty sometimes, and that they had feet as large as the kind hearts of the Germans of every age and sex. He was able to note, rather more freshly, that with all their kindness the Germans were a very nervous people, if not irritable, and at the least cause gave way to an agitation, which indeed quickly passed, but was violent while it lasted. Several times that day he had seen encounters between the portier and guests at the hotel which promised violence, but which ended peacefully as soon as some simple question of train-time was solved. The encounters always left the portier purple and perspiring, as any agitation must with a man so tight in his livery. He bemoaned himself after one of them as the victim of an unhappy calling, in which he could take no exercise. "It is a life of excitements, but not of movements," he explained to March; and when he learned where he was going, he

regretted that he could not go to Carlsbad too. "For sugar?" he asked, as if there were overmuch of it in his own make.

March felt the tribute, but he had to say, "No; liver."

"Ah!" said the portier, with the air of failing to get on common ground with him.

XXV.

The next morning was so fine that it would have been a fine morning in America. Its beauty was scarcely sullied, even subjectively, by the telegram which the portier sent after the Marches from the hotel, saying that their missing trunk had not yet been found, and their spirits were as light as the gay little clouds which blew about in the sky, when their train drew out in the sunshine, brilliant on the charming landscape all the way to Carlsbad. A fatherly 'traeger' had done his best to get them the worst places in a non-smoking compartment, but had succeeded so poorly that they were very comfortable, with no companions but a mother and daughter, who spoke German in soft low tones together. Their compartment was pervaded by tobacco fumes from the smokers, but as these were twice as many as the non-smokers, it was only fair, and after March had got a window open it did not matter, really.

He asked leave of the strangers in his German, and they consented in theirs; but he could not master the secret of the window-catch, and the elder lady said in English, "Let me show you," and came to his help.

The occasion for explaining that they were Americans and accustomed to different car windows was so tempting that Mrs. March could not forbear, and the other ladies were affected as deeply as she could wish. Perhaps they were the more affected because it presently appeared that they had cousins in New York whom she knew of, and that they were acquainted with an American family that had passed the winter in Berlin. Life likes to do these things handsomely, and it easily turned out that this was a family of intimate friendship with the Marches; the names, familiarly spoken, abolished all strangeness between the travellers; and they entered into a comparison of tastes, opinions, and experiences, from which it seemed that the objects and interests of cultivated people in Berlin were quite the same as those of cultivated people in New York. Each of the parties to the discovery disclaimed any superiority for their respective civilizations; they wished rather to ascribe a greater charm and virtue to the alien conditions; and they acquired such merit with one another that when the German ladies got out of the train at Franzensbad, the mother offered Mrs. March an ingenious folding footstool which she had admired. In fact, she left her with it clasped to her breast, and bowing speechless toward the giver in a vain wish to express her gratitude.

"That was very pretty of her, my dear," said March. "You couldn't have

done that."

"No," she confessed; "I shouldn't have had the courage. The courage of my emotions," she added, thoughtfully.

"Ah, that's the difference! A Berliner could do it, and a Bostonian couldn't. Do you think it so much better to have the courage of your convictions?"

"I don't know. It seems to me that I'm less and less certain of everything that I used to be sure of."

He laughed, and then he said, "I was thinking how, on our wedding journey, long ago, that Gray Sister at the Hotel Dieu in Quebec offered you a rose."

"Well?"

"That was to your pretty youth. Now the gracious stranger gives you a folding stool."

"To rest my poor old feet. Well, I would rather have it than a rose, now."

"You bent toward her at just the slant you had when you took the flower that time; I noticed it. I didn't see that you looked so very different. To be sure the roses in your cheeks have turned into rosettes; but rosettes are very nice, and they're much more permanent; I prefer them; they will keep in any climate."

She suffered his mockery with an appreciative sigh. "Yes, our age caricatures our youth, doesn't it?"

"I don't think it gets much fun out of it," he assented.

"No; but it can't help it. I used to rebel against it when it first began. I did enjoy being young."

"You did, my dear," he said, taking her hand tenderly; she withdrew it, because though she could bear his sympathy, her New England nature could not bear its expression. "And so did I; and we were both young a long time. Travelling brings the past back, don't you think? There at that restaurant, where we stopped for dinner--"

"Yes, it was charming! Just as it used to be! With that white cloth, and those tall shining bottles of wine, and the fruit in the centre, and the dinner in courses, and that young waiter who spoke English, and was so nice! I'm never going home; you may, if you like."

"You bragged to those ladies about our dining-cars; and you said that our railroad restaurants were quite as good as the European."

"I had to do that. But I knew better; they don't begin to be."

"Perhaps not; but I've been thinking that travel is a good deal alike everywhere. It's the expression of the common civilization of the world. When I came out of that restaurant and ran the train down, and then found that it didn't start for fifteen minutes, I wasn't sure whether I was at home or abroad. And when we changed cars at Eger, and got into this train which had been baking in the sun for us outside the station, I didn't know but I was back in the good old Fitchburg depot. To be sure, Wallenstein wasn't assassinated at Boston, but I forgot his murder at Eger, and so that came to the same thing. It's these confounded fifty-odd years. I used to recollect everything."

He had got up and was looking out of the window at the landscape, which had not grown less amiable in growing rather more slovenly since they had crossed the Saxon border into Bohemia. All the morning and early afternoon they had run through lovely levels of harvest, where men were cradling the wheat and women were binding it into sheaves in the narrow fields between black spaces of forest. After they left Eger, there was something more picturesque and less thrifty in the farming among the low hills which they gradually mounted to uplands, where they tasted a mountain quality in the thin pure air. The railroad stations were shabbier; there was an indefinable touch of something Southern in the scenery and the people. Lilies were rocking on the sluggish reaches of the streams, and where the current quickened, tall wheels were lifting water for the fields in circles of brimming and spilling pockets. Along the embankments, where a new track was being laid, barefooted women were at work with pick and spade and barrow, and little yellow-haired girls were lugging large white-headed babies, and watching the train go by. At an up grade where it slowed in the ascent he began to throw out to the children the pfennigs which had been left over from the passage in Germany, and he pleased himself with his bounty, till the question whether the children could spend the money forced itself upon him. He sat down feeling less like a good genius than a cruel magician who had tricked them with false wealth; but he kept his remorse to himself, and tried to interest his wife in the difference of social and civic ideal expressed in the change of the inhibitory notices at the car windows, which in Germany had strongest forbidden him to outlean himself, and now in Austria entreated him not to outbow himself. She refused to share in the speculation, or to debate the yet nicer problem involved by the placarded prayer in the washroom to the Messrs. Travellers not to take away the soap; and suddenly he felt himself as tired as she looked, with that sense of the futility of travel which lies in wait for every one who profits by travel.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Bad wars, or what are comically called good wars
Calm of those who have logic on their side
Decided not to let the facts betray themselves by chance
Explained perhaps too fully

Futility of travel
Humanity may at last prevail over nationality
Impertinent prophecies of their enjoying it so much
Less certain of everything that I used to be sure of
Life of the ship, like the life of the sea: a sodden monotony
Life was like the life at a sea-side hotel, but more monotonous
Madness of sight-seeing, which spoils travel
Night so bad that it was worse than no night at all
Our age caricatures our youth
Prices fixed by his remorse
Recipes for dishes and diseases
Reckless and culpable optimism
Repeated the nothings they had said already
She cares for him: that she was so cold shows that
She could bear his sympathy, but not its expression
Suffering under the drip-drip of his innocent egotism
They were so near in age, though they were ten years apart
Unfounded hope that sooner or later the weather would be fine
Wilful sufferers
Woman harnessed with a dog to a cart
Wooded with the precise, severely disciplined German forests
Work he was so fond of and so weary of

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by William Dean Howells

THEIR SILVER WEDDING JOURNEY

PART II.

XXVI.

They found Burnamy expecting them at the station in Carlsbad, and she scolded him like a mother for taking the trouble to meet them, while she kept back for the present any sign of knowing that he had staid over a day with the Triscoes in Leipsic. He was as affectionately glad to see her and her husband as she could have wished, but she would have liked it better if he had owned up at once about Leipsic. He did not, and it seemed to her that he was holding her at arm's-length in his answers about his employer. He would not say how he liked his work, or how he liked Mr. Stoller; he merely said that they were at Pupp's together, and that he had got in a good day's work already; and since he would say no more, she contented herself with that.

The long drive from the station to the hotel was by streets that wound

down the hill-side like those of an Italian mountain town, between gay stuccoed houses, of Southern rather than of Northern architecture; and the impression of a Latin country was heightened at a turn of the road which brought into view a colossal crucifix planted against a curtain of dark green foliage on the brow of one of the wooded heights that surrounded Carlsbad. When they reached the level of the Tepl, the hill-fed torrent that brawls through the little city under pretty bridges within walls of solid masonry, they found themselves in almost the only vehicle on a brilliant promenade thronged with a cosmopolitan world. Germans in every manner of misfit; Polish Jews in long black gabardines, with tight corkscrew curls on their temples under their black velvet derbys; Austrian officers in tight corsets; Greek priests in flowing robes and brimless high hats; Russians in caftans and Cossacks in Astrakhan caps, accented the more homogeneous masses of western Europeans, in which it would have been hard to say which were English, French or Italians. Among the vividly dressed ladies, some were imaginably Parisian from their chic costumes, but they might easily have been Hungarians or Levantines of taste; some Americans, who might have passed unknown in the perfection of their dress, gave their nationality away in the flat wooden tones of their voices, which made themselves heard above the low hum of talk and the whisper of the innumerable feet.

The omnibus worked its way at a slow walk among the promenaders going and coming between the rows of pollard locusts on one side and the bright walls of the houses on the other. Under the trees were tables, served by pretty bareheaded girls who ran to and from the restaurants across the way. On both sides flashed and glittered the little shops full of silver, glass, jewelry, terracotta figurines, wood-carvings, and all the idle frippery of watering-place traffic: they suggested Paris, and they suggested Saratoga, and then they were of Carlsbad and of no place else in the world, as the crowd which might have been that of other cities at certain moments could only have been of Carlsbad in its habitual effect.

"Do you like it?" asked Burnamy, as if he owned the place, and Mrs. March saw how simple-hearted he was in his reticence, after all. She was ready to bless him when they reached the hotel and found that his interest had got them the only rooms left in the house. This satisfied in her the passion for size which is at the bottom of every American heart, and which perhaps above all else marks us the youngest of the peoples. We pride ourselves on the bigness of our own things, but we are not ungenerous, and when we go to Europe and find things bigger than ours, we are magnanimously happy in them. Pupp's, in its altogether different way, was larger than any hotel at Saratoga or at Niagara; and when Burnamy told her that it sometimes fed fifteen thousand people a day in the height of the season, she was personally proud of it.

She waited with him in the rotunda of the hotel, while the secretary led March off to look at the rooms reserved for them, and Burnamy hospitably turned the revolving octagonal case in the centre of the rotunda where the names of the guests were put up. They were of all nations, but there were so many New Yorkers whose names ended in berg, and thal, and stern, and baum that she seemed to be gazing upon a cyclorama of the signs on Broadway. A large man of unmistakable American make, but with so little

that was of New England or New York in his presence that she might not at once have thought him American, lounged toward them with a quill toothpick in the corner of his mouth. He had a jealous blue eye, into which he seemed trying to put a friendly light; his straight mouth stretched into an involuntary smile above his tawny chin-beard, and he wore his soft hat so far back from his high forehead (it showed to the crown when he took his hat off) that he had the effect of being uncovered.

At his approach Burnamy turned, and with a flush said: "Oh! Let me introduce Mr. Stoller, Mrs. March."

Stoller took his toothpick out of his mouth and bowed; then he seemed to remember, and took off his hat. "You see Jews enough, here to make you feel at home?" he asked; and he added: "Well, we got some of 'em in Chicago, too, I guess. This young man"--he twisted his head toward Burnamy" found you easy enough?"

"It was very good of him to meet us," Mrs. March began. "We didn't expect--"

"Oh, that's all right," said Stoller, putting his toothpick back, and his hat on. "We'd got through for the day; my doctor won't let me work all I want to, here. Your husband's going to take the cure, they tell me. Well, he wants to go to a good doctor, first. You can't go and drink these waters hit or miss. I found that out before I came."

"Oh, no!" said Mrs. March, and she wished to explain how they had been advised; but he said to Burnamy:

"I sha'n't want you again till ten to-morrow morning. Don't let me interrupt you," he added patronizingly to Mrs. March. He put his hand up toward his hat, and sauntered away out of the door.

Burnamy did not speak; and she only asked at last, to relieve the silence, "Is Mr. Stoller an American?"

"Why, I suppose so," he answered, with an uneasy laugh. "His people were German emigrants who settled in Southern Indiana. That makes him as much American as any of us, doesn't it?"

Burnamy spoke with his mind on his French-Canadian grandfather, who had come down through Detroit, when their name was Bonami; but Mrs. March answered from her eight generations of New England ancestry. "Oh, for the West, yes, perhaps," and they neither of them said anything more about Stoller.

In their room, where she found March waiting for her amidst their arriving baggage, she was so full of her pent-up opinions of Burnamy's patron that she, would scarcely speak of the view from their windows of the wooded hills up and down the Tepl. "Yes, yes; very nice, and I know I shall enjoy it ever so much. But I don't know what you will think of that poor young Burnamy!"

"Why, what's happened to him?"

"Happened? Stoller's happened."

"Oh, have you seen him, already? Well?"

"Well, if you had been going to pick out that type of man, you'd have rejected him, because you'd have said he was too pat. He's like an actor made up for a Western millionaire. Do you remember that American in 'L'Etranger' which Bernhardt did in Boston when she first came? He, looks exactly like that, and he has the worst manners. He stood talking to me with his hat on, and a toothpick in his mouth; and he made me feel as if he had bought me, along with Burnamy, and had paid too much. If you don't give him a setting down, Basil, I shall never speak to you; that's all. I'm sure Burnamy is in some trouble with him; he's got some sort of hold upon him; what it could be in such a short time, I can't imagine; but if ever a man seemed to be, in a man's power, he does, in his!

"Now," said March, "your pronouns have got so far beyond me that I think we'd better let it all go till after supper; perhaps I shall see Stoller myself by that time."

She had been deeply stirred by her encounter with Stoller, but she entered with impartial intensity into the fact that the elevator at Pupp's had the characteristic of always coming up and never going down with passengers. It was locked into its closet with a solid door, and there was no bell to summon it, or any place to take it except on the ground-floor; but the stairs by which she could descend were abundant and stately; and on one landing there was the lithograph of one of the largest and ugliest hotels in New York; how ugly it was, she said she should never have known if she had not seen it there.

The dining-room was divided into the grand saloon, where they supped amid rococo sculptures and frescoes, and the glazed veranda opening by vast windows on a spread of tables without, which were already filling up for the evening concert. Around them at the different tables there were groups of faces and figures fascinating in their strangeness, with that distinction which abashes our American level in the presence of European inequality.

"How simple and unimpressive we are, Basil," she said, "beside all these people! I used to feel it in Europe when I was young, and now I'm certain that we must seem like two faded-in old village photographs. We don't even look intellectual! I hope we look good."

"I know I do," said March. The waiter went for their supper, and they joined in guessing the different nationalities in the room. A French party was easy enough; a Spanish mother and daughter were not difficult, though whether they were not South-American remained uncertain; two elderly maiden ladies were unmistakably of central Massachusetts, and were obviously of a book-club culture that had left no leaf unturned;

some Triestines gave themselves away by their Venetian accent; but a large group at a farther table were unassignable in the strange language which they clattered loudly together, with bursts of laughter. They were a family party of old and young, they were having a good time, with a freedom which she called baronial; the ladies wore white satin, or black lace, but the men were in sack-coats; she chose to attribute them, for no reason but their outlandishness, to Transylvania. March pretended to prefer a table full of Germans, who were unmistakably bourgeois, and yet of intellectual effect. He chose as his favorite a middle-aged man of learned aspect, and they both decided to think of him as the Herr Professor, but they did not imagine how perfectly the title fitted him till he drew a long comb from his waistcoat pocket and combed his hair and beard with it above the table.

The wine wrought with the Transylvanians, and they all jargoned together at once, and laughed at the jokes passing among them. One old gentleman had a peculiar fascination from the infantile innocence of his gums when he threw his head back to laugh, and showed an upper jaw toothless except for two incisors, standing guard over the chasm between. Suddenly he choked, coughed to relieve himself, hawked, held his napkin up before him, and--

"Noblesse oblige," said March, with the tone of irony which he reserved for his wife's preoccupations with aristocracies of all sorts. "I think I prefer my Hair Professor, bourgeois, as he is."

The ladies attributively of central Massachusetts had risen from their table, and were making for the door without having paid for their supper. The head waiter ran after them; with a real delicacy for their mistake he explained that though in most places the meals were charged in the bill, it was the custom in Carlsbad to pay for them at the table; one could see that he was making their error a pleasant adventure to them which they could laugh over together, and write home about without a pang.

"And I," said Mrs. March, shamelessly abandoning the party of the aristocracy, "prefer the manners of the lower classes."

"Oh, yes," he admitted. "The only manners we have at home are black ones. But you mustn't lose courage. Perhaps the nobility are not always so baronial."

"I don't know whether we have manners at home," she said, "and I don't believe I care. At least we have decencies."

"Don't be a jingo," said her husband.

XXVII.

Though Stoller had formally discharged Burnamy from duty for the day, he was not so full of resources in himself, and he had not so general an

acquaintance in the hotel but he was glad to have the young fellow make up to him in the reading-room, that night. He laid down a New York paper ten days old in despair of having left any American news in it, and pushed several continental Anglo-American papers aside with his elbow, as he gave a contemptuous glance at the foreign journals, in Bohemian, Hungarian, German, French, and Italian, which littered the large table.

"I wonder," he said, "how long it'll take 'em, over here, to catch on to our way of having pictures?"

Burnamy had come to his newspaper work since illustrated journalism was established, and he had never had any shock from it at home, but so sensitive is youth to environment that, after four days in Europe, the New York paper Stoller had laid down was already hideous to him. From the politic side of his nature, however, he temporized with Stoller's preference. "I suppose it will be some time yet."

"I wish," said Stoller, with a savage disregard of expressed sequences and relevancies, "I could ha' got some pictures to send home with that letter this afternoon: something to show how they do things here, and be a kind of object-lesson." This term had come up in a recent campaign when some employers, by shutting down their works, were showing their employees what would happen if the employees voted their political opinions into effect, and Stoller had then mastered its meaning and was fond of using it. "I'd like 'em to see the woods around here, that the city owns, and the springs, and the donkey-carts, and the theatre, and everything, and give 'em some practical ideas."

Burnamy made an uneasy movement.

"I'd 'a' liked to put 'em alongside of some of our improvements, and show how a town can be carried on when it's managed on business principles. "Why didn't you think of it?"

"Really, I don't know," said Burnamy, with a touch of impatience.

They had not met the evening before on the best of terms. Stoller had expected Burnamy twenty-four hours earlier, and had shown his displeasure with him for loitering a day at Leipsic which he might have spent at Carlsbad; and Burnamy had been unsatisfactory in accounting for the delay. But he had taken hold so promptly and so intelligently that by working far into the night, and through the whole forenoon, he had got Stoller's crude mass of notes into shape, and had sent off in time for the first steamer the letter which was to appear over the proprietor's name in his paper. It was a sort of rough but very full study of the Carlsbad city government, the methods of taxation, the municipal ownership of the springs and the lands, and the public control in everything. It condemned the aristocratic constitution of the municipality, but it charged heavily in favor of the purity, beneficence, and wisdom of the administration, under which there was no poverty and no idleness, and which was managed like any large business.

Stoller had sulkily recurred to his displeasure, once or twice, and

Burnamy suffered it submissively until now. But now, at the change in Burnamy's tone, he changed his manner a little.

"Seen your friends since supper?" he asked.

"Only a moment. They are rather tired, and they've gone to bed."

That the fellow that edits that book you write for?"

"Yes; he owns it, too."

The notion of any sort of ownership moved Stoller's respect, and he asked more deferentially, "Makin' a good thing out of it?"

"A living, I suppose. Some of the high-class weeklies feel the competition of the ten-cent monthlies. But 'Every Other Week' is about the best thing we've got in the literary way, and I guess it's holding its own."

"Have to, to let the editor come to Carlsbad," Stoller said, with a return to the sourness of his earlier mood. "I don't know as I care much for his looks; I seen him when he came in with you. No snap to him." He clicked shut the penknife he had been paring his nails with, and started up with the abruptness which marked all his motions, mental and physical; as he walked heavily out of the room he said, without looking at Burnamy, "You want to be ready by half past ten at the latest."

Stoller's father and mother were poor emigrants who made their way to the West with the instinct for sordid prosperity native to their race and class; and they set up a small butcher shop in the little Indiana town where their son was born, and thrived in it from the start. He could remember his mother helping his father make the sausage and head-cheese and pickle the pigs' feet, which they took turns in selling at as great a price as they could extort from the townspeople. She was a good and tender mother, and when her little Yawcup, as the boys called Jacob in mimicry after her, had grown to the school-going age, she taught him to fight the Americans, who stoned him when he came out of his gate, and mobbed his home-coming; and mocked and tormented him at play-time till they wore themselves into a kindlier mind toward him through the exhaustion of their invention. No one, so far as the gloomy, stocky, rather dense little boy could make out, ever interfered in his behalf; and he grew up in bitter shame for his German origin, which entailed upon him the hard fate of being Dutch among the Americans. He hated his native speech so much that he cried when he was forced to use it with his father and mother at home; he furiously denied it with the boys who proposed to parley with him in it on such terms as "Nix come arouse in de Dytchman's house." He disused it so thoroughly that after his father took him out of school, when he was old enough to help in the shop, he could not get back to it. He regarded his father's business as part of his national disgrace, and at the cost of leaving his home he broke away from it, and informally apprenticed himself to the village blacksmith and wagon-maker. When it came to his setting up for himself in the business he had chosen, he had no help from his father, who had gone on adding

dollar to dollar till he was one of the richest men in the place.

Jacob prospered too; his old playmates, who had used him so cruelly, had many of them come to like him; but as a Dutchman they never dreamt of asking him to their houses when they were young people, any more than when they were children. He was long deeply in love with an American girl whom he had never spoken to, and the dream of his life was to marry an American. He ended by marrying the daughter of Pferd the brewer, who had been at an American school in Indianapolis, and had come home as fragilely and nasally American as anybody. She made him a good, sickly, fretful wife; and bore him five children, of whom two survived, with no visible taint of their German origin.

In the mean time Jacob's father had died and left his money to his son, with the understanding that he was to provide for his mother, who would gladly have given every cent to him and been no burden to him, if she could. He took her home, and cared tenderly for her as long as she lived; and she meekly did her best to abolish herself in a household trying so hard to be American. She could not help her native accent, but she kept silence when her son's wife had company; and when her eldest granddaughter began very early to have American callers, she went out of the room; they would not have noticed her if she had staid.

Before this Jacob had come forward publicly in proportion to his financial importance in the community. He first commended himself to the Better Element by crushing out a strike in his Buggy Works, which were now the largest business interest of the place; and he rose on a wave of municipal reform to such a height of favor with the respectable classes that he was elected on a citizens' ticket to the Legislature. In the reaction which followed he was barely defeated for Congress, and was talked of as a dark horse who might be put up for the governorship some day; but those who knew him best predicted that he would not get far in politics, where his bull-headed business ways would bring him to ruin sooner or later; they said, "You can't swing a bolt like you can a strike."

When his mother died, he surprised his old neighbors by going to live in Chicago, though he kept his works in the place where he and they had grown up together. His wife died shortly after, and within four years he lost his three eldest children; his son, it was said, had begun to go wrong first. But the rumor of his increasing wealth drifted back from Chicago; he was heard of in different enterprises and speculations; at last it was said that he had bought a newspaper, and then his boyhood friends decided that Jake was going into politics again.

In the wider horizons and opener atmosphere of the great city he came to understand better that to be an American in all respects was not the best. His mounting sense of importance began to be retroactive in the direction of his ancestral home; he wrote back to the little town near Wurzburg which his people had come from, and found that he had relatives still living there, some of whom had become people of substance; and about the time his health gave way from life-long gluttony, and he was ordered to Carlsbad, he had pretty much made up his mind to take his

younger daughters and put them in school for a year or two in Wurzburg, for a little discipline if not education. He had now left them there, to learn the language, which he had forgotten with such heart-burning and shame, and music, for which they had some taste.

The twins loudly lamented their fate, and they parted from their father with open threats of running away; and in his heart he did not altogether blame them. He came away from Wurzburg raging at the disrespect for his money and his standing in business which had brought him a more galling humiliation there than anything he had suffered in his boyhood at Des Vaches. It intensified him in his dear-bought Americanism to the point of wishing to commit lese majesty in the teeth of some local dignitaries who had snubbed him, and who seemed to enjoy putting our eagle to shame in his person; there was something like the bird of his step-country in Stoller's pale eyes and huge beak.

XXVIII.

March sat with a company of other patients in the anteroom of the doctor, and when it came his turn to be prodded and kneaded, he was ashamed at being told he was not so bad a case as he had dreaded. The doctor wrote out a careful dietary for him, with a prescription of a certain number of glasses of water at a certain spring and a certain number of baths, and a rule for the walks he was to take before and after eating; then the doctor patted him on the shoulder and pushed him caressingly out of his inner office. It was too late to begin his treatment that day, but he went with his wife to buy a cup, with a strap for hanging it over his shoulder, and he put it on so as to be an invalid with the others at once; he came near forgetting the small napkin of Turkish towelling which they stuffed into their cups, but happily the shopman called him back in time to sell it to him.

At five the next morning he rose, and on his way to the street exchanged with the servants cleaning the hotel stairs the first of the gloomy 'Guten Morgens' which usher in the day at Carlsbad. They cannot be so finally hopeless as they sound; they are probably expressive only of the popular despair of getting through with them before night; but March heard the salutations sorrowfully groaned out on every hand as he joined the straggling current of invalids which swelled on the way past the silent shops and cafes in the Alte Wiese, till it filled the street, and poured its thousands upon the promenade before the classic colonnade of the Muhlbrunn. On the other bank of the Tepl the Sprudel flings its steaming waters by irregular impulses into the air under a pavilion of iron and glass; but the Muhlbrunn is the source of most resort. There is an instrumental concert somewhere in Carlsbad from early rising till bedtime; and now at the Muhlbrunn there was an orchestra already playing; and under the pillared porch, as well as before it, the multitude shuffled up and down, draining their cups by slow sips, and then taking each his place in the interminable line moving on to replenish them at the spring.

A picturesque majority of Polish Jews, whom some vice of their climate is said peculiarly to fit for the healing effects of Carlsbad, most took his eye in their long gabardines of rusty black and their derby hats of plush or velvet, with their corkscrew curls coming down before their ears. They were old and young, they were grizzled and red and black, but they seemed all well-to-do; and what impresses one first and last at Carlsbad is that its waters are mainly for the healing of the rich. After the Polish Jews, the Greek priests of Russian race were the most striking figures. There were types of Latin ecclesiastics, who were striking in their way too; and the uniforms of certain Austrian officers and soldiers brightened the picture. Here and there a southern face, Italian or Spanish or Levantine, looked passionately out of the mass of dull German visages; for at Carlsbad the Germans, more than any other gentile nation, are to the fore. Their misfits, their absence of style, imparted the prevalent effect; though now and then among the women a Hungarian, or Pole, or Parisian, or American, relieved the eye which seeks beauty and grace rather than the domestic virtues. There were certain faces, types of discomfort and disease, which appealed from the beginning to the end. A young Austrian, yellow as gold, and a livid South-American, were of a lasting fascination to March.

What most troubled him, in his scrutiny of the crowd, was the difficulty of assigning people to their respective nations, and he accused his years of having dulled his perceptions; but perhaps it was from their long disuse in his homogeneous American world. The Americans themselves fused with the European races who were often so hard to make out; his fellow-citizens would not be identified till their bad voices gave them away; he thought the women's voices the worst.

At the springs, a line of young girls with a steady mechanical action dipped the cups into the steaming source, and passed them impersonally up to their owners. With the patients at the Muhlbrunn it was often a half-hour before one's turn came, and at all a strict etiquette forbade any attempt to anticipate it. The water was merely warm and flat, and after the first repulsion one could forget it. March formed a childish habit of counting ten between the sips, and of finishing the cup with a gulp which ended it quickly; he varied his walks between cups by going sometimes to a bridge at the end of the colonnade where a group of Triestines were talking Venetian, and sometimes to the little Park beyond the Kurhaus, where some old women were sweeping up from the close sward the yellow leaves which the trees had untidily dropped overnight. He liked to sit there and look at the city beyond the Tepl, where it climbed the wooded heights in terraces till it lost its houses in the skirts and folds of the forest. Most mornings it rained, quietly, absent-mindedly, and this, with the chili in the air, deepened a pleasant illusion of Quebec offered by the upper town across the stream; but there were sunny mornings when the mountains shone softly through a lustrous mist, and the air was almost warm.

Once in his walk he found himself the companion of Burnamy's employer, whom he had sometimes noted in the line at the Muhlbrunn, waiting his turn, cup in hand, with a face of sullen impatience. Stoller explained

that though you could have the water brought to you at your hotel, he chose to go to the spring for the sake of the air; it was something you had got to live through; before he had that young Burnamy to help him he did not know what to do with his time, but now, every minute he was not eating or sleeping he was working; his cure did not oblige him to walk much. He examined March, with a certain mixture of respect and contempt, upon the nature of the literary life, and how it differed from the life of a journalist. He asked if he thought Burnamy would amount to anything as a literary man; he so far assented to March's faith in him as to say, "He's smart." He told of leaving his daughters in school at Wurzburg; and upon the whole he moved March with a sense of his pathetic loneliness without moving his liking, as he passed lumberingly on, dangling his cup.

March gave his own cup to the little maid at his spring, and while she gave it to a second, who dipped it and handed it to a third for its return to him, he heard an unmistakable fellow-countryman saying good-morning to them all in English. "Are you going to teach them United States?" he asked of a face with which he knew such an appeal would not fail.

"Well," the man admitted, "I try to teach them that much. They like it. You are an American? I am glad of it. I have 'most lost the use of my lungs, here. I'm a great talker, and I talk to my wife till she's about dead; then I'm out of it for the rest of the day; I can't speak German."

His manner was the free, friendly manner of the West. He must be that sort of untravelled American whom March had so seldom met, but he was afraid to ask him if this was his first time at Carlsbad, lest it should prove the third or fourth. "Are you taking the cure?" he asked instead.

"Oh, no. My wife is. She'll be along directly; I come down here and drink the waters to encourage her; doctor said to. That gets me in for the diet, too. I've e't more cooked fruit since I been here than I ever did in my life before. Prunes? My Lord, I'm full o' prunes! Well, it does me good to see an American, to know him. I couldn't 'a' told you, it you hadn't have spoken."

"Well," said March, "I shouldn't have been so sure of you, either, by your looks."

"Yes, we can't always tell ourselves from these Dutch. But they know us, and they don't want us, except just for one thing, and that's our money. I tell you, the Americans are the chumps over here. Soon's they got all our money, or think they have, they say, "Here, you Americans, this is my country; you got off; and we got to get. Ever been over before?"

"A great while ago; so long that I can hardly believe it."

"It's my first time. My name's Otterson: I'm from out in Iowa."

March gave him his name, and added that he was from New York.

"Yes. I thought you was Eastern. But that wasn't an Eastern man you was

just with?"

"No; he's from Chicago. He's a Mr. Stoller."

"Not the buggy man?"

"I believe he makes buggies."

"Well, you do meet everybody here." The lowan was silent for a moment, as if, hushed by the weighty thought. "I wish my wife could have seen him. I just want her to see the man that made our buggy. I don't know what's keeping her, this morning," he added, apologetically. "Look at that fellow, will you, tryin' to get away from those women!" A young officer was doing his best to take leave of two ladies, who seemed to be mother and daughter; they detained him by their united arts, and clung to him with caressing words and looks. He was red in the face with his polite struggles when he broke from them at last. "How they do hang on to a man, over here!" the lowa man continued. "And the Americans are as bad as any. Why, there's one ratty little Englishman up at our place, and our girls just swarm after him; their mothers are worse. Well, it's so, Jenny," he said to the lady who had joined them and whom March turned round to see when he spoke to her. "If I wanted a foreigner I should go in for a man. And these officers! Put their mustaches up at night in curl-papers, they tell me. Introduce you to Mrs. Otterson, Mr. March. Well, had your first glass, yet, Jenny? I'm just going for my second tumbler."

He took his wife back to the spring, and began to tell her about Stoller; she made no sign of caring for him; and March felt inculpated. She relented a little toward him as they drank together; when he said he must be going to breakfast with his wife, she asked where he breakfasted, and said, "Why, we go to the Posthof, too." He answered that then they should be sure some time to meet there; he did not venture further; he reflected that Mrs. March had her reluctances too; she distrusted people who had amused or interested him before she met them.

XXIX.

Burnamy had found the Posthof for them, as he had found most of the other agreeable things in Carlsbad, which he brought to their knowledge one by one, with such forethought that March said he hoped he should be cared for in his declining years as an editor rather than as a father; there was no tenderness like a young contributor's.

Many people from the hotels on the hill found at Pupp's just the time and space between their last cup of water and their first cup of coffee which are prescribed at Carlsbad; but the Marches were aware somehow from the beginning that Pupp's had not the hold upon the world at breakfast which it had at the mid-day dinner, or at supper on the evenings when the concert was there. Still it was amusing, and they were patient of

Burnamy's delay till he could get a morning off from Stoller and go with them to the Posthof. He met Mrs. March in the reading-room, where March was to join them on his way from the springs with his bag of bread. The earlier usage of buying the delicate pink slices of Westphalia ham, which form the chief motive of a Carlsbad breakfast, at a certain shop in the town, and carrying them to the cafe with you, is no longer of such binding force as the custom of getting your bread at the Swiss bakery. You choose it yourself at the counter, which begins to be crowded by half past seven, and when you have collected the prescribed loaves into the basket of metallic filigree given you by one of the baker's maids, she puts it into a tissue-paper bag of a gay red color, and you join the other invalids streaming away from the bakery, their paper bags making a festive rustling as they go.

Two roads lead out of the town into the lovely meadow-lands, a good mile up the brawling Tepl, before they join on the right side of the torrent, where the Posthof lurks nestled under trees whose boughs let the sun and rain impartially through upon its army of little tables. By this time the slow omnibus plying between Carlsbad and some villages in the valley beyond has crossed from the left bank to the right, and keeps on past half a dozen other cafes, where patients whose prescriptions marshal them beyond the Posthof drop off by the dozens and scores.

The road on the left bank of the Tepl is wild and overhung at points with wooded steeps, when it leaves the town; but on the right it is bordered with shops and restaurants a great part of its length. In leafy nooks between these, uphill walks begin their climb of the mountains, from the foot of votive shrines set round with tablets commemorating in German, French, Russian, Hebrew, Magyar and Czech, the cure of high-well-borns of all those races and languages. Booths glittering with the lapidary's work in the cheaper gems, or full of the ingenious figures of the toy-makers, alternate with the shrines and the cafes on the way to the Posthof, and with their shoulders against the overhanging cliff, spread for the passing crowd a lure of Viennese jewelry in garnets, opals, amethysts, and the like, and of such Bohemian playthings as carrot-eating rabbits, worsted-working cats, dancing-bears, and peacocks that strut about the feet of the passers and expand their iridescent tails in mimic pride.

Burnamy got his charges with difficulty by the shrines in which they felt the far-reflected charm of the crucifixes of the white-hot Italian highways of their early travel, and by the toyshops where they had a mechanical, out-dated impulse to get something for the children, ending in a pang for the fact that they were children no longer. He waited politely while Mrs. March made up her mind that she would not buy any laces of the motherly old women who showed them under pent-roofs on way-side tables; and he waited patiently at the gate of the flower-gardens beyond the shops where March bought lavishly of sweetpease from the businesslike flower-woman, and feigned a grateful joy in her because she knew no English, and gave him a chance of speaking his German.

"You'll find," he said, as they crossed the road again, "that it's well to trifle a good deal; it makes the time pass. I should still be lagging

along in my thirties if it hadn't been for fooling, and here I am well on in my fifties, and Mrs. March is younger than ever."

They were at the gate of the garden and grounds of the cafe at last, and a turn of the path brought them to the prospect of its tables, under the trees, between the two long glazed galleries where the breakfasters take refuge at other tables when it rains; it rains nearly always, and the trunks of the trees are as green with damp as if painted; but that morning the sun was shining. At the verge of the open space a group of pretty serving-maids, each with her name on a silver band pinned upon her breast, met them and bade them a 'Guten Morgen' of almost cheerful note, but gave way, to an eager little smiling blonde, who came pushing down the path at sight of Burnamy, and claimed him for her own.

"Ah, Lili! We want an extra good table, this morning. These are some American Excellencies, and you must do your best for them."

"Oh, yes," the girl answered in English, after a radiant salutation of the Marches; "I get you one."

"You are a little more formerly, to-day, and I didn't had one already."

She ran among the tables along the edge of the western edge of the gallery, and was far beyond hearing his protest that he was not earlier than usual when she beckoned him to the table she had found. She had crowded it in between two belonging to other girls, and by the time her breakfasters came up she was ready for their order, with the pouting pretence that the girls always tried to rob her of the best places. Burnamy explained proudly, when she went, that none of the other girls ever got an advantage of her; she had more custom than any three of them, and she had hired a man to help her carry her orders. The girls were all from the neighboring villages, he said, and they lived at home in the winter on their summer tips; their wages were nothing, or less, for sometimes they paid for their places.

"What a mass of information!" said March. "How did you come by it?"

"Newspaper habit of interviewing the universe."

"It's not a bad habit, if one doesn't carry it too far. How did Lili learn her English?"

"She takes lessons in the winter. She's a perfect little electric motor. I don't believe any Yankee girl could equal her."

"She would expect to marry a millionaire if she did. What astonishes one over here is to see how contentedly people prosper along on their own level. And the women do twice the work of the men without expecting to equal them in any other way. At Pupp's, if we go to one end of the outdoor restaurant, it takes three men to wait on us: one to bring our coffee or tea, another to bring our bread and meat, and another to make out our bill, and I have to tip all three of them. If we go to the other end, one girl serves us, and I have to give only one fee; I make it less

than the least I give any three of the men waiters."

"You ought to be ashamed of that," said his wife.

"I'm not. I'm simply proud of your sex, my dear."

"Women do nearly everything, here," said Burnamy, impartially. "They built that big new Kaiserbad building: mixed the mortar, carried the hods, and laid the stone."

"That makes me prouder of the sex than ever. But come, Mr. Burnamy! Isn't there anybody of polite interest that you know of in this crowd?"

"Well, I can't say," Burnamy hesitated.

The breakfasters had been thronging into the grove and the galleries; the tables were already filled, and men were bringing other tables on their heads, and making places for them, with entreaties for pardon everywhere; the proprietor was anxiously directing them; the pretty serving-girls were running to and from the kitchen in a building apart with shrill, sweet promises of haste. The morning sun fell broken through the leaves on the gay hats and dresses of the ladies, and dappled the figures of the men with harlequin patches of light and shade. A tall woman, with a sort of sharpened beauty, and an artificial permanency of tint in her cheeks and yellow hair, came trailing herself up the sun-shot path, and found, with hardy insistence upon the publicity, places for the surly-looking, down-faced young man behind her, and for her maid and her black poodle; the dog was like the black poodle out of Faust. Burnamy had heard her history; in fact, he had already roughed out a poem on it, which he called Europa, not after the old fable, but because it seemed to him that she expressed Europe, on one side of its civilization, and had an authorized place in its order, as she would not have had in ours. She was where she was by a toleration of certain social facts which corresponds in Europe to our reverence for the vested interests. In her history there, had been officers and bankers; even foreign dignitaries; now there was this sullen young fellow Burnamy had wondered if it would do to offer his poem to March, but the presence of the original abashed him, and in his mind he had torn the poem up, with a heartache for its aptness.

"I don't believe," he said, "that I recognize-any celebrities here."

"I'm sorry," said March. "Mrs. March would have been glad of some Hoheits, some Grafs and Grafins, or a few Excellenzen, or even some mere well-borns. But we must try to get along with the picturesqueness."

"I'm satisfied with the picturesqueness," said his wife. "Don't worry about me, Mr. Burnamy. "Why can't we have this sort of thing at home?"

"We're getting something like it in the roof-gardens," said March. "We couldn't have it naturally because the climate is against it, with us. At this time in the morning over there, the sun would be burning the life out of the air, and the flies would be swarming on every table. At nine

A. M. the mosquitoes would be eating us up in such a grove as this. So we have to use artifice, and lift our Posthof above the fly-line and the mosquito-line into the night air. I haven't seen a fly since I came to Europe. I really miss them; it makes me homesick."

"There are plenty in Italy," his wife suggested.

"We must get down there before we go home."

"But why did nobody ever tell us that there were no flies in Germany? Why did no traveller ever put it in his book? When your stewardess said so on the steamer, I remember that you regarded it as a bluff." He turned to Burnamy, who was listening with the deference of a contributor: "Isn't Lili rather long? I mean for such a very prompt person. Oh, no!"

But Burnamy got to his feet, and shouted "Fraulein!" to Lili; with her hireling at her heels she was flying down a distant aisle between the tables. She called back, with a face laughing over her shoulder, "In a minute!" and vanished in the crowd.

"Does that mean anything in particular? There's really no hurry."

"Oh, I think she'll come now," said Burnamy. March protested that he had only been amused at Lili's delay; but his wife scolded him for his impatience; she begged Burnamy's pardon, and repeated civilities passed between them. She asked if he did not think some of the young ladies were pretty beyond the European average; a very few had style; the mothers were mostly fat, and not stylish; it was well not to regard the fathers too closely; several old gentlemen were clearing their throats behind their newspapers, with noises that made her quail. There was no one so effective as the Austrian officers, who put themselves a good deal on show, bowing from their hips to favored groups; with the sun glinting from their eyeglasses, and their hands pressing their sword-hilts, they moved between the tables with the gait of tight-laced women.

"They all wear corsets," Burnamy explained.

"How much you know already!" said Mrs. March. "I can see that Europe won't be lost on you in anything. Oh, who's that?" A lady whose costume expressed saris at every point glided up the middle aisle of the grove with a graceful tilt. Burnamy was silent. "She must be an American. Do you know who she is?"

"Yes." He hesitated, a little to name a woman whose tragedy had once filled the newspapers.

Mrs. March gazed after her with the fascination which such tragedies inspire. "What grace! Is she beautiful?"

"Very." Burnamy had not obtruded his knowledge, but somehow Mrs. March did not like his knowing who she was, and how beautiful. She asked March to look, but he refused.

"Those things are too squalid," he said, and she liked him for saying it; she hoped it would not be lost upon Burnamy.

One of the waitresses tripped on the steps near them and flung the burden off her tray on the stone floor before her; some of the dishes broke, and the breakfast was lost. Tears came into the girl's eyes and rolled down her hot cheeks. "There! That is what I call tragedy," said March. "She'll have to pay for those things."

"Oh, give her the money, dearest!"

"How can I?"

The girl had just got away with the ruin when Lili and her hireling behind her came bearing down upon them with their three substantial breakfasts on two well-laden trays. She forestalled Burnamy's reproaches for her delay, laughing and bridling, while she set down the dishes of ham and tongue and egg, and the little pots of coffee and frothed milk.

"I could not so soon I wanted, because I was to serve an American princess."

Mrs. March started with proud conjecture of one of those noble international marriages which fill our women with vainglory for such of their compatriots as make them.

"Oh, come now, Lili!" said Burnamy. "We have queens in America, but nothing so low as princesses. This was a queen, wasn't it?"

She referred the case to her hireling, who confirmed her. "All people say it is princess," she insisted.

"Well, if she's a princess we must look her up after breakfast," said Burnamy. "Where is she sitting?"

She pointed at a corner so far off on the other side that no one could be distinguished, and then was gone, with a smile flashed over her shoulder, and her hireling trying to keep up with her.

"We're all very proud of Lili's having a hired man," said Burnamy. "We think it reflects credit on her customers."

March had begun his breakfast with the voracious appetite of an early-rising invalid. "What coffee!"

He drew a long sigh after the first draught.

"It's said to be made of burnt figs," said Burnamy, from the inexhaustible advantage of his few days' priority in Carlsbad.

"Then let's have burnt figs introduced at home as soon as possible. But why burnt figs? That seems one of those doubts which are much more difficult than faith."

It's not only burnt figs," said Burnamy, with amiable superiority, "if it is burnt figs, but it's made after a formula invented by a consensus of physicians, and enforced by the municipality. Every cafe in Carlsbad makes the same kind of coffee and charges the same price."

"You are leaving us very little to find out for ourselves," sighed March.

"Oh, I know a lot more things. Are you fond of fishing?"

"Not very."

"You can get a permit to catch trout in the Tepl, but they send an official with you who keeps count, and when you have had your sport, the trout belong to the municipality just as they did before you caught them."

"I don't see why that isn't a good notion: the last thing I should want to do would be to eat a fish that I had caught, and that I was personally acquainted with. Well, I'm never going away from Carlsbad. I don't wonder people get their doctors to tell them to come back."

Burnamy told them a number of facts he said Stoller had got together about the place, and had given him to put in shape. It was run in the interest of people who had got out of order, so that they would keep coming to get themselves in order again; you could hardly buy an unwholesome meal in the town; all the cooking was 'kurgemass'. He won such favor with his facts that he could not stop in time: he said to March, "But if you ever should have a fancy for a fish of your personal acquaintance, there's a restaurant up the Tepl, where they let you pick out your trout in the water; then they catch him and broil him for you, and you know what you are eating."

"Is it a municipal restaurant?"

"Semi-municipal," said Burnamy, laughing.

"We'll take Mrs. March," said her husband, and in her gravity Burnamy felt the limitations of a woman's sense of humor, which always define themselves for men so unexpectedly.

He did what he could to get back into her good graces by telling her what he knew about distinctions and dignities that he now saw among the breakfasters. The crowd had now grown denser till the tables were set together in such labyrinths that any one who left the central aisle was lost in them. The serving-girls ran more swiftly to and fro, responding with a more nervous shrillness to the calls of "Fraulein! Fraulein!" that followed them. The proprietor, in his bare head, stood like one paralyzed by his prosperity, which sent up all round him the clash of knives and crockery, and the confusion of tongues. It was more than an hour before Burnamy caught Lili's eye, and three times she promised to come and be paid before she came. Then she said, "It is so nice, when you stay a little," and when he told her of the poor Fraulein who had

broken the dishes in her fall near them, she almost wept with tenderness; she almost winked with wickedness when he asked if the American princess was still in her place.

"Do go and see who it can be!" Mrs. March entreated. "We'll wait here," and he obeyed. "I am not sure that I like him," she said, as soon as he was out of hearing. "I don't know but he's coarse, after all. Do you approve of his knowing so many people's 'taches' already?"

"Would it be any better later?" he asked in tern. "He seemed to find you interested."

"It's very different with us; we're not young," she urged, only half seriously.

Her husband laughed. "I see you want me to defend him. Oh, hello!" he cried, and she saw Burnamy coming toward them with a young lady, who was nodding to them from as far as she could see them. "This is the easy kind of thing that makes you blush for the author if you find it in a novel."

XXX.

Mrs. March fairly took Miss Triscoe in her arms to kiss her. "Do you know I felt it must be you, all the time! When did you come? Where is your father? What hotel are you staying at?"

It appeared, while Miss Triscoe was shaking hands with March, that it was last night, and her father was finishing his breakfast, and it was one of the hotels on the hill. On the way back to her father it appeared that he wished to consult March's doctor; not that there was anything the matter.

The general himself was not much softened by the reunion with his fellow-Americans; he confided to them that his coffee was poisonous; but he seemed, standing up with the Paris-New York Chronicle folded in his hand, to have drunk it all. Was March going off on his forenoon tramp? He believed that was part of the treatment, which was probably all humbug, though he thought of trying it, now he was there. He was told the walks were fine; he looked at Burnamy as if he had been praising them, and Burnamy said he had been wondering if March would not like to try a mountain path back to his hotel; he said, not so sincerely, that he thought Mrs. March would like it.

"I shall like your account of it," she answered. "But I'll walk back on a level, if you please."

"Oh, yes," Miss Triscoe pleaded, "come with us!"

She played a little comedy of meaning to go back with her father so

gracefully that Mrs. March herself could scarcely have told just where the girl's real purpose of going with Burnamy began to be evident, or just how she managed to make General Triscoe beg to have the pleasure of seeing Mrs. March back to her hotel.

March went with the young people across the meadow behind the Posthof and up into the forest, which began at the base of the mountain. At first they tried to keep him in the range of their talk; but he fell behind more and more, and as the talk narrowed to themselves it was less and less possible to include him in it. When it began to concern their common appreciation of the Marches, they even tried to get out of his hearing.

"They're so young in their thoughts," said Burnamy, "and they seem as much interested in everything as they could have been thirty years ago. They belong to a time when the world was a good deal fresher than it is now; don't you think? I mean, in the eighteen-sixties."

"Oh, yes, I can see that."

"I don't know why we shouldn't be born older in each generation than people were in the last. Perhaps we are," he suggested.

"I don't know how you mean," said the girl, keeping vigorously up with him; she let him take the jacket she threw off, but she would not have his hand at the little steeps where he wanted to give it.

"I don't believe I can quite make it out myself. But fancy a man that began to act at twenty, quite unconsciously of course, from the past experience of the whole race--"

"He would be rather a dreadful person, wouldn't he?"

"Rather monstrous, yes," he owned, with a laugh. "But that's where the psychological interest would come in."

As if she did not feel the notion quite pleasant she turned from it.

"I suppose you've been writing all sorts of things since you came here."

"Well, it hasn't been such a great while as it's seemed, and I've had Mr. Stoller's psychological interests to look after."

"Oh, yes! Do you like him?"

"I don't know. He's a lump of honest selfishness. He isn't bad. You know where to have him. He's simple, too."

"You mean, like Mr. March?"

"I didn't mean that; but why not? They're not of the same generation, but Stoller isn't modern."

"I'm very curious to see him," said the girl.

"Do you want me to introduce him?"

"You can introduce him to papa."

They stopped and looked across the curve of the mounting path, down on March, who had sunk on a way-side seat, and was mopping his forehead. He saw them, and called up: "Don't wait for me. I'll join you, gradually."

"I don't want to lose you," Burnamy called back, but he kept on with Miss Triscoe. "I want to get the Hirschsprung in," he explained. "It's the cliff where a hunted deer leaped down several hundred feet to get away from an emperor who was after him."

"Oh, yes. They have them everywhere."

"Do they? Well, anyway, there's a noble view up there."

There was no view on the way up. The Germans' notion of a woodland is everywhere that of a dense forest such as their barbarous tribes primevally herded in. It means the close-set stems of trees, with their tops interwoven in a roof of boughs and leaves so densely that you may walk dry through it almost as long as a German shower lasts. When the sun shines there is a pleasant greenish light in the aisles, shot here and there with the gold that trickles through. There is nothing of the accident of an American wood in these forests, which have been watched and weeded by man ever since they burst the soil. They remain nurseries, but they have the charm which no human care can alienate. The smell of their bark and their leaves, and of the moist, flowerless earth about their roots, came to March where he sat rich with the memories of his country-bred youth, and drugged all consciousness of his long life in cities since, and made him a part of nature, with dulled interests and dimmed perspectives, so that for the moment he had the enjoyment of exemption from care. There was no wild life to penetrate his isolation; no birds, not a squirrel, not an insect; an old man who had bidden him good-morning, as he came up, kept fumbling at the path with his hoe, and was less intrusive than if he had not been there.

March thought of the impassioned existence of these young people playing the inevitable comedy of hide and seek which the youth of the race has played from the beginning of time. The other invalids who haunted the forest, and passed up and down before him in fulfilment of their several prescriptions, had a thin unreality in spite of the physical bulk that prevailed among them, and they heightened the relief that the forest-spirit brought him from the strenuous contact of that young drama. He had been almost painfully aware that the persons in it had met, however little they knew it, with an eagerness intensified by their brief separation, and he fancied it was the girl who had unconsciously operated their reunion in response to the young man's longing, her will making itself electrically felt through space by that sort of wireless telegraphy which love has long employed, and science has just begun to imagine.

He would have been willing that they should get home alone, but he knew that his wife would require an account of them from him, and though he could have invented something of the kind, if it came to the worst, he was aware that it would not do for him to arrive without them. The thought goaded him from his seat, and he joined the upward procession of his fellow-sick, as it met another procession straggling downward; the ways branched in all directions, with people on them everywhere, bent upon building up in a month the health which they would spend the rest of the year in demolishing.

He came upon his charges unexpectedly at a turn of the path, and Miss Triscoe told him that he ought to have been with them for the view from the Hirschensprung. It was magnificent, she said, and she made Burnamy corroborate her praise of it, and agree with her that it was worth the climb a thousand times; he modestly accepted the credit she appeared willing to give him, of inventing the Hirschensprung.

XXXI.

Between his work for Stoller and what sometimes seemed the obstructiveness of General Triscoe, Burnamy was not very much with Miss Triscoe. He was not devout, but he went every Sunday to the pretty English church on the hill, where he contributed beyond his means to the support of the English clergy on the Continent, for the sake of looking at her back hair during the service, and losing himself in the graceful lines which defined, the girl's figure from the slant of her flowery hat to the point where the pewtop crossed her elastic waist. One happy morning the general did not come to church, and he had the fortune to walk home with her to her pension, where she lingered with him a moment, and almost made him believe she might be going to ask him to come in.

The next evening, when he was sauntering down the row of glittering shops beside the Tepl, with Mrs. March, they overtook the general and his daughter at a place where the girl was admiring some stork-scissors in the window; she said she wished she were still little, so that she could get them. They walked home with the Triscoes, and then he hurried Mrs. March back to the shop. The man had already put up his shutters, and was just closing his door, but Burnamy pushed in, and asked to look at the stork-scissors they had seen in the window. The gas was out, and the shopman lighted a very dim candle, to show them.

"I knew you wanted to get them for her, after what she said, Mrs. March," he laughed, nervously, "and you must let me lend you the money."

"Why, of course!" she answered, joyfully humoring his feint. "Shall I put my card in for the man to send home to her with them?"

"Well--no. No. Not your card--exactly. Or, yes! Yes, you must, I suppose."

They made the hushing street gay with their laughter; the next evening Miss Triscoe came upon the Marches and Burnamy where they sat after supper listening to the concert at Pupp's, and thanked Mrs. March for the scissors. Then she and Burnamy had their laugh again, and Miss Triscoe joined them, to her father's frowning mystification. He stared round for a table; they were all taken, and he could not refuse the interest Burnamy made with the waiters to bring them one and crowd it in. He had to ask him to sup with them, and Burnamy sat down and heard the concert through beside Miss Triscoe.

"What is so tremendously amusing in a pair of stork-scissors?" March demanded, when his wife and he were alone.

"Why, I was wanting to tell you, dearest," she began, in a tone which he felt to be wheedling, and she told the story of the scissors.

"Look here, my dear! Didn't you promise to let this love-affair alone?"

"That was on the ship. And besides, what would you have done, I should like to know? Would you have refused to let him buy them for her?" She added, carelessly, "He wants us to go to the Kurhaus ball with him."

"Oh, does he!"

"Yes. He says he knows that she can get her father to let her go if we will chaperon them. And I promised that you would."

"That I would?"

"It will do just as well if you go. And it will be very amusing; you can see something of Carlsbad society."

"But I'm not going!" he declared. "It would interfere with my cure. The sitting up late would be bad enough, but I should get very hungry, and I should eat potato salad and sausages, and drink beer, and do all sorts of unwholesome things."

"Nonsense! The refreshments will be 'kurgemass', of course."

"You can go yourself," he said.

A ball is not the same thing for a woman after fifty as it is before twenty, but still it has claims upon the imagination, and the novel circumstance of a ball in the Kurhaus in Carlsbad enhanced these for Mrs. March. It was the annual reunion which is given by municipal authority in the large hall above the bathrooms; it is frequented with safety and pleasure by curious strangers, and now, upon reflection, it began to have for Mrs. March the charm of duty; she believed that she could finally have made March go in her place, but she felt that she ought really to go in his, and save him from the late hours and the late supper.

"Very well, then," she said at last, "I will go."

It appeared that any civil person might go to the reunion who chose to pay two florins and a half. There must have been some sort of restriction, and the ladies of Burnamy's party went with a good deal of amused curiosity to see what the distinctions were; but they saw none unless it was the advantages which the military had. The long hall over the bathrooms shaped itself into a space for the dancing at one end, and all the rest of it was filled with tables, which at half past eight were crowded with people, eating, drinking, and smoking. The military enjoyed the monopoly of a table next the rail dividing the dancing from the dining space. There the tight-laced Herr Hauptmanns and Herr Lieutenants sat at their sausage and beer and cigars in the intervals of the waltzes, and strengthened themselves for a foray among the gracious Fraus and Frauleins on the benches lining three sides of the dancing-space. From the gallery above many civilian spectators looked down upon the gayety, and the dress-coats of a few citizens figured among the uniforms.

As the evening wore on some ladies of greater fashion found their way to the dancing-floor, and toward ten o'clock it became rather crowded. A party of American girls showed their Paris dresses in the transatlantic versions of the waltz. At first they danced with the young men who came with them; but after a while they yielded to the custom of the place, and danced with any of the officers who asked them.

"I know it's the custom," said Mrs. March to Miss Triscoe, who was at her side in one of the waltzes she had decided to sit out, so as not to be dancing all the time with Burnamy, "but I never can like it without an introduction."

"No," said the girl, with the air of putting temptation decidedly away, "I don't believe papa would, either."

A young officer came up, and drooped in mute supplication before her. She glanced at Mrs. March, who turned her face away; and she excused herself with the pretence that she had promised the dance, and by good fortune, Burnamy, who had been unscrupulously waltzing with a lady he did not know, came up at the moment. She rose and put her hand on his arm, and they both bowed to the officer before they whirled away. The officer looked after them with amiable admiration; then he turned to Mrs. March with a light of banter in his friendly eyes, and was unmistakably asking her to dance. She liked his ironical daring, she liked it so much that she forgot her objection to partners without introductions; she forgot her fifty-odd years; she forgot that she was a mother of grown children and even a mother-in-law; she remembered only the step of her out-dated waltz.

It seemed to be modern enough for the cheerful young officer, and they were suddenly revolving with the rest. . . A tide of long-forgotten girlhood welled up in her heart, and she laughed as she floated off on it past the astonished eyes of Miss Triscoe and Burnamy. She saw them falter, as if they had lost their step in their astonishment; then they seemed both to vanish, and her partner had released her, and was helping Miss Triscoe up from the floor; Burnamy was brushing the dust from his knees, and the citizen who had bowled them over was boisterously

apologizing and incessantly bowing.

"Oh, are you hurt?" Mrs. March implored. "I'm sure you must be killed; and I did it! I don't know, what I was thinking of!"

The girl laughed. "I'm not hurt a bit!"

They had one impulse to escape from the place, and from the sympathy and congratulation. In the dressing-room she declared again that she was all right. "How beautifully you waltz, Mrs. March!" she said, and she laughed again, and would not agree with her that she had been ridiculous. "But I'm glad those American girls didn't see me. And I can't be too thankful papa didn't come!"

Mrs. March's heart sank at the thought of what General Triscoe would think of her. "You must tell him I did it. I can never lift up my head!"

"No, I shall not. No one did it," said the girl, magnanimously. She looked down sidelong at her draperies. "I was so afraid I had torn my dress! I certainly heard something rip."

It was one of the skirts of Burnamy's coat, which he had caught into his hand and held in place till he could escape to the men's dressing-room, where he had it pinned up so skillfully that the damage was not suspected by the ladies. He had banged his knee abominably too; but they did not suspect that either, as he limped home on the air beside them, first to Miss Triscoe's pension, and then to Mrs. March's hotel.

It was quite eleven o'clock, which at Carlsbad is as late as three in the morning anywhere else, when she let herself into her room. She decided not to tell her husband, then; and even at breakfast, which they had at the Posthof, she had not got to her confession, though she had told him everything else about the ball, when the young officer with whom she had danced passed between the tables near her. He caught her eye and bowed with a smile of so much meaning that March asked, "Who's your pretty young friend?"

"Oh, that!" she answered carelessly. "That was one of the officers at the ball," and she laughed.

"You seem to be in the joke, too," he said. "What is it?"

"Oh, something. I'll tell you some time. Or perhaps you'll find out."

"I'm afraid you won't let me wait."

"No, I won't," and now she told him. She had expected teasing, ridicule, sarcasm, anything but the psychological interest mixed with a sort of retrospective tenderness which he showed. "I wish I could have seen you; I always thought you danced well." He added: "It seems that you need a chaperon too."

The next morning, after March and General Triscoe had started off upon one of the hill climbs, the young people made her go with them for a walk up the Tepl, as far as the cafe of the Freundschaftsaal. In the grounds an artist in silhouettes was cutting out the likenesses of people who supposed themselves to have profiles, and they begged Mrs. March to sit for hers. It was so good that she insisted on Miss Triscoe's sitting in turn, and then Burnamy. Then he had the inspiration to propose that they should all three sit together, and it appeared that such a group was within the scope of the silhouettist's art; he posed them in his little bower, and while he was mounting the picture they took turns, at five kreutzers each, in listening to American tunes played by his Edison phonograph.

Mrs. March felt that all this was weakening her moral fibre; but she tried to draw the line at letting Burnamy keep the group. "Why not?" he pleaded.

"You oughtn't to ask," she returned. "You've no business to have Miss Triscoe's picture, if you must know."

"But you're there to chaperon us!" he persisted.

He began to laugh, and they all laughed when she said, "You need a chaperon who doesn't lose her head, in a silhouette." But it seemed useless to hold out after that, and she heard herself asking, "Shall we let him keep it, Miss Triscoe?"

Burnamy went off to his work with Stoller, carrying the silhouette with him, and she kept on with Miss Triscoe to her hotel. In turning from the gate after she parted with the girl she found herself confronted with Mrs. Adding and Rose. The ladies exclaimed at each other in an astonishment from which they had to recover before they could begin to talk, but from the first moment Mrs. March perceived that Mrs. Adding had something to say. The more freely to say it she asked Mrs. March into her hotel, which was in the same street with the pension of the Triscoes, and she let her boy go off about the exploration of Carlsbad; he promised to be back in an hour.

"Well, now what scrape are you in?" March asked when his wife came home, and began to put off her things, with signs of excitement which he could not fail to note. He was lying down after a long tramp, and he seemed very comfortable.

His question suggested something of anterior import, and she told him about the silhouettes, and the advantage the young people had taken of their power over her through their knowledge of her foolish behavior at the ball.

He said, lazily: "They seem to be working you for all you're worth. Is that it?"

"No; there is something worse. Something's happened which throws all that quite in the shade. Mrs. Adding is here."

"Mrs. Adding?" he repeated, with a dimness for names which she would not allow was growing on him.

"Don't be stupid, dear! Mrs. Adding, who sat opposite Mr. Kenby on the Norumbia. The mother of the nice boy."

"Oh, yes! Well, that's good!"

"No, it isn't! Don't say such a thing--till you know!" she cried, with a certain shrillness which warned him of an unfathomed seriousness in the fact. He sat up as if better to confront the mystery. "I have been at her hotel, and she has been telling me that she's just come from Berlin, and that Mr. Kenby's been there, and--Now I won't have you making a joke of it, or breaking out about it, as if it were not a thing to be looked for; though of course with the others on our hands you're not to blame for not thinking of it. But you can see yourself that she's young and good-looking. She did speak beautifully of her son, and if it were not for him, I don't believe she would hesitate--"

"For heaven's sake, what are you driving at?" March broke in, and she answered him as vehemently:

"He's asked her to marry him!"

"Kenby? Mrs. Adding?"

"Yes!"

"Well, now, Isabel, this won't do! They ought to be ashamed of themselves. With that morbid, sensitive boy! It's shocking--"

"Will you listen? Or do you want me to stop?" He arrested himself at her threat, and she resumed, after giving her contempt of his turbulence time to sink in, "She refused him, of course!"

"Oh, all right, then!"

"You take it in such a way that I've a great mind not to tell you anything more about it."

"I know you have," he said, stretching himself out again; "but you'll do it, all the same. You'd have been awfully disappointed if I had been calm and collected."

"She refused him," she began again, "although she respects him, because she feels that she ought to devote herself to her son. Of course she's very young, still; she was married when she was only nineteen to a man twice her age, and she's not thirty-five yet. I don't think she ever cared much for her husband; and she wants you to find out something about him."

"I never heard of him. I--"

Mrs. March made a "tchck!" that would have recalled the most consequent of men from the most logical and coherent interpretation to the true intent of her words. He perceived his mistake, and said, resolutely: "Well, I won't do it. If she's refused him, that's the end of it; she needn't know anything about him, and she has no right to."

"Now I think differently," said Mrs. March, with an inductive air. "Of course she has to know about him, now." She stopped, and March turned his head and looked expectantly at her. "He said he would not consider her answer final, but would hope to see her again and--She's afraid he may follow her--What are you looking at me so for?"

"Is he coming here?"

"Am I to blame if he is? He said he was going to write to her."

March burst into a laugh. "Well, they haven't been beating about the bush! When I think how Miss Triscoe has been pursuing Burnamy from the first moment she set eyes on him, with the settled belief that she was running from him, and he imagines that he has been boldly following her, without the least hope from her, I can't help admiring the simple directness of these elders."

"And if Kenby wants to talk with you, what will you say?" she cut in eagerly.

"I'll say I don't like the subject. What am I in Carlsbad for? I came for the cure, and I'm spending time and money on it. I might as well go and take my three cups of Felsenquelle on a full stomach as to listen to Kenby."

"I know it's bad for you, and I wish we had never seen those people," said Mrs. March. "I don't believe he'll want to talk with you; but if--"

"Is Mrs. Adding in this hotel? I'm not going to have them round in my bread-trough!"

"She isn't. She's at one of the hotels on the hill."

"Very well, let her stay there, then. They can manage their love-affairs in their own way. The only one I care the least for is the boy."

"Yes, it is forlorn for him. But he likes Mr. Kenby, and--No, it's horrid, and you can't make it anything else!"

"Well, I'm not trying to." He turned his face away. "I must get my nap, now." After she thought he must have fallen asleep, he said, "The first thing you know, those old Eltwins will be coming round and telling us that they're going to get divorced." Then he really slept.

XXXII.

The mid-day dinner at Pupp's was the time to see the Carlsbad world, and the Marches had the habit of sitting long at table to watch it.

There was one family in whom they fancied a sort of literary quality, as if they had come out of some pleasant German story, but they never knew anything about them. The father by his dress must have been a Protestant clergyman; the mother had been a beauty and was still very handsome; the daughter was good-looking, and of a good-breeding which was both girlish and ladylike. They commended themselves by always taking the table d'hote dinner, as the Marches did, and eating through from the soup and the rank fresh-water fish to the sweet, upon the same principle: the husband ate all the compote and gave the others his dessert, which was not good for him. A young girl of a different fascination remained as much a mystery. She was small and of an extreme tenuity, which became more bewildering as she advanced through her meal, especially at supper, which she made of a long cucumber pickle, a Frankfort sausage of twice the pickle's length, and a towering goblet of beer; in her lap she held a shivering little hound; she was in the decorous keeping of an elderly maid, and had every effect of being a gracious Fraulein. A curious contrast to her Teutonic voracity was the temperance of a young Latin swell, imaginably from Trieste, who sat long over his small coffee and cigarette, and tranquilly mused upon the pages of an Italian newspaper. At another table there was a very noisy lady, short and fat, in flowing draperies of white, who commanded a sallow family of South-Americans, and loudly harangued them in South-American Spanish; she flared out in a picture which nowhere lacked strong effects; and in her background lurked a mysterious black face and figure, ironically subservient to the old man, the mild boy, and the pretty young girl in the middle distance of the family group.

Amidst the shows of a hardened worldliness there were touching glimpses of domesticity and heart: a young bride fed her husband soup from her own plate with her spoon, unabashed by the publicity; a mother and her two pretty daughters hung about a handsome officer, who must have been newly betrothed to one of the girls; and, the whole family showed a helpless fondness for him, which he did not despise, though he held it in check; the girls dressed alike, and seemed to have for their whole change of costume a difference from time to time in the color of their sleeves. The Marches believed they had seen the growth of the romance which had eventuated so happily; and they saw other romances which did not in any wise eventuate. Carlsbad was evidently one of the great marriage marts of middle Europe, where mothers brought their daughters to be admired, and everywhere the flower of life was blooming for the hand of love. It blew by on all the promenades in dresses and hats as pretty as they could be bought or imagined; but it was chiefly at Pupp's that it flourished. For the most part it seemed to flourish in vain, and to be destined to be put by for another season to dream, bulblike, of the coming summer in the quiet of Moldavian and Transylvanian homes.

Perhaps it was oftener of fortunate effect than the spectators knew; but

for their own pleasure they would not have had their pang for it less; and March objected to having a more explicit demand upon his sympathy. "We could have managed," he said, at the close of their dinner, as he looked compassionately round upon the parterre of young girls, "we could have managed with Burnamy and Miss Triscoe; but to have Mrs. Adding and Kenby launched upon us is too much. Of course I like Kenby, and if the widow alone were concerned I would give him my blessing: a wife more or a widow less is not going to disturb the equilibrium of the universe; but--" He stopped, and then he went on: "Men and women are well enough. They complement each other very agreeably, and they have very good times together. But why should they get in love?--It is sure to make them uncomfortable to themselves and annoying to others." He broke off, and stared about him. "My dear, this is really charming--almost as charming as the Posthof." The crowd spread from the open vestibule of the hotel and the shelter of its branching pavilion roofs until it was dimmed in the obscurity of the low grove across the way in an ultimate depth where the musicians were giving the afternoon concert. Between its two stationary divisions moved a current of promenaders, with some such effect as if the colors of a lovely garden should have liquefied and flowed in mingled rose and lilac, pink and yellow, and white and orange, and all the middle tints of modern millinery. Above on one side were the agreeable bulks of architecture, in the buff and gray of Carlsbad; and far beyond on the other were the upland slopes, with villas and long curves of country roads, belted in with miles of wall. "It would be about as offensive to have a love-interest that one personally knew about intruded here," he said, "as to have a two-spanner carriage driven through this crowd. It ought to be forbidden by the municipality."

Mrs. March listened with her ears, but not with her eyes, and she answered: "See that handsome young Greek priest! Isn't he an archimandrite? The portier said he was."

"Then let him pass for an archimandrite. Now," he recurred to his grievance again, dreamily, "I have got to take Papa Triscoe in hand, and poison his mind against Burnamy, and I shall have to instil a few drops of venomous suspicion against Kenby into the heart of poor little Rose Adding. Oh;" he broke out, "they will spoil everything. They'll be with us morning, noon, and night," and he went on to work the joke of repining at his lot. The worst thing, he said, would be the lovers' pretence of being interested in something besides themselves, which they were no more capable of than so many lunatics. How could they care for pretty girls playing tennis on an upland level, in the waning afternoon? Or a cartful of peasant women stopping to cross themselves at a way-side shrine? Or a whistling boy with holes in his trousers pausing from some wayside raspberries to touch his hat and say good-morning? Or those preposterous maidens sprinkling linen on the grass from watering-pots while the skies were full of rain? Or that blacksmith shop where Peter the Great made a horseshoe. Or the monument of the young warrior-poet Koerner, with a gentle-looking girl and her mother reading and knitting on a bench before it? These simple pleasures sufficed them, but what could lovers really care for them? A peasant girl flung down on the grassy road-side, fast asleep, while her yoke-fellow, the gray old dog, lay in his harness near her with one drowsy eye half open for her and the other for the contents

of their cart; a boy chasing a red squirrel in the old upper town beyond the Tepl, and enlisting the interest of all the neighbors; the negro door-keeper at the Golden Shield who ought to have spoken our Southern English, but who spoke bad German and was from Cairo; the sweet afternoon stillness in the woods; the good German mothers crocheting at the Posthof concerts. Burnamy as a young poet might have felt the precious quality of these things, if his senses had not been holden by Miss Triscoe; and she might have felt it if only he had done so. But as it was it would be lost upon their preoccupation; with Mrs. Adding and Kenby it would be hopeless.

A day or two after Mrs. March had met Mrs. Adding, she went with her husband to revere a certain magnificent blackamoor whom he had discovered at the entrance of one of the aristocratic hotels on the Schlossberg, where he performed the function of a kind of caryatid, and looked, in the black of his skin and the white of his flowing costume, like a colossal figure carved in ebony and ivory. They took a roundabout way through a street entirely of villa-pensions; every house in Carlsbad but one is a pension if it is not a hotel; but these were of a sort of sentimental prettiness; with each a little garden before it, and a bower with an iron table in it for breakfasting and supping out-doors; and he said that they would be the very places for bridal couples who wished to spend the honey-moon in getting well of the wedding surfeit. She denounced him for saying such a thing as that, and for his inconsistency in complaining of lovers while he was willing to think of young married people. He contended that there was a great difference in the sort of demand that young married people made upon the interest of witnesses, and that they were at least on their way to sanity; and before they agreed, they had come to the hotel with the blackamoor at the door. While they lingered, sharing the splendid creature's hospitable pleasure in the spectacle he formed, they were aware of a carriage with liveried coachman and footman at the steps of the hotel; the liveries were very quiet and distinguished, and they learned that the equipage was waiting for the Prince of Coburg, or the Princess of Montenegro, or Prince Henry of Prussia; there were differing opinions among the twenty or thirty bystanders. Mrs. March said she did not care which it was; and she was patient of the denouement, which began to postpone itself with delicate delays. After repeated agitations at the door among portiers, proprietors, and waiters, whose fluttered spirits imparted their thrill to the spectators, while the coachman and footman remained sculpturesquely impassive in their places, the carriage moved aside and let an energetic American lady and her family drive up to the steps. The hotel people paid her a tempered devotion, but she marred the effect by rushing out and sitting on a balcony to wait for the delaying royalties. There began to be more promises of their early appearance; a footman got down and placed himself at the carriage door; the coachman stiffened himself on his box; then he relaxed; the footman drooped, and even wandered aside. There came a moment when at some signal the carriage drove quite away from the portal and waited near the gate of the stableyard; it drove back, and the spectators redoubled their attention. Nothing happened, and some of them dropped off. At last an indescribable significance expressed itself in the official group at the door; a man in a high hat and dresscoat hurried out; a footman hurried to meet him; they

spoke inaudibly together. The footman mounted to his place; the coachman gathered up his reins and drove rapidly out of the hotel-yard, down the street, round the corner, out of sight. The man in the tall hat and dress-coat went in; the official group at the threshold dissolved; the statue in ivory and ebony resumed its place; evidently the Hoheit of Coburg, or Montenegro, or Prussia, was not going to take the air.

"My dear, this is humiliating."

"Not at all! I wouldn't have missed it for anything. Think how near we came to seeing them!"

"I shouldn't feel so shabby if we had seen them. But to hang round here in this plebeian abeyance, and then to be defeated and defrauded at last! I wonder how long this sort of thing is going on?"

"What thing?"

"This base subjection of the imagination to the Tom Foolery of the Ages."

"I don't know what you mean. I'm sure it's very natural to want to see a Prince."

"Only too natural. It's so deeply founded in nature that after denying royalty by word and deed for a hundred years, we Americans are hungrier for it than anybody else. Perhaps we may come back to it!"

"Nonsense!"

They looked up at the Austrian flag on the tower of the hotel, languidly curling and uncurling in the bland evening air, as it had over a thousand years of stupid and selfish monarchy, while all the generous republics of the Middle Ages had perished, and the commonwealths of later times had passed like fever dreams. That dull, inglorious empire had antedated or outlived Venice and Genoa, Florence and Siena, the England of Cromwell, the Holland of the Stadtholders, and the France of many revolutions, and all the fleeting democracies which sprang from these.

March began to ask himself how his curiosity differed from that of the Europeans about him; then he became aware that these had detached themselves, and left him exposed to the presence of a fellow countryman. It was Otterson, with Mrs. Otterson; he turned upon March with hilarious recognition. "Hello! Most of the Americans in Carlsbad seem to be hanging round here for a sight of these kings. Well, we don't have a great many of 'em, and it's natural we shouldn't want to miss any. But now, you Eastern fellows, you go to Europe every summer, and yet you don't seem to get enough of 'em. Think it's human nature, or did it get so ground into us in the old times that we can't get it out, no difference what we say?"

"That's very much what I've been asking myself," said March. "Perhaps it's any kind of show. We'd wait nearly as long for the President to come out, wouldn't we?"

"I reckon we would. But we wouldn't for his nephew, or his second cousin."

"Well, they wouldn't be in the way of the succession."

"I guess you're right." The lowan seemed better satisfied with March's philosophy than March felt himself, and he could not forbear adding:

"But I don't, deny that we should wait for the President because he's a kind of king too. I don't know that we shall ever get over wanting to see kings of some kind. Or at least my wife won't. May I present you to Mrs. March?"

"Happy to meet you, Mrs. March," said the lowan. "Introduce you to Mrs. Otterson. I'm the fool in my family, and I know just how you feel about a chance like this. I don't mean that you're--"

They all laughed at the hopeless case, and Mrs. March said, with one of her unexpected likings: "I understand, Mr. Otterson. And I would rather be our kind of fool than the kind that pretends not to care for the sight of a king."

"Like you and me, Mrs. Otterson," said March.

"Indeed, indeed," said the lady, "I'd like to see a king too, if it didn't take all night. Good-evening," she said, turning her husband about with her, as if she suspected a purpose of patronage in Mrs. March, and was not going to have it.

Otterson looked over his shoulder to explain, despairingly: "The trouble with me is that when I do get a chance to talk English, there's such a flow of language it carries me away, and I don't know just where I'm landing."

XXXIII.

There were several kings and their kindred at Carlsbad that summer. One day the Duchess of Orleans drove over from Marienbad, attended by the Duke on his bicycle. After luncheon, they reappeared for a moment before mounting to her carriage with their Secretaries: two young French gentlemen whose dress and bearing better satisfied Mrs. March's exacting passion for an aristocratic air in their order. The Duke was fat and fair, as a Bourbon should be, and the Duchess fatter, though not so fair, as became a Hapsburg, but they were both more plebeian-looking than their retainers, who were slender as well as young, and as perfectly appointed as English tailors could imagine them.

"It wouldn't do for the very highest sort of Highhotes," March declared, "to look their own consequence personally; they have to leave that, like

everything else, to their inferiors."

By a happy heterophemy of Mrs. March's the German Hoheit had now become Highhote, which was so much more descriptive that they had permanently adopted it, and found comfort to their republican pride in the mockery which it poured upon the feudal structure of society. They applied it with a certain compunction, however, to the King of Servia, who came a few days after the Duke and Duchess: he was such a young King, and of such a little country. They watched for him from the windows of the reading-room, while the crowd outside stood six deep on the three sides of the square before the hotel, and the two plain public carriages which brought the King and his suite drew tamely up at the portal, where the proprietor and some civic dignitaries received him. His moderated approach, so little like that of royalty on the stage, to which Americans are used, allowed Mrs. March to make sure of the pale, slight, insignificant, amiable-looking youth in spectacles as the sovereign she was ambuscading. Then no appeal to her principles could keep her from peeping through the reading-room door into the rotunda, where the King graciously but speedily dismissed the civic gentlemen and the proprietor, and vanished into the elevator. She was destined to see him so often afterwards that she scarcely took the trouble to time her dining and supping by that of the simple potentate, who had his meals in one of the public rooms, with three gentlemen of his suite, in sack-coats like himself, after the informal manner of the place.

Still another potentate, who happened that summer to be sojourning abroad, in the interval of a successful rebellion, was at the opera one night with some of his faithful followers. Burnamy had offered Mrs. March, who supposed that he merely wanted her and her husband with him, places in a box; but after she eagerly accepted, it seemed that he wished her to advise him whether it would do to ask Miss Triscoe and her father to join them.

"Why not?" she returned, with an arching of the eyebrows.

"Why," he said, "perhaps I had better make a clean breast of it."

"Perhaps you had," she said, and they both laughed, though he laughed with a knot between his eyes.

"The fact is, you know, this isn't my treat, exactly. It's Mr. Stoller's." At the surprise in her face he hurried on. "He's got back his first letter in the paper, and he's so much pleased with the way he reads in print, that he wants to celebrate."

"Yes," said Mrs. March, non-committally.

Burnamy laughed again. "But he's bashful, and he isn't sure that you would all take it in the right way. He wants you as friends of mine; and he hasn't quite the courage to ask you himself."

This seemed to Mrs. March so far from bad that she said: "That's very nice of him. Then he's satisfied with--with your help? I'm glad of

that."

"Thank you. He's met the Triscoes, and he thought it would be pleasant to you if they went, too."

"Oh, certainly."

"He thought," Burnamy went on, with the air of feeling his way, "that we might all go to the opera, and then--then go for a little supper afterwards at Schwarzkopf's."

He named the only place in Carlsbad where you can sup so late as ten o'clock; as the opera begins at six, and is over at half past eight, none but the wildest roisterers frequent the place.

"Oh!" said Mrs. March. "I don't know how a late supper would agree with my husband's cure. I should have to ask him."

"We could make it very hygienic," Burnamy explained.

In repeating his invitation she blamed Burnamy's uncandor so much that March took his part, as perhaps she intended, and said, "Oh, nonsense," and that he should like to go in for the whole thing; and General Triscoe accepted as promptly for himself and his daughter. That made six people, Burnamy counted up, and he feigned a decent regret that there was not room for Mrs. Adding and her son; he would have liked to ask them.

Mrs. March did not enjoy it so much as coming with her husband alone when they took two florin seats in the orchestra for the comedy. The comedy always began half an hour earlier than the opera, and they had a five-o'clock supper at the Theatre-Cafe before they went, and they got to sleep by nine o'clock; now they would be up till half past ten at least, and that orgy at Schwarzkopf's might not be at all good for him. But still she liked being there; and Miss Triscoe made her take the best seat; Burnamy and Stoller made the older men take the other seats beside the ladies, while they sat behind, or stood up, when they, wished to see, as people do in the back of a box. Stoller was not much at ease in evening dress, but he bore himself with a dignity which was not perhaps so gloomy as it looked; Mrs. March thought him handsome in his way, and required Miss Triscoe to admire him. As for Burnamy's beauty it was not necessary to insist upon that; he had the distinction of slender youth; and she liked to think that no Highhote there was of a more patrician presence than this yet unprinted contributor to 'Every Other Week'. He and Stoller seemed on perfect terms; or else in his joy he was able to hide the uneasiness which she had fancied in him from the first time she saw them together, and which had never been quite absent from his manner in Stoller's presence. Her husband always denied that it existed, or if it did that it was anything but Burnamy's effort to get on common ground with an inferior whom fortune had put over him.

The young fellow talked with Stoller, and tried to bring him into the range of the general conversation. He leaned over the ladies, from time to time, and pointed out the notables whom he saw in the house; she was

glad, for his sake, that he did not lean less over her than over Miss Triscoe. He explained certain military figures in the boxes opposite, and certain ladies of rank who did not look their rank; Miss Triscoe, to Mrs. March's thinking, looked their united ranks, and more; her dress was very simple, but of a touch which saved it from being insipidly girlish; her beauty was dazzling.

"Do you see that old fellow in the corner chair just behind the orchestra?" asked Burnamy. "He's ninety-six years old, and he comes to the theatre every night, and falls asleep as soon as the curtain rises, and sleeps through till the end of the act."

"How dear!" said the girl, leaning forward to fix the nonagenarian with her glasses, while many other glasses converged upon her. "Oh, wouldn't you like to know him, Mr. March?"

"I should consider it a liberal education. They have brought these things to a perfect system in Europe. There is nothing to make life pass smoothly like inflexible constancy to an entirely simple custom. My dear," he added to his wife, "I wish we'd seen this sage before. He'd have helped us through a good many hours of unintelligible comedy. I'm always coming as Burnamy's guest, after this."

The young fellow swelled with pleasure in his triumph, and casting an eye about the theatre to cap it, he caught sight of that other potentate. He whispered joyfully, "Ah! We've got two kings here to-night," and he indicated in a box of their tier just across from that where the King of Servia sat, the well-known face of the King of New York.

"He isn't bad-looking," said March, handing his glass to General Triscoe. "I've not seen many kings in exile; a matter of a few Carlist princes and ex-sovereign dukes, and the good Henry V. of France, once, when I was staying a month in Venice; but I don't think they any of them looked the part better. I suppose he has his dream of recurring power like the rest."

"Dream!" said General Triscoe with the glass at his eyes. "He's dead sure of it."

"Oh, you don't really mean that!"

"I don't know why I should have changed my mind."

"Then it's as if we were in the presence of Charles II. just before he was called back to England, or Napoleon in the last moments of Elba. It's better than that. The thing is almost unique; it's a new situation in history. Here's a sovereign who has no recognized function, no legal status, no objective existence. He has no sort of public being, except in the affection of his subjects. It took an upheaval little short of an earthquake to unseat him. His rule, as we understand it, was bad for all classes; the poor suffered more than the rich; the people have now had three years of self-government; and yet this wonderful man has such a hold upon the masses that he is going home to win the cause of oppression

at the head of the oppressed. When he's in power again, he will be as subjective as ever, with the power of civic life and death, and an idolatrous following perfectly ruthless in the execution of his will."

"We've only begun," said the general. "This kind of king is municipal, now; but he's going to be national. And then, good-by, Republic!"

"The only thing like it," March resumed, too incredulous of the evil future to deny himself the aesthetic pleasure of the parallel, "is the rise of the Medici in Florence, but even the Medici were not mere manipulators of pulls; they had some sort of public office, with some sort of legislated tenure of it. The King of New York is sovereign by force of will alone, and he will reign in the voluntary submission of the majority. Is our national dictator to be of the same nature and quality?"

"It would be the scientific evolution, wouldn't it?"

The ladies listened with the perfunctory attention which women pay to any sort of inquiry which is not personal. Stoller had scarcely spoken yet; he now startled them all by demanding, with a sort of vindictive force, "Why shouldn't he have the power, if they're willing to let him?"

"Yes," said General Triscoe, with a tilt of his head towards March. "That's what we must ask ourselves more and more."

March leaned back in his chair, and looked up over his shoulder at Stoller. "Well, I don't know. Do you think it's quite right for a man to use an unjust power, even if others are willing that he should?"

Stoller stopped with an air of bewilderment as if surprised on the point of saying that he thought just this. He asked instead, "What's wrong about it?"

"Well, that's one of those things that have to be felt, I suppose. But if a man came to you, and offered to be your slave for a certain consideration--say a comfortable house, and a steady job, that wasn't too hard--should you feel it morally right to accept the offer? I don't say think it right, for there might be a kind of logic for it."

Stoller seemed about to answer; he hesitated; and before he had made any response, the curtain rose.

XXXIV.

There are few prettier things than Carlsbad by night from one of the many bridges which span the Tepl in its course through the town. If it is a starry night, the torrent glides swiftly away with an inverted firmament in its bosom, to which the lamps along its shores and in the houses on either side contribute a planetary splendor of their own. By nine

o'clock everything is hushed; not a wheel is heard at that dead hour; the few feet shuffling stealthily through the Alte Wiese whisper a caution of silence to those issuing with a less guarded tread from the opera; the little bowers that overhang the stream are as dark and mute as the restaurants across the way which serve meals in them by day; the whole place is as forsaken as other cities at midnight. People get quickly home to bed, or if they have a mind to snatch a belated joy, they slip into the Theater-Cafe, where the sleepy Frauleins serve them, in an exemplary drowse, with plates of cold ham and bottles of the gently gaseous waters of Giesshubl. Few are of the bold badness which delights in a supper at Schwarzkopf's, and even these are glad of the drawn curtains which hide their orgy from the chance passer.

The invalids of Burnamy's party kept together, strengthening themselves in a mutual purpose not to be tempted to eat anything which was not strictly 'kurgemass'. Mrs. March played upon the interest which each of them felt in his own case so artfully that she kept them talking of their cure, and left Burnamy and Miss Triscoe to a moment on the bridge, by which they profited, while the others strolled on, to lean against the parapet and watch the lights in the skies and the water, and be alone together. The stream shone above and below, and found its way out of and into the darkness under the successive bridges; the town climbed into the night with lamp-lit windows here and there, till the woods of the hill-sides darkened down to meet it, and fold it in an embrace from which some white edifice showed palely in the farthest gloom.

He tried to make her think they could see that great iron crucifix which watches over it day and night from its piny cliff. He had a fancy for a poem, very impressionistic, which should convey the notion of the crucifix's vigil. He submitted it to her; and they remained talking till the others had got out of sight and hearing; and she was letting him keep the hand on her arm which he had put there to hold her from falling over the parapet, when they were both startled by approaching steps, and a voice calling, "Look here! Who's running this supper party, anyway?"

His wife had detached March from her group for the mission, as soon as she felt that the young people were abusing her kindness. They answered him with hysterical laughter, and Burnamy said, "Why, it's Mr. Stoller's treat, you know."

At the restaurant, where the proprietor obsequiously met the party on the threshold and bowed them into a pretty inner room, with a table set for their supper, Stoller had gained courage to play the host openly. He appointed General Triscoe to the chief seat; he would have put his daughter next to him, if the girl had not insisted upon Mrs. March's having the place, and going herself to sit next to March, whom she said she had not been able to speak a word to the whole evening. But she did not talk a great deal to him; he smiled to find how soon he dropped out of the conversation, and Burnamy, from his greater remoteness across the table, dropped into it. He really preferred the study of Stoller, whose instinct of a greater worldly quality in the Triscoes interested him; he could see him listening now to what General Triscoe was saying to Mrs. March, and now to what Burnamy was saying to Miss Triscoe; his strong,

selfish face, as he turned it on the young people, expressed a mingled grudge and greed that was very curious.

Stoller's courage, which had come and gone at moments throughout, rose at the end, and while they lingered at the table well on to the hour of ten, he said, in the sort of helpless offence he had with Burnamy, "What's the reason we can't all go out tomorrow to that old castle you was talking about?"

"To Engelhaus? I don't know any reason, as far as I'm concerned," answered Burnamy; but he refused the initiative offered him, and Stoller was obliged to ask March:

"You heard about it?"

"Yes." General Triscoe was listening, and March added for him, "It was the hold of an old robber baron; Gustavus Adolphus knocked it down, and it's very picturesque, I believe."

"It sounds promising," said the general. "Where is it?"

"Isn't to-morrow our mineral bath?" Mrs. March interposed between her husband and temptation.

"No; the day after. Why, it's about ten or twelve miles out on the old postroad that Napoleon took for Prague."

"Napoleon knew a good road when he saw it," said the general, and he alone of the company lighted a cigar. He was decidedly in favor of the excursion, and he arranged for it with Stoller, whom he had the effect of using for his pleasure as if he were doing him a favor. They were six, and two carriages would take them: a two-spanner for four, and a one-spanner for two; they could start directly after dinners and get home in time for supper.

Stoller asserted himself to say: "That's all right, then. I want you to be my guests, and I'll see about the carriages." He turned to Burnamy: "Will you order them?"

"Oh," said the young fellow, with a sort of dryness, "the portier will get them."

"I don't understand why General Triscoe was so willing to accept. Surely, he can't like that man!" said Mrs. March to her husband in their own room.

"Oh, I fancy that wouldn't be essential. The general seems to me, capable of letting even an enemy serve his turn. Why didn't you speak, if you didn't want to go?"

"Why didn't you?"

"I wanted to go."

"And I knew it wouldn't do to let Miss Triscoe go alone; I could see that she wished to go."

"Do you think Burnamy did?"

"He seemed rather indifferent. And yet he must have realized that he would be with Miss Triscoe the whole afternoon."

XXXV.

If Burnamy and Miss Triscoe took the lead in the one-spanner, and the others followed in the two-spanner, it was not from want of politeness on the part of the young people in offering to give up their places to each of their elders in turn. It would have been grotesque for either March or Stoller to drive with the girl; for her father it was apparently no question, after a glance at the more rigid uprightness of the seat in the one-spanner; and he accepted the place beside Mrs. March on the back seat of the two-spanner without demur. He asked her leave to smoke, and then he scarcely spoke to her. But he talked to the two men in front of him almost incessantly, haranguing them upon the inferiority of our conditions and the futility of our hopes as a people, with the effect of bewildering the cruder arrogance of Stoller, who could have got on with Triscoe's contempt for the worthlessness of our working-classes, but did not know what to do with his scorn of the vulgarity and venality of their employers. He accused some of Stoller's most honored and envied capitalists of being the source of our worst corruptions, and guiltier than the voting-cattle whom they bought and sold.

"I think we can get rid of the whole trouble if we go at it the right way," Stoller said, diverging for the sake of the point he wished to bring in. "I believe in having the government run on business principles. They've got it here in Carlsbad, already, just the right sort of thing, and it works. I been lookin' into it, and I got this young man, yonder"--he twisted his hand in the direction of the one-spanner! "to help me put it in shape. I believe it's going to make our folks think, the best ones among them. Here!" He drew a newspaper out of his pocket, folded to show two columns in their full length, and handed it to Triscoe, who took it with no great eagerness, and began to run his eye over it. "You tell me what you think of that. I've put it out for a kind of a feeler. I got some money in that paper, and I just thought I'd let our people see how a city can be managed on business principles."

He kept his eye eagerly upon Triscoe, as if to follow his thought while he read, and keep him up to the work, and he ignored the Marches so entirely that they began in self-defence to talk with each other.

Their carriage had climbed from Carlsbad in long irregular curves to the breezy upland where the great highroad to Prague ran through fields of

harvest. They had come by heights and slopes of forest, where the serried stems of the tall firs showed brown and whitish-blue and grew straight as stalks of grain; and now on either side the farms opened under a sky of unwonted cloudlessness. Narrow strips of wheat and rye, which the men were cutting with sickles, and the women in red bodices were binding, alternated with ribands of yellowing oats and grass, and breadths of beets and turnips, with now and then lengths of ploughed land. In the meadows the peasants were piling their carts with heavy rowen, the girls lifting the hay on the forks, and the men giving themselves the lighter labor of ordering the load. From the upturned earth, where there ought to have been troops of strutting crows, a few sombre ravens rose. But they could not rob the scene of its gayety; it smiled in the sunshine with colors which vividly followed the slope of the land till they were dimmed in the forests on the far-off mountains. Nearer and farther, the cottages and villages shone in the valleys, or glimmered through the veils of the distant haze. Over all breathed the keen pure air of the hills, with a sentiment of changeless eld, which charmed March, back to his boyhood, where he lost the sense of his wife's presence, and answered her vaguely. She talked contentedly on in the monologue to which the wives of absent-minded men learn to resign themselves. They were both roused from their vagary by the voice of General Triscoe. He was handing back the folded newspaper to Stoller, and saying, with a queer look at him over his glasses, "I should like to see what your contemporaries have to say to all that."

"Well, sir," Stoller returned, "maybe I'll have the chance to show you. They got my instructions over there to send everything to me."

Burnamy and Miss Triscoe gave little heed to the landscape as landscape. They agreed that the human interest was the great thing on a landscape, after all; but they ignored the peasants in the fields and meadows, who were no more to them than the driver on the box, or the people in the two-spanner behind. They were talking of the hero and heroine of a novel they had both read, and he was saying, "I suppose you think he was justly punished."

"Punished?" she repeated. "Why, they got married, after all!"

"Yes, but you could see that they were not going to be happy."

"Then it seems to me that she was punished; too."

"Well, yes; you might say that. The author couldn't help that."

Miss Triscoe was silent a moment before she said:

"I always thought the author was rather hard on the hero. The girl was very exacting."

"Why," said Burnamy, "I supposed that women hated anything like deception in men too much to tolerate it at all. Of course, in this case, he didn't deceive her; he let her deceive herself; but wasn't that worse?"

"Yes, that was worse. She could have forgiven him for deceiving her."

"Oh!"

"He might have had to do that. She wouldn't have minded his fibbing outright, so much, for then it wouldn't have seemed to come from his nature. But if he just let her believe what wasn't true, and didn't say a word to prevent her, of course it was worse. It showed something weak, something cowardly in him."

Burnamy gave a little cynical laugh. "I suppose it did. But don't you think it's rather rough, expecting us to have all the kinds of courage?"

"Yes, it is," she assented. "That is why I say she was too exacting. But a man oughtn't to defend him."

Burnamy's laugh had more pleasure in it, now. "Another woman might?"

"No. She might excuse him."

He turned to look back at the two-spanner; it was rather far behind, and he spoke to their driver bidding him go slowly till it caught up with them. By the time it did so, they were so close to it that they could distinguish the lines of its wandering and broken walls. Ever since they had climbed from the wooded depths of the hills above Carlsbad to the open plateau, it had shown itself in greater and greater detail. The detached mound of rock on which it stood rose like an island in the midst of the plain, and commanded the highways in every direction.

"I believe," Burnamy broke out, with a bitterness apparently relevant to the ruin alone, "that if you hadn't required any quarterings of nobility from him, Stoller would have made a good sort of robber baron. He's a robber baron by nature, now, and he wouldn't have any scruple in levying tribute on us here in our one-spanner, if his castle was in good repair and his crossbowmen were not on a strike. But they would be on a strike, probably, and then he would lock them out, and employ none but non-union crossbowmen."

If Miss Triscoe understood that he arraigned the morality as well as the civility of his employer, she did not take him more seriously than he meant, apparently, for she smiled as she said, "I don't see how you can have anything to do with him, if you feel so about him."

"Oh," Burnamy replied in kind, "he buys my poverty and not my will. And perhaps if I thought better of myself, I should respect him more."

"Have you been doing something very wicked?"

"What should you have to say to me, if I had?" he bantered.

"Oh, I should have nothing at all to say to you," she mocked back.

They turned a corner of the highway, and drove rattling through a village

street up a long slope to the rounded hill which it crowned. A church at its base looked out upon an irregular square.

A gaunt figure of a man, with a staring mask, which seemed to hide a darkling mind within, came out of the church, and locked it behind him. He proved to be the sacristan, and the keeper of all the village's claims upon the visitors' interest; he mastered, after a moment, their wishes in respect to the castle, and showed the path that led to it; at the top, he said, they would find a custodian of the ruins who would admit them.

XXXVI.

The path to the castle slanted upward across the shoulder of the hill, to a certain point, and there some rude stone steps mounted more directly. Wilding lilac-bushes, as if from some forgotten garden, bordered the ascent; the chickory opened its blue flower; the clean bitter odor of vermouth rose from the trodden turf; but Nature spreads no such lavish feast in wood or field in the Old World as she spoils us with in the New; a few kinds, repeated again and again, seem to be all her store, and man must make the most of them. Miss Triscoe seemed to find flowers enough in the simple bouquet which Burnamy put together for her. She took it, and then gave it back to him, that she might have both hands for her skirt, and so did him two favors.

A superannuated forester of the nobleman who owns the ruin opened a gate for the party at the top, and levied a tax of thirty kreutzers each upon them, for its maintenance. The castle, by his story, had descended from robber sire to robber son, till Gustavus knocked it to pieces in the sixteenth century; three hundred years later, the present owner restored it; and now its broken walls and arches, built of rubble mixed with brick, and neatly pointed up with cement, form a ruin satisfyingly permanent. The walls were not of great extent, but such as they were they enclosed several dungeons and a chapel, all underground, and a cistern which once enabled the barons and their retainers to water their wine in time of siege.

From that height they could overlook the neighboring highways in every direction, and could bring a merchant train to, with a shaft from a crossbow, or a shot from an arquebuse, at pleasure. With General Triscoe's leave, March praised the strategic strength of the unique position, which he found expressive of the past, and yet suggestive of the present. It was more a difference in method than anything else that distinguished the levy of customs by the authorities then and now. What was the essential difference, between taking tribute of travellers passing on horseback, and collecting dues from travellers arriving by steamer? They did not pay voluntarily in either case; but it might be proof of progress that they no longer fought the customs officials.

"Then you believe in free trade," said Stoller, severely.

"No. I am just inquiring which is the best way of enforcing the tariff laws."

"I saw in the Paris Chronicle, last night," said Miss Triscoe, "that people are kept on the docks now for hours, and ladies cry at the way their things are tumbled over by the inspectors."

"It's shocking," said Mrs. March, magisterially.

"It seems to be a return to the scenes of feudal times," her husband resumed. "But I'm glad the travellers make no resistance. I'm opposed to private war as much as I am to free trade."

"It all comes round to the same thing at last," said General Triscoe. "Your precious humanity--"

"Oh, I don't claim it exclusively," March protested.

"Well, then, our precious humanity is like a man that has lost his road. He thinks he is finding his way out, but he is merely rounding on his course, and coming back to where he started."

Stoller said, "I think we ought to make it so rough for them, over here, that they will come to America and set up, if they can't stand the duties."

"Oh, we ought to make it rough for them anyway," March consented.

If Stoller felt his irony, he did not know what to answer. He followed with his eyes the manoeuvre by which Burnamy and Miss Triscoe eliminated themselves from the discussion, and strayed off to another corner of the ruin, where they sat down on the turf in the shadow of the wall; a thin, upland breeze drew across them, but the sun was hot. The land fell away from the height, and then rose again on every side in carpetlike fields and in long curving bands, whose parallel colors passed unblended into the distance. "I don't suppose," Burnamy said, "that life ever does much better than this, do you? I feel like knocking on a piece of wood and saying 'Unberufen.' I might knock on your bouquet; that's wood."

"It would spoil the flowers," she said, looking down at them in her belt. She looked up and their eyes met.

"I wonder," he said, presently, "what makes us always have a feeling of dread when we are happy?"

"Do you have that, too?" she asked.

"Yes. Perhaps it's because we know that change must come, and it must be for the worse."

"That must be it. I never thought of it before, though."

"If we had got so far in science that we could predict psychological

weather, and could know twenty-four hours ahead when a warm wave of bliss or a cold wave of misery was coming, and prepare for smiles and tears beforehand--it may come to that."

"I hope it won't. I'd rather not know when I was to be happy; it would spoil the pleasure; and wouldn't be any compensation when it was the other way."

A shadow fell across them, and Burnamy glanced round to see Stoller looking down at them, with a slant of the face that brought his aquiline profile into relief. "Oh! Have a turf, Mr. Stoller?" he called gayly up to him.

"I guess we've seen about all there is," he answered. "Hadn't we better be going?" He probably did not mean to be mandatory.

"All right," said Burnamy, and he turned to speak to Miss Triscoe again without further notice of him.

They all descended to the church at the foot of the hill where the weird sacristan was waiting to show them the cold, bare interior, and to account for its newness with the fact that the old church had been burnt, and this one built only a few years before. Then he locked the doors after them, and ran forward to open against their coming the chapel of the village cemetery, which they were to visit after they had fortified themselves for it at the village cafe.

They were served by a little hunch-back maid; and she told them who lived in the chief house of the village. It was uncommonly pretty; where all the houses were picturesque, and she spoke of it with respect as the dwelling of a rich magistrate who was clearly the great man of the place. March admired the cat which rubbed against her skirt while she stood and talked, and she took his praises modestly for the cat; but they wrought upon the envy, of her brother so that he ran off to the garden, and came back with two fat, sleepy-eyed puppies which he held up, with an arm across each of their stomachs, for the acclaim of the spectators.

"Oh, give him something! "Mrs. March entreated. "He's such a dear."

"No, no! I am not going to have my little hunchback and her cat outdone," he refused; and then he was about to yield.

"Hold on!" said Stoller, assuming the host. "I got the change."

He gave the boy a few kreutzers, when Mrs. March had meant her husband to reward his naivete with half a florin at least; but he seemed to feel that he had now ingratiated himself with the ladies, and he put himself in charge of them for the walk to the cemetery chapel; he made Miss Triscoe let him carry her jacket when she found it warm.

The chapel is dedicated to the Holy Trinity, and the Jesuit brother who designed it, two or three centuries ago, indulged a devotional fancy in the triangular form of the structure and the decorative details.

Everything is three-cornered; the whole chapel, to begin with, and then the ark of the high altar in the middle of it, and each of the three side-altars. The clumsy baroque taste of the architecture is a German version of the impulse that was making Italy fantastic at the time; the carving is coarse, and the color harsh and unsoftened by years, though it is broken and obliterated in places.

The sacristan said that the chapel was never used for anything but funeral services, and he led the way out into the cemetery, where he wished to display the sepulchral devices. The graves here were planted with flowers, and some were in a mourning of black pansies; but a space fenced apart from the rest held a few neglected mounds, overgrown with weeds and brambles: This space, he said, was for suicides; but to March it was not so ghastly as the dapper grief of certain tombs in consecrated ground where the stones had photographs of the dead on porcelain let into them. One was the picture of a beautiful young woman, who had been the wife of the local magnate; an eternal love was vowed to her in the inscription, but now, the sacristan said, with nothing of irony, the magnate was married again, and lived in that prettiest house of the village. He seemed proud of the monument, as the thing worthiest the attention of the strangers, and he led them with less apparent hopefulness to the unfinished chapel representing a Gethsemane, with the figure of Christ praying and his apostles sleeping. It is a subject much celebrated in terra-cotta about Carlsbad, and it was not a novelty to his party; still, from its surroundings, it had a fresh pathos, and March tried to make him understand that they appreciated it. He knew that his wife wished the poor man to think he had done them a great favor in showing it; he had been touched with all the vain shows of grief in the poor, ugly little place; most of all he had felt the exile of those who had taken their own lives and were parted in death from the more patient sufferers who had waited for God to take them. With a curious, unpainful self-analysis he noted that the older members of the party, who in the course of nature were so much nearer death, did not shrink from its shows; but the young girl and the young man had not borne to look on them, and had quickly escaped from the place, somewhere outside the gate. Was it the beginning, the promise of that reconciliation with death which nature brings to life at last, or was it merely the effect, or defect, of ossified sensibilities, of toughened nerves?

"That is all?" he asked of the spectral sacristan.

"That is all," the man said, and March felt in his pocket for a coin commensurate to the service he had done them; it ought to be something handsome.

"No, no," said Stoller, detecting his gesture. "Your money a'n't good."

He put twenty or thirty kreutzers into the hand of the man, who regarded them with a disappointment none the less cruel because it was so patient. In France, he would have been insolent; in Italy, he would have frankly said it was too little; here, he merely looked at the money and whispered a sad "Danke."

Burnamy and Miss Triscoe rose from the grassy bank outside where they were sitting, and waited for the elders to get into their two-spanner.

"Oh, have I lost my glove in there?" said Mrs. March, looking at her hands and such parts of her dress as a glove might cling to.

"Let me go and find it for you," Burnamy entreated.

"Well," she consented, and she added, "If the sacristan has found it, give him something for me something really handsome, poor fellow."

As Burnamy passed her, she let him see that she had both her gloves, and her heart yearned upon him for his instant smile of intelligence: some men would have blundered out that she had the lost glove in her hand. He came back directly, saying, "No, he didn't find it."

She laughed, and held both gloves up. "No wonder! I had it all the time. Thank you ever so much."

"How are we going to ride back?" asked Stoller.

Burnamy almost turned pale; Miss Triscoe smiled impenetrably. No one else spoke, and Mrs. March said, with placid authority, "Oh, I think the way we came, is best."

"Did that absurd creature," she apostrophized her husband as soon as she got him alone after their arrival at Pupp's, "think I was going to let him drive back with Agatha?"

"I wonder," said March, "if that's what Burnamy calls her now?"

"I shall despise him if it isn't."

XXXVII.

Burnamy took up his mail to Stoller after the supper which they had eaten in a silence natural with two men who have been off on a picnic together. He did not rise from his writing-desk when Burnamy came in, and the young man did not sit down after putting his letters before him. He said, with an effort of forcing himself to speak at once, "I have looked through the papers, and there is something that I think you ought to see."

"What do you mean?" said Stoller.

Burnamy laid down three or four papers opened to pages where certain articles were strongly circumscribed in ink. The papers varied, but their editorials did not, in purport at least. Some were grave and some were gay; one indignantly denounced; another affected an ironical bewilderment; the third simply had fun with the Hon. Jacob Stoller. They all, however, treated his letter on the city government of Carlsbad

as the praise of municipal socialism, and the paper which had fun with him gleefully congratulated the dangerous classes on the accession of the Honorable Jacob to their ranks.

Stoller read the articles, one after another, with parted lips and gathering drops of perspiration on his upper lip, while Burnamy waited on foot. He flung the papers all down at last. "Why, they're a pack of fools! They don't know what they're talking about! I want city government carried on on business principles, by the people, for the people. I don't care what they say! I know I'm right, and I'm going ahead on this line if it takes all--" The note of defiance died out of his voice at the sight of Burnamy's pale face. "What's the matter with you?"

"There's nothing the matter with me."

"Do you mean to tell me it is"--he could not bring himself to use the word--"what they say?"

"I suppose," said Burnamy, with a dry mouth, "it's what you may call municipal socialism."

Stoller jumped from his seat. "And you knew it when you let me do it?"

"I supposed you knew what you were about."

"It's a lie!" Stoller advanced upon him, wildly, and Burnamy took a step backward.

"Look out!" shouted Burnamy. "You never asked me anything about it. You told me what you wanted done, and I did it. How could I believe you were such an ignoramus as not to know the a b c of the thing you were talking about?" He added, in cynical contempt, "But you needn't worry. You can make it right with the managers by spending a little more money than you expected to spend."

Stoller started as if the word money reminded him of something. "I can take care of myself, young man. How much do I owe you?"

"Nothing!" said Burnamy, with an effort for grandeur which failed him.

The next morning as the Marches sat over their coffee at the Posthof, he came dragging himself toward them with such a haggard air that Mrs. March called, before he reached their table, "Why, Mr. Burnamy, what's the matter?"

He smiled miserably. "Oh, I haven't slept very well. May I have my coffee with you? I want to tell you something; I want you to make me. But I can't speak till the coffee comes. Fraulein!" he besought a waitress going off with a tray near them. "Tell Lili, please, to bring me some coffee--only coffee."

He tried to make some talk about the weather, which was rainy, and the

Marches helped him, but the poor endeavor lagged wretchedly in the interval between the ordering and the coming of the coffee. "Ah, thank you, Lili," he said, with a humility which confirmed Mrs. March in her instant belief that he had been offering himself to Miss Triscoe and been rejected. After gulping his coffee, he turned to her: "I want to say good-by. I'm going away."

"From Carlsbad?" asked Mrs. March with a keen distress.

The water came into his eyes. "Don't, don't be good to me, Mrs. March! I can't stand it. But you won't, when you know."

He began to speak of Stoller, first to her, but addressing himself more and more to the intelligence of March, who let him go on without question, and laid a restraining hand upon his wife when he saw her about to prompt him. At the end, "That's all," he said, huskily, and then he seemed to be waiting for March's comment. He made none, and the young fellow was forced to ask, "Well, what do you think, Mr. March?"

"What do you think yourself?"

"I think, I behaved badly," said Burnamy, and a movement of protest from Mrs. March nerved him to add: "I could make out that it was not my business to tell him what he was doing; but I guess it was; I guess I ought to have stopped him, or given him a chance to stop himself. I suppose I might have done it, if he had treated me decently when I turned up a day late, here; or hadn't acted toward me as if I were a hand in his buggy-works that had come in an hour after the whistle sounded."

He set his teeth, and an indignant sympathy shone in Mrs. March's eyes; but her husband only looked the more serious.

He asked gently, "Do you offer that fact as an explanation, or as a justification."

Burnamy laughed forlornly. "It certainly wouldn't justify me. You might say that it made the case all the worse for me." March forbore to say, and Burnamy went on. "But I didn't suppose they would be onto him so quick, or perhaps at all. I thought--if I thought anything--that it would amuse some of the fellows in the office, who know about those things." He paused, and in March's continued silence he went on. "The chance was one in a hundred that anybody else would know where he had brought up."

"But you let him take that chance," March suggested.

"Yes, I let him take it. Oh, you know how mixed all these things are!"

"Yes."

Of course I didn't think it out at the time. But I don't deny that I had a satisfaction in the notion of the hornets' nest he was poking his thick head into. It makes me sick, now, to think I had. I oughtn't to have

let him; he was perfectly innocent in it. After the letter went, I wanted to tell him, but I couldn't; and then I took the chances too. I don't believe he could have ever got forward in politics; he's too honest--or he isn't dishonest in the right way. But that doesn't let me out. I don't defend myself! I did wrong; I behaved badly. But I've suffered for it.

I've had a foreboding all the time that it would come to the worst, and felt like a murderer with his victim when I've been alone with Stoller. When I could get away from him I could shake it off, and even believe that it hadn't happened. You can't think what a nightmare it's been! Well, I've ruined Stoller politically, but I've ruined myself, too. I've spoiled my own life; I've done what I can never explain to--to the people I want to have believe in me; I've got to steal away like the thief I am. Good-by!" He jumped to his feet, and put out his hand to March, and then to Mrs. March.

"Why, you're not going away now!" she cried, in a daze.

"Yes, I am. I shall leave Carlsbad on the eleven-o'clock train. I don't think I shall see you again." He clung to her hand. "If you see General Triscoe--I wish you'd tell them I couldn't--that I had to--that I was called away suddenly--Good-by!" He pressed her hand and dropped it, and mixed with the crowd. Then he came suddenly back, with a final appeal to March: "Should you--do you think I ought to see Stoller, and--and tell him I don't think I used him fairly?"

"You ought to know--" March began.

But before he could say more, Burnamy said, "You're right," and was off again.

"Oh, how hard you were with him, my dear!" Mrs. March lamented.

"I wish," he said, "if our boy ever went wrong that some one would be as true to him as I was to that poor fellow. He condemned himself; and he was right; he has behaved very badly."

"You always overdo things so, when you act righteously!"

"Now, Isabel!"

"Oh, yes, I know what you will say. But I should have tempered justice with mercy."

Her nerves tingled with pity for Burnamy, but in her heart she was glad that her husband had had strength to side with him against himself, and she was proud of the forbearance with which he had done it. In their earlier married life she would have confidently taken the initiative on all moral questions. She still believed that she was better fitted for their decision by her Puritan tradition and her New England birth, but once in a great crisis when it seemed a question of their living, she had weakened before it, and he, with no such advantages, had somehow met the

issue with courage and conscience. She could not believe he did so by inspiration, but she had since let him take the brunt of all such issues and the responsibility. He made no reply, and she said: "I suppose you'll admit now there was always something peculiar in the poor boy's manner to Stoller."

He would confess no more than that there ought to have been. "I don't see how he could stagger through with that load on his conscience. I'm not sure I like his being able to do so."

She was silent in the misgiving which she shared with him, but she said: "I wonder how far it has gone with him and Miss Triscoe?"

"Well, from his wanting you to give his message to the general in the plural--"

"Don't laugh! It's wicked to laugh! It's heartless!" she cried, hysterically. "What will he do, poor fellow?"

"I've an idea that he will light on his feet, somehow. But, at any rate, he's doing the right thing in going to own up to Stoller."

"Oh, Stoller! I care nothing for Stoller! Don't speak to me of Stoller!"

Burnamy fond the Bird of Prey, as he no longer had the heart to call him, walking up and down in his room like an eagle caught in a trap. He erected his crest fiercely enough, though, when the young fellow came in at his loudly shouted, "Herein!"

"What do you want?" he demanded, brutally.

This simplified Burnamy's task, while it made it more loathsome. He answered not much less brutally, "I want to tell you that I think I used you badly, that I let you betray yourself, that I feel myself to blame." He could have added, "Curse you!" without change of tone.

Stoller sneered in a derision that showed his lower teeth like a dog's when he snarls. "You want to get back!"

"No," said Burnamy, mildly, and with increasing sadness as he spoke. "I don't want to get back. Nothing would induce me. I'm going away on the first train."

"Well, you're not!" shouted Stoller. "You've lied me into this--"

"Look out!" Burnamy turned white.

"Didn't you lie me into it, if you let me fool myself, as you say?" Stoller pursued, and Burnamy felt himself weaken through his wrath. "Well, then, you got to lie me out of it. I been going over the damn thing, all night--and you can do it for me. I know you can do it," he gave way in a plea that was almost a whimper. "Look here! You see if

you can't. I'll make it all right with you. I'll pay you whatever you think is right--whatever you say."

"Oh!" said Burnamy, in otherwise unutterable disgust.

"You kin," Stoller went on, breaking down more and more into his adopted Hoosier, in the stress of his anxiety. "I know you kin, Mr. Burnamy." He pushed the paper containing his letter into Burnamy's hands, and pointed out a succession of marked passages. "There! And here! And this place! Don't you see how you could make out that it meant something else, or was just ironical?" He went on to prove how the text might be given the complexion he wished, and Burnamy saw that he had really thought it not impossible. "I can't put it in writing as well as you; but I've done all the work, and all you've got to do is to give it some of them turns of yours. I'll cable the fellows in our office to say I've been misrepresented, and that my correction is coming. We'll get it into shape here together, and then I'll cable that. I don't care for the money. And I'll get our counting-room to see this scoundrel"--he picked up the paper that had had fun with him--"and fix him all right, so that he'll ask for a suspension of public opinion, and--You see, don't you?"

The thing did appeal to Burnamy. If it could be done, it would enable him to make Stoller the reparation he longed to make him more than anything else in the world. But he heard himself saying, very gently, almost tenderly, "It might be done, Mr. Stoller. But I couldn't do it. It wouldn't be honest--for me."

"Yah!" yelled Stoller, and he crushed the paper into a wad and flung it into Burnamy's face. "Honest, you damn humbug! You let me in for this, when you knew I didn't mean it, and now you won't help me out because it a'n't honest! Get out of my room, and get out quick before I--"

He hurled himself toward Burnamy, who straightened himself, with "If you dare! He knew that he was right in refusing; but he knew that Stoller was right, too, and that he had not meant the logic of what he had said in his letter, and of what Burnamy had let him imply. He braved Stoller's onset, and he left his presence untouched, but feeling as little a moral hero as he well could.

XXXVIII.

General Triscoe woke in the bad humor of an elderly man after a day's pleasure, and in the self-reproach of a pessimist who has lost his point of view for a time, and has to work back to it. He began at the belated breakfast with his daughter when she said, after kissing him gayly, in the small two-seated bower where they breakfasted at their hotel when they did not go to the Posthof, "Didn't you have a nice time, yesterday, papa?"

She sank into the chair opposite, and beamed at him across the little

iron table, as she lifted the pot to pour out his coffee.

"What do you call a nice time?" he temporized, not quite able to resist her gayety.

"Well, the kind of time I had."

"Did you get rheumatism from sitting on the grass? I took cold in that old church, and the tea at that restaurant must have been brewed in a brass kettle. I suffered all night from it. And that ass from Illinois--"

"Oh, poor papa! I couldn't go with Mr. Stoller alone, but I might have gone in the two-spanner with him and let you have Mr. or Mrs. March in the one-spanner."

"I don't know. Their interest in each other isn't so interesting to other people as they seem to think."

"Do you feel that way really, papa? Don't you like their being so much in love still?"

"At their time of life? Thank you it's bad enough in young people."

The girl did not answer; she appeared altogether occupied in pouring out her father's coffee.

He tasted it, and then he drank pretty well all of it; but he said, as he put his cup down, "I don't know what they make this stuff of. I wish I had a cup of good, honest American coffee."

"Oh, there's nothing like American food!" said his daughter, with so much conciliation that he looked up sharply.

But whatever he might have been going to say was at least postponed by the approach of a serving-maid, who brought a note to his daughter. She blushed a little at sight of it, and then tore it open and read:

"I am going away from Carlsbad, for a fault of my own which forbids me to look you in the face. If you wish to know the worst of me, ask Mrs. March. I have no heart to tell you."

Agatha read these mystifying words of Burnamy's several times over in a silent absorption with them which left her father to look after himself, and he had poured out a second cup of coffee with his own hand, and was reaching for the bread beside her before she came slowly back to a sense of his presence.

"Oh, excuse me, papa," she said, and she gave him the butter. "Here's a very strange letter from Mr. Burnamy, which I think you'd better see." She held the note across the table to him, and watched his face as he read it.

After he had read it twice, he turned the sheet over, as people do with letters that puzzle them, in the vain hope of something explanatory on the back. Then he looked up and asked: "What do you suppose he's been doing?"

"I don't believe he's been doing anything. It's something that Mr. Stoller's been doing to him."

"I shouldn't infer that from his own words. What makes you think the trouble is with Stoller?"

"He said--he said yesterday--something about being glad to be through with him, because he disliked him so much he was always afraid of wronging him. And that proves that now Mr. Stoller has made him believe that he's done wrong, and has worked upon him till he does believe it."

"It proves nothing of the kind," said the general, recurring to the note. After reading it again, he looked keenly at her: "Am I to understand that you have given him the right to suppose you would want to know the worst --or the best of him?"

The girl's eyes fell, and she pushed her knife against her plate. She began: "No--"

"Then confound his impudence!" the general broke out. "What business has he to write to you at all about this?"

"Because he couldn't go away without it!" she returned; and she met her father's eye courageously. "He had a right to think we were his friends; and if he has done wrong, or is in disgrace any way, isn't it manly of him to wish to tell us first himself?"

Her father could not say that it was not. But he could and did say, very sceptically: "Stuff! Now, see here, Agatha: what are you going to do?"

"I'm going to see Mrs. March, and then--"

"You mustn't do anything of the kind, my dear," said her father, gently. "You've no right to give yourself away to that romantic old goose." He put up his hand to interrupt her protest. "This thing has got to be gone to the bottom of. But you're not to do it. I will see March myself. We must consider your dignity in this matter--and mine. And you may as well understand that I'm not going to have any nonsense. It's got to be managed so that it can't be supposed we're anxious about it, one way or the other, or that he was authorized to write to you in this way--"

"No, no! He oughtn't to have done so. He was to blame. He couldn't have written to you, though, papa--"

"Well, I don't know why. But that's no reason why we should let it be understood that he has written to you. I will see March; and I will manage to see his wife, too. I shall probably find them in the reading-room at Pupp's, and--"

The Marches were in fact just coming in from their breakfast at the Posthof, and he met them at the door of Pupp's, where they all sat down on one of the iron settees of the piazza, and began to ask one another questions of their minds about the pleasure of the day before, and to beat about the bush where Burnamy lurked in their common consciousness.

Mrs. March was not able to keep long from starting him. "You knew," she said, "that Mr. Burnamy had left us?"

"Left! Why?" asked the general.

She was a woman of resource, but in a case like this she found it best to trust her husband's poverty of invention. She looked at him, and he answered for her with a promptness that made her quake at first, but finally seemed the only thing, if not the best thing: "He's had some trouble with Stoller." He went on to tell the general just what the trouble was.

At the end the general grunted as from an uncertain mind. "You think he's behaved badly."

"I think he's behaved foolishly--youthfully. But I can understand how strongly he was tempted. He could say that he was not authorized to stop Stoller in his mad career."

At this Mrs. March put her hand through her husband's arm.

"I'm not so sure about that," said the general.

March added: "Since I saw him this morning, I've heard something that disposes me to look at his performance in a friendlier light. It's something that Stoller told me himself; to heighten my sense of Burnamy's wickedness. He seems to have felt that I ought to know what a serpent I was cherishing in my bosom," and he gave Triscoe the facts of Burnamy's injurious refusal to help Stoller put a false complexion on the opinions he had allowed him ignorantly to express.

The general grunted again. "Of course he had to refuse, and he has behaved like a gentleman so far. But that doesn't justify him in having let Stoller get himself into the scrape."

"No," said March. "It's a tough nut for the casuist to try his tooth on. And I must say I feel sorry for Stoller."

Mrs. March plucked her hand from his arm. "I don't, one bit. He was thoroughly selfish from first to last. He has got just what he deserved."

"Ah, very likely," said her husband. "The question is about Burnamy's part in giving him his deserts; he had to leave him to them, of course."

The general fixed her with the impenetrable glitter of his eye-glasses,

and left the subject as of no concern to him. "I believe," he said, rising, "I'll have a look at some of your papers," and he went into the reading-room.

"Now," said Mrs. March, "he will go home and poison that poor girl's mind. And, you will have yourself to thank for prejudicing him against Burnamy."

"Then why didn't you do it yourself, my dear?" he teased; but he was really too sorry for the whole affair, which he nevertheless enjoyed as an ethical problem.

The general looked so little at the papers that before March went off for his morning walk he saw him come out of the reading-room and take his way down the Alte Wiese. He went directly back to his daughter, and reported Burnamy's behavior with entire exactness. He dwelt upon his making the best of a bad business in refusing to help Stoller out of it, dishonorably and mendaciously; but he did not conceal that it was a bad business.

"Now, you know all about it," he said at the end, "and I leave the whole thing to you. If you prefer, you can see Mrs. March. I don't know but I'd rather you'd satisfy yourself--"

"I will not see Mrs. March. Do you think I would go back of you in that way? I am satisfied now."

XXXIX.

Instead of Burnamy, Mrs. Adding and her son now breakfasted with the Marches at the Posthof, and the boy was with March throughout the day a good deal. He rectified his impressions of life in Carlsbad by March's greater wisdom and experience, and did his best to anticipate his opinions and conform to his conclusions. This was not easy, for sometimes he could not conceal from himself, that March's opinions were whimsical, and his conclusions fantastic; and he could not always conceal from March that he was matching them with Kenby's on some points, and suffering from their divergence. He came to join the sage in his early visit to the springs, and they walked up and down talking; and they went off together on long strolls in which Rose was proud to bear him company. He was patient of the absences from which he was often answered, and he learned to distinguish between the earnest and the irony of which March's replies seemed to be mixed. He examined him upon many features of German civilization, but chiefly upon the treatment of women in it; and upon this his philosopher was less satisfactory than he could have wished him to be. He tried to excuse his trifling as an escape from the painful stress of questions which he found so afflicting himself; but in the matter of the woman-and-dog teams, this was not easy. March owned that the notion of their being yokemates was shocking; but he urged that it was a stage of evolution, and a distinct advance upon the time when women

dragged the carts without the help of the dogs; and that the time might not be far distant when the dogs would drag the carts without the help of the women.

Rose surmised a joke, and he tried to enjoy it, but inwardly he was troubled by his friend's apparent acceptance of unjust things on their picturesque side. Once as they were sauntering homeward by the brink of the turbid Eger, they came to a man lying on the grass with a pipe in his mouth, and lazily watching from under his fallen lids the cows grazing by the river-side, while in a field of scraggy wheat a file of women were reaping a belated harvest with sickles, bending wearily over to clutch the stems together and cut them with their hooked blades. "Ah, delightful!" March took off his hat as if to salute the pleasant sight.

"But don't you think, Mr. March," the boy ventured, "that the man had better be cutting the wheat, and letting the women watch the cows?"

"Well, I don't know. There are more of them; and he wouldn't be half so graceful as they are, with that flow of their garments, and the sway of their aching backs." The boy smiled sadly, and March put his hand on his shoulder as they walked on. "You find a lot of things in Europe that need putting right, don't you, Rose?"

"Yes; I know it's silly."

"Well, I'm not sure. But I'm afraid it's useless. You see, these old customs go such a way back, and are so grounded in conditions. We think they might be changed, if those who rule could be got to see how cruel and ugly they are; but probably they couldn't. I'm afraid that the Emperor of Austria himself couldn't change them, in his sovereign plenitude of power. The Emperor is only an old custom too, and he's as much grounded in the conditions as any." This was the serious way Rose felt that March ought always to talk; and he was too much grieved to laugh when he went on. "The women have so much of the hard work to do, over here, because the emperors need the men for their armies. They couldn't let their men cut wheat unless it was for their officers' horses, in the field of some peasant whom it would ruin."

If Mrs. March was by she would not allow him to work these paradoxes for the boy's confusion. She said the child adored him, and it was a sacrilege to play with his veneration. She always interfered to save him, but with so little logic though so much justice that Rose suffered a humiliation from her championship, and was obliged from a sense of self-respect to side with the mocker. She understood this, and magnanimously urged it as another reason why her husband should not trifle with Rose's ideal of him; to make his mother laugh at him was wicked.

"Oh, I'm not his only ideal," March protested. "He adores Kenby too, and every now and then he brings me to book with a text from Kenby's gospel."

Mrs. March caught her breath. "Kenby! Do you really think, then, that she--"

"Oh, hold on, now! It isn't a question of Mrs. Adding; and I don't say Rose had an eye on poor old Kenby as a step-father. I merely want you to understand that I'm the object of a divided worship, and that when I'm off duty as an ideal I don't see why I shouldn't have the fun of making Mrs. Adding laugh. You can't pretend she isn't wrapped up in the boy. You've said that yourself."

"Yes, she's wrapped up in him; she'd give her life for him; but she is so light. I didn't suppose she was so light; but it's borne in upon me more and more."

They were constantly seeing Rose and his mother, in the sort of abeyance the Triscoes had fallen into. One afternoon the Addings came to Mrs. March's room to look from her windows at a parade of bicyclers' clubs from the neighboring towns. The spectacle prospered through its first half-hour, with the charm which German sentiment and ingenuity, are able to lend even a bicycle parade. The wheelmen and wheelwomen filed by on machines wreathed with flowers and ribbons, and decked with streaming banners. Here and there one sat under a moving arch of blossoms, or in a bower of leaves and petals, and they were all gay with their club costumes and insignia. In the height of the display a sudden mountain shower gathered and broke upon them. They braved it till it became a drenching down-pour; then they leaped from their machines and fled to any shelter they could find, under trees and in doorways. The men used their greater agility to get the best places, and kept them; the women made no appeal for them by word or look, but took the rain in the open as if they expected nothing else.

Rose watched the scene with a silent intensity which March interpreted. "There's your chance, Rose. Why don't you go down and rebuke those fellows?"

Rose blushed and shrank away without answer, and Mrs. March promptly attacked her husband in his behalf. "Why don't you go and rebuke them yourself?"

Well, for one thing, there isn't any conversation in my phrase-book Between an indignant American Herr and a Party of German Wheelmen who have taken Shelter from the Rain and are keeping the Wheelwomen out in the Wet." Mrs. Adding shrieked her delight, and he was flattered into going on. "For another thing, I think it's very well for you ladies to realize from an object-lesson of this sort what spoiled children of our civilization you are. It ought to make you grateful for your privileges."

"There is something in that," Mrs. Adding joyfully consented.

"Oh, there is no civilization but ours," said Mrs. March, in a burst of vindictive patriotism. "I am more and more convinced of it the longer I stay in Europe."

"Perhaps that's why we like to stay so long in Europe; it strengthens us in the conviction that America is the only civilized country in the

world," said March.

The shower passed as quickly as it had gathered, and the band which it had silenced for a moment burst forth again in the music which fills the Carlsbad day from dawn till dusk. Just now, it began to play a pot pourri of American airs; at the end some unseen Americans under the trees below clapped and cheered.

"That was opportune of the band," said March. "It must have been a telepathic impulse from our patriotism in the director. But a pot pourri of American airs is like that tablet dedicating the American Park up here on the Schlossberg, which is signed by six Jews and one Irishman. The only thing in this medley that's the least characteristic or original is Dixie; and I'm glad the South has brought us back into the Union."

"You don't know one note from another, my dear," said his wife.

"I know the 'Washington Post.'"

"And don't you call that American?"

"Yes, if Sousa is an American name; I should have thought it was Portuguese."

"Now that sounds a little too much like General Triscoe's pessimism," said Mrs. March; and she added: "But whether we have any national melodies or not, we don't poke women out in the rain and keep them soaking!"

"No, we certainly don't," he assented, with such a well-studied effect of yielding to superior logic that Mrs. Adding screamed for joy.

The boy had stolen out of the room, and he said, "I hope Rose isn't acting on my suggestion?"

"I hate to have you tease him, dearest," his wife interposed.

"Oh, no," the mother said, laughing still, but with a note of tenderness in her laugh, which dropped at last to a sigh. "He's too much afraid of lese-majesty, for that. But I dare say he couldn't stand the sight. He's queer."

"He's beautiful!" said Mrs. March.

"He's good," the mother admitted. "As good as the day's long. He's never given me a moment's trouble--but he troubles me. If you can understand!"

"Oh, I do understand!" Mrs. March returned. "By his innocence, you mean. That is the worst of children. Their innocence breaks our hearts and makes us feel ourselves such dreadful old things."

"His innocence, yes," pursued Mrs. Adding, "and his ideals." She began

to laugh again. "He may have gone off for a season of meditation and prayer over the misbehavior of these bicyclers. His mind is turning that way a good deal lately. It's only fair to tell you, Mr. March, that he seems to be giving up his notion of being an editor. You mustn't be disappointed."

"I shall be sorry," said the editor. "But now that you mention it, I think I have noticed that Rose seems rather more indifferent to periodical literature. I supposed he might simply have exhausted his questions--or my answers."

"No; it goes deeper than that. I think it's Europe that's turned his mind in the direction of reform. At any rate he thinks now he will be a reformer."

"Really! What kind of one? Not religious, I hope?"

"No. His reform has a religious basis, but its objects are social. I don't make it out, exactly; but I shall, as soon as Rose does. He tells me everything, and sometimes I don't feel equal to it, spiritually or even intellectually."

"Don't laugh at him, Mrs. Adding!" Mrs. March entreated.

"Oh, he doesn't mind my laughing," said the mother, gayly. Rose came shyly back into the room, and she said, "Well, did you rebuke those bad bicyclers?" and she laughed again.

"They're only a custom, too, Rose," said March, tenderly. "Like the man resting while the women worked, and the Emperor, and all the rest of it."

"Oh, yes, I know," the boy returned.

"They ride modern machines, but they live in the tenth century. That's what we're always forgetting when we come to Europe and see these barbarians enjoying all our up-to-date improvements."

There, doesn't that console you?" asked his mother, and she took him away with her, laughing back from the door. "I don't believe it does, a bit!"

"I don't believe she understands the child," said Mrs. March. "She is very light, don't you think? I don't know, after all, whether it wouldn't be a good thing for her to marry Kenby. She is very easygoing, and she will be sure to marry somebody."

She had fallen into a tone of musing censure, and he said, "You might put these ideas to her."

With the passage of the days and weeks, the strange faces which had familiarized themselves at the springs disappeared; even some of those which had become the faces of acquaintance began to go. In the diminishing crowd the smile of Otterson was no longer to be seen; the sad, severe visage of Major Eltwin, who seemed never to have quite got his bearings after his error with General Triscoe, seldom showed itself. The Triscoes themselves kept out of the Marches' way, or they fancied so; Mrs. Adding and Rose alone remained of their daily encounter.

It was full summer, as it is everywhere in mid-August, but at Carlsbad the sun was so late getting up over the hills that as people went to their breakfasts at the cafes up the valley of the Tepl they found him looking very obliquely into it at eight o'clock in the morning. The yellow leaves were thicker about the feet of the trees, and the grass was silvery gray with the belated dews. The breakfasters were fewer than they had been, and there were more little barefooted boys and girls with cups of red raspberries which they offered to the passers with cries of "Himbeeren! Himbeeren!" plaintive as the notes of birds left songless by the receding summer.

March was forbidden the fruit, but his wife and Mrs. Adding bought recklessly of it, and ate it under his eyes with their coffee and bread, pouring over it pots of clotted cream that the 'schone' Lili brought them. Rose pretended an indifference to it, which his mother betrayed was a sacrifice in behalf of March's inability.

Lili's delays in coming to be paid had been such that the Marches now tried to pay her when she brought their breakfast, but they sometimes forgot, and then they caught her whenever she came near them. In this event she liked to coquet with their impatience; she would lean against their table, and say: "Oh, no. You stay a little. It is so nice." One day after such an entreaty, she said, "The queen is here, this morning."

Mrs. March started, in the hope of highnotes. "The queen!"

"Yes; the young lady. Mr. Burnamy was saying she was a queen. She is there with her father." She nodded in the direction of a distant corner, and the Marches knew that she meant Miss Triscoe and the general. "She is not seeming so gayly as she was being."

March smiled. "We are none of us so gayly as we were being, Lili. The summer is going."

"But Mr. Burnamy will be returning, not true?" the girl asked, resting her tray on the corner of the table.

"No, I'm afraid he won't," March returned sadly.

"He was very good. He was paying the proprietor for the dishes that Augusta did break when she was falling down. He was paying before he went away, when he was knowing that the proprietor would make Augusta to pay."

"Ah!" said March, and his wife said, "That was like him!" and she eagerly explained to Mrs. Adding how good and great Burnamy had been in this characteristic instance, while Lili waited with the tray to add some pathetic facts about Augusta's poverty and gratitude. "I think Miss Triscoe ought to know it. There goes the wretch, now!" she broke off. "Don't look at him!" She set her husband the example of averting his face from the sight of Stoller sullenly pacing up the middle aisle of the grove, and looking to the right and left for a vacant table. "Ugh! I hope he won't be able to find a single place."

Mrs. Adding gave one of her peeling laughs, while Rose watched March's face with grave sympathy. "He certainly doesn't deserve one. Don't let us keep you from offering Miss Triscoe any consolation you can." They got up, and the boy gathered up the gloves, umbrella, and handkerchief which the ladies let drop from their laps.

"Have you been telling?" March asked his wife.

"Have I told you anything?" she demanded of Mrs. Adding in turn. "Anything that you didn't as good as know, already?"

"Not a syllable!" Mrs. Adding replied in high delight. "Come, Rose!"

"Well, I suppose there's no use saying anything," said March, after she left them.

"She had guessed everything, without my telling her," said his wife.

"About Stoller?"

"Well-no. I did tell her that part, but that was nothing. It was about Burnamy and Agatha that she knew. She saw it from the first."

"I should have thought she would have enough to do to look after poor old Kenby."

"I'm not sure, after all, that she cares for him. If she doesn't, she oughtn't to let him write to her. Aren't you going over to speak to the Triscoes?"

"No, certainly not. I'm going back to the hotel. There ought to be some steamer letters this morning. Here we are, worrying about these strangers all the time, and we never give a thought to our own children on the other side of the ocean."

"I worry about them, too," said the mother, fondly. "Though there is nothing to worry about," she added.

"It's our duty to worry," he insisted.

At the hotel the portier gave them four letters. There was one from each of their children: one very buoyant, not to say boisterous, from the

daughter, celebrating her happiness in her husband, and the loveliness of Chicago as a summer city ("You would think she was born out there!" sighed her mother); and one from the son, boasting his well-being in spite of the heat they were having ("And just think how cool it is here!" his mother upbraided herself), and the prosperity of 'Every Other Week'. There was a line from Fulkerson, praising the boy's editorial instinct, and ironically proposing March's resignation in his favor.

"I do believe we could stay all winter, just as well as not," said Mrs. March, proudly. "What does 'Burnamy say?"

"How do you know it's from him?"

"Because you've been keeping your hand on it! Give it here."

"When I've read it."

The letter was dated at Ansbach, in Germany, and dealt, except for some messages of affection to Mrs. March, with a scheme for a paper which Burnamy wished to write on Kaspar Hauser, if March thought he could use it in 'Every Other Week'. He had come upon a book about that hapless foundling in Nuremberg, and after looking up all his traces there he had gone on to Ansbach, where Kaspar Hauser met his death so pathetically. Burnamy said he could not give any notion of the enchantment of Nuremberg; but he besought March, if he was going to the Tyrol for his after-cure, not to fail staying a day or so in the wonderful place. He thought March would enjoy Ansbach too, in its way.

"And, not a word--not a syllable--about Miss Triscoe!" cried Mrs. March. "Shall you take his paper?"

"It would be serving him right, if I refused it, wouldn't it?"

They never knew what it cost Burnamy to keep her name out of his letter, or by what an effort of the will he forbade himself even to tell of his parting interview with Stoller. He had recovered from his remorse for letting Stoller give himself away; he was still sorry for that, but he no longer suffered; yet he had not reached the psychological moment when he could celebrate his final virtue in the matter. He was glad he had been able to hold out against the temptation to retrieve himself by another wrong; but he was humbly glad, and he felt that until happier chance brought him and his friends together he must leave them to their merciful conjectures. He was young, and he took the chance, with an aching heart. If he had been older, he might not have taken it.

XLI.

The birthday of the Emperor comes conveniently, in late August, in the good weather which is pretty sure to fall then, if ever in the Austrian summer. For a week past, at Carlsbad, the workmen had been building a

scaffolding for the illumination in the woods on a height overlooking the town, and making unobtrusive preparations at points within it.

The day was important as the last of March's cure, and its pleasures began for him by a renewal of his acquaintance in its first kindness with the Eltwins. He had met them so seldom that at one time he thought they must have gone away, but now after his first cup he saw the quiet, sad old pair, sitting together on a bench in the Stadt Park, and he asked leave to sit down with them till it was time for the next. Eltwin said that this was their last day, too; and explained that his wife always came with him to the springs, while he took the waters.

"Well," he apologized, "we're all that's left, and I suppose we like to keep together." He paused, and at the look in March's face he suddenly went on. "I haven't been well for three or four years; but I always fought against coming out here, when the doctors wanted me to. I said I couldn't leave home; and, I don't suppose I ever should. But my home left me."

As he spoke his wife shrank tenderly near him, and March saw her steal her withered hand into his.

"We'd had a large family, but they'd all died off, with one thing or another, and here in the spring we lost our last daughter. Seemed perfectly well, and all at once she died; heart-failure, they called it. It broke me up, and mother, here, got at me to go. And so we're here." His voice trembled; and his eyes softened; then they flashed up, and March heard him add, in a tone that astonished him less when he looked round and saw General Triscoe advancing toward them, "I don't know what it is always makes me want to kick that man."

The general lifted his hat to their group, and hoped that Mrs. Eltwin was well, and Major Eltwin better. He did not notice their replies, but said to March, "The ladies are waiting for you in Pupp's readingroom, to go with them to the Posthof for breakfast."

"Aren't you going, too?" asked March.

"No, thank you," said the general, as if it were much finer not; "I shall breakfast at our pension." He strolled off with the air of a man who has done more than his duty.

"I don't suppose I ought to feel that way," said Eltwin, with a remorse which March suspected a reproachful pressure of his wife's hand had prompted in him. "I reckon he means well."

"Well, I don't know," March said, with a candor he could not wholly excuse.

On his way to the hotel he fancied mocking his wife for her interest in the romantic woes of her lovers, in a world where there was such real pathos as these poor old people's; but in the company of Miss Triscoe he could not give himself this pleasure. He tried to amuse her on the way

from Pupp's, with the doubt he always felt in passing the Cafe Sans-Souci, whether he should live to reach the Posthof where he meant to breakfast. She said, "Poor Mr. March!" and laughed inattentively; when he went on to philosophize the commonness of the sparse company always observable at the Sans-Souci as a just effect of its Laodicean situation between Pupp's and the Posthof, the girl sighed absently, and his wife frowned at him.

The flower-woman at the gate of her garden had now only autumnal blooms for sale in the vases which flanked the entrance; the windrows of the rowen, left steeping in the dews overnight, exhaled a faint fragrance; a poor remnant of the midsummer multitudes trailed itself along to the various cafes of the valley, its pink paper bags of bread rustling like sere foliage as it moved.

At the Posthof the 'schone' Lili alone was as gay, as in the prime of July. She played archly about the guests she welcomed to a table in a sunny spot in the gallery. "You are tired of Carlsbad?" she said caressingly to Miss Triscoe, as she put her breakfast before her.

"Not of the Posthof," said the girl, listlessly.

"Posthof, and very little Lili?" She showed, with one forefinger on another, how very little she was.

Miss Triscoe laughed, not cheerily, and Lili said to Mrs. March, with abrupt seriousness, "Augusta was finding a handkerchief under the table, and she was washing it and ironing it before she did bring it. I have scolded her, and I have made her give it to me."

She took from under her apron a man's handkerchief, which she offered to Mrs. March. It bore, as she saw Miss Triscoe saw, the initials L. J. B. But, "Whose can it be?" they asked each other.

"Why, Burnamy's," said March; and Lili's eyes danced. "Give it here!"

His wife caught it farther away. "No, I'm going to see whose it is, first; if it's his, I'll send it to him myself."

She tried to put it into the pocket which was not in her dress by sliding it down her lap; then she handed it to the girl, who took it with a careless air, but kept it after a like failure to pocket it.

Mrs. March had come out in her India-rubber sandals, but for once in Carlsbad the weather was too dry for them, and she had taken them off and was holding them in her lap. They fell to the ground when she now rose from breakfast, and she stooped to pick them up. Miss Triscoe was too quick for her.

"Oh, let me carry them for you!" she entreated, and after a tender struggle she succeed in enslaving herself to them, and went away wearing them through the heel-bands like manacles on her wrist. She was not the kind of girl to offer such pretty devotions, and Mrs. March was not the

kind of woman to suffer them; but they played the comedy through, and let March go off for his last hill-climb with the promise to meet him in the Stadt Park when he came to the Kurhaus for his last mineral bath.

Mrs. March in the mean time went about some final shopping, and invited the girl's advice with a fondness which did not prevent her rejecting it in every case, with Miss Triscoe's eager approval. In the Stadt Park they sat down and talked; from time to time Mrs. March made polite feints of recovering her sandals, but the girl kept them with increased effusion.

When they rose, and strolled away from the bench where they had been sitting, they seemed to be followed. They looked round and saw no one more alarming than a very severe-looking old gentleman, whose hat brim in spite of his severity was limp with much lifting, as all Austrian hat brims are. He touched it, and saying haughtily in German, "Something left lying," passed on.

They stared at each other; then, as women do, they glanced down at their skirts to see if there was anything amiss with them, and Miss Triscoe perceived her hands empty of Mrs. March's sandals and of Burnamy's handkerchief.

"Oh, I put it in one of the toes!" she lamented, and she fled back to their bench, alarming in her course the fears of a gendarme for the public security, and putting a baby in its nurse's arms into such doubts of its personal safety that it burst into a desolate cry. She laughed breathlessly as she rejoined Mrs. March. "That comes of having no pocket; I didn't suppose I could forget your sandals, Mrs. March! Wasn't it absurd?"

"It's one of those things," Mrs. March said to her husband afterwards, "that they can always laugh over together."

"They? And what about Burnamy's behavior to Stoller?"

"Oh, I don't call that anything but what will come right. Of course he can make it up to him somehow. And I regard his refusal to do wrong when Stoller wanted him to as quite wiping out the first offence."

"Well, my dear, you have burnt your ships behind you. My only hope is that when we leave here tomorrow, her pessimistic papa's poison will neutralize yours somehow."

XLII.

One of the pleasantest incidents of March's sojourn in Carlsbad was his introduction to the manager of the municipal theatre by a common friend who explained the editor in such terms to the manager that he conceived of him as a brother artist. This led to much bowing and smiling from the

manager when the Marches met him in the street, or in their frequent visits to the theatre, with which March felt that it might well have ended, and still been far beyond his desert. He had not thought of going to the opera on the Emperor's birthday, but after dinner a box came from the manager, and Mrs. March agreed with him that they could not in decency accept so great a favor. At the same time she argued that they could not in decency refuse it, and that to show their sense of the pleasure done them, they must adorn their box with all the beauty and distinction possible; in other words, she said they must ask Miss Triscoe and her father.

"And why not Major Eltwin and his wife? Or Mrs. Adding and Rose?"

She begged him, simply in his own interest, not to be foolish; and they went early, so as to be in their box when their guests came. The foyer of the theatre was banked with flowers, and against a curtain of evergreens stood a high-pedestalled bust of the paternal Caesar, with whose side-whiskers a laurel crown comported itself as well as it could. At the foot of the grand staircase leading to the boxes the manager stood in evening dress, receiving his friends and their felicitations upon the honor which the theatre was sure to do itself on an occasion so august. The Marches were so cordial in their prophecies that the manager yielded to an artist's impulse and begged his fellow-artist to do him the pleasure of coming behind the scenes between the acts of the opera; he bowed a heart-felt regret to Mrs. March that he could not make the invitation include her, and hoped that she would not be too lonely while her husband was gone.

She explained that they had asked friends, and she should not be alone, and then he entreated March to bring any gentleman who was his guest with him. On the way up to their box, she pressed his arm as she used in their young married days, and asked him if it was not perfect. "I wish we were going to have it all to ourselves; no one else can appreciate the whole situation. Do you think we have made a mistake in having the Triscoes?"

"We!" he retorted. "Oh, that's good! I'm going to shirk him, when it comes to going behind the scenes."

"No, no, dearest," she entreated. "Snubbing will only make it worse. We must stand it to the bitter end, now."

The curtain rose upon another laurelled bust of the Emperor, with a chorus of men formed on either side, who broke into the grave and noble strains of the Austrian Hymn, while every one stood. Then the curtain fell again, and in the interval before the opera could begin, General Triscoe and his daughter came in.

Mrs. March took the splendor in which the girl appeared as a tribute to her hospitality. She had hitherto been a little disappointed of the open homage to American girlhood which her readings of international romance had taught her to expect in Europe, but now her patriotic vanity feasted full. Fat highhotes of her own sex levelled their lorgnettes at Miss

Triscoe all around the horseshoe, with critical glances which fell blunted from her complexion and costume; the house was brilliant with the military uniforms, which we have not yet to mingle with our unrivalled millinery, and the ardent gaze of the young officers dwelt on the perfect mould of her girlish arms and neck, and the winning lines of her face. The girl's eyes shone with a joyful excitement, and her little head, defined by its dark hair, trembled as she slowly turned it from side to side, after she removed the airy scarf which had covered it. Her father, in evening dress, looked the Third Emperor complaisant to a civil occasion, and took a chair in the front of the box without resistance; and the ladies disputed which should yield the best place to the other, till Miss Triscoe forced Mrs. March fondly into it for the first act at least.

The piece had to be cut a good deal to give people time for the illuminations afterwards; but as it was it gave scope to the actress who, 'als Gast' from a Viennese theatre, was the chief figure in it. She merited the distinction by the art which still lingered, deeply embedded in her massive balk, but never wholly obscured.

"That is grand, isn't it?" said March, following one of the tremendous strokes by which she overcame her physical disadvantages. "It's fine to see how her art can undo, for one splendid instant, the work of all those steins of beer, those illimitable licks of sausage, those boundless fields of cabbage. But it's rather pathetic."

"It's disgusting," said his wife; and at this General Triscoe, who had been watching the actress through his lorgnette, said, as if his contrary-mindedness were irresistibly invoked:

"Well, I don't know. It's amusing. Do you suppose we shall see her when we go behind, March?"

He still professed a desire to do so when the curtain fell, and they hurried to the rear door of the theatre. It was slightly ajar, and they pulled it wide open, with the eagerness of their age and nation, and began to mount the stairs leading up from it between rows of painted dancing-girls, who had come out for a breath of air, and who pressed themselves against the walls to make room for the intruders. With their rouged faces, and the stare of their glassy eyes intensified by the coloring of their brows and lashes, they were like painted statues, as they stood there with their crimsoned lips parted in astonished smiles.

"This is rather weird," said March, faltering at the sight. "I wonder if we might ask these young ladies where to go?" General Triscoe made no answer, and was apparently no more prepared than himself to accost the files of danseuses, when they were themselves accosted by an angry voice from the head of the stairs with a demand for their business. The voice belonged to a gendarme, who descended toward them and seemed as deeply scandalized at their appearance as they could have been at that of the young ladies.

March explained, in his ineffective German, with every effect of

improbability, that they were there by appointment of the manager, and wished to find his room.

The gendarme would not or could not make anything out of it. He pressed down upon them, and laying a rude hand on a shoulder of either, began to force them back to the door. The mild nature of the editor might have yielded to his violence, but the martial spirit of General Triscoe was roused. He shrugged the gendarme's hand from his shoulder, and with a voice as furious as his own required him, in English, to say what the devil he meant. The gendarme rejoined with equal heat in German; the general's tone rose in anger; the dancing-girls emitted some little shrieks of alarm, and fled noisily up the stairs. From time to time March interposed with a word of the German which had mostly deserted him in his hour of need; but if it had been a flow of intelligible expostulation, it would have had no effect upon the disputants. They grew more outrageous, till the manager himself, appeared at the head of the stairs, and extended an arresting hand over the hubbub. As soon as the situation clarified itself he hurried down to his visitors with a polite roar of apology and rescued them from the gendarme, and led them up to his room and forced them into arm-chairs with a rapidity of reparation which did not exhaust itself till he had entreated them with every circumstance of civility to excuse an incident so mortifying to him. But with all his haste he lost so much time in this that he had little left to show them through the theatre, and their presentation to the prima donna was reduced to the obeisances with which they met and parted as she went upon the stage at the lifting of the curtain. In the lack of a common language this was perhaps as well as a longer interview; and nothing could have been more honorable than their dismissal at the hands of the gendarme who had received them so stormily. He opened the door for them, and stood with his fingers to his cap saluting, in the effect of being a whole file of grenadiers.

XLIII.

At the same moment Burnamy bowed himself out of the box where he had been sitting with the ladies during the absence of the gentlemen. He had knocked at the door almost as soon as they disappeared, and if he did not fully share the consternation which his presence caused, he looked so frightened that Mrs. March reserved the censure which the sight of him inspired, and in default of other inspiration treated his coming simply as a surprise. She shook hands with him, and then she asked him to sit down, and listened to his explanation that he had come back to Carlsbad to write up the birthnight festivities, on an order from the Paris-New York Chronicle; that he had seen them in the box and had ventured to take in. He was pale, and so discomposed that the heart of justice was softened more and more in Mrs. March's breast, and she left him to the talk that sprang up, by an admirable effect of tact in the young lady, between him and Miss Triscoe.

After all, she decided, there was nothing criminal in his being in

Carlsbad, and possibly in the last analysis there was nothing so very wicked in his being in her box. One might say that it was not very nice of him after he had gone away under such a cloud; but on the other hand it was nice, though in a different way, if he longed so much to see Miss Triscoe that he could not help coming. It was altogether in his favor that he was so agitated, though he was momentarily becoming less agitated; the young people were beginning to laugh at the notion of Mr. March and General Triscoe going behind the scenes. Burnamy said he envied them the chance; and added, not very relevantly, that he had come from Baireuth, where he had seen the last of the Wagner performances. He said he was going back to Baireuth, but not to Ansbach again, where he had finished looking up that Kaspar Hauser business. He seemed to think Mrs. March would know about it, and she could not help saying; Oh, yes, Mr. March was so much interested. She wondered if she ought to tell him about his handkerchief; but she remembered in time that she had left it in Miss Triscoe's keeping. She wondered if the girl realized how handsome he was. He was extremely handsome, in his black evening dress, with his Tuxedo, and the pallor of his face repeated in his expanse of shirt front.

At the bell for the rising of the curtain he rose too, and took their offered hands. In offering hers Mrs. March asked if he would not stay and speak with Mr. March and the general; and now for the first time he recognized anything clandestine in his visit. He laughed nervously, and said, "No, thank you!" and shut himself out.

"We must tell them," said Mrs. March, rather interrogatively, and she was glad that the girl answered with a note of indignation.

"Why, certainly, Mrs. March."

They could not tell them at once, for the second act had begun when March and the general came back; and after the opera was over and they got out into the crowded street there was no chance, for the general was obliged to offer his arm to Mrs. March, while her husband followed with his daughter.

The facades of the theatre and of the hotels were outlined with thickly set little lamps, which beaded the arches of the bridges spanning the Tepl, and lighted the casements and portals of the shops. High above all, against the curtain of black woodland on the mountain where its skeleton had been growing for days, glittered the colossal effigy of the doubleheaded eagle of Austria, crowned with the tiara of the Holy Roman Empire; in the reflected splendor of its myriad lamps the pale Christ looked down from the mountain opposite upon the surging multitudes in the streets and on the bridges.

They were most amiable multitudes, March thought, and they responded docilely to the entreaties of the policemen who stood on the steps of the bridges, and divided their encountering currents with patient appeals of "Bitte schon! Bitte schon!" He laughed to think of a New York cop saying "Please prettily! Please prettily!" to a New York crowd which he wished to have go this way or that, and then he burned with shame to

think how far our manners were from civilization, wherever our heads and hearts might be, when he heard a voice at his elbow:

"A punch with a club would start some of these fellows along quicker."

It was Stoller, and March turned from him to lose his disgust in the sudden terror of perceiving that Miss Triscoe was no longer at his side. Neither could he see his wife and General Triscoe, and he began to push frantically about in the crowd looking for the girl. He had an interminable five or ten minutes in his vain search, and he was going to call out to her by name, when Burnamy saved him from the hopeless absurdity by elbowing his way to him with Miss. Triscoe on his arm.

"Here she is, Mr. March," he said, as if there were nothing strange in his having been there to find her; in fact he had followed them all from the theatre, and at the moment he saw the party separated, and Miss Triscoe carried off helpless in the human stream, had plunged in and rescued her. Before March could formulate any question in his bewilderment, Burnamy was gone again; the girl offered no explanation for him, and March had not yet decided to ask any when he caught sight of his wife and General Triscoe standing tiptoe in a doorway and craning their necks upward and forward to scan the crowd in search of him and his charge. Then he looked round at her and opened his lips to express the astonishment that filled him, when he was aware of an ominous shining of her eyes and trembling of her hand on his arm.

She pressed his arm nervously, and he understood her to beg him to forbear at once all question of her and all comment on Burnamy's presence to her father.

It would not have been just the time for either. Not only Mrs. March was with the general, but Mrs. Adding also; she had called to them from that place, where she was safe with Rose when she saw them eddying about in the crowd. The general was still, expressing a gratitude which became more pressing the more it was disclaimed; he said casually at sight of his daughter, "Ah; you've found us, have you?" and went on talking to Mrs. Adding, who nodded to them laughingly, and asked, "Did you see me beckoning?"

"Look here, my dear!" March said to his wife as soon as they parted from the rest, the general gallantly promising that his daughter and he would see Mrs. Adding safe to her hotel, and were making their way slowly home alone. "Did you know that Burnamy was in Carlsbad?"

"He's going away on the twelve-o'clock train tonight," she answered, firmly.

"What has that got to do with it? Where did you see him?"

"In the box, while you were behind the scenes."

She told him all about it, and he listened in silent endeavor for the ground of censure from which a sense of his own guilt forced him. She

asked suddenly, "Where did you see him?" and he told her in turn.

He added severely, "Her father ought to know. Why didn't you tell him?"

"Why didn't you?" she retorted with great reason.

"Because I didn't think he was just in the humor for it." He began to laugh as he sketched their encounter with the gendarme, but she did not seem to think it amusing; and he became serious again. "Besides, I was afraid she was going to blubber, any way."

"She wouldn't have blubbered, as you call it. I don't know why you need be so disgusting! It would have given her just the moral support she needed. Now she will have to tell him herself, and he will blame us. You ought to have spoken; you could have done it easily and naturally when you came up with her. You will have yourself to thank for all the trouble that comes of it, now, my dear."

He shouted in admiration of her skill in shifting the blame on him.

"All right! I should have had to stand it, even if you hadn't behaved with angelic wisdom."

"Why," she said, after reflection, "I don't see what either of us has done. We didn't get Burnamy to come here, or connive at his presence in any way."

"Oh! Make Triscoe believe that! He knows you've done all you could to help the affair on."

"Well, what if I have? He began making up to Mrs. Adding himself as soon as he saw her, to-night. She looked very pretty."

"Well, thank Heaven! we're off to-morrow morning, and I hope we've seen the last of them. They've done what they could to spoil my cure, but I'm not going to have them spoil my aftercure."

XLIV.

Mrs. March had decided not to go to the Posthof for breakfast, where they had already taken a lavish leave of the 'schone' Lili, with a sense of being promptly superseded in her affections. They found a place in the red-table-cloth end of the pavilion at Pupp's, and were served by the pretty girl with the rose-bud mouth whom they had known only as Ein-und-Zwanzig, and whose promise of "Komm' gleich, bitte schon!" was like a bird's note. Never had the coffee been so good, the bread so aerially light, the Westphalian ham so tenderly pink. A young married couple whom they knew came by, arm in arm, in their morning walk, and sat down with them, like their own youth, for a moment.

"If you had told them we were going, dear," said Mrs. March, when the

couple were themselves gone, "we should have been as old as ever. Don't let us tell anybody, this morning, that we're going. I couldn't bear it."

They had been obliged to take the secretary of the hotel into their confidence, in the process of paying their bill. He put on his high hat and came out to see them off. The portier was already there, standing at the step of the lordly two-spanner which they had ordered for the long drive to the station. The Swiss elevator-man came to the door to offer them a fellow-republican's good wishes for their journey; Herr Pupp himself appeared at the last moment to hope for their return another summer. Mrs. March bent a last look of interest upon the proprietor as their two-spanner whirled away.

"They say that he is going to be made a count."

"Well, I don't object," said March. "A man who can feed fourteen thousand people, mostly Germans, in a day, ought to be made an archduke."

At the station something happened which touched them even more than these last attentions of the hotel. They were in their compartment, and were in the act of possessing themselves of the best places by putting their bundles and bags on them, when they heard Mrs. March's name called.

They turned and saw Rose Adding at the door, his thin face flushed with excitement and his eyes glowing. "I was afraid I shouldn't get here in time," he panted, and he held up to her a huge bunch of flowers.

"Why Rose! From your mother?"

"From me," he said, timidly, and he was slipping out into the corridor, when she caught him and his flowers to her in one embrace. "I want to kiss you," she said; and presently, when he had waved his hand to them from the platform outside, and the train had started, she fumbled for her handkerchief. "I suppose you call it blubbering; but he is the sweetest child!"

"He's about the only one of our Carlsbad compatriots that I'm sorry to leave behind," March assented. "He's the only unmarried one that wasn't in danger of turning up a lover on my hands; if there had been some rather old girl, or some rather light matron in our acquaintance, I'm not sure that I should have been safe even from Rose. Carlsbad has been an interruption to our silver wedding journey, my dear; but I hope now that it will begin again."

"Yes," said his wife, "now we can have each other all to ourselves."

"Yes. It's been very different from our first wedding journey in that. It isn't that we're not so young now as we were, but that we don't seem so much our own property. We used to be the sole proprietors, and now we seem to be mere tenants at will, and any interloping lover may come in and set our dearest interests on the sidewalk. The disadvantage of living along is that we get too much into the hands of other people."

"Yes, it is. I shall be glad to be rid of them all, too."

"I don't know that the drawback is serious enough to make us wish we had died young--or younger," he suggested.

"No, I don't know that it is," she assented. She added, from an absence where he was sufficiently able to locate her meaning, "I hope she'll write and tell me what her father says and does when she tells him that he was there."

There were many things, in the weather, the landscape, their sole occupancy of an unsmoking compartment, while all the smoking compartments round overflowed with smokers, which conspired to offer them a pleasing illusion of the past; it was sometimes so perfect that they almost held each other's hands. In later life there are such moments when the youthful emotions come back, as certain birds do in winter, and the elderly heart chirps and twitters to itself as if it were young. But it is best to discourage this fondness; and Mrs. March joined her husband in mocking it, when he made her observe how fit it was that their silver wedding journey should be resumed as part of his after-cure. If he had found the fountain of youth in the warm, flat, faintly nauseous water of the Felsenquelle, he was not going to call himself twenty-eight again till his second month of the Carlsbad regimen was out, and he had got back to salad and fruit.

At Eger they had a memorable dinner, with so much leisure for it that they could form a life-long friendship for the old English-speaking waiter who served them, and would not suffer them to hurry themselves. The hills had already fallen away, and they ran along through a cheerful country, with tracts of forest under white clouds blowing about in a blue sky, and gayly flinging their shadows down upon the brown ploughed land, and upon the yellow oat-fields, where women were cutting the leisurely harvest with sickles, and where once a great girl with swarthy bare arms unbent herself from her toil, and rose, a statue of rude vigor and beauty, to watch them go by. Hedges of evergreen enclosed the yellow oat-fields, where slow wagons paused to gather the sheaves of the week before, and then loitered away with them. Flocks of geese waddled in sculpturesque relief against the close-cropt pastures, herded by little girls with flaxen pigtails, whose eyes, blue as corn-flowers, followed the flying train. There were stretches of wild thyme purpling long barren acreages, and growing up the railroad banks almost to the rails themselves. From the meadows the rowen, tossed in long loose windrows, sent into their car a sad autumnal fragrance which mingled with the tobacco smoke, when two fat smokers emerged into the narrow corridor outside their compartments and tried to pass each other. Their vast stomachs beat together in a vain encounter.

"Zu enge!" said one, and "Ja, zu enge!" said the other, and they laughed innocently in each other's' faces, with a joy in their recognition of the corridor's narrowness as great as if it had been a stroke of the finest wit.

All the way the land was lovely, and as they drew near Nuremberg it grew enchanting, with a fairy quaintness. The scenery was Alpine, but the scale was toy-like, as befitted the region, and the mimic peaks and valleys with green brooks gushing between them, and strange rock forms recurring in endless caprice, seemed the home of children's story. All the gnomes and elves might have dwelt there in peaceful fellowship with the peasants who ploughed the little fields, and gathered the garlanded hops, and lived in the farmsteads and village houses with those high timber-laced gables.

"We ought to have come here long ago with the children, when they were children," said March.

"No," his wife returned; "it would have been too much for them. Nobody but grown people could bear it."

The spell which began here was not really broken by anything that afterwards happened in Nuremberg, though the old toy-capital was trolley-wired through all its quaintness, and they were lodged in a hotel lighted by electricity and heated by steam, and equipped with an elevator which was so modern that it came down with them as well as went up. All the things that assumed to be of recent structure or invention were as nothing against the dense past, which overwhelmed them with the sense of a world elsewhere outlived. In Nuremberg it is not the quaint or the picturesque that is exceptional; it is the matter-of-fact and the commonplace. Here, more than anywhere else, you are steeped in the gothic spirit which expresses itself in a Teutonic dialect of homely sweetness, of endearing caprice, of rude grotesqueness, but of positive grace and beauty almost never. It is the architectural speech of a strenuous, gross, kindly, honest people's fancy; such as it is it was inexhaustible, and such as it is it was bewitching for the travellers.

They could hardly wait till they had supper before plunging into the ancient town, and they took the first tram-car at a venture. It was a sort of transfer, drawn by horses, which delivered them a little inside of the city gate to a trolley-car. The conductor with their fare demanded their destination; March frankly owned that they did not know where they wanted to go; they wanted to go anywhere the conductor chose; and the conductor, after reflection, decided to put them down at the public garden, which, as one of the newest things in the city, would make the most favorable impression upon strangers. It was in fact so like all other city gardens, with the foliage of its trimly planted alleys, that it sheltered them effectually from the picturesqueness of Nuremberg, and they had a long, peaceful hour on one of its benches, where they rested from their journey, and repented their hasty attempt to appropriate the charm of the city.

The next morning it rained, according to a custom which the elevator-boy (flown with the insolent recollection of a sunny summer in Milan) said was invariable in Nuremberg; but after the one-o'clock table d'hote they took a noble two-spanner carriage, and drove all round the city. Everywhere the ancient moat, thickly turfed and planted with trees and shrubs, stretched a girdle of garden between their course and the wall

beautifully old, with knots of dead ivy clinging to its crevices, or broad meshes of the shining foliage mantling its blackened masonry. A tile-roofed open gallery ran along the top, where so many centuries of sentries had paced, and arched the massive gates with heavily moulded piers, where so countlessly the fierce burgher troops had sallied forth against their besiegers, and so often the leaguer hosts had dashed themselves in assault. The blood shed in forgotten battles would have flooded the moat where now the grass and flowers grew, or here and there a peaceful stretch of water stagnated.

The drive ended in a visit to the old Burg, where the Hapsburg Kaisers dwelt when they visited their faithful imperial city. From its ramparts the incredible picturesqueness of Nuremberg best shows itself, and if one has any love for the distinctive quality of Teutonic architecture it is here that more than anywhere else one may feast it. The prospect of tower and spire and gable is of such a mediaeval richness, of such an abounding fulness, that all incidents are lost in it. The multitudinous roofs of red-brown tiles, blinking browsily from their low dormers, press upon one another in endless succession; they cluster together on a rise of ground and sink away where the street falls, but they nowhere disperse or scatter, and they end abruptly at the other rim of the city, beyond which looms the green country, merging in the remoter blue of misty uplands.

A pretty young girl waited at the door of the tower for the visitors to gather in sufficient number, and then led them through the terrible museum, discanting in the same gay voice and with the same smiling air on all the murderous engines and implements of torture. First in German and then in English she explained the fearful uses of the Iron Maiden, she winningly illustrated the action of the racks and wheels on which men had been stretched and broken, and she sweetly vaunted a sword which had beheaded eight hundred persons. When she took the established fee from March she suggested, with a demure glance, "And what more you please for saying it in English."

"Can you say it in Russian?" demanded a young man, whose eyes he had seen dwelling on her from the beginning. She laughed archly, and responded with some Slavic words, and then delivered her train of sight-seers over to the custodian who was to show them through the halls and chambers of the Burg. These were undergoing the repairs which the monuments of the past are perpetually suffering in the present, and there was some special painting and varnishing for the reception of the Kaiser, who was coming to Nuremberg for the military manoeuvres then at hand. But if they had been in the unmolested discomfort of their unlivable magnificence, their splendor was such as might well reconcile the witness to the superior comfort of a private station in our snugger day. The Marches came out owning that the youth which might once have found the romantic glories of the place enough was gone from them. But so much of it was left to her that she wished to make him stop and look at the flirtation which had blossomed out between that pretty young girl and the Russian, whom they had scarcely missed from their party in the Burg. He had apparently never parted from the girl, and now as they sat together on the threshold of the gloomy tower, he most have been teaching her more Slavic words, for

they were both laughing as if they understood each other perfectly.

In his security from having the affair in any wise on his hands, March would have willingly lingered, to see how her education got on; but it began to rain, The rain did not disturb the lovers, but it obliged the elderly spectators to take refuge in their carriage; and they drove off to find the famous Little Goose Man. This is what every one does at Nuremberg; it would be difficult to say why. When they found the Little Goose Man, he was only a mediaeval fancy in bronze, who stood on his pedestal in the market-place and contributed from the bill of the goose under his arm a small stream to the rainfall drenching the wet wares of the wet market-women round the fountain, and soaking their cauliflowers and lettuce, their grapes and pears, their carrots and turnips, to the watery flavor of all fruits and vegetables in Germany.

The air was very raw and chill; but after supper the clouds cleared away, and a pleasant evening tempted the travellers out. The portier dissembled any slight which their eagerness for the only amusement he could think of inspired, and directed them to a popular theatre which was giving a summer season at low prices to the lower classes, and which they surprised, after some search, trying to hide itself in a sort of back square. They got the best places at a price which ought to have been mortifyingly cheap, and found themselves, with a thousand other harmless bourgeois folk, in a sort of spacious, agreeable barn, of a decoration by no means ugly, and of a certain artless comfort. Each seat fronted a shelf at the back of the seat before it, where the spectator could put his hat; there was a smaller shelf for his stein of the beer passed constantly throughout the evening; and there was a buffet where he could stay himself with cold ham and other robust German refreshments.

It was "The Wedding Journey to Nuremberg" upon which they had oddly chanced, and they accepted as a national tribute the character of an American girl in it. She was an American girl of the advanced pattern, and she came and went at a picnic on the arm of a head waiter. She seemed to have no office in the drama except to illustrate a German conception of American girlhood, but even in this simple function she seemed rather to puzzle the German audience; perhaps because of the occasional English words which she used.

To the astonishment of her compatriots, when they came out of the theatre it was not raining; the night was as brilliantly starlit as a night could be in Germany, and they sauntered home richly content through the narrow streets and through the beautiful old Damenthor, beyond which their hotel lay. How pretty, they said, to call that charming port the Ladies' Gate! They promised each other to find out why, and they never did so, but satisfied themselves by assigning it to the exclusive use of the slim maidens and massive matrons of the old Nuremberg patriciate, whom they imagined trailing their silken splendors under its arch in perpetual procession.

XLV.

The life of the Nuremberg patriciate, now extinct in the control of the city which it builded so strenuously and maintained so heroically, is still insistent in all its art. This expresses their pride at once and their simplicity with a childish literality. At its best it is never so good as the good Italian art, whose influence is always present in its best. The coloring of the great canvases is Venetian, but there is no such democracy of greatness as in the painting at Venice; in decoration the art of Nuremberg is at best quaint, and at the worst puerile. Wherever it had obeyed an academic intention it seemed to March poor and coarse, as in the bronze fountain beside the Church of St. Lawrence. The water spins from the pouted breasts of the beautiful figures in streams that cross and interlace after a fancy trivial and gross; but in the base of the church there is a time-worn Gethsemane, exquisitely affecting in its simple-hearted truth. The long ages have made it even more affecting than the sculptor imagined it; they have blurred the faces and figures in passing till their features are scarcely distinguishable; and the sleeping apostles seem to have dreamed themselves back into the mother-marble. It is of the same tradition and impulse with that supreme glory of the native sculpture, the ineffable tabernacle of Adam Krafft, which climbs a column of the church within, a miracle of richly carven story; and no doubt if there were a Nuremberg sculptor doing great things today, his work would be of kindred inspiration.

The descendants of the old patrician who ordered the tabernacle at rather a hard bargain from the artist still worship on the floor below, and the descendants of his neighbor patricians have their seats in the pews about, and their names cut in the proprietary plates on the pew-tops. The vergeress who showed the Marches through the church was devout in the praise of these aristocratic fellow-citizens of hers. "So simple, and yet so noble!" she said. She was a very romantic vergeress, and she told them at unsparing length the legend of the tabernacle, how the artist fell asleep in despair of winning his patron's daughter, and saw in a vision the master-work with the lily-like droop at top, which gained him her hand. They did not realize till too late that it was all out of a novel of Georg Ebers's, but added to the regular fee for the church a gift worthy of an inedited legend.

Even then they had a pleasure in her enthusiasm rarely imparted by the Nuremberg manner. They missed there the constant, sweet civility of Carlsbad, and found themselves falling flat in their endeavors for a little cordiality. They indeed inspired with some kindness the old woman who showed them through that cemetery where Albert Durer and Hans Sachs and many other illustrious citizens lie buried under monumental brasses of such beauty:

"That kings to have the like, might wish to die."

But this must have been because they abandoned themselves so willingly to the fascination of the bronze skull on the tomb of a fourteenth-century patrician, which had the uncommon advantage of a lower jaw hinged to the upper. She proudly clapped it up and down for their astonishment, and

waited, with a toothless smile, to let them discover the bead of a nail artfully figured in the skull; then she gave a shrill cackle of joy, and gleefully explained that the wife of this patrician had killed him by driving a nail into his temple, and had been fitly beheaded for the murder.

She cared so much for nothing else in the cemetery, but she consented to let them wonder at the richness of the sculpture in the level tombs, with their escutcheons and memorial tablets, overrun by the long grass and the matted ivy; she even consented to share their indignation at the destruction of some of the brasses and the theft of others. She suffered more reluctantly their tenderness for the old, old crucifixion figured in sculpture at one corner of the cemetery, where the anguish of the Christ had long since faded into the stone from which it had been evoked, and the thieves were no longer distinguishable in their penitence or impenitence; but she parted friends with them when she saw how much they seemed taken with the votive chapel of the noble Holzschuh family, where a line of wooden shoes puns upon the name in the frieze, like the line of dogs which chase one another, with bones in their mouths, around the Canossa palace at Verona. A sense of the beautiful house by the Adige was part of the pleasing confusion which possessed them in Nuremberg whenever they came upon the expression of the gothic spirit common both to the German and northern Italian art. They knew that it was an effect which had passed from Germany into Italy, but in the liberal air of the older land it had come to so much more beauty that now, when they found it in its home, it seemed something fetched from over the Alps and coarsened in the attempt to naturalize it to an alien air.

In the Germanic Museum they fled to the Italian painters from the German pictures they had inspired; in the great hall of the Rathhaus the noble Processional of Durer was the more precious, because his Triumph of Maximilian somehow suggested Mantegna's Triumph of Caesar. There was to be a banquet in the hall, under the mighty fresco, to welcome the German Emperor, coming the next week, and the Rathhaus was full of work-people furbishing it up against his arrival, and making it difficult for the custodian who had it in charge to show it properly to strangers. She was of the same enthusiastic sisterhood as the vergeress of St. Lawrence and the guardian of the old cemetery, and by a mighty effort she prevailed over the workmen so far as to lead her charges out through the corridor where the literal conscience of the brothers Kuhn has wrought in the roof to an exact image of a tournament as it was in Nuremberg four hundred years ago. In this relief, thronged with men and horses, the gala-life of the past survives in unexampled fulness; and March blamed himself after enjoying it for having felt in it that toy-figure quality which seems the final effect of the German gothicism in sculpture.

XLVI.

On Sunday Mrs. March partially conformed to an earlier New England ideal of the day by ceasing from sight-seeing. She could not have understood

the sermon if she had gone to church, but she appeased the lingering conscience she had on this point by not going out till afternoon. Then she found nothing of the gayety which Sunday afternoon wears in Catholic lands. The people were resting from their week-day labors, but they were not playing; and the old churches, long since converted to Lutheran uses, were locked against tourist curiosity.

It was as it should be; it was as it would be at home; and yet in this ancient city, where the past was so much alive in the perpetual picturesqueness, the Marches felt an incongruity in it; and they were fain to escape from the Protestant silence and seriousness of the streets to the shade of the public garden they had involuntarily visited the evening of their arrival.

On a bench sat a quiet, rather dejected man, whom March asked some question of their way. He answered in English, and in the parley that followed they discovered that they were all Americans. The stranger proved to be an American of the sort commonest in Germany, and he said he had returned to his native country to get rid of the ague which he had taken on Staten Island. He had been seventeen years in New York, and now a talk of Tammany and its chances in the next election, of pulls and deals, of bosses and heelers, grew up between the civic step-brothers, and joined them in a common interest. The German-American said he was bookkeeper in some glass-works which had been closed by our tariff, and he confessed that he did not mean to return to us, though he spoke of German affairs with the impartiality of an outsider. He said that the Socialist party was increasing faster than any other, and that this tacitly meant the suppression of rank and the abolition of monarchy. He warned March against the appearance of industrial prosperity in Germany; beggary was severely repressed, and if poverty was better clad than with us, it was as hungry and as hopeless in Nuremberg as in New York. The working classes were kindly and peaceable; they only knifed each other quietly on Sunday evenings after having too much beer.

Presently the stranger rose and bowed to the Marches for good-by; and as he walked down the aisle of trees in which they had been fitting together, he seemed to be retreating farther and farther from such Americanism as they had in common. He had reverted to an entirely German effect of dress and figure; his walk was slow and Teutonic; he must be a type of thousands who have returned to the fatherland without wishing to own themselves its children again, and yet out of heart with the only country left them.

"He was rather pathetic, my dear," said March, in the discomfort he knew his wife must be feeling as well as himself. "How odd to have the lid lifted here, and see the same old problems seething and bubbling in the witch's caldron we call civilization as we left simmering away at home! And how hard to have our tariff reach out and snatch the bread from the mouths of those poor glass-workers!"

"I thought that was hard," she sighed. "It must have been his bread, too."

"Let's hope it was not his cake, anyway. I suppose," he added, dreamily, "that what we used to like in Italy was the absence of all the modern activities. The Italians didn't repel us by assuming to be of our epoch in the presence of their monuments; they knew how to behave as pensive memories. I wonder if they're still as charming."

"Oh, no," she returned, "nothing is as charming as it used to be. And now we need the charm more than ever."

He laughed at her despair, in the tacit understanding they had lived into that only one of them was to be desperate at a time, and that they were to take turns in cheering each other up. "Well, perhaps we don't deserve it. And I'm not sure that we need it so much as we did when we were young. We've got tougher; we can stand the cold facts better now. They made me shiver once, but now they give me a sort of agreeable thrill. Besides, if, life kept up its pretty illusions, if it insisted upon being as charming as it used to be, how could we ever bear to die? We've got that to consider." He yielded to the temptation of his paradox, but he did not fail altogether of the purpose with which he began, and they took the trolley back to their hotel cheerful in the intrepid fancy that they had confronted fate when they had only had the hardihood to face a phrase.

They agreed that now he ought really to find out something about the contemporary life of Nuremberg, and the next morning he went out before breakfast, and strolled through some of the simpler streets, in the hope of intimate impressions. The peasant women, serving portions of milk from house to house out of the cans in the little wagons which they drew themselves, were a touch of pleasing domestic comedy; a certain effect of tragedy imparted itself from the lamentations of the sucking-pigs jolted over the pavements in handcarts; a certain majesty from the long procession of yellow mail-wagons, with drivers in the royal Bavarian blue, trooping by in the cold small rain, impassibly dripping from their glazed hat-brims upon their uniforms. But he could not feel that these things were any of them very poignantly significant; and he covered his retreat from the actualities of Nuremberg by visiting the chief bookstore and buying more photographs of the architecture than he wanted, and more local histories than he should ever read. He made a last effort for the contemporaneous life by asking the English-speaking clerk if there were any literary men of distinction living in Nuremberg, and the clerk said there was not one.

He went home to breakfast wondering if he should be able to make his meagre facts serve with his wife; but he found her far from any wish to listen to them. She was intent upon a pair of young lovers, at a table near her own, who were so absorbed in each other that they were proof against an interest that must otherwise have pierced them through. The bridegroom, as he would have called himself, was a pretty little Bavarian lieutenant, very dark and regular, and the bride was as pretty and as little, but delicately blond. Nature had admirably mated them, and if art had helped to bring them together through the genius of the bride's mother, who was breakfasting with them, it had wrought almost as fitly. Mrs. March queried impartially who they were, where they met, and how,

and just when they were going to be married; and March consented, in his personal immunity from their romance, to let it go on under his eyes without protest. But later, when they met the lovers in the street, walking arm in arm, with the bride's mother behind them gloating upon their bliss, he said the woman ought, at her time of life, to be ashamed of such folly. She must know that this affair, by nine chances out of ten, could not fail to eventuate at the best in a marriage as tiresome as most other marriages, and yet she was abandoning herself with those ignorant young people to the illusion that it was the finest and sweetest thing in life.

"Well, isn't it?" his wife asked.

"Yes, that's the worst of it. It shows how poverty-stricken life really is. We want somehow to believe that each pair of lovers will find the good we have missed, and be as happy as we expected to be."

"I think we have been happy enough, and that we've had as much good as was wholesome for us," she returned, hurt.

"You're always so concrete! I meant us in the abstract. But if you will be personal, I'll say that you've been as happy as you deserve, and got more good than you had any right to."

She laughed with him, and then they laughed again to perceive that they were walking arm in arm too, like the lovers, whom they were insensibly following.

He proposed that while they were in the mood they should go again to the old cemetery, and see the hinged jaw of the murdered Paumgartner, wagging in eternal accusation of his murderess. "It's rather hard on her, that he should be having the last word, that way," he said. "She was a woman, no matter what mistakes she had committed."

"That's what I call 'banale'," said Mrs. March.

"It is, rather," he confessed. "It makes me feel as if I must go to see the house of Durer, after all."

"Well, I knew we should have to, sooner or later."

It was the thing that they had said would not do, in Nuremberg, because everybody did it; but now they hailed a fiacre, and ordered it driven to Durer's house, which they found in a remote part of the town near a stretch of the city wall, varied in its picturesqueness by the interposition of a dripping grove; it was raining again by the time they reached it. The quarter had lapsed from earlier dignity, and without being squalid, it looked worn and hard worked; otherwise it could hardly have been different in Durer's time. His dwelling, in no way impressive outside, amidst the enviroing quaintness, stood at the corner of a narrow side-hill street that sloped cityward; and within it was stripped bare of all the furniture of life below-stairs, and above was none the cozier for the stiff appointment of a show-house. It was cavernous and

cold; but if there had been a fire in the kitchen, and a table laid in the dining-room, and beds equipped for nightmare, after the German fashion, in the empty chambers, one could have imagined a kindly, simple, neighborly existence there. It in no wise suggested the calling of an artist, perhaps because artists had not begun in Durer's time to take themselves so objectively as they do now, but it implied the life of a prosperous citizen, and it expressed the period.

The Marches wrote their names in the visitors' book, and paid the visitor's fee, which also bought them tickets in an annual lottery for a reproduction of one of Durer's pictures; and then they came away, by no means dissatisfied with his house. By its association with his sojourns in Italy it recalled visits to other shrines, and they had to own that it was really no worse than Ariosto's house at Ferrara, or Petrarch's at Arqua, or Michelangelo's at Florence. "But what I admire," he said, "is our futility in going to see it. We expected to surprise some quality of the man left lying about in the house because he lived and died in it; and because his wife kept him up so close there, and worked him so hard to save his widow from coming to want."

"Who said she did that?"

"A friend of his who hated her. But he had to allow that she was a God-fearing woman, and had a New England conscience."

"Well, I dare say Durer was easy-going."

"Yes; but I don't like her laying her plans to survive him; though women always do that."

They were going away the next day, and they sat down that evening to a final supper in such good-humor with themselves that they were willing to include a young couple who came to take places at their table, though they would rather have been alone. They lifted their eyes for their expected salutation, and recognized Mr. and Mrs. Leffers, of the Norumbia.

The ladies fell upon each other as if they had been mother and daughter; March and the young man shook hands, in the feeling of passengers mutually endeared by the memories of a pleasant voyage. They arrived at the fact that Mr. Leffers had received letters in England from his partners which allowed him to prolong his wedding journey in a tour of the continent, while their wives were still exclaiming at their encounter in the same hotel at Nuremberg; and then they all sat down to have, as the bride said, a real Norumbia time.

She was one of those young wives who talk always with their eyes submissively on their husbands, no matter whom they are speaking to; but she was already unconsciously ruling him in her abeyance. No doubt she was ruling him for his good; she had a livelier, mind than he, and she knew more, as the American wives of young American business men always do, and she was planning wisely for their travels. She recognized her merit in this devotion with an artless candor, which was typical

rather than personal. March was glad to go out with Leffers for a little stroll, and to leave Mrs. March to listen to Mrs. Leffers, who did not let them go without making her husband promise to wrap up well, and not get his feet wet. She made March promise not to take him far, and to bring him back early, which he found himself very willing to do, after an exchange of ideas with Mr. Leffers. The young man began to talk about his wife, in her providential, her almost miraculous adaptation to the sort of man he was, and when he had once begun to explain what sort of man he was, there was no end to it, till they rejoined the ladies in the reading-room.

XLVII.

The young couple came to the station to see the Marches off after dinner the next day; and the wife left a bank of flowers on the seat beside Mrs. March, who said, as soon as they were gone, "I believe I would rather meet people of our own age after this. I used to think that you could keep young by being with young people; but I don't, now. There world is very different from ours. Our world doesn't really exist any more, but as long as we keep away from theirs we needn't realize it. Young people," she went on, "are more practical-minded than we used to be; they're quite as sentimental; but I don't think they care so much for the higher things. They're not so much brought up on poetry as we were," she pursued. "That little Mrs. Leffers would have read Longfellow in our time; but now she didn't know of his poem on Nuremberg; she was intelligent enough about the place, but you could see that its quaintness was not so precious as it was to us; not so sacred." Her tone entreated him to find more meaning in her words than she had put into them. "They couldn't have felt as we did about that old ivied wall and that grassy, flowery moat under it; and the beautiful Damenthor and that pile-up of the roofs from the Burg; and those winding streets with their Gothic facades all, cobwebbed with trolley wires; and that yellow, aguish-looking river drowsing through the town under the windows of those overhanging houses; and the market-place, and the squares before the churches, with their queer shops in the nooks and corners round them!"

"I see what you mean. But do you think it's as sacred to us as it would have been twenty-five years ago? I had an irreverent feeling now and then that Nuremberg was overdoing Nuremberg."

"Oh, yes; so had I. We're that modern, if we're not so young as we were."

"We were very simple, in those days."

"Well, if we were simple, we knew it!"

"Yes; we used to like taking our unconsciousness to pieces and looking at it."

"We had a good time."

"Too good. Sometimes it seems as if it would have lasted longer if it had not been so good. We might have our cake now if we hadn't eaten it."

"It would be mouldy, though."

"I wonder," he said, recurring to the Lefferses; "how we really struck them."

"Well, I don't believe they thought we ought to be travelling about alone, quite, at our age."

"Oh, not so bad as that! "After a moment he said, "I dare say they don't go round quarrelling on their wedding journey, as we did."

"Indeed they do! They had an awful quarrel just before they got to Nuremberg: about his wanting to send some of the baggage to Liverpool by express that she wanted to keep with them. But she said it had been a lesson, and they were never going to quarrel again." The elders looked at each other in the light of experience, and laughed. "Well," she ended, "that's one thing we're through with. I suppose we've come to feel more alike than we used to."

"Or not to feel at all. How did they settle it about the baggage?"

"Oh! He insisted on her keeping it with her." March laughed again, but this time he laughed alone, and after a while she said: "Well, they gave just the right relief to Nuremberg, with their good, clean American philistinism. I don't mind their thinking us queer; they must have thought Nuremberg was queer."

"Yes. We oldsters are always queer to the young. We're either ridiculously lively and chirpy, or we're ridiculously stiff and grim; they never expect to be like us, and wouldn't, for the world. The worst of it is, we elderly people are absurd to one another; we don't, at the bottom of our hearts, believe we're like that, when we meet. I suppose that arrogant old ass of a Triscoe looks upon me as a grinning dotard."

"I wonder," said Mrs. March, "if she's told him yet," and March perceived that she was now suddenly far from the mood of philosophic introspection; but he had no difficulty in following her.

"She's had time enough. But it was an awkward task Burnamy left to her."

"Yes, when I think of that, I can hardly forgive him for coming back in that way. I know she is dead in love with him; but she could only have accepted him conditionally."

"Conditionally to his making it all right with Stoller?"

"Stoller? No! To her father's liking it."

"Ah, that's quite as hard. What makes you think she accepted him at all?"

"What do you think she was crying about?"

"Well, I have supposed that ladies occasionally shed tears of pity. If she accepted him conditionally she would have to tell her father about it." Mrs. March gave him a glance of silent contempt, and he hastened to atone for his stupidity. "Perhaps she's told him on the instalment plan. She may have begun by confessing that Burnamy had been in Carlsbad. Poor old fellow, I wish we were going to find him in Ansbach! He could make things very smooth for us."

"Well, you needn't flatter yourself that you'll find him in Ansbach. I'm sure I don't know where he is."

"You might write to Miss Triscoe and ask."

"I think I shall wait for Miss Triscoe to write to me," she said, with dignity.

"Yes, she certainly owes you that much, after all your suffering for her. I've asked the banker in Nuremberg to forward our letters to the poste restante in Ansbach. Isn't it good to see the crows again, after those ravens around Carlsbad?"

She joined him in looking at the mild autumnal landscape through the open window. The afternoon was fair and warm, and in the level fields bodies of soldiers were at work with picks and spades, getting the ground ready for the military manoeuvres; they disturbed among the stubble foraging parties of crows, which rose from time to time with cries of indignant protest. She said, with a smile for the crows, "Yes. And I'm thankful that I've got nothing on my conscience, whatever happens," she added in dismissal of the subject of Burnamy.

"I'm thankful too, my dear. I'd much rather have things on my own. I'm more used to that, and I believe I feel less remorse than when you're to blame."

They might have been carried near this point by those telepathic influences which have as yet been so imperfectly studied. It was only that morning, after the lapse of a week since Burnamy's furtive reappearance in Carlsbad, that Miss Triscoe spoke to her father about it, and she had at that moment a longing for support and counsel that might well have made its mystical appeal to Mrs. March.

She spoke at last because she could put it off no longer, rather than because the right time had come. She began as they sat at breakfast. "Papa, there is something that I have got to tell you. It is something that you ought to know; but I have put off telling you because--"

She hesitated for the reason, and "Well!" said her father, looking up at her from his second cup of coffee. "What is it?"

Then she answered, "Mr. Burnamy has been here."

"In Carlsbad? When was he here?"

"The night of the Emperor's birthday. He came into the box when you were behind the scenes with Mr. March; afterwards I met him in the crowd."

"Well?"

"I thought you ought to know. Mrs. March said I ought to tell you."

"Did she say you ought to wait a week?" He gave way to an irascibility which he tried to check, and to ask with indifference, "Why did he come back?"

"He was going to write about it for that paper in Paris." The girl had the effect of gathering her courage up for a bold plunge. She looked steadily at her father, and added: "He said he came back because he couldn't help it. He--wished to speak with me, He said he knew he had no right to suppose I cared anything about what had happened with him and Mr. Stoller. He wanted to come back and tell me--that."

Her father waited for her to go on, but apparently she was going to leave the word to him, now. He hesitated to take it, but he asked at last with a mildness that seemed to surprise her, "Have you heard anything from him since?"

"No."

"Where is he?"

"I don't know. I told him I could not say what he wished; that I must tell you about it."

The case was less simple than it would once have been for General Triscoe. There was still his affection for his daughter, his wish for her happiness, but this had always been subordinate to his sense of his own interest and comfort, and a question had recently arisen which put his paternal love and duty in a new light. He was no more explicit with himself than other men are, and the most which could ever be said of him without injustice was that in his dependence upon her he would rather have kept his daughter to himself if she could not have been very prosperously married. On the other hand, if he disliked the man for whom she now hardly hid her liking, he was not just then ready to go to extremes concerning him.

"He was very anxious," she went on, "that you should know just how it was. He thinks everything of your judgment and--and--opinion." The general made a consenting noise in his throat. "He said that he did not wish me to 'whitewash' him to you. He didn't think he had done right; he didn't excuse himself, or ask you to excuse him unless you could from the stand-point of a gentleman."

The general made a less consenting noise in his throat, and asked, "How do you look at it, yourself, Agatha?"

"I don't believe I quite understand it; but Mrs. March--"

"Oh, Mrs. March!" the general snorted.

"--says that Mr. March does not think so badly of it as Mr. Burnamy does."

"I doubt it. At any rate, I understood March quite differently."

"She says that he thinks he behaved very nobly afterwards when Mr. Stoller wanted him to help him put a false complexion on it; that it was all the more difficult for him to do right then, because of his remorse for what he had done before." As she spoke on she had become more eager.

"There's something in that," the general admitted, with a candor that he made the most of both to himself and to her. "But I should like to know what Stoller had to say of it all. Is there anything," he inquired, "any reason why I need be more explicit about it, just now?"

"N--no. Only, I thought--He thinks so much of your opinion that--if--"

"Oh, he can very well afford to wait. If he values my opinion so highly he can give me time to make up my mind."

"Of course--"

"And I'm not responsible," the general continued, significantly, "for the delay altogether. If you had told me this before--Now, I don't know whether Stoller is still in town."

He was not behaving openly with her; but she had not behaved openly with him. She owned that to herself, and she got what comfort she could from his making the affair a question of what Burnamy had done to Stoller rather than of what Burnamy had said to her, and what she had answered him. If she was not perfectly clear as to what she wanted to do, or wished to have happen, there was now time and place in which she could delay and make sure. The accepted theory of such matters is that people know their minds from the beginning, and that they do not change them. But experience seems to contradict this theory, or else people often act contrary to their convictions and impulses. If the statistics were accessible, it might be found that many potential engagements hovered in a doubtful air, and before they touched the earth in actual promise were dissipated by the play of meteorological chances.

When General Triscoe put down his napkin in rising he said that he would step round to Pupp's and see if Stoller were still there. But on the way he stepped up to Mrs. Adding's hotel on the hill, and he came back, after an interval which he seemed not to have found long, to report rather casually that Stoller had left Carlsbad the day before. By this time the

fact seemed not to concern Agatha herself very vitally.

He asked if the Marches had left any address with her, and she answered that they had not. They were going to spend a few days in Nuremberg, and then push on to Holland for Mr. March's after-cure. There was no relevance in his question unless it intimated his belief that she was in confidential correspondence with Mrs. March, and she met this by saying that she was going to write her in care of their bankers; she asked whether he wished to send any word.

"No. I understand," he intimated, "that there is nothing at all in the nature of a--a--an understanding, then, with--"

"No, nothing."

"Hm!" The general waited a moment. Then he ventured, "Do you care to say--do you wish me to know--how he took it?"

The tears came into the girl's eyes, but she governed herself to say, "He--he was disappointed."

"He had no right to be disappointed."

It was a question, and she answered: "He thought he had. He said--that he wouldn't--trouble me any more."

The general did not ask at once, "And you don't know where he is now--you haven't heard anything from him since?"

Agatha flashed through her tears, "Papa!"

"Oh! I beg your pardon. I think you told me."

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Americans are hungrier for royalty than anybody else
Effort to get on common ground with an inferior
He buys my poverty and not my will
Honest selfishness
Intrepid fancy that they had confronted fate
Less intrusive than if he had not been there
Monologue to which the wives of absent-minded men resign
Only one of them was to be desperate at a time
Reconciliation with death which nature brings to life at last
Voting-cattle whom they bought and sold
We don't seem so much our own property
We get too much into the hands of other people

THEIR SILVER WEDDING JOURNEY

PART III.

XLVIII.

At the first station where the train stopped, a young German bowed himself into the compartment with the Marches, and so visibly resisted an impulse to smoke that March begged him to light his cigarette. In the talk which this friendly overture led to between them he explained that he was a railway architect, employed by the government on that line of road, and was travelling officially. March spoke of Nuremberg; he owned the sort of surfeit he had suffered from its excessive mediaevalism, and the young man said it was part of the new imperial patriotism to cherish the Gothic throughout Germany; no other sort of architecture was permitted in Nuremberg. But they would find enough classicism at Ansbach, he promised them, and he entered with sympathetic intelligence into their wish to see this former capital when March told him they were going to stop there, in hopes of something typical of the old disjointed Germany of the petty principalities, the little paternal despotisms now extinct.

As they talked on, partly in German and partly in English, their purpose in visiting Ansbach appeared to the Marches more meditated than it was. In fact it was somewhat accidental; Ansbach was near Nuremberg; it was not much out of the way to Holland. They took more and more credit to themselves for a reasoned and definite motive, in the light of their companion's enthusiasm for the place, and its charm began for them with the drive from the station through streets whose sentiment was both Italian and French, and where there was a yellowish cast in the gray of the architecture which was almost Mantuan. They rested their sensibilities, so bruised and fretted by Gothic angles and points, against the smooth surfaces of the prevailing classicistic facades of the houses as they passed, and when they arrived at their hotel, an old mansion of Versailles type, fronting on a long irregular square planted with pollard sycamores, they said that it might as well have been Lucca.

The archway and stairway of the hotel were draped with the Bavarian colors, and they were obscurely flattered to learn that Prince Leopold, the brother of the Prince-Regent of the kingdom, had taken rooms there, on his way to the manoeuvres at Nuremberg, and was momentarily expected with his suite. They realized that they were not of the princely party, however, when they were told that he had sole possession of the dining-

room, and they went out to another hotel, and had their supper in keeping delightfully native. People seemed to come there to write their letters and make up their accounts, as well as to eat their suppers; they called for stationery like characters in old comedy, and the clatter of crockery and the scratching of pens went on together; and fortune offered the Marches a delicate reparation for their exclusion from their own hotel in the cold popular reception of the prince which they got back just in time to witness. A very small group of people, mostly women and boys, had gathered to see him arrive, but there was no cheering or any sign of public interest. Perhaps he personally merited none; he looked a dull, sad man, with his plain, stubbed features; and after he had mounted to his apartment, the officers of his staff stood quite across the landing, and barred the passage of the Americans, ignoring even Mrs. March's presence, as they talked together.

"Well, my dear," said her husband, "here you have it at last. This is what you've been living for, ever since we came to Germany. It's a great moment."

"Yes. What are you going to do?"

"Who? I? Oh, nothing! This is your affair; it's for you to act."

If she had been young, she might have withered them with a glance; she doubted now if her dim eyes would have any such power; but she advanced steadily upon them, and then the officers seemed aware of her, and stood aside.

March always insisted that they stood aside apologetically, but she held as firmly that they stood aside impertinently, or at least indifferently, and that the insult to her American womanhood was perfectly ideal. It is true that nothing of the kind happened again during their stay at the hotel; the prince's officers were afterwards about in the corridors and on the stairs, but they offered no shadow of obstruction to her going and coming, and the landlord himself was not so preoccupied with his highhopes but he had time to express his grief that she had been obliged to go out for supper.

They satisfied the passion for the little obsolete capital which had been growing upon them by strolling past the old Resident at an hour so favorable for a first impression. It loomed in the gathering dusk even vaster than it was, and it was really vast enough for the pride of a King of France, much more a Margrave of Ansbach. Time had blackened and blotched its coarse limestone walls to one complexion with the statues swelling and strutting in the figure of Roman legionaries before it, and standing out against the evening sky along its balustraded roof, and had softened to the right tint the stretch of half a dozen houses with mansard roofs and renaissance facades obsequiously in keeping with the Versailles ideal of a Resident. In the rear, and elsewhere at fit distance from its courts, a native architecture prevailed; and at no great remove the Marches found themselves in a simple German town again. There they stumbled upon a little bookseller's shop blinking in a quiet corner, and bought three or four guides and small histories of Ansbach,

which they carried home, and studied between drowsing and waking. The wonderful German syntax seems at its most enigmatical in this sort of literature, and sometimes they lost themselves in its labyrinths completely, and only made their way perilously out with the help of cumulative declensions, past articles and adjectives blindly seeking their nouns, to long-procrastinated verbs dancing like swamp-fires in the distance. They emerged a little less ignorant than they went in, and better qualified than they would otherwise have been for their second visit to the Schloss, which they paid early the next morning.

They were so early, indeed, that when they mounted from the great inner court, much too big for Ansbach, if not for the building, and rung the custodian's bell, a smiling maid who let them into an ante-room, where she kept on picking over vegetables for her dinner, said the custodian was busy, and could not be seen till ten o'clock. She seemed, in her nook of the pretentious pile, as innocently unconscious of its history as any hen-sparrow who had built her nest in some coign of its architecture; and her friendly, peaceful domesticity remained a wholesome human background to the tragedies and comedies of the past, and held them in a picturesque relief in which they were alike tolerable and even charming.

The history of Ansbach strikes its roots in the soil of fable, and above ground is a gnarled and twisted growth of good and bad from the time of the Great Charles to the time of the Great Frederick. Between these times she had her various rulers, ecclesiastical and secular, in various forms of vassalage to the empire; but for nearly four centuries her sovereignty was in the hands of the margraves, who reigned in a constantly increasing splendor till the last sold her outright to the King of Prussia in 1791, and went to live in England on the proceeds. She had taken her part in the miseries and glories of the wars that desolated Germany, but after the Reformation, when she turned from the ancient faith to which she owed her cloistered origin under St. Gumpertus, her people had peace except when their last prince sold them to fight the battles of others. It is in this last transaction that her history, almost in the moment when she ceased to have a history of her own, links to that of the modern world, and that it came home to the Marches in their national character; for two thousand of those poor Ansbach mercenaries were bought up by England and sent to put down a rebellion in her American colonies.

Humanly, they were more concerned for the Last Margrave, because of certain qualities which made him the Best Margrave, in spite of the defects of his qualities. He was the son of the Wild Margrave, equally known in the Ansbach annals, who may not have been the Worst Margrave, but who had certainly a bad trick of putting his subjects to death without trial, and in cases where there was special haste, with his own hand. He sent his son to the university at Utrecht because he believed that the republican influences in Holland would be wholesome for him, and then he sent him to travel in Italy; but when the boy came home looking frail and sick, the Wild Margrave charged his official travelling companion with neglect, and had the unhappy Hofrath Meyer hanged without process for this crime. One of the gentlemen of his realm, for a

pasquinade on the Margrave, was brought to the scaffold; he had, at various times, twenty-two of his soldiers shot with arrows and bullets or hanged for desertion, besides many whose penalties his clemency commuted to the loss of an ear or a nose; a Hungarian who killed his hunting-dog, he had broken alive on the wheel. A soldier's wife was hanged for complicity in a case of desertion; a young soldier who eloped with the girl he loved was brought to Ansbach from a neighboring town, and hanged with her on the same gallows. A sentry at the door of one of the Margrave's castles amiably complied with the Margrave's request to let him take his gun for a moment, on the pretence of wishing to look at it. For this breach of discipline the prince covered him with abuse and gave him over to his hussars, who bound him to a horse's tail and dragged him through the streets; he died of his injuries. The kennel-master who had charge of the Margrave's dogs was accused of neglecting them: without further inquiry the Margrave rode to the man's house and shot him down on his own threshold. A shepherd who met the Margrave on a shying horse did not get his flock out of the way quickly enough; the Margrave demanded the pistols of a gentleman in his company, but he answered that they were not loaded, and the shepherd's life was saved. As they returned home the gentleman fired them off. "What does that mean?" cried the Margrave, furiously. "It means, gracious lord, that you will sleep sweeter tonight, for not having heard my pistols an hour sooner."

From this it appears that the gracious lord had his moments of regret; but perhaps it is not altogether strange that when he died, the whole population "stormed through the streets to meet his funeral train, not in awe-stricken silence to meditate on the fall of human grandeur, but to unite in an eager tumult of rejoicing, as if some cruel brigand who had long held the city in terror were delivered over to them bound and in chains." For nearly thirty years this blood-stained miscreant had reigned over his hapless people in a sovereign plenitude of power, which by the theory of German imperialism in our day is still a divine right.

They called him the Wild Margrave, in their instinctive revolt from the belief that any man not untamably savage could be guilty of his atrocities; and they called his son the Last Margrave, with a touch of the poetry which perhaps records a regret for their extinction as a state. He did not harry them as his father had done; his mild rule was the effect partly of the indifference and distaste for his country bred, by his long sojourns abroad; but doubtless also it was the effect of a kindly nature. Even in the matter of selling a few thousands of them to fight the battles of a bad cause on the other side of the world, he had the best of motives, and faithfully applied the proceeds to the payment of the state debt and the embellishment of the capital.

His mother was a younger sister of Frederick the Great, and was so constantly at war with her husband that probably she had nothing to do with the marriage which the Wild Margrave forced upon their son. Love certainly had nothing to do with it, and the Last Margrave early escaped from it to the society of Mlle. Clairon, the great French tragedienne, whom he met in Paris, and whom he persuaded to come and make her home with him in Ansbach. She lived there seventeen years, and though always an alien, she bore herself with kindness to all classes, and is still

remembered there by the roll of butter which calls itself a Klarungswecke in its imperfect French.

No roll of butter records in faltering accents the name of the brilliant and disdainful English lady who replaced this poor tragic muse in the Margrave's heart, though the lady herself lived to be the last Margravine of Ansbach, where everybody seems to have hated her with a passion which she doubtless knew how to return. She was the daughter of the Earl of Berkeley, and the wife of Lord Craven, a sufficiently unfaithful and unworthy nobleman by her account, from whom she was living apart when the Margrave asked her to his capital. There she set herself to oust Mlle. Clairon with sneers and jests for the theatrical style which the actress could not outlive. Lady Craven said she was sure Clairon's nightcap must be a crown of gilt paper; and when Clairon threatened to kill herself, and the Margrave was alarmed, "You forget," said Lady Craven, "that actresses only stab themselves under their sleeves."

She drove Clairon from Ansbach, and the great tragedienne returned to Paris, where she remained true to her false friend, and from time to time wrote him letters full of magnanimous counsel and generous tenderness. But she could not have been so good company as Lady Craven, who was a very gifted person, and knew how to compose songs and sing them, and write comedies and play them, and who could keep the Margrave amused in many ways. When his loveless and childless wife died he married the English woman, but he grew more and more weary of his dull little court and his dull little country, and after a while, considering the uncertain tenure sovereigns had of their heads since the French King had lost his, and the fact that he had no heirs to follow him in his principality, he resolved to cede it for a certain sum to Prussia. To this end his new wife's urgency was perhaps not wanting. They went to England, where she outlived him ten years, and wrote her memoirs.

The custodian of the Schloss came at last, and the Marches saw instantly that he was worth waiting for. He was as vainglorious of the palace as any grand-monarching margrave of them all. He could not have been more personally superb in showing their different effigies if they had been his own family portraits, and he would not spare the strangers a single splendor of the twenty vast, handsome, tiresome, Versailles-like rooms he led them through. The rooms were fatiguing physically, but so poignantly interesting that Mrs. March would not have missed, though she perished of her pleasure, one of the things she saw. She had for once a surfeit of highhoting in the pictures, the porcelains, the thrones and canopies, the tapestries, the historical associations with the margraves and their marriages, with the Great Frederick and the Great Napoleon. The Great Napoleon's man Bernadotte made the Schloss his headquarters when he occupied Ansbach after Austerlitz, and here he completed his arrangements for taking her bargain from Prussia and handing it over to Bavaria, with whom it still remains. Twice the Great Frederick had sojourned in the palace; visiting his sister Louise, the wife of the Wild Margrave, and more than once it had welcomed her next neighbor and sister Wilhelmina, the Margravine of Baireuth, whose autobiographic voice, piercingly plaintive and reproachful, seemed to quiver in the air. Here, oddly enough, the spell of the Wild Margrave weakened in the presence of his

portrait, which signally failed to justify his fame of furious tyrant. That seems, indeed, to have been rather the popular and historical conception of him than the impression he made upon his exalted contemporaries. The Margravine of Baireuth at any rate could so far excuse her poor blood-stained brother-in-law as to say: "The Margrave of Ansbach . . . was a young prince who had been very badly educated. He continually ill-treated my sister; they led the life of cat and dog. My sister, it is true, was sometimes in fault . . . Her education had been very bad. . . She was married at fourteen."

At parting, the custodian told the Marches that he would easily have known them for Americans by the handsome fee they gave him; they came away flown with his praise; and their national vanity was again flattered when they got out into the principal square of Ansbach. There, in a bookseller's window, they found among the pamphlets teaching different languages without a master, one devoted to the Amerikanische Sprache as distinguished from the Englische Sprache. That there could be no mistake, the cover was printed with colors in a German ideal of the star-spangled banner; and March said he always knew that we had a language of our own, and that now he was going in to buy that pamphlet and find out what it was like. He asked the young shop-woman how it differed from English, which she spoke fairly well from having lived eight years in Chicago. She said that it differed from the English mainly in emphasis and pronunciation. "For instance, the English say 'HALF past', and the Americans 'Half PAST'; the English say 'laht' and the Americans say 'late'."

The weather had now been clear quite long enough, and it was raining again, a fine, bitter, piercing drizzle. They asked the girl if it always rained in Ansbach; and she owned that it nearly always did. She said that sometimes she longed for a little American summer; that it was never quite warm in Ansbach; and when they had got out into the rain, March said: "It was very nice to stumble on Chicago in an Ansbach bookstore. You ought to have told her you had a married daughter in Chicago. Don't miss another such chance."

"We shall need another bag if we keep on buying books at this rate," said his wife with tranquil irrelevance; and not to give him time for protest; she pushed him into a shop where the valises in the window perhaps suggested her thought. March made haste to forestall her there by saying they were Americans, but the mistress of the shop seemed to have her misgivings, and "Born Americans, perhaps?" she ventured. She had probably never met any but the naturalized sort, and supposed these were the only sort. March re-assured her, and then she said she had a son living in Jersey City, and she made March take his address that he might tell him he had seen his mother; she had apparently no conception what a great way Jersey City is from New York.

Mrs. March would not take his arm when they came out. "Now, that is what I never can get used to in you, Basil, and I've tried to palliate it for twenty-seven years. You know you won't look up that poor woman's son! Why did you let her think you would?"

"How could I tell her I wouldn't? Perhaps I shall."

"No, no! You never will. I know you're good and kind, and that's why I can't understand your being so cruel. When we get back, how will you ever find time to go over to Jersey City?"

He could not tell, but at last he said: "I'll tell you what! You must keep me up to it. You know how much you enjoy making me do my duty, and this will be such a pleasure!"

She laughed forlornly, but after a moment she took his arm; and he began, from the example of this good mother, to philosophize the continuous simplicity and sanity of the people of Ansbach under all their civic changes. Saints and soldiers, knights and barons, margraves, princes, kings, emperors, had come and gone, and left their single-hearted, friendly subjectfolk pretty much what they found them. The people had suffered and survived through a thousand wars, and apparently prospered on under all governments and misgovernments. When the court was most French, most artificial, most vicious, the citizen life must have remained immutably German, dull, and kind. After all, he said, humanity seemed everywhere to be pretty safe, and pretty much the same.

"Yes, that is all very well," she returned, "and you can theorize interestingly enough; but I'm afraid that poor mother, there, had no more reality for you than those people in the past. You appreciate her as a type, and you don't care for her as a human being. You're nothing but a dreamer, after all. I don't blame you," she went on. "It's your temperament, and you can't change, now."

"I may change for the worse," he threatened. "I think I have, already. I don't believe I could stand up to Dryfoos, now, as I did for poor old Lindau, when I risked your bread and butter for his. I look back in wonder and admiration at myself. I've steadily lost touch with life since then. I'm a trifler, a dilettante, and an amateur of the right and the good as I used to be when I was young. Oh, I have the grace to be troubled at times, now, and once I never was. It never occurred to me then that the world wasn't made to interest me, or at the best to instruct me, but it does, now, at times."

She always came to his defence when he accused himself; it was the best ground he could take with her. "I think you behaved very well with Burnamy. You did your duty then."

"Did I? I'm not so sure. At any rate, it's the last time I shall do it. I've served my term. I think I should tell him that he was all right in that business with Stoller, if I were to meet him, now."

"Isn't it strange," she said, provisionally, "that we don't come upon a trace of him anywhere in Ansbach?"

"Ah, you've been hoping he would turn up!"

"Yes. I don't deny it. I feel very unhappy about him."

"I don't. He's too much like me. He would have been quite capable of promising that poor woman to look up her son in Jersey City. When I think of that, I have no patience with Burnamy."

"I am going to ask the landlord about him, now he's got rid of his highhotes," said Mrs. March.

XLIX.

They went home to their hotel for their midday dinner, and to the comfort of having it nearly all to themselves. Prince Leopold had risen early, like all the hard-working potentates of the continent, and got away to the manoeuvres somewhere at six o'clock; the decorations had been removed, and the court-yard where the hired coach and pair of the prince had rolled in the evening before had only a few majestic ducks waddling about in it and quacking together, indifferent to the presence of a yellow mail-wagon, on which the driver had been apparently dozing till the hour of noon should sound. He sat there immovable, but at the last stroke of the clock he woke up and drove vigorously away to the station.

The dining-room which they had been kept out of by the prince the night before was not such as to embitter the sense of their wrong by its splendor. After all, the tastes of royalty must be simple, if the prince might have gone to the Schloss and had chosen rather to stay at this modest hotel; but perhaps the Schloss was reserved for more immediate royalty than the brothers of prince-regents; and in that case he could not have done better than dine at the Golden Star. If he paid no more than two marks, he dined as cheaply as a prince could wish, and as abundantly. The wine at Ansbach was rather thin and sour, but the bread, March declared, was the best bread in the whole world, not excepting the bread of Carlsbad.

After dinner the Marches had some of the local pastry, not so incomparable as the bread, with their coffee, which they had served them in a pavilion of the beautiful garden remaining to the hotel from the time when it was a patrician mansion. The garden had roses in it and several sorts of late summer flowers, as well as ripe cherries, currants, grapes, and a Virginia-creeper red with autumn, all harmoniously contemporaneous, as they might easily be in a climate where no one of the seasons can very well know itself from the others. It had not been raining for half an hour, and the sun was scalding hot, so that the shelter of their roof was very grateful, and the puddles of the paths were drying up with the haste which puddles have to make in Germany, between rains, if they are ever going to dry up at all.

The landlord came out to see if they were well served, and he was sincerely obliging in the English he had learned as a waiter in London. Mrs. March made haste to ask him if a young American of the name of Burnamy had been staying with him a few weeks before; and she described

Burnamy's beauty and amiability so vividly that the landlord, if he had been a woman, could not have failed to remember him. But he failed, with a real grief, apparently, and certainly a real politeness, to recall either his name or his person. The landlord was an intelligent, good-looking young fellow; he told them that he was lately married, and they liked him so much that they were sorry to see him afterwards privately boxing the ears of the piccolo, the waiter's little understudy. Perhaps the piccolo deserved it, but they would rather not have witnessed his punishment; his being in a dress-coat seemed to make it also an indignity.

In the late afternoon they went to the cafe in the old Orangery of the Schloss for a cup of tea, and found themselves in the company of several Ansbach ladies who had brought their work, in the evident habit of coming there every afternoon for their coffee and for a dish of gossip. They were kind, uncomely, motherly-looking bodies; one of them combed her hair at the table; and they all sat outside of the cafe with their feet on the borders of the puddles which had not dried up there in the shade of the building.

A deep lawn, darkened at its farther edge by the long shadows of trees, stretched before them with the sunset light on it, and it was all very quiet and friendly. The tea brought to the Marches was brewed from some herb apparently of native growth, with bits of what looked like willow leaves in it, but it was flavored with a clove in each cup, and they sat contentedly over it and tried to make out what the Ansbach ladies were, talking about. These had recognized the strangers for Americans, and one of them explained that Americans spoke the same language as the English and yet were not quite the same people.

"She differs from the girl in the book-store," said March, translating to his wife. "Let us get away before she says that we are not so nice as the English," and they made off toward the avenue of trees beyond the lawn.

There were a few people walking up and down in the alley, making the most of the moment of dry weather. They saluted one another like acquaintances, and three clean-shaven, walnut-faced old peasants bowed in response to March's stare, with a self-respectful civility. They were yeomen of the region of Ansbach, where the country round about is dotted with their cottages, and not held in vast homeless tracts by the nobles as in North Germany.

The Bavarian who had imparted this fact to March at breakfast, not without a certain tacit pride in it to the disadvantage of the Prussians, was at the supper table, and was disposed to more talk, which he managed in a stout, slow English of his own. He said he had never really spoken English with an English-speaking person before, or at all since he studied it in school at Munich.

"I should be afraid to put my school-boy German against your English," March said, and, when he had understood, the other laughed for pleasure, and reported the compliment to his wife in their own parlance. "You

Germans certainly beat us in languages."

"Oh, well," he retaliated, "the Americans beat us in some other things," and Mrs. March felt that this was but just; she would have liked to mention a few, but not ungraciously; she and the German lady kept smiling across the table, and trying detached vocables of their respective tongues upon each other.

The Bavarian said he lived in Munich still, but was in Ansbach on an affair of business; he asked March if he were not going to see the manoeuvres somewhere. Till now the manoeuvres had merely been the interesting background of their travel; but now, hearing that the Emperor of Germany, the King of Saxony, the Regent of Bavaria, and the King of Wurtemberg, the Grand-Dukes of Weimar and Baden, with visiting potentates of all sorts, and innumerable lesser highhotes, foreign and domestic, were to be present, Mrs. March resolved that they must go to at least one of the reviews.

"If you go to Frankfort, you can see the King of Italy too," said the Bavarian, but he owned that they probably could not get into a hotel there, and he asked why they should not go to Wurzburg, where they could see all the sovereigns except the King of Italy.

"Wurzburg? Wurzburg?" March queried of his wife. "Where did we hear of that place?"

"Isn't it where Burnamy said Mr. Stoller had left his daughters at school?"

"So it is! And is that on the way to the Rhine?" he asked the Bavarian.

"No, no! Wurzburg is on the Main, about five hours from Ansbach. And it is a very interesting place. It is where the good wine comes from."

"Oh, yes," said March, and in their rooms his wife got out all their guides and maps and began to inform herself and to inform him about Wurzburg. But first she said it was very cold and he must order some fire made in the tall German stove in their parlor. The maid who came said "Gleich," but she did not come back, and about the time they were getting furious at her neglect, they began getting warm. He put his hand on the stove and found it hot; then he looked down for a door in the stove where he might shut a damper; there was no door.

"Good heavens!" he shouted. "It's like something in a dream," and he ran to pull the bell for help.

"No, no! Don't ring! It will make us ridiculous. They'll think Americans don't know anything. There must be some way of dampening the stove; and if there isn't, I'd rather suffocate than give myself away." Mrs. March ran and opened the window, while her husband carefully examined the stove at every point, and explored the pipe for the damper in vain. "Can't you find it?" The night wind came in raw and damp, and threatened to blow their lamp out, and she was obliged to shut the

window.

"Not a sign of it. I will go down and ask the landlord in strict confidence how they dampen their stoves in Ansbach."

"Well, if you must. It's getting hotter every moment." She followed him timorously into the corridor, lit by a hanging lamp, turned low for the night.

He looked at his watch; it was eleven o'clock. "I'm afraid they're all in bed."

"Yes; you mustn't go! We must try to find out for ourselves. What can that door be for?"

It was a low iron door, half the height of a man, in the wall near their room, and it yielded to his pull. "Get a candle," he whispered, and when she brought it, he stooped to enter the doorway.

"Oh, do you think you'd better?" she hesitated.

"You can come, too, if you're afraid. You've always said you wanted to die with me."

"Well. But you go first."

He disappeared within, and then came back to the doorway. "Just come in here, a moment." She found herself in a sort of antechamber, half the height of her own room, and following his gesture she looked down where in one corner some crouching monster seemed showing its fiery teeth in a grin of derision. This grin was the damper of their stove, and this was where the maid had kindled the fire which had been roasting them alive, and was still joyously chuckling to itself. "I think that Munich man was wrong. I don't believe we beat the Germans in anything. There isn't a hotel in the United States where the stoves have no front doors, and every one of them has the space of a good-sized flat given up to the convenience of kindling a fire in it."

L.

After a red sunset of shameless duplicity March was awakened to a rainy morning by the clinking of cavalry hoofs on the pavement of the long-irregular square before the hotel, and he hurried out to see the passing of the soldiers on their way to the manoeuvres. They were troops of all arms, but mainly infantry, and as they stumped heavily through the groups of apathetic citizens in their mud-splashed boots, they took the steady downpour on their dripping helmets. Some of them were smoking, but none smiling, except one gay fellow who made a joke to a serving-maid on the sidewalk. An old officer halted his staff to scold a citizen who had given him a mistaken direction. The shame of the erring man was great,

and the pride of a fellow-citizen who corrected him was not less, though the arrogant brute before whom they both cringed used them with equal scorn; the younger officers listened indifferently round on horseback behind the glitter of their eyeglasses, and one of them amused himself by turning the silver bangles on his wrist.

Then the files of soldier slaves passed on, and March crossed the bridge spanning the gardens in what had been the city moat, and found his way to the market-place, under the walls of the old Gothic church of St. Gumpertus. The market, which spread pretty well over the square, seemed to be also a fair, with peasants' clothes and local pottery for sale, as well as fruits and vegetables, and large baskets of flowers, with old women squatting before them. It was all as picturesque as the markets used to be in Montreal and Quebec, and in a cloudy memory of his wedding journey long before, he bought so lavishly of the flowers to carry back to his wife that a little girl, who saw his arm-load from her window as he returned, laughed at him, and then drew shyly back. Her laugh reminded him how many happy children he had seen in Germany, and how freely they seemed to play everywhere, with no one to make them afraid. When they grow up the women laugh as little as the men, whose rude toil the soldiering leaves them to.

He got home with his flowers, and his wife took them absently, and made him join her in watching the sight which had fascinated her in the street under their windows. A slender girl, with a waist as slim as a corseted officer's, from time to time came out of the house across the way to the firewood which had been thrown from a wagon upon the sidewalk there. Each time she embraced several of the heavy four-foot logs and disappeared with them in-doors. Once she paused from her work to joke with a well-dressed man who came by; and seemed to find nothing odd in her work; some gentlemen lounging at the window over head watched her with no apparent sense of anomaly.

"What do you think of that?" asked Mrs. March. "I think it's good exercise for the girl, and I should like to recommend it to those fat fellows at the window. I suppose she'll saw the wood in the cellar, and then lug it up stairs, and pile it up in the stoves' dressing-rooms."

"Don't laugh! It's too disgraceful."

"Well, I don't know! If you like, I'll offer these gentlemen across the way your opinion of it in the language of Goethe and Schiller."

"I wish you'd offer my opinion of them. They've been staring in here with an opera-glass."

"Ah, that's a different affair. There isn't much going on in Ansbach, and they have to make the most of it."

The lower casements of the houses were furnished with mirrors set at right angles with them, and nothing which went on in the streets was lost. Some of the streets were long and straight, and at rare moments they lay full of sun. At such times the Marches were puzzled by the

sight of citizens carrying open umbrellas, and they wondered if they had forgotten to put them down, or thought it not worth while in the brief respites from the rain, or were profiting by such rare occasions to dry them; and some other sights remained baffling to the last. Once a man with his hands pinioned before him, and a gendarme marching stolidly after him with his musket on his shoulder, passed under their windows; but who he was, or what he, had done, or was to suffer, they never knew. Another time a pair went by on the way to the railway station: a young man carrying an umbrella under his arm, and a very decent-looking old woman lugging a heavy carpet bag, who left them to the lasting question whether she was the young man's servant in her best clothes, or merely his mother.

Women do not do everything in Ansbach, however, the sacristans being men, as the Marches found when they went to complete their impression of the courtly past of the city by visiting the funeral chapel of the margraves in the crypt of St. Johannis Church. In the little ex-margravely capital there was something of the neighborly interest in the curiosity of strangers which endears Italian witness. The white-haired street-sweeper of Ansbach, who willingly left his broom to guide them to the house of the sacristan, might have been a street-sweeper in Vicenza; and the old sacristan, when he put his velvet skull-cap out of an upper window and professed his willingness to show them the chapel, disappointed them by saying "Gleich!" instead of "Subito!" The architecture of the houses was a party to the illusion. St. Johannis, like the older church of St. Gumpertus, is Gothic, with the two unequal towers which seem distinctive of Ansbach; at the St. Gumpertus end of the place where they both stand the dwellings are Gothic too, and might be in Hamburg; but at the St. Johannis end they seem to have felt the exotic spirit of the court, and are of a sort of Teutonized renaissance.

The rococo margraves and margravines used of course to worship in St. Johannis Church. Now they all, such as did not marry abroad, lie in the crypt of the church, in caskets of bronze and copper and marble, with draperies of black samite, more and more funereally vainglorious to the last. Their courtly coffins are ranged in a kind of hemicycle, with the little coffins of the children that died before they came to the knowledge of their greatness. On one of these a kneeling figurine in bronze holds up the effigy of the child within; on another the epitaph plays tenderly with the fate of a little princess, who died in her first year.

In the Rose-month was this sweet Rose taken.
For the Rose-kind hath she earth forsaken.
The Princess is the Rose, that here no longer blows.
From the stem by death's hand rudely shaken.
Then rest in the Rose-house.
Little Princess-Rosebud dear!
There life's Rose shall bloom again
In Heaven's sunshine clear.

While March struggled to get this into English words, two German ladies, who had made themselves of his party, passed reverently away and left him

to pay the sacristan alone.

"That is all right," he said, when he came out. "I think we got the most value; and they didn't look as if they could afford it so well; though you never can tell, here. These ladies may be the highest kind of highhotes practising a praiseworthy economy. I hope the lesson won't be lost on us. They have saved enough by us for their coffee at the Orangery. Let us go and have a little willow-leaf tea!"

The Orangery perpetually lured them by what it had kept of the days when an Orangery was essential to the self-respect of every sovereign prince, and of so many private gentlemen. On their way they always passed the statue of Count Platen, the dull poet whom Heine's hate would have delivered so cruelly over to an immortality of contempt, but who stands there near the Schloss in a grass-plot prettily planted with flowers, and ignores his brilliant enemy in the comfortable durability of bronze; and there always awaited them in the old pleasaunce the pathos of Kaspar Hauser's fate; which his murder affixes to it with a red stain.

After their cups of willow leaves at the cafe they went up into that nook of the plantation where the simple shaft of church-warden's Gothic commemorates the assassination on the spot where it befell. Here the hapless youth, whose mystery will never be fathomed on earth, used to come for a little respite from his harsh guardian in Ansbach, homesick for the kindness of his Nuremberg friends; and here his murderer found him and dealt him the mortal blow.

March lingered upon the last sad circumstance of the tragedy in which the wounded boy dragged himself home, to suffer the suspicion and neglect of his guardian till death attested his good faith beyond cavil. He said this was the hardest thing to bear in all his story, and that he would like to have a look into the soul of the dull, unkind wretch who had so misread his charge. He was going on with an inquiry that pleased him much, when his wife pulled him abruptly away.

"Now, I see, you are yielding to the fascination of it, and you are wanting to take the material from Burnamy!"

"Oh, well, let him have the material; he will spoil it. And I can always reject it, if he offers it to 'Every Other Week'."

"I could believe, after your behavior to that poor woman about her son in Jersey City, you're really capable of it."

"What comprehensive inculpation! I had forgotten about that poor woman."

LI.

The letters which March had asked his Nuremberg banker to send them came just as they were leaving Ansbach. The landlord sent them down to the

station, and Mrs. March opened them in the train, and read them first so that she could prepare him if there were anything annoying in them, as well as indulge her livelier curiosity.

"They're from both the children," she said, without waiting for him to ask. "You can look at them later. There's a very nice letter from Mrs. Adding to me, and one from dear little Rose for you." Then she hesitated, with her hand on a letter faced down in her lap. "And there's one from Agatha Triscoe, which I wonder what you'll think of." She delayed again, and then flashed it open before him, and waited with a sort of impassioned patience while he read it.

He read it, and gave it back to her. "There doesn't seem to be very much in it."

"That's it! Don't you think I had a right to there being something in it, after all I did for her?"

"I always hoped you hadn't done anything for her, but if you have, why should she give herself away on paper? It's a very proper letter."

"It's a little too proper, and it's the last I shall have to do with her. She knew that I should be on pins and needles till I heard how her father had taken Burnamy's being there, that night, and she doesn't say a word about it."

"The general may have had a tantrum that she couldn't describe. Perhaps she hasn't told him, yet."

"She would tell him instantly!" cried Mrs. March who began to find reason in the supposition, as well as comfort for the hurt which the girl's reticence had given her. "Or if she wouldn't, it would be because she was waiting for the best chance."

"That would be like the wise daughter of a difficult father. She may be waiting for the best chance to say how he took it. No, I'm all for Miss Triscoe, and I hope that now, if she's taken herself off our hands, she'll keep off."

"It's altogether likely that he's made her promise not to tell me anything about it," Mrs. March mused aloud.

"That would be unjust to a person who had behaved so discreetly as you have," said her husband.

They were on their way to Wurzburg, and at the first station, which was a junction, a lady mounted to their compartment just before the train began to move. She was stout and middle-aged, and had never been pretty, but she bore herself with a kind of authority in spite of her thread gloves, her dowdy gray travelling-dress, and a hat of lower middle-class English tastelessness. She took the only seat vacant, a backward-riding place beside a sleeping passenger who looked like a commercial traveller, but she seemed ill at ease in it, and March offered her his seat. She

accepted it very promptly, and thanked him for it in the English of a German, and Mrs. March now classed her as a governess who had been teaching in England and had acquired the national feeling for dress. But in this character she found her interesting, and even a little pathetic, and she made her some overtures of talk which the other met eagerly enough. They were now running among low hills, not so picturesque as those between Eger and Nuremberg, but of much the same toylike quaintness in the villages dropped here and there in their valleys. One small town, completely walled, with its gray houses and red roofs, showed through the green of its trees and gardens so like a colored print in a child's story-book that Mrs. March cried out for joy in it, and then accounted for her rapture by explaining to the stranger that they were Americans and had never been in Germany before. The lady was not visibly affected by the fact, she said casually that she had often been in that little town, which she named; her uncle had a castle in the country back of it, and she came with her husband for the shooting in the autumn. By a natural transition she spoke of her children, for whom she had an English governess; she said she had never been in England, but had learnt the language from a governess in her own childhood; and through it all Mrs. March perceived that she was trying to impress them with her consequence. To humor her pose, she said they had been looking up the scene of Kaspar Hauser's death at Ansbach; and at this the stranger launched into such intimate particulars concerning him, and was so familiar at first hands with the facts of his life, that Mrs. March let her run on, too much amused with her pretensions to betray any doubt of her. She wondered if March were enjoying it all as much, and from time to time she tried to catch his eye, while the lady talked constantly and rather loudly, helping herself out with words from them both when her English failed her. In the safety of her perfect understanding of the case, Mrs. March now submitted farther, and even suffered some patronage from her, which in another mood she would have met with a decided snub.

As they drew in among the broad vine-webbed slopes of the Wurzburg, hills, the stranger said she was going to change there, and take a train on to Berlin. Mrs. March wondered whether she would be able to keep up the comedy to the last; and she had to own that she carried it off very easily when the friends whom she was expecting did not meet her on the arrival of their train. She refused March's offers of help, and remained quietly seated while he got out their wraps and bags. She returned with a hardy smile the cold leave Mrs. March took of her; and when a porter came to the door, and forced his way by the Marches, to ask with anxious servility if she, were the Baroness von-----, she bade the man get them. a 'traeger', and then come back for her. She waved them a complacent adieu before they mixed with the crowd and lost sight of her.

"Well, my dear," said March, addressing the snobbishness in his wife which he knew to be so wholly impersonal, "you've mingled with one highhote, anyway. I must say she didn't look it, any more than the Duke and Duchess of Orleans, and yet she's only a baroness. Think of our being three hours in the same compartment, and she doing all she could to impress us and our getting no good of it! I hoped you were feeling her quality, so that we should have it in the family, anyway, and always know

what it was like. But so far, the highhotes have all been terribly disappointing."

He teased on as they followed the traeger with their baggage out of the station; and in the omnibus on the way to their hotel, he recurred to the loss they had suffered in the baroness's failure to dramatize her nobility effectually. "After all, perhaps she was as much disappointed in us. I don't suppose we looked any more like democrats than she looked like an aristocrat."

"But there's a great difference," Mrs. March returned at last. "It isn't at all a parallel case. We were not real democrats, and she was a real aristocrat."

"To be sure. There is that way of looking at it. That's rather novel; I wish I had thought of that myself. She was certainly more to blame than we were."

LII.

The square in front of the station was planted with flag-poles wreathed in evergreens; a triumphal arch was nearly finished, and a colossal allegory in imitation bronze was well on the way to completion, in honor of the majesties who were coming for the manoeuvres. The streets which the omnibus passed through to the Swan Inn were draped with the imperial German and the royal Bavarian colors; and the standards of the visiting nationalities decked the fronts of the houses where their military attaches were lodged; but the Marches failed to see our own banner, and were spared for the moment the ignominy of finding it over an apothecary shop in a retired avenue. The sun had come out, the sky overhead was of a smiling blue; and they felt the gala-day glow and thrill in the depths of their inextinguishable youth.

The Swan Inn sits on one of the long quays bordering the Main, and its windows look down upon the bridges and shipping of the river; but the traveller reaches it by a door in the rear, through an archway into a back street, where an odor dating back to the foundation of the city is waiting to welcome him.

The landlord was there, too, and he greeted the Marches so cordially that they fully partook his grief in being able to offer them rooms on the front of the house for two nights only. They reconciled themselves to the necessity of then turning out for the staff of the King of Saxony, the more readily because they knew that there was no hope of better things at any other hotel.

The rooms which they could have for the time were charming, and they came down to supper in a glazed gallery looking out on the river picturesque with craft of all fashions: with row-boats, sail-boats, and little steamers, but mainly with long black barges built up into houses in the

middle, and defended each by a little nervous German dog. Long rafts of logs weltered in the sunset red which painted the swift current, and mantled the immeasurable vineyards of the hills around like the color of their ripening grapes. Directly in face rose a castled steep, which kept the ranging walls and the bastions and battlements of the time when such a stronghold could have defended the city from foes without or from tumult within. The arches of a stately bridge spanned the river sunsetward, and lifted a succession of colossal figures against the crimson sky.

"I guess we have been wasting our time, my dear," said March, as they, turned from this beauty to the question of supper. "I wish we had always been here!"

Their waiter had put them at a table in a division of the gallery beyond that which they entered, where some groups of officers were noisily supping. There was no one in their room but a man whose face was indistinguishable against the light, and two young girls who glanced at them with looks at once quelled and defiant, and then after a stare at the officers in the gallery beyond, whispered together with suppressed giggling. The man fed on without noticing them, except now and then to utter a growl that silenced the whispering and giggling for a moment. The Marches, from no positive evidence of any sense, decided that they were Americans.

"I don't know that I feel responsible for them as their fellow-countryman; I should, once," he said.

"It isn't that. It's the worry of trying to make out why they are just what they are," his wife returned.

The girls drew the man's attention to them and he looked at them for the first time; then after a sort of hesitation he went on with his supper. They had only begun theirs when he rose with the two girls, whom Mrs. March now saw to be of the same size and dressed alike, and came heavily toward them.

"I thought you was in Carlsbad," he said bluntly to March, with a nod at Mrs. March. He added, with a twist of his head toward the two girls, "My daughters," and then left them to her, while he talked on with her husband. "Come to see this foolery, I suppose. I'm on my way to the woods for my after-cure; but I thought I might as well stop and give the girls a chance; they got a week's vacation, anyway." Stoller glanced at them with a sort of troubled tenderness in his strong dull face.

"Oh, yes. I understood they were at school here," said March, and he heard one of them saying, in a sweet, high pipe to his wife:

"Ain't it just splendid? I ha'n't seen anything equal to it since the Worrl'd's Fairr." She spoke with a strong contortion of the Western r, and her sister hastened to put in:

"I don't think it's to be compared with the Worrl'd's Fairr. But these

German girls, here, just think it's great. It just does me good to laff at 'em, about it. I like to tell 'em about the electric fountain and the Court of lionorr when they get to talkin' about the illuminations they're goun' to have. You goun' out to the parade? You better engage your carriage right away if you arre. The carrs'll be a perfect jam. Father's engaged ourrs; he had to pay sixty marrks forr it."

They chattered on without shyness and on as easy terms with a woman of three times their years as if she had been a girl of their own age; they willingly took the whole talk to themselves, and had left her quite outside of it before Stoller turned to her.

"I been telling Mr. March here that you better both come to the parade with us. I guess my twospanner will hold five; or if it won't, we'll make it. I don't believe there's a carriage left in Wurzburg; and if you go in the cars, you'll have to walk three or four miles before you get to the parade-ground. You think it over," he said to March. "Nobody else is going to have the places, anyway, and you can say yes at the last minute just as well as now."

He moved off with his girls, who looked over their shoulders at the officers as they passed on through the adjoining room.

"My dear!" cried Mrs. March. "Didn't you suppose he classed us with Burnamy in that business? Why should he be polite to us?"

"Perhaps he wants you to chaperon his daughters. He's probably heard of your performance at the Kurhaus ball. But he knows that I thought Burnamy in the wrong. This may be Stoller's way of wiping out an obligation. Wouldn't you like to go with him?"

"The mere thought of his being in the same town is prostrating. I'd far rather he hated us; then he would avoid us."

"Well, he doesn't own the town, and if it comes to the worst, perhaps we can avoid him. Let us go out, anyway, and see if we can't."

"No, no; I'm too tired; but you go. And get all the maps and guides you can; there's so very little in Baedeker, and almost nothing in that great hulking Bradshaw of yours; and I'm sure there must be the most interesting history of Wurzburg. Isn't it strange that we haven't the slightest association with the name?"

"I've been rummaging in my mind, and I've got hold of an association at last," said March. "It's beer; a sign in a Sixth Avenue saloon window Wurzbürger Hof-Brau."

"No matter if it is beer. Find some sketch of the history, and we'll try to get away from the Stollers in it. I pitied those wild girls, too. What crazy images of the world must fill their empty minds! How their ignorant thoughts must go whirling out into the unknown! I don't envy their father. Do hurry back! I shall be thinking about them every instant till you come."

She said this, but in their own rooms it was so soothing to sit looking through the long twilight at the lovely landscape that the sort of bruise given by their encounter with the Stollers had left her consciousness before March returned. She made him admire first the convent church on a hill further up the river which exactly balanced the fortress in front of them, and then she seized upon the little books he had brought, and set him to exploring the labyrinths of their German, with a mounting exultation in his discoveries. There was a general guide to the city, and a special guide, with plans and personal details of the approaching manoeuvres and the princes who were to figure in them; and there was a sketch of the local history: a kind of thing that the Germans know how to write particularly, well, with little gleams of pleasant humor blinking through it. For the study of this, Mrs. March realized, more and more passionately, that they were in the very most central and convenient point, for the history of Wurzburg might be said to have begun with her prince-bishops, whose rule had begun in the twelfth century, and who had built, on a forgotten Roman work, the fortress of the Marienburg on that vineyarded hill over against the Swan Inn. There had of course been history before that, but 'nothing so clear, nothing so peculiarly swell, nothing that so united the glory of this world and the next as that of the prince-bishops. They had made the Marienburg their home, and kept it against foreign and domestic foes for five hundred years. Shut within its well-armed walls they had awed the often-turbulent city across the Main; they had held it against the embattled farmers in the Peasants' War, and had splendidly lost it to Gustavus Adolphus, and then got it back again and held it till Napoleon took it from them. He gave it with their flock to the Bavarians, who in turn briefly yielded it to the Prussians in 1866, and were now in apparently final possession of it.

Before the prince-bishops, Charlemagne and Barbarossa had come and gone, and since the prince-bishops there had been visiting thrones and kingdoms enough in the ancient city, which was soon to be illustrated by the presence of imperial Germany, royal, Wirtemberg and Saxony, grand-ducal Baden and Weimar, and a surfeit of all the minor potentates among those who speak the beautiful language of the Ja.

But none of these could dislodge the prince-bishops from that supreme place which they had at once taken in Mrs. March's fancy. The potentates were all going to be housed in the vast palace which the prince-bishops had built themselves in Wurzburg as soon as they found it safe to come down from their stronghold of Marienburg, and begin to adorn their city, and to confirm it in its intense fidelity to the Church. Tiepolo had come up out of Italy to fresco their palace, where he wrought year after year, in that worldly taste which has somehow come to express the most sovereign moment of ecclesiasticism. It prevailed so universally in Wurzburg that it left her with the name of the Rococo City, entrenched in a period of time equally remote from early Christianity and modern Protestantism. Out of her sixty thousand souls, only ten thousand are now of the reformed religion, and these bear about the same relation to the Catholic spirit of the place that the Gothic architecture bears to the baroque.

As long as the prince-bishops lasted the Wurzburgers got on very well with but one newspaper, and perhaps the smallest amount of merrymaking known outside of the colony of Massachusetts Bay at the same epoch. The prince-bishops had their finger in everybody's pie, and they portioned out the cakes and ale, which were made according to formulas of their own. The distractions were all of a religious character; churches, convents, monasteries, abounded; ecclesiastical processions and solemnities were the spectacles that edified if they did not amuse the devout population.

It seemed to March an ironical outcome of all this spiritual severity that one of the greatest modern scientific discoveries should have been made in Wurzburg, and that the Roentgen rays should now be giving her name a splendor destined to eclipse the glories of her past.

Mrs. March could not allow that they would do so; or at least that the name of Roentgen would ever lend more lustre to his city than that of Longfellow's Walther von der Vogelweide. She was no less surprised than pleased to realize that this friend of the birds was a Wurzbürger, and she said that their first pilgrimage in the morning should be to the church where he lies buried.

LIII.

March went down to breakfast not quite so early as his wife had planned, and left her to have her coffee in her room. He got a pleasant table in the gallery overlooking the river, and he decided that the landscape, though it now seemed to be rather too much studied from a drop-certain, had certainly lost nothing of its charm in the clear morning light. The waiter brought his breakfast, and after a little delay came back with a card which he insisted was for March. It was not till he put on his glasses and read the name of Mr. R. M. Kenby that he was able at all to agree with the waiter, who stood passive at his elbow.

"Well," he said, "why wasn't this card sent up last night?"

The waiter explained that the gentleman had just, given him his card, after asking March's nationality, and was then breakfasting in the next room. March caught up his napkin and ran round the partition wall, and Kenby rose with his napkin and hurried to meet him.

"I thought it must be you," he called out, joyfully, as they struck their extended hands together, "but so many people look alike, nowadays, that I don't trust my eyes any more."

Kenby said he had spent the time since they last met partly in Leipsic and partly in Gotha, where he had amused himself in rubbing up his rusty German. As soon as he realized that Wurzburg was so near he had slipped down from Gotha for a glimpse of the manoeuvres. He added that he supposed March was there to see them, and he asked with a quite

unembarrassed smile if they had met Mr. Adding in Carlsbad, and without heeding March's answer, he laughed and added: "Of course, I know she must have told Mrs. March all about it."

March could not deny this; he laughed, too; though in his wife's absence he felt bound to forbid himself anything more explicit.

"I don't give it up, you know," Kenby went on, with perfect ease. "I'm not a young fellow, if you call thirty-nine old."

"At my age I don't," March put in, and they roared together, in men's security from the encroachments of time.

"But she happens to be the only woman I've ever really wanted to marry, for more than a few days at a stretch. You know how it is with us."

"Oh, yes, I know," said March, and they shouted again.

"We're in love, and we're out of love, twenty times. But this isn't a mere fancy; it's a conviction. And there's no reason why she shouldn't marry me."

March smiled gravely, and his smile was not lost upon Kenby. "You mean the boy," he said. "Well, I like Rose," and now March really felt swept from his feet. "She doesn't deny that she likes me, but she seems to think that her marrying again will take her from him; the fact is, it will only give me to him. As for devoting her whole life to him, she couldn't do a worse thing for him. What the boy needs is a man's care, and a man's will--Good heavens! You don't think I could ever be unkind to the little soul?" Kenby threw himself forward over the table.

"My dear fellow!" March protested.

"I'd rather cut off my right hand! "Kenby pursued, excitedly, and then he said, with a humorous drop: "The fact is, I don't believe I should want her so much if I couldn't have Rose too. I want to have them both. So far, I've only got no for an answer; but I'm not going to keep it. I had a letter from Rose at Carlsbad, the other day; and--"

The waiter came forward with a folded scrap of paper on his salver, which March knew must be from his wife. "What is keeping you so?" she wrote. "I am all ready." "It's from Mrs. March," he explained to Kenby. "I am going out with her on some errands. I'm awfully glad to see you again. We must talk it all over, and you must--you mustn't--Mrs. March will want to see you later--I--Are you in the hotel?"

"Oh yes. I'll see you at the one-o'clock table d'hote, I suppose."

March went away with his head whirling in the question whether he should tell his wife at once of Kenby's presence, or leave her free for the pleasures of Wurzburg, till he could shape the fact into some safe and acceptable form. She met him at the door with her guide-books, wraps and umbrellas, and would hardly give him time to get on his hat and coat.

"Now, I want you to avoid the Stollers as far as you can see them. This is to be a real wedding-journey day, with no extraneous acquaintance to bother; the more strangers the better. Wurzburg is richer than anything I imagined. I've looked it all up; I've got the plan of the city, so that we can easily find the way. We'll walk first, and take carriages whenever we get tired. We'll go to the cathedral at once; I want a good gulp of rococo to begin with; there wasn't half enough of it at Ansbach. Isn't it strange how we've come round to it?"

She referred to that passion for the Gothic which they had obediently imbibed from Ruskin in the days of their early Italian travel and courtship, when all the English-speaking world bowed down to him in devout aversion from the renaissance, and pious abhorrence of the rococo.

"What biddable little things we were!" she went on, while March was struggling to keep Kenby in the background of his consciousness. "The rococo must have always had a sneaking charm for us, when we were pinning our faith to pointed arches; and yet I suppose we were perfectly sincere. Oh, look at that divinely ridiculous Madonna!" They were now making their way out of the crooked footway behind their hotel toward the street leading to the cathedral, and she pointed to the Blessed Virgin over the door of some religious house, her drapery billowing about her feet; her body twisting to show the sculptor's mastery of anatomy, and the halo held on her tossing head with the help of stout gilt rays. In fact, the Virgin's whole figure was gilded, and so was that of the child in her arms. "Isn't she delightful?"

"I see what you mean," said March, with a dubious glance at the statue, "but I'm not sure, now, that I wouldn't like something quieter in my Madonnas."

The thoroughfare which they emerged upon, with the cathedral ending the prospective, was full of the holiday so near at hand. The narrow sidewalks were thronged with people, both soldiers and civilians, and up the middle of the street detachments of military came and went, halting the little horse-cars and the huge beer-wagons which otherwise seemed to have the sole right to the streets of Wurzburg; they came jingling or thundering out of the aide streets and hurled themselves round the corners reckless of the passers, who escaped alive by flattening themselves like posters against the house walls. There were peasants, men and women, in the costume which the unbroken course of their country life had kept as quaint as it was a hundred years before; there were citizens in the misfits of the latest German fashions; there were soldiers of all arms in their vivid uniforms, and from time to time there were pretty young girls in white dresses with low necks, and bare arms gloved to the elbows, who were following a holiday custom of the place in going about the streets in ball costume. The shop windows were filled with portraits of the Emperor and the Empress, and the Prince-Regent and the ladies of his family; the German and Bavarian colors draped the facades of the houses and festooned the fantastic Madonnas posing above so many portals. The modern patriotism included the ancient piety without disturbing it; the rococo city remained ecclesiastical through

its new imperialism, and kept the stamp given it by the long rule of the prince-bishops under the sovereignty of its King and the suzerainty of its Kaiser.

The Marches escaped from the present, when they entered the cathedral, as wholly as if they had taken hold of the horns of the altar, though they were far from literally doing this in an interior so grandiose. There are a few rococo churches in Italy, and perhaps more in Spain, which approach the perfection achieved by the Wurzburg cathedral in the baroque style. For once one sees what that style can do in architecture and sculpture, and whatever one may say of the details, one cannot deny that there is a prodigiously effective keeping in it all. This interior came together, as the decorators say, with a harmony that the travellers had felt nowhere in their earlier experience of the rococo. It was, unimpeachably perfect in its way, "Just," March murmured to his wife, "as the social and political and scientific scheme of the eighteenth century was perfected in certain times and places. But the odd thing is to find the apotheosis of the rococo away up here in Germany. I wonder how much the prince-bishops really liked it. But they had become rococo, too! Look at that row of their statues on both sides of the nave! What magnificent swell! How they abash this poor plain Christ, here; he would like to get behind the pillar; he knows that he could never lend himself to the baroque style. It expresses the eighteenth century, though. But how you long for some little hint of the thirteenth, or even the nineteenth."

"I don't," she whispered back. "I'm perfectly wild with Wurzburg. I like to have a thing go as far as it can. At Nuremberg I wanted all the Gothic I could get, and in Wurzburg I want all the baroque I can get. I am consistent."

She kept on praising herself to his disadvantage, as women do, all the way to the Neumunster Church, where they were going to revere the tomb of Walther von der Vogelweide, not so much for his own sake as for Longfellow's. The older poet lies buried within, but his monument is outside the church, perhaps for the greater convenience of the sparrows, which now represent the birds he loved. The cenotaph is surmounted by a broad vase, and around this are thickly perched the effigies of the Meistersinger's feathered friends, from whom the canons of the church, as Mrs. March read aloud from her Baedeker, long ago directed his bequest to themselves. In revenge for their lawless greed the defrauded beneficiaries choose to burlesque the affair by looking like the four-and-twenty blackbirds when the pie was opened.

She consented to go for a moment to the Gothic Marienkapelle with her husband in the revival of his mediaeval taste, and she was rewarded amidst its thirteenth-century sincerity by his recantation. "You are right! Baroque is the thing for Wurzburg; one can't enjoy Gothic here any more than one could enjoy baroque in Nuremberg."

Reconciled in the rococo, they now called a carriage, and went to visit the palace of the prince-bishops who had so well known how to make the heavenly take the image and superscription of the worldly; and they were

jointly indignant to find it shut against the public in preparation for the imperialities and royalties coining to occupy it. They were in time for the noon guard-mounting, however, and Mrs. March said that the way the retiring squad kicked their legs out in the high martial step of the German soldiers was a perfect expression of the insolent militarism of their empire, and was of itself enough to make one thank Heaven that one was an American and a republican. She softened a little toward their system when it proved that the garden of the palace was still open, and yet more when she sank down upon a bench between two marble groups representing the Rape of Proserpine and the Rape of Europa. They stood each in a gravelled plot, thickly overrun by a growth of ivy, and the vine climbed the white naked limbs of the nymphs, who were present on a pretence of gathering flowers, but really to pose at the spectators, and clad them to the waist and shoulders with an effect of modesty never meant by the sculptor, but not displeasing. There was an old fountain near, its stone rim and centre of rock-work green with immemorial mould, and its basin quivering between its water-plants under the soft fall of spray. At a waft of fitful breeze some leaves of early autumn fell from the trees overhead upon the elderly pair where they sat, and a little company of sparrows came and hopped about their feet. Though the square without was so all astir with festive expectation, there were few people in the garden; three or four peasant women in densely fluted white skirts and red aprons and shawls wandered by and stared at the Europa and at the Proserpine.

It was a precious moment in which the charm of the city's past seemed to culminate, and they were loath to break it by speech.

"Why didn't we have something like all this on our first wedding journey?" she sighed at last. "To think of our battenning from Boston to Niagara and back! And how hard we tried to make something of Rochester and Buffalo, of Montreal and Quebec!"

"Niagara wasn't so bad," he said, "and I will never go back on Quebec."

"Ah, but if we could have had Hamburg and Leipsic, and Carlsbad and Nuremberg, and Ansbach and Wurzburg! Perhaps this is meant as a compensation for our lost youth. But I can't enjoy it as I could when I was young. It's wasted on my sere and yellow leaf. I wish Burnamy and Miss Triscoe were here; I should like to try this garden on them."

"They wouldn't care for it," he replied, and upon a daring impulse he added, "Kenby and Mrs. Adding might." If she took this suggestion in good part, he could tell her that Kenby was in Wurzburg.

"Don't speak of them! They're in just that besotted early middle-age when life has settled into a self-satisfied present, with no past and no future; the most philistine, the most bourgeois, moment of existence. Better be elderly at once, as far as appreciation of all this goes." She rose and put her hand on his arm, and pushed him away in the impulsive fashion of her youth, across alleys of old trees toward a balustraded terrace in the background which had tempted her.

"It isn't so bad, being elderly," he said. "By that time we have accumulated enough past to sit down and really enjoy its associations. We have got all sorts of perspectives and points of view. We know where we are at."

"I don't mind being elderly. The world's just as amusing as ever, and lots of disagreeable things have dropped out. It's the getting more than elderly; it's the getting old; and then--"

They shrank a little closer together, and walked on in silence till he said, "Perhaps there's something else, something better--somewhere."

They had reached the balustraded terrace, and were pausing for pleasure in the garden tops below, with the flowery spaces, and the statued fountains all coming together. She put her hand on one of the fat little urchin-groups on the stone coping. "I don't want cherubs, when I can have these putti. And those old prince-bishops didn't, either!"

"I don't suppose they kept a New England conscience," he said, with a vague smile. "It would be difficult in the presence of the rococo."

They left the garden through the beautiful gate which the old court ironsmith Oegg hammered out in lovely forms of leaves and flowers, and shaped laterally upward, as lightly as if with a waft of his hand, in gracious Louis Quinze curves; and they looked back at it in the kind of despair which any perfection inspires. They said how feminine it was, how exotic, how expressive of a luxurious ideal of life which art had purified and left eternally charming. They remembered their Ruskinian youth, and the confidence with which they would once have condemned it; and they had a sense of recreance in now admiring it; but they certainly admired it, and it remained for them the supreme expression of that time-soul, mundane, courtly, aristocratic, flattering, which once influenced the art of the whole world, and which had here so curiously found its apotheosis in a city remote from its native place and under a rule sacerdotally vowed to austerity. The vast superb palace of the prince bishops, which was now to house a whole troop of sovereigns, imperial, royal, grand ducal and ducal, swelled aloft in superb amplitude; but it did not realize their historic pride so effectively as this exquisite work of the court ironsmith. It related itself in its aerial beauty to that of the Tiepolo frescoes which the travellers knew were swimming and soaring on the ceilings within, and from which it seemed to accent their exclusion with a delicate irony, March said. "Or iron-mongery," he corrected himself upon reflection.

LIV.

He had forgotten Kenby in these aesthetic interests, but he remembered him again when he called a carriage, and ordered it driven to their hotel. It was the hour of the German mid-day table d'hote, and they would be sure to meet him there. The question now was how March should

own his presence in time to prevent his wife from showing her ignorance of it to Kenby himself, and he was still turning the question hopelessly over in his mind when the sight of the hotel seemed to remind her of a fact which she announced.

"Now, my dear, I am tired to death, and I am not going to sit through a long table d'hote. I want you to send me up a simple beefsteak and a cup of tea to our rooms; and I don't want you to come near for hours; because I intend to take a whole afternoon nap. You can keep all the maps and plans, and guides, and you had better go and see what the Volksfest is like; it will give you some notion of the part the people are really taking in all this official celebration, and you know I don't care. Don't come up after dinner to see how I am getting along; I shall get along; and if you should happen to wake me after I had dropped off--"

Kenby had seen them arrive from where he sat at the reading-room window, waiting for the dinner hour, and had meant to rush out and greet Mrs. March as they passed up the corridor. But she looked so tired that he had decided to spare her till she came down to dinner; and as he sat with March at their soup, he asked if she were not well.

March explained, and he provisionally invented some regrets from her that she should not see Kenby till supper.

Kenby ordered a bottle of one of the famous Wurzburg wines for their mutual consolation in her absence, and in the friendliness which its promoted they agreed to spend the afternoon together. No man is so inveterate a husband as not to take kindly an occasional release to bachelor companionship, and before the dinner was over they agreed that they would go to the Volksfest, and get some notion of the popular life and amusements of Wurzburg, which was one of the few places where Kenby had never been before; and they agreed that they would walk.

Their way was partly up the quay of the Main, past a barrack full of soldiers. They met detachments of soldiers everywhere, infantry, artillery, cavalry.

"This is going to be a great show," Kenby said, meaning the manoeuvres, and he added, as if now he had kept away from the subject long enough and had a right to recur to it, at least indirectly, "I should like to have Rose see it, and get his impressions."

"I've an idea he wouldn't approve of it. His mother says his mind is turning more and more to philanthropy."

Kenby could not forego such a chance to speak of Mrs. Adding. "It's one of the prettiest things to see how she understands Rose. It's charming to see them together. She wouldn't have half the attraction without him."

"Oh, yes," March assented. He had often wondered how a man wishing to marry a widow managed with the idea of her children by another marriage; but if Kenby was honest; it was much simpler than he had supposed. He

could not say this to him, however, and in a certain embarrassment he had with the conjecture in his presence he attempted a diversion. "We're promised something at the Volksfest which will be a great novelty to us as Americans. Our driver told us this morning that one of the houses there was built entirely of wood."

When they reached the grounds of the Volksfest, this civil feature of the great military event at hand, which the Marches had found largely set forth in the programme of the parade, did not fully keep the glowing promises made for it; in fact it could not easily have done so. It was in a pleasant neighborhood of new villas such as form the modern quarter of every German city, and the Volksfest was even more unfinished than its environment. It was not yet enclosed by the fence which was to hide its wonders from the non-paying public, but March and Kenby went in through an archway where the gate-money was as effectually collected from them as if they were barred every other entrance.

The wooden building was easily distinguishable from the other edifices because these were tents and booths still less substantial. They did not make out its function, but of the others four sheltered merry-go-rounds, four were beer-gardens, four were restaurants, and the rest were devoted to amusements of the usual country-fair type. Apparently they had little attraction for country people. The Americans met few peasants in the grounds, and neither at the Edison kinematograph, where they refreshed their patriotism with some scenes of their native life, nor at the little theatre where they saw the sports of the arena revived, in the wrestle of a woman with a bear, did any of the people except tradesmen and artisans seem to be taking part in the festival expression of the popular pleasure.

The woman, who finally threw the bear, whether by slight, or by main strength, or by a previous understanding with him, was a slender creature, pathetically small and not altogether plain; and March as they walked away lapsed into a pensive muse upon her strange employ. He wondered how she came to take it up, and whether she began with the bear when they were both very young, and she could easily throw him.

"Well, women have a great deal more strength than we suppose," Kenby began with a philosophical air that gave March the hope of some rational conversation. Then his eye glazed with a far-off look, and a doting smile came into his face. "When we went through the Dresden gallery together, Rose and I were perfectly used up at the end of an hour, but his mother kept on as long as there was anything to see, and came away as fresh as a peach."

Then March saw that it was useless to expect anything different from him, and he let him talk on about Mrs. Adding all the rest of the way back to the hotel. Kenby seemed only to have begun when they reached the door, and wanted to continue the subject in the reading-room.

March pleaded his wish to find how his wife had got through the afternoon, and he escaped to her. He would have told her now that Kenby was in the house, but he was really so sick of the fact himself that he

could not speak of it at once, and he let her go on celebrating all she had seen from the window since she had waked from her long nap. She said she could never be glad enough that they had come just at that time. Soldiers had been going by the whole afternoon, and that made it so feudal.

Yes," he assented. "But aren't you coming up to the station with me to see the Prince-Regent arrive? He's due at seven, you know."

"I declare I had forgotten all about it. No, I'm not equal to it. You must go; you can tell me everything; be sure to notice how the Princess Maria looks; the last of the Stuarts, you know; and some people consider her the rightful Queen of England; and I'll have the supper ordered, and we can go down as soon as you've got back."

LV.

March felt rather shabby stealing away without Kenby; but he had really had as much of Mrs. Adding as he could stand, for one day, and he was even beginning to get sick of Rose. Besides, he had not sent back a line for 'Every Other Week' yet, and he had made up his mind to write a sketch of the manoeuvres. To this end he wished to receive an impression of the Prince-Regent's arrival which should not be blurred or clouded by other interests. His wife knew the kind of thing he liked to see, and would have helped him out with his observations, but Kenby would have got in the way, and would have clogged the movement of his fancy in assigning the facts to the parts he would like them to play in the sketch.

At least he made some such excuses to himself as he hurried along toward the Kaiserstrasse. The draught of universal interest in that direction had left the other streets almost deserted, but as he approached the thoroughfare he found all the ways blocked, and the horse-cars, ordinarily so furiously headlong, arrested by the multiple ranks of spectators on the sidewalks. The avenue leading from the railway station to the palace was decorated with flags and garlands, and planted with the stems of young firs and birches. The doorways were crowded, and the windows dense with eager faces peering out of the draped bunting. The carriageway was kept clear by mild policemen who now and then allowed one of the crowd to cross it.

The crowd was made up mostly of women and boys, and when March joined them, they had already been waiting an hour for the sight of the princes who were to bless them with a vision of the faery race which kings always are to common men. He thought the people looked dull, and therefore able to bear the strain of expectation with patience better than a livelier race. They relieved it by no attempt at joking; here and there a dim smile dawned on a weary face, but it seemed an effect of amiability rather than humor. There was so little of this, or else it was so well bridled by the solemnity of the occasion, that not a man, woman, or child laughed when a bareheaded maid-servant broke through the lines and ran

down between them with a life-size plaster bust of the Emperor William in her arms: she carried it like an overgrown infant, and in alarm at her conspicuous part she cast frightened looks from side to side without arousing any sort of notice. Undeterred by her failure, a young dog, parted from his owner, and seeking him in the crowd, pursued his search in a wild flight down the guarded roadway with an air of anxiety that in America would have won him thunders of applause, and all sorts of kindly encouragements to greater speed. But this German crowd witnessed his progress apparently without interest, and without a sign of pleasure. They were there to see the Prince-Regent arrive, and they did not suffer themselves to be distracted by any preliminary excitement. Suddenly the indefinable emotion which expresses the fulfilment of expectation in a waiting crowd passed through the multitude, and before he realized it March was looking into the friendly gray-bearded face of the Prince-Regent, for the moment that his carriage allowed in passing. This came first preceded by four outriders, and followed by other simple equipages of Bavarian blue, full of highnesses of all grades. Beside the Regent sat his daughter-in-law, the Princess Maria, her silvered hair framing a face as plain and good as the Regent's, if not so intelligent.

He, in virtue of having been born in Wurzburg, is officially supposed to be specially beloved by his fellow townsmen; and they now testified their affection as he whirled through their ranks, bowing right and left, by what passes in Germany for a cheer. It is the word Hoch, groaned forth from abdominal depths, and dismally prolonged in a hollow roar like that which the mob makes behind the scenes at the theatre before bursting in visible tumult on the stage. Then the crowd dispersed, and March came away wondering why such a kindly-looking Prince-Regent should not have given them a little longer sight of himself; after they had waited so patiently for hours to see him. But doubtless in those countries, he concluded, the art of keeping the sovereign precious by suffering him to be rarely and briefly seen is wisely studied.

On his way home he resolved to confess Kenby's presence; and he did so as soon as he sat down to supper with his wife. "I ought to have told you the first thing after breakfast. But when I found you in that mood of having the place all to ourselves, I put it off."

"You took terrible chances, my dear," she said, gravely.

"And I have been terribly punished. You've no idea how much Kenby has talked to me about Mrs. Adding!"

She broke out laughing. "Well, perhaps you've suffered enough. But you can see now, can't you, that it would have been awful if I had met him, and let out that I didn't know he was here?"

"Terrible. But if I had told, it would have spoiled the whole morning for you; you couldn't have thought of anything else."

"Oh, I don't know," she said, airily. "What should you think if I told you I had known he was here ever since last night?" She went on in delight at the start he gave. "I saw him come into the hotel while you

were gone for the guide-books, and I determined to keep it from you as long as I could; I knew it would worry you. We've both been very nice; and I forgive you," she hurried on, "because I've really got something to tell you."

"Don't tell me that Burnamy is here!"

"Don't jump to conclusions! No, Burnamy isn't here, poor fellow! And don't suppose that I'm guilty of concealment because I haven't told you before. I was just thinking whether I wouldn't spare you till morning, but now I shall let you take the brunt of it. Mrs. Adding and Rose are here." She gave the fact time to sink in, and then she added, "And Miss Triscoe and her father are here."

"What is the matter with Major Eltwin and his wife being here, too? Are they in our hotel?"

"No, they are not. They came to look for rooms while you were off waiting for the Prince-Regent, and I saw them. They intended to go to Frankfort for the manoeuvres, but they heard that there was not even standing-room there, and so the general telegraphed to the Spanischer Hof, and they all came here. As it is, he will have to room with Rose, and Agatha and Mrs. Adding will room together. I didn't think Agatha was looking very well; she looked unhappy; I don't believe she's heard, from Burnamy yet; I hadn't a chance to ask her. And there's something else that I'm afraid will fairly make you sick."

"Oh, no; go on. I don't think anything can do that, after an afternoon of Kenby's confidences."

"It's worse than Kenby," she said with a sigh. "You know I told you at Carlsbad I thought that ridiculous old thing was making up to Mrs. Adding."

"Kenby? Why of co--"

"Don't be stupid, my dear! No, not Kenby: General Triscoe. I wish you could have been here to see him paying her all sort; of silly attentions, and hear him making her compliments."

"Thank you. I think I'm just as well without it. Did she pay him silly attentions and compliments, too?"

"That's the only thing that can make me forgive her for his wanting her. She was keeping him at arm's-length the whole time, and she was doing it so as not to make him contemptible before his daughter."

"It must have been hard. And Rose?"

"Rose didn't seem very well. He looks thin and pale; but he's sweeter than ever. She's certainly commoner clay than Rose. No, I won't say that! It's really nothing but General Triscoe's being an old goose about her that makes her seem so, and it isn't fair."

March went down to his coffee in the morning with the delicate duty of telling Kenby that Mrs. Adding was in town. Kenby seemed to think it quite natural she should wish to see the manoeuvres, and not at all strange that she should come to them with General Triscoe and his daughter. He asked if March would not go with him to call upon her after breakfast, and as this was in the line of his own instructions from Mrs. March, he went.

They found Mrs. Adding with the Triscoes, and March saw nothing that was not merely friendly, or at the most fatherly, in the general's behavior toward her. If Mrs. Adding or Miss Triscoe saw more, they hid it in a guise of sisterly affection for each other. At the most the general showed a gayety which one would not have expected of him under any conditions, and which the fact that he and Rose had kept each other awake a good deal the night before seemed so little adapted to call out. He joked with Rose about their room and their beds, and put on a comradeship with him that was not a perfect fit, and that suffered by contrast with the pleasure of the boy and Kenby in meeting. There was a certain question in the attitude of Mrs. Adding till March helped Kenby to account for his presence; then she relaxed in an effect of security so tacit that words overstate it, and began to make fun of Rose.

March could not find that Miss Triscoe looked unhappy, as his wife had said; he thought simply that she had grown plainer; but when he reported this, she lost her patience with him. In a girl, she said, plainness was unhappiness; and she wished to know when he would ever learn to look an inch below the surface: She was sure that Agatha Triscoe had not heard from Burnamy since the Emperor's birthday; that she was at swords'-points with her father, and so desperate that she did not care what became of her.

He had left Kenby with the others, and now, after his wife had talked herself tired of them all, he proposed going out again to look about the city, where there was nothing for the moment to remind them of the presence of their friends or even of their existence. She answered that she was worrying about all those people, and trying to work out their problem for them. He asked why she did not let them work it out themselves as they would have to do, after all her worry, and she said that where her sympathy had been excited she could not stop worrying, whether it did any good or not, and she could not respect any one who could drop things so completely out of his mind as he could; she had never been able to respect that in him.

"I know, my dear," he assented. "But I don't think it's a question of moral responsibility; it's a question of mental structure, isn't it? Your consciousness isn't built in thought-tight compartments, and one emotion goes all through it, and sinks you; but I simply close the doors and shut the emotion in, and keep on."

The fancy pleased him so much that he worked it out in all its implications, and could not, after their long experience of each other, realize that she was not enjoying the joke too, till she said she saw

that he merely wished to tease. Then, too late, he tried to share her worry; but she protested that she was not worrying at all; that she cared nothing about those people: that she was nervous, she was tired; and she wished he would leave her, and go out alone.

He found himself in the street again, and he perceived that he must be walking fast when a voice called him by name, and asked him what his hurry was. The voice was Stoller's, who got into step with him and followed the first with a second question.

"Made up your mind to go to the manoeuvres with me?"

His bluntness made it easy for March to answer: "I'm afraid my wife couldn't stand the drive back and forth."

"Come without her."

"Thank you. It's very kind of you. I'm not certain that I shall go at all. If I do, I shall run out by train, and take my chances with the crowd."

Stoller insisted no further. He felt no offence at the refusal of his offer, or chose to show none. He said, with the same uncouth abruptness as before: "Heard anything of that fellow since he left Carlsbad?"

"Burnamy?"

"Mm."

"No."

"Know where he is?"

"I don't in the least."

Stoller let another silence elapse while they hurried on, before he said, "I got to thinking what he done afterwards. He wasn't bound to look out for me; he might suppose I knew what I was about."

March turned his face and stared in Stoller's, which he was letting hang forward as he stamped heavily on. Had the disaster proved less than he had feared, and did he still want Burnamy's help in patching up the broken pieces; or did he really wish to do Burnamy justice to his friend?

In any case March's duty was clear. "I think Burnamy was bound to look out for you; Mr. Stoller, and I am glad to know that he saw it in the same light."

"I know he did," said Stoker with a blaze as from a long-smouldering fury, "and damn him, I'm not going to have it. I'm not going to, plead the baby act with him, or with any man. You tell him so, when you get the chance. You tell him I don't hold him accountable for anything I made him do. That ain't business; I don't want him around me, any more;

but if he wants to go back to the paper he can have his place. You tell him I stand by what I done; and it's all right between him and me. I hain't done anything about it, the way I wanted him to help me to; I've let it lay, and I'm a-going to. I guess it ain't going to do me any harm, after all; our people hain't got very long memories; but if it is, let it. You tell him it's all right."

"I don't know where he is, Mr. Stoller, and I don't know that I care to be the bearer of your message," said March.

"Why not?"

"Why, for one thing, I don't agree with you that it's all right. Your choosing to stand by the consequences of Burnamy's wrong doesn't undo it. As I understand, you don't pardon it--"

Stoller gulped and did not answer at once. Then he said, "I stand by what I done. I'm not going to let him say I turned him down for doing what I told him to, because I hadn't the sense to know what I was about."

"Ah, I don't think it's a thing he'll like to speak of in any case," said March.

Stoller left him, at the corner they had reached, as abruptly as he had joined him, and March hurried back to his wife, and told her what had just passed between him and Stoller.

She broke out, "Well, I am surprised at you, my dear! You have always accused me of suspecting people, and attributing bad motives; and here you've refused even to give the poor man the benefit of the doubt. He merely wanted to save his savage pride with you, and that's all he wants to do with Burnamy. How could it hurt the poor boy to know that Stoller doesn't blame him? Why should you refuse to give his message to Burnamy? I don't want you to ridicule me for my conscience any more, Basil; you're twice as bad as I ever was. Don't you think that a person can ever expiate an offence? I've often heard you say that if any one owned his fault, he put it from him, and it was the same as if it hadn't been; and hasn't Burnamy owned up over and over again? I'm astonished at you, dearest."

March was in fact somewhat astonished at himself in the light of her reasoning; but she went on with some sophistries that restored him to his self-righteousness.

"I suppose you think he has interfered with Stoller's political ambition, and injured him in that way. Well, what if he has? Would it be a good thing to have a man like that succeed in politics? You're always saying that the low character of our politicians is the ruin of the country; and I'm sure," she added, with a prodigious leap over all the sequences, "that Mr. Stoller is acting nobly; and it's your duty to help him relieve Burnamy's mind." At the laugh he broke into she hastened to say, "Or if you won't, I hope you'll not object to my doing so, for I shall, anyway!"

She rose as if she were going to begin at once, in spite of his laughing; and in fact she had already a plan for coming to Stoller's assistance by getting at Burnamy through Miss Triscoe, whom she suspected of knowing where he was. There had been no chance for them to speak of him either that morning or the evening before, and after a great deal of controversy with herself in her husband's presence she decided to wait till they came naturally together the next morning for the walk to the Capuchin Church on the hill beyond the river, which they had agreed to take. She could not keep from writing a note to Miss Triscoe begging her to be sure to come, and hinting that she had something very important to speak of.

She was not sure but she had been rather silly to do this, but when they met the girl confessed that she had thought of giving up the walk, and might not have come except for Mrs. March's note. She had come with Rose, and had left him below with March; Mrs. Adding was coming later with Kenby and General Triscoe.

Mrs. March lost no time in telling her the great news; and if she had been in doubt before of the girl's feeling for Burnamy she was now in none. She had the pleasure of seeing her flush with hope, and then the pain which was also a pleasure, of seeing her blanch with dismay.

"I don't know where he is, Mrs. March. I haven't heard a word from him since that night in Carlsbad. I expected--I didn't know but you--"

Mrs. March shook her head. She treated the fact skillfully as something to be regretted simply because it would be such a relief to Burnamy to know how Mr. Stoller now felt. Of course they could reach him somehow; you could always get letters to people in Europe, in the end; and, in fact, it was altogether probable that he was that very instant in Wurzburg; for if the New York-Paris Chronicle had wanted him to write up the Wagner operas, it would certainly want him to write up the manoeuvres. She established his presence in Wurzburg by such an irrefragable chain of reasoning that, at a knock outside, she was just able to keep back a scream, while she ran to open the door. It was not Burnamy, as in compliance with every nerve it ought to have been, but her husband, who tried to justify his presence by saying that they were all waiting for her and Miss Triscoe, and asked when they were coming.

She frowned him silent, and then shut herself outside with him long enough to whisper, "Say she's got a headache, or anything you please; but don't stop talking here with me, or I shall go wild." She then shut herself in again, with the effect of holding him accountable for the whole affair.

LVI.

General Triscoe could not keep his irritation, at hearing that his daughter was not coming, out of the excuses he made to Mrs. Adding; he said again and again that it must seem like a discourtesy to her.

She gayly disclaimed any such notion; she would not hear of putting off their excursion to another day; it had been raining just long enough to give them a reasonable hope of a few hours' drought, and they might not have another dry spell for weeks. She slipped off her jacket after they started, and gave it to Kenby, but she let General Triscoe hold her umbrella over her, while he limped beside her. She seemed to March, as he followed with Rose, to be playing the two men off against each other, with an ease which he wished his wife could be there to see, and to judge aright.

They crossed by the Old Bridge, which is of the earliest years of the seventh century, between rows of saints whose statues surmount the piers. Some are bishops as well as saints; one must have been at Rome in his day, for he wore his long thick beard in the fashion of Michelangelo's Moses. He stretched out toward the passers two fingers of blessing and was unaware of the sparrow which had lighted on them and was giving him the effect of offering it to the public admiration. Squads of soldiers tramping by turned to look and smile, and the dull faces of citizens lighted up at the quaint sight. Some children stopped and remained very quiet, not to scare away the bird; and a cold-faced, spiritual-looking priest paused among them as if doubting whether to rescue the absent-minded bishop from a situation derogatory to his dignity; but he passed on, and then the sparrow suddenly flew off.

Rose Adding had lingered for the incident with March, but they now pushed on, and came up with the others at the end of the bridge, where they found them in question whether they had not better take a carriage and drive to the foot of the hill before they began their climb. March thanked them, but said he was keeping up the terms of his cure, and was getting in all the walking he could. Rose begged his mother not to include him in the driving party; he protested that he was feeling so well, and the walk was doing him good. His mother consented, if he would promise not to get tired, and then she mounted into the two-spanner which had driven instinctively up to their party when their parley began, and General Triscoe took the place beside her, while Kenby, with smiling patience, seated himself in front.

Rose kept on talking with March about Wurzburg and its history, which it seemed he had been reading the night before when he could not sleep. He explained, "We get little histories of the places wherever we go. That's what Mr. Kenby does, you know."

"Oh, yes," said March.

"I don't suppose I shall get a chance to read much here," Rose continued, "with General Triscoe in the room. He doesn't like the light."

"Well, well. He's rather old, you know. And you musn't read too much, Rose. It isn't good for you."

"I know, but if I don't read, I think, and that keeps me awake worse. Of course, I respect General Triscoe for being in the war, and getting wounded," the boy suggested.

"A good many did it," March was tempted to say.

The boy did not notice his insinuation. "I suppose there were some things they did in the army, and then they couldn't get over the habit. But General Grant says in his 'Life' that he never used a profane expletive."

"Does General Triscoe?"

Rose answered reluctantly, "If anything wakes him in the night, or if he can't make these German beds over to suit him--"

"I see." March turned his face to hide the smile which he would not have let the boy detect. He thought best not to let Rose resume his impressions of the general; and in talk of weightier matters they found themselves at that point of the climb where the carriage was waiting for them. From this point they followed an alley through ivied, garden walls, till they reached the first of the balustraded terraces which ascend to the crest of the hill where the church stands. Each terrace is planted with sycamores, and the face of the terrace wall supports a bass-relief commemorating with the drama of its lifesize figures the stations of the cross.

Monks and priests were coming and going, and dropped on the steps leading from terrace to terrace were women and children on their knees in prayer. It was all richly reminiscent of pilgrim scenes in other Catholic lands; but here there was a touch of earnest in the Northern face of the worshipers which the South had never imparted. Even in the beautiful rococo interior of the church at the top of the hill there was a sense of something deeper and truer than mere ecclesiasticism; and March came out of it in a serious muse while the boy at his side did nothing to interrupt. A vague regret filled his heart as he gazed silently out over the prospect of river and city and vineyard, purpling together below the top where he stood, and mixed with this regret was a vague resentment of his wife's absence. She ought to have been there to share his pang and his pleasure; they had so long enjoyed everything together that without her he felt unable to get out of either emotion all there was in it.

The forgotten boy stole silently down the terraces after the rest of the party who had left him behind with March. At the last terrace they stopped and waited; and after a delay that began to be long to Mrs. Adding, she wondered aloud what could have become of them.

Kenby promptly offered to go back and see, and she consented in seeming to refuse: "It isn't worth while. Rose has probably got Mr. March into some deep discussion, and they've forgotten all about us. But if you will go, Mr. Kenby, you might just remind Rose of my existence." She let him lay her jacket on her shoulders before he left her, and then she sat down on one of the steps, which General Triscoe kept striking with the point of her umbrella as he stood before her.

"I really shall have to take it from you if you do that any more," she

said, laughing up in his face. "I'm serious."

He stopped. "I wish I could believe you were serious, for a moment."

"You may, if you think it will do you any good. But I don't see why."

The general smiled, but with a kind of tremulous eagerness which might have been pathetic to any one who liked him. "Do you know this is almost the first time I have spoken alone with you?"

"Really, I hadn't noticed," said Mrs. Adding.

General Triscoe laughed in rather a ghastly way. "Well, that's encouraging, at least, to a man who's had his doubts whether it wasn't intended."

"Intended? By whom? What do you mean, General Triscoe? Why in the world shouldn't you have spoken alone with me before?"

He was not, with all his eagerness, ready to say, and while she smiled pleasantly she had the look in her eyes of being brought to bay and being prepared, if it must come to that, to have the worst over, then and there. She was not half his age, but he was aware of her having no respect for his years; compared with her average American past as he understood it, his social place was much higher, but, she was not in the least awed by it; in spite of his war record she was making him behave like a coward. He was in a false position, and if he had any one but himself to blame he had not her. He read her equal knowledge of these facts in the clear eyes that made him flush and turn his own away.

Then he started with a quick "Hello!" and stood staring up at the steps from the terrace above, where Rose Adding was staying himself weakly by a clutch of Kenby on one side and March on the other.

His mother looked round and caught herself up from where she sat and ran toward him. "Oh, Rose!"

"It's nothing, mother," he called to her, and as she dropped on her knees before him he sank limply against her. "It was like what I had in Carlsbad; that's all. Don't worry about me, please!"

"I'm not worrying, Rose," she said with courage of the same texture as his own. "You've been walking too much. You must go back in the carriage with us. Can't you have it come here?" she asked Kenby.

"There's no road, Mrs. Adding. But if Rose would let me carry him--"

"I can walk," the boy protested, trying to lift himself from her neck.

"No, no! you mustn't." She drew away and let him fall into the arms that Kenby put round him. He raised the frail burden lightly to his shoulder, and moved strongly away, followed by the eyes of the spectators who had gathered about the little group, but who dispersed now, and went back to

their devotions.

March hurried after Kenby with Mrs. Adding, whom he told he had just missed Rose and was looking about for him, when Kenby came with her message for them. They made sure that he was nowhere about the church, and then started together down the terraces. At the second or third station below they found the boy clinging to the barrier that protected the bass-relief from the zeal of the devotees. He looked white and sick, though he insisted that he was well, and when he turned to come away with them he reeled and would have fallen if Kenby had not caught him. Kenby wanted to carry him, but Rose would not let him, and had made his way down between them.

"Yea, he has such a spirit," she said, "and I've no doubt he's suffering now more from Mr. Kenby's kindness than from his own sickness he had one of these giddy turns in Carlsbad, though, and I shall certainly have a doctor to see him."

"I think I should, Mrs. Adding," said March, not too gravely, for it seemed to him that it was not quite his business to alarm her further, if she was herself taking the affair with that seriousness. He questioned whether she was taking it quite seriously enough, when she turned with a laugh, and called to General Triscoe, who was limping down the steps of the last terrace behind them:

"Oh, poor General Triscoe! I thought you had gone on ahead."

General Triscoe could not enter into the joke of being forgotten, apparently. He assisted with gravity at the disposition of the party for the return, when they all reached the carriage. Rose had the place beside his mother, and Kenby wished March to take his with the general and let him sit with the driver; but he insisted that he would rather walk home, and he did walk till they had driven out of eight. Then he called a passing one-spanner, and drove to his hotel in comfort and silence.

LVII.

Kenby did not come to the Swan before supper; then he reported that the doctor had said Rose was on the verge of a nervous collapse. He had overworked at school, but the immediate trouble was the high, thin air, which the doctor said he must be got out of at once, into a quiet place at the sea-shore somewhere. He had suggested Ostend; or some point on the French coast; Kenby had thought of Schevleningen, and the doctor had said that would do admirably.

"I understood from Mrs. Adding," he concluded, "that you were going there for your after-cure, Mr. March, and I didn't know but you might be going soon."

At the mention of Schevleningen the Marches had looked at each other with a guilty alarm, which they both tried to give the cast of affectionate sympathy but she dismissed her fear that he might be going to let his compassion prevail with him to his hurt when he said: "Why, we ought to have been there before this, but I've been taking my life in my hands in trying to see a little of Germany, and I'm afraid now that Mrs. March has her mind too firmly fixed on Berlin to let me think of going to Schevleningen till we've been there."

"It's too bad!" said Mrs. March, with real regret. "I wish we were going." But she had not the least notion of gratifying her wish; and they were all silent till Kenby broke out:

"Look here! You know how I feel about Mrs Adding! I've been pretty frank with Mr. March myself, and I've had my suspicions that she's been frank with you, Mrs. March. There isn't any doubt about my wanting to marry her, and up to this time there hasn't been any doubt about her not wanting to marry me. But it isn't a question of her or of me, now. It's a question of Rose. I love the boy," and Kenby's voice shook, and he faltered a moment. "Pshaw! You understand."

"Indeed I do, Mr. Kenby," said Mrs. March. "I perfectly understand you."

"Well, I don't think Mrs. Adding is fit to make the journey with him alone, or to place herself in the best way after she gets to Schevleningen. She's been badly shaken up; she broke down before the doctor; she said she didn't know what to do; I suppose she's frightened--"

Kenby stopped again, and March asked, "When is she going?"

"To-morrow," said Kenby, and he added, "And now the question is, why shouldn't I go with her?"

Mrs. March gave a little start, and looked at her husband, but he said nothing, and Kenby seemed not to have supposed that he would say anything.

"I know it would be very American, and all that, but I happen to be an American, and it wouldn't be out of character for me. I suppose," he appealed to Mrs. March, "that it's something I might offer to do if it were from New York to Florida--and I happened to be going there? And I did happen to be going to Holland."

"Why, of course, Mr. Kenby," she responded, with such solemnity that March gave way in an outrageous laugh.

Kenby laughed, and Mrs. March laughed too, but with an inner note of protest.

"Well," Kenby continued, still addressing her, "what I want you to do is to stand by me when I propose it."

Mrs. March gathered strength to say, "No, Mr. Kenby, it's your own affair, and you must take the responsibility."

"Do you disapprove?"

"It isn't the same as it would be at home. You see that yourself."

"Well," said Kenby, rising, "I have to arrange about their getting away to-morrow. It won't be easy in this hurly-burly that's coming off."

"Give Rose our love; and tell Mrs. Adding that I'll come round and see her to-morrow before she starts."

"Oh! I'm afraid you can't, Mrs. March. They're to start at six in the morning."

"They are! Then we must go and see them tonight. We'll be there almost as soon as you are."

March went up to their rooms with, his wife, and she began on the stairs:

"Well, my dear, I hope you realize that your laughing so gave us completely away. And what was there to keep grinning about, all through?"

"Nothing but the disingenuous, hypocritical passion of love. It's always the most amusing thing in the world; but to see it trying to pass itself off in poor old Kenby as duty and humanity, and disinterested affection for Rose, was more than I could stand. I don't apologize for laughing; I wanted to yell."

His effrontery and his philosophy both helped to save him; and she said from the point where he had side-tracked her mind: "I don't call it disingenuous. He was brutally frank. He's made it impossible to treat the affair with dignity. I want you to leave the whole thing to me, from this out. Now, will you?"

On their way to the Spanischer Hof she arranged in her own mind for Mrs. Adding to get a maid, and for the doctor to send an assistant with her on the journey, but she was in such despair with her scheme that she had not the courage to right herself when Mrs. Adding met her with the appeal:

"Oh, Mrs. March, I'm so glad you approve of Mr. Kenby's plan. It does seem the only thing to do. I can't trust myself alone with Rose, and Mr. Kenby's intending to go to Schevleningen a few days later anyway. Though it's too bad to let him give up the manoeuvres."

"I'm sure he won't mind that," Mrs. March's voice said mechanically, while her thought was busy with the question whether this scandalous duplicity was altogether Kenby's, and whether Mrs. Adding was as guiltless of any share in it as she looked. She looked pitifully distracted; she might not have understood his report; or Kenby might

really have mistaken Mrs. March's sympathy for favor.

"No, he only lives to do good," Mrs. Adding returned. "He's with Rose; won't you come in and see them?"

Rose was lying back on the pillows of a sofa, from which they would not let him get up. He was full of the trip to Holland, and had already pushed Kenby, as Kenby owned, beyond the bounds of his very general knowledge of the Dutch language, which Rose had plans for taking up after they were settled in Schevleningen. The boy scoffed at the notion that he was not perfectly well, and he wished to talk with March on the points where he had found Kenby wanting.

"Kenby is an encyclopaedia compared with me, Rose," the editor protested, and he amplified his ignorance for the boy's good to an extent which Rose saw was a joke. He left Holland to talk about other things which his mother thought quite as bad for him. He wished to know if March did not think that the statue of the bishop with the sparrow on its finger was a subject for a poem; and March said gayly that if Rose would write it he would print it in 'Every Other Week'.

The boy flushed with pleasure at his banter. "No, I couldn't do it. But I wish Mr. Burnamy had seen it. He could. Will you tell him about it?" He wanted to know if March had heard from Burnamy lately, and in the midst of his vivid interest he gave a weary sigh.

His mother said that now he had talked enough, and bade him say good-by to the Marches, who were coming so soon to Holland, anyway. Mrs. March put her arms round him to kiss him, and when she let him sink back her eyes were dim.

"You see how frail he is?" said Mrs. Adding. "I shall not let him out of my sight, after this, till he's well again."

She had a kind of authority in sending Kenby away with them which was not lost upon the witnesses. He asked them to come into the reading-room a moment with him, and Mrs. March wondered if he were going to make some excuse to her for himself; but he said: "I don't know how we're to manage about the Triscoes. The general will have a room to himself, but if Mrs. Adding takes Rose in with her, it leaves Miss Triscoe out, and there isn't a room to be had in this house for love or money. Do you think," he appealed directly to Mrs. March, "that it would do to offer her my room at the Swan?"

"Why, yes," she assented, with a reluctance rather for the complicity in which he had already involved her, and for which he was still unpunished, than for what he was now proposing. "Or she could come in with me, and Mr. March could take it."

"Whichever you think," said Kenby so submissively that she relented, to ask:

"And what will you do?"

He laughed. "Well, people have been known to sleep in a chair. I shall manage somehow."

"You might offer to go in with the general," March suggested, and the men apparently thought this was a joke. Mrs. March did not laugh in her feminine worry about ways and means.

"Where is Miss Triscoe?" she asked. "We haven't seen them."

"Didn't Mrs. Adding tell you? They went to supper at a restaurant; the general doesn't like the cooking here. They ought to have been back before this."

He looked up at the clock on the wall, and she said, "I suppose you would like us to wait."

"It would be very kind of you."

"Oh, it's quite essential," she returned with an airy freshness which Kenby did not seem to feel as painfully as he ought.

They all sat down, and the Triscoes came in after a few minutes, and a cloud on the general's face lifted at the proposition Kenby left Mrs. March to make.

"I thought that child ought to be in his mother's charge," he said. With his own comfort provided for, he made no objections to Mrs. March's plan; and Agatha went to take leave of Rose and his mother. "By-the-way," the general turned to March, "I found Stoller at the restaurant where we supped. He offered me a place in his carriage for the manoeuvres. How are you going?"

"I think I shall go by train. I don't fancy the long drive."

"Well, I don't know that it's worse than the long walk after you leave the train," said the general from the offence which any difference of taste was apt to give him. "Are you going by train, too?" he asked Kenby with indifference.

"I'm not going at all," said Kenby. "I'm leaving Wurzburg in the morning."

"Oh, indeed," said the general.

Mrs. March could not make out whether he knew that Kenby was going with Rose and Mrs. Adding, but she felt that there must be a full and open recognition of the fact among them. "Yes," she said, "isn't it fortunate that Mr. Kenby should be going to Holland, too! I should have been so unhappy about them if Mrs. Adding had been obliged to make that long journey with poor little Rose alone."

"Yes, yes; very fortunate, certainly," said the general colorlessly.

Her husband gave her a glance of intelligent appreciation; but Kenby was too simply, too densely content with the situation to know the value of what she had done. She thought he must certainly explain, as he walked back with her to the Swan, whether he had misrepresented her to Mrs. Adding, or Mrs. Adding had misunderstood him. Somewhere there had been an error, or a duplicity which it was now useless to punish; and Kenby was so apparently unconscious of it that she had not the heart to be cross with him. She heard Miss Triscoe behind her with March laughing in the gayety which the escape from her father seemed to inspire in her. She was promising March to go with him in the morning to see the Emperor and Empress of Germany arrive at the station, and he was warning her that if she laughed there, like that, she would subject him to fine and imprisonment. She pretended that she would like to see him led off between two gendarmes, but consented to be a little careful when he asked her how she expected to get back to her hotel without him, if such a thing happened.

LVIII.

After all, Miss Triscoe did not go with March; she preferred to sleep. The imperial party was to arrive at half past seven, but at six the crowd was already dense before the station, and all along the street leading to the Residenz. It was a brilliant day, with the promise of sunshine, through which a chilly wind blew, for the manoeuvres. The colors of all the German states flapped in this breeze from the poles wreathed with evergreen which encircled the square; the workmen putting the last touches on the bronzed allegory hurried madly to be done, and they had, scarcely finished their labors when two troops of dragoons rode into the place and formed before the station, and waited as motionlessly as their horses would allow.

These animals were not so conscious as lions at the approach of princes; they tossed and stamped impatiently in the long interval before the Regent and his daughter-in-law came to welcome their guests. All the human beings, both those who were in charge and those who were under charge, were in a quiver of anxiety to play their parts well, as if there were some heavy penalty for failure in the least point. The policemen keeping the people, in line behind the ropes which restrained them trembled with eagerness; the faces of some of the troopers twitched. An involuntary sigh went up from the crowd as the Regent's carriage appeared, heralded by outriders, and followed by other plain carriages of Bavarian blue with liveries of blue and silver. Then the whistle of the Kaiser's train sounded; a trumpeter advanced and began to blow his trumpet as they do in the theatre; and exactly at the appointed moment the Emperor and Empress came out of the station through the brilliant human alley leading from it, mounted their carriages, with the stage trumpeter always blowing, and whirled swiftly round half the square and flashed into the corner toward the Residenz out of sight. The same hollow groans of Ho-o-o-ch greeted and followed them from the spectators

as had welcomed the Regent when he first arrived among his fellow-townsmen, with the same effect of being the conventional cries of a stage mob behind the scenes.

The Emperor was like most of his innumerable pictures, with a swarthy face from which his blue eyes glanced pleasantly; he looked good-humored if not good-natured; the Empress smiled amiably beneath her deeply fringed white parasol, and they both bowed right and left in acknowledgment of those hollow groans; but again it seemed, to March that sovereignty, gave the popular curiosity, not to call it devotion, a scantier return than it merited. He had perhaps been insensibly working toward some such perception as now came to him that the great difference between Europe and America was that in Europe life is histrionic and dramatized, and that in America, except when it is trying to be European, it is direct and sincere. He wondered whether the innate conviction of equality, the deep, underlying sense of a common humanity transcending all social and civic pretences, was what gave their theatrical effect to the shows of deference from low to high, and of condescension from high to low. If in such encounters of sovereigns and subjects, the prince did not play his part so well as the people, it might be that he had a harder part to play, and that to support his dignity at all, to keep from being found out the sham that he essentially was, he had to hurry across the stage amidst the distracting thunders of the orchestra. If the star staid to be scrutinized by the soldiers, citizens, and so forth, even the poor supernumeraries and scene-shifters might see that he was a tallow candle like themselves.

In the censorious mood induced by the reflection that he had waited an hour and a half for half a minute's glimpse of the imperial party, March now decided not to go to the manoeuvres, where he might be subjected to still greater humiliation and disappointment. He had certainly come to Wurzburg for the manoeuvres, but Wurzburg had been richly repaying in itself; and why should he stifle half an hour in an overcrowded train, and struggle for three miles on foot against that harsh wind, to see a multitude of men give proofs of their fitness to do manifold murder? He was, in fact, not the least curious for the sight, and the only thing that really troubled him was the question of how he should justify his recreance to his wife. This did alloy the pleasure with which he began, after an excellent breakfast at a neighboring cafe, to stroll about the streets, though he had them almost to himself, so many citizens had followed the soldiers to the manoeuvres.

It was not till the soldiers began returning from the manoeuvres, dusty-footed, and in white canvas overalls drawn over their trousers to save them, that he went back to Mrs. March and Miss Triscoe at the Swan. He had given them time enough to imagine him at the review, and to wonder whether he had seen General Triscoe and the Stollers there, and they met him with such confident inquiries that he would not undeceive them at once. He let them divine from his inventive answers that he had not gone to the manoeuvres, which put them in the best humor with themselves, and the girl said it was so cold and rough that she wished her father had not gone, either. The general appeared just before dinner and frankly avowed the same wish. He was rasping and wheezing from the dust which filled

his lungs; he looked blown and red, and he was too angry with the company he had been in to have any comments on the manoeuvres. He referred to the military chiefly in relation to the Miss Stollers' ineffectual flirtations, which he declared had been outrageous. Their father had apparently no control over them whatever, or else was too ignorant to know that they were misbehaving. They were without respect or reverence for any one; they had talked to General Triscoe as if he were a boy of their own age, or a dotard whom nobody need mind; they had not only kept up their foolish babble before him, they had laughed and giggled, they had broken into snatches of American song, they had all but whistled and danced. They made loud comments in Illinois English--on the cuteness of the officers whom they admired, and they had at one time actually got out their handkerchiefs. He supposed they meant to wave them at the officers, but at the look he gave them they merely put their hats together and snickered in derision of him. They were American girls of the worst type; they conformed to no standard of behavior; their conduct was personal. They ought to be taken home.

Mrs. March said she saw what he meant, and she agreed with him that they were altogether unformed, and were the effect of their own ignorant caprices. Probably, however, it was too late to amend them by taking them away.

"It would hide them, at any rate," he answered. "They would sink back into the great mass of our vulgarity, and not be noticed. We behave like a parcel of peasants with our women. We think that if no harm is meant or thought, we may risk any sort of appearance, and we do things that are scandalously improper simply because they are innocent. That may be all very well at home, but people who prefer that sort of thing had better stay there, where our peasant manners won't make them conspicuous."

As their train ran northward out of Wurzburg that afternoon, Mrs. March recurred to the general's closing words. "That was a slap at Mrs. Adding for letting Kenby go off with her."

She took up the history of the past twenty-four hours, from the time March had left her with Miss Triscoe when he went with her father and the Addings and Kenby to see that church. She had had no chance to bring up these arrears until now, and she atoned to herself for the delay by making the history very full, and going back and adding touches at any point where she thought she had scanted it. After all, it consisted mainly of fragmentary intimations from Miss Triscoe and of half-uttered questions which her own art now built into a coherent statement.

March could not find that the general had much resented Burnamy's clandestine visit to Carlsbad when his daughter told him of it, or that he had done more than make her promise that she would not keep up the acquaintance upon any terms unknown to him.

"Probably," Mrs. March said, "as long as he had any hopes of Mrs. Adding, he was a little too self-conscious to be very up and down about Burnamy."

"Then you think he was really serious about her?"

"Now my dear! He was so serious that I suppose he was never so completely taken aback in his life as when he met Kenby in Wurzburg and saw how she received him. Of course, that put an end to the fight."

"The fight?"

"Yes--that Mrs. Adding and Agatha were keeping up to prevent his offering himself."

"Oh! And how do you know that they were keeping up the fight together?"

"How do I? Didn't you see yourself what friends they were? Did you tell him what Stoller had, said about Burnamy?"

"I had no chance. I don't know that I should have done it, anyway. It wasn't my affair."

"Well, then, I think you might. It would have been everything for that poor child; it would have completely justified her in her own eyes."

"Perhaps your telling her will serve the same purpose."

"Yes, I did tell her, and I am glad of it. She had a right to know it."

"Did she think Stoller's willingness to overlook Burnamy's performance had anything to do with its moral quality?"

Mrs. March was daunted for the moment, but she said, "I told her you thought that if a person owned to a fault they disowned it, and put it away from them just as if it had never been committed; and that if a person had taken their punishment for a wrong they had done, they had expiated it so far as anybody else was concerned. And hasn't poor Burnamy done both?"

As a moralist March was flattered to be hoist with his own petard, but as a husband he was not going to come down at once. "I thought probably you had told her that. You had it pat from having just been over it with me. When has she heard from him?"

"Why, that's the strangest thing about it. She hasn't heard at all. She doesn't know where he is. She thought we must know. She was terribly broken up."

"How did she show it?"

"She didn't show it. Either you want to tease, or you've forgotten how such things are with young people--or at least girls."

"Yes, it's all a long time ago with me, and I never was a girl. Besides, the frank and direct behavior of Kenby and Mrs. Adding has been very obliterating to my early impressions of love-making."

"It certainly hasn't been ideal," said Mrs. March with a sigh.

"Why hasn't it been ideal?" he asked. "Kenby is tremendously in love with her; and I believe she's had a fancy for him from the beginning. If it hadn't been for Rose she would have accepted him at once; and now he's essential to them both in their helplessness. As for Papa Triscoe and his Europeanized scruples, if they have any reality at all they're the residuum of his personal resentment, and Kenby and Mrs. March have nothing to do with their unreality. His being in love with her is no reason why he shouldn't be helpful to her when she needs him, and every reason why he should. I call it a poem, such as very few people have the luck to live out together."

Mrs. March listened with mounting fervor, and when he stopped, she cried out, "Well, my dear, I do believe you are right! It is ideal, as you say; it's a perfect poem. And I shall always say--"

She stopped at the mocking light which she caught in his look, and perceived that he had been amusing himself with her perennial enthusiasm for all sorts of love-affairs. But she averred that she did not care; what he had said was true, and she should always hold him to it.

They were again in the wedding-journey sentiment in which they had left Carlsbad, when they found themselves alone together after their escape from the pressure of others' interests. The tide of travel was towards Frankfort, where the grand parade was to take place some days later. They were going to Weimar, which was so few hours out of their way that they simply must not miss it; and all the way to the old literary capital they were alone in their compartment, with not even a stranger, much less a friend to molest them. The flying landscape without was of their own early autumnal mood, and when the vineyards of Wurzburg ceased to purple it, the heavy after-math of hay and clover, which men, women, and children were loading on heavy wains, and driving from the meadows everywhere, offered a pastoral and pleasing change. It was always the German landscape; sometimes flat and fertile, sometimes hilly and poor; often clothed with dense woods, but always charming, with castled tops in ruin or repair, and with levels where Gothic villages drowsed within their walls, and dreamed of the mediaeval past, silent, without apparent life, except for some little goose-girl driving her flock before her as she sallied out into the nineteenth century in search of fresh pasturage.

As their train mounted among the Thuringian uplands they were aware of a finer, cooler air through their open window. The torrents foamed white out of the black forests of fir and pine, and brawled along the valleys, where the hamlets roused themselves in momentary curiosity as the train roared into them from the many tunnels. The afternoon sunshine had the glister of mountain sunshine everywhere, and the travellers had a pleasant bewilderment in which their memories of Switzerland and the White Mountains mixed with long-dormant emotions from Adirondack sojourns. They chose this place and that in the lovely region where they lamented that they had not come at once for the after-cure, and they appointed enough returns to it in future years to consume all the summers they had left to live.

LIX.

It was falling night when they reached Weimar, where they found at the station a provision of omnibuses far beyond the hotel accommodations. They drove first to the Crown-Prince, which was in a promising state of reparation, but which for the present could only welcome them to an apartment where a canvas curtain cut them off from a freshly plastered wall. The landlord deplored the fact, and sent hospitably out to try and place them at the Elephant. But the Elephant was full, and the Russian Court was full too. Then the landlord of the Crown-Prince bethought himself of a new hotel, of the second class, indeed, but very nice, where they might get rooms, and after the delay of an hour, they got a carriage and drove away from the Crown-Prince, where the landlord continued to the last as benevolent as if they had been a profit instead of a loss to him.

The streets of the town at nine o'clock were empty and quiet, and they instantly felt the academic quality of the place. Through the pale night they could see that the architecture was of the classic sentiment which they were destined to feel more and more; at one point they caught a fleeting glimpse of two figures with clasped hands and half embraced, which they knew for the statues of Goethe and Schiller; and when they mounted to their rooms at the Grand-Duke of Saxe-Weimar, they passed under a fresco representing Goethe and four other world-famous poets, Shakspeare, Milton, Tasso, and Schiller. The poets all looked like Germans, as was just, and Goethe was naturally chief among them; he marshalled the immortals on their way, and Schiller brought up the rear and kept them from going astray in an Elysium where they did not speak the language. For the rest, the hotel was brand-new, of a quite American freshness, and was pervaded by a sweet smell as of straw matting, and provided with steam-radiators. In the sense of its homelikeness the Marches boasted that they were never going away from it.

In the morning they discovered that their windows looked out on the grand-ducal museum, with a garden space before and below its classicistic bulk, where, in a whim of the weather, the gay flowers were full of sun. In a pleasant illusion of taking it unawares, March strolled up through the town; but Weimar was as much awake at that hour as at any of the twenty-four, and the tranquillity of its streets, where he encountered a few passers several blocks apart, was their habitual mood. He came promptly upon two objects which he would willingly have shunned: a 'denkmal' of the Franco-German war, not so furiously bad as most German monuments, but antipathetic and uninteresting, as all patriotic monuments are; and a woman-and-dog team. In the shock from this he was sensible that he had not seen any woman-and-dog teams for some time, and he wondered by what civic or ethnic influences their distribution was so controlled that they should have abounded in Hamburg, Leipsic, and Carlsbad, and wholly ceased in Nuremberg, Ansbach, and Wurzburg, to reappear again in Weimar, though they seemed as characteristic of all Germany as the ugly denkmals to her victories over France.

The Goethe and Schiller monument which he had glimpsed the night before was characteristic too, but less offensively so. German statues at the best are conscious; and the poet-pair, as the inscription calls them, have the air of showily confronting posterity with their clasped hands, and of being only partially rapt from the spectators. But they were more unconscious than any other German statues that March had seen, and he quelled a desire to ask Goethe, as he stood with his hand on Schiller's shoulder, and looked serenely into space far above one of the typical equipages of his country, what he thought of that sort of thing. But upon reflection he did not know why Goethe should be held personally responsible for the existence of the woman-and-dog team. He felt that he might more reasonably attribute to his taste the prevalence of classic profiles which he began to note in the Weimar populace. This could be a sympathetic effect of that passion for the antique which the poet brought back with him from his sojourn in Italy; though many of the people, especially the children, were bow-legged. Perhaps the antique had begun in their faces, and had not yet got down to their legs; in any case they were charming children, and as a test of their culture, he had a mind to ask a little girl if she could tell him where the statue of Herder was, which he thought he might as well take in on his ramble, and so be done with as many statues as he could. She answered with a pretty regret in her tender voice, "That I truly cannot," and he was more satisfied than if she could, for he thought it better to be a child and honest, than to know where any German statue was.

He easily found it for himself in the place which is called the Herder Platz after it. He went into the Peter and Paul Church there; where Herder used to preach sermons, sometimes not at all liked by the nobility and gentry for their revolutionary tendency; the sovereign was shielded from the worst effects of his doctrine by worshipping apart from other sinners in a glazed gallery. Herder is buried in the church, and when you ask where, the sacristan lifts a wooden trap-door in the pavement, and you think you are going down into the crypt, but you are only to see Herder's monumental stone, which is kept covered so to save it from passing feet. Here also is the greatest picture of that great soul Luke Kranach, who had sincerity enough in his paining to atone for all the swelling German sculptures in the world. It is a crucifixion, and the cross is of a white birch log, such as might have been cut out of the Weimar woods, shaved smooth on the sides, with the bark showing at the edges. Kranach has put himself among the spectators, and a stream of blood from the side of the Savior falls in baptism upon the painter's head. He is in the company of John the Baptist and Martin Luther; Luther stands with his Bible open, and his finger on the line, "The blood of Jesus cleanseth us."

Partly because he felt guilty at doing all these things without his wife, and partly because he was now very hungry, March turned from them and got back to his hotel, where she was looking out for him from their open window. She had the air of being long domesticated there, as she laughed down at seeing him come; and the continued brilliancy of the weather added to the illusion of home.

It was like a day of late spring in Italy or America; the sun in that gardened hollow before the museum was already hot enough to make him glad of the shelter of the hotel. The summer seemed to have come back to oblige them, and when they learned that they were to see Weimar in a festive mood because this was Sedan Day, their curiosity, if not their sympathy, accepted the chance gratefully. But they were almost moved to wish that the war had gone otherwise when they learned that all the public carriages were engaged, and they must have one from a stable if they wished to drive after breakfast. Still it was offered them for such a modest number of marks, and their driver proved so friendly and conversable, that they assented to the course of history, and were more and more reconciled as they bowled along through the grand-ducal park beside the waters of the classic Ilm.

The waters of the classic Ilm are sluggish and slimy in places, and in places clear and brooklike, but always a dull dark green in color. They flow in the shadow of pensive trees, and by the brinks of sunny meadows, where the after-math wanders in heavy windrows, and the children sport joyously over the smooth-mown surfaces in all the freedom that there is in Germany. At last, after immemorial appropriation the owners of the earth are everywhere expropriated, and the people come into the pleasure if not the profit of it. At last, the prince, the knight, the noble finds, as in his turn the plutocrat will find, that his property is not for him, but for all; and that the nation is to enjoy what he takes from it and vainly thinks to keep from it. Parks, pleasaunces, gardens, set apart for kings, are the play-grounds of the landless poor in the Old World, and perhaps yield the sweetest joy of privilege to some state-sick ruler, some world-weary princess, some lonely child born to the solitude of sovereignty, as they each look down from their palace windows upon the leisure of overwork taking its little holiday amidst beauty vainly created for the perpetual festival of their empty lives.

March smiled to think that in this very Weimar, where sovereignty had graced and ennobled itself as nowhere else in the world by the companionship of letters and the arts, they still were not hurrying first to see the palace of a prince, but were involuntarily making it second to the cottage of a poet. But in fact it is Goethe who is forever the prince in Weimar. His greatness blots out its history, his name fills the city; the thought of him is its chiefest imitation and largest hospitality. The travellers remembered, above all other facts of the grand-ducal park, that it was there he first met Christiane Vulpius, beautiful and young, when he too was beautiful and young, and took her home to be his love, to the just and lasting displeasure of Fran von Stein, who was even less reconciled when, after eighteen years of due reflection, the love of Goethe and Christiane became their marriage. They, wondered just where it was he saw the young girl coming to meet him as the Grand-Duke's minister with an office-seeking petition from her brother, Goethe's brother author, long famed and long forgotten for his romantic tale of "Rinaldo Rinaldini."

They had indeed no great mind, in their American respectability, for that rather matter-of-fact and deliberate liaison, and little as their sympathy was for the passionless intellectual intrigue with the Frau von

Stein, it cast no halo of sentiment about the Goethe cottage to suppose that there his love-life with Christiane began. Mrs. March even resented the fact, and when she learned later that it was not the fact at all, she removed it from her associations with the pretty place almost indignantly.

In spite of our facile and multiple divorces we Americans are worshipers of marriage, and if a great poet, the minister of a prince, is going to marry a poor girl, we think he had better not wait till their son is almost of age. Mrs. March would not accept as extenuating circumstances the Grand-Duke's godfatherhood, or Goethe's open constancy to Christiane, or the tardy consecration of their union after the French sack of, Weimar, when the girl's devotion had saved him from the rudeness of the marauding soldiers. For her New England soul there were no degrees in such guilt; and, perhaps there are really not so many as people have tried to think, in their deference to Goethe's greatness. But certainly the affair was not so simple for a grand-ducal minister of world-wide renown, and he might well have felt its difficulties, for he could not have been proof against the censorious public opinion of Weimar, or the yet more censorious private opinion of Fran von Stein.

On that lovely Italo-American morning no ghost of these old dead embarrassments lingered within or without the Goethe garden-house. The trees which the poet himself planted flung a sun-shot shadow upon it, and about its feet basked a garden of simple flowers, from which the sweet lame girl who limped through the rooms and showed them, gathered a parting nosegay for her visitors. The few small livingrooms were above the ground-floor, with kitchen and offices below in the Italian fashion; in one of the little chambers was the camp-bed which Goethe carried with him on his journeys through Italy; and in the larger room at the front stood the desk where he wrote, with the chair before it from which he might just have risen.

All was much more livingly conscious of the great man gone than the proud little palace in the town, which so abounds with relics and memorials of him. His library, his study, his study table, with everything on it just as he left it when

"Cadde la stanca mana."

are there, and there is the death-chair facing the window, from which he gasped for "more light" at last. The handsome, well-arranged rooms are full of souvenirs of his travel, and of that passion for Italy which he did so much to impart to all German hearts, and whose modern waning leaves its records here of an interest pathetically, almost amusingly, faded. They intimate the classic temper to which his mind tended more and more, and amidst the multitude of sculptures, pictures, prints, drawings, gems, medals, autographs, there is the sense of the many-mindedness, the universal taste, for which he found room in little Weimar, but not in his contemporaneous Germany. But it is all less keenly personal, less intimate than the simple garden-house, or else, with the great troop of people going through it, and the custodians lecturing in various voices and languages to the attendant groups, the

Marches had it less to themselves, and so imagined him less in it.

LX.

All palaces have a character of tiresome unlivableness which is common to them everywhere, and very probably if one could meet their proprietors in them one would as little remember them apart afterwards as the palaces themselves. It will not do to lift either houses or men far out of the average; they become spectacles, ceremonies; they cease to have charm, to have character, which belong to the levels of life, where alone there are ease and comfort, and human nature may be itself, with all the little delightful differences repressed in those who represent and typify.

As they followed the custodian through the grand-ducal Residenz at Weimar, March felt everywhere the strong wish of the prince who was Goethe's friend to ally himself with literature, and to be human at least in the humanities. He came honestly by his passion for poets; his mother had known it in her time, and Weimar was the home of Wieland and of Herder before the young Grand-Duke came back from his travels bringing Goethe with him, and afterwards attracting Schiller. The story of that great epoch is all there in the Residenz, told as articulately as a palace can.

There are certain Poets' Rooms, frescoed with illustrations of Goethe, Schiller, and Wieland; there is the room where Goethe and the Grand-Duke used to play chess together; there is the conservatory opening from it where they liked to sit and chat; everywhere in the pictures and sculptures, the engraving and intaglios, are the witnesses of the tastes they shared, the love they both had for Italy, and for beautiful Italian things. The prince was not so great a prince but that he could very nearly be a man; the court was perhaps the most human court that ever was; the Grand-Duke and the grand poet were first boon companions, and then monarch and minister working together for the good of the country; they were always friends, and yet, as the American saw in the light of the New World, which he carried with him, how far from friends! At best it was make-believe, the make-believe of superiority and inferiority, the make-believe of master and man, which could only be the more painful and ghastly for the endeavor of two generous spirits to reach and rescue each other through the asphyxiating unreality; but they kept up the show of equality faithfully to the end. Goethe was born citizen of a free republic, and his youth was nurtured in the traditions of liberty; he was one of the greatest souls of any time, and he must have known the impossibility of the thing they pretended; but he died and made no sign, and the poet's friendship with the prince has passed smoothly into history as one of the things that might really be. They worked and played together; they dined and danced, they picnicked and poetized, each on his own side of the impassable gulf; with an air of its not being there which probably did not deceive their contemporaries so much as posterity.

A part of the palace was of course undergoing repair; and in the gallery beyond the conservatory a company of workmen were sitting at a table where they had spread their luncheon. They were somewhat subdued by the consciousness of their august environment; but the sight of them was charming; they gave a kindly interest to the place which it had wanted before; and which the Marches felt again in another palace where the custodian showed them the little tin dishes and saucepans which the German Empress Augusta and her sisters played with when they were children. The sight of these was more affecting even than the withered wreaths which they had left on the death-bed of their mother, and which are still mouldering there.

This was in the Belvedere, the country house on the height overlooking Weimar, where the grand-ducal family spend the month of May, and where the stranger finds himself amid overwhelming associations of Goethe, although the place is so full of relics and memorials of the owners. It seemed in fact to be a storehouse for the wedding-presents of the whole connection, which were on show in every room; Mrs. March hardly knew whether they heightened the domestic effect or took from it; but they enabled her to verify with the custodian's help certain royal intermarriages which she had been in doubt about before.

Her zeal for these made such favor with him that he did not spare them a portrait of all those which March hoped to escape; he passed them over, scarcely able to stand, to the gardener, who was to show them the open-air theatre where Goethe used to take part in the plays.

The Natur-Theater was of a classic ideal, realized in the trained vines and clipped trees which formed the coulisses. There was a grassy space for the chorus and the commoner audience, and then a few semicircular gradines cut in the turf, one alcove another, where the more honored spectators sat. Behind the seats were plinths bearing the busts of Goethe, Schiller, Wieland, and Herder. It was all very pretty, and if ever the weather in Weimar was dry enough to permit a performance, it must have been charming to see a play in that open day to which the drama is native, though in the late hours it now keeps in the thick air of modern theatres it has long forgotten the fact. It would be difficult to be Greek under a German sky, even when it was not actually raining, but March held that with Goethe's help it might have been done at Weimar, and his wife and he proved themselves such enthusiasts for the Natur-Theater that the walnut-faced old gardener who showed it put together a sheaf of the flowers that grew nearest it and gave them to Mrs. March for a souvenir.

They went for a cup of tea to the cafe which looks, as from another eyebrow of the hill, out over lovely little Weimar in the plain below. In a moment of sunshine the prospect was very smiling; but their spirits sank over their tea when it came; they were at least sorry they had not asked for coffee. Most of the people about them were taking beer, including the pretty girls of a young ladies' school, who were there with their books and needle-work, in the care of one of the teachers, apparently for the afternoon.

Mrs. March perceived that they were not so much engaged with their books or their needle-work but they had eyes for other things, and she followed the glances of the girls till they rested upon the people at a table somewhat obliquely to the left. These were apparently a mother and daughter, and they were listening to a young man who sat with his back to Mrs. March, and leaned low over the table talking to them. They were both smiling radiantly, and as the girl smiled she kept turning herself from the waist up, and slanting her face from this side to that, as if to make sure that every one saw her smiling.

Mrs. March felt her husband's gaze following her own, and she had just time to press her finger firmly on his arm and reduce his cry of astonishment to the hoarse whisper in which he gasped, "Good gracious! It's the pivotal girl!"

At the same moment the girl rose with her mother, and with the young man, who had risen too, came directly toward the Marches on their way out of the place without noticing them, though Burnamy passed so near that Mrs. March could almost have touched him.

She had just strength to say, "Well, my dear! That was the cut direct."

She said this in order to have her husband reassure her. "Nonsense! He never saw us. Why didn't you speak to him?"

"Speak to him? I never shall speak to him again. No! This is the last of Mr. Burnamy for me. I shouldn't have minded his not recognizing us, for, as you say, I don't believe he saw us; but if he could go back to such a girl as that, and flirt with her, after Miss Triscoe, that's all I wish to know of him. Don't you try to look him up, Basil! I'm glad--yes, I'm glad he doesn't know how Stoller has come to feel about him; he deserves to suffer, and I hope he'll keep on suffering: You were quite right, my dear--and it shows how true your instinct is in such things (I don't call it more than instinct)--not to tell him what Stoller said, and I don't want you ever should."

She had risen in her excitement, and was making off in such haste that she would hardly give him time to pay for their tea, as she pulled him impatiently to their carriage.

At last he got a chance to say, "I don't think I can quite promise that; my mind's been veering round in the other direction. I think I shall tell him."

"What! After you've seen him flirting with that girl? Very well, then, you won't, my dear; that's all! He's behaving very basely to Agatha."

"What's his flirtation with all the girls in the universe to do with my duty to him? He has a right to know what Stoller thinks. And as to his behaving badly toward Miss Triscoe, how has he done it? So far as you know, there is nothing whatever between them. She either refused him outright, that last night in Carlsbad, or else she made impossible conditions with him. Burnamy is simply consoling himself, and I don't

blame him."

"Consoling himself with a pivotal girl!" cried Mrs. March.

"Yes, with a pivotal girl. Her pivotality may be a nervous idiosyncrasy, or it may be the effect of tight lacing; perhaps she has to keep turning and twisting that way to get breath. But attribute the worst motive: say it is to make people look at her! Well, Burnamy has a right to look with the rest; and I am not going to renounce him because he takes refuge with one pretty girl from another. It's what men have been doing from the beginning of time."

"Oh, I dare say!"

"Men," he went on, "are very delicately constituted; very peculiarly. They have been known to seek the society of girls in general, of any girl, because some girl has made them happy; and when some girl has made them unhappy, they are still more susceptible. Burnamy may be merely amusing himself, or he may be consoling himself; but in either case I think the pivotal girl has as much right to him as Miss Triscoe. She had him first; and I'm all for her."

LXI.

Burnamy came away from seeing the pivotal girl and her mother off on the train which they were taking that evening for Frankfort and Hombourg, and strolled back through the Weimar streets little at ease with himself. While he was with the girl and near her he had felt the attraction by which youth impersonally draws youth, the charm which mere maid has for mere man; but once beyond the range of this he felt sick at heart and ashamed. He was aware of having used her folly as an anodyne for the pain which was always gnawing at him, and he had managed to forget it in her folly, but now it came back, and the sense that he had been reckless of her rights came with it. He had done his best to make her think him in love with her, by everything but words; he wondered how he could be such an ass, such a wicked ass, as to try making her promise to write to him from Frankfort; he wished never to see her again, and he wished still less to hear from her. It was some comfort to reflect that she had not promised, but it was not comfort enough to restore him to such fragmentary self-respect as he had been enjoying since he parted with Agatha Triscoe in Carlsbad; he could not even get back to the resentment with which he had been staying himself somewhat before the pivotal girl unexpectedly appeared with her mother in Weimar.

It was Sedan Day, but there was apparently no official observance of the holiday, perhaps because the Grand-Duke was away at the manoeuvres, with all the other German princes. Burnamy had hoped for some voluntary excitement among the people, at least enough to warrant him in making a paper about Sedan Day in Weimar, which he could sell somewhere; but the night was falling, and there was still no sign of popular rejoicing over

the French humiliation twenty-eight years before, except in the multitude of Japanese lanterns which the children were everywhere carrying at the ends of sticks. Babies had them in their carriages, and the effect of the floating lights in the winding, up-and-down-hill streets was charming even to Burnamy's lack-lustre eyes. He went by his hotel and on to a cafe with a garden, where there was a patriotic concert promised; he supped there, and then sat dreamily behind his beer, while the music banged and brayed round him unheeded.

Presently he heard a voice of friendly banter saying in English, "May I sit at your table?" and he saw an ironical face looking down on him. "There doesn't seem any other place."

"Why, Mr. March!" Burnamy sprang up and wrung the hand held out to him, but he choked with his words of recognition; it was so good to see this faithful friend again, though he saw him now as he had seen him last, just when he had so little reason to be proud of himself.

March settled his person in the chair facing Burnamy, and then glanced round at the joyful jam of people eating and drinking, under a firmament of lanterns. "This is pretty," he said, "mighty pretty. I shall make Mrs. March sorry for not coming, when I go back."

"Is Mrs. March--she is--with you--in Weimar?" Burnamy asked stupidly.

March forbore to take advantage of him. "Oh, yes. We saw you out at Belvedere this afternoon. Mrs. March thought for a moment that you meant not to see us. A woman likes to exercise her imagination in those little flights."

"I never dreamed of your being there--I never saw--" Burnamy began.

"Of course not. Neither did Mrs. Etkins, nor Miss Etkins; she was looking very pretty. Have you been here some time?"

"Not long. A week or so. I've been at the parade at Wurzburg."

"At Wurzburg! Ah, how little the world is, or how large Wurzburg is! We were there nearly a week, and we pervaded the place. But there was a great crowd for you to hide in from us. What had I better take?" A waiter had come up, and was standing at March's elbow. "I suppose I mustn't sit here without ordering something?"

"White wine and selters," said Burnamy vaguely.

"The very thing! Why didn't I think of it? It's a divine drink: it satisfies without filling. I had it a night or two before we left home, in the Madison Square Roof Garden. Have you seen 'Every Other Week' lately?"

"No," said Burnamy, with more spirit than he had yet shown.

"We've just got our mail from Nuremberg. The last number has a poem in

it that I rather like." March laughed to see the young fellow's face light up with joyful consciousness. "Come round to my hotel, after you're tired here, and I'll let you see it. There's no hurry. Did you notice the little children with their lanterns, as you came along? It's the gentlest effect that a warlike memory ever came to. The French themselves couldn't have minded those innocents carrying those soft lights on the day of their disaster. You ought to get something out of that, and I've got a subject in trust for you from Rose Adding. He and his mother were at Wurzburg; I'm sorry to say the poor little chap didn't seem very well. They've gone to Holland for the sea air." March had been talking for quantity in compassion of the embarrassment in which Burnamy seemed bound; but he questioned how far he ought to bring comfort to the young fellow merely because he liked him. So far as he could make out, Burnamy had been doing rather less than nothing to retrieve himself since they had met; and it was by an impulse that he could not have logically defended to Mrs. March that he resumed. "We found another friend of yours in Wurzburg: Mr. Stoller."

"Mr. Stoller?" Burnamy faintly echoed.

"Yes; he was there to give his daughters a holiday during the manoeuvres; and they made the most of it. He wanted us to go to the parade with his family but we declined. The twins were pretty nearly the death of General Triscoe."

Again Burnamy echoed him. "General Triscoe?"

"Ah, yes: I didn't tell you. General Triscoe and his daughter had come on with Mrs. Adding and Rose. Kenby--you remember Kenby, On the Norumbia?--Kenby happened to be there, too; we were quite a family party; and Stoller got the general to drive out to the manoeuvres with him and his girls."

Now that he was launched, March rather enjoyed letting himself go. He did not know what he should say to Mrs. March when he came to confess having told Burnamy everything before she got a chance at him; he pushed on recklessly, upon the principle, which probably will not hold in morals, that one may as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb. "I have a message for you from Mr. Stoller."

"For me?" Burnamy gasped.

"I've been wondering how I should put it, for I hadn't expected to see you. But it's simply this: he wants you to know--and he seemed to want me to know--that he doesn't hold you accountable in the way he did. He's thought it all over, and he's decided that he had no right to expect you to save him from his own ignorance where he was making a show of knowledge. As he said, he doesn't choose to plead the baby act. He says that you're all right, and your place on the paper is open to you."

Burnamy had not been very prompt before, but now he seemed braced for instant response. "I think he's wrong," he said, so harshly that the people at the next table looked round. "His feeling as he does has

nothing to do with the fact, and it doesn't let me out."

March would have liked to take him in his arms; he merely said, "I think you're quite right, as to that. But there's such a thing as forgiveness, you know. It doesn't change the nature of what you've done; but as far as the sufferer from it is concerned, it annuls it."

"Yes, I understand that. But I can't accept his forgiveness if I hate him."

"But perhaps you won't always hate him. Some day you may have a chance to do him a good turn. It's rather banal; but there doesn't seem any other way. Well, I have given you his message. Are you going with me to get that poem?"

When March had given Burnamy the paper at his hotel, and Burnamy had put it in his pocket, the young man said he thought he would take some coffee, and he asked March to join him in the dining-room where they had stood talking.

"No, thank you," said the elder, "I don't propose sitting up all night, and you'll excuse me if I go to bed now. It's a little informal to leave a guest--"

"You're not leaving a guest! I'm at home here. I'm staying in this hotel too."

March said, "Oh!" and then he added abruptly, "Good-night," and went up stairs under the fresco of the five poets.

"Whom were you talking with below?" asked Mrs. March through the door opening into his room from hers.

"Burnamy," he answered from within. "He's staying in this house. He let me know just as I was going to turn him out for the night. It's one of those little uncandors of his that throw suspicion on his honesty in great things."

"Oh! Then you've been telling him," she said, with a mental bound high above and far beyond the point.

"Everything."

"About Stoller, too?"

"About Stoller and his daughters, and Mrs. Adding and Rose and Kenby and General Triscoe--and Agatha."

"Very well. That's what I call shabby. Don't ever talk to me again about the inconsistencies of women. But now there's something perfectly fearful."

"What is it?"

"A letter from Miss Triscoe came after you were gone, asking us to find rooms in some hotel for her and her father to-morrow. He isn't well, and they're coming. And I've telegraphed them to come here. Now what do you say?"

LXII.

They could see no way out of the trouble, and Mrs. March could not resign herself to it till her husband suggested that she should consider it providential. This touched the lingering superstition in which she had been ancestrally taught to regard herself as a means, when in a very tight place, and to leave the responsibility with the moral government of the universe. As she now perceived, it had been the same as ordered that they should see Burnamy under such conditions in the afternoon that they could not speak to him, and hear where he was staying; and in an inferior degree it had been the same as ordered that March should see him in the evening and tell him everything, so that she should know just how to act when she saw him in the morning. If he could plausibly account for the renewal of his flirtation with Miss Elkins, or if he seemed generally worthy apart from that, she could forgive him.

It was so pleasant when he came in at breakfast with his well-remembered smile, that she did not require from him any explicit defence. While they talked she was righting herself in an undercurrent of drama with Miss Triscoe, and explaining to her that they could not possibly wait over for her and her father in Weimar, but must be off that day for Berlin, as they had made all their plans. It was not easy, even in drama where one has everything one's own way, to prove that she could not without impiety so far interfere with the course of Providence as to prevent Miss Triscoe's coming with her father to the same hotel where Burnamy was staying. She contrived, indeed, to persuade her that she had not known he was staying there when she telegraphed them where to come, and that in the absence of any open confidence from Miss Triscoe she was not obliged to suppose that his presence would be embarrassing.

March proposed leaving her with Burnamy while he went up into the town and interviewed the house of Schiller, which he had not done yet; and as soon as he got himself away she came to business, breaking altogether from the inner drama with Miss Triscoe and devoting herself to Burnamy. They had already got so far as to have mentioned the meeting with the Triscoes in Wurzburg, and she said: "Did Mr. March tell you they were coming here? Or, no! We hadn't heard then. Yes, they are coming to-morrow. They may be going to stay some time. She talked of Weimar when we first spoke of Germany on the ship." Burnamy said nothing, and she suddenly added, with a sharp glance, "They wanted us to get them rooms, and we advised their coming to this house." He started very satisfactorily, and "Do you think they would be comfortable, here?" she pursued.

"Oh, yes, very. They can have my room; it's southeast; I shall be going into other quarters." She did not say anything; and "Mrs. March," he began again, "what is the use of my beating about the bush? You must know what I went back to Carlsbad for, that night--"

"No one ever told--"

"Well, you must have made a pretty good guess. But it was a failure. I ought to have failed, and I did. She said that unless her father liked it--And apparently he hasn't liked it." Burnamy smiled ruefully.

"How do you know? She didn't know where you were!"

"She could have got word to me if she had had good news for me. They've forwarded other letters from Pupp's. But it's all right; I had no business to go back to Carlsbad. Of course you didn't know I was in this house when you told them to come; and I must clear out. I had better clear out of Weimar, too."

"No, I don't think so; I have no right to pry into your affairs, but--"

"Oh, they're wide enough open!"

"And you may have changed your mind. I thought you might, when I saw you yesterday at Belvedere--"

"I was only trying to make bad worse."

"Then I think the situation has changed entirely through what Mr. Stoller said to Mr. March."

"I can't see how it has. I committed an act of shabby treachery, and I'm as much to blame as if he still wanted to punish me for it."

"Did Mr. March say that to you?"

"No; I said that to Mr. March; and he couldn't answer it, and you can't. You're very good, and very kind, but you can't answer it."

"I can answer it very well," she boasted, but she could find nothing better to say than, "It's your duty to her to see her and let her know."

"Doesn't she know already?"

"She has a right to know it from you. I think you are morbid, Mr. Burnamy. You know very well I didn't like your doing that to Mr. Stoller. I didn't say so at the time, because you seemed to feel it enough yourself. But I did like your owning up to it," and here Mrs. March thought it time to trot out her borrowed battle-horse again. "My husband always says that if a person owns up to an error, fully and faithfully, as you've always done, they make it the same in its consequences to them as if it had never been done."

"Does Mr. March say that?" asked Burnamy with a relenting smile.

"Indeed he does!"

Burnamy hesitated; then he asked, gloomily again:

"And what about the consequences to the, other fellow?"

"A woman," said Mrs. March, "has no concern with them. And besides, I think you've done all you could to save Mr. Stoller from the consequences."

"I haven't done anything."

"No matter. You would if you could. I wonder," she broke off, to prevent his persistence at a point where her nerves were beginning to give way, "what can be keeping Mr. March?"

Nothing much more important, it appeared later, than the pleasure of sauntering through the streets on the way to the house of Schiller, and looking at the pretty children going to school, with books under their arms. It was the day for the schools to open after the long summer vacation, and there was a freshness of expectation in the shining faces which, if it could not light up his own graybeard visage, could at least touch his heart:

When he reached the Schiller house he found that it was really not the Schiller house, but the Schiller flat, of three or four rooms, one flight up, whose windows look out upon the street named after the poet. The whole place is bare and clean; in one corner of the large room fronting the street stands Schiller's writing-table, with his chair before it; with the foot extending toward this there stands, in another corner, the narrow bed on which he died; some withered wreaths on the pillow frame a picture of his deathmask, which at first glance is like his dead face lying there. It is all rather tasteless, and all rather touching, and the place with its meagre appointments, as compared with the rich Goethe house, suggests that personal competition with Goethe in which Schiller is always falling into the second place. Whether it will be finally so with him in literature it is too early to ask of time, and upon other points eternity will not be interrogated. "The great, Goethe and the good Schiller," they remain; and yet, March reasoned, there was something good in Goethe and something great, in Schiller.

He was so full of the pathos of their inequality before the world that he did not heed the warning on the door of the pastry-shop near the Schiller house, and on opening it he bedaubed his hand with the fresh paint on it. He was then in such a state, that he could not bring his mind to bear upon the question of which cakes his wife would probably prefer, and he stood helplessly holding up his hand till the good woman behind the counter discovered his plight, and uttered a loud cry of compassion. She ran and got a wet napkin, which she rubbed with soap, and then she instructed him by word and gesture to rub his hand upon it, and she did not leave him till his rescue was complete. He let her choose a variety

of the cakes for him, and came away with a gay paper bag full of them, and with the feeling that he had been in more intimate relations with the life of Weimar than travellers are often privileged to be. He argued from the instant and intelligent sympathy of the pastry woman a high grade of culture in all classes; and he conceived the notion of pretending to Mrs. March that he had got these cakes from, a descendant of Schiller.

His deceit availed with her for the brief moment in which she always, after so many years' experience of his duplicity, believed anything he told her. They dined merrily together at their hotel, and then Burnamy came down to the station with them and was very comfortable to March in helping him to get their tickets and their baggage registered. The train which was to take them to Halle, where they were to change for Berlin, was rather late, and they had but ten minutes after it came in before it would start again. Mrs. March was watching impatiently at the window of the waiting-room for the dismounting passengers to clear the platform and allow the doors to be opened; suddenly she gave a cry, and turned and ran into the passage by which the new arrivals were pouring out toward the superabundant omnibuses. March and Burnamy, who had been talking apart, mechanically rushed after her and found her kissing Miss Triscoe and shaking hands with the general amidst a tempest of questions and answers, from which it appeared that the Triscoes had got tired of staying in Wurzburg, and had simply come on to Weimar a day sooner than they had intended.

The general was rather much bundled up for a day which was mild for a German summer day, and he coughed out an explanation that he had taken an abominable cold at that ridiculous parade, and had not shaken it off yet. He had a notion that change of air would be better for him; it could not be worse.

He seemed a little vague as to Burnamy, rather than inimical. While the ladies were still talking eagerly together in proffer and acceptance of Mrs. March's lamentations that she should be going away just as Miss Triscoe was coming, he asked if the omnibus for their hotel was there. He by no means resented Burnamy's assurance that it was, and he did not refuse to let him order their baggage, little and large, loaded upon it. By the time this was done, Mrs. March and Miss Triscoe had so far detached themselves from each other that they could separate after one more formal expression of regret and forgiveness. With a lament into which she poured a world of inarticulate emotions, Mrs. March wrenched herself from the place, and suffered herself, to be pushed toward her train. But with the last long look which she cast over her shoulder, before she vanished into the waiting-room, she saw Miss Triscoe and Burnamy transacting the elaborate politenesses of amiable strangers with regard to the very small bag which the girl had in her hand. He succeeded in relieving her of it; and then he led the way out of the station on the left of the general, while Miss Triscoe brought up the rear.

LXIII.

From the window of the train as it drew out Mrs. March tried for a glimpse of the omnibus in which her proteges were now rolling away together. As they were quite out of sight in the omnibus, which was itself out of sight, she failed, but as she fell back against her seat she treated the recent incident with a complexity and simultaneity of which no report can give an idea. At the end one fatal conviction remained: that in everything she had said she had failed to explain to Miss Triscoe how Burnamy happened to be in Weimar and how he happened to be there with them in the station. She required March to say how she had overlooked the very things which she ought to have mentioned first, and which she had on the point of her tongue the whole time. She went over the entire ground again to see if she could discover the reason why she had made such an unaccountable break, and it appeared that she was led to it by his rushing after her with Burnamy before she had had a chance to say a word about him; of course she could not say anything in his presence. This gave her some comfort, and there was consolation in the fact that she had left them together without the least intention or connivance, and now, no matter what happened, she could not accuse herself, and he could not accuse her of match-making.

He said that his own sense of guilt was so great that he should not dream of accusing her of anything except of regret that now she could never claim the credit of bringing the lovers together under circumstances so favorable. As soon as they were engaged they could join in renouncing her with a good conscience, and they would probably make this the basis of their efforts to propitiate the general.

She said she did not care, and with the mere removal of the lovers in space, her interest in them began to abate. They began to be of a minor importance in the anxieties of the change of trains at Halle, and in the excitement of settling into the express from Frankfort there were moments when they were altogether forgotten. The car was of almost American length, and it ran with almost American smoothness; when the conductor came and collected an extra fare for their seats, the Marches felt that if the charge had been two dollars instead of two marks they would have had every advantage of American travel.

On the way to Berlin the country was now fertile and flat, and now sterile and flat; near the capital the level sandy waste spread almost to its gates. The train ran quickly through the narrow fringe of suburbs, and then they were in one of those vast Continental stations which put our outdated depots to shame. The good 'traeger' who took possession of them and their hand-bags, put their boxes on a baggage-bearing drosky, and then got them another drosky for their personal transportation. This was a drosky of the first-class, but they would not have thought it so, either from the vehicle itself, or from the appearance of the driver and his horses. The public carriages of Germany are the shabbiest in the world; at Berlin the horses look like old hair trunks and the drivers like their moth-eaten contents.

The Marches got no splendor for the two prices they paid, and their approach to their hotel on Unter den Linden was as unimpressive as the ignoble avenue itself. It was a moist, cold evening, and the mean, tiresome street, slopped and splashed under its two rows of small trees, to which the thinning leaves clung like wet rags, between long lines of shops and hotels which had neither the grace of Paris nor the grandiosity of New York. March quoted in bitter derision:

"Bees, bees, was it your hydromel,
Under the Lindens?"

and his wife said that if Commonwealth Avenue in Boston could be imagined with its trees and without their beauty, flanked by the architecture of Sixth Avenue, with dashes of the west side of Union Square, that would be the famous Unter den Linden, where she had so resolutely decided that they would stay while in Berlin.

They had agreed upon the hotel, and neither could blame the other because it proved second-rate in everything but its charges. They ate a poorish table d'hote dinner in such low spirits that March had no heart to get a rise from his wife by calling her notice to the mouse which fed upon the crumbs about their feet while they dined. Their English-speaking waiter said that it was a very warm evening, and they never knew whether this was because he was a humorist, or because he was lonely and wished to talk, or because it really was a warm evening, for Berlin. When they had finished, they went out and drove about the greater part of the evening looking for another hotel, whose first requisite should be that it was not on Unter den Linden. What mainly determined Mrs. March in favor of the large, handsome, impersonal place they fixed upon was the fact that it was equipped for steam-heating; what determined March was the fact that it had a passenger-office where when he wished to leave, he could buy his railroad tickets and have his baggage checked without the maddening anxiety, of doing it at the station. But it was precisely in these points that the hotel which admirably fulfilled its other functions fell short. The weather made a succession of efforts throughout their stay to clear up cold; it merely grew colder without clearing up, but this seemed to offer no suggestion of steam for heating their bleak apartment and the chilly corridors to the management. With the help of a large lamp which they kept burning night and day they got the temperature of their rooms up to sixty; there was neither stove nor fireplace, the cold electric bulbs diffused a frosty glare; and in the vast, stately dining-room with its vaulted roof, there was nothing to warm them but their plates, and the handles of their knives and forks, which, by a mysterious inspiration, were always hot. When they were ready to go, March experienced from the apathy of the baggage clerk and the reluctance of the porters a more piercing distress than any he had known at the railroad stations; and one luckless valise which he ordered sent after him by express reached his bankers in Paris a fortnight overdue, with an accumulation of charges upon it outvaluing the books which it contained.

But these were minor defects in an establishment which had many merits, and was mainly of the temperament and intention of the large English railroad hotels. They looked from their windows down into a garden

square, peopled with a full share of the superabounding statues of Berlin and frequented by babies and nurse maids who seemed not to mind the cold any more than the stone kings and generals. The aspect of this square, like the excellent cooking of the hotel and the architecture of the imperial capital, suggested the superior civilization of Paris. Even the rows of gray houses and private palaces of Berlin are in the French taste, which is the only taste there is in Berlin. The suggestion of Paris is constant, but it is of Paris in exile, and without the chic which the city wears in its native air. The crowd lacks this as much as the architecture and the sculpture; there is no distinction among the men except for now and then a military figure, and among the women no style such as relieves the commonplace rash of the New York streets. The Berliners are plain and ill dressed, both men and women, and even the little children are plain. Every one is ill dressed, but no one is ragged, and among the undersized homely folk of the lower classes there is no such poverty-stricken shabbiness as shocks and insults the sight in New York. That which distinctly recalls our metropolis is the lofty passage of the elevated trains intersecting the prospectives of many streets; but in Berlin the elevated road is carried on massive brick archways and not lifted upon gay, crazy iron ladders like ours.

When you look away from this, and regard Berlin on its aesthetic, side you are again in that banished Paris, whose captive art-soul is made to serve, so far as it may be enslaved to such an effect, in the celebration of the German triumph over France. Berlin has never the presence of a great capital, however, in spite of its perpetual monumental insistence. There is no streaming movement in broad vistas; the dull looking population moves sluggishly; there is no show of fine equipages. The prevailing tone of the city and the sky is gray; but under the cloudy heaven there is no responsive Gothic solemnity in the architecture. There are hints of the older German cities in some of the remote and observe streets, but otherwise all is as new as Boston, which in fact the actual Berlin hardly antedates.

There are easily more statues in Berlin than in any other city in the world, but they only unite in failing to give Berlin an artistic air. They stand in long rows on the cornices; they crowd the pediments; they poise on one leg above domes and arches; they shelter themselves in niches; they ride about on horseback; they sit or lounge on street corners or in garden walks; all with a mediocrity in the older sort which fails of any impression. If they were only furiously baroque they would be something, and it may be from a sense of this that there is a self-assertion in the recent sculptures, which are always patriotic, more noisy and bragging than anything else in perennial brass. This offensive art is the modern Prussian avatar of the old German romantic spirit, and bears the same relation to it that modern romanticism in literature bears to romance. It finds its apotheosis in the monument to Kaiser Wilhelm I., a vast incoherent group of swelling and swaggering bronze, commemorating the victory of the first Prussian Emperor in the war with the last French Emperor, and avenging the vanquished upon the victors by its ugliness. The ungainly and irrelevant assemblage of men and animals backs away from the imperial palace, and saves itself too soon from plunging over the border of a canal behind it, not far from Rauch's great

statue of the great Frederic. To come to it from the simplicity and quiet of that noble work is like passing from some exquisite masterpiece of naturalistic acting to the rant and uproar of melodrama; and the Marches stood stunned and bewildered by its wild explosions.

When they could escape they found themselves so convenient to the imperial palace that they judged best to discharge at once the obligation to visit it which must otherwise weigh upon them. They entered the court without opposition from the sentinel, and joined other strangers straggling instinctively toward a waiting-room in one corner of the building, where after they had increased to some thirty, a custodian took charge of them, and led them up a series of inclined plains of brick to the state apartments. In the antechamber they found a provision of immense felt over-shoes which they were expected to put on for their passage over the waxed marquetry of the halls. These roomy slippers were designed for the accommodation of the native boots; and upon the mixed company of foreigners the effect was in the last degree humiliating. The women's skirts some what hid their disgrace, but the men were openly put to shame, and they shuffled forward with their bodies at a convenient incline like a company of snow-shoers. In the depths of his own abasement March heard a female voice behind him sighing in American accents, "To think I should be polishing up these imperial floors with my republican feet!"

The protest expressed the rebellion which he felt mounting in his own heart as they advanced through the heavily splendid rooms, in the historical order of the family portraits recording the rise of the Prussian sovereigns from Margraves to Emperors. He began to realize here the fact which grew open him more and more that imperial Germany is not the effect of a popular impulse but of a dynastic propensity. There is nothing original in the imperial palace, nothing national; it embodies and proclaims a powerful personal will, and in its adaptations of French art it appeals to no emotion in the German witness nobler than his pride in the German triumph over the French in war. March found it tiresome beyond the tiresome wont of palaces, and he gladly shook off the sense of it with his felt shoes. "Well," he confided to his wife when they were fairly out-of-doors, "if Prussia rose in the strength of silence, as Carlyle wants us to believe, she is taking it out in talk now, and tall talk."

"Yes, isn't she!" Mrs. March assented, and with a passionate desire for excess in a bad thing, which we all know at times, she looked eagerly about her for proofs of that odious militarism of the empire, which ought to have been conspicuous in the imperial capital; but possibly because the troops were nearly all away at the manoeuvres, there were hardly more in the streets than she had sometimes seen in Washington. Again the German officers signally failed to offer her any rudeness when she met them on the side-walks. There were scarcely any of them, and perhaps that might have been the reason why they were not more aggressive; but a whole company of soldiers marching carelessly up to the palace from the Brandenburg gate, without music, or so much style as our own militia often puts on, regarded her with inoffensive eyes so far as they looked at her. She declared that personally there was nothing against the

Prussians; even when in uniform they were kindly and modest-looking men; it was when they got up on pedestals, in bronze or marble, that they, began to bully and to brag.

LXIV.

The dinner which the Marches got at a restaurant on Unter den Linden almost redeemed the avenue from the disgrace it had fallen into with them. It was, the best meal they had yet eaten in Europe, and as to fact and form was a sort of compromise between a French dinner and an English dinner which they did not hesitate to pronounce Prussian. The waiter who served it was a friendly spirit, very sensible of their intelligent appreciation of the dinner; and from him they formed a more respectful opinion of Berlin civilization than they had yet held. After the manner of strangers everywhere they judged the country they were visiting from such of its inhabitants as chance brought them in contact with; and it would really be a good thing for nations that wish to stand well with the world at large to look carefully to the behavior of its cabmen and car conductors, its hotel clerks and waiters, its theatre-ticket sellers and ushers, its policemen and sacristans, its landlords and salesmen; for by these rather than by its society women and its statesmen and divines, is it really judged in the books of travellers; some attention also should be paid to the weather, if the climate is to be praised. In the railroad cafe at Potsdam there was a waiter so rude to the Marches that if they had not been people of great strength of character he would have undone the favorable impression the soldiers and civilians of Berlin generally had been at such pains to produce in them; and throughout the week of early September which they passed there, it rained so much and so bitterly, it was so wet and so cold, that they might have come away thinking it's the worst climate in the world, if it had not been for a man whom they saw in one of the public gardens pouring a heavy stream from his garden hose upon the shrubbery already soaked and shuddering in the cold. But this convinced them that they were suffering from weather and not from the climate, which must really be hot and dry; and they went home to their hotel and sat contentedly down in a temperature of sixty degrees. The weather, was not always so bad; one day it was dry cold instead of wet cold, with rough, rusty clouds breaking a blue sky; another day, up to eleven in the forenoon, it was like Indian summer; then it changed to a harsh November air; and then it relented and ended so mildly, that they hired chairs in the place before the imperial palace for five pfennigs each, and sat watching the life before them. Motherly women-folk were there knitting; two American girls in chairs near them chatted together; some fine equipages, the only ones they saw in Berlin, went by; a dog and a man (the wife who ought to have been in harness was probably sick, and the poor fellow was forced to take her place) passed dragging a cart; some schoolboys who had hung their satchels upon the low railing were playing about the base of the statue of King William III. in the joyous freedom of German childhood.

They seemed the gayer for the brief moments of sunshine, but to the

Americans, who were Southern by virtue of their sky, the brightness had a sense of lurking winter in it, such as they remembered feeling on a sunny day in Quebec. The blue heaven looked sad; but they agreed that it fitly roofed the bit of old feudal Berlin which forms the most ancient wing of the Schloss. This was time-blackened and rude, but at least it did not try to be French, and it overhung the Spree which winds through the city and gives it the greatest charm it has. In fact Berlin, which is otherwise so grandiose without grandeur and so severe without impressiveness, is sympathetic wherever the Spree opens it to the sky. The stream is spanned by many bridges, and bridges cannot well be unpicturesque, especially if they have statues to help them out. The Spree abounds in bridges, and it has a charming habit of slow hay-laden barges; at the landings of the little passenger-steamers which ply upon it there are cafes and summer-gardens, and these even in the inclement air of September suggested a friendly gayety.

The Marches saw it best in the tour of the elevated road in Berlin which they made in an impassioned memory of the elevated road in New York. The brick viaducts which carry this arch the Spree again and again in their course through and around the city, but with never quite such spectacular effects as our spidery tressels, achieve. The stations are pleasant, sometimes with lunch-counters and news-stands, but have not the comic-opera-chalet prettiness of ours, and are not so frequent. The road is not so smooth, the cars not so smooth-running or so swift. On the other hand they are comfortably cushioned, and they are never overcrowded. The line is at times above, at times below the houses, and at times on a level with them, alike in city and in suburbs. The train whirled out of thickly built districts, past the backs of the old houses, into outskirts thinly populated, with new houses springing up without order or continuity among the meadows and vegetable-gardens, and along the ready-made, elm-planted avenues, where wooden fences divided the vacant lots. Everywhere the city was growing out over the country, in blocks and detached edifices of limestone, sandstone, red and yellow brick, larger or smaller, of no more uniformity than our suburban dwellings, but never of their ugliness or lawless offensiveness.

In an effort for the intimate life of the country March went two successive mornings for his breakfast to the Cafe Bauer, which has some admirable wall-printings, and is the chief cafe on Unter den Linden; but on both days there were more people in the paintings than out of them. The second morning the waiter who took his order recognized him and asked, "Wie gestern?" and from this he argued an affectionate constancy in the Berliners, and a hospitable observance of the tastes of strangers. At his bankers, on the other hand, the cashier scrutinized his signature and remarked that it did not look like the signature in his letter of credit, and then he inferred a suspicious mind in the moneyed classes of Prussia; as he had not been treated with such unkind doubt by Hebrew bankers anywhere, he made a mental note that the Jews were politer than the Christians in Germany. In starting for Potsdam he asked a traeger where the Potsdam train was and the man said, "Dat train dare," and in coming back he helped a fat old lady out of the car, and she thanked him in English. From these incidents, both occurring the same day in the same place, the inference of a widespread knowledge of our language in

all classes of the population was inevitable.

In this obvious and easy manner he studied contemporary civilization in the capital. He even carried his researches farther, and went one rainy afternoon to an exhibition of modern pictures in a pavilion of the Thiergarten, where from the small attendance he inferred an indifference to the arts which he would not ascribe to the weather. One evening at a summer theatre where they gave the pantomime of the 'Puppenfee' and the operetta of 'Hansel and Gretel', he observed that the greater part of the audience was composed of nice plain young girls and children, and he noted that there was no sort of evening dress; from the large number of Americans present he imagined a numerous colony in Berlin, where they must have an instinctive sense of their co-nationality, since one of them in the stress of getting his hat and overcoat when they all came out, confidently addressed him in English. But he took stock of his impressions with his wife, and they seemed to him so few, after all, that he could not resist a painful sense of isolation in the midst of the environment.

They made a Sunday excursion to the Zoological Gardens in the Thiergarten, with a large crowd of the lower classes, but though they had a great deal of trouble in getting there by the various kinds of horsecars and electric cars, they did not feel that they had got near to the popular life. They endeavored for some sense of Berlin society by driving home in a drosky, and on the way they passed rows of beautiful houses, in French and Italian taste, fronting the deep, damp green park from the Thiergartenstrasse, in which they were confident cultivated and delightful people lived; but they remained to the last with nothing but their unsupported conjecture.

LXV.

Their excursion to Potsdam was the cream of their sojourn in Berlin. They chose for it the first fair morning, and they ran out over the flat sandy plains surrounding the capital, and among the low hills surrounding Potsdam before it actually began to rain.

They wished immediately to see Sans Souci for the great Frederick's sake, and they drove through a lively shower to the palace, where they waited with a horde of twenty-five other tourists in a gusty colonnade before they were led through Voltaire's room and Frederick's death chamber.

The French philosopher comes before the Prussian prince at Sans Souci even in the palatial villa which expresses the wilful caprice of the great Frederick as few edifices have embodied the whims or tastes of their owners. The whole affair is eighteenth-century French, as the Germans conceived it. The gardened terrace from which the low, one-story building, thickly crusted with baroque sculptures, looks down into a many-colored parterre, was luxuriantly French, and sentimentally French the colonnaded front opening to a perspective of artificial ruins, with

broken pillars lifting a conscious fragment of architrave against the sky. Within, all again was French in the design, the decoration and the furnishing. At that time there, was in fact no other taste, and Frederick, who despised and disused his native tongue, was resolved upon French taste even in his intimate companionship. The droll story of his coquetry with the terrible free spirit which he got from France to be his guest is vividly reanimated at Sans Souci, where one breathes the very air in which the strangely assorted companions lived, and in which they parted so soon to pursue each other with brutal annoyance on one side, and with merciless mockery on the other. Voltaire was long ago revenged upon his host for all the indignities he suffered from him in their comedy; he left deeply graven upon Frederick's fame the trace of those lacerating talons which he could strike to the quick; and it is the singular effect of this scene of their brief friendship that one feels there the pre-eminence of the wit in whatever was most important to mankind.

The rain had lifted a little and the sun shone out on the bloom of the lovely parterre where the Marches profited by a smiling moment to wander among the statues and the roses heavy with the shower. Then they walked back to their carriage and drove to the New Palace, which expresses in differing architectural terms the same subjection to an alien ideal of beauty. It is thronged without by delightfully preposterous rococco statues, and within it is rich in all those curiosities and memorials of royalty with which palaces so well know how to fatigue the flesh and spirit of their visitors.

The Marches escaped from it all with sighs and groans of relief, and before they drove off to see the great fountain of the Orangeries, they dedicated a moment of pathos to the Temple of Friendship which Frederick built in memory of unhappy Wilhelmina of Beyreuth, the sister he loved in the common sorrow of their wretched home, and neglected when he came to his kingdom. It is beautiful in its rococco way, swept up to on its terrace by most noble staircases, and swaggered over by baroque allegories of all sorts: Everywhere the statues outnumbered the visitors, who may have been kept away by the rain; the statues naturally did not mind it.

Sometime in the midst of their sight-seeing the Marches had dinner in a mildewed restaurant, where a compatriotic accent caught their ear in a voice saying to the waiter, "We are in a hurry." They looked round and saw that it proceeded from the pretty nose of a young American girl, who sat with a party of young American girls at a neighboring table. Then they perceived that all the people in that restaurant were Americans, mostly young girls, who all looked as if they were in a hurry. But neither their beauty nor their impatience had the least effect with the waiter, who prolonged the dinner at his pleasure, and alarmed the Marches with the misgiving that they should not have time for the final palace on their list.

This was the palace where the father of Frederick, the mad old Frederick William, brought up his children with that severity which Solomon urged but probably did not practise. It is a vast place, but they had time for

it all, though the custodian made the most of them as the latest comers of the day, and led them through it with a prolixity as great as their waiter's. He was a most friendly custodian, and when he found that they had some little notion of what they wanted to see, he mixed zeal with his patronage, and in a manner made them his honored guests. They saw everything but the doorway where the faithful royal father used to lie in wait for his children and beat them, princes and princesses alike, with his knobby cane as they came through. They might have seen this doorway without knowing it; but from the window overlooking the parade-ground where his family watched the manoeuvres of his gigantic grenadiers, they made sure of just such puddles as Frederick William forced his family to sit with their feet in, while they dined alfresco on pork and cabbage; and they visited the room of the Smoking Parliament where he ruled his convives with a rod of iron, and made them the victims of his bad jokes. The measuring-board against which he took the stature of his tall grenadiers is there, and one room is devoted to those masterpieces which he used to paint in the agonies of gout. His chef d'oeuvre contains a figure with two left feet, and there seemed no reason why it might not have had three. In another room is a small statue of Carlyle, who did so much to rehabilitate the house which the daughter of it, Wilhelmina, did so much to demolish in the regard of men.

The palace is now mostly kept for guests, and there is a chamber where Napoleon slept, which is not likely to be occupied soon by any other self-invited guest of his nation. It is perhaps to keep the princes of Europe humble that hardly a palace on the Continent is without the chamber of this adventurer, who, till he stooped to be like them, was easily their master. Another democracy had here recorded its invasion in the American stoves which the custodian pointed out in the corridor when Mrs. March, with as little delay as possible, had proclaimed their country. The custodian professed an added respect for them from the fact, and if he did not feel it, no doubt he merited the drink money which they lavished on him at parting.

Their driver also was a congenial spirit, and when he let them out of his carriage at the station, he excused the rainy day to them. He was a merry fellow beyond the wont of his nation, and he-laughed at the bad weather, as if it had been a good joke on them.

His gayety, and the red sunset light, which shone on the stems of the pines on the way back to Berlin, contributed to the content in which they reviewed their visit to Potsdam. They agreed that the place was perfectly charming, and that it was incomparably expressive of kingly will and pride. These had done there on the grand scale what all the German princes and princelings had tried to do in imitation and emulation of French splendor. In Potsdam the grandeur, was not a historical growth as at Versailles, but was the effect of family genius, in which there was often the curious fascination of insanity.

They felt this strongly again amidst the futile monuments of the Hohenzollern Museum, in Berlin, where all the portraits, effigies, personal belongings and memorials of that gifted, eccentric race are gathered and historically disposed. The princes of the mighty line who

stand out from the rest are Frederick the Great and his infuriate father; and in the waxen likeness of the son, a small thin figure, terribly spry, and a face pitilessly alert, appears something of the madness which showed in the life of the sire.

They went through many rooms in which the memorials of the kings and queens, the emperors and empresses were carefully ordered, and felt no kindness except before the relics relating to the Emperor Frederick and his mother. In the presence of the greatest of the dynasty they experienced a kind of terror which March expressed, when they were safely away, in the confession of his joy that those people were dead.

LXVI.

The rough weather which made Berlin almost uninhabitable to Mrs. March had such an effect with General Triscoe at Weimar that under the orders of an English-speaking doctor he retreated from it altogether and went to bed. Here he escaped the bronchitis which had attacked him, and his convalescence left him so little to complain of that he could not always keep his temper. In the absence of actual offence, either from his daughter or from Burnamy, his sense of injury took a retroactive form; it centred first in Stoller and the twins; then it diverged toward Rose Adding, his mother and Kenby, and finally involved the Marches in the same measure of inculpation; for they had each and all had part, directly or indirectly, in the chances that brought on his cold.

He owed to Burnamy the comfort of the best room in the hotel, and he was constantly dependent upon his kindness; but he made it evident that he did not over-value Burnamy's sacrifice and devotion, and that it was not an unmixed pleasure, however great a convenience, to have him about. In giving up his room, Burnamy had proposed going out of the hotel altogether; but General Triscoe heard of this with almost as great vexation as he had accepted the room. He besought him not to go, but so ungraciously that his daughter was ashamed, and tried to atone for his manner by the kindness of her own.

Perhaps General Triscoe would not have been without excuse if he were not eager to have her share with destitute merit the fortune which she had hitherto shared only with him. He was old, and certain luxuries had become habits if not necessities with him. Of course he did not say this to himself; and still less did he say it to her. But he let her see that he did not enjoy the chance which had thrown them again in such close relations with Burnamy, and he did not hide his belief that the Marches were somehow to blame for it. This made it impossible for her to write at once to Mrs. March as she had promised; but she was determined that it should not make her unjust to Burnamy. She would not avoid him; she would not let anything that had happened keep her from showing that she felt his kindness and was glad of his help.

Of course they knew no one else in Weimar, and his presence merely as a fellow-countryman would have been precious. He got them a doctor, against General Triscoe's will; he went for his medicines; he lent him books and papers; he sat with him and tried to amuse him. But with the girl he attempted no return to the situation at Carlsbad; there is nothing like the delicate pride of a young man who resolves to forego unfair advantage in love.

The day after their arrival, when her father was making up for the sleep he had lost by night, she found herself alone in the little reading-room of the hotel with Burnamy for the first time, and she said: "I suppose you must have been all over Weimar by this time."

"Well, I've been here, off and on, almost a month. It's an interesting place. There's a good deal of the old literary quality left."

"And you enjoy that! I saw"--she added this with a little unnecessary flush--"your poem in the paper you lent papa."

"I suppose I ought to have kept that back. But I couldn't." He laughed, and she said:

"You must find a great deal of inspiration in such a literary place."

"It isn't lying about loose, exactly." Even in the serious and perplexing situation in which he found himself he could not help being amused with her unliterary notions of literature, her conventional and commonplace conceptions of it. They had their value with him as those of a more fashionable world than his own, which he believed was somehow a greater world. At the same time he believed that she was now interposing them between the present and the past, and forbidding with them any return to the mood of their last meeting in Carlsbad. He looked at her ladylike composure and unconsciousness, and wondered if she could be the same person and the same person as they who lost themselves in the crowd that night and heard and said words palpitant with fate. Perhaps there had been no such words; perhaps it was all a hallucination. He must leave her to recognize that it was reality; till she did so, he felt bitterly that there was nothing for him but submission and patience; if she never did so, there was nothing for him but acquiescence.

In this talk and in the talks they had afterwards she seemed willing enough to speak of what had happened since: of coming on to Wurzburg with the Addings and of finding the Marches there; of Rose's collapse, and of his mother's flight seaward with him in the care of Kenby, who was so fortunately going to Holland, too. He on his side told her of going to Wurzburg for the manoeuvres, and they agreed that it was very strange they had not met.

She did not try to keep their relations from taking the domestic character which was inevitable, and it seemed to him that this in itself was significant of a determination on her part that was fatal to his hopes. With a lover's indefinite power of blinding himself to what is before his eyes, he believed that if she had been more diffident of him,

more uneasy in his presence, he should have had more courage; but for her to breakfast unafraid with him, to meet him at lunch and dinner in the little dining-room where they were often the only guests, and always the only English-speaking guests, was nothing less than prohibitive.

In the hotel service there was one of those men who are porters in this world, but will be angels in the next, unless the perfect goodness of their looks, the constant kindness of their acts, belies them. The Marches had known and loved the man in their brief stay, and he had been the fast friend of Burnamy from the moment they first saw each other at the station. He had tenderly taken possession of General Triscoe on his arrival, and had constituted himself the nurse and keeper of the irascible invalid, in the intervals of going to the trains, with a zeal that often relieved his daughter and Burnamy. The general in fact preferred him to either, and a tacit custom grew up by which when August knocked at his door, and offered himself in his few words of serviceable English, that one of them who happened to be sitting with the general gave way, and left him in charge. The retiring watcher was then apt to encounter the other watcher on the stairs, or in the reading-room, or in the tiny, white-pebbled door-yard at a little table in the shade of the wooden-tubbed evergreens. From the habit of doing this they one day suddenly formed the habit of going across the street to that gardened hollow before and below the Grand-Ducal Museum. There was here a bench in the shelter of some late-flowering bush which the few other frequenters of the place soon recognized as belonging to the young strangers, so that they would silently rise and leave it to them when they saw them coming. Apparently they yielded not only to their right, but to a certain authority which resides in lovers, and which all other men, and especially all other women, like to acknowledge and respect.

In the absence of any civic documents bearing upon the affair it is difficult to establish the fact that this was the character in which Agatha and Burnamy were commonly regarded by the inhabitants of Weimar. But whatever their own notion of their relation was, if it was not that of a Brant and a Brautigam, the people of Weimar would have been puzzled to say what it was. It was known that the gracious young lady's father, who would naturally have accompanied them, was sick, and in the fact that they were Americans much extenuation was found for whatever was phenomenal in their unencumbered enjoyment of each other's society.

If their free American association was indistinguishably like the peasant informality which General Triscoe despised in the relations of Kenby and Mrs. Adding, it is to be said in his excuse that he could not be fully cognizant of it, in the circumstances, and so could do nothing to prevent it. His pessimism extended to his health; from the first he believed himself worse than the doctor thought him, and he would have had some other physician if he had not found consolation in their difference of opinion and the consequent contempt which he was enabled to cherish for the doctor in view of the man's complete ignorance of the case. In proof of his own better understanding of it, he remained in bed some time after the doctor said he might get up.

Nearly ten days had passed before he left his room, and it was not till

then that he clearly saw how far affairs had gone with his daughter and Burnamy, though even then his observance seemed to have anticipated theirs. He found them in a quiet acceptance of the fortune which had brought them together, so contented that they appeared to ask nothing more of it. The divine patience and confidence of their youth might sometimes have had almost the effect of indifference to a witness who had seen its evolution from the moods of the first few days of their reunion in Weimar. To General Triscoe, however, it looked like an understanding which had been made without reference to his wishes, and had not been directly brought to his knowledge.

"Agatha," he said, after due note of a gay contest between her and Burnamy over the pleasure and privilege of ordering his supper sent to his room when he had gone back to it from his first afternoon in the open air, "how long is that young man going to stay in Weimar?"

"Why, I don't know!" she answered, startled from her work of beating the sofa pillows into shape, and pausing with one of them in her hand. "I never asked him." She looked down candidly into his face where he sat in an easy-chair waiting for her arrangement of the sofa. "What makes you ask?"

He answered with another question. "Does he know that we had thought of staying here?"

"Why, we've always talked of that, haven't we? Yes, he knows it. Didn't you want him to know it, papa? You ought to have begun on the ship, then. Of course I've asked him what sort of place it was. I'm sorry if you didn't want me to."

"Have I said that? It's perfectly easy to push on to Paris. Unless--"

"Unless what?" Agatha dropped the pillow, and listened respectfully. But in spite of her filial attitude she could not keep her youth and strength and courage from quelling the forces of the elderly man.

He said querulously, "I don't see why you take that tone with me. You certainly know what I mean. But if you don't care to deal openly with me, I won't ask you." He dropped his eyes from her face, and at the same time a deep blush began to tinge it, growing up from her neck to her forehead. "You must know--you're not a child," he continued, still with averted eyes, "that this sort of thing can't go on... It must be something else, or it mustn't be anything at all. I don't ask you for your confidence, and you know that I've never sought to control you."

This was not the least true, but Agatha answered, either absently or provisionally, "No."

"And I don't seek to do so now. If you have nothing that you wish to tell me--"

He waited, and after what seemed a long time, she asked as if she had not heard him, "Will you lie down a little before your supper, papa?"

"I will lie down when I feel like it," he answered. "Send August with the supper; he can look after me."

His resentful tone, even more than his words, dismissed her, but she left him without apparent grievance, saying quietly, "I will send August."

LXVII.

Agatha did not come down to supper with Burnamy. She asked August, when she gave him her father's order, to have a cup of tea sent to her room, where, when it came, she remained thinking so long that it was rather tepid by the time she drank it.

Then she went to her window, and looked out, first above and next below. Above, the moon was hanging over the garden hollow before the Museum with the airy lightness of an American moon. Below was Burnamy behind the tubbed evergreens, sitting tilted in his chair against the house wall, with the spark of his cigar fainting and flashing like an American firefly. Agatha went down to the door, after a little delay, and seemed surprised to find him there; at least she said, "Oh!" in a tone of surprise.

Burnamy stood up, and answered, "Nice night."

"Beautiful!" she breathed. "I didn't suppose the sky in Germany could ever be so clear."

"It seems to be doing its best."

"The flowers over there look like ghosts in the light," she said dreamily.

"They're not. Don't you want to get your hat and wrap, and go over and expose the fraud?"

"Oh," she answered, as if it were merely a question of the hat and wrap, "I have them."

They sauntered through the garden walks for a while, long enough to have ascertained that there was not a veridical phantom among the flowers, if they had been looking, and then when they came to their accustomed seat, they sat down, and she said, "I don't know that I've seen the moon so clear since we left Carlsbad." At the last word his heart gave a jump that seemed to lodge it in his throat and kept him from speaking, so that she could resume without interruption, "I've got something of yours, that you left at the Posthof. The girl that broke the dishes found it, and Lili gave it to Mrs. March for you." This did not account for Agatha's having the thing, whatever it was; but when she took a handkerchief from her belt, and put out her hand with it toward him, he seemed to find that

her having it had necessarily followed. He tried to take it from her, but his own hand trembled so that it clung to hers, and he gasped, "Can't you say now, what you wouldn't say then?"

The logical sequence was no more obvious than be fore; but she apparently felt it in her turn as he had felt it in his. She whispered back, "Yes," and then she could not get out anything more till she entreated in a half-stifled voice, "Oh, don't!"

"No, no!" he panted. "I won't--I oughtn't to have done it--I beg your pardon--I oughtn't to have spoken,--even--I--"

She returned in a far less breathless and tremulous fashion, but still between laughing and crying, "I meant to make you. And now, if you're ever sorry, or I'm ever too topping about anything, you can be perfectly free to say that you'd never have spoken if you hadn't seen that I wanted you to."

"But I didn't see any such thing," he protested. "I spoke because I couldn't help it any longer."

She laughed triumphantly. "Of course you think so! And that shows that you are only a man after all; in spite of your finessing. But I am going to have the credit of it. I knew that you were holding back because you were too proud, or thought you hadn't the right, or something. Weren't you?" She startled him with the sudden vehemence of her challenge: "If you pretend, that you weren't I shall never forgive you!"

"But I was! Of course I was. I was afraid--"

"Isn't that what I said?" She triumphed over him with another laugh, and cowered a little closer to him, if that could be.

They were standing, without knowing how they had got to their feet; and now without any purpose of the kind, they began to stroll again among the garden paths, and to ask and to answer questions, which touched every point of their common history, and yet left it a mine of inexhaustible knowledge for all future time. Out of the sweet and dear delight of this encyclopedian reserve two or three facts appeared with a present distinctness. One of these was that Burnamy had regarded her refusal to be definite at Carlsbad as definite refusal, and had meant never to see her again, and certainly never to speak again of love to her. Another point was that she had not resented his coming back that last night, but had been proud and happy in it as proof of his love, and had always meant somehow to let him know that she was torched by his trusting her enough to come back while he was still under that cloud with Mr. Stoller. With further logic, purely of the heart, she acquitted him altogether of wrong in that affair, and alleged in proof, what Mr. Stoller had said of it to Mr. March. Burnamy owned that he knew what Stoller had said, but even in his present condition he could not accept fully her reading of that obscure passage of his life. He preferred to put the question by, and perhaps neither of them cared anything about it except as it related to the fact that they were now each other's forever.

They agreed that they must write to Mr. and Mrs. March at once; or at least, Agatha said, as soon as she had spoken to her father. At her mention of her father she was aware of a doubt, a fear, in Burnamy which expressed itself by scarcely more than a spiritual consciousness from his arm to the hands which she had clasped within it. "He has always appreciated you," she said courageously, "and I know he will see it in the right light."

She probably meant no more than to affirm her faith in her own ability finally to bring her father to a just mind concerning it; but Burnamy accepted her assurance with buoyant hopefulness, and said he would see General Triscoe the first thing in the morning.

"No, I will see him," she said, "I wish to see him first; he will expect it of me. We had better go in, now," she added, but neither made any motion for the present to do so. On the contrary, they walked in the other direction, and it was an hour after Agatha declared their duty in the matter before they tried to fulfil it.

Then, indeed, after they returned to the hotel, she lost no time in going to her father beyond that which must be given to a long hand-pressure under the fresco of the five poets on the stairs landing, where her ways and Burnamy's parted. She went into her own room, and softly opened the door into her father's and listened.

"Well?" he said in a sort of challenging voice.

"Have you been asleep?" she asked.

"I've just blown out my light. What has kept you?"

She did not reply categorically. Standing there in the sheltering dark, she said, "Papa, I wasn't very candid with you, this afternoon. I am engaged to Mr. Burnamy."

"Light the candle," said her father. "Or no," he added before she could do so. "Is it quite settled?"

"Quite," she answered in a voice that admitted of no doubt. "That is, as far as it can be, without you."

"Don't be a hypocrite, Agatha," said the general. "And let me try to get to sleep. You know I don't like it, and you know I can't help it."

"Yes," the girl assented.

"Then go to bed," said the general concisely.

Agatha did not obey her father. She thought she ought to kiss him, but she decided that she had better postpone this; so she merely gave him a tender goodnight, to which he made no response, and shut herself into her own room, where she remained sitting and staring out into the moonlight,

with a smile that never left her lips.

When the moon sank below the horizon, the sky was pale with the coming day, but before it was fairly dawn, she saw something white, not much greater than some moths, moving before her window. She pulled the valves open and found it a bit of paper attached to a thread dangling from above. She broke it loose and in the morning twilight she read the great central truth of the universe:

"I love you. L. J. B."

She wrote under the tremendous inspiration:

"So do I. Don't be silly. A. T."

She fastened the paper to the thread again, and gave it a little twitch. She waited for the low note of laughter which did not fail to flutter down from above; then she threw herself upon the bed, and fell asleep.

It was not so late as she thought when she woke, and it seemed, at breakfast, that Burnamy had been up still earlier. Of the three involved in the anxiety of the night before General Triscoe was still respited from it by sleep, but he woke much more haggard than either of the young people. They, in fact, were not at all haggard; the worst was over, if bringing their engagement to his knowledge was the worst; the formality of asking his consent which Burnamy still had to go through was unpleasant, but after all it was a formality. Agatha told him everything that had passed between herself and her father, and if it had not that cordiality on his part which they could have wished it was certainly not hopelessly discouraging.

They agreed at breakfast that Burnamy had better have it over as quickly as possible, and he waited only till August came down with the general's tray before going up to his room. The young fellow did not feel more at his ease than the elder meant he should in taking the chair to which the general waved him from where he lay in bed; and there was no talk wasted upon the weather between them.

"I suppose I know what you have come for, Mr. Burnamy," said General Triscoe in a tone which was rather judicial than otherwise, "and I suppose you know why you have come." The words certainly opened the way for Burnamy, but he hesitated so long to take it that the general had abundant time to add, "I don't pretend that this event is unexpected, but I should like to know what reason you have for thinking I should wish you to marry my daughter. I take it for granted that you are attached to each other, and we won't waste time on that point. Not to beat about the bush, on the next point, let me ask at once what your means of supporting her are. How much did you earn on that newspaper in Chicago?"

"Fifteen hundred dollars," Burnamy answered, promptly enough.

"Did you earn anything more, say within the last year?"

"I got three hundred dollars advance copyright for a book I sold to a publisher." The glory had not yet faded from the fact in Burnamy's mind.

"Eighteen hundred. What did you get for your poem in March's book?"

"That's a very trifling matter: fifteen dollars."

"And your salary as private secretary to that man Stoller?"

"Thirty dollars a week, and my expenses. But I wouldn't take that, General Triscoe," said Burnamy.

General Triscoe, from his 'lit de justice', passed this point in silence.

"Have you any one dependent on you?"

"My mother; I take care of my mother," answered Burnamy, proudly.

"Since you have broken with Stoller, what are your prospects?"

"I have none."

"Then you don't expect to support my daughter; you expect to live upon her means."

"I expect to do nothing of the kind!" cried Burnamy. "I should be ashamed--I should feel disgraced--I should--I don't ask you--I don't ask her till I have the means to support her--"

"If you were very fortunate," continued the general, unmoved by the young fellow's pain, and unperturbed by the fact that he had himself lived upon his wife's means as long as she lived, and then upon his daughter's, "if you went back to Stoller--"

"I wouldn't go back to him. I don't say he's knowingly a rascal, but he's ignorantly a rascal, and he proposed a rascally thing to me. I behaved badly to him, and I'd give anything to undo the wrong I let him do himself; but I'll never go back to him."

"If you went back, on your old salary," the general persisted pitilessly, "you would be very fortunate if you brought your earnings up to twenty-five hundred a year."

"Yes--"

"And how far do you think that would go in supporting my daughter on the scale she is used to? I don't speak of your mother, who has the first claim upon you."

Burnamy sat dumb; and his head which he had lifted indignantly when the question was of Stoller, began to sink.

The general went on. "You ask me to give you my daughter when you haven't money enough to keep her in gowns; you ask me to give her to a

stranger--"

"Not quite a stranger, General Triscoe," Burnamy protested. "You have known me for three months at least, and any one who knows me in Chicago will tell you--"

"A stranger, and worse than a stranger," the general continued, so pleased with the logical perfection of his position that he almost smiled, and certainly softened toward Burnamy. "It isn't a question of liking you, Mr. Burnamy, but of knowing you; my daughter likes you; so do the Marches; so does everybody who has met you. I like you myself. You've done me personally a thousand kindnesses. But I know very little of you, in spite of our three months' acquaintance; and that little is-- But you shall judge for yourself! You were in the confidential employ of a man who trusted you, and you let him betray himself."

"I did. I don't excuse it. The thought of it burns like fire. But it wasn't done maliciously; it wasn't done falsely; it was done inconsiderately; and when it was done, it seemed irrevocable. But it wasn't; I could have prevented, I could have stooped the mischief; and I didn't! I can never outlive that."

"I know," said the general relentlessly, "that you have never attempted any defence. That has been to your credit with me. It inclined me to overlook your unwarranted course in writing to my daughter, when you told her you would never see her again. What did you expect me to think, after that, of your coming back to see her? Or didn't you expect me to know it?"

"I expected you to know it; I knew she would tell you. But I don't excuse that, either. It was acting a lie to come back. All I can say is that I had to see her again for one last time."

"And to make sure that it was to be the last time, you offered yourself to her."

"I couldn't help doing that."

"I don't say you could. I don't judge the facts at all. I leave them altogether to you; and you shall say what a man in my position ought to say to such a man as you have shown yourself."

"No, I will say." The door into the adjoining room was flung open, and Agatha flashed in from it.

Her father looked coldly at her impassioned face. "Have you been listening?" he asked.

"I have been hearing--"

"Oh!" As nearly as a man could, in bed, General Triscoe shrugged.

"I suppose I had, a right to be in my own room. I couldn't help hearing;

and I was perfectly astonished at you, papa, the cruel way you went on, after all you've said about Mr. Stoller, and his getting no more than he deserved."

"That doesn't justify me," Burnamy began, but she cut him short almost as severely as she--had dealt with her father.

"Yes, it does! It justifies you perfectly! And his wanting you to falsify the whole thing afterwards, more than justifies you."

Neither of the men attempted anything in reply to her casuistry; they both looked equally posed by it, for different reasons; and Agatha went on as vehemently as before, addressing herself now to one and now to the other.

"And besides, if it didn't justify you, what you have done yourself would; and your never denying it, or trying to excuse it, makes it the same as if you hadn't done it, as far as you are concerned; and that is all I care for." Burnamy started, as if with the sense of having heard something like this before, and with surprise at hearing it now; and she flushed a little as she added tremulously, "And I should never, never blame you for it, after that; it's only trying to wriggle out of things which I despise, and you've never done that. And he simply had to come back," she turned to her father, "and tell me himself just how it was. And you said yourself, papa--or the same as said--that he had no right to suppose I was interested in his affairs unless he--unless--And I should never have forgiven him, if he hadn't told me then that he that he had come back because he--felt the way he did. I consider that that exonerated him for breaking his word, completely. If he hadn't broken his word I should have thought he had acted very cruelly and--and strangely. And ever since then, he has behaved so nobly, so honorably, so delicately, that I don't believe he would ever have said anything again--if I hadn't fairly forced him. Yes! Yes, I did!" she cried at a movement of remonstrance from Burnamy. "And I shall always be proud of you for it." Her father stared steadfastly at her, and he only lifted his eyebrows, for change of expression, when she went over to where Burnamy stood, and put her hand in his with a certain childlike impetuosity. "And as for the rest," she declared, "everything I have is his; just as everything of his would be mine if I had nothing. Or if he wishes to take me without anything, then he can have me so, and I sha'n't be afraid but we can get along somehow." She added, "I have managed without a maid, ever since I left home, and poverty has no terrors for me!"

LXVIII.

General Triscoe submitted to defeat with the patience which soldiers learn. He did not submit amiably; that would have been out of character, and perhaps out of reason; but Burnamy and Agatha were both so amiable that they supplied good-humor for all. They flaunted their rapture in

her father's face as little as they could, but he may have found their serene satisfaction, their settled confidence in their fate, as hard to bear as a more boisterous happiness would have been.

It was agreed among them all that they were to return soon to America, and Burnamy was to find some sort of literary or journalistic employment in New York. She was much surer than he that this could be done with perfect ease; but they were of an equal mind that General Triscoe was not to be disturbed in any of his habits, or vexed in the tenor of his living; and until Burnamy was at least self-supporting there must be no talk of their being married.

The talk of their being engaged was quite enough for the time. It included complete and minute auto-biographies on both sides, reciprocal analyses of character, a scientifically exhaustive comparison of tastes, ideas and opinions; a profound study of their respective chins, noses, eyes, hands, heights, complexions, moles and freckles, with some account of their several friends.

In this occupation, which was profitably varied by the confession of what they had each thought and felt and dreamt concerning the other at every instant since they met, they passed rapidly the days which the persistent anxiety of General Triscoe interposed before the date of their leaving Weimar for Paris, where it was arranged that they should spend a month before sailing for New York. Burnamy had a notion, which Agatha approved, of trying for something there on the New York-Paris Chronicle; and if he got it they might not go home at once. His gains from that paper had eked out his copyright from his book, and had almost paid his expenses in getting the material which he had contributed to it. They were not so great, however, but that his gold reserve was reduced to less than a hundred dollars, counting the silver coinages which had remained to him in crossing and recrossing frontiers. He was at times dimly conscious of his finances, but he buoyantly disregarded the facts, as incompatible with his status as Agatha's betrothed, if not unworthy of his character as a lover in the abstract.

The afternoon before they were to leave Weimar, they spent mostly in the garden before the Grand-Ducal Museum, in a conference so important that when it came on to rain, at one moment, they put up Burnamy's umbrella, and continued to sit under it rather than interrupt the proceedings even to let Agatha go back to the hotel and look after her father's packing. Her own had been finished before dinner, so as to leave her the whole afternoon for their conference, and to allow her father to remain in undisturbed possession of his room as long as possible.

What chiefly remained to be put into the general's trunk were his coats and trousers, hanging in the closet, and August took these down, and carefully folded and packed them. Then, to make sure that nothing had been forgotten, Agatha put a chair into the closet when she came in, and stood on it to examine the shelf which stretched above the hooks.

There seemed at first to be nothing on it, and then there seemed to be something in the further corner, which when it was tiptoed for, proved to

be a bouquet of flowers, not so faded as to seem very old; the blue satin ribbon which they were tied up with, and which hung down half a yard, was of entire freshness except for the dust of the shelf where it had lain.

Agatha backed out into the room with her find in her hand, and examined it near to, and then at arm's length. August stood by with a pair of the general's trousers lying across his outstretched hands, and as Agatha absently looked round at him, she caught a light of intelligence in his eyes which changed her whole psychological relation to the withered bouquet. Till then it had been a lifeless, meaningless bunch of flowers, which some one, for no motive, had tossed up on that dusty shelf in the closet. At August's smile it became something else. Still she asked lightly enough, "Was ist loss, August?"

His smile deepened and broadened. "Für die Andere," he explained.

Agatha demanded in English, "What do you mean by feardy ondery?"

"Oddaw lehdy."

"Other lady?" August nodded, rejoicing in big success, and Agatha closed the door into her own room, where the general had been put for the time so as to be spared the annoyance of the packing; then she sat down with her hands in her lap, and the bouquet in her hands. "Now, August," she said very calmly, "I want you to tell me--ich wunsche Sie zu mir sagen--what other lady--wass andere Dame--these flowers belonged to--diese Blumen gehorte zu. Verstehen Sie?"

August nodded brightly, and with German carefully adjusted to Agatha's capacity, and with now and then a word or phrase of English, he conveyed that before she and her Herr Father had appeared, there had been in Weimar another American Fraulein with her Frau Mother; they had not indeed staid in that hotel, but had several times supped there with the young Herr Bornahme, who was occupying that room before her Herr Father. The young Herr had been much about with these American Damen, driving and walking with them, and sometimes dining or supping with them at their hotel, The Elephant. August had sometimes carried notes to them from the young Herr, and he had gone for the bouquet which the gracious Fraulein was holding, on the morning of the day that the American Damen left by the train for Hanover.

August was much helped and encouraged throughout by the friendly intelligence of the gracious Fraulein, who smiled radiantly in clearing up one dim point after another, and who now and then supplied the English analogues which he sought in his effort to render his German more luminous.

At the end she returned to the work of packing, in which she directed him, and sometimes assisted him with her own hands, having put the bouquet on the mantel to leave herself free. She took it up again and carried it into her own room, when she went with August to summon her father back to his. She bade August say to the young Herr, if he saw him, that she was going to sup with her father, and August gave her

message to Burnamy, whom he met on the stairs coming down as he was going up with their tray.

Agatha usually supped with her father, but that evening Burnamy was less able than usual to bear her absence in the hotel dining-room, and he went up to a cafe in the town for his supper. He did not stay long, and when he returned his heart gave a joyful lift at sight of Agatha looking out from her balcony, as if she were looking for him. He made her a gay flourishing bow, lifting his hat high, and she came down to meet him at the hotel door. She had her hat on and jacket over one arm and she joined him at once for the farewell walk he proposed in what they had agreed to call their garden.

She moved a little ahead of him, and when they reached the place where they always sat, she shifted her jacket to the other arm and uncovered the hand in which she had been carrying the withered bouquet. "Here is something I found in your closet, when I was getting papa's things out."

"Why, what is it?" he asked innocently, as he took it from her.

"A bouquet, apparently," she answered, as he drew the long ribbons through his fingers, and looked at the flowers curiously, with his head aslant.

"Where did you get it?"

"On the shelf."

It seemed a long time before Burnamy said with a long sigh, as of final recollection, "Oh, yes," and then he said nothing; and they did not sit down, but stood looking at each other.

"Was it something you got for me, and forgot to give me?" she asked in a voice which would not have misled a woman, but which did its work with the young man.

He laughed and said, "Well, hardly! The general has been in the room ever since you came."

"Oh, yes. Then perhaps somebody left it there before you had the room?"

Burnamy was silent again, but at last he said, "No, I flung it up there I had forgotten all about it."

"And you wish me to forget about it, too?" Agatha asked in a gayety of tone that still deceived him.

"It would only be fair. You made me," he rejoined, and there was something so charming in his words and way, that she would have been glad to do it.

But she governed herself against the temptation and said, "Women are not good at forgetting, at least till they know what."

"Oh, I'll tell you, if you want to know," he said with a laugh, and at the words she--sank provisionally in their accustomed seat. He sat down beside her, but not so near as usual, and he waited so long before he began that it seemed as if he had forgotten again. "Why, it's nothing. Miss Etkins and her mother were here before you came, and this is a bouquet that I meant to give her at the train when she left. But I decided I wouldn't, and I threw it onto the shelf in the closet."

"May I ask why you thought of taking a bouquet to her at the train?"

"Well, she and her mother--I had been with them a good deal, and I thought it would be civil."

"And why did you decide not to be civil?"

"I didn't want it to look like more than civility."

"Were they here long?"

"About a week. They left just after the Marches came."

Agatha seemed not to heed the answer she had exacted. She sat reclined in the corner of the seat, with her head drooping. After an interval which was long to Burnamy she began to pull at a ring on the third finger of her left hand, absently, as if she did not know what she was doing; but when she had got it off she held it towards Burnamy and said quietly, "I think you had better have this again," and then she rose and moved slowly and weakly away.

He had taken the ring mechanically from her, and he stood a moment bewildered; then he pressed after her.

"Agatha, do you--you don't mean--"

"Yes," she said, without looking round at his face, which she knew was close to her shoulder. "It's over. It isn't what you've done. It's what you are. I believed in you, in spite of what you did to that man--and your coming back when you said you wouldn't--and--But I see now that what you did was you; it was your nature; and I can't believe in you any more."

"Agatha!" he implored. "You're not going to be so unjust! There was nothing between you and me when that girl was here! I had a right to--"

"Not if you really cared for me! Do you think I would have flirted with any one so soon, if I had cared for you as you pretended you did for me that night in Carlsbad? Oh, I don't say you're false. But you're fickle--"

"But I'm not fickle! From the first moment I saw you, I never cared for any one but you!"

"You have strange ways of showing your devotion. Well, say you are not fickle. Say, that I'm fickle. I am. I have changed my mind. I see that it would never do. I leave you free to follow all the turning and twisting of your fancy." She spoke rapidly, almost breathlessly, and she gave him no chance to get out the words that seemed to choke him. She began to run, but at the door of the hotel she stopped and waited till he came stupidly up. "I have a favor to ask, Mr. Burnamy. I beg you will not see me again, if you can help it before we go to-morrow. My father and I are indebted to you for too many kindnesses, and you mustn't take any more trouble on our account. August can see us off in the morning."

She nodded quickly, and was gone in-doors while he was yet struggling with his doubt of the reality of what had all so swiftly happened.

General Triscoe was still ignorant of any change in the status to which he had reconciled himself with so much difficulty, when he came down to get into the omnibus for the train. Till then he had been too proud to ask what had become of Burnamy, though he had wondered, but now he looked about and said impatiently, "I hope that young man isn't going to keep us waiting."

Agatha was pale and worn with sleeplessness, but she said firmly, "He isn't going, papa. I will tell you in the train. August will see to the tickets and the baggage."

August conspired with the traeger to get them a first-class compartment to themselves. But even with the advantages of this seclusion Agatha's confidences to her father were not full. She told her father that her engagement was broken for reasons that did not mean anything very wrong in Mr. Burnamy but that convinced her they could never be happy together. As she did not give the reasons, he found a natural difficulty in accepting them, and there was something in the situation which appealed strongly to his contrary-mindedness. Partly from this, partly from his sense of injury in being obliged so soon to adjust himself to new conditions, and partly from his comfortable feeling of security from an engagement to which his assent had been forced, he said, "I hope you're not making a mistake."

"Oh, no," she answered, and she attested her conviction by a burst of sobbing that lasted well on the way to the first stop of the train.

LXIX.

It would have been always twice as easy to go direct from Berlin to the Hague through Hanover; but the Marches decided to go by Frankfort and the Rhine, because they wished to revisit the famous river, which they remembered from their youth, and because they wished to stop at Dusseldorf, where Heinrich Heine was born. Without this Mrs. March, who kept her husband up to his early passion for the poet with a feeling that she was defending him from age in it, said that their silver wedding

journey would not be complete; and he began himself to think that it would be interesting.

They took a sleeping-car for Frankfort and they woke early as people do in sleeping-cars everywhere. March dressed and went out for a cup of the same coffee of which sleeping-car buffets have the awful secret in Europe as well as America, and for a glimpse of the twilight landscape. One gray little town, towered and steeped and red-roofed within its mediaeval walls, looked as if it would have been warmer in something more. There was a heavy dew, if not a light frost, over all, and in places a pale fog began to lift from the low hills. Then the sun rose without dispersing the cold, which was afterwards so severe in their room at the Russischer Hof in Frankfort that in spite of the steam-radiators they sat shivering in all their wraps till breakfast-time.

There was no steam on in the radiators, of course; when they implored the portier for at least a lamp to warm their hands by he turned on all the electric lights without raising the temperature in the slightest degree. Amidst these modern comforts they were so miserable that they vowed each other to shun, as long as they were in Germany, or at least while the summer lasted, all hotels which were steam-heated and electric-lighted. They heated themselves somewhat with their wrath, and over their breakfast they relented so far as to suffer themselves a certain interest in the troops of all arms beginning to pass the hotel. They were fragments of the great parade, which had ended the day before, and they were now drifting back to their several quarters of the empire. Many of them were very picturesque, and they had for the boys and girls running before and beside them, the charm which armies and circus processions have for children everywhere. But their passage filled with cruel anxiety a large old dog whom his master had left harnessed to a milk-cart before the hotel door; from time to time he lifted up his voice, and called to the absentee with hoarse, deep barks that almost shook him from his feet.

The day continued blue and bright and cold, and the Marches gave the morning to a rapid survey of the city, glad that it was at least not wet. What afterwards chiefly remained to them was the impression of an old town as quaint almost and as Gothic as old Hamburg, and a new town, handsome and regular, and, in the sudden arrest of some streets, apparently overbuilt. The modern architectural taste was of course Parisian; there is no other taste for the Germans; but in the prevailing absence of statues there was a relief from the most oppressive characteristic of the imperial capital which was a positive delight. Some sort of monument to the national victory over France there must have been; but it must have been unusually inoffensive, for it left no record of itself in the travellers' consciousness. They were aware of gardened squares and avenues, bordered by stately dwellings, of dignified civic edifices, and of a vast arid splendid railroad station, such as the state builds even in minor European cities, but such as our paternal corporations have not yet given us anywhere in America. They went to the Zoological Garden, where they heard the customary Kalmucks at their public prayers behind a high board fence; and as pilgrims from the most plutocratic country in the world March insisted that they must pay their

devoirs at the shrine of the Rothschilds, whose natal banking-house they revered from the outside.

It was a pity, he said, that the Rothschilds were not on his letter of credit; he would have been willing to pay tribute to the Genius of Finance in the percentage on at least ten pounds. But he consoled himself by reflecting that he did not need the money; and he consoled Mrs. March for their failure to penetrate to the interior of the Rothschilds' birthplace by taking her to see the house where Goethe was born. The public is apparently much more expected there, and in the friendly place they were no doubt much more welcome than they would have been in the Rothschild house. Under that roof they renewed a happy moment of Weimar, which after the lapse of a week seemed already so remote. They wondered, as they mounted the stairs from the basement opening into a clean little court, how Burnamy was getting on, and whether it had yet come to that understanding between him and Agatha, which Mrs. March, at least, had meant to be inevitable. Then they became part of some such sight-seeing retinue as followed the custodian about in the Goethe house in Weimar, and of an emotion indistinguishable from that of their fellow sight-seers. They could make sure, afterwards, of a personal pleasure in a certain prescient classicism of the house. It somehow recalled both the Goethe houses at Weimar, and it somehow recalled Italy. It is a separate house of two floors above the entrance, which opens to a little court or yard, and gives access by a decent stairway to the living-rooms. The chief of these is a sufficiently dignified parlor or salon, and the most important is the little chamber in the third story where the poet first opened his eyes to the light which he rejoiced in for so long a life, and which, dying, he implored to be with him more. It is as large as his death-chamber in Weimar, where he breathed this prayer, and it looks down into the Italian-looking court, where probably he noticed the world for the first time, and thought it a paved enclosure thirty or forty feet square. In the birth-room they keep his puppet theatre, and the place is fairly suggestive of his childhood; later, in his youth, he could look from the parlor windows and see the house where his earliest love dwelt. So much remains of Goethe in the place where he was born, and as such things go, it is not a little. The house is that of a prosperous and well-placed citizen, and speaks of the senatorial quality in his family which Heine says he was fond of recalling, rather than the sartorial quality of the ancestor who, again as Heine says, mended the Republic's breeches.

From the Goethe house, one drives by the Goethe monument to the Romer, the famous town-hall of the old free imperial city which Frankfort once was; and by this route the Marches drove to it, agreeing with their coachman that he was to keep as much in the sun as possible. It was still so cold that when they reached the Romer, and he stopped in a broad blaze of the only means of heating that they have in Frankfort in the summer, the travellers were loath to leave it for the chill interior, where the German emperors were elected for so many centuries. As soon as an emperor was chosen, in the great hall effigied round with the portraits of his predecessors, he hurried out in the balcony, ostensibly to show himself to the people, but really, March contended, to warm up a little in the sun. The balcony was undergoing repairs that day, and the

travellers could not go out on it; but under the spell of the historic interest of the beautiful old Gothic place, they lingered in the interior till they were half-torpid with the cold. Then she abandoned to him the joint duty of viewing the cathedral, and hurried to their carriage where she basked in the sun till he came to her. He returned shivering, after a half-hour's absence, and pretended that she had missed the greatest thing in the world, but as he could never be got to say just what she had lost, and under the closest cross-examination could not prove that this cathedral was memorably different from hundreds of other fourteenth-century cathedrals, she remained in a lasting content with the easier part she had chosen. His only definite impression at the cathedral seemed to be confined to a Bostonian of gloomily correct type, whom he had seen doing it with his Baedeker, and not letting an object of interest escape; and his account of her fellow-townsman reconciled Mrs. March more and more to not having gone.

As it was warmer out-doors than in-doors at Frankfort, and as the breadth of sunshine increased with the approach of noon they gave the rest of the morning to driving about and ignorantly enjoying the outside of many Gothic churches, whose names even they did not trouble themselves to learn. They liked the river Main whenever they came to it, because it was so lately from Wurzburg, and because it was so beautiful with its bridges, old and new, and its boats of many patterns. They liked the market-place in front of the Romer not only because it was full of fascinating bargains in curious crockery and wooden-ware, but because there was scarcely any shade at all in it. They read from their Baedeker that until the end of the last century no Jew was suffered to enter the marketplace, and they rejoiced to find from all appearances that the Jews had been making up for their unjust exclusion ever since. They were almost as numerous there as the Anglo-Saxons were everywhere else in Frankfort. These, both of the English and American branches of the race, prevailed in the hotel diningroom, where the Marches had a mid-day dinner so good that it almost made amends for the steam-heating and electric-lighting.

As soon as possible after dinner they took the train for Mayence, and ran Rhinewards through a pretty country into what seemed a milder climate. It grew so much milder, apparently, that a lady in their compartment to whom March offered his forward-looking seat, ordered the window down when the guard came, without asking their leave. Then the climate proved much colder, and Mrs. March covered under her shawls the rest of the way, and would not be entreated to look at the pleasant level landscape near, or the hills far off. He proposed to put up the window as peremptorily as it had been put down, but she stayed him with a hoarse whisper, "She may be another Baroness!" At first he did not know what she meant, then he remembered the lady whose claims to rank her presence had so poorly enforced on the way to Wurzburg, and he perceived that his wife was practising a wise forbearance with their fellow-passengers, and giving her a chance to turn out any sort of highhote she chose. She failed to profit by the opportunity; she remained simply a selfish, disagreeable woman, of no more perceptible distinction than their other fellow-passenger, a little commercial traveller from Vienna (they resolved from his appearance and the lettering on his valise that he was no other), who

slept with a sort of passionate intensity all the way to Mayence.

LXX.

The Main widened and swam fuller as they approached the Rhine, and flooded the low-lying fields in-places with a pleasant effect under a wet sunset. When they reached the station in Mayence they drove interminably to the hotel they had chosen on the river-shore, through a city handsomer and cleaner than any American city they could think of, and great part of the way by a street of dwellings nobler, Mrs. March owned, than even Commonwealth Avenue in Boston. It was planted, like that, with double rows of trees, but lacked its green lawns; and at times the sign of Weinhandlung at a corner, betrayed that there was no such restriction against shops as keeps the Boston street so sacred. Otherwise they had to confess once more that any inferior city of Germany is of a more proper and dignified presence than the most parse-proud metropolis in America. To be sure, they said, the German towns had generally a thousand years' start; but all the same the fact galled them.

It was very bleak, though very beautiful when they stopped before their hotel on the Rhine, where all their impalpable memories of their visit to Mayence thirty years earlier precipitated themselves into something tangible. There were the reaches of the storied and fabled stream with its boats and bridges and wooded shores and islands; there were the spires and towers and roofs of the town on either bank crowding to the river's brink; and there within-doors was the stately portier in gold braid, and the smiling, bowing, hand-rubbing landlord, alluring them to his most expensive rooms, which so late in the season he would fain have had them take. But in a little elevator, that mounted slowly, very slowly, in the curve of the stairs, they went higher to something lower, and the landlord retired baked, and left them to the ministrations of the serving-men who arrived with their large and small baggage. All these retired in turn when they asked to have a fire lighted in the stove, without which Mrs. March would never have taken the fine stately rooms, and sent back a pretty young girl to do it. She came indignant, not because she had come lugging a heavy hod of coal and a great arm-load of wood, but because her sense of fitness was outraged by the strange demand.

"What!" she cried. "A fire in September!"

"Yes," March returned, inspired to miraculous aptness in his German by the exigency, "yes, if September is cold."

The girl looked at him, and then, either because she thought him mad, or liked him merry, burst into a loud laugh, and kindled the fire without a word more.

He lighted all the reluctant gas-jets in the vast gilt chandelier, and in less than half an hour the temperature of the place rose to at least

sixty-five Fahrenheit, with every promise of going higher. Mrs. March made herself comfortable in a deep chair before the stove, and said she would have her supper there; and she bade him send her just such a supper of chicken and honey and tea as they had all had in Mayence when they supped in her aunt's parlor there all those years ago. He wished to compute the years, but she drove him out with an imploring cry, and he went down to a very gusty dining-room on the ground-floor, where he found himself alone with a young English couple and their little boy. They were friendly, intelligent people, and would have been conversable, apparently, but for the terrible cold of the husband, which he said he had contracted at the manoeuvres in Hombourg. March said he was going to Holland, and the Englishman was doubtful of the warmth which March expected to find there. He seemed to be suffering from a suspense of faith as to the warmth anywhere; from time to time the door of the dining-room self-opened in a silent, ghostly fashion into the court without, and let in a chilling draught about the legs of all, till the little English boy got down from his place and shut it.

He alone continued cheerful, for March's spirits certainly did not rise when some mumbling Americans came in and muttered over their meat at another table. He hated to own it, but he had to own that wherever he had met the two branches of the Anglo-Saxon race together in Europe, the elder had shown, by a superior chirpiness, to the disadvantage of the younger. The cast clothes of the old-fashioned British offishness seemed to have fallen to the American travellers who were trying to be correct and exemplary; and he would almost rather have had back the old-style bragging Americans whom he no longer saw. He asked of an agreeable fellow-countryman whom he found later in the reading-room, what had become of these; and this compatriot said he had travelled with one only the day before, who had posed before their whole compartment in his scorn of the German landscape, the German weather, the German government, the German railway management, and then turned out an American of German birth! March found his wife in great bodily comfort when he went back to her, but in trouble of mind about a clock which she had discovered standing on the lacquered iron top of the stove. It was a French clock, of architectural pretensions, in the taste of the first Empire, and it looked as if it had not been going since Napoleon occupied Mayence early in the century. But Mrs. March now had it sorely on her conscience where, in its danger from the heat of the stove, it rested with the weight of the Pantheon, whose classic form it recalled. She wondered that no one had noticed it before the fire was kindled, and she required her husband to remove it at once from the top of the stove to the mantel under the mirror, which was the natural habitat of such a clock. He said nothing could be simpler, but when he lifted it, it began to fall all apart, like a clock in the house of the Hoodoo. Its marble base dropped-off; its pillars tottered; its pediment swayed to one side. While Mrs. March lamented her hard fate, and implored him to hurry it together before any one came, he contrived to reconstruct it in its new place. Then they both breathed freer, and returned to sit down before the stove. But at the same moment they both saw, ineffaceably outlined on the lacquered top, the basal form of the clock. The chambermaid would see it in the morning; she would notice the removal of the clock, and would make a merit of reporting its ruin by the heat to the landlord, and

in the end they would be mulcted of its value. Rather than suffer this wrong they agreed to restore it to its place, and, let it go to destruction upon its own terms. March painfully rebuilt it where he had found it, and they went to bed with a bad conscience to worse dreams.

He remembered, before he slept, the hour of his youth when he was in Mayence before, and was so care free that he had heard with impersonal joy two young American voices speaking English in the street under his window. One of them broke from the common talk with a gay burlesque of pathos in the line:

"Oh heavens! she cried, my Heeding country save!"

and then with a laughing good-night these unseen, unknown spirits of youth parted and departed. Who were they, and in what different places, with what cares or ills, had their joyous voices grown old, or fallen silent for evermore? It was a moonlight night, March remembered, and he remembered how he wished he were out in it with those merry fellows.

He nursed the memory and the wonder in his dreaming thought, and he woke early to other voices under his window. But now the voices, though young, were many and were German, and the march of feet and the stamp of hooves kept time with their singing. He drew his curtain and saw the street filled with broken squads of men, some afoot and some on horseback, some in uniform and some in civil dress with students' caps, loosely straggling on and roaring forth that song whose words he could not make out. At breakfast he asked the waiter what it all meant, and he said that these were conscripts whose service had expired with the late manoeuvres, and who were now going home. He promised March a translation of the song, but he never gave it; and perhaps the sense of their joyful home-going remained the more poetic with him because its utterance remained inarticulate.

March spent the rainy Sunday, on which they had fallen, in wandering about the little city alone. His wife said she was tired and would sit by the fire, and hear about Mayence when he came in. He went to the cathedral, which has its renown for beauty and antiquity, and he there added to his stock of useful information the fact that the people of Mayence seemed very Catholic and very devout. They proved it by preferring to any of the divine old Gothic shrines in the cathedral, an ugly baroque altar, which was everywhere hung about with votive offerings. A fashionably dressed young man and young girl sprinkled themselves with holy water as reverently as if they had been old and ragged. Some tourists strolled up and down the aisles with their red guide-books, and studied the objects of interest. A resplendent beadle in a cocked hat, and with along staff of authority posed before his own ecclesiastical consciousness in blue and silver. At the high altar a priest was saying mass, and March wondered whether his consciousness was as wholly ecclesiastical as the beadle's, or whether somewhere in it he felt the historical majesty, the long human consecration of the place.

He wandered at random in the town through streets German and quaint and old, and streets French and fine and new, and got back to the river,

which he crossed on one of the several handsome bridges. The rough river looked chill under a sky of windy clouds, and he felt out of season, both as to the summer travel, and as to the journey he was making. The summer of life as well as the summer of that year was past. Better return to his own radiator in his flat on Stuyvesant Square; to the great ugly brutal town which, if it was not home to him, was as much home to him as to any one. A longing for New York welled up his heart, which was perhaps really a wish to be at work again. He said he must keep this from his wife, who seemed not very well, and whom he must try to cheer up when he returned to the hotel.

But they had not a very joyous afternoon, and the evening was no gayer. They said that if they had not ordered their letters sent to Dusseldorf they believed they should push on to Holland without stopping; and March would have liked to ask, Why not push on to America? But he forbore, and he was afterwards glad that he had done so.

In the morning their spirits rose with the sun, though the sun got up behind clouds as usual; and they were further animated by the imposition which the landlord practised upon them. After a distinct and repeated agreement as to the price of their rooms he charged them twice as much, and then made a merit of throwing off two marks out of the twenty he had plundered them of.

"Now I see," said Mrs. March, on their way down to the boat, "how fortunate it was that we baked his clock. You may laugh, but I believe we were the instruments of justice."

"Do you suppose that clock was never baked before?" asked her husband. "The landlord has his own arrangement with justice. When he overcharges his parting guests he says to his conscience, Well, they baked my clock."

LXXI.

The morning was raw, but it was something not to have it rainy; and the clouds that hung upon the hills and hid their tops were at least as fine as the long board signs advertising chocolate on the river banks. The smoke rising from the chimneys of the manufactories of Mayence was not so bad, either, when one got them in the distance a little; and March liked the way the river swam to the stems of the trees on the low grassy shores. It was like the Mississippi between St. Louis and Cairo in that, and it was yellow and thick, like the Mississippi, though he thought he remembered it blue and clear. A friendly German, of those who began to come aboard more and more at all the landings after leaving Mayence, assured him that he was right, and that the Rhine was unusually turbid from the unusual rains. March had his own belief that whatever the color of the Rhine might be the rains were not unusual, but he could not gainsay the friendly German.

Most of the passengers at starting were English and American; but they

showed no prescience of the international affinitive which has since realized itself, in their behavior toward one another. They held silently apart, and mingled only in the effect of one young man who kept the Marches in perpetual question whether he was a Bostonian or an Englishman. His look was Bostonian, but his accent was English; and was he a Bostonian who had been in England long enough to get the accent, or was he an Englishman who had been in Boston long enough to get the look? He wore a belated straw hat, and a thin sack-coat; and in the rush of the boat through the raw air they fancied him very cold, and longed to offer him one of their superabundant wraps. At times March actually lifted a shawl from his knees, feeling sure that the stranger was English and that he might make so bold with him; then at some glacial glint in the young man's eye, or at some petrific expression of his delicate face, he felt that he was a Bostonian, and lost courage and let the shawl sink again. March tried to forget him in the wonder of seeing the Germans begin to eat and drink, as soon as they came on boards either from the baskets they had brought with them, or from the boat's provision. But he prevailed, with his smile that was like a sneer, through all the events of the voyage; and took March's mind off the scenery with a sudden wrench when he came unexpectedly into view after a momentary disappearance. At the table d'hote, which was served when the landscape began to be less interesting, the guests were expected to hand their plates across the table to the stewards but to keep their knives and forks throughout the different courses, and at each of these partial changes March felt the young man's chilly eyes upon him, inculcating him for the semi-civilization of the management. At such times he knew that he was a Bostonian.

The weather cleared, as they descended the river, and under a sky at last cloudless, the Marches had moments of swift reversion to their former Rhine journey, when they were young and the purple light of love mantled the vineyarded hills along the shore, and flushed the castled steepes. The scene had lost nothing of the beauty they dimly remembered; there were certain features of it which seemed even fairer and grander than they remembered. The town of Bingen, where everybody who knows the poem was more or less born, was beautiful in spite of its factory chimneys, though there were no compensating castles near it; and the castles seemed as good as those of the theatre. Here and there some of them had been restored and were occupied, probably by robber barons who had gone into trade. Others were still ruinous, and there was now and then such a mere gray snag that March, at sight of it, involuntarily put his tongue to the broken tooth which he was keeping for the skill of the first American dentist.

For natural sublimity the Rhine scenery, as they recognized once more, does not compare with the Hudson scenery; and they recalled one point on the American river where the Central Road tunnels a jutting cliff, which might very well pass for the rock of the Loreley, where she dreams

'Solo sitting by the shores of old romance.'

and the trains run in and out under her knees unheeded. "Still, still you know," March argued, "this is the Loreley on the Rhine, and not the

Loreley on the Hudson; and I suppose that makes all the difference. Besides, the Rhine doesn't set up to be sublime; it only means to be storied and dreamy and romantic and it does it. And then we have really got no Mouse Tower; we might build one, to be sure."

"Well, we have got no denkmal, either," said his wife, meaning the national monument to the German reconquest of the Rhine, which they had just passed, "and that is something in our favor."

"It was too far off for us to see how ugly it was," he returned.

"The denkmal at Coblenz was so near that the bronze Emperor almost rode aboard the boat."

He could not answer such a piece of logic as that. He yielded, and began to praise the orcharded levels which now replaced the vine-purpled slopes of the upper river. He said they put him in mind of orchards that he had known in his boyhood; and they, agreed that the supreme charm of travel, after all, was not in seeing something new and strange, but in finding something familiar and dear in the heart of the strangeness.

At Cologne they found this in the tumult of getting ashore with their baggage and driving from the steamboat landing to the railroad station, where they were to get their train for Dusseldorf an hour later. The station swarmed with travellers eating and drinking and smoking; but they escaped from it for a precious half of their golden hour, and gave the time to the great cathedral, which was built, a thousand years ago, just round the corner from the station, and is therefore very handy to it. Since they saw the cathedral last it had been finished, and now under a cloudless evening sky, it soared and swept upward like a pale flame. Within it was a bit over-clean, a bit bare, but without it was one of the great memories of the race, the record of a faith which wrought miracles of beauty, at least, if not piety.

The train gave the Marches another, and last, view of it as they slowly drew out of the city, and began to run through a level country walled with far-off hills; past fields of buckwheat showing their stems like coral under their black tops; past peasant houses changing their wonted shape to taller and narrower forms; past sluggish streams from which the mist rose and hung over the meadows, under a red sunset, glassy clear till the manifold factory chimneys of Dusseldorf stained it with their dun smoke.

This industrial greeting seemed odd from the town where Heinrich Heine was born; but when they had eaten their supper in the capital little hotel they found there, and went out for a stroll, they found nothing to remind them of the factories, and much to make them think of the poet. The moon, beautiful and perfect as a stage moon, came up over the shoulder of a church as they passed down a long street which they had all to themselves. Everybody seemed to have gone to bed, but at a certain corner a girl opened a window above them, and looked out at the moon.

When they returned to their hotel they found a highwalled garden facing

it, full of black depths of foliage. In the night March woke and saw the moon standing over the garden, and silvering its leafy tops. This was really as it should be in the town where the idolized poet of his youth was born; the poet whom of all others he had adored, and who had once seemed like a living friend; who had been witness of his first love, and had helped him to speak it. His wife used to laugh at him for his Heine-worship in those days; but she had since come to share it, and she, even more than he, had insisted upon this pilgrimage. He thought long thoughts of the past, as he looked into the garden across the way, with an ache for his perished self and the dead companionship of his youth, all ghosts together in the silvered shadow. The trees shuddered in the night breeze, and its chill penetrated to him where he stood.

His wife called to him from her room, "What are you doing?"

"Oh, sentimentalizing," he answered boldly.

"Well, you will be sick," she said, and he crept back into bed again.

They had sat up late, talking in a glad excitement. But he woke early, as an elderly man is apt to do after broken slumbers, and left his wife still sleeping. He was not so eager for the poetic interests of the town as he had been the night before; he even deferred his curiosity for Heine's birth-house to the instructive conference which he had with his waiter at breakfast. After all, was not it more important to know something of the actual life of a simple common class of men than to indulge a faded fancy for the memory of a genius, which no amount of associations could feed again to its former bloom? The waiter said he was a Nuremberger, and had learned English in London where he had served a year for nothing. Afterwards, when he could speak three languages he got a pound a week, which seemed low for so many, though not so low as the one mark a day which he now received in Dusseldorf; in Berlin he paid the hotel two marks a day. March confided to him his secret trouble as to tips, and they tried vainly to enlighten each other as to what a just tip was.

He went to his banker's, and when he came back he found his wife with her breakfast eaten, and so eager for the exploration of Heine's birthplace that she heard with indifference of his failure to get any letters. It was too soon to expect them, she said, and then she showed him her plan, which she had been working out ever since she woke. It contained every place which Heine had mentioned, and she was determined not one should escape them. She examined him sharply upon his condition, accusing him of having taken cold when he got up in the night, and acquitting him with difficulty. She herself was perfectly well, but a little fagged, and they must have a carriage.

They set out in a lordly two-spanner, which took up half the little Bolkerstrasse where Heine was born, when they stopped across the way from his birthhouse, so that she might first take it all in from the outside before they entered it. It is a simple street, and not the cleanest of the streets in a town where most of them are rather dirty. Below the houses are shops, and the first story of Heine's house is a butcher shop,

with sides of pork and mutton hanging in the windows; above, where the Heine family must once have lived, a gold-beater and a frame-maker displayed their signs.

But did the Heine family really once live there? The house looked so fresh and new that in spite of the tablet in its front affirming it the poet's birthplace, they doubted; and they were not reassured by the people who half halted as they passed, and stared at the strangers, so anomalously interested in the place. They dismounted, and crossed to the butcher shop where the provision man corroborated the tablet, but could not understand their wish to go up stairs. He did not try to prevent them, however, and they climbed to the first floor above, where a placard on the door declared it private and implored them not to knock. Was this the outcome of the inmate's despair from the intrusion of other pilgrims who had wisd to see the Heine dwelling-rooms? They durst not knock and ask so much, and they sadly descended to the ground-floor, where they found a butcher boy of much greater apparent intelligence than the butcher himself, who told them that the building in front was as new as it looked, and the house where Heine was really born was the old house in the rear. He showed them this house, across a little court patched with mangy grass and lilac-bushes; and when they wished to visit it he led the way. The place was strewn both underfoot and overhead with feathers; it had once been all a garden out to the street, the boy said, but from these feathers, as well as the odor which prevailed, and the anxious behavior of a few hens left in the high coop at one side, it was plain that what remained of the garden was now a chicken slaughteryard. There was one well-grown tree, and the boy said it was of the poet's time; but when he let them into the house, he became vague as to the room where Heine was born; it was certain only that it was somewhere upstairs and that it could not be seen. The room where they stood was the frame-maker's shop, and they bought of him a small frame for a memorial. They bought of the butcher's boy, not so commercially, a branch of lilac; and they came away, thinking how much amused Heine himself would have been with their visit; how sadly, how merrily he would have mocked at their effort to revere his birthplace.

They were too old if not too wise to be daunted by their defeat, and they drove next to the old court garden beside the Rhine where the poet says he used to play with the little Veronika, and probably did not. At any rate, the garden is gone; the Schloss was burned down long ago; and nothing remains but a detached tower in which the good Elector Jan Wilhelm, of Heine's time, amused himself with his many mechanical inventions. The tower seemed to be in process of demolition, but an intelligent workman who came down out of it, was interested in the strangers' curiosity, and directed them to a place behind the Historical Museum where they could find a bit of the old garden. It consisted of two or three low trees, and under them the statue of the Elector by which Heine sat with the little Veronika, if he really did. Afresh gale blowing through the trees stirred the bushes that backed the statue, but not the laurel wreathing the Elector's head, and meeting in a neat point over his forehead. The laurel wreath is stone, like the rest of the Elector, who stands there smirking in marble ermine and armor, and resting his baton on the nose of a very small lion, who, in the

exigencies of foreshortening, obligingly goes to nothing but a tail under the Elector's robe.

This was a prince who loved himself in effigy so much that he raised an equestrian statue to his own renown in the market-place, though he modestly refused the credit of it, and ascribed its erection to the affection of his subjects. You see him therein a full-bottomed wig, mounted on a rampant charger with a tail as big round as a barrel, and heavy enough to keep him from coming down on his fore legs as long as he likes to hold them up. It was to this horse's back that Heine clambered when a small boy, to see the French take formal possession of Dusseldorf; and he clung to the waist of the bronze Elector, who had just abdicated, while the burgomaster made a long speech, from the balcony of the Rathhaus, and the Electoral arms were taken down from its doorway.

The Rathhaus is a salad-dressing of German gothic and French rococo as to its architectural style, and is charming in its way, but the Marches were in the market-place for the sake of that moment of Heine's boyhood. They felt that he might have been the boy who stopped as he ran before them, and smacked the stomach of a large pumpkin lying at the feet of an old market-woman, and then dashed away before she could frame a protest against the indignity. From this incident they philosophized that the boys of Dusseldorf are as mischievous at the end of the century as they were at the beginning; and they felt the fascination that such a bounteous, unkempt old marketplace must have for the boys of any period. There were magnificent vegetables of all sorts in it, and if the fruits were meagre that was the fault of the rainy summer, perhaps. The market-place was very dirty, and so was the narrow street leading down from it to the Rhine, which ran swift as a mountain torrent along a slatternly quay. A bridge of boats crossing the stream shook in the rapid current, and a long procession of market carts passed slowly over, while a cluster of scows waited in picturesque patience for the draw to open.

They saw what a beautiful town that was for a boy to grow up in, and how many privileges it offered, how many dangers, how many chances for hairbreadth escapes. They chose that Heine must often have rushed shrieking joyfully down that foul alley to the Rhine with other boys; and they easily found a leaf-strewn stretch of the sluggish Dussel, in the Public Garden, where his playmate, the little Wilhelm, lost his life and saved the kitten's. They were not so sure of the avenue through which the poet saw the Emperor Napoleon come riding on his small white horse when he took possession of the Elector's dominions. But if it was that where the statue of the Kaiser Wilhelm I. comes riding on a horse led by two Victories, both poet and hero are avenged there on the accomplished fact. Defeated and humiliated France triumphs in the badness of that foolish denkmal (one of the worst in all denkmal-ridden Germany), and the memory of the singer whom the Hohenzollern family pride forbids honor in his native place, is immortal in its presence.

On the way back to their hotel, March made some reflections upon the open neglect, throughout Germany, of the greatest German lyricist, by which the poet might have profited if he had been present. He contended that it was not altogether an effect of Hohenzollern pride, which could not

suffer a joke or two from the arch-humorist; but that Heine had said things of Germany herself which Germans might well have found unpardonable. He concluded that it would not do to be perfectly frank with one's own country. Though, to be sure, there would always be the question whether the Jew-born Heine had even a step-fatherland in the Germany he loved so tenderly and mocked so pitilessly. He had to own that if he were a negro poet he would not feel bound to measure terms in speaking of America, and he would not feel that his fame was in her keeping.

Upon the whole he blamed Heine less than Germany and he accused her of taking a shabby revenge, in trying to forget him; in the heat of his resentment that there should be no record of Heine in the city where he was born, March came near ignoring himself the fact that the poet Freiligrath was also born there. As for the famous Dusseldorf school of painting, which once filled the world with the worst art, he rejoiced that it was now so dead, and he grudged the glance which the beauty of the new Art Academy extorted from him. It is in the French taste, and is so far a monument to the continuance in one sort of that French supremacy, of which in another sort another denkmal celebrates the overthrow. Dusseldorf is not content with the denkmal of the Kaiser on horseback, with the two Victories for grooms; there is a second, which the Marches found when they strolled out again late in the afternoon. It is in the lovely park which lies in the heart of the city, and they felt in its presence the only emotion of sympathy which the many patriotic monuments of Germany awakened in them. It had dignity and repose, which these never had elsewhere; but it was perhaps not so much for the dying warrior and the pitying lion of the sculpture that their hearts were moved as for the gentle and mournful humanity of the inscription, which dropped into equivalent English verse in March's note-book:

Fame was enough for the Victors, and glory and verdurous laurel;
Tears by their mothers wept founded this image of stone.

To this they could forgive the vaunting record, on the reverse, of the German soldiers who died heroes in the war with France, the war with Austria, and even the war with poor little Denmark!

The morning had been bright and warm, and it was just that the afternoon should be dim and cold, with a pale sun looking through a September mist, which seemed to deepen the seclusion and silence of the forest reaches; for the park was really a forest of the German sort, as parks are apt to be in Germany. But it was beautiful, and they strayed through it, and sometimes sat down on the benches in its damp shadows, and said how much seemed to be done in Germany for the people's comfort and pleasure. In what was their own explicitly, as well as what was tacitly theirs, they were not so restricted as we were at home, and especially the children seemed made fondly and lovingly free of all public things. The Marches met troops of them in the forest, as they strolled slowly back by the winding Dussel to the gardened avenue leading to the park, and they found them everywhere gay and joyful. But their elders seemed subdued, and were silent. The strangers heard no sound of laughter in the streets of Dusseldorf, and they saw no smiling except on the part of a very old

couple, whose meeting they witnessed and who grinned and cackled at each other like two children as they shook hands. Perhaps they were indeed children of that sad second childhood which one would rather not blossom back into.

In America, life is yet a joke with us, even when it is grotesque and shameful, as it so often is; for we think we can make it right when we choose. But there is no joking in Germany, between the first and second childhoods, unless behind closed doors. Even there, people do not joke above their breath about kings and emperors. If they joke about them in print, they take out their laugh in jail, for the press laws are severely enforced, and the prisons are full of able editors, serious as well as comic. Lese-majesty is a crime that searches sinners out in every walk of life, and it is said that in family jars a husband sometimes has the last word of his wife by accusing her of blaspheming the sovereign, and so having her silenced for three months at least behind penitential bars.

"Think," said March, "how simply I could adjust any differences of opinion between us in Dusseldorf."

"Don't!" his wife implored with a burst of feeling which surprised him. "I want to go home!"

They had been talking over their day, and planning their journey to Holland for the morrow, when it came to this outburst from her in the last half-hour before bed which they sat prolonging beside their stove.

"What! And not go to Holland? What is to become of my after-cure?"

"Oh, it's too late for that, now. We've used up the month running about, and tiring ourselves to death. I should like to rest a week--to get into my berth on the Norumbia and rest!"

"I guess the September gales would have something to say about that."

"I would risk the September gales."

LXXII.

In the morning March came home from his bankers gay with the day's provisional sunshine in his heart, and joyously expectant of his wife's pleasure in the letters he was bringing. There was one from each of their children, and there was one from Fulkerson, which March opened and read on the street, so as to intercept any unpleasant news there might be in them; there were two letters for Mrs. March which he knew without opening were from Miss Triscoe and Mrs. Adding respectively; Mrs. Adding's, from the postmarks, seemed to have been following them about for some time.

"They're all right at home," he said. "Do see what those people have

been doing."

"I believe," she said, taking a knife from the breakfast tray beside her bed to cut the envelopes, "that you've really cared more about them all along than I have."

"No, I've only been anxious to be done with them."

She got the letters open, and holding one of them up in each hand she read them impartially and simultaneously; then she flung them both down, and turned her face into her pillow with an impulse of her inalienable girlishness. "Well, it is too silly."

March felt authorized to take them up and read them consecutively; when he had done, so he did not differ from his wife. In one case, Agatha had written to her dear Mrs. March that she and Burnamy had just that evening become engaged; Mrs. Adding, on her part owned a farther step, and announced her marriage to Mr. Kenby. Following immemorial usage in such matters Kenby had added a postscript affirming his happiness in unsparing terms, and in Agatha's letter there was an avowal of like effect from Burnamy. Agatha hinted her belief that her father would soon come to regard Burnamy as she did; and Mrs. Adding professed a certain humiliation in having realized that, after all her misgiving about him, Rose seemed rather relieved than otherwise, as if he were glad to have her off his hands.

"Well," said March, "with these troublesome affairs settled, I don't see what there is to keep us in Europe any longer, unless it's the consensus of opinion in Tom, Bella, and Fulkerson, that we ought to stay the winter."

"Stay the winter!" Mrs. March rose from her pillow, and clutched the home letters to her from the abeyance in which they had fallen on the coverlet while she was dealing with the others. "What do you mean?"

"It seems to have been prompted by a hint you let drop, which Tom has passed to Bella and Fulkerson."

"Oh, but that was before we left Carlsbad!" she protested, while she devoured the letters with her eyes, and continued to denounce the absurdity of the writers. Her son and daughter both urged that now their father and mother were over there, they had better stay as long as they enjoyed it, and that they certainly ought not to come home without going to Italy, where they had first met, and revisiting the places which they had seen together when they were young engaged people: without that their silver wedding journey would not be complete. Her son said that everything was going well with 'Every Other Week', and both himself and Mr. Fulkerson thought his father ought to spend the winter in Italy, and get a thorough rest. "Make a job of it, March," Fulkerson wrote, "and have a Sabbatical year while you're at it. You may not get another."

"Well, I can tell them," said Mrs. March indignantly, "we shall not do anything of the kind."

"Then you didn't mean it?"

"Mean it!" She stopped herself with a look at her husband, and asked gently, "Do you want to stay?"

"Well, I don't know," he answered vaguely. The fact was, he was sick of travel and of leisure; he was longing to be at home and at work again. But if there was to be any self-sacrifice which could be had, as it were, at a bargain; which could be fairly divided between them, and leave him the self and her the sacrifice, he was too experienced a husband not to see the advantage of it, or to refuse the merit. "I thought you wished to stay."

"Yes," she sighed, "I did. It has been very, very pleasant, and, if anything, I have over-enjoyed myself. We have gone romping through it like two young people, haven't we?"

"You have," he assented. "I have always felt the weight of my years in getting the baggage registered; they have made the baggage weigh more every time."

"And I've forgotten mine. Yes, I have. But the years haven't forgotten me, Basil, and now I remember them. I'm tired. It doesn't seem as if I could ever get up. But I dare say it's only a mood; it may be only a cold; and if you wish to stay, why--we will think it over."

"No, we won't, my dear," he said, with a generous shame for his hypocrisy if not with a pure generosity. "I've got all the good out of it that there was in it, for me, and I shouldn't go home any better six months hence than I should now. Italy will keep for another time, and so, for the matter of that, will Holland."

"No, no!" she interposed. "We won't give up Holland, whatever we do. I couldn't go home feeling that I had kept you out of your after-cure; and when we get there, no doubt the sea air will bring me up so that I shall want to go to Italy, too, again. Though it seems so far off, now! But go and see when the afternoon train for the Hague leaves, and I shall be ready. My mind's quite made up on that point."

"What a bundle of energy!" said her husband laughing down at her.

He went and asked about the train to the Hague, but only to satisfy a superficial conscience; for now he knew that they were both of one mind about going home. He also looked up the trains for London, and found that they could get there by way of Ostend in fourteen hours. Then he went back to the banker's, and with the help of the Paris-New York Chronicle which he found there, he got the sailings of the first steamers home. After that he strolled about the streets for a last impression of Dusseldorf, but it was rather blurred by the constantly recurring pull of his thoughts toward America, and he ended by turning abruptly at a certain corner, and going to his hotel.

He found his wife dressed, but fallen again on her bed, beside which her breakfast stood still untasted; her smile responded wanly to his brightness. "I'm not well, my dear," she said. "I don't believe I could get off to the Hague this afternoon."

"Could you to Liverpool?" he returned.

"To Liverpool?" she gasped. "What do you mean?"

"Merely that the Cupania is sailing on the twentieth, and I've telegraphed to know if we can get a room. I'm afraid it won't be a good one, but she's the first boat out, and--"

"No, indeed, we won't go to Liverpool, and we will never go home till you've had your after-cure in Holland." She was very firm in this, but she added, "We will stay another night, here, and go to the Hague tomorrow. Sit down, and let us talk it over. Where were we?"

She lay down on the sofa, and he put a shawl over her. "We were just starting for Liverpool."

"No, no we weren't! Don't say such things, dearest! I want you to help me sum it all, up. You think it's been a success, don't you?"

"As a cure?"

"No, as a silver wedding journey?"

"Perfectly howling."

"I do think we've had a good time. I never expected to enjoy myself so much again in the world. I didn't suppose I should ever take so much interest in anything. It shows that when we choose to get out of our rut we shall always find life as fresh and delightful as ever. There is nothing to prevent our coming any year, now that Tom's shown himself so capable, and having another silver wedding journey. I don't like to think of it's being confined to Germany quite."

"Oh, I don't know. We can always talk of it as our German-Silver Wedding Journey."

"That's true. But nobody would understand nowadays what you meant by German-silver; it's perfectly gone out. How ugly it was! A sort of greasy yellowish stuff, always getting worn through; I believe it was made worn through. Aunt Mary had a castor of it, that I can remember when I was a child; it went into the kitchen long before I grew up. Would a joke like that console you for the loss of Italy?"

"It would go far to do it. And as a German-Silver Wedding Journey, it's certainly been very complete."

"What do you mean?"

"It's given us a representative variety of German cities. First we had Hamburg, you know, a great modern commercial centre."

"Yes! Go on!"

"Then we had Leipsic, the academic."

"Yes!"

"Then Carlsbad, the supreme type of a German health resort; then Nuremberg, the mediaeval; then Anspach, the extinct princely capital; then Wurzburg, the ecclesiastical rococo; then Weimar, for the literature of a great epoch; then imperial Berlin; then Frankfort, the memory of the old free city; then Dusseldorf, the centre of the most poignant personal interest in the world--I don't see how we could have done better, if we'd planned it all, and not acted from successive impulses."

"It's been grand; it's been perfect! As German-Silver Wedding Journey it's perfect--it seems as if it had been ordered! But I will never let you give up Holland! No, we will go this afternoon, and when I get to Schevleningen, I'll go to bed, and stay there, till you've completed your after-cure."

"Do you think that will be wildly gay for the convalescent?"

She suddenly began to cry. "Oh, dearest, what shall we do? I feel perfectly broken down. I'm afraid I'm going to be sick--and away from home! How could you ever let me overdo, so?" She put her handkerchief to her eyes, and turned her face into the sofa pillow.

This was rather hard upon him, whom her vivid energy and inextinguishable interest had not permitted a moment's respite from pleasure since they left Carlsbad. But he had been married, too long not to understand that her blame of him was only a form of self-reproach for her own self-forgetfulness. She had not remembered that she was no longer young till she had come to what he saw was a nervous collapse. The fact had its pathos and its poetry which no one could have felt more keenly than he. If it also had its inconvenience and its danger he realized these too.

"Isabel," he said, "we are going home."

"Very well, then it will be your doing."

"Quite. Do you think you could stand it as far as Cologne? We get the sleeping-car there, and you can lie down the rest of the way to Ostend."

"This afternoon? Why I'm perfectly strong; it's merely my nerves that are gone." She sat up, and wiped her eyes. "But Basil! If you're doing this for me--"

"I'm doing it for myself," said March, as he went out of the room.

She stood the journey perfectly well, and in the passage to Dover she

suffered so little from the rough weather that she was an example to many robust matrons who filled the ladies' cabin with the noise of their anguish during the night. She would have insisted upon taking the first train up to London, if March had not represented that this would not expedite the sailing of the Cupania, and that she might as well stay the forenoon at the convenient railway hotel, and rest. It was not quite his ideal of repose that the first people they saw in the coffee-room when they went to breakfast should be Kenby and Rose Adding, who were having their tea and toast and eggs together in the greatest apparent good-fellowship. He saw his wife shrink back involuntarily from the encounter, but this was only to gather force for it; and the next moment she was upon them in all the joy of the surprise. Then March allowed himself to be as glad as the others both seemed, and he shook hands with Kenby while his wife kissed Rose; and they all talked at once. In the confusion of tongues it was presently intelligible that Mrs. Kenby was going to be down in a few minutes; and Kenby took March into his confidence with a smile which was, almost a wink in explaining that he knew how it was with the ladies. He said that Rose and he usually got down to breakfast first, and when he had listened inattentively to Mrs. March's apology for being on her way home, he told her that she was lucky not to have gone to Schevleningen, where she and March would have frozen to death. He said that they were going to spend September at a little place on the English coast, near by, where he had been the day before with Rose to look at lodgings, and where you could bathe all through the month. He was not surprised that the Marches were going home, and said, Well, that was their original plan, wasn't it?

Mrs. Kenby, appearing upon this, pretended to know better, after the outburst of joyful greeting with the Marches; and intelligently reminded Kenby that he knew the Marches had intended to pass the winter in Paris. She was looking extremely pretty, but she wished only to make them see how well Rose was looking, and she put her arm round his shoulders as she spoke, Schevleningen had done wonders for him, but it was fearfully cold there, and now they were expecting everything from Westgate, where she advised March to come, too, for his after-cure: she recollected in time to say, She forgot they were on their way home. She added that she did not know when she should return; she was merely a passenger, now; she left everything to the men of the family. She had, in fact, the air of having thrown off every responsibility, but in supremacy, not submission. She was always ordering Kenby about; she sent him for her handkerchief, and her rings which she had left either in the tray of her trunk, or on the pin-cushion, or on the wash-stand or somewhere, and forbade him to come back without them. He asked for her keys, and then with a joyful scream she owned that she had left the door-key in the door and the whole bunch of trunk-keys in her trunk; and Kenby treated it all as the greatest joke; Rose, too, seemed to think that Kenby would make everything come right, and he had lost that look of anxiety which he used to have; at the most he showed a friendly sympathy for Kenby, for whose sake he seemed mortified at her. He was unable to regard his mother as the delightful joke which she appeared to Kenby, but that was merely temperamental; and he was never distressed except when she behaved with unreasonable caprice at Kenby's cost.

As for Kenby himself he betrayed no dissatisfaction with his fate to March. He perhaps no longer regarded his wife as that strong character which he had sometimes wearied March by celebrating; but she was still the most brilliant intelligence, and her charm seemed only to have grown with his perception of its wilful limitations. He did not want to talk about her so much; he wanted rather to talk about Rose, his health, his education, his nature, and what was best to do for him. The two were on terms of a confidence and affection which perpetually amused Mrs. Kenby, but which left the sympathetic witness nothing to desire in their relation.

They all came to the train when the Marches started up to London, and stood waving to them as they pulled out of the station. "Well, I can't see but that's all right," he said as he sank back in his seat with a sigh of relief. "I never supposed we should get out of their marriage half so well, and I don't feel that you quite made the match either, my dear."

She was forced to agree with him that the Kenbys seemed happy together, and that there was nothing to fear for Rose in their happiness. He would be as tenderly cared for by Kenby as he could have been by his mother, and far more judiciously. She owned that she had trembled for him till she had seen them all together; and now she should never tremble again.

"Well?" March prompted, at a certain inconclusiveness in her tone rather than her words.

"Well, you can see that it, isn't ideal."

"Why isn't it ideal? I suppose you think that the marriage of Burnamy and Agatha Triscoe will be ideal, with their ignorances and inexperience and illusions."

"Yes! It's the illusions: no marriage can be perfect without them, and at their age the Kenbys can't have them."

"Kenby is a solid mass of illusion. And I believe that people can go and get as many new illusions as they want, whenever they've lost their old ones."

"Yes, but the new illusions won't wear so well; and in marriage you want illusions that will last. No; you needn't talk to me. It's all very well, but it isn't ideal."

March laughed. "Ideal! What is ideal?"

"Going home!" she said with such passion that he had not the heart to point out that they were merely returning to their old duties, cares and pains, with the worn-out illusion that these would be altogether different when they took them up again.

LXXIII.

In fulfilment of another ideal Mrs. March took straightway to her berth when she got on board the Cupania, and to her husband's admiration she remained there till the day before they reached New York. Her theory was that the complete rest would do more than anything else to calm her shaken nerves; and she did not admit into her calculations the chances of adverse weather which March would not suggest as probable in the last week in September. The event justified her unconscious faith. The ship's run was of unparalleled swiftness, even for the Cupania, and of unparalleled smoothness. For days the sea was as sleek as oil; the racks were never on the tables once; the voyage was of the sort which those who make it no more believe in at the time than those whom they afterwards weary in boasting of it.

The ship was very full, but Mrs. March did not show the slightest curiosity to know who her fellow-passengers were. She said that she wished to be let perfectly alone, even by her own emotions, and for this reason she forbade March to bring her a list of the passengers till after they had left Queenstown lest it should be too exciting. He did not take the trouble to look it up, therefore; and the first night out he saw no one whom he knew at dinner; but the next morning at breakfast he found himself to his great satisfaction at the same table with the Eltwins. They were so much at ease with him that even Mrs. Eltwin took part in the talk, and told him how they had spent the time of her husband's rigorous after-cure in Switzerland, and now he was going home much better than they had expected. She said they had rather thought of spending the winter in Europe, but had given it up because they were both a little homesick. March confessed that this was exactly the case with his wife and himself; and he had to add that Mrs. March was not very well otherwise, and he should be glad to be at home on her account. The recurrence of the word home seemed to deepen Eltwin's habitual gloom, and Mrs. Eltwin hastened to leave the subject of their return for inquiry into Mrs. March's condition; her interest did not so far overcome her shyness that she ventured to propose a visit to her; and March found that the fact of the Eltwins' presence on board did not agitate his wife. It seemed rather to comfort her, and she said she hoped he would see all he could of the poor old things. She asked if he had met any one else he knew, and he was able to tell her that there seemed to be a good many swells on board, and this cheered her very much, though he did not know them; she liked to be near the rose, though it was not a flower that she really cared for.

She did not ask who the swells were, and March took no trouble to find out. He took no trouble to get a passenger-list, and he had the more trouble when he tried at last; the lists seemed to have all vanished, as they have a habit of doing, after the first day; the one that he made interest for with the head steward was a second-hand copy, and had no one he knew in it but the Eltwins. The social solitude, however, was rather favorable to certain other impressions. There seemed even more elderly people than there were on the Norumbia; the human atmosphere was gray and sober; there was nothing of the gay expansion of the outward voyage;

there was little talking or laughing among those autumnal men who were going seriously and anxiously home, with faces fiercely set for the coming grapple; or necks meekly bowed for the yoke. They had eaten their cake, and it had been good, but there remained a discomfort in the digestion. They sat about in silence, and March fancied that the flown summer was as dreamlike to each of them as it now was to him. He hated to be of their dreary company, but spiritually he knew that he was of it; and he vainly turned to cheer himself with the younger passengers. Some matrons who went about clad in furs amused him, for they must have been unpleasantly warm in their jackets and boas; nothing but the hope of being able to tell the customs inspector with a good conscience that the things had been worn, would have sustained one lady draped from head to foot in Astrakhan.

They were all getting themselves ready for the fray or the play of the coming winter; but there seemed nothing joyous in the preparation. There were many young girls, as there always are everywhere, but there were not many young men, and such as there were kept to the smoking-room. There was no sign of flirtation among them; he would have given much for a moment of the pivotal girl, to see whether she could have brightened those gloomy surfaces with her impartial lamp. March wished that he could have brought some report from the outer world to cheer his wife, as he descended to their state-room. They had taken what they could get at the eleventh hour, and they had got no such ideal room as they had in the Norumbia. It was, as Mrs. March graphically said, a basement room. It was on the north side of the ship, which is a cold exposure, and if there had been any sun it could not have got into their window, which was half the time under water. The green waves, laced with foam, hissed as they ran across the port; and the electric fan in the corridor moaned like the wind in a gable.

He felt a sinking of the heart as he pushed the state-room door open, and looked at his wife lying with her face turned to the wall; and he was going to withdraw, thinking her asleep, when she said quietly, "Are we going down?"

"Not that I know of," he answered with a gayety he did not feel. "But I'll ask the head steward."

She put out her hand behind her for him to take, and clutched his fingers convulsively. "If I'm never any better, you will always remember this happy, summer, won't you? Oh, it's been such a happy summer! It has been one long joy, one continued triumph! But it was too late; we were too old; and it's broken me."

The time had been when he would have attempted comfort; when he would have tried mocking; but that time was long past; he could only pray inwardly for some sort of diversion, but what it was to be in their barren circumstance he was obliged to leave altogether to Providence. He ventured, pending an answer to his prayers upon the question, "Don't you think I'd better see the doctor, and get you some sort of tonic?"

She suddenly turned and faced him. "The doctor! Why, I'm not sick,

Basil! If you can see the purser and get our rooms changed, or do something to stop those waves from slapping against that horrible blinking one-eyed window, you can save my life; but no tonic is going to help me."

She turned her face from him again, and buried it in the bedclothes, while he looked desperately at the racing waves, and the port that seemed to open and shut like a weary eye.

"Oh, go away!" she implored. "I shall be better presently, but if you stand there like that--Go and see if you can't get some other room, where I needn't feel as if I were drowning, all the way over."

He obeyed, so far as to go away at once, and having once started, he did not stop short of the purser's office. He made an excuse of getting greenbacks for some English bank-notes, and then he said casually that he supposed there would be no chance of having his room on the lower deck changed for something a little less intimate with the sea. The purser was not there to take the humorous view, but he conceived that March wanted something higher up, and he was able to offer him a room of those on the promenade where he had seen swells going in and out, for six hundred dollars. March did not blench, but said he would get his wife to look at it with him, and then he went out somewhat dizzily to take counsel with himself how he should put the matter to her. She would be sure to ask what the price of the new room would be, and he debated whether to take it and tell her some kindly lie about it, or trust to the bracing effect of the sum named in helping restore the lost balance of her nerves. He was not so rich that he could throw six hundred dollars away, but there might be worse things; and he walked up and down thinking. All at once it flashed upon him that he had better see the doctor, anyway, and find out whether there were not some last hope in medicine before he took the desperate step before him. He turned in half his course, and ran into a lady who had just emerged from the door of the promenade laden with wraps, and who dropped them all and clutched him to save herself from falling.

"Why, Mr. March!" she shrieked.

"Miss Triscoe!" he returned, in the astonishment which he shared with her to the extent of letting the shawls he had knocked from her hold lie between them till she began to pick them up herself. Then he joined her and in the relief of their common occupation they contrived to possess each other of the reason of their presence on, the same boat. She had sorrowed over Mrs. March's sad state, and he had grieved to hear that her father was going home because he was not at all well, before they found the general stretched out in his steamer-chair, and waiting with a grim impatience for his daughter.

"But how is it you're not in the passenger-list?" he inquired of them both, and Miss Triscoe explained that they had taken their passage at the last moment, too late, she supposed, to get into the list. They were in London, and had run down to Liverpool on the chance of getting berths. Beyond this she was not definite, and there was an absence of Burnamy not

only from her company but from her conversation which mystified March through all his selfish preoccupations with his wife. She was a girl who had her reserves, but for a girl who had so lately and rapturously written them of her engagement, there was a silence concerning her betrothed that had almost positive quality. With his longing to try Miss Triscoe upon Mrs. March's malady as a remedial agent, he had now the desire to try Mrs. March upon Miss Triscoe's mystery as a solvent. She stood talking to him, and refusing to sit down and be wrapped up in the chair next her father. She said that if he were going to ask Mrs. March to let her come to her, it would not be worth while to sit down; and he hurried below.

"Did you get it?" asked his wife, without looking round, but not so apathetically as before.

"Oh, yes. That's all right. But now, Isabel, there's something I've got to tell you. You'd find it out, and you'd better know it at once."

She turned her face, and asked sternly, "What is it?"

Then he said, with, an almost equal severity, "Miss Triscoe is on board. Miss Triscoe-and-her-father. She wishes to come down and see you."

Mrs. March sat up and began to twist her hair into shape. "And Burnamy?"

"There is no Burnamy physically, or so far as I can make out, spiritually. She didn't mention him, and I talked at least five minutes with her."

"Hand me my dressing-sack," said Mrs. March, "and poke those things on the sofa under the berth. Shut up that wash-stand, and pull the curtain across that hideous window. Stop! Throw those towels into your berth. Put my shoes, and your slippers into the shoe-bag on the door. Slip the brushes into that other bag. Beat the dent out of the sofa cushion that your head has made. Now!"

"Then--then you will see her?"

"See her!"

Her voice was so terrible that he fled before it, and he returned with Miss Triscoe in a dreamlike simultaneity. He remembered, as he led the way into his corridor, to apologize for bringing her down into a basement room.

"Oh, we're in the basement, too; it was all we could get," she said in words that ended within the state-room he opened to her. Then he went back and took her chair and wraps beside her father.

He let the general himself lead the way up to his health, which he was not slow in reaching, and was not quick in leaving. He reminded March of the state he had seen him in at Wurzburg, and he said it had gone from bad to worse with him. At Weimar he had taken to his bed and merely

escaped from it with his life. Then they had tried Schevleningen for a week, where, he said in a tone of some injury, they had rather thought they might find them, the Marches. The air had been poison to him, and they had come over to England with some notion of Bournemouth; but the doctor in London had thought not, and urged their going home. "All Europe is damp, you know, and dark as a pocket in winter," he ended.

There had been nothing about Burnamy, and March decided that he must wait to see his wife if he wished to know anything, when the general, who had been silent, twisted his head towards him, and said without regard to the context, "It was complicated, at Weimar, by that young man in the most devilish way. Did my daughter write to Mrs. March about--Well it came to nothing, after all; and I don't understand how, to this day. I doubt if they do. It was some sort of quarrel, I suppose. I wasn't consulted in the matter either way. It appears that parents are not consulted in these trifling affairs, nowadays." He had married his daughter's mother in open defiance of her father; but in the glare of his daughter's wilfulness this fact had whitened into pious obedience. "I dare say I shall be told, by-and-by, and shall be expected to approve of the result."

A fancy possessed March that by operation of temperamental laws General Triscoe was no more satisfied with Burnamy's final rejection than with his acceptance. If the engagement was ever to be renewed, it might be another thing; but as it stood, March divined a certain favor for the young man in the general's attitude. But the affair was altogether too delicate for comment; the general's aristocratic frankness in dealing with it might have gone farther if his knowledge had been greater; but in any case March did not see how he could touch it. He could only say, He had always liked Burnamy, himself.

He had his good qualities, the general owned. He did not profess to understand the young men of our time; but certainly the fellow had the instincts of a gentleman. He had nothing to say against him, unless in that business with that man--what was his name?

"Stoller?" March prompted. "I don't excuse him in that, but I don't blame him so much, either. If punishment means atonement, he had the opportunity of making that right very suddenly, and if pardon means expunction, then I don't see why that offence hasn't been pretty well wiped out.

"Those things are not so simple as they used to seem," said the general, with a seriousness beyond his wont in things that did not immediately concern his own comfort or advantage.

LXXVI.

In the mean time Mrs. March and Miss Triscoe were discussing another offence of Burnamy's.

"It wasn't," said the girl, excitedly, after a plunge through all the minor facts to the heart of the matter, "that he hadn't a perfect right to do it, if he thought I didn't care for him. I had refused him at Carlsbad, and I had forbidden him to speak to me about--on the subject. But that was merely temporary, and he ought to have known it. He ought to have known that I couldn't accept him, on the spur of the moment, that way; and when he had come back, after going away in disgrace, before he had done anything to justify himself. I couldn't have kept my self-respect; and as it was I had the greatest difficulty; and he ought to have seen it. Of course he said afterwards that he didn't see it. But when--when I found out that SHE had been in Weimar, and all that time, while I had been suffering in Carlsbad and Wurzburg, and longing to see him--let him know how I was really feeling--he was flirting with that--that girl, then I saw that he was a false nature, and I determined to put an end to everything. And that is what I did; and I shall always think I--did right--and--"

The rest was lost in Agatha's handkerchief, which she put up to her eyes. Mrs. March watched her from her pillow keeping the girl's unoccupied hand in her own, and softly pressing it till the storm was past sufficiently to allow her to be heard.

Then she said, "Men are very strange--the best of them. And from the very fact that he was disappointed, he would be all the more apt to rush into a flirtation with somebody else."

Miss Triscoe took down her handkerchief from a face that had certainly not been beautified by grief. "I didn't blame him for the flirting; or not so much. It was his keeping it from me afterwards. He ought to have told me the very first instant we were engaged. But he didn't. He let it go on, and if I hadn't happened on that bouquet I might never have known anything about it. That is what I mean by--a false nature. I wouldn't have minded his deceiving me; but to let me deceive myself--Oh, it was too much!"

Agatha hid her face in her handkerchief again. She was perching on the edge of the berth, and Mrs. March said, with a glance, which she did not see, toward the sofa, "I'm afraid that's rather a hard seat for you."

"Oh, no, thank you! I'm perfectly comfortable--I like it--if you don't mind?"

Mrs. March pressed her hand for answer, and after another little delay, sighed and said, "They are not like us, and we cannot help it. They are more temporizing."

"How do you mean?" Agatha unmasked again.

"They can bear to keep things better than we can, and they trust to time to bring them right, or to come right of themselves."

"I don't think Mr. March would trust things to come right of themselves!"

said Agatha in indignant accusal of Mrs. March's sincerity.

"Ah, that's just what he would do, my dear, and has done, all along; and I don't believe we could have lived through without it: we should have quarrelled ourselves into the grave!"

"Mrs. March!"

"Yes, indeed. I don't mean that he would ever deceive me. But he would let things go on, and hope that somehow they would come right without any fuss."

"Do you mean that he would let anybody deceive themselves?"

"I'm afraid he would--if he thought it would come right. It used to be a terrible trial to me; and it is yet, at times when I don't remember that he means nothing but good and kindness by it. Only the other day in Ansbach--how long ago it seems!--he let a poor old woman give him her son's address in Jersey City, and allowed her to believe he would look him up when we got back and tell him we had seen her. I don't believe, unless I keep right round after him, as we say in New England, that he'll ever go near the man."

Agatha looked daunted, but she said, "That is a very different thing."

"It isn't a different kind of thing. And it shows what men are,--the sweetest and best of them, that is. They are terribly apt to be --easy-going."

"Then you think I was all wrong?" the girl asked in a tremor.

"No, indeed! You were right, because you really expected perfection of him. You expected the ideal. And that's what makes all the trouble, in married life: we expect too much of each other--we each expect more of the other than we are willing to give or can give. If I had to begin over again, I should not expect anything at all, and then I should be sure of being radiantly happy. But all this talking and all this writing about love seems to turn our brains; we know that men are not perfect, even at our craziest, because women are not, but we expect perfection of them; and they seem to expect it of us, poor things! If we could keep on after we are in love just as we were before we were in love, and take nice things as favors and surprises, as we did in the beginning! But we get more and more greedy and exacting--"

"Do you think I was too exacting in wanting him to tell me everything after we were engaged?"

"No, I don't say that. But suppose he had put it off till you were married?" Agatha blushed a little, but not painfully, "Would it have been so bad? Then you might have thought that his flirting up to the last moment in his desperation was a very good joke. You would have understood better just how it was, and it might even have made you fonder of him. You might have seen that he had flirted with some one else

because he was so heart-broken about you."

"Then you believe that if I could have waited till--till--but when I had found out, don't you see I couldn't wait? It would have been all very well if I hadn't known it till then. But as I did know it. Don't you see?"

"Yes, that certainly complicated it," Mrs. March admitted. "But I don't think, if he'd been a false nature, he'd have owned up as he did. You see, he didn't try to deny it; and that's a great point gained."

"Yes, that is true," said Agatha, with conviction. "I saw that afterwards. But you don't think, Mrs. March, that I was unjust or--or hasty?"

"No, indeed! You couldn't have done differently under the circumstances. You may be sure he felt that--he is so unselfish and generous--" Agatha began to weep into her handkerchief again; Mrs. March caressed her hand. "And it will certainly come right if you feel as you do."

"No," the girl protested. "He can never forgive me; it's all over, everything is over. It would make very little difference to me, what happened now--if the steamer broke her shaft, or anything. But if I can only believe I wasn't unjust--"

Mrs. March assured her once more that she had behaved with absolute impartiality; and she proved to her by a process of reasoning quite irrefragable that it was only a question of time, with which place had nothing to do, when she and Burnamy should come together again, and all should be made right between them. The fact that she did not know where he was, any more than Mrs. March herself, had nothing to do with the result; that was a mere detail, which would settle itself. She clinched her argument by confessing that her own engagement had been broken off, and that it had simply renewed itself. All you had to do was to keep willing it, and waiting. There was something very mysterious in it.

"And how long was it till--" Agatha faltered.

"Well, in our ease it was two years."

"Oh!" said the girl, but Mrs. March hastened to reassure her.

"But our case was very peculiar. I could see afterwards that it needn't have been two months, if I had been willing to acknowledge at once that I was in the wrong. I waited till we met."

"If I felt that I was in the wrong, I should write," said Agatha.

"I shouldn't care what he thought of my doing it."

"Yes, the great thing is to make sure that you were wrong."

They remained talking so long, that March and the general had exhausted all the topics of common interest, and had even gone through those they

did not care for. At last the general said, "I'm afraid my daughter will tire Mrs. March."

"Oh, I don't think she'll tire my wife. But do you want her?"

"Well, when you're going down."

"I think I'll take a turn about the deck, and start my circulation," said March, and he did so before he went below.

He found his wife up and dressed, and waiting provisionally on the sofa. "I thought I might as well go to lunch," she said, and then she told him about Agatha and Burnamy, and the means she had employed to comfort and encourage the girl. "And now, dearest, I want you to find out where Burnamy is, and give him a hint. You will, won't you! If you could have seen how unhappy she was!"

"I don't think I should have cared, and I'm certainly not going to meddle. I think Burnamy has got no more than he deserved, and that he's well rid of her. I can't imagine a broken engagement that would more completely meet my approval. As the case stands, they have my blessing."

"Don't say that, dearest! You know you don't mean it."

"I do; and I advise you to keep your hands off. You've done all and more than you ought to propitiate Miss Triscoe. You've offered yourself up, and you've offered me up--"

"No, no, Basil! I merely used you as an illustration of what men were-- the best of them."

"And I can't observe," he continued, "that any one else has been considered in the matter. Is Miss Triscoe the sole sufferer by Burnamy's flirtation? What is the matter with a little compassion for the pivotal girl?"

"Now, you know you're not serious," said his wife; and though he would not admit this, he could not be seriously sorry for the new interest which she took in the affair. There was no longer any question of changing their state-room. Under the tonic influence of the excitement she did not go back to her berth after lunch, and she was up later after dinner than he could have advised. She was absorbed in Agatha, but in her liberation from her hypochondria, she began also to make a comparative study of the American swells, in the light of her late experience with the German highhotes. It is true that none of the swells gave her the opportunity of examining them at close range, as the highhotes had done. They kept to their, state-rooms mostly, where, after he thought she could bear it, March told her how near he had come to making her their equal by an outlay of six hundred dollars. She now shuddered at the thought; but she contended that in their magnificent exclusiveness they could give points to European princes; and that this showed again how when Americans did try to do a thing, they beat the world. Agatha Triscoe knew who they were, but she did not know them;

they belonged to another kind of set; she spoke of them as "rich people," and she seemed content to keep away from them with Mrs. March and with the shy, silent old wife of Major Eltwin, to whom March sometimes found her talking.

He never found her father talking with Major Eltwin. General Triscoe had his own friends in the smoking-room, where he held forth in a certain corner on the chances of the approaching election in New York, and mocked their incredulity when he prophesied the success of Tammany and the return of the King. March himself much preferred Major Eltwin to the general and his friends; he lived back in the talk of the Ohioan into his own younger years in Indiana, and he was amused and touched to find how much the mid-Western life seemed still the same as he had known. The conditions had changed, but not so much as they had changed in the East and the farther West. The picture that the major drew of them in his own region was alluring; it made March homesick; though he knew that he should never go back to his native section. There was the comfort of kind in the major; and he had a vein of philosophy, spare but sweet, which March liked; he liked also the meekness which had come through sorrow upon a spirit which had once been proud.

They had both the elderly man's habit of early rising, and they usually found themselves together waiting impatiently for the cup of coffee, ingeniously bad, which they served on the Cupania not earlier than half past six, in strict observance of a rule of the line discouraging to people of their habits. March admired the vileness of the decoction, which he said could not be got anywhere out of the British Empire, and he asked Eltwin the first morning if he had noticed how instantly on the Channel boat they had dropped to it and to the sour, heavy, sodden British bread, from the spirited and airy Continental tradition of coffee and rolls.

The major confessed that he was no great hand to notice such things, and he said he supposed that if the line had never lost a passenger, and got you to New York in six days it had a right to feed you as it pleased; he surmised that if they could get their airing outside before they took their coffee, it would give the coffee a chance to taste better; and this was what they afterwards did. They met, well buttoned and well mined up, on the promenade when it was yet so early that they were not at once sure of each other in the twilight, and watched the morning planets pale east and west before the sun rose. Sometimes there were no paling planets and no rising sun, and a black sea, ridged with white, tossed under a low dark sky with dim rifts.

One morning, they saw the sun rise with a serenity and majesty which it rarely has outside of the theatre. The dawn began over that sea which was like the rumpled canvas imitations of the sea on the stage, under long mauve clouds bathed in solemn light. Above these, in the pale tender sky, two silver stars hung, and the steamer's smoke drifted across them like a thin dusky veil. To the right a bank of dun cloud began to burn crimson, and to burn brighter till it was like a low hill-side full of gorgeous rugosities fleeced with a dense dwarfish growth of autumnal shrubs. The whole eastern heaven softened and flushed through diaphanous

mists; the west remained a livid mystery. The eastern masses and flakes of cloud began to kindle keenly; but the stars shone clearly, and then one star, till the tawny pink hid it. All the zenith reddened, but still the sun did not show except in the color of the brilliant clouds. At last the lurid horizon began to burn like a flame-shot smoke, and a fiercely bright disc edge pierced its level, and swiftly defined itself as the sun's orb.

Many thoughts went through March's mind; some of them were sad, but in some there was a touch of hopefulness. It might have been that beauty which consoled him for his years; somehow he felt himself, if no longer young, a part of the young immortal frame of things. His state was indefinable, but he longed to hint at it to his companion.

"Yes," said Eltwin, with a long deep sigh. "I feel as if I could walk out through that brightness and find her. I reckon that such hopes wouldn't be allowed to lie to us; that so many ages of men couldn't have fooled themselves so. I'm glad I've seen this." He was silent and they both remained watching the rising sun till they could not bear its splendor. "Now," said the major, "it must be time for that mud, as you call it." Over their coffee and crackers at the end of the table which they had to themselves, he resumed. "I was thinking all the time-- we seem to think half a dozen things at once, and this was one of them-- about a piece of business I've got to settle when I reach home; and perhaps you can advise me about it; you're an editor. I've got a newspaper on my hands; I reckon it would be a pretty good thing, if it had a chance; but I don't know what to do with it: I got it in trade with a fellow who has to go West for his lungs, but he's staying till I get back. What's become of that young chap--what's his name?--that went out with us?"

"Burnamy?" prompted March, rather breathlessly.

"Yes. Couldn't he take hold of it? I rather liked him. He's smart, isn't he?"

"Very," said March. "But I don't know where he is. I don't know that he would go into the country--. But he might, if--"

They entered provisionally into the case, and for argument's sake supposed that Burnamy would take hold of the major's paper if he could be got at. It really looked to March like a good chance for him, on Eltwin's showing; but he was not confident of Burnamy's turning up very soon, and he gave the major a pretty clear notion why, by entering into the young fellow's history for the last three months.

"Isn't it the very irony of fate?" he said to his wife when he found her in their room with a cup of the same mud he had been drinking, and reported the facts to her.

"Irony?" she said, with all the excitement he could have imagined or desired. "Nothing of the kind. It's a leading, if ever there was one. It will be the easiest thing in the world to find Burnamy. And out there

she can sit on her steps!"

He slowly groped his way to her meaning, through the hypothesis of Burnamy's reconciliation and marriage with Agatha Triscoe, and their settlement in Major Eltwin's town under social conditions that implied a habit of spending the summer evenings on their front porch. While he was doing this she showered him with questions and conjectures and requisitions in which nothing but the impossibility of going ashore saved him from the instant devotion of all his energies to a world-wide, inquiry into Burnamy's whereabouts.

The next morning he was up before Major Eltwin got out, and found the second-cabin passengers free of the first-cabin promenade at an hour when their superiors were not using it. As he watched these inferiors, decent-looking, well-clad men and women, enjoying their privilege with a furtive air, and with stolen glances at him, he asked himself in what sort he was their superior, till the inquiry grew painful. Then he rose from his chair, and made his way to the place where the material barrier between them was lifted, and interested himself in a few of them who seemed too proud to avail themselves of his society on the terms made. A figure seized his attention with a sudden fascination of conjecture and rejection: the figure of a tall young man who came out on the promenade and without looking round, walked swiftly away to the bow of the ship, and stood there, looking down at the water in an attitude which was bewilderingly familiar. His movement, his posture, his dress, even, was that of Burnamy, and March, after a first flush of pleasure, felt a sickening repulsion in the notion of his presence. It would have been such a cheap performance on the part of life, which has all sorts of chances at command, and need not descend to the poor tricks of second-rate fiction; and he accused Burnamy of a complicity in the bad taste of the affair, though he realized, when he reflected, that if it were really Burnamy he must have sailed in as much unconsciousness of the Triscoes as he himself had done. He had probably got out of money and had hurried home while he had still enough to pay the second-cabin fare on the first boat back. Clearly he was not to blame, but life was to blame for such a shabby device; and March felt this so keenly that he wished to turn from the situation, and have nothing to do with it. He kept moving toward him, drawn by the fatal attraction, and at a few paces' distance the young man whirled about and showed him the face of a stranger.

March made some witless remark on the rapid course of the ship as it cut its way through the water of the bow; the stranger answered with a strong Lancashire accent; and in the talk which followed, he said he was going out to see the cotton-mills at Fall River and New Bedford, and he seemed hopeful of some advice or information from March; then he said he must go and try to get his Missus out; March understood him to mean his wife, and he hurried down to his own, to whom he related his hair-breadth escape from Burnamy.

"I don't call it an escape at all!" she declared. "I call it the greatest possible misfortune. If it had been Burnamy we could have brought them together at once, just when she has seen so clearly that she was in the wrong, and is feeling all broken up. There wouldn't have been

any difficulty about his being in the second-cabin. We could have contrived to have them meet somehow. If the worst came to the worst you could have lent him money to pay the difference, and got him into the first-cabin."

"I could have taken that six-hundred-dollar room for him," said March, "and then he could have eaten with the swells."

She answered that now he was teasing; that he was fundamentally incapable of taking anything seriously; and in the end he retired before the stewardess bringing her first coffee, with a well-merited feeling that if it had not been for his triviality the young Lancashireman would really have been Burnamy.

LXXV.

Except for the first day and night out from Queenstown, when the ship rolled and pitched with straining and squeaking noises, and a thumping of the lifted screws, there was no rough weather, and at last the ocean was livid and oily, with a long swell, on which she swayed with no perceptible motion save from her machinery.

Most of the seamanship seemed to be done after dark, or in those early hours when March found the stewards cleaning the stairs, and the sailors scouring the promenades. He made little acquaintance with his fellow-passengers. One morning he almost spoke with an old Quaker lady whom he joined in looking at the Niagara flood which poured from the churning screws; but he did not quite get the words out. On the contrary he talked freely with an American who, bred horses on a farm near Boulogne, and was going home to the Horse Show; he had been thirty-five years out of the country, but he had preserved his Yankee accent in all its purity, and was the most typical-looking American on board. Now and then March walked up and down with a blond Mexican whom he found of the usual well-ordered Latin intelligence, but rather flavorless; at times he sat beside a nice Jew, who talked agreeably, but only about business; and he philosophized the race as so tiresome often because it seemed so often without philosophy. He made desperate attempts at times to interest himself in the pool-selling in the smoking-room where the betting on the ship's wonderful run was continual.

He thought that people talked less and less as they drew nearer home; but on the last day out there was a sudden expansion, and some whom he had not spoken with voluntarily addressed him. The sweet, soft air was like midsummer the water rippled gently, without a swell, blue under the clear sky, and the ship left a wide track that was silver in the sun. There were more sail; the first and second class baggage was got up and piled along the steerage deck.

Some people dressed a little more than usual for the last dinner which was earlier than usual, so as to be out of the way against the arrival

which had been variously predicted at from five to seven-thirty. An indescribable nervousness culminated with the appearance of the customs officers on board, who spread their papers on cleared spaces of the dining-tables, and summoned the passengers to declare that they had nothing to declare, as a preliminary to being searched like thieves at the dock.

This ceremony proceeded while the Cupania made her way up the Narrows, and into the North River, where the flare of lights from the crazy steeps and cliffs of architecture on the New York shore seemed a persistence of the last Fourth of July pyrotechnics. March blushed for the grotesque splendor of the spectacle, and was confounded to find some Englishmen admiring it, till he remembered that aesthetics were not the strong point of our race. His wife sat hand in hand with Miss Triscoe, and from time to time made him count the pieces of small baggage in the keeping of their steward; while General Triscoe held aloof in a sarcastic calm.

The steamer groped into her dock; the gangways were lifted to her side; the passengers fumbled and stumbled down their incline, and at the bottom the Marches found themselves respectively in the arms of their son and daughter. They all began talking at once, and ignoring and trying to remember the Triscoes to whom the young Marches were presented. Bella did her best to be polite to Agatha, and Tom offered to get an inspector for the general at the same time as for his father. Then March, remorsefully remembered the Eltwins, and looked about for them, so that his son might get them an inspector too. He found the major already in the hands of an inspector, who was passing all his pieces after carelessly looking into one: the official who received the declarations on board had noted a Grand Army button like his own in the major's lapel, and had marked his fellow-veteran's paper with the mystic sign which procures for the bearer the honor of being promptly treated as a smuggler, while the less favored have to wait longer for this indignity at the hands of their government. When March's own inspector came he was as civil and lenient as our hateful law allows; when he had finished March tried to put a bank-note in his hand, and was brought to a just shame by his refusal of it. The bed-room steward keeping guard over the baggage helped put-it together after the search, and protested that March had feed him so handsomely that he would stay there with it as long as they wished. This partly restored March's self-respect, and he could share in General Triscoe's indignation with the Treasury ruling which obliged him to pay duty on his own purchases in excess of the hundred-dollar limit, though his daughter had brought nothing, and they jointly came far within the limit for two.

He found that the Triscoes were going to a quiet old hotel on the way to Stuyvesant Square, quite in his own neighborhood, and he quickly arranged for all the ladies and the general to drive together while he was to follow with his son on foot and by car. They got away from the scene of the customs' havoc while the steamer shed, with its vast darkness dimly lit by its many lamps, still showed like a battle-field where the inspectors groped among the scattered baggage like details from the victorious army searching for the wounded. His son clapped him on the shoulder when he suggested this notion, and said he was the same old

father; and they got home as gayly together as the dispiriting influences of the New York ugliness would permit. It was still in those good and decent times, now so remote, when the city got something for the money paid out to keep its streets clean, and those they passed through were not foul but merely mean.

The ignoble effect culminated when they came into Broadway, and found its sidewalks, at an hour when those of any European metropolis would have been brilliant with life, as unpeopled as those of a minor country town, while long processions of cable-cars carted heaps of men and women up and down the thoroughfare amidst the deformities of the architecture.

The next morning the March family breakfasted late after an evening prolonged beyond midnight in spite of half-hourly agreements that now they must really all go to bed. The children had both to recognize again and again how well their parents were looking; Tom had to tell his father about the condition of 'Every Other Week'; Bella had to explain to her mother how sorry her husband was that he could not come on to meet them with her, but was coming a week later to take her home, and then she would know the reason why they could not all, go back to Chicago with him: it was just the place for her father to live, for everybody to live. At breakfast she renewed the reasoning with which she had maintained her position the night before; the travellers entered into a full expression of their joy at being home again; March asked what had become of that stray parrot which they had left in the tree-top the morning they started; and Mrs. March declared that this was the last Silver Wedding Journey she ever wished to take, and tried to convince them all that she had been on the verge of nervous collapse when she reached the ship. They sat at table till she discovered that it was very nearly eleven o'clock, and said it was disgraceful.

Before they rose, there was a ring at the door, and a card was brought in to Tom. He glanced at it, and said to his father, "Oh, yes! This man has been haunting the office for the last three days. He's got to leave to-day, and as it seemed to be rather a case of life and death with him, I said he'd probably find you here this morning. But if you don't want to see him, I can put him off till afternoon, I suppose."

He tossed the card to his father, who looked at it quietly, and then gave it to his wife. "Perhaps I'd as well see him?"

"See him!" she returned in accents in which all the intensity of her soul was centred. By an effort of self-control which no words can convey a just sense of she remained with her children, while her husband with a laugh more teasing than can be imagined went into the drawing-room to meet Burnamy.

The poor fellow was in an effect of belated summer as to clothes, and he looked not merely haggard but shabby. He made an effort for dignity as well as gayety, however, in stating himself to March, with many apologies for his persistency. But, he said, he was on his way West, and he was anxious to know whether there was any chance of his 'Kasper Hauler' paper being taken if he finished it up. March would have been a far harder-

hearted editor than he was, if he could have discouraged the suppliant before him. He said he would take the Kasper Hauler paper and add a band of music to the usual rate of ten dollars a thousand words. Then Burnamy's dignity gave way, if not his gayety; he began to laugh, and suddenly he broke down and confessed that he had come home in the steerage; and was at his last cent, beyond his fare to Chicago. His straw hat looked like a withered leaf in the light of his sad facts; his thin overcoat affected March's imagination as something like the diaphanous cast shell of a locust, hopelessly resumed for comfort at the approach of autumn. He made Burnamy sit down, after he had once risen, and he told him of Major Eltwin's wish to see him; and he promised to go round with him to the major's hotel before the Eltwins left town that afternoon.

While he prolonged the interview in this way, Mrs. March was kept from breaking in upon them only by the psychical experiment which she was making with the help and sympathy of her daughter at the window of the dining-room which looked up Sixteenth Street. At the first hint she gave of the emotional situation which Burnamy was a main part of, her son; with the brutal contempt of young men for other young men's love affairs, said he must go to the office; he bade his mother tell his father there was no need of his coming down that day, and he left the two women together. This gave the mother a chance to develop the whole fact to the daughter with telegraphic rapidity and brevity, and then to enrich the first-outline with innumerable details, while they both remained at the window, and Mrs. March said at two-minutely intervals, with no sense of iteration for either of them, "I told her to come in the morning, if she felt like it, and I know she will. But if she doesn't, I shall say there is nothing in fate, or Providence either. At any rate I'm going to stay here and keep longing for her, and we'll see whether there's anything in that silly theory of your father's. I don't believe there is," she said, to be on the safe side.

Even when she saw Agatha Triscoe enter the park gate on Rutherford Place, she saved herself from disappointment by declaring that she was not coming across to their house. As the girl persisted in coming and coming, and at last came so near that she caught sight of Mrs. March at the window and nodded, the mother turned ungratefully upon her daughter, and drove her away to her own room, so that no society detail should hinder the divine chance. She went to the door herself when Agatha rang, and then she was going to open the way into the parlor where March was still closeted with Burnamy, and pretend that she had not known they were there. But a soberer second thought than this prevailed, and she told the girl who it was that was within and explained the accident of his presence. "I think," she said nobly, "that you ought to have the chance of going away if you don't wish to meet him."

The girl, with that heroic precipitation which Mrs. March had noted in her from the first with regard to what she wanted to do, when Burnamy was in question, answered, "But I do wish to meet him, Mrs. March."

While they stood looking at each other, March came out to ask his wife if she would see Burnamy, and she permitted herself so much stratagem as to

substitute Agatha, after catching her husband aside and subduing his proposed greeting of the girl to a hasty handshake.

Half an hour later she thought it time to join the young people, urged largely by the frantic interest of her daughter. But she returned from the half-open door without entering. "I couldn't bring myself to break in on the poor things. They are standing at the window together looking over at St. George's."

Bella silently clasped her hands. March gave cynical laugh, and said, "Well we are in for it, my dear." Then he added, "I hope they'll take us with them on their Silver Wedding Journey."

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Declare that they had nothing to declare
Despair which any perfection inspires
Disingenuous, hypocritical passion of love
Fundamentally incapable of taking anything seriously
Held aloof in a sarcastic calm
Illusions: no marriage can be perfect without them
Married life: we expect too much of each other
Not do to be perfectly frank with one's own country
Offence which any difference of taste was apt to give him
Passionate desire for excess in a bad thing
Puddles of the paths were drying up with the haste
Race seemed so often without philosophy
Self-sacrifice which could be had, as it were, at a bargain
She always came to his defence when he accused himself

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by William Dean Howells

ETEXT EDITORS BOOKMARKS FOR THE ENTIRE TRILOGY:

Affected absence of mind
Affectional habit
All the loveliness that exists outside of you, dearest is little
All luckiest or the unluckiest, the healthiest or the sickest
Americans are hungrier for royalty than anybody else
Amusing world, if you do not refuse to be amused
Anticipative homesickness

Anticipative reprisal
Any sort of stuff was good enough to make a preacher out of
Appearance made him doubt their ability to pay so much
Artists never do anything like other people
As much of his story as he meant to tell without prompting
At heart every man is a smuggler
Bad wars, or what are comically called good wars
Ballast of her instinctive despondency
Be good, sweet man, and let who will be clever
Beautiful with the radiance of loving and being loved
Bewildering labyrinth of error
Biggest place is always the kindest as well as the cruelest
Brag of his wife, as a good husband always does
Brown-stone fronts
But when we make that money here, no one loses it
Buttoned about him as if it concealed a bad conscience
Calm of those who have logic on their side
Civilly protested and consented
Clinging persistence of such natures
Coldly and inaccessibly vigilant
Collective silence which passes for sociality
Comfort of the critical attitude
Conscience weakens to the need that isn't
Considerable comfort in holding him accountable
Courage hadn't been put to the test
Courtship
Deadly summer day
Death is peace and pardon
Death is an exile that no remorse and no love can reach
Decided not to let the facts betray themselves by chance
Declare that they had nothing to declare
Despair which any perfection inspires
Did not idealize him, but in the highest effect she realized him
Dinner unites the idea of pleasure and duty
Disingenuous, hypocritical passion of love
Dividend: It's a chicken before it's hatched
Does any one deserve happiness
Does anything from without change us?
Dog that had plainly made up his mind to go mad
Effort to get on common ground with an inferior
Europe, where society has them, as it were, in a translation
Evil which will not let a man forgive his victim
Explained perhaps too fully
Extract what consolation lurks in the irreparable
Family buryin' grounds
Favorite stock of his go up and go down under the betting
Feeblest-minded are sure to lead the talk
Feeling rather ashamed,--for he had laughed too
Feeling of contempt for his unambitious destination
Flavors not very sharply distinguished from one another
Fundamentally incapable of taking anything seriously
Futility of travel
Gayety, which lasted beyond any apparent reason for it

Glad; which considering, they ceased to be
Got their laugh out of too many things in life
Guilty rapture of a deliberate dereliction
Had learned not to censure the irretrievable
Had no opinions that he was not ready to hold in abeyance
Handsome pittance
Happiness is so unreasonable
Happiness built upon and hedged about with misery
He expected to do the wrong thing when left to his own devices
He buys my poverty and not my will
Headache darkens the universe while it lasts
Heart that forgives but does not forget
Held aloof in a sarcastic calm
Helplessness begets a sense of irresponsibility
Helplessness accounts for many heroic facts in the world
Hemmed round with this eternal darkness of death
Homage which those who have not pay to those who have
Honest selfishness
Hopeful recklessness
How much can a man honestly earn without wronging or oppressing
Humanity may at last prevail over nationality
Hurry up and git well--or something
Hypothetical difficulty
I cannot endure this--this hopefulness of yours
I want to be sorry upon the easiest possible terms
I supposed I had the pleasure of my wife's acquaintance
I'm not afraid--I'm awfully demoralized
If you dread harm enough it is less likely to happen
Ignorant of her ignorance
Illusions: no marriage can be perfect without them
Impertinent prophecies of their enjoying it so much
Indispensable
Indulge safely in the pleasures of autobiography
Intrepid fancy that they had confronted fate
It had come as all such calamities come, from nothing
It must be your despair that helps you to bear up
It don't do any good to look at its drawbacks all the time
It 's the same as a promise, your not saying you wouldn't
Jesting mood in the face of all embarrassments
Justice must be paid for at every step in fees and costs
Less intrusive than if he had not been there
Less certain of everything that I used to be sure of
Life was like the life at a sea-side hotel, but more monotonous
Life of the ship, like the life of the sea: a sodden monotony
Life has taught him to truckle and trick
Long life of holidays which is happy marriage
Love of justice hurry them into sympathy with violence
Made money and do not yet know that money has made them
Madness of sight-seeing, which spoils travel
Man's willingness to abide in the present
Married life: we expect too much of each other
Married the whole mystifying world of womankind
Married for no other purpose than to avoid being an old maid

Marry for love two or three times
Monologue to which the wives of absent-minded men resign
Muddy draught which impudently affected to be coffee
Nervous woes of comfortable people
Never-blooming shrub
Never could have an emotion without desiring to analyze it
Night so bad that it was worse than no night at all
No man deserves to suffer at the hands of another
No longer the gross appetite for novelty
No right to burden our friends with our decisions
Not do to be perfectly frank with one's own country
Nothing so apt to end in mutual dislike,--except gratitude
Nothing so sad to her as a bride, unless it's a young mother
Novelists, who really have the charge of people's thinking
Oblivion of sleep
Offence which any difference of taste was apt to give him
Only so much clothing as the law compelled
Only one of them was to be desperate at a time
Our age caricatures our youth
Parkman
Passionate desire for excess in a bad thing
Patience with mediocrity putting on the style of genius
Patronizing spirit of travellers in a foreign country
People that have convictions are difficult
Person talks about taking lessons, as if they could learn it
Poverty as hopeless as any in the world
Prices fixed by his remorse
Puddles of the paths were drying up with the haste
Race seemed so often without philosophy
Recipes for dishes and diseases
Reckless and culpable optimism
Reconciliation with death which nature brings to life at last
Rejoice in everything that I haven't done
Rejoice as much at a non-marriage as a marriage
Repeated the nothings they had said already
Respect for your mind, but she don't think you've got any sense
Say when he is gone that the woman gets along better without him
Seemed the last phase of a world presently to be destroyed
Seeming interested in points necessarily indifferent to him
Self-sufficiency, without its vulgarity
Self-sacrifice which could be had, as it were, at a bargain
Servant of those he loved
She always came to his defence when he accused himself
She cares for him: that she was so cold shows that
She could bear his sympathy, but not its expression
Shouldn't care for the disgrace of being poor--its inconvenience
Sigh with which ladies recognize one another's martyrdom
So hard to give up doing anything we have meant to do
So old a world and groping still
Society: All its favors are really bargains
Sorry he hadn't asked more; that's human nature
Suffering under the drip-drip of his innocent egotism
Superstition that having and shining is the chief good

Superstition of the romances that love is once for all
That isn't very old--or not so old as it used to be
The knowledge of your helplessness in any circumstances
There is little proportion about either pain or pleasure
They were so near in age, though they were ten years apart
They can only do harm by an expression of sympathy
Timidity of the elder in the presence of the younger man
To do whatever one likes is finally to do nothing that one likes
Took the world as she found it, and made the best of it
Tragical character of heat
Travel, with all its annoyances and fatigues
Tried to be homesick for them, but failed
Turn to their children's opinion with deference
Typical anything else, is pretty difficult to find
Unfounded hope that sooner or later the weather would be fine
Used to having his decisions reached without his knowledge
Vexed by a sense of his own pitifulness
Voice of the common imbecility and incoherence
Voting-cattle whom they bought and sold
Wages are the measure of necessity and not of merit
We get too much into the hands of other people
We don't seem so much our own property
Weariness of buying
What we can be if we must
When you look it--live it
Wilful sufferers
Willingness to find poetry in things around them
Wish we didn't always recognize the facts as we do
Without realizing his cruelty, treated as a child
Woman harnessed with a dog to a cart
Wooded with the precise, severely disciplined German forests
Work he was so fond of and so weary of
Would sacrifice his best friend to a phrase

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by William Dean Howells

DR. BREEN'S PRACTICE.

By William Dean Howells

Near the verge of a bold promontory stands the hotel, and looks
southeastward over a sweep of sea unbroken to the horizon. Behind it
stretches the vast forest, which after two hundred years has resumed the

sterile coast wrested from it by the first Pilgrims, and has begun to efface the evidences of the inroad made in recent years by the bold speculator for whom Jocelyn's is named. The young birches and spruces are breast high in the drives and avenues at Jocelyn's; the low blackberry vines and the sweet fern cover the carefully-graded sidewalks, and obscure the divisions of the lots; the children of the boarders have found squawberries in the public square on the spot where the band-stand was to have been. The notion of a sea-side resort at this point was courageously conceived, and to a certain extent it was generously realized. Except for its remoteness from the railroad, a drawback which future enterprise might be expected to remedy in some way, the place has many natural advantages. The broad plateau is cooled by a breeze from the vast forests behind it, which comes laden with health and freshness from the young pines; the sea at its feet is warmed by the Gulf Stream to a temperature delicious for bathing. There are certainly mosquitoes from the woods; but there are mosquitoes everywhere, and the report that people have been driven away by them is manifestly untrue, for whoever comes to Jocelyn's remains. The beach at the foot of the bluff is almost a mile at its curve, and it is so smooth and hard that it glistens like polished marble when newly washed by the tide. It is true that you reach it from the top by a flight of eighty steps, but it was intended to have an elevator, like those near the Whirlpool at Niagara. In the mean time it is easy enough to go down, and the ladies go down every day, taking their novels or their needle-work with them. They have various notions of a bath: some conceive that it is bathing to sit in the edge of the water, and emit shrieks as the surge sweeps against them; others run boldly in, and after a moment of poignant hesitation jump up and down half-a-dozen times, and run out; yet others imagine it better to remain immersed to the chin for a given space, looking toward the shore with lips tightly shut and the breath held. But after the bath they are all of one mind; they lay their shawls on the warm sand, and, spreading out their hair to dry, they doze in the sun, in such coils and masses as the unconscious figure lends itself to. When they rise from their beds, they sit in the shelter of the cliff and knit or sew, while one of them reads aloud, and another stands watch to announce the coming of the seals, which frequent a reef near the shore in great numbers. It has been said at rival points on the coast that the ladies linger there in despair of ever being able to remount to the hotel. A young man who clambered along the shore from one of those points reported finding day after day the same young lady stretched out on the same shawl, drying the same yellow hair, who had apparently never gone upstairs since the season began. But the recurrence of this phenomenon in this spot at the very moment when the young man came by might have been accounted for upon other theories. Jocelyn's was so secluded that she could not have expected any one to find her there twice, and if she had expected this she would not have permitted it. Probably he saw a different young lady each time.

Many of the same boarders come year after year, and these tremble at the suggestion of a change for the better in Jocelyn's. The landlord has always believed that Jocelyn's would come up, some day, when times got better. He believes that the narrow-gauge railroad from New Leyden--arrested on paper at the disastrous moment when the fortunes of Jocelyn's felt the general crash--will be pushed through yet; and every summer he

promises that next summer they are going to have a steam-launch running twice a day from Leyden Harbor. But at present his house is visited once a day by a barge, as the New England coast-folks call the vehicle in which they convey city boarders to and from the station, and the old frequenters of the place hope that the station will never be nearer Jocelyn's than at present. Some of them are rich enough to afford a sojourn at more fashionable resorts; but most of them are not, though they are often people of polite tastes and of aesthetic employments. They talk with slight of the large watering-places, and probably they would not like them, though it is really economy that inspires their passion for Jocelyn's with most of them, and they know of the splendid weariness of Newport mostly by hearsay. New arrivals are not favored, but there are not often new arrivals at Jocelyn's. The chief business of the barge is to bring fresh meat for the table and the gaunt bag which contains the mail; for in the first flush of the enterprise the place was made a post-office, and the landlord is postmaster; he has the help of the lady-boarders in his official duties.

Scattered about among the young birches there are several of those pine frames known as shells, within easy walk of the hotel, where their inmates board. They are picturesque interiors, and are on informal terms with the public as to many domestic details. The lady of the house, doing her back hair at her dressing-room glass, is divided from her husband, smoking at the parlor fire-place, only by a partition of unlathed studding. The arrest of development in these shells is characteristic of everything about the place. None of the improvements invented since the hard times began have been added to Jocelyn's; lawntennis is still unknown there; but there is a croquet-ground before the hotel, where the short, tough grass is kept in tolerable order. The wickets are pretty rusty, and it is usually the children who play; but toward the close of a certain, afternoon a young lady was pushing the balls about there. She seemed to be going over a game just played, and trying to trace the cause of her failure. She made bad shots, and laughed at her blunders. Another young lady drooped languidly on a bench at the side of the croquet-ground, and followed her movements with indifference.

"I don't see how you did it, Louise," panted the player; "it's astonishing how you beat me."

The lady on the bench made as if to answer, but ended by coughing hoarsely.

"Oh, dear child!" cried the first, dropping her mallet, and running to her. "You ought to have put on your shawl!" She lifted the knit shawl lying beside her on the bench, and laid it across the other's shoulders, and drew it close about her neck.

"Oh, don't!" said the other. "It chokes me to be bundled up so tight." She shrugged the shawl down to her shoulders with a pretty petulance. "If my chest's protected, that's all that's necessary." But she made no motion to drape the outline which her neatly-fitted dress displayed, and she did not move from her place, or look up at her anxious friend.

"Oh, but don't sit here, Louise," the latter pleaded, lingering near her.
"I was wrong to let you sit down at all after you had got heated."

"Well, Grace, I had to," said she who was called Louise. "I was so tired out. I'm not going to take more cold. I can always tell when I am. I'll put on the shawl in half a minute; or else I'll go in."

"I'm sure there's nothing to keep me out. That's the worst of these lonely places: my mind preys upon itself. That's what Dr. Nixon always said: he said it was no use in air so long as my mind preyed upon itself. He said that I ought to divert my mind all I could, and keep it from preying upon itself; that it was worth all the medicine in the world."

"That's perfectly true."

"Then you ought n't to keep reminding me all the time that I'm sick. That's what starts my mind to preying upon itself; and when it gets going once I can't stop it. I ought to treat myself just like a well person; that's what the doctor said."

The other stood looking at the speaker in frowning perplexity. She was a serious-faced girl, and now when she frowned her black brows met sternly above her gray eyes. But she controlled any impulse she had to severity, and asked gently, "Shall I send Bella to you?"

"Oh, no! I can't make society out of a child the whole time. I'll just sit here till the barge comes in. I suppose it will be as empty as a gourd, as usual." She added, with a sick and weary negligence, "I don't even know where Bella is. She's run off, somewhere."

"It's quite time she should be looked up, for tea. I'll wander out that way and look for her." She indicated the wilderness generally.

"Thanks," said Louise. She now gratefully drew her shawl up over her shoulders, and faced about on the bench so as to command an easy view of the arriving barge. The other met it on her way to the place in the woods where the children usually played, and found it as empty as her friend had foreboded. But the driver stopped his horses, and leaned out of the side of the wagon with a little package in his hand. He read the superscription, and then glanced consciously at the girl. "You're Miss Breen, ain't you?"

"Yes," she said, with lady-like sweetness and a sort of business-like alertness.

"Well," suggested the driver, "this is for Miss Grace Breen, M. D."

"For me, thank you," said the young lady. "I'm Dr. Breen." She put out her hand for the little package from the homoeopathic pharmacy in Boston; and the driver yielded it with a blush that reddened him to his hair. "Well," he said slowly, staring at the handsome girl, who did not visibly share his embarrassment, "they told me you was the one; but I could n't

seem to get it through me. I thought it must be the old lady."

"My mother is Mrs. Breen," the young lady briefly explained, and walked rapidly away, leaving the driver stuck in the heavy sand of Sea-Glimpse Avenue.

"Why, get up!" he shouted to his horses. "Goin' to stay here all day?"

He craned his neck round the side of the wagon for a sight of her.

"Well, dumm 'f I don't wish I was sick! Steps along," he mused, watching the swirl and ripple of her skirt, "like--I dunno what."

With her face turned from him Dr. Breen blushed, too; she was not yet so used to her quality of physician that she could coldly bear the confusion to which her being a doctor put men. She laughed a little to herself at the helplessness of the driver, confronted probably for the first time with a graduate of the New York homoeopathic school; but she believed that she had reasons for taking herself seriously in every way, and she had not entered upon this career without definite purposes. When she was not yet out of her teens, she had an unhappy love affair, which was always darkly referred to as a disappointment by people who knew of it at the time. Though the particulars of the case do not directly concern this story, it may be stated that the recreant lover afterwards married her dearest girl-friend, whom he had first met in her company. It was cruel enough, and the hurt went deep; but it neither crushed nor hardened her. It benumbed her for a time; she sank out of sight; but when she returned to the knowledge of the world she showed no mark of the blow except what was thought a strange eccentricity in a girl such as she had been. The world which had known her--it was that of an inland New England city--heard of her definitely after several years as a student of medicine in New York. Those who had more of her intimacy understood that she had chosen this work with the intention of giving her life to it, in the spirit in which other women enter convents, or go out to heathen lands; but probably this conception had its exaggerations. What was certain was that she was rich enough to have no need of her profession as a means of support, and that its study had cost her more than the usual suffering that it brings to persons of sensitive nerves. Some details were almost insuperably repugnant; but in schooling herself to them she believed that she was preparing to encounter anything in the application of her science.

Her first intention had been to go back to her own town after her graduation, and begin the practice of her profession among those who had always known her, and whose scrutiny and criticism would be hardest to bear, and therefore, as she fancied, the most useful to her in the formation of character. But afterwards she relinquished her purpose in favor of a design which she thought would be more useful to others: she planned going to one of the great factory towns, and beginning practice there, in company with an older physician, among the children of the operatives. Pending the completion of this arrangement, which was waiting upon the decision of the other lady, she had come to Jocelyn's with her mother, and with Mrs. Maynard, who had arrived from the West, aimlessly sick and unfriended, just as they were about leaving home. There was no resource but to invite her with them, and Dr. Breen was

finding her first patient in this unexpected guest. She did not wholly regret the accident; this, too, was useful work, though not that she would have chosen; but her mother, after a fortnight, openly repined, and could not mention Mrs. Maynard without some rebellious murmur. She was an old lady, who had once kept a very vigilant conscience for herself; but after making her life unhappy with it for some threescore years, she now applied it entirely to the exasperation and condemnation of others. She especially devoted it to fretting a New England girl's naturally morbid sense of duty in her daughter, and keeping it in the irritation of perpetual self-question. She had never actively opposed her studying medicine; that ambition had harmonized very well with certain radical tendencies of her own, and it was at least not marriage, which she had found tolerable only in its modified form of widowhood; but at every step after the decisive step was taken she was beset with misgivings lest Grace was not fully alive to the grave responsibilities of her office, which she accumulated upon the girl in proportion as she flung off all responsibilities of her own. She was doubtless deceived by that show of calm which sometimes deceived Grace herself, who, in tutoring her soul to bear what it had to bear, mistook her tense effort for spiritual repose, and scarcely realized through her tingling nerves the strain she was undergoing. In spite of the bitter experience of her life, she was still very ardent in her hopes of usefulness, very scornful of distress or discomfort to herself, and a little inclined to exact the heroism she was ready to show. She had a child's severe morality, and she had hardly learned to understand that there is much evil in the world that does not characterize the perpetrators: she held herself as strictly to account for every word and deed as she held others, and she had an almost passionate desire to meet the consequence of her errors; till that was felt, an intolerable doom hung over her. She tried not to be impulsive; that was criminal in one of her calling; and she struggled for patience with an endeavor that was largely successful.

As to the effect of her career outside of herself, and of those whom her skill was to benefit, she tried to think neither arrogantly nor meanly. She would not entertain the vanity that she was serving what is called the cause of woman, and she would not assume any duties or responsibilities toward it. She thought men were as good as women; at least one man had been no worse than one woman; and it was in no representative or exemplary character that she had chosen her course. At the same time that she held these sane opinions, she believed that she had put away the hopes with the pleasures that might once have taken her as a young girl. In regard to what had changed the current of her life, she mentally asserted her mere nullity, her absolute non-existence. The thought of it no longer rankled, and that interest could never be hers again. If it had not been so much like affectation, and so counter to her strong aesthetic instinct, she might have made her dress somehow significant of her complete abeyance in such matters; but as it was she only studied simplicity, and as we have seen from the impression of the barge-driver she did not finally escape distinction in dress and manner. In fact, she could not have escaped that effect if she would; and it was one of the indomitable contradictions of her nature that she would not.

When she came back to the croquet-ground, leading the little girl by the

hand, she found Mrs. Maynard no longer alone and no longer sad. She was chatting and laughing with a slim young fellow, whose gay blue eyes looked out of a sunburnt face, and whose straw hat, carried in his hand, exposed a closely shaven head. He wore a suit of gray flannel, and Mrs. Maynard explained that he was camping on the beach at Birkman's Cove, and had come over in the steamer with her when she returned from Europe. She introduced him as Mr. Libby, and said, "Oh, Bella, you dirty little thing!"

Mr. Libby bowed anxiously to Grace, and turned for refuge to the little girl. "Hello, Bella!" "Hello!" said the child. "Remember me?" The child put her left hand on that of Grace holding her right, and prettily pressed her head against the girl's arm in bashful silence. Grace said some coldly civil words to the young man: without looking at Mrs. Maynard, and passed on into the house.

"You don't mean that's your doctor?" he scarcely more than whispered.

"Yes, I do," answered Mrs. Maynard. "Is n't she too lovely? And she's just as good! She used to stand up at school for me, when all the girls were down on me because I was Western. And when I came East, this time, I just went right straight to her house. I knew she could tell me exactly what to do. And that's the reason I'm here. I shall always recommend this air to anybody with lung difficulties. It's the greatest thing! I'm almost another person. Oh, you need n't look after her, Mr. Libby! There's nothing flirtatious about Grace," said Mrs. Maynard.

The young man recovered himself from his absentminded stare in the direction Grace had taken, with a frank laugh. "So much the better for a fellow, I should say!"

Grace handed the little girl over to her nurse, and went to her own room, where she found her mother waiting to go down to tea.

"Where is Mrs. Maynard?" asked Mrs. Breen.

"Out on the croquet-ground," answered the daughter.

"I should think it would be damp," suggested Mrs. Green.

"She will come in when the tea-bell rings. She wouldn't come in now, if I told her."

"Well," said the elder lady, "for a person who lets her doctor pay her board, I think 'she's very independent."

"I wish you would n't speak of that, mother," said the girl.

"I can't help it, Grace. It's ridiculous,--that's what it is; it's ridiculous."

"I don't see anything ridiculous in it. A physician need not charge anything unless he chooses, or she; and if I choose to make Louise my

guest here it's quite the same as if she were my guest at home."

"I don't like you to have such a guest," said Mrs. Green. "I don't see what claim she has upon your hospitality."

"She has a double claim upon it," Grace answered, with a flush. "She is in sickness and in trouble. I don't see how she could have a better claim. Even if she were quite well I should consider the way she had been treated by her husband sufficient, and I should want to do everything I could for her."

"I should want her to behave herself," said Mrs. Green dryly.

"How behave herself? What do you mean?" demanded Grace, with guilty heat.

"You know what I mean, Grace. A woman in her position ought to be more circumspect than any other woman, if she wants people to believe that her husband treated her badly."

"We ought n't to blame her for trying to forget her troubles. It's essential to her recovery for her to be as cheerful as she can be. I know that she's impulsive, and she's free in her manners with strangers; but I suppose that's her Westernism. She's almost distracted. She was crying half the night, with her troubles, and kept Bella and me both awake."

"Is Bella with her now?"

"No," Grace admitted. "Jane's getting her ready to go down with us. Louise is talking with a gentleman who came over on the steamer with her; he's camping on the beach near here. I didn't wait to hear particulars."

When the nurse brought the little girl to their door, Mrs. Green took one hand and Grace the other, and they led her down to tea. Mrs. Maynard was already at table, and told them all about meeting Mr. Libby abroad.

Until the present time she and Grace had not seen each other since they were at school together in Southington, where the girl used to hear so much to the disadvantage of her native section that she would hardly have owned to it if her accent had not found her out. It would have been pleasanter to befriend another person, but the little Westerner suffered a veritable persecution, and that was enough to make Grace her friend. Shortly after she returned home from school she married, in that casual and tentative fashion in which so many marriages seem made. Grace had heard of her as travelling in Europe with her husband, from whom she was now separated. She reported that he had known Mr. Libby in his bachelor days, and that Mr. Libby had travelled with them. Mr. Maynard appeared to have left to Mr. Libby the arrangement of his wife's pleasures, the supervision of her shopping, and the direction of their common journeys and sojourns; and it seemed to have been indifferent to him whether his friend was smoking and telling stories with him, or going with his wife to the opera, or upon such excursions as he had no taste for. She gave

the details of the triangular intimacy with a frank unconsciousness; and after nine o'clock she returned from a moonlight walk on the beach with Mr. Libby.

Grace sat waiting for her at the little one's bedside, for Bella had been afraid to go to sleep alone.

"How good you are!" cried Louise, in a grateful under-tone, as she came in. She kissed Grace, and choked down a cough with her hand over her mouth.

"Louise," said Grace sternly, "this is shameful! You forget that you are married, and ill, too."

"Oh, I'm ever so much better, to-night. The air's just as dry! And you needn't mind Mr. Libby. He's such an old friend! Besides, I'm sure to gain the case."

"No matter. Even as a divorced woman, you oughtn't to go on in this way."

"Well, I would n't, with every one. But it's quite different with Mr. Libby. And, besides, I have to keep my mind from preying on itself somehow."

II.

Mrs. Maynard sat in the sun on the seaward-looking piazza of the hotel, and coughed in the warm air. She told the ladies, as they came out from breakfast, that she was ever so much better generally, but that she seemed to have more of that tickling in her throat. Each of them advised her for good, and suggested this specific and that; and they all asked her what Miss Breen was doing for her cough. Mrs. Maynard replied, between the paroxysms, that she did not know: it was some kind of powders. Then they said they would think she would want to try something active; even those among them who were homoeopaths insinuated a fine distrust of a physician of their own sex. "Oh, it's nothing serious," Mrs. Maynard explained. "It's just bronchial. The air will do me more good than anything. I'm keeping out in it all I can."

After they were gone, a queer, gaunt man came and glanced from the doorway at her. He had one eye in unnatural fixity, and the other set at that abnormal slant which is said to qualify the owner for looking round a corner before he gets to it. A droll twist of his mouth seemed partly physical, but: there is no doubt that he had often a humorous intention. It was Barlow, the man-of-all-work, who killed and plucked the poultry, peeled the potatoes and picked the peas, pulled the sweet-corn and the tomatoes, kindled the kitchen fire, harnessed the old splayfooted mare, --safe for ladies and children, and intolerable for all others, which formed the entire stud of the Jocelyn House stables,--dug the clams,

rowed and sailed the boat, looked after the bath-houses, and came in contact with the guests at so many points that he was on easy terms with them all. This ease tended to an intimacy which he was himself powerless to repress, and which, from time to time, required their intervention. He now wore a simple costume of shirt and trousers, the latter terminated by a pair of broken shoes, and sustained by what he called a single gallows; his broad-brimmed straw hat scooped down upon his shoulders behind, and in front added to his congenital difficulty of getting people in focus. "How do you do, this morning, Mrs. Maynard?" he said.

"Oh, I'm first-rate, Mr. Barlow. What sort of day do you think it's going to be for a sail?"

Barlow came out to the edge of the piazza, and looked at the sea and sky. "First-rate. Fog's most burnt away now. You don't often see a fog at Jocelyn's after ten o'clock in the mornin'."

He looked for approval to Mrs. Maynard, who said, "That's so. The air's just splendid. It 's doing everything for me."

"It's these pine woods, back o' here. Every breath on 'em does ye good. It's the balsam in it. D' you ever try," he asked, stretching his hand as far up the piazza-post as he could, and swinging into a conversational posture,--"d' you ever try whiskey--good odd Bourbon whiskey--with white-pine chips in it?"

Mrs. Maynard looked up with interest, but, shaking her head, coughed for no.

"Well, I should like to have you try that."

"What does it do?" she gasped, when she could get her breath.

"Well, it's soothin' t' the cough, and it builds ye up, every ways. Why, my brother," continued the factotum, "he died of consumption when I was a boy,--reg'lar old New England consumption. Don't hardly ever hear of it any more, round here. Well, I don't suppose there's been a case of reg'lar old New England consumption--well, not the old New England kind --since these woods growed up. He used to take whiskey with white-pine chips in it; and I can remember hearin 'em say that it done him more good than all the doctor's stuff. He'd been out to Demarary, and everywheres, and he come home in the last stages, and took up with this whiskey with whitepine chips in it. Well, it's just like this, I presume it's the balsam in the chips. It don't make any difference how you git the balsam into your system, so 's 't you git it there. I should like to have you try whiskey with white-pine chips in it."

He looked convincingly at Mrs. Maynard, who said she should like to try it. "It's just bronchial with me, you know. But I should like to try it. I know it would be soothing; and I've always heard that whiskey was the very thing to build you up. But," she added, lapsing from this vision of recovery, "I couldn't take it unless Grace said so. She'd be sure to find it out."

"Why, look here," said Barlow. "As far forth as that goes, you could keep the bottle in my room. Not but what I believe in going by your doctor's directions, it don't matter who your doctor is. I ain't sayin' nothin' against Miss Breen, you understand?"

"Oh, no!" cried Mrs. Maynard.

"I never see much nicer ladies than her and her mother in the house. But you just tell her about the whiskey with the white-pine chips in it. Maybe she never heard of it. Well, she hain't had a great deal of experience yet."

"No," said Mrs. Maynard. "And I think she'll be glad to hear of it. You may be sure I'll tell her, Mr. Barlow. Grace is everything for the balsamic properties of the air, down here. That's what she said; and as you say, it doesn't matter how you get the balsam into your system, so you get it there."

"No," said the factotum, in a tone of misgiving, as if the repetition of the words presented the theory in a new light to him.

"What I think is, and what I'm always telling Grace," pursued Mrs. Maynard, in that confidential spirit in which she helplessly spoke of her friends by their first names to every one, "that if I could once get my digestion all right, then the cough would stop of itself. The doctor said--Dr. Nixon, that is--that it was more than half the digestion any way. But just as soon as I eat anything--or if I over-eat a little--then that tickling in my throat begins, and then I commence coughing; and I'm back just where I was. It's the digestion. I oughtn't to have eaten that mince pie, yesterday."

"No," admitted Barlow. Then he said, in indirect defence of the kitchen, "I think you had n't ought to be out in the night air,--well, not a great deal."

"Well, I don't suppose it does do me much good," Mrs. Maynard said, turning her eyes seaward.

Barlow let his hand drop from the piazza post, and slouched in-doors; but he came out again as if pricked by conscience to return.

"After all, you know, it did n't cure him."

"What cure him?" asked Mrs. Maynard.

"The whiskey with the white-pine chips in it."

"Cure who?"

"My brother."

"Oh! Oh, yes! But mine's only bronchial. I think it might do me good."

I shall tell Grace about it."

Barlow looked troubled, as if his success in the suggestion of this remedy were not finally a pleasure; but as Mrs. Maynard kept her eyes persistently turned from him, and was evidently tired, he had nothing for it but to go in-doors again. He met Grace, and made way for her on the threshold to pass out.

As she joined Mrs. Maynard, "Well, Grace," said the latter, "I do believe you are right. I have taken some more cold. But that shows that it does n't get worse of itself, and I think we ought to be encouraged by that. I'm going to be more careful of the night air after this."

"I don't think the night air was the worst thing about it, Louise," said Grace bluntly.

"You mean the damp from the sand? I put on my rubbers."

"I don't mean the damp sand," said Grace, beginning to pull over some sewing which she had in her lap, and looking down at it.

Mrs. Maynard watched her a while in expectation that she would say more, but she did not speak. "Oh--well!" she was forced to continue herself, "if you're going to go on with that!"

"The question is," said Grace, getting the thread she wanted, "whether you are going on with it."

"Why, I can't see any possible harm in it," protested Mrs. Maynard.

"I suppose you don't exactly like my going with Mr. Libby, and I know that under some circumstances it would n't be quite the thing. But did n't I tell you last night how he lived with us in Europe? And when we were all coming over on the steamer together Mr. Libby and Mr. Maynard were together the whole time, smoking and telling stories. They were the greatest friends! Why, it isn't as if he was a stranger, or an enemy of Mr. Maynard's."

Grace dropped her sewing into her lap. "Really, Louise, you're incredible!" She looked sternly at the invalid; but broke into a laugh, on which Mrs. Maynard waited with a puzzled face. As Grace said nothing more, she helplessly resumed:--

"We did n't expect to go down the cliff when he first called in the evening. But he said he would help me up again, and--he did, nicely. I was n't exhausted a bit; and how I took more cold I can't understand; I was wrapped up warmly. I think I took the cold when I was sitting there after our game of croquet, with my shawl off. Don't you think so?" she wheedled.

"Perhaps," said Grace.

"He did nothing but talk about you, Grace," said Mrs. Maynard, with a sly look at the other. "He's awfully afraid of you, and he kept asking about

you."

"Louise," said the other, gravely ignoring these facts, "I never undertook the care of you socially, and I object very much to lecturing you. You are nearly as old as I am, and you have had a great deal more experience of life than I have." Mrs. Maynard sighed deeply in assent. "But it does n't seem to have taught you that if you will provoke people to talk of you, you must expect criticism. One after another you've told nearly every woman in the house your affairs, and they have all sympathized with you and pitied you. I shall have to be plain, and tell you that I can't have them sneering and laughing at any one who is my guest. I can't let you defy public opinion here."

"Why, Grace," said Mrs. Maynard, buoyed above offence at her friend's words by her consciousness of the point she was about to make, "you defy public opinion yourself a good deal more than I do, every minute."

"I? How do I defy it?" demanded Grace indignantly.

"By being a doctor."

Grace opened her lips to speak, but she was not a ready person, and she felt the thrust. Before she could say anything Mrs. Maynard went on:

"There isn't one of them that does n't think you're much more scandalous than if you were the greatest flirt alive. But, I don't mind them, and why should you?"

The serious girl whom she addressed was in that helpless subjection to the truth in which so many New England women pass their lives. She could not deny the truth which lurked in the exaggeration of these words, and it unnerved her, as the fact that she was doing what the vast majority of women considered unwomanly always unnerved her when she suffered herself to think of it. "You are right, Louise," she said meekly and sadly.

"They think as well of you as they do of me."

"Yes, that's just what I said!" cried Mrs. Maynard, glad of her successful argument.

But however disabled, her friend resumed: "The only safe way for you is to take the ground that so long as you wear your husband's name you must honor it, no matter how cruel and indifferent to you he has been."

"Yes," assented Mrs. Maynard ruefully, "of course."

"I mean that you must n't even have the appearance of liking admiration, or what you call attentions. It's wicked."

"I suppose so," murmured the culprit.

"You have been brought up to have such different ideas of divorce from what I have," continued Grace, "that I don't feel as if I had any right to advise you about what you are to do after you gain your suit."

"I shall not want to get married again for one while; I know that much," Mrs. Maynard interpolated self-righteously.

"But till you do gain it, you ought not to regard it as emancipating you in the slightest degree."

"No," came in sad assent from the victim of the law's delays.

"And I want you to promise me that you won't go walking with Mr. Libby any more; and that you won't even see him alone, after this."

"Why, but Grace!" cried Mrs. Maynard, as much in amazement as in annoyance. "You don't seem to understand! Have n't I told you he was a friend of the family? He's quite as much Mr. Maynard's friend as he is mine. I'm sure," she added, "if I asked Mr. Libby, I should never think of getting divorced. He's all for George; and it's as much as I can do to put up with him."

"No matter. That does n't alter the appearance to people here. I don't wish you to go with him alone any more."

"Well, Grace, I won't," said Mrs. Maynard earnestly. "I won't, indeed. And that makes me think: he wanted you to go along this morning."

"To go along? Wanted me--What are you talking about?"

"Why, I suppose that's his boat, out there, now." Mrs. Maynard pointed to a little craft just coming to anchor inside the reef. "He said he wanted me to take a sail with him, this morning; and he said he would come up and ask you, too. I do hope you'll go, Grace. It's just as calm; and he always has a man with him to help sail the boat, so there is n't the least danger." Grace looked at her in silent sorrow, and Mrs. Maynard went on with sympathetic seriousness: "Oh! there's one thing I want to ask you about, Grace: I don't like to have any concealments from you." Grace did not speak, but she permitted Mrs. Maynard to proceed: "Barlow recommended it, and he's lived here a great while. His brother took it, and he had the regular old New England consumption. I thought I shouldn't like to try it without your knowing it."

"Try it? What are you talking about, Louise?"

"Why, whiskey with white-pine chips in it."

Grace rose, and moved towards the door, with the things dropping from her lap. One of these was a spool, that rolled down the steps and out upon the sandy road. She turned to pursue it, and recovered it at the cost of dropping her scissors and thimble out of opposite sides of her skirt, which she had gathered up apronwise to hold her work. When she rose from the complicated difficulty, in which Mrs. Maynard had amiably lent her aid, she confronted Mr. Libby, who was coming towards them from the cliff. She gave him a stiff nod, and attempted to move away; but in turning round and about she had spun herself into the folds of a stout linen thread escaping from its spool. These gyves not only bound her

skirts but involved her feet in an extraordinary mesh, which tightened at the first step and brought her to a standstill.

Mrs. Maynard began to laugh and cough, as Mr. Libby came to her friend's help. He got the spool in his hand, and walked around her in the endeavor to free her; but in vain. She extended him the scissors with the stern passivity of a fate. "Cut it," she commanded, and Mr. Libby knelt before her and obeyed. "Thanks," she said, taking back the scissors; and now she sat down again, and began deliberately to put up her work in her handkerchief.

"I'll go out and get my things. I won't be gone half a minute, Mr. Libby," said Mrs. Maynard, with her first breath, as she vanished indoors.

Mr. Libby leaned against the post lately occupied by the factotum in his talk with Mrs. Maynard, and looked down at Grace as she bent over her work. If he wished to speak to her, and was wavering as to the appropriate style of address for a handsome girl, who was at once a young lady and a physician, she spared him the agony of a decision by looking up at him suddenly.

"I hope," he faltered, "that you feel like a sail, this morning? Did Mrs. Maynard--"

"I shall have to excuse myself," answered Grace, with a conscience against saying she was sorry. "I am a very bad sailor."

"Well, so am I, for that matter," said Mr. Libby. "But it's smooth as a pond, to-day."

Grace made no direct response, and he grew visibly uncomfortable under the cold abstraction of the gaze with which she seemed to look through him. "Mrs. Maynard tells me you came over with her from Europe."

'Oh yes!' cried the young man, the light of pleasant recollection kindling in his gay eyes. "We had a good time. Maynard was along: he's a first-rate fellow. I wish he were here."

"Yes," said Grace, "I wish so, too." She did not know what to make of this frankness of the young man's, and she did not know whether to consider him very depraved or very innocent. In her question she continued to stare at him, without being aware of the embarrassment to which she was putting him.

"I heard of Mrs. Maynard's being here, and I thought I should find him, too. I came over yesterday to get him to go into the woods with us."

Grace decided that this was mere effrontery. "It is a pity that he is not here," she said; and though it ought to have been possible for her to go on and rebuke the young fellow for bestowing upon Mrs. Maynard the comradeship intended for her husband, it was not so. She could only look severely at him, and trust that he might conceive the intention which she

could not express. She rebelled against the convention and against her own weakness, which would not let her boldly interfere in what she believed a wrong; she had defied society, in the mass, but here, with this man, whom as an atom of the mass she would have despised, she was powerless.

"Have you ever seen him?" Libby asked, perhaps clinging to Maynard because he was a topic of conversation in default of which there might be nothing to say.

"No," answered Grace.

"He 's funny. He's got lots of that Western humor, and he tells a story better than any man I ever saw. There was one story of his"--

"I have no sense of humor," interrupted Grace impatiently. "Mr. Libby," she broke out, "I 'm sorry that you've asked Mrs. Maynard to take a sail with you. The sea air"--she reddened with the shame of not being able to proceed without this wretched subterfuge--"won't do her any good."

"Then," said the young man, "you must n't let her go."

"I don't choose to forbid her," Grace began.

"I beg your pardon," he broke in. "I'll be back in a moment."

He turned, and ran to the edge of the cliff, over which he vanished, and he did not reappear till Mrs. Maynard had rejoined Grace on the piazza.

"I hope you won't mind its being a little rough, Mrs. Maynard," he said, breathing quickly. "Adams thinks we're going to have it pretty fresh before we get back."

"Indeed, I don't want to go, then!" cried Mrs. Maynard, in petulant disappointment, letting her wraps fall upon a chair.

Mr. Libby looked at Grace, who haughtily rejected a part in the conspiracy. "I wish you to go, Louise," she declared indignantly. "I will take the risk of all the harm that comes to you from the bad weather." She picked up the shawls, and handed them to Mr. Libby, on whom her eyes blazed their contempt and wonder. It cost a great deal of persuasion and insistence now to make Mrs. Maynard go, and he left all this to Grace, not uttering a word till he gave Mrs. Maynard his hand to help her down the steps. Then he said, "Well, I wonder what Miss Breen does want."

"I 'm sure I don't know," said the other. "At first she did n't want me to go, this morning, and now she makes me. I do hope it is n't going to be a storm."

"I don't believe it is. A little fresh, perhaps. I thought you might be seasick."

"Don't you remember? I'm never seasick! That's one of the worst signs."

"Oh, yes."

"If I could be thoroughly seasick once, it would be the best thing I could do."

"Is she capricious?" asked Mr. Libby.

"Grace?" cried Mrs. Maynard, releasing her hand half-way down the steps, in order to enjoy her astonishment without limitation of any sort.

"Grace capricious!"

"Yes," said Mr. Libby, "that's what I thought. Better take my hand again," and he secured that of Mrs. Maynard, who continued her descent.

"I suppose I don't understand her exactly. Perhaps she did n't like my not calling her Doctor. I did n't call her anything. I suppose she thought I was dodging it. I was. I should have had to call her Miss Breen, if I called her anything."

"She wouldn't have cared. She is n't a doctor for the name of it."

"I suppose you think it's a pity?" he asked.

"What?"

"Her being a doctor."

"I'll tell her you say so."

"No, don't. But don't you?"

"Well, I would n't want to be one," said Mrs. Maynard candidly.

"I suppose it's all right, if she does it from a sense of duty, as you say," he suggested.

"Oh, yes, she's all right. And she's just as much of a girl as anybody; though she don't know it," Mrs. Maynard added astutely. "Why would n't she come with us? Were you afraid to ask her?"

"She said she was n't a good sailor. Perhaps she thought we were too young. She must be older than you."

"Yes, and you, too!" cried Mrs. Maynard, with good-natured derision.

"She doesn't look old," returned Mr. Libby.

"She's twenty-eight. How old are you?"

"I promised the census-taker not to tell till his report came out."

"What is the color of her hair?"

"Brown."

"And her eyes?"

"I don't know!"

"You had better look out, Mr. Libby!" said Mrs. Maynard, putting her foot on the ground at last.

They walked across the beach to where his dory lay, and Grace saw him pulling out to the sail boat before she went in from the piazza. Then she went to her mother's room. The elderly lady was keeping indoors, upon a theory that the dew was on, and that it was not wholesome to go out till it was off. She asked, according to her habit when she met her daughter alone, "Where is Mrs. Maynard?"

"Why do you always ask that, mother?" retorted Grace, with her growing irritation in regard to her patient intensified by the recent interview.

"I can't be with her the whole time."

"I wish you could," said Mrs. Breen, with noncommittal suggestion.

Grace could not keep herself from demanding, "Why?" as her mother expected, though she knew why too well.

"Because she wouldn't be in mischief then," returned Mrs. Breen.

"She's in mischief now!" cried the girl vehemently; "and it's my fault! I did it. I sent her off to sail with that ridiculous Mr. Libby!"

"Why?" asked Mrs. Breen, in her turn, with unbroken tranquillity.

"Because I am a fool, and I couldn't help him lie out of his engagement with her."

"Did n't he want to go?"

"I don't know. Yes. They both wanted me to go with them. Simpletons! And while she had gone up-stairs for her wraps I managed to make him understand that I did n't wish her to go, either; and he ran down to his boat, and came back with a story about its going to be rough, and looked at me perfectly delighted, as if I should be pleased. Of course, then, I made him take her."

"And is n't it going to be rough?" asked Mrs. Green.

"Why, mother, the sea's like glass."

Mrs. Breen turned the subject. "You would have done better, Grace, to begin as you had planned. Your going to Fall River, and beginning practice there among those factory children, was the only thing that I ever entirely liked in your taking up medicine. There was sense in that.

You had studied specially for it. You could have done good there."

"Oh, yes," sighed the girl, "I know. But what was I to do, when she came to us, sick and poor? I couldn't turn my back on her, especially after always befriending her, as I used to, at school, and getting her to depend on me."

"I don't see how you ever liked her," said Mrs. Breen.

"I never did like her. I pitied her. I always thought her a poor, flimsy little thing. But that ought n't to make any difference, if she was in trouble."

"No," Mrs. Breen conceded, and in compensation Grace admitted something more on her side: "She's worse than she used to be,--sillier. I don't suppose she has a wrong thought; but she's as light as foam."

"Oh, it is n't the wicked people who, do the harm," said Mrs. Green.

"I was sure that this air would be everything for her; and so it would, with any ordinary case. But a child would take better care of itself. I have to watch her every minute, like a child; and I never know what she will do next."

"Yes; it's a burden," said Mrs. Breen, with a sympathy which she had not expressed before. "And you're a good girl, Grace," she added in very unwonted recognition.

The grateful tears stole into the daughter's eyes, but she kept a firm face, even after they began to follow one another down her cheeks. "And if Louise had n't come, you know, mother, that I was anxious to have some older person with me when I went to Fall River. I was glad to have this respite; it gives me a chance to think. I felt a little timid about beginning alone."

"A man would n't," Mrs. Breen remarked.

"No. I am not a man. I have accepted that; with all the rest. I don't rebel against being a woman. If I had been a man, I should n't have studied medicine. You know that. I wished to be a physician because I was a woman, and because--because--I had failed where--other women's hopes are." She said it out firmly, and her mother softened to her in proportion to the girl's own strength. "I might have been just a nurse. You know I should have been willing to be that, but I thought I could be something more. But it's no use talking." She added, after an interval, in which her mother rocked to and fro with a gentle motion that searched the joints of her chair, and brought out its most plaintive squeak in pathetic iteration, and watched Grace, as she sat looking seaward through the open window, "I think it's rather hard, mother, that you should be always talking as if I wished to take my calling mannishly. All that I intend is not to take it womanishly; but as for not being a woman about it, or about anything, that's simply impossible. A woman is reminded of her insufficiency to herself every hour of the day. And it's always a

man that comes to her help. I dropped some things out of my lap down there, and by the time I had gathered them up I was wound round and round with linen thread so that I could n't move a step, and Mr. Libby cut me loose. I could have done it myself, but it seemed right and natural that he should do it. I dare say he plumed himself upon his service to me, --that would be natural, too. I have things enough to keep me meek, mother!"

She did not look round at Mrs. Breen, who said, "I think you are morbid about it."

"Yes. And I have the satisfaction of knowing that whatever people think of Louise's giddiness, I'm, a great deal more scandalous to them than she is simply because I wish to do some good in the world, in a way that women have n't done it, usually."

"Now you are morbid."

"Oh, yes! Talk about men being obstacles! It's other women! There isn't a woman in the house that would n't sooner trust herself in the hands of the stupidest boy that got his diploma with me than she would in mine. Louise knows it, and she feels that she has a claim upon me in being my patient. And I've no influence with her about her conduct because she understands perfectly well that they all consider me much worse. She prides herself on doing me justice. She patronizes me. She tells me that I'm just as nice as, if I hadn't 'been through all that.'" Grace rose, and a laugh, which was half a sob, broke from her.

Mrs. Breen could not feel the humor of the predicament. "She puts you in a false position."

"I must go and see where that poor little wretch of a child is," said Grace, going out of the room. She returned in an hour, and asked her mother for the arnica. "Bella has had a bump," she explained.

"Why, have you been all this time looking for her?"

"No, I couldn't find her, and I've been reading. Barlow has just brought her in. HE could find her. She fell out of a tree, and she's frightfully bruised."

She was making search on a closet shelf as she talked. When she reappeared with the bottle in her hand, her mother asked, "Is n't it very hot and close?"

"Very," said Grace.

"I should certainly think they would perish," said Mrs. Breen, hazarding the pronoun, with a woman's confidence that her interlocutor would apply it correctly.

When Grace had seen Bella properly bathed and brown-papered, and in the way to forgetfulness of her wounds in sleep, she came down to the piazza,

and stood looking out to sea. The ladies appeared one by one over the edge of the cliff, and came up, languidly stringing their shawls after them, or clasping their novels to their bosoms.

"There isn't a breath down there," they said, one after another. The last one added, "Barlow says it's the hottest day he's ever seen here."

In a minute Barlow himself appeared at the head of the steps with the ladies' remaining wraps, and confirmed their report in person. "I tell you," he said, wiping his forehead, "it's a ripper."

"It must be an awful day in town," said one of the ladies, fanning herself with a newspaper.

"Is that to-day's Advertiser, Mrs. Alger?" asked another.

"Oh, dear, no! yesterday's. We sha'n't have today's till this afternoon. It shows what a new arrival you are, Mrs. Scott--your asking."

"To be sure. But it's such a comfort being where you can see the Advertiser the same morning. I always look at the Weather Report the first thing. I like to know what the weather is going to be."

"You can't at Jocelyn's. You can only know what it's been."

"Well," Barlow interposed, jealous for Jocelyn's, "you can most al'ays tell by the look o' things."

"Yes," said one of the ladies; "but I'd rather trust the Weather Report. It's wonderful how it comes true. I don't think there 's anything that you miss more in Europe than our American Weather Report."

"I'm sure you miss the oysters," said another.

"Yes," the first admitted, "you do miss the oysters. It was the last of the R months when we landed in New York; and do you know what we did the first thing--? We drove to Fulton Market, and had one of those Fulton Market broils! My husband said we should have had it if it had been July. He used to dream of the American oysters when we were in Europe. Gentlemen are so fond of them."

Barlow, from scanning the heavens, turned round and faced the company, which had drooped in several attitudes of exhaustion on the benching of the piazza. "Well, I can most al'ays tell about Jocelyn's as good as the Weather Report. I told Mrs. Maynard here this mornin' that the fog was goin' to burn off."

"Burn off?" cried Mrs. Alger. "I should think it had!" The other ladies laughed.

"And you'll see," added Barlow, "that the wind 'll change at noon, and we'll have it cooler."

"If it's as hot on the water as it is here," said Mrs. Scott, "I should think those people would get a sunstroke."

"Well, so should I, Mrs. Scott," cordially exclaimed a little fat lady, as if here at last were an opinion in which all might rejoice to sympathize.

"It's never so hot on the water, Mrs. Merritt," said Mrs. Alger, with the instructiveness of an old habitude.

"Well, not at Jocelyn's," suggested Barlow. Mrs. Alger stopped fanning herself with her newspaper, and looked at him. Upon her motion, the other ladies looked at Barlow. Doubtless he felt that his social acceptability had ceased with his immediate usefulness. But he appeared resolved to carry it off easily. "Well," he said, "I suppose I must go and pick my peas."

No one said anything to this. When the factotum had disappeared round the corner of the house, Mrs. Alger turned her head' aside, and glanced downward with an air of fatigue. In this manner Barlow was dismissed from the ladies' minds.

"I presume," said young Mrs. Scott, with a deferential glance at Grace, "that the sun is good for a person with lung-difficulty."

Grace silently refused to consider herself appealed to, and Mrs. Merritt said, "Better than the moon, I should think."

Some of the others tittered, but Grace looked up at Mrs. Merritt and said, "I don't think Mrs. Maynard's case is so bad that she need be afraid of either."

"Oh, I am so glad to hear it!" replied the other. She looked round, but was unable to form a party. By twos or threes they might have liked to take Mrs. Maynard to pieces; but no one cares to make unkind remarks before a whole company of people. Some of the ladies even began to say pleasant things about Mr. Libby, as if he were Grace's friend.

"I always like to see these fair men when they get tanned," said Mrs. Alger. "Their blue eyes look so very blue. And the backs of their necks--just like my boys!"

"Do you admire such a VERY fighting-clip as Mr. Libby has on?" asked Mrs. Scott.

"It must be nice for summer," returned the elder lady.

"Yes, it certainly must," admitted the younger.

"Really," said another, "I wish I could go in the fighting-clip. One does n't know what to do with one's hair at the sea-side; it's always in the way."

"Your hair would be a public loss, Mrs. Frost," said Mrs. Alger. The others looked at her hair, as if they had seen it now for the first time.

"Oh, I don't think so," said Mrs. Frost, in a sort of flattered coo.

"Oh, don't have it cut off!" pleaded a young girl, coming up and taking the beautiful mane, hanging loose after the bath, into her hand. Mrs. Frost put her arm round the girl's waist, and pulled her down against her shoulder. Upon reflection she also kissed her.

Through a superstition, handed down from mother to daughter, that it is uncivil and even unkind not to keep saying something, they went on talking vapidity, where the same number of men, equally vacuous, would have remained silent; and some of them complained that the nervous strain of conversation took away all the good their bath had done them. Miss Gleason, who did not bathe, was also not a talker. She kept a bright-eyed reticence, but was apt to break out in rather enigmatical flashes, which resolved the matter in hand into an abstraction, and left the others with the feeling that she was a person of advanced ideas, but that, while rejecting historical Christianity, she believed in a God of Love. This Deity was said, upon closer analysis, to have proved to be a God of Sentiment, and Miss Gleason was herself a hero-worshiper, or, more strictly speaking, a heroine-worshiper. At present Dr. Breen was her cult, and she was apt to lie in wait for her idol, to beam upon it with her suggestive eyes, and evidently to expect it to say or do something remarkable, but not to suffer anything like disillusion or disappointment in any event. She would sometimes offer it suddenly a muddled depth of sympathy in such phrases as, "Too bad!" or, "I don't see how you keep-up?" and darkly insinuate that she appreciated all that Grace was doing. She seemed to rejoice in keeping herself at a respectful distance, to which she breathlessly retired, as she did now, after waylaying her at the top of the stairs, and confidentially darting at her the words, "I'm so glad you don't like scandal!"

III.

After dinner the ladies tried to get a nap, but such of them as re-appeared on the piazza later agreed that it was perfectly useless. They tested every corner for a breeze, but the wind had fallen dead, and the vast sweep of sea seemed to smoulder under the sun. "This is what Mr. Barlow calls having it cooler," said Mrs. Alger.

"There are some clouds that look like thunderheads in the west," said Mrs. Frost, returning from an excursion to the part of the piazza commanding that quarter.

"Oh, it won't rain to-day," Mrs. Alger decided.

"I thought there was always a breeze at Jocelyn's," Mrs. Scott observed, in the critical spirit of a recent arrival.

"There always is," the other explained, "except the first week you're here."

A little breath, scarcely more than a sentiment of breeze, made itself felt. "I do believe the wind has changed," said Mrs. Frost. "It's east." The others owned one by one that it was so, and she enjoyed the merit of a discoverer; but her discovery was rapidly superseded. The clouds mounted in the west, and there came a time when the ladies disputed whether they had heard thunder or not: a faction contended for the bowling alley, and another faction held for a wagon passing over the bridge just before you reached Jocelyn's. But those who were faithful to the theory of thunder carried the day by a sudden crash that broke over the forest, and, dying slowly away among the low hills, left them deeply silent.

"Some one," said Mrs. Alger, "ought to go for those children." On this it appeared that there were two minds as to where the children were,-- whether on the beach or in the woods.

"Was n't that thunder, Grace?" asked Mrs. Breen, with the accent by which she implicated her daughter in whatever happened.

"Yes," said Grace, from where she sat at her window, looking seaward, and waiting tremulously for her mother's next question.

"Where is Mrs. Maynard?"

"She is n't back, yet."

"Then," said Mrs. Breen, "he really did expect rough weather."

"He must," returned Grace, in a guilty whisper.

"It's a pity," remarked her mother, "that you made them go."

"Yes." She rose, and, stretching herself far out of the window, searched the inexorable expanse of sea. It had already darkened at the verge, and the sails of some fishing-craft flecked a livid wall with their white, but there was no small boat in sight.

"If anything happened to them," her mother continued, "I should feel terribly for you."

"I should feel terribly for myself," Grace responded, with her eyes still seaward.

"Where do you think they went?"

"I did n't ask," said the girl. "I wouldn't," she added, in devotion to the whole truth.

"Well, it is all of the same piece," said Mrs. Breen. Grace did not ask

what the piece was. She remained staring at the dark wall across the sea, and spiritually confronting her own responsibility, no atom of which she rejected. She held herself in every way responsible,--for doubting that poor young fellow's word, and then for forcing that reluctant creature to go with him, and forbidding by her fierce insistence any attempt of his at explanation; she condemned herself to perpetual remorse with even greater zeal than her mother would have sentenced her, and she would not permit herself any respite when a little sail, which she knew for theirs, blew round the point. It seemed to fly along just on the hither side of that mural darkness, skilfully tacking to reach the end of the reef before the wall pushed it on the rocks. Suddenly, the long low stretch of the reef broke into white foam, and then passed from sight under the black wall, against which the little sail still flickered. The girl fetched a long, silent breath. They were inside the reef, in comparatively smooth water, and to her ignorance they were safe. But the rain would be coming in another moment, and Mrs. Maynard would be drenched; and Grace would be to blame for her death. She ran to the closet, and pulled down her mother's India-rubber cloak and her own, and fled out-of-doors, to be ready on the beach with the wrap, against their landing. She met the other ladies on the stairs and in the hall, and they clamored at her; but she glided through them like something in a dream, and then she heard a shouting in her ear, and felt herself caught and held up against the wind.

"Where in land be you goin', Miss Breen?"

Barlow, in a long, yellow oil-skin coat and sou'wester hat, kept pushing her forward to the edge of the cliff, as he asked.

"I'm going down to meet them!" she screamed.

"Well, I hope you WILL meet 'em. But I guess you better go back to the house. Hey? WUNT? Well; come along, then, if they ain't past doctorin' by the time they git ashore! Pretty well wrapped up, any way!" he roared; and she perceived that she had put on her waterproof and drawn the hood over her head.

Those steps to the beach had made her giddy when she descended with leisure for such dismay; but now, with the tempest flattening her against the stair-case, and her gossamer clutching and clinging to every surface, and again twisting itself about her limbs, she clambered down as swiftly and recklessly as Barlow himself, and followed over the beach beside the men who were pulling a boat down the sand at a run.

"Let me get in!" she screamed. "I wish to go with you!"

"Take hold of the girl, Barlow!" shouted one of the men. "She's crazy."

He tumbled himself with four others into the boat, and they all struck out together through the froth and swirl of the waves. She tried to free herself from Barlow, so as to fling the waterproof into the boat. "Take this, then. She'll be soaked through!"

Barlow broke into a grim laugh. "She won't need it, except for a windin'-sheet!" he roared. "Don't you see the boat's drivin' right on t' the sand? She'll be kindlin' wood in a minute."

"But they're inside the reef! They can come to anchor!" she shrieked in reply. He answered her with a despairing grin and a shake of the head. "They can't. What has your boat gone out for, then?"

"To pick 'em up out the sea. But they'll never git 'em alive. Look how she slaps her boom int' the water! Well! He DOES know how to handle a boat!"

It was Libby at the helm, as she could dimly see, but what it was in his management that moved Barlow's praise she could not divine. The boat seemed to be aimed for the shore, and to be rushing, head on, upon the beach; her broad sail was blown straight out over her bow, and flapped there like a banner, while the heavy boom hammered the water as she rose and fell. A jagged line of red seamed the breast of the dark wall behind; a rending crash came, and as if fired upon, the boat flung up her sail, as a wild fowl flings up its wing when shot, and lay tossing keel up, on the top of the waves. It all looked scarcely a stone's cast away, though it was vastly farther. A figure was seen to drag itself up out of the sea, and fall over into the boat, hovering and pitching in the surrounding welter, and struggling to get at two other figures clinging to the wreck. Suddenly the men in the boat pulled away, and Grace uttered a cry of despair and reproach: "Why, they're leaving it, they're leaving it!"

"Don't expect 'em to tow the wreck ashore in this weather, do ye?" shouted Barlow. "They've got the folks all safe enough. I tell ye I see 'em!" he cried, at a wild look of doubt in her eyes. "Run to the house, there, and get everything in apple-pie order. There's goin' to be a chance for some of your doctor'n' now, if ye know how to fetch folks to."

It was the little house on the beach, which the children were always prying and peering into, trying the lock, and wondering what the boat was like, which Grace had seen launched. Now the door yielded to her, and within she found a fire kindled in the stove, blankets laid in order, and flasks of brandy in readiness in the cupboard. She put the blankets to heat for instant use, and prepared for the work of resuscitation. When she could turn from them to the door, she met there a procession that approached with difficulty, heads down and hustled by the furious blast through which the rain now hissed and shot. Barlow and one of the boat's crew were carrying Mrs. Maynard, and bringing up the rear of the huddling oil-skins and sou'westers came Libby, soaked, and dripping as he walked. His eyes and Grace's encountered with a mutual avoidance; but whatever was their sense of blame, their victim had no reproaches to make herself. She was not in need of restoration. She was perfectly alive, and apparently stimulated by her escape from deadly peril to a vivid conception of the wrong that had been done her. If the adventure had passed off prosperously, she was the sort of woman to have owned to her friend that she ought not to have thought of going. But the event had

obliterated these scruples, and she realized herself as a hapless creature who had been thrust on to dangers from which she would have shrunk. "Well, Grace!" she began, with a voice arid look before which the other quailed, "I hope you are satisfied! All the time I was clinging to that wretched boat. I was wondering how you would feel. Yes, my last thoughts were of you. I pitied you. I did n't see how you could ever have peace again."

"Hold on, Mrs. Maynard!" cried Libby. "There's no, time for that, now. What had best be done, Miss Green? Had n't she better be got up to the house?"

"Yes, by all means," answered Grace.

"You might as well let me die here," Mrs. Maynard protested, as Grace wrapped the blankets round her dripping dress. "I 'm as wet as I can be, now."

Libby began to laugh at these inconsequences, to which he was probably well used. "You would n't have time to die here. And we want to give this hydropathic treatment a fair trial. You've tried the douche, and now you're to have the pack." He summoned two of the boatmen, who had been considerably dripping outside, in order to leave the interior to the shipwrecked company, and they lifted Mrs. Maynard, finally wrapped in, Grace's India-rubber cloak, and looking like some sort of strange, huge chrysalis, and carried her out into the storm and up the steps.

Grace followed last with Mr. Libby, very heavyhearted and reckless. She had not only that sore self-accusal; but the degradation of the affair, its grotesqueness, its spiritual squalor, its utter gracelessness, its entire want of dignity, were bitter as death in her proud soul. It was not in this shameful guise that she had foreseen the good she was to do. And it had all come through her own wilfulness and selfrighteousness. The tears could mix unseen with the rain that drenched her face, but they blinded her, and half-way up the steps she stumbled on her skirt, and would have fallen, if the young man had not caught her. After that, from time to time he put his arm about her, and stayed her against the gusts.

Before they reached the top he said, "Miss Breen, I'm awfully sorry for all this. Mrs. Maynard will be ashamed of what she said. Confound it! If Maynard were only here!"

"Why should she be ashamed?" demanded Grace. "If she had been drowned, I should have murdered her, and I'm responsible if anything happens to her,--I am to blame." She escaped from him, and ran into the house. He slunk round the piazza to the kitchen door, under the eyes of the ladies watching at the parlor windows.

"I wonder he let the others carry her up," said Miss Gleason. "Of course, he will marry her now,--when she gets her divorce." She spoke of Mrs. Maynard, whom her universal toleration not only included in the mercy which the opinions of the other ladies denied her, but round whom her romance cast a halo of pretty possibilities as innocently sentimental as

the hopes of a young girl.

IV.

The next morning Grace was sitting beside her patient, with whom she had spent the night. It was possibly Mrs. Maynard's spiritual toughness which availed her, for she did not seem much the worse for her adventure: she had a little fever, and she was slightly hoarser; but she had died none of the deaths that she projected during the watches of the night, and for which she had chastened the spirit of her physician by the repeated assurance that she forgave her everything, and George Maynard everything, and hoped that they would be good to her poor little Bella. She had the child brought from its crib to her own bed, and moaned over it; but with the return of day and the duties of life she appeared to feel that she had carried her forgiveness far enough, and was again remembering her injuries against Grace, as she lay in her morning gown on the lounge which had been brought in for her from the parlor.

"Yes, Grace, I shall always say if I had died and I may die yet--that I did not wish to go out with Mr. Libby, and that I went purely to please you. You forced me to go. I can't understand why you did it; for I don't suppose you wanted to kill us, whatever you did."

Grace could not lift her head. She bowed it over the little girl whom she had on her knee, and who was playing with the pin at her throat, in apparent unconsciousness of all that was said. But she had really followed it, with glimpses of intelligence, as children do, and now at this negative accusal she lifted her hand, and suddenly struck Grace a stinging blow on the cheek.

Mrs. Maynard sprang from her lounge. "Why, Bella! you worthless little wretch!" She caught her from Grace's knee, and shook her violently. Then, casting the culprit from her at random, she flung herself down again in a fit of coughing, while the child fled to Grace for consolation, and, wildly sobbing, buried her face in the lap of her injured friend.

"I don't know what I shall do about that child!" cried Mrs. Maynard. "She has George Maynard's temper right over again. I feel dreadfully, Grace!"

"Oh, never mind it," said Grace, fondling the child, and half addressing it. "I suppose Bella thought I had been unkind to her mother."

"That's just it!" exclaimed Louise. "When you've been kindness itself! Don't I owe everything to you? I should n't be alive at this moment if it were not for your treatment. Oh, Grace!" She began to cough again; the paroxysm increased in vehemence. She caught her handkerchief from her lips; it was spotted with blood. She sprang to her feet, and regarded it with impersonal sternness. "Now," she said, "I am sick, and

"I want a doctor!"

"A doctor," Grace meekly echoed.

"Yes. I can't be trifled with any longer. I want a man doctor!"

Grace had looked at the handkerchief. "Very well," she said, with coldness. "I shall not stand in your way of calling another physician. But if it will console you, I can tell you that the blood on your handkerchief means nothing worth speaking of. Whom shall I send for?" she asked, turning to go out of the room. "I wish to be your friend still, and I will do anything I can to help you."

"Oh, Grace Breen! Is that the way you talk to me?" whimpered Mrs. Maynard. "You know that I don't mean to give you up. I'm not a stone; I have some feeling. I did n't intend to dismiss you, but I thought perhaps you would like to have a consultation about it. I should think it was time to have a consultation, should n't you? Of course, I'm not alarmed, but I know it's getting serious, and I'm afraid that your medicine is n't active enough. That's it; it's perfectly good medicine, but it is n't active. They've all been saying that I ought to have something active. Why not try the whiskey with the white-pine chips in it? I'm sure it's indicated." In her long course of medication she had picked up certain professional phrases, which she used with amusing seriousness. "It would be active, at any rate."

Grace did not reply. As she stood smoothing the head of the little girl, who had followed her to the door, and now leaned against her, hiding her tearful face in Grace's dress, she said, "I don't know of any homoeopathic physician in this neighborhood. I don't believe there's one nearer than Boston, and I should make myself ridiculous in calling one so far for a consultation. But I'm quite willing you should call one, and I will send for you at once."

"And wouldn't you consult with him, after he came?"

"Certainly not. It would be absurd."

"I shouldn't like to have a doctor come all the way from Boston," mused Mrs. Maynard, sinking on the lounge again. "There must be a doctor in the neighborhood. It can't be so healthy as that!"

"There's an allopathic physician at Corbitant," said Grace passively. "A very good one, I believe," she added.

"Oh, well, then!" cried Mrs. Maynard, with immense relief. "Consult with him!"

"I've told you, Louise, that I would not consult with anybody. And I certainly wouldn't consult with a physician whose ideas and principles I knew nothing about."

"Why but, Grace," Mrs. Maynard expostulated. "Is n't that rather

prejudiced?" She began to take an impartial interest in Grace's position, and fell into an argumentative tone. "If two heads are better than one,--and everybody says they are,--I don't see how you can consistently refuse to talk with another physician."

"I can't explain to you, Louise," said Grace. "But you can call Dr. Mulbridge, if you wish. That will be the right way for you to do, if you have lost confidence in me."

"I have n't lost confidence in you, Grace. I don't see how you can talk so. You can give me bread pills, if you like, or air pills, and I will take them gladly. I believe in you perfectly. But I do think that in a matter of this kind, where my health, and perhaps my life, is concerned, I ought to have a little say. I don't ask you to give up your principles, and I don't dream of giving you up, and yet you won't just to please me!--exchange a few words with another doctor about my case, merely because he's allopathic. I should call it bigotry, and I don't see how you can call it anything else." There was a sound of voices at the door outside, and she called cheerily, "Come in, Mr. Libby,--come in! There's nobody but Grace here," she added, as the young man tentatively opened the door, and looked in. He wore an evening dress, even to the white cravat, and he carried in his hand a crush hat: there was something anomalous in his appearance, beyond the phenomenal character of his costume, and he blushed consciously as he bowed to Grace, and then at her motion shook hands with her. Mrs. Maynard did not give herself the fatigue of rising; she stretched her hand to him from the lounge, and he took it without the joy which he had shown when Grace made him the same advance. "How very swell you look. Going to an evening party this morning?" she cried; and after she had given him a second glance of greater intensity, "Why, what in the world has come over' you?" It was the dress which Mr. Libby wore. He was a young fellow far too well made, and carried himself too alertly, to look as if any clothes misfitted him; his person gave their good cut elegance, but he had the effect of having fallen away in them. "Why, you look as if you had been sick a month!" Mrs. Maynard interpreted.

The young man surveyed himself with a downward glance. "They're Johnson's," he explained. "He had them down for a hop at the Long Beach House, and sent over for them. I had nothing but my camping flannels, and they have n't been got into shape yet, since yesterday. I wanted to come over and see how you were."

"Poor fellow!" exclaimed Mrs. Maynard. "I never thought of you! How in the world did you get to your camp?"

"I walked."

"In all that rain?"

"Well, I had been pretty well sprinkled, already. It was n't a question of wet and dry; it was a question of wet and wet. I was going off bareheaded, I lost my hat in the water, you know,--but your man, here, hailed me round the corner of the kitchen, and lent me one. I've been

taking up collections of clothes ever since."

Mr. Libby spoke lightly, and with a cry of "Barlow's hat!" Mrs. Maynard went off in a shriek of laughter; but a deep distress kept Grace silent. It seemed to her that she had been lacking not only in thoughtfulness, but in common humanity, in suffering him to walk away several miles in the rain, without making an offer to keep him and have him provided for in the house. She remembered now her bewildered impression that he was without a hat when he climbed the stairs and helped her to the house; she recalled the fact that she had thrust him on to the danger he had escaped, and her heart was melted with grief and shame. "Mr. Libby"--she began, going up to him, and drooping before him in an attitude which simply and frankly expressed the contrition she felt; but she could not continue. Mrs. Maynard's laugh broke into the usual cough, and as soon as she could speak she seized the word.

"Well, there, now; we can leave it to Mr. Libby. It's the principle of the thing that I look at. And I want to see how it strikes him. I want to know, Mr. Libby, if you were a doctor,"--he looked at Grace, and flushed,--"and a person was very sick, and wanted you to consult with another doctor, whether you would let the mere fact that you had n't been introduced have any weight with you?" The young man silently appealed to Grace, who darkened angrily, and before he could speak Mrs. Maynard interposed. "No, no, you sha'n't ask her. I want your opinion. It's just an abstract question." She accounted for this fib with a wink at Grace.

"Really," he said, "it's rather formidable. I've never been a doctor of any kind."

"Oh, yes, we know that!" said Mrs. Maynard. "But you are now, and now would you do it?"

"If the other fellow knew more, I would."

"But if you thought he did n't?"

"Then I wouldn't. What are you trying to get at, Mrs. Maynard? I'm not going to answer any more of your questions."

"Yes,--one more. Don't you think it's a doctor's place to get his patient well any way he can?"

"Why, of course!"

"There, Grace! It's just exactly the same case. And ninety-nine out of a hundred would decide against you every time."

Libby turned towards Grace in confusion. "Miss Breen--I did n't understand--I don't presume to meddle in anything--You're not fair, Mrs. Maynard! I have n't any opinion on the subject, Miss Breen; I haven't, indeed!"

"Oh, you can't back out, now!" exclaimed Mrs. Maynard joyously. "You've said it."

"And you're quite right, Mr. Libby," said Grace haughtily. She bade him good-morning; but he followed her from the room, and left Mrs. Maynard to her triumph.

"Miss Breen--Do let me speak to you, please! Upon my word and honor, I didn't know what she was driving at; I did n't, indeed! It's pretty rough on me, for I never dreamt of setting myself up as a judge of your affairs. I know you're right, whatever you think; and I take it all back; it was got out of me by fraud, any way. And I beg your pardon for not calling you Doctor--if you want me to do it. The other comes more natural; but I wish to recognize you in the way you prefer, for I do feel most respectul--reverent--"

He was so very earnest and so really troubled, and he stumbled about so for the right word, and hit upon the wrong one with such unflinching disaster, that she must have been superhuman not to laugh. Her laughing seemed to relieve him even more than her hearty speech. "Call me how you like, Mr. Libby. I don't insist upon anything with you; but I believe I prefer Miss Breen."

"You're very kind! Miss Breen it is, then. And you'll, forgive my siding against you?" he demanded radiantly.

"Don't speak of that again, please. I've nothing to forgive you."

They walked down-stairs and out on the piazza. Barlow stood before the steps, holding by the bit a fine bay mare, who twitched her head round a little at the sound of Libby's voice, and gave him a look. He passed without noticing the horse. "I'm glad to find Mrs. Maynard so well. With that cold of hers, hanging on so long, I didn't know but she'd be in an awful state this morning."

"Yes," said Grace, "it's a miraculous escape."

"The fact is I sent over to New Leyden for my team yesterday. I did n't know how things might turn out, and you're so far from a lemon here, that I thought I might be useful in going errands."

Grace turned her head and glanced at the equipage. "Is that your team?"

"Yes," said the young fellow, with a smile of suppressed pride.

"What an exquisite creature!" said the girl.

"ISN'T she?" They both faced about, and stood looking at the mare, and the light, shining, open buggy behind her. The sunshine had the after-storm glister; the air was brisk, and the breeze blew balm from the heart of the pine forest. "Miss Breen," he broke out, "I wish you'd take a little dash through the woods with me. I've got a broad-track buggy, that's just right for these roads. I don't suppose it's the thing at all

to ask you, on such short acquaintance, but I wish you would. I know you'd enjoy it: Come?"

His joyous urgency gave her a strange thrill. She had long ceased to imagine herself the possible subject of what young ladies call attentions, and she did not think of herself in that way now. There was something in the frank, eager boyishness of the invitation that fascinated her, and the sunny face turned so hopefully upon her had its amusing eloquence. She looked about the place with an anxiety of which she was immediately ashamed: all the ladies were out of sight, and probably at the foot of the cliff.

"Don't say no, Miss Breen," pleaded the gay voice.

The answer seemed to come of itself. "Oh, thank you, yes, I should like to go."

"Good!" he exclaimed, and the word which riveted her consent made her recoil.

"But not this morning. Some other day. I--I--I want to think about Mrs. Maynard. I--ought n't to leave her. Excuse me this morning, Mr. Libby."

"Why, of course," he tried to say with unaltered gayety, but a note of disappointment made itself felt. "Do you think she's going to be worse?"

"No, I don't think she is. But--" She paused, and waited a space before she continued. "I'm afraid I can't be of use to her any longer. She has lost confidence in me--It's important she should trust her physician." Libby blushed, as he always did when required to recognize Grace in her professional quality. "It's more a matter of nerves than anything else, and if she does n't believe in me I can't do her any good."

"Yes, I can understand that," said the young man, with gentle sympathy; and she felt, somehow, that he delicately refrained from any leading or prompting comment.

"She has been urging me to have a consultation with some doctor about her case, and I--it would be ridiculous!"

"Then I would n't do it!" said Mr. Libby. "You know a great deal better what she wants than she does. You had better make her, do what you say."

"I didn't mean to burden you with my affairs," said Grace, "but I wished to explain her motive in speaking to you as she did." After she had said this, it seemed to her rather weak, and she could not think of anything else that would strengthen it. The young man might think that she had asked advice of him. She began to resent his telling her to make Mrs. Maynard do what she said. She was about to add something to snub him, when she recollected that it was her own wilfulness which had precipitated the present situation, and she humbled herself.

"She will probably change her mind," said Libby. "She would if you could let her carry her point," he added, with a light esteem for Mrs. Maynard which set him wrong again in Grace's eyes: he had no business to speak so to her.

"Very likely," she said, in stiff withdrawal from all terms of confidence concerning Mrs. Maynard. She did not add anything more, and she meant that the young fellow should perceive that his, audience was at an end. He did not apparently resent it, but she fancied him hurt in his acquiescence.

She went back to her patient, whom she found languid and disposed to sleep after the recent excitement, and she left her again, taking little Bella with her. Mrs. Maynard slept long, but woke none the better for her nap. Towards evening she grew feverish, and her fever mounted as the night fell. She was restless and wakeful, and between her dreamy dozes she was incessant in her hints for a consultation to Grace, who passed the night in her room, and watched every change for the worse with a self-accusing heart. The impending trouble was in that indeterminate phase which must give the physician his most anxious moments; and this inexperienced girl; whose knowledge was all to be applied, and who had hardly arrived yet at that dismaying stage when a young physician finds all the results at war with all the precepts, began to realize the awfulness of her responsibility. She had always thought of saving life, and not of losing it.

V.

By morning Grace was as nervous and anxious as her patient, who had momentarily the advantage of her in having fallen asleep. She went stealthily out, and walked the length of the piazza, bathing her eyes with the sight of the sea, cool and dim under a clouded sky. At the corner next the kitchen she encountered Barlow, who, having kindled the fire for the cook, had spent a moment of leisure in killing some chickens at the barn; he appeared with a cluster of his victims in his hand, but at sight of Grace he considerably put them behind him.

She had not noticed them. "Mr. Barlow," she said, "how far is it to Corbitant?"

Barlow slouched into a conversational posture, easily resting on his raised hip the back of the hand in which he held the chickens. "Well, it 's accordin' to who you ask. Some says six mile, and real clever folks makes it about four and a quarter."

"I ask you," persisted Grace.

"Well, the last time I was there, I thought it was about sixty. 'Most froze my fingers goin' round the point. 'N' all I was afraid of was gettin' there too soon. Tell you, a lee shore ain't a pleasant neighbor

in a regular old northeaster. 'F you go by land, I guess it's about ten mile round through the woods. Want to send for Dr. Mulbridge? I thought mebber"--

"No, no!" said Grace. She turned back into the house, and then she came running out again; but by this time Barlow had gone into the kitchen, where she heard him telling the cook that these were the last of the dommyneckers. At breakfast several of the ladies came and asked after Mrs. Maynard, whose restless night they had somehow heard of. When she came out of the dining-room' Miss Gleason waylaid her in the hall.

"Dr. Breen," she said, in a repressed tumult, "I hope you won't give way. For woman's sake, I hope you won't! You owe it to yourself not to give way! I'm sure Mrs. Maynard is as well off in your hands as she can be. If I did n't think so, I should be the last to advise your being firm; but, feeling as I do, I do advise it most strongly. Everything depends on it."

"I don't know what you mean, Miss Gleason," said Grace.

"I'm glad it hasn't come to you yet. If it was a question of mere professional pride, I should say, By all means call him at once. But I feel that a great deal more is involved. If you yield, you make it harder for other women to help themselves hereafter, and you confirm such people as these in their distrust of female physicians. Looking at it in a large way, I almost feel that it would be better for her to die than for you to give up; and feeling as I do"--

"Are you talking of Mrs. Maynard?" asked Grace.

"They are all saying that you ought to give up the case to Dr. Mulbridge. But I hope you won't. I should n't blame you for calling in another female physician"--

"Thank you," answered Grace. "There is no danger of her dying. But it seems to me that she has too many female physicians already. In this house I should think it better to call a man." She left the barb to rankle in Miss Gleason's breast, and followed her mother to her room, who avenged Miss Gleason by a series of inquisitorial tortures, ending with the hope that, whatever she did, Grace would not have that silly creature's blood on her hands. The girl opened her lips to attempt some answer to this unanswerable aspiration, when the unwonted sound of wheels on the road without caught her ear.

"What is that, Grace?" demanded her mother, as if Grace were guilty of the noise.

"Mr. Libby," answered Grace, rising.

"Has he come for you?"

"I don't know. But I am going down to see him."

At sight of the young man's face, Grace felt her heart lighten. He had jumped from his buggy, and was standing at his smiling ease on the piazza steps, looking about as if for some one, and he brightened joyfully at her coming. He took her hand with eager friendliness, and at her impulse began to move away to the end of the piazza with her. The ladies had not yet descended to the beach; apparently their interest in Dr. Breen's patient kept them.

"How is Mrs. Maynard this morning?" he asked; and she answered, as they got beyond earshot,--

"Not better, I'm afraid."

"Oh, I'm sorry," said the young man. "Then you won't be able to drive with me this morning? I hope she is n't seriously worse?" he added, recurring to Mrs. Maynard at the sight of the trouble in Grace's face.

"I shall ask to drive with you," she returned. "Mr. Libby, do you know where Corbitant is?"

"Oh, yes."

"And will you drive me there?"

"Why, certainly!" he cried, in polite wonder.

"Thank you." She turned half round, and cast a woman's look at the other women. "I shall be ready in half an hour. Will you go away, and come back then? Not sooner."

"Anything you please, Miss Breen," he said, laughing in his mystification. "In thirty minutes, or thirty days."

They went back to the steps, and he mounted his buggy. She sat down, and taking some work from her pocket, bent her head over it. At first she was pale, and then she grew red. But these fluctuations of color could not keep her spectators long; one by one they dispersed and descended the cliff; and when she rose to go for her hat the last had vanished, with a longing look at her. It was Miss Gleason.

Grace briefly announced her purpose to her mother, who said, "I hope you are not doing anything impulsive"; and she answered, "No, I had quite made up my mind to it last night."

Mr. Libby had not yet returned when she went back to the piazza, and she walked out on the road by which he must arrive. She had not to walk far. He drew in sight before she had gone a quarter of a mile, driving rapidly. "Am I late?" he asked, turning, and pulling up at the roadside, with wellsubdued astonishment at encountering her.

"Oh, no; not that I know." She mounted to the seat, and they drove off in a silence which endured for a long time. If Libby had been as vain as he seemed light, he must have found it cruelly unflattering, for it

ignored his presence and even his existence. She broke the silence at last with a deep-drawn sigh, as frankly sad as if she had been quite alone, but she returned to consciousness of him in it. "Mr. Libby, you must think it is very strange for me to ask you to drive me to Corbitant without troubling myself to tell you my errand."

"Oh, not at all," said the young man. "I'm glad to be of use on any terms. It is n't often that one gets the chance."

"I am going to see Dr. Mulbridge," she began, and then stopped so long that he perceived she wished him to say something.

He said, "Yes?"

"Yes. I thought this morning that I should give Mrs. Maynard's case up to him. I shouldn't be at all troubled at seeming to give it up under a pressure of opinion, though I should not give it up for that. Of course," she explained, "you don't know that all those women have been saying that I ought to call in Dr. Mulbridge. It's one of those things," she added bitterly, "that make it so pleasant for a woman to try to help women." He made a little murmur of condolence, and she realized that she had thrown herself on his sympathy, when she thought she had been merely thinking aloud. "What I mean is that he is a man of experience and reputation, and could probably be of more use to her than I, for she would trust him more. But I have known her a long time, and I understand her temperament and her character,--which goes for a good deal in such matters,--and I have concluded not to give up the case. I wish to meet Dr. Mulbridge, however, and ask him to see her in consultation with me. That is all," she ended rather haughtily, as if she had been dramatizing the fact to Dr. Mulbridge in her own mind.

"I should think that would be the right thing," said Libby limply, with uncalled-for approval; but he left this dangerous ground abruptly. "As you say, character goes for a great deal in these things. I've seen Mrs. Maynard at the point of death before. As a general rule, she does n't die. If you have known her a long time, you know what I mean. She likes to share her sufferings with her friends. I've seen poor old Maynard"--

"Mr. Libby!" Grace broke in. "You may speak of Mr. Maynard as you like, but I cannot allow your disrespectfulness to Mrs. Maynard. It's shocking! You had no right to be their friend if you felt toward them as you seem to have done."

"Why, there was no harm in them. I liked them!" explained the young man.

"People have no right to like those they don't respect!"

Libby looked as if this were rather a new and droll idea. But he seemed not to object to her tutoring him. "Well," he said, "as far as Mrs. Maynard was concerned, I don't know that I liked her any more than I respected her."

Grace ought to have frowned at this, but she had to check a smile in.

order to say gravely, "I know she is disagreeable at times. And she likes to share her sufferings with others, as you say. But her husband was fully entitled to any share of them that he may have borne. If he had been kinder to her, she wouldn't be what and where she is now."

"Kinder to her!" Libby exclaimed. "He's the kindest fellow in the world! Now, Miss Breen," he said earnestly, "I hope Mrs. Maynard hasn't been talking against her husband to you?"

"Is it possible," demanded Grace, "that you don't know they're separated, and that she's going to take steps for a divorce?"

"A divorce? No! What in the world for?"

"I never talk gossip. I thought of course she had told you"--

"She never told me a word! She was ashamed to do it! She knows that I know Maynard was the best husband in the world to her. All she told me was that he was out on his ranch, and she had come on here for her health. It's some ridiculous little thing that no reasonable woman would have dreamt of caring for. It's one of her caprices. It's her own fickleness. She's tired of him,--or thinks she is, and that's all about it. Miss Breen, I beg you won't believe anything against Maynard!"

"I don't understand," faltered Grace, astonished at his fervor; and the light it cast upon her first doubts of him. "Of course, I only know the affair from her report, and I haven't concerned myself in it, except as it affected her health. And I don't wish to misjudge him. And I like your--defending him," she said, though it instantly seemed a patronizing thing to have said. "But I couldn't withhold my sympathy where I believed there had been neglect and systematic unkindness, and finally desertion."

"Oh, I know Mrs. Maynard; I know her kind of talk. I've seen Maynard's neglect and unkindness, and I know just what his desertion would be. If he's left her, it's because she wanted him to leave her; he did it to humor her, to please her. I shall have a talk with Mrs. Maynard when we get back."

"I 'm afraid I can't allow it at present," said Grace, very seriously.

"She is worse to-day. Otherwise I should n't be giving you this trouble."

"Oh, it's no trouble"--

"But I'm glad--I'm glad we've had this understanding. I'm very glad. It makes me think worse of myself and better of--others."

Libby gave a laugh. "And you like that? You're easily pleased."

She remained grave. "I ought to be able to tell you what I mean. But it is n't possible--now. Will you let me beg your pardon?" she urged, with impulsive earnestness.

"Why, yes," he answered, smiling.

"And not ask me why?"

"Certainly."

"Thank you. Yes," she added hastily, "she is so much worse that some one of greater experience than I must see her, and I have made up my mind. Dr. Mulbridge may refuse to consult with me. I know very well that there is a prejudice against women physicians, and I couldn't especially blame him for sharing it. I have thought it all over. If he refuses, I shall know what to do." She had ceased to address Libby, who respected her soliloquy. He drove on rapidly over the soft road, where the wheels made no sound, and the track wandered with apparent aimlessness through the interminable woods of young oak and pine. The low trees were full of the sunshine, and dappled them with shadow as they dashed along; the fresh, green ferns springing from the brown carpet of the pineneedles were as if painted against it. The breath of the pines was heavier for the recent rain; and the woody smell of the oaks was pungent where the balsam failed. They met no one, but the solitude did not make itself felt through her preoccupation. From time to time she dropped a word or two; but for the most she was silent, and he did not attempt to lead. By and by they came to an opener place, where there were many red fieldlilies tilting in the wind.

"Would you like some of those?" he asked, pulling up.

"I should, very much," she answered, glad of the sight of the gay things. But when he had gathered her a bunch of the flowers she looked down at them in her lap, and said, "It's silly in me to be caring for lilies at such a time, and I should make an unfavorable impression on Dr. Mulbridge if he saw me with them. But I shall risk their effect on him. He may think I have been botanizing."

"Unless you tell him you have n't," the young man suggested.

"I need n't do that."

"I don't think any one else would do it."

She colored a little at the tribute to her candor, and it pleased her, though it had just pleased her as much to forget that she was not like any other young girl who might be simply and irresponsibly happy in flowers gathered for her by a young man. "I won't tell him, either!" she cried, willing to grasp the fleeting emotion again; but it was gone, and only a little residue of sad consciousness remained.

The woods gave way on either side of the road, which began to be a village street, sloping and shelving down toward the curve of a quiet bay. The neat weather-gray dwellings, shingled to the ground and brightened with door-yard flowers and creepers, straggled off into the boat-houses and fishing-huts on the shore, and the village seemed to get

afloat at last in the sloops and schooners riding in the harbor, whose smooth plane rose higher to the eye than the town itself. The salt and the sand were everywhere, but though there had been no positive prosperity in Corbitant for a generation, the place had an impregnable neatness, which defied decay; if there had been a dog in the street, there would not have been a stick to throw at him.

One of the better, but not the best, of the village houses, which did not differ from the others in any essential particular, and which stood flush upon the street, bore a door-plate with the name Dr. Rufus Mulbridge, and Libby drew up in front of it without having had to alarm the village with inquiries. Grace forbade his help in dismounting, and ran to the door, where she rang one of those bells which sharply respond at the back of the panel to the turn of a crank in front; she observed, in a difference of paint, that this modern improvement had displaced an old-fashioned knocker. The door was opened by a tall and strikingly handsome old woman, whose black eyes still kept their keen light under her white hair, and whose dress showed none of the incongruity which was offensive in the door-bell: it was in the perfection of an antiquated taste, which, however, came just short of characterizing it with gentlewomanliness.

"Is Dr. Mulbridge at home?" asked Grace.

"Yes," said the other, with a certain hesitation, and holding the door ajar.

"I should like to see him," said Grace, mounting to the threshold.

"Is it important?" asked the elder woman.

"Quite," replied Grace, with an accent at once of surprise and decision.

"You may come in," said the other reluctantly, and she opened a door into a room at the side of the hall.

"You may give Dr. Mulbridge my card, if you please," said Grace, before she turned to go into this room; and the other took it, and left her to find a chair for herself. It was a country doctor's office, with the usual country doctor's supply of drugs on a shelf, but very much more than the country doctor's usual library: the standard works were there, and there were also the principal periodicals and the latest treatises of note in the medical world. In a long, upright case, like that of an old hall-clock, was the anatomy of one who had long done with time; a laryngoscope and some other professional apparatus of constant utility lay upon the leaf of the doctor's desk. There was nothing in the room which did not suggest his profession, except the sword and the spurs which hung upon the wall opposite where Grace sat beside one of the front windows. She spent her time in study of the room and its appointments, and in now and then glancing out at Mr. Libby, who sat statuesquely patient in the buggy. His profile cut against the sky was blameless; and a humorous shrewdness which showed in the wrinkle at his eye and in the droop of his yellow mustache gave its regularity life and charm. It occurred to her that if Dr. Mulbridge caught sight of Mr. Libby before he

saw her, or before she could explain that she had got one of the gentlemen at the hotel--she resolved upon this prevarication--to drive her to Corbitant in default of another conveyance, he would have his impressions and conjectures, which doubtless the bunch of lilies in her hand would do their part to stimulate. She submitted to this possibility, and waited for his coming, which began to seem unreasonably delayed. The door opened at last, and a tall, powerfully framed man of thirty-five or forty, dressed in an ill-fitting suit of gray Canada homespun appeared. He moved with a slow, pondering step, and carried his shaggy head bent downwards from shoulders slightly rounded. His dark beard was already grizzled, and she saw that his mustache was burnt and turned tawny at points by smoking, of which habit his presence gave stale evidence to another sense. He held Grace's card in his hand, and he looked at her, as he advanced, out of gray eyes that, if not sympathetic, were perfectly intelligent, and that at once sought to divine and class her. She perceived that he took in the lilies and her coming color; she felt that he noted her figure and her dress.

She half rose in response to his questioning bow, and he motioned her to her seat again. "I had to keep you waiting," he said. "I was up all night with a patient, and I was asleep when my mother called me." He stopped here, and definitively waited for her to begin.

She did not find this easy, as he took a chair in front of her, and sat looking steadily in her face. "I'm sorry to have disturbed you" "Oh, not at all," he interrupted. "The rule is to disturb a doctor."

"I mean," she began again, "that I am not sure that I am justified in disturbing you."

He waited a little while for her to go on, and then he said, "Well, let us hear."

"I wish to consult with you," she broke out, and again she came to a sudden pause; and as she looked into his vigilant face, in which she was not sure there was not a hovering derision, she could not continue. She felt that she ought to gather courage from the fact that he had not started, or done anything positively disagreeable when she had asked for a consultation; but she could not, and it did not avail her to reflect that she was rendering herself liable to all conceivable misconstruction, --that she was behaving childishly, with every appearance of behaving guiltily.

He came to her aid again, in a blunt fashion, neither kind nor unkind, but simply common sense. "What is the matter?"

"What is the matter?" she repeated.

"Yes. What are the symptoms? Where and how are, you sick?"

"I am not sick," she cried. They stared at each other in reciprocal amazement and mystification.

"Then excuse me if I ask you what you wish me to do?"

"Oh!" said Grace, realizing his natural error, with a flush. "It is n't in regard to myself that I wish to consult with you. It's another person--a friend"--

"Well," said Dr. Mulbridge, laughing, with the impatience of a physician used to making short cuts through the elaborate and reluctant statements of ladies seeking advice, "what is the matter with your friend?"

"She has been an invalid for some time," replied Grace. The laugh, which had its edge of patronage and conceit, stung her into self-possession again, and she briefly gave the points of Mrs. Maynard's case, with the recent accident and the symptoms developed during the night. He listened attentively, nodding his head at times, and now and then glancing sharply at her, as one might at a surprisingly intelligent child.

"I must see her," he said decidedly, when she came to an end. "I will see her as soon as possible. I will come over to Jocelyn's this afternoon,--as soon as I can get my dinner, in fact."

There was such a tone of dismissal in his words that she rose, and he promptly followed her example. She stood hesitating a moment. Then, "I don't know whether you understood that I wish merely to consult with you," she said; "that I don't wish to relinquish the case to you"--

"Relinquish the case--consult"--Dr. Mulbridge stared at her. "No, I don't understand. What do you mean by not relinquishing the case? If there is some one else in attendance"

"I am in attendance," said the girl firmly. "I am Mrs. Maynard's physician."

"You? Physician"

"If you have looked at my card"--she began with indignant severity.

He gave a sort of roar of amusement and apology, and then he stared at her again with much of the interest of a naturalist in an extraordinary specimen.

"I beg your pardon," he exclaimed. "I did n't look at it"; but he now did so, where he held it crumpled in the palm of his left hand. "My mother said it was a young lady, and I did n't look. Will you will you sit down, Dr. Breen?" He bustled in getting her several chairs.

"I live off here in a corner, and I have never happened to meet any ladies of our profession before. Excuse me, if I spoke under a,--mistaken impression. I--I--I should not have--ah--taken you for a physician. You"--He checked himself, as if he might have been going to say that she was too young and too pretty. "Of course, I shall have pleasure in consulting with you in regard to your friend's case, though I've no doubt you are doing all that can be done." With a great show of deference, he still betrayed something of the air of one who humors a joke; and she

felt this, but felt that she could not openly resent it.

"Thank you," she returned with dignity, indicating with a gesture of her hand that she would not sit down again. "I am sorry to ask you to come so far."

"Oh, not at all. I shall be driving over in that direction at any rate. I've a patient near there." He smiled upon her with frank curiosity, and seemed willing to detain her, but at a loss how to do so. "If I had n't been stupid from my nap I should have inferred a scientific training from your statement of your friend's case." She still believed that he was laughing at her, and that this was a mock but she was still helpless to resent it, except by an assumption of yet colder state. This had apparently no effect upon Dr. Mulbridge. He continued to look at her with hardly concealed amusement, and visibly to grow more and more conscious of her elegance and style, now that she stood before him. There had been a time when, in planning her career, she had imagined herself studying a masculine simplicity and directness of address; but the over-success of some young women, her fellows at the school, in this direction had disgusted her with it, and she had perceived that after all there is nothing better for a girl, even a girl who is a doctor of medicine, than a ladylike manner. Now, however, she wished that she could do or say something aggressively mannish, for she felt herself dwindling away to the merest femininity, under a scrutiny which had its fascination, whether agreeable or disagreeable. "You must," he said, with really unwarrantable patronage, "have found that the study of medicine has its difficulties,--you must have been very strongly drawn to it."

"Oh no, not at all; I had rather an aversion at first," she replied, with the instant superiority of a woman where the man suffers any topic to become personal. "Why did you think I was drawn to it?"

"I don't know--I don't know that I thought so," he stammered. "I believe I intended to ask," he added bluntly; but she had the satisfaction of seeing him redden, and she did not volunteer anything in his relief. She divined that it would leave him with an awkward sense of defeat if he quitted the subject there; and in fact he had determined that he would not. "Some of our ladies take up the study abroad," he said; and he went on to speak, with a real deference, of the eminent woman who did the American name honor by the distinction she achieved in the schools of Paris.

"I have never been abroad," said Grace.

"No?" he exclaimed. "I thought all American ladies had been abroad"; and now he said, with easy recognition of her resolution not to help him out, "I suppose you have your diploma from the Philadelphia school."

"No," she returned, "from the New York school,--the homoeopathic school of New York."

Dr. Mulbridge instantly sobered, and even turned a little pale, but he

did not say anything. He remained looking at her as if she had suddenly changed from a piquant mystery to a terrible dilemma.

She moved toward the door. "Then I may expect you," she said, "about the middle of the afternoon."

He did not reply; he stumbled upon the chairs in following her a pace or two, with a face of acute distress. Then he broke out with "I can't come! I can't consult with you!"

She turned and looked at him with astonishment, which he did his best to meet. Her astonishment congealed into hauteur, and then dissolved into the helplessness of a lady who has been offered a rudeness; but still she did not speak. She merely looked at him, while he halted and stammered on.

"Personally, I--I--should be--obliged--I should feel honored--I--It has nothing to do with your--your--being a--a--a--woman lady. I should not care for that. No. But surely you must know the reasons--the obstacles--which deter me?"

"No, I don't," she said, calm with the advantage of his perturbation. "But if you refuse, that is sufficient. I will not inquire your reasons. I will simply withdraw my request."

"Thank you. But I beg you to understand that they have no reference whatever to you in--your own--capacity--character--individual quality. They are purely professional--that is, technical--I should say disciplinary,--entirely disciplinary. Yes, disciplinary." The word seemed to afford Dr. Mulbridge the degree of relief which can come only from an exactly significant and luminously exegetic word.

"I don't at all know what you mean," said Grace. "But it is not necessary that I should know. Will you allow me?" she asked, for Dr. Mulbridge had got between her and the door, and stood with his hand on the latch.

His face flushed, and drops stood on his forehead. "Surely, Miss--I mean Doctor--Breen, you must know why I can't consult with you! We belong to two diametrically opposite schools--theories--of medicine. It would be impracticable--impossible for us to consult. We could find no common ground. Have you never heard that the--ah regular practice cannot meet homoeopaths in this way? If you had told me--if I had known--you were a homoeopathist, I could n't have considered the matter at all. I can't now express any opinion as to your management of the case, but I have no doubt that you will know what to do--from your point of view--and that you will prefer to call in some one of your own--persuasion. I hope that you don't hold me personally responsible for this result!"

"Oh, no!" replied the girl, with a certain dreamy abstraction. "I had heard that you made some such distinction--I remember, now. But I could n't realize anything so ridiculous."

Dr. Mulbridge colored. "Excuse me," he said, "if, even under the circumstances, I can't agree with you that the position taken by the regular practice is ridiculous."

She did not make any direct reply. "But I supposed that you only made this distinction, as you call it, in cases where there is no immediate danger; that in a matter of life and death you would waive it. Mrs. Maynard is really--"

"There are no conditions under which I could not conscientiously refuse to waive it."

"Then," cried Grace, "I withdraw the word! It is not ridiculous. It is monstrous, atrocious, inhuman!"

A light of humorous irony glimmered in Dr. Mulbridge's eye. "I must submit to your condemnation."

"Oh, it isn't a personal condemnation!" she retorted. "I have no doubt that personally you are not responsible. We can lay aside our distinctions as allopathist and homoeopathist, and you can advise with me"--

"It's quite impossible," said Dr. Mulbridge. "If I advised with you, I might be--A little while ago one of our school in Connecticut was expelled from the State Medical Association for consulting with"--he began to hesitate, as if he had not hit upon a fortunate or appropriate illustration, but he pushed on--"with his own wife, who was a physician of your school."

She haughtily ignored his embarrassment. "I can appreciate your difficulty, and pity any liberal-minded person who is placed as you are, and disapproves of such wretched bigotry."

"I am obliged to tell you," said Dr. Mulbridge, "that I don't disapprove of it."

"I am detaining you," said Grace. "I beg your pardon. I was curious to know how far superstition and persecution can go in our day." If the epithets were not very accurate, she used them with a woman's effectiveness, and her intention made them descriptive. "Good-day," she added, and she made a movement toward the door, from which Dr. Mulbridge retired. But she did not open the door. Instead, she sank into the chair which stood in the corner, and passed her hand over her forehead, as if she were giddy.

Dr. Mulbridge's finger was instantly on her wrist. "Are you faint?"

"No, no!" she gasped, pulling her hand away. "I am perfectly well." Then she was silent for a time before she added by a supreme effort, "I have no right to endanger another's life, through any miserable pride, and I never will. Mrs. Maynard needs greater experience than mine, and she must have it. I can't justify myself in the delay and uncertainty of

sending to Boston. I relinquish the case. I give it to you. And I will nurse her under your direction, obediently, conscientiously. Oh!" she cried, at his failure to make any immediate response, "surely you won't refuse to take the case!"

"I won't refuse," he said, with an effect of difficult concession.

"I will come. I will drive over at once, after dinner."

She rose now, and put her hand on the door-latch. "Do you object to my nursing your patient? She is an old school friend. But I could yield that point too, if"--

"Oh, no, no! I shall be only too glad of your help, and your"--he was going to say advice, but he stopped himself, and repeated--"help."

They stood inconclusively a moment, as if they would both be glad of something more to say. Then she said tentatively, "Good-morning," and responded experimentally, "Good-morning"; and with that they involuntarily parted, and she went out of the door, which he stood holding open even after she had got out of the gate.

His mother came down the stairs. "What in the world were you quarrelling with that girl about, Rufus?"

"We were not quarrelling, mother."

"Well, it sounded like it. Who was she?"

"Who?" repeated her son absently. "Dr. Breen."

"Doctor Breen? That girl a doctor?"

"Yes."

"I thought she was some saucy thing. Well, upon my word!" exclaimed Mrs. Mulbridge. "So that is a female doctor, is it? Was she sick?"

"No," said her son, with what she knew to be professional finality. "Mother, if you can hurry dinner a little, I shall be glad. I have to drive over to Jocelyn's, and I should like to start as soon as possible."

"Who was the young man with her? Her beau, I guess."

"Was there a young man with her?" asked Dr. Mulbridge.

His mother went out without speaking. She could be unsatisfactory, too.

VI.

No one but Mrs. Breen knew of her daughter's errand, and when Grace came

back she alighted from Mr. Libby's buggy with an expression of thanks that gave no clew as to the direction or purpose of it. He touched his hat to her with equal succinctness, and drove away, including all the ladies on the piazza in a cursory obeisance.

"We must ask you, Miss Gleason," said Mrs. Alger. "Your admiration of Dr. Breen clothes you with authority and responsibility."

"I can't understand it at all," Miss Gleason confessed. "But I'm sure there's nothing in it. He isn't her equal. She would feel that it wasn't right--under the circumstances."

"But if Mrs. Maynard was well it would be a fair game, you mean," said Mrs. Alger.

"No," returned Miss Gleason, with the greatest air of candor, "I can't admit that I meant that."

"Well," said the elder lady, "the presumption is against them. Every young couple seen together must be considered in love till they prove the contrary."

"I like it in her," said Mrs. Frost. "It shows that she is human, after all. It shows that she is like other girls. It's a relief."

"She is n't like other girls," contended Miss Gleason darkly.

"I would rather have Mr. Libby's opinion," said Mrs. Merritt.

Grace went to Mrs. Maynard's room, and told her that Dr. Mulbridge was coming directly after dinner.

"I knew you would do it!" cried Mrs. Maynard, throwing her right arm round Grace's neck, while the latter bent over to feel the pulse in her left. "I knew where you had gone as soon as your mother told me you had driven off with Walter Libby. I'm so glad that you've got somebody to consult! Your theories are perfectly right and I'm sure that Dr. Mulbridge will just tell you to keep on as you've been doing."

Grace withdrew from her caress. "Dr. Mulbridge is not coming for a consultation. He refused to consult with me."

"Refused to consult? Why, how perfectly ungentlemanly! Why did he refuse?"

"Because he is an allopathist and I am a homoeopathist."

"Then, what is he coming for, I should like to know!"

"I have given up the case to him," said Grace wearily.

"Very well, then!" cried Mrs. Maynard, "I won't be given up. I will simply die! Not a pill, not a powder, of his will I touch! If he thinks

himself too good to consult with another doctor, and a lady at that, merely because she doesn't happen to be allopathist, he can go along! I never heard of anything so conceited, so disgustingly mean, in my life. No, Grace! Why, it's horrid!" She was silent, and then, "Why, of course," she added, "if he comes, I shall have to see him. I look like a fright, I suppose."

"I will do your hair," said Grace, with indifference to these vows and protests; and without deigning further explanation or argument she made the invalid's toilet for her. If given time, Mrs. Maynard would talk herself into any necessary frame of mind, and Grace merely supplied the monosyllabic promptings requisite for her transition from mood to mood. It was her final resolution that when Dr. Mulbridge did come she should give him a piece of her mind; and she received him with anxious submissiveness, and hung upon all his looks and words with quaking and with an inclination to attribute her unfavorable symptoms to the treatment of her former physician. She did not spare him certain apologies for the disorderly appearance of her person and her room.

Grace sat by and watched him with perfectly quiescent observance. The large, somewhat uncouth man gave evidence to her intelligence that he was all physician--that he had not chosen his profession from any theory or motive, however good, but had been as much chosen by it as if he had been born a Physician. He was incredibly gentle and soft in all his movements, and perfectly kind, without being at any moment unprofitably sympathetic. He knew when to listen and when not to listen,--to learn everything from the quivering bundle of nerves before him without seeming to have learnt anything alarming; he smiled when it would do her good to be laughed at, and treated her with such grave respect that she could not feel herself trifled with, nor remember afterwards any point of neglect. When he rose and left some medicines, with directions to Grace for giving them and instructions for contingencies, she followed him from the room.

"Well?" she said anxiously.

"Mrs. Maynard is threatened with pneumonia. Or, I don't know why I should say threatened," he added; "she has pneumonia."

"I supposed--I was afraid so," faltered the girl.

"Yes." He looked into her eyes with even more seriousness than he spoke.

"Has she friends here?" he asked.

"No; her husband is in Cheyenne, out on the plains."

"He ought to know," said Dr. Mulbridge. "A great deal will depend upon her nursing--Miss--ah--Dr. Breen."

"You need n't call me Dr. Breen," said Grace. "At present, I am Mrs. Maynard's nurse."

He ignored this as he had ignored every point connected with the

interview of the morning. He repeated the directions he had already given with still greater distinctness, and, saying that he should come in the morning, drove away. She went back to Louise: inquisition for inquisition, it was easier to meet that of her late patient than that of her mother, and for once the girl spared herself.

"I know he thought I was very bad," whimpered Mrs. Maynard, for a beginning. "What is the matter with me?"

"Your cold has taken an acute form; you will have to go to bed."

"Then I'm going to be down sick! I knew I was! I knew it! And what am I going to do, off in such a place as this? No one to nurse me, or look after Bella! I should think you would be satisfied now, Grace, with the result of your conscientiousness: you were so very sure that Mr. Libby was wanting to flirt with me that you drove us to our death, because you thought he felt guilty and was trying to fib out of it."

"Will you let me help to undress you?" asked Grace gently. "Bella shall be well taken care of, and I am going to nurse you myself, under Dr. Mulbridge's direction. And once for all, Louise, I wish to say that I hold myself to blame for all"--

"Oh, yes! Much good that does now!" Being got into bed, with the sheet smoothed under her chin, she said, with the effect of drawing a strictly logical conclusion from the premises, "Well, I should think George Maynard would want to be with his family!"

Spent with this ordeal, Grace left her at last, and went out on the piazza, where she found Libby returned. In fact, he had, upon second thoughts, driven back, and put up his horse at Jocelyn's, that he might be of service there in case he were needed. The ladies, with whom he had been making friends, discreetly left him to Grace, when she appeared, and she frankly walked apart with him, and asked him if he could go over to New Leyden, and telegraph to Mr. Maynard.

"Has she asked for him?" he inquired, laughing. "I knew it would come to that."

"She has not asked; she has said that she thought he ought to be with his family," repeated Grace faithfully.

"Oh, I know how she said it: as if he had gone away wilfully, and kept away against her wishes and all the claims of honor and duty. It wouldn't take her long to get round to that if she thought she was very sick. Is she so bad?" he inquired, with light scepticism.

"She's threatened with pneumonia. We can't tell how bad she may be."

"Why, of course I'll telegraph. But I don't think anything serious can be the matter with Mrs. Maynard."

"Dr. Mulbridge said that Mr. Maynard ought to know."

"Is that so?" asked Libby, in quite a different tone. If she recognized the difference, she was meekly far from resenting it; he, however, must have wished to repair his blunder. "I think you need n't have given up the case to him. I think you're too conscientious about it."

"Please don't speak of that now," she interposed.

"Well, I won't," he consented. "Can I be of any use here to-night?"

"No, we shall need nothing more. The doctor will be here again in the morning."

"Libby did not come in the morning till after the doctor had gone, and then he explained that he had waited to hear in reply to his telegram, so that they might tell Mrs. Maynard her husband had started; and he had only just now heard.

"And has he started?" Grace asked.

"I heard from his partner. Maynard was at the ranch. His partner had gone for him."

"Then he will soon be here," she said.

"He will, if telegraphing can bring him. I sat up half the night with the operator. She was very obliging when she understood the case."

"She?" reputed Grace, with a slight frown.

"The operators are nearly all women in the country."

"Oh!" She looked grave. "Can they trust young girls with such important duties?"

"They did n't in this instance," relied Libby. "She was a pretty old girl. What made you think she was young?"

"I don't know. I thought you said she was young." She blushed, and seemed about to say more, but she did not.

He waited, and then he said, "You can tell Mrs. Maynard that I telegraphed on my own responsibility, if you think it's going to alarm her."

"Well," said Grace, with a helpless sigh.

"You don't like to tell her that," he suggested, after a moment, in which he had watched her.

"How do you know?"

"Oh, I know. And some day I will tell you how--if you will let me."

It seemed a question; and she did not know what it was that kept her-- silent and breathless and hot in the throat. "I don't like to do it," she said at last. "I hate myself whenever I have to feign anything. I knew perfectly well that you did n't say she was young," she broke out desperately.

"Say Mrs. Maynard was young?" he asked stupidly.

"No!" she cried. She rose hastily from the bench where she had been sitting with him. "I must go back to her now."

He mounted to his buggy, and drove thoughtfully away at a walk.

The ladies, whose excited sympathies for Mrs. Maynard had kept them from the beach till now, watched him quite out of sight before they began to talk of Grace.

"I hope Dr. Breen's new patient will be more tractable," said Mrs. Merritt. "It would be a pity if she had to give him up, too, to Dr. Mulbridge."

Mrs. Scott failed of the point. "Why, is Mr. Libby sick?"

"Not very," answered Mrs. Merritt, with a titter of self-applause.

"I should be sorry," interposed Mrs. Alger authoritatively, "if we had said anything to influence the poor thing in what she has done."

"Oh, I don't think we need distress ourselves about undue influence!" Mrs. Merritt exclaimed.

Mrs. Alger chose to ignore the suggestion. "She had a very difficult part; and I think she has acted courageously. I always feel sorry for girls who attempt anything of that kind. It's a fearful ordeal."

"But they say Miss Breen was n't obliged to do it for a living," Mrs. Scott suggested.

"So much the worse," said Mrs. Merritt.

"No, so much the better," returned Mrs. Alger.

Mrs. Merritt, sitting on the edge of the piazza, stooped over with difficulty and plucked a glass-straw, which she bit as she looked rebelliously away.

Mrs. Frost had installed herself as favorite since Mrs. Alger had praised her hair. She now came forward, and, dropping fondly at her knee, looked up to her for instruction. "Don't you think that she showed her sense in giving up at the very beginning, if she found she was n't equal to it?" She gave her head a little movement from side to side, and put the mass of her back hair more on show.

"Perhaps," said Mrs. Alger, looking at the favorite not very favorably.

"Oh, I don't think she's given up," Miss Gleason interposed, in her breathless manner. She waited to be asked why, and then she added, "I think she's acting in consultation with Dr. Mulbridge. He may have a certain influence over her,--I think he has; but I know they are acting in unison."

Mrs. Merritt flung her grass-straw away. "Perhaps it is to be Dr. Mulbridge, after all, and not Mr. Libby."

"I have thought of that," Miss Gleason assented candidly. "Yes, I have thought of that. I have thought of their being constantly thrown together, in this way. It would not discourage me. She could be quite as true to her vocation as if she remained single. Truer."

"Talking of true," said Mrs. Scott, "always does make me think of blue. They say that yellow will be worn on everything this winter."

"Old gold?" asked Mrs. Frost. Yes, more than ever."

"Dear!" cried the other lady. "I don't know what I shall do. It perfectly kills my hair."

"Oh, Miss Gleason!" exclaimed the young girl.

"Do you believe in character coming out in color?"

"Yes, certainly. I have always believed that."

"Well, I've got a friend, and she wouldn't have anything to do with a girl that wore magenta more than she would fly."

"I should suppose," explained Miss Gleason, "that all those aniline dyes implied something coarse in people."

"Is n't it curious," asked Mrs. Frost, "how red-haired people have come in fashion? I can recollect, when I was a little girl, that everybody laughed at red hair. There was one girl at the first school I ever went to,--the boys used to pretend to burn their fingers at her hair."

"I think Dr. Breen's hair is a very pretty shade of brown," said the young girl.

Mrs. Merritt rose from the edge of the piazza. "I think that if she hasn't given up to him entirely she's the most submissive consulting physician I ever saw," she said, and walked out over the grass towards the cliff.

The ladies looked after her. "Is Mrs. Merritt more pudgy when she's sitting down or when she's standing up?" asked Mrs. Scott.

Miss Gleason seized her first chance of speaking with Grace alone.

"Oh, do you know how much you are doing for us all?"

"Doing for you, all? How doing?" faltered Grace, whom she had whisperingly halted in a corner of the hall leading from the dining-room.

"By acting in unison,--by solving the most perplexing problem in women's practising your profession. She passed the edge of her fan over her lips before letting it fall furled upon her left hand, and looked luminously into Grace's eyes.

"I don't at all know what you mean, Miss Gleason," said the other.

Miss Gleason kicked out the skirt of her dress, so as to leave herself perfectly free for the explanation. "Practising in harmony with a physician of the other sex. I have always felt that there was the great difficulty,--how to bring that about. I have always felt that the TRUE physician must be DUAL,--have both the woman's nature and the man's; the woman's tender touch, the man's firm grasp. You have shown how the medical education of women can meet this want. The physician can actually be dual,--be two, in fact. Hereafter, I have no doubt we shall always call a physician of each sex. But it's wonderful how you could ever bring it about, though you can do anything! Has n't it worn upon you?" Miss Gleason darted out her sentences in quick, short breaths, fixing Grace with her eyes, and at each clause nervously tapping her chest with her reopened fan.

"If you suppose," said Grace, "that Dr. Mulbridge and I are acting professionally in unison, as you call it, you are mistaken. He has entire charge of the case; I gave it up to him, and I am merely nursing Mrs. Maynard under his direction."

"How splendid!" Miss Gleason exclaimed. "Do you know that I admire you for giving up,--for knowing when to give up? So few women do that! Is n't he magnificent?"

"Magnificent?"

"I mean psychically. He is what I should call a strong soul You must have felt his masterfulness; you must have enjoyed it! Don't you like to be dominated?"

"No," said Grace, "I should n't at all like it."

"Oh, I do! I like to meet one of those forceful masculine natures that simply bid you obey. It's delicious. Such a sense of self-surrender," Miss Gleason explained. "It is n't because they are men," she added. "I have felt the same influence from some women. I felt it, in a certain degree, on first meeting you."

"I am very sorry," said Grace coldly. "I should dislike being controlled myself, and I should dislike still more to control others."

"You're doing it now!" cried Miss Gleason, with delight. "I could not do a thing to resist your putting me down! Of course you don't know that you're doing it; it's purely involuntary. And you wouldn't know that he was dominating you. And he would n't."

Very probably Dr. Mulbridge would not have recognized himself in the character of all-compelling lady's-novel hero, which Miss Gleason imagined for him. Life presented itself rather simply to him, as it does to most men, and he easily dismissed its subtler problems from a mind preoccupied with active cares. As far as Grace was concerned, she had certainly roused in him an unusual curiosity; nothing less than her homoeopathy would have made him withdraw his consent to a consultation with her, and his fear had been that in his refusal she should escape from his desire to know more about her, her motives, her purposes. He had accepted without scruple the sacrifice of pride she had made to him; but he had known how to appreciate her scientific training, which he found as respectable as that of any clever, young man of their profession. He praised, in his way, the perfection with which she interpreted his actions and intentions in regard to the patient.

"If there were such nurses as you, Miss Breen, there would be very little need of doctors," he said, with a sort of interrogative fashion of laughing peculiar to him.

"I thought of being a nurse once;" she answered. "Perhaps I may still be one. The scientific training won't be lost."

"Oh, no? It's a pity that more of them have n't it. But I suppose they think nursing is rather too humble an ambition."

"I don't think it so," said Grace briefly.

"Then you did n't care for medical distinction."

"No."

He looked at her quizzically, as if this were much droller than if she had cared. "I don't understand why you should have gone into it. You told me, I think, that it was repugnant to you; and it's hard work for a woman, and very uncertain work for anyone. You must have had a tremendous desire to benefit your race."

His characterization of her motive was so distasteful that she made no reply, and left him to his conjectures, in which he did not appear unhappy. "How do you find Mrs. Maynard to-day?" she asked.

He looked at her with an instant coldness, as if he did not like her asking, and were hesitating whether to answer. But he said at last, "She is no better. She will be worse before she is better. You see," he added, "that I haven't been able to arrest the disorder in its first stage. We must hope for what can be done now, in the second."

She had gathered from the half jocose ease with which he had listened to Mrs. Maynard's account of herself, and to her own report, an

encouragement which now fell to the ground "Yes," she assented, in her despair, "that is the only hope."

He sat beside the table in the hotel parlor, where they found themselves alone for the moment, and drubbed upon it with an absent look. "Have you sent for her husband?" he inquired, returning to himself.

"Yes; Mr. Libby telegraphed the evening we saw you."

"That's good," said Dr. Mulbridge, with comfortable approval; and he rose to go away.

Grace impulsively detained him. "I--won't--ask you whether you consider Mrs. Maynard's case a serious one, if you object to my doing so."

"I don't know that I object," he said slowly, with a teasing smile, such as one might use with a persistent child whom one chose to baffle in that way.

She disdained to avail herself of the implied permission. "What I mean--what I wish to tell you is--that I feel myself responsible for her sickness, and that if she dies, I shall be guilty of her death."

"Ah?" said Dr. Mulbridge, with more interest, but the same smile.

"What do you mean?"

"She didn't wish to go that day when she was caught in the storm. But I insisted; I forced her to go." She stood panting with the intensity of the feeling which had impelled her utterance.

"What do you mean by forcing her to go?"

"I don't know. I--I--persuaded her."

Dr. Mulbridge smiled, as if he perceived her intention not to tell him something she wished to tell him. He looked down into his hat, which he carried in his hand.

"Did you believe the storm was coming?"

"No!"

"And you did n't make it come?"

"Of course not!"

He looked at her and laughed.

"Oh, you don't at all understand!" she cried.

"I'm not a doctor of divinity," he said. "Good morning."

"Wait, wait!" she implored, "I'm afraid--I don't know--Perhaps my being

near her is injurious to her; perhaps I ought to let some one else nurse her. I wished to ask you this"--She stopped breathlessly.

"I don't think you have done her any harm as yet," he answered lightly.

"However," he said, after a moment's consideration, "why don't you take a holiday? Some of the other ladies might look after her a while."

"Do you really think," she palpitated, "that I might? Do you think I ought? I'm afraid I ought n't"--

"Not if your devotion is hurtful to her?" he asked. "Send some one else to her for a while. Any one can take care of her for a few hours."

"I couldn't leave her--feeling as I do about her."

"I don't know how you feel about her," said Dr. Mulbridge. "But you can't go on at this rate. I shall want your help by and by, and Mrs. Maynard doesn't need you now. Don't go back to her."

"But if she should get worse while I am away"--

"You think your staying and feeling bad would make her better? Don't go back," he repeated; and he went out to his ugly rawboned horse, and, mounting his shabby wagon, rattled away. She lingered, indescribably put to shame by the brutal common sense which she could not impeach, but which she still felt was no measure of the case. It was true that she had not told him everything, and she could not complain that he had mocked her appeal for sympathy if she had trifled with him by a partial confession. But she indignantly denied to herself that she had wished to appeal to him for sympathy.

She wandered out on the piazza, which she found empty, and stood gazing at the sea in a revery of passionate humiliation. She was in that mood, familiar to us all, when we long to be consoled and even flattered for having been silly. In a woman this mood is near to tears; at a touch of kindness the tears come, and momentous questions are decided. What was perhaps uppermost in the girl's heart was a detestation of the man to whom she had seemed a simpleton; her thoughts pursued him, and divined the contempt with which he must be thinking of her and her pretensions. She heard steps on the sand, and Libby came round the corner of the house from the stable.

VII.

Libby's friends had broken up their camp on the beach, and had gone to a lake in the heart of the woods for the fishing. He had taken a room at the Long Beach House, but he spent most of his time at Jocelyn's, where he kept his mare for use in going upon errands for Mrs. Maynard. Grace saw him constantly, and he was always doing little things for her with a

divination of her unexpressed desires which women find too rarely in men. He brought her flowers, which, after refusing them for Mrs. Maynard the first time, she accepted for herself. He sometimes brought her books, the light sort which form the sentimental currency of young people, and she lent them round among the other ladies, who were insatiable of them. She took a pleasure in these attentions, as if they had been for some one else. In this alien sense she liked to be followed up with a chair to the point where she wished to sit; to have her hat fetched, or her shawl; to drop her work or her handkerchief, secure that it would be picked up for her.

It all interested her, and it was a relief from the circumstances that would have forbidden her to recognize it as gallantry, even if her own mind had not been so far from all thought of that. His kindness followed often upon some application of hers for his advice or help, for she had fallen into the habit of going to him with difficulties. He had a prompt common sense that made him very useful in emergencies, and a sympathy or an insight that was quick in suggestions and expedients. Perhaps she overrated other qualities of his in her admiration of the practical readiness which kept his amiability from seeming weak. But the practical had so often been the unattainable with her that it was not strange she should overrate it, and that she should rest upon it in him with a trust that included all he chose to do in her behalf.

"What is the matter, Mr. Libby?" she asked, as he came toward her.

"Is anything the matter?" he demanded in turn.

"Yes; you are looking downcast," she cried reproachfully.

"I didn't know that I mustn't look downcast. I did n't suppose it would be very polite, under the circumstances, to go round looking as bobbish as I feel."

"It's the best thing you could possibly do. But you're not feeling very bobbish now." A woman respects the word a man uses, not because she would have chosen it, but because she thinks that he has an exact intention in it, which could not be reconveyed in a more feminine phrase. In this way slang arises. "Is n't it time for Mr. Maynard to be here?"

"Yes," he answered. Then, "How did you know I was thinking of that?"

"I did n't. I only happened to think it was time. What are you keeping back, Mr. Libby?" she pursued tremulously.

"Nothing, upon my honor. I almost wish there were something to keep back. But there is n't anything. There have n't been any accidents reported. And I should n't keep anything back from you."

"Why?"

"Because you would be equal to it, whatever it was."

"I don't see why you say that." She weakly found comfort in the praise which she might once have resented as patronage.

"I don't see why I should n't," he retorted:

"Because I am not fit to be trusted at all."

"Do you mean"--

"Oh, I haven't the strength, to mean anything," she said. "But I thank you, thank you very much," she added. She turned her head away.

"Confound Maynard!" cried the young man. "I don't see why he does n't come. He must have started four days ago. He ought to have had sense enough to telegraph when he did start. I did n't tell his partner to ask him. You can't think of everything. I've been trying to find out something. I'm going over to Leyden, now, to try to wake up somebody in Cheyenne who knows Maynard." He looked ruefully at Grace, who listened with anxious unintelligence. "You're getting worn out, Miss Breen," he said. "I wish I could ask you to go with me to Leyden. It would do you good. But my mare's fallen lame; I've just been to see her. Is there anything I can do for you over there?"

"Why, how are you going?" she asked.

"In my boat," he answered consciously.

"The same boat?"

"Yes. I've had her put to rights. She was n't much damaged."

She was silent a moment, while he stood looking down at her in the chair into which she had sunk. "Does it take you long?"

"Oh, no. It's shorter than it is by land. I shall have the tide with me both ways. I can make the run there and back in a couple of hours."

"Two hours?"

"Yes."

A sudden impulse, unreasoned and unreasonable, in which there seemed hope of some such atonement, or expiation, as the same ascetic nature would once have found in fasting or the scourge, prevailed with her. She rose. "Mr. Libby," she panted, "if you will let me, I should like to go with you in your boat. Do you think it will be rough?"

"No, it's a light breeze; just right. You need n't be afraid."

"I'm not afraid. I should not care if it were rough! I should not care if it stormed! I hope it--I will ask mother to stay with Mrs. Maynard."

Mrs. Breen had not been pleased to have her daughter in charge of Mrs.

Maynard's case, but she had not liked her giving it up. She had said more than once that she had no faith in Dr. Mulbridge. She willingly consented to Grace's prayer, and went down into Mrs. Maynard's room, and insinuated misgivings in which the sick woman found so much reason that they began for the first time to recognize each other's good qualities. They decided that the treatment was not sufficiently active, and that she should either have something that would be more loosening to the cough, or some application--like mustard plasters--to her feet, so as to take away that stuffed feeling about the head.

At that hour of the afternoon, when most of the ladies were lying down in their rooms, Grace met no one on the beach but Miss Gleason and Mrs. Alger, who rose from their beds of sand under the cliff at her passage with Mr. Libby to his dory.

"Don't you want to go to Leyden?" he asked jocosely over his shoulder.

"You don't mean to say you're going?" Miss Gleason demanded of Grace.

"Yes, certainly. Why not?"

"Well, you are brave!"

She shut her novel upon her thumb, that she might have nothing to do but admire Grace's courage, as the girl walked away.

"It will do her good, poor thing," said the elder woman. "She looks wretchedly."

"I can understand just why she does it," murmured Miss Gleason in adoring rapture.

"I hope she does it for pleasure," said Mrs. Alger.

"It is n't that," returned Miss Gleason mysteriously.

"At any rate, Mr. Libby seemed pleased."

"Oh, she would never marry HIM!" said Miss Gleason.

The other laughed, and at that moment Grace also laughed. The strong current of her purpose, the sense of escape from the bitter servitude of the past week, and the wild hope of final expiation through the chances she was tempting gave her a buoyancy long unfelt. She laughed in gayety of heart as she helped the young man draw his dory down the sand, and then took her place at one end while he gave it the last push and then leaped in at the other. He pulled out to where the boat lay tilting at anchor, and held the dory alongside by the gunwale that she might step aboard. But after rising she faltered, looking intently at the boat as if she missed something there.

"I thought you had a man to sail your boat"

"I had. But I let him go last week. Perhaps I ought to have told you," he said, looking up at her aslant. "Are you afraid to trust my seamanship? Adams was a mere form. He behaved like a fool that day."

"Oh, I'm not afraid," said Grace. She stepped from the dory into the boat, and he flung out the dory's anchor and followed. The sail went up with a pleasant clucking of the tackle, and the light wind filled it. Libby made the sheet fast, and, sitting down in the stern on the other side, took the tiller and headed the boat toward the town that shimmered in the distance. The water hissed at the bow, and seethed and sparkled from the stern; the land breeze that bent their sail blew cool upon her cheek and freshened it with a tinge of color.

"This will do you good," he said, looking into hers with his kind, gay eyes.

The color in her cheeks deepened a little. "Oh, I am better than I look. I did n't come for"--

"For medicinal purposes. Well, I am glad of it. We've a good hour between us and news or no news from Maynard, and I should like to think we were out for pleasure. You don't object?"

"No. You can even smoke, if that will heighten the illusion."

"It will make it reality. But you don't mean it?"

"Yes; why not?"

"I don't know. But I could n't have dreamt of smoking in your presence. And we take the liberty to dream very strange things."

"Yes," she said, "it's shocking what things we do dream of people. But am I so forbidding?" she asked, a little sadly.

"Not now," said Libby. He got out a pouch of tobacco and some cigarette papers, and putting the tiller under his arm, he made himself a cigarette.

"You seem interested," he said, as he lifted his eyes from his work, on which he found her intent, and struck his fusee.

"I was admiring your skill," she answered.

"Do you think it was worth a voyage to South America?"

"I shouldn't have thought the voyage was necessary."

"Oh, perhaps you think you can do it," he said, handing her the tobacco and papers. She took them and made a cigarette. "It took me a whole day to learn to make bad ones, and this, is beautiful. But I will never smoke it. I will keep this always."

"You had better smoke it, if you want more," she said.

"Will you make some more? I can't smoke the first one!"

"Then smoke the last," she said, offering him the things back.

"No, go on. I'll smoke it."

She lent herself to the idle humor of the time, and went on making cigarettes till there were no more papers. From time to time she looked up from this labor, and scanned the beautiful bay, which they had almost wholly to themselves. They passed a collier lagging in the deep channel, and signalling for a pilot to take her up to the town. A yacht, trim and swift, cut across their course; the ladies on board waved a salutation with their handkerchiefs, and Libby responded.

"Do you know them?" asked Grace.

"No!" he laughed. "But ladies like to take these liberties at a safe distance."

"Yes, that's a specimen of woman's daring," she said, with a self-scornful curl of the lip, which presently softened into a wistful smile. "How lovely it all is!" she sighed.

"Yes, there's nothing better in all the world than a sail. It is all the world while it lasts. A boat's like your own fireside for snugness."

A dreamier light came into her eye, which wandered, with a turn of the head giving him the tender curve of her cheek, over the levels of the bay, roughened everywhere by the breeze, but yellowish green in the channels and dark with the thick growth of eel-grass in the shallows; then she lifted her face to the pale blue heavens in an effort that slanted towards him the soft round of her chin, and showed her full throat.

"This is the kind of afternoon," she said, still looking at the sky, "that you think will never end."

"I wish it would n't," he answered.

She lowered her eyes to his, and asked: "Do you have times when you are sorry that you ever tried to do anything--when it seems foolish to have tried?"

"I have the other kind of times,--when I wish that I had tried to do something."

"Oh yes, I have those, too. It's wholesome to be ashamed of not having tried to do anything; but to be ashamed of having tried--it's like death. There seems no recovery from that."

He did not take advantage of her confession, or try to tempt her to

further confidence; and women like men who have this wisdom, or this instinctive generosity, and trust them further.

"And the worst of it is that you can't go back and be like those that have never tried at all. If you could, that would be some consolation for having failed. There is nothing left of you but your mistake."

"Well," he said, "some people are not even mistakes. I suppose that almost any sort of success looks a good deal like failure from the inside. It must be a poor creature that comes up to his own mark. The best way is not to have any mark, and then you're in no danger of not coming up to it." He laughed, but she smiled sadly.

"You don't believe in thinking about yourself," she said.

"Oh, I try a little introspection, now and then. But I soon get through: there isn't much of me to think about."

"No, don't talk in that way," she pleaded, and she was very charming in her earnestness: it was there that her charm lay. "I want you to be serious with me, and tell me--tell me how men feel when."--

A sudden splashing startled her, and looking round she saw a multitude of curious, great-eyed, black heads, something like the heads of boys, and something like the heads of dogs, thrusting from the water, and flashing under it again at sight of them with a swish that sent the spray into the air. She sprang to her feet. "Oh, look at those things! Look at them! Look at them!" She laid vehement hands upon the young man, and pushed him in the direction in which she wished him to look, at some risk of pushing him overboard, while he laughed at her ecstasy.

"They're seals. The bay's full of them. Did you never see them on the reef at Jocelyn's?"

"I never saw them before!" she cried. "How wonderful they are! Oh!" she shouted; as one of them glanced sadly at her over its shoulder, and then vanished with a whirl of the head. "The Beatrice Cenci attitude!"

"They're always trying that," said Libby. "Look yonder." He pointed to a bank of mud which the tide had not yet covered, and where a herd of seals lay basking in the sun. They started at his voice, and wriggling and twisting and bumping themselves over the earth to the water's edge, they plunged in. "Their walk isn't so graceful as their swim. Would you like one for a pet, Miss Breen? That's all they're good for since kerosene came in. They can't compete with that, and they're not the kind that wear the cloaks."

She was standing with her hand pressed hard upon his shoulder.

"Did they ever kill them?"

"They used to take that precaution."

"With those eyes? It was murder! "She withdrew her hand and sat down.

"Well, they only catch them, now. I tried it myself once. I set out at low tide, about ten o'clock, one night, and got between the water and the biggest seal on the bank. We fought it out on that line till daylight."

"And did you get it?" she demanded, absurdly interested.

"No, it got me. The tide came in, and the seal beat."

"I am glad of that."

"Thank you."

"What did you want with it?"

"I don't think I wanted it at all. At any rate, that's what I always said. I shall have to ask you to sit on this side," he added, loosening the sheet and preparing to shift the sail. "The wind has backed round a little more to the south, and it's getting lighter."

"If it's going down we shall be late," she said, with an intimation of apprehension.

"We shall be at Leyden on time. If the wind falls then, I can get a horse at the stable and have you driven back."

"Well."

He kept scanning the sky. Then, "Did you ever hear them whistle for a wind?" he asked.

"No. What is it like?"

"When Adams does it, it's like this." He put on a furtive look, and glanced once or twice at her askance. "Well!" he said with the reproduction of a strong nasal, "of course I don't believe there's anything in it. Of course it's all foolishness. Now you must urge me a little," he added, in his own manner.

"Oh, by all means go on, Mr. Adams," she cried, with a laugh.

He rolled his head again to one side sheepishly.

"Well, I don't presume it DOES have anything to do with the wind--well, I don't PRESUME it does." He was silent long enough to whet an imagined expectation; then he set his face towards the sky, and began a soft, low, coaxing sibilation between his teeth. "S-s-s-s; s-s-s-s-s-s! Well, it don't stand to reason it can bring the wind--S-s-s-s-s-s-s; s-s-s-s. Why, of course it's all foolishness. S-s-s-s." He continued to emit these sibilants, interspersing them with Adams's protests. Suddenly the sail pulled the loose sheet taut and the boat leaped forward over the water.

"Wonderful!" cried the girl.

"That's what I said to Adams, or words to that effect. But I thought we should get it from the look of the sky before I proposed to whistle for it. Now, then," he continued, "I will be serious, if you like."

"Serious?"

"Yes. Didn't you ask me to be serious just before those seals interrupted you?"

"Oh!" she exclaimed, coloring a little. "I don't think we can go back to that, now." He did not insist, and she said presently, "I thought the sailors had a superstition about ships that are lucky and unlucky. But you've kept your boat"

"I kept her for luck: the lightning never strikes twice in the same place. And I never saw a boat that behaved so well."

"Do you call it behaving well to tip over?"

"She behaved well before that. She didn't tip over outside the reef"

"It certainly goes very smoothly," said the girl. She had in vain recurred to the tragic motive of her coming; she could not revive it; there had been nothing like expiation in this eventless voyage; it had been a pleasure and no penance. She abandoned herself with a weak luxury to the respite from suffering and anxiety; she made herself the good comrade of the young man whom perhaps she even tempted to flatter her farther and farther out of the dreariness in which she had dwelt; and if any woful current of feeling swept beneath, she would not fathom it, but resolutely floated, as one may at such times, on the surface. They laughed together and jested; they talked in the gay idleness of such rare moods.

They passed a yacht at anchor, and a young fellow in a white duck cap, leaning over the rail, saluted Libby with the significant gravity which one young man uses towards another whom he sees in a sail-boat with a pretty girl.

She laughed at this. "Do you know your friend?" she asked.

"Yes. This time I do?"

"He fancies you are taking some young lady a sail. What would he say if you were to stop and introduce me to him as Dr. Breen?"

"Oh, he knows who you are. It's Johnson."

"The one whose clothes you came over in, that morning?"

"Yes. I suppose you laughed at me."

"I liked your having the courage to do it. But how does he know me?"

"I--I described you. He's rather an old friend." This also amused her.
"I should like to hear how you described me."

"I will tell you sometime. It was an elaborate description. I could n't get through with it now before we landed."

The old town had come out of the haze of the distance,--a straggling village of weather-beaten wood and weather-beaten white paint, picturesque, but no longer a vision of gray stone and pale marble. A coal-yard, and a brick locomotive house, and rambling railroad sheds stretched along the water-front. They found their way easily enough through the sparse shipping to the steps at the end of the wooden pier, where Libby dropped the sail and made his boat fast.

A little pleasant giddiness, as if the lightness of her heart had mounted to her head, made her glad of his arm up these steps and up the wharf; and she kept it as they climbed the sloping elm-shaded village street to the main thoroughfare, with its brick sidewalks, its shops and awnings, and its cheerful stir and traffic.

The telegraph office fronted the head of the street which they had ascended. "You can sit here in the apothecary's till I come down," he said.

"Do you think that will be professionally appropriate? I am only a nurse now."

"No, I wasn't thinking of that. But I saw a chair in there. And we can make a pretense of wanting some soda. It is the proper thing to treat young ladies to soda when one brings them in from the country."

"It does have that appearance," she assented, with a smile. She kept him waiting with what would have looked like coquettish hesitation in another, while she glanced at the windows overhead, pierced by a skein of converging wires. "Suppose I go up with you?"

"I should like that better," he said; and she followed him lightly up the stairs that led to the telegraph office. A young man stood at the machine with a cigar in his mouth, and his eyes intent upon the ribbon of paper unreeling itself before him.

"Just hold on," he said to Libby, without turning his head. "I've got something here for you." He read: "Despatch received yesterday. Coming right through. George Maynard."

"Good!" cried Libby.

"Dated Council Bluffs. Want it written out?"

"No. What 's to pay?"

"Paid," said the operator.

The laconically transacted business ended with this, the wire began to cluck again like the anxious hen whose manner the most awful and mysterious of the elements assumes in becoming articulate, and nothing remained for them but to come away.

"That was what I was afraid of," said Libby. "Maynard was at his ranch, and it must have been a good way out. They're fifty or sixty miles out, sometimes. That would account for the delay. Well, Mrs. Maynard doesn't know how long it takes to come from Cheyenne, and we can tell her he's on the way, and has telegraphed." They were walking rapidly down the street to the wharf where his boat lay. "Oh!" he exclaimed, halting abruptly. "I promised to send you back by land, if you preferred."

"Has the wind fallen?"

"Oh, no. We shall have a good breeze:"

"I won't put you to the trouble of getting a horse. I can go back perfectly well in the boat."

"Well, that's what I think," he said cheerily.

She did not respond, and he could not be aware that any change had come over her mood. But when they were once more seated in the boat, and the sail was pulling in the fresh breeze, she turned to him with a scarcely concealed indignation. "Have you a fancy for experimenting upon people, Mr. Libby?"

"Experimenting? I? I don't know in the least what you mean!"

"Why did you tell me that the operator was a woman?"

"Because the other operator is," he answered.

"Oh!" she said, and fell blankly silent.

"There is a good deal of business there. They have to have two operators," he explained, after a pause.

"Why, of course," she murmured in deep humiliation. If he had suffered her to be silent as long as she would, she might have offered him some reparation; but he spoke.

"Why did you think I had been experimenting on you?" he asked.

"Why?" she repeated. The sense of having put herself in the wrong exasperated her with him. "Oh, I dare say you were curious. Don't you suppose I have noticed that men are puzzled at me? What did you mean by saying that you thought I would be equal to anything?"

"I meant--I thought you would like to be treated frankly."

"And you would n't treat everybody so?"

"I wouldn't treat Mrs. Maynard so."

"Oh!" she said. "You treat me upon a theory."

"Don't you like that? We treat everybody upon a theory"--

"Yes, I know"

"And I should tell you the worst of anything at once, because I think you are one of the kind that don't like to have their conclusions made for them."

"And you would really let women make their own conclusions," she said.

"You are very peculiar!" She waited a while, and then she asked, "And what is your theory of me?"

"That you are very peculiar."

"How?"

"You are proud."

"And is pride so very peculiar?"

"Yes; in women."

"Indeed! You set up for a connoisseur of female character. That's very common, nowadays. Why don't you tell me something more about Yourself? We're always talking about me."

He might well have been doubtful of her humor. He seemed to decide that she was jesting, for he answered lightly, "Why, you began it."

"I know I did, this time. But now I wish to stop it, too."

He looked down at the tiller in his hands. "Well," he said, "I should like to tell you about myself. I should like to know what you think of the kind of man I am. Will you be honest if I will?"

"That's a very strange condition," she answered, meeting and then avoiding the gaze he lifted to her face.

"What? Being honest?"

"Well, no--Or, yes!"

"It is n't for you."

"Thank you. But I'm not under discussion now."

"Well, in the first place," he began, "I was afraid of you when we met."

"Afraid of me?"

"That is n't the word, perhaps. We'll say ashamed of myself. Mrs. Maynard told me about you, and I thought you would despise me for not doing or being anything in particular. I thought you must."

"Indeed!"

He hesitated, as if still uncertain of her mood from this intonation, and then he went on: "But I had some little hope you would tolerate me, after all. You looked like a friend I used to have.--Do you mind my telling you?"

"Oh, no. Though I can't say that it's ever very comfortable to be told that you look like some one else."

"I don't suppose any one else would have been struck by the resemblance," said Libby, with a laugh of reminiscence. "He was huge. But he had eyes like a girl,--I beg your pardon,--like yours."

"You mean that I have eyes like a man."

He laughed, and said, "No," and then turned grave. "As long as he lived"--

"Oh, is he dead?" she asked more gently than she had yet spoken.

"Yes, he died just before I went abroad. I went out on business for my father,--he's an importer and jobber,--and bought goods for him. Do you despise business?"

"I don't know anything about it."

"I did it to please my father, and he said I was a very good buyer. He thinks there's nothing like buying--except selling. He used to sell things himself, over the counter, and not so long ago, either.

"I fancied it made a difference for me when I was in college, and that the yardstick came between me and society. I was an ass for thinking anything about it. Though I did n't really care, much. I never liked society, and I did like boats and horses. I thought of a profession, once. But it would n't work. I've been round the world twice, and I've done nothing but enjoy myself since I left college,--or try to. When I first saw you I was hesitating about letting my father make me of use. He wants me to become one of the most respectable members of society, he wants me to be a cotton-spinner. You know there 's nothing so irreproachable as cotton, for a business?"

"No. I don't know about those things."

"Well, there is n't. When I was abroad, buying and selling, I made a little discovery: I found that there were goods we could make and sell in the European market cheaper than the English, and that gave my father the notion of buying a mill to make them. I'm boring you!"

"No."

"Well, he bought it; and he wants me to take charge of it."

"And shall you?"

"Do you think I'm fit for it?"

"I? How should I know?"

"You don't know cotton; but you know me a little. Do I strike you as fit for anything?" She made no reply to this, and he laughed. "I assure you I felt small enough when I heard what you had done, and thought--what I had done. It gave me a start; and I wrote my father that night that I would go in for it."

"I once thought of going to a factory town," she answered, without wilful evasion, "to begin my practice there among the operatives' children. I should have done it if it had not been for coming here with Mrs. Maynard. It would have been better."

"Come to my factory town, Miss Breen! There ought to be fevers there in the autumn, with all the low lands that I'm allowed to flood Mrs. Maynard told me about your plan."

"Pray, what else did Mrs. Maynard tell you about me?"

"About your taking up a profession, in the way you did, when you needn't, and when you did n't particularly like it."

"Oh!" she said. Then she added, "And because I was n't obliged to it, and did n't like it, you tolerated me?"

"Tolerated?" he echoed.

This vexed her. "Yes, tolerate! Everybody, interested or not, has to make up his mind whether to tolerate me as soon as he hears what I am. What excuse did you make for me?"

"I did n't make any," said Libby.

"But you had your misgiving, your surprise."

"I thought if you could stand it, other people might. I thought it was your affair."

"Just as if I had been a young man?"

"No! That wasn't possible."

She was silent. Then, "The conversation has got back into the old quarter," she said. "You are talking about me again. Have you heard from your friends since they went away?"

"What friends?"

"Those you were camping with."

"No."

"What did they say when they heard that you had found a young doctress at Jocelyn's? How did you break the fact to them? What jokes did they make? You need n't be afraid to tell me!" she cried. "Give me Mr. Johnson's comments."

He looked at her in surprise that incensed her still more, and rendered her incapable of regarding the pain with which he answered her. "I 'm afraid," he said, "that I have done something to offend you."

"Oh no! What could you have done?"

"Then you really mean to ask me whether I would let any one make a joke of you in my presence?"

"Yes; why not?"

"Because it was impossible," he answered.

"Why was it impossible?" she pursued.

"Because--I love you."

She had been looking him defiantly in the eyes, and she could not withdraw her gaze. For the endless moment that ensued, her breath was taken away. Then she asked in a low, steady voice, "Did you mean to say that?"

"No."

"I believe you, and I forgive you. No, no!" she cried, at a demonstration of protest from him, "don't speak again!"

He obeyed, instantly, implicitly. With the tiller in his hand he looked past her and guided the boat's course. It became intolerable.

"Have I ever done anything that gave you the right to--to--say that?" she asked, without the self-command which she might have wished to show.

"No," he said, "you were only the most beautiful"--

"I am not beautiful! And if I were"--

"It wasn't to be helped! I saw from the first how good and noble you were, and"--

"This is absurd!" she exclaimed. "I am neither good nor noble; and if I were"--

"It wouldn't make any difference. Whatever you are, you are the one woman in the world to me; and you always will be."

"Mr. Libby!"

"Oh, I must speak now! You were always thinking, because you had studied a man's profession, that no one would think of you as a woman, as if that could make any difference to a man that had the soul of a man in him!"

"No, no!" she protested. "I did n't think that. I always expected to be considered as a woman."

"But not as a woman to fall in love with. I understood. And that somehow made you all the dearer to me. If you had been a girl like other girls, I should n't have cared for you."

"Oh!"

"I did n't mean to speak to you to-day. But sometime I did mean to speak; because, whatever I was, I loved you; and I thought you did n't dislike me."

"I did like you," she murmured, "very much. And I respected you. But you can't say that I ever gave you any hope in this--this--way." She almost asked him if she had.

"No,--not purposely. And if you did, it 's over now. You have rejected me. I understand that. There's no reason why you shouldn't. And I can hold my tongue." He did not turn, but looked steadily past her at the boat's head.

An emotion stirred in her breast which took the form of a reproach.

"Was it fair, then, to say this when neither of us could escape afterwards?"

"I did n't mean to speak," he said, without looking up, "and I never meant to place you where you could n't escape."

It was true that she had proposed to go with him in the boat, and that she had chosen to come back with him, when he had offered to have her driven home from Leyden. "No, you are not to blame," she said, at last. "I asked to come with you. Shall I tell you why?" Her voice began to break. In her pity for him and her shame for herself the tears started to her eyes. She did not press her question, but, "Thank you for reminding me that I invited myself to go with you," she said, with feeble bitterness.

He looked up at her in silent wonder, and she broke into a sob. He said gently, "I don't suppose you expect me to deny that. You don't think me such a poor dog as that."

"Why, of course not," she answered, with quivering lips, while she pressed her handkerchief to her eyes.

"I was only too glad to have you come. I always meant to tell you--what I have told; but not when I should seem to trap you into listening."

"No," she murmured, "I can believe that of you. I do believe it. I take back what I said. Don't let us speak of it any more now," she continued, struggling for her lost composure, with what success appeared in the fresh outburst with which she recognized his forbearance to hint at any painfulness to himself in the situation.

"I don't mind it so much on my account, but oh! how could you for your own sake? Do let us get home as fast as we can!"

"I am doing everything I can to release you," he said. "If you will sit here," he added, indicating the place beside him in the stern, "you won't have to change so much when I want to tack."

She took the other seat, and for the first time she noticed that the wind had grown very light. She watched him with a piteous impatience while he shifted the sail from side to side, keeping the sheet in his hand for convenience in the frequent changes. He scanned the sky, and turned every current of the ebbing tide to account. It was useless; the boat crept, and presently it scarcely moved.

"The wind is down," he said, making the sheet fast, and relaxing his hold on the tiller.

"And--And the tide is going out!" she exclaimed.

"The tide is going out," he admitted.

"If we should get caught on these flats," she began, with rising indignation.

"We should have to stay till the tide turned."

She looked wildly about for aid. If there were a row-boat anywhere within hail, she could be taken to Jocelyn's in that. But they were quite alone on those lifeless waters.

Libby got out a pair of heavy oars from the bottom of the boat, and, setting the rowlocks on either side, tugged silently at them.

The futile effort suggested an idea to her which doubtless she would not have expressed if she had not been lacking, as she once said, in a sense of humor.

"Why don't you whistle for a wind?"

He stared at her in sad astonishment to make sure that she was in earnest, and then, "Whistle!" he echoed forlornly, and broke into a joyless laugh.

"You knew the chances of delay that I took in asking to come with you," she cried, "and you should have warned me. It was ungenerous--it was ungentlemanly!"

"It was whatever you like. I must be to blame. I suppose I was too glad to have you come. If I thought anything, I thought you must have some particular errand at Leyden. You seemed anxious to go, even if it stormed."

"If it had stormed," she retorted, "I should not have cared! I hoped it would storm. Then at least I should have run the same danger,--I hoped it would be dangerous."

"I don't understand what you mean," he said.

"I forced that wretched creature to go with you that day when you said it was going to be rough; and I shall have her blood upon my hands if she dies"

"Is it possible," cried Libby, pulling in his useless oars, and leaning forward upon them, "that she has gone on letting you think I believed there was going to be a storm? She knew perfectly well that I didn't mind what Adams said; he was always croaking." She sat looking at him in a daze, but she could not speak, and he continued. "I see: it happened by one chance in a million to turn out as he said; and she has been making you pay for it. Why, I suppose," he added, with a melancholy smile of intelligence, "she's had so much satisfaction in holding you responsible for what's happened, that she's almost glad of it!"

"She has tortured me!" cried the girl. "But you--you, when you saw that I did n't believe there was going to be any storm, why did you--why didn't--you"--

"I did n't believe it either! It was Mrs. Maynard that proposed the sail, but when I saw that you did n't like it I was glad of any excuse for putting it off. I could n't help wanting to please you, and I couldn't see why you urged us afterwards; but I supposed you had some reason."

She passed her hand over her forehead, as if to clear away the confusion in which all this involved her. "But why--why did you let me go on thinking myself to blame"--

"How could I know what you were thinking? Heaven knows I didn't dream of such a thing! Though I remember, now, your saying"--

"Oh, I see!" she cried. "You are a man! But I can't forgive it,--no, I can't forgive it! You wished to deceive her if you did n't wish to deceive me. How can you excuse yourself for repeating what you did n't believe?"

"I was willing she should think Adams was right."

"And that was deceit. What can you say to it?"

"There is only one thing I could say," he murmured, looking hopelessly into her eyes, "and that's of no use."

She turned her head away. Her tragedy had fallen to nothing; or rather it had never been. All her remorse, all her suffering, was mere farce now; but his guilt in the matter was the greater. A fierce resentment burned in her heart; she longed to make him feel something of the anguish she had needlessly undergone.

He sat watching her averted face. "Miss Breen," he said huskily, "will you let me speak to you?"

"Oh, you have me in your power," she answered cruelly. "Say what you like."

He did not speak, nor make any motion to do so.

A foolish, idle curiosity to know what, after all that had happened, he could possibly have to say, stirred within her, but she disdainfully stifled it. They were both so still that a company of seals found it safe to put their heads above water, and approach near enough to examine her with their round soft eyes. She turned from the silly things in contempt that they should even have interested her. She felt that from time to time her companion lifted an anxious glance to the dull heavens. At last the limp sail faintly stirred; it flapped; it filled shallowly; the boat moved. The sail seemed to have had a prescience of the wind before it passed over the smooth water like a shadow.

When a woman says she never will forgive a man, she always has a condition of forgiveness in her heart. Now that the wind had risen again, "I have no right to forbid you to speak," she said, as if no silence had elapsed, and she turned round and quietly confronted him; she no longer felt so impatient to escape.

He did not meet her eye at once, and he seemed in no haste to avail himself of the leave granted him. A heavy sadness blotted the gayety of a face whose sunny sympathy had been her only cheer for many days. She fancied a bewilderment in its hopelessness which smote her with still sharper pathos. "Of course," she said, "I appreciate your wish to do what I wanted, about Mrs. Maynard. I remember my telling you that she ought n't to go out, that day. But that was not the way to do it"--

"There was no other," he said.

"No," she assented, upon reflection. "Then it ought n't to have been done."

He showed no sign of intending to continue, and after a moment of restlessness, she began again.

"If I have been rude or hasty in refusing to hear you, Mr. Libby, I am very wrong. I must hear anything you have to say."

"Oh, not unless you wish."

"I wish whatever you wish."

"I'm not sure that I wish that now. I have thought it over; I should only distress you for nothing. You are letting me say why sentence shouldn't be passed upon me. Sentence is going to be passed any way. I should only repeat what I have said. You would pity me, but you couldn't help me. And that would give you pain for nothing. No, it would be useless."

"It would be useless to talk to me about--loving." She took the word on her lips with a certain effect of adopting it for convenience' sake in her vocabulary. "All that was ended for me long ago,--ten years ago. And my whole life since then has been shaped to do without it. I will tell you my story if you like. Perhaps it's your due. I wish to be just. You may have a right to know."

"No, I haven't. But--perhaps I ought to say that Mrs. Maynard told me something."

"Well, I am glad of that, though she had no right to do it. Then you can understand."

"Oh, yes, I can understand. I don't pretend that I had any reason in it."

He forbore again to urge any plea for himself, and once more she was obliged to interfere in his behalf. "Mr. Libby, I have never confessed that I once wronged you in a way that I'm very sorry for."

"About Mrs. Maynard? Yes, I know. I won't try to whitewash myself; but it didn't occur to me how it would look. I wanted to talk with her about you."

"You ought to have considered her, though," she said gently.

"She ought to have considered herself," he retorted, with his unfailing bitterness for Mrs. Maynard. "But it doesn't matter whose fault it was. I'm sufficiently punished; for I know that it injured me with you."

"It did at first. But now I can see that I was wrong. I wished to tell you that. It isn't creditable to me that I thought you intended to flirt with her. If I had been better myself"--

"You!" He could not say more.

That utter faith in her was very charming. It softened her more and more; it made her wish to reason with him, and try gently to show him how impossible his hope was. "And you know," she said, recurring to something that had gone before, "that even if I had cared for you in the way you wish, it could n't be. You would n't want to have people laughing and saying I had been a doctress."

"I shouldn't have minded. I know how much people's talk is worth."

"Yes," she said, "I know you would be generous and brave about that--about anything. But what--what if I could n't give up my career--my hopes of being useful in the way I have planned? You would n't have liked me to go on practising medicine?"

"I thought of that," he answered simply. "I didn't see how it could be done. But if you saw any way, I was willing--No, that was my great trouble! I knew that it was selfish in me, and very conceited, to suppose you would give up your whole life for me; and whenever I thought of that, I determined not to ask you. But I tried not to think of that."

"Well, don't you see? But if I could have answered you as you wish, it wouldn't have been anything to give up everything for you. A woman isn't something else first, and a woman afterwards. I understand how unselfishly you meant, and indeed, indeed, I thank you. But don't let's talk of it any more. It couldn't have been, and there is nothing but misery in thinking of it. "Come," she said, with a struggle for cheerfulness, "let us forget it. Let it be just as if you hadn't spoken to me; I know you did n't intend to do it; and let us go on as if nothing had happened."

"Oh, we can't go on," he answered. "I shall get away, as soon as Maynard comes, and rid you of the sight of me."

"Are you going away?" she softly asked. "Why need you? I know that people always seem to think they can't be friends after--such a thing as this. But why shouldn't we? I respect you, and I like you very much. You have shown me more regard and more kindness than any other friend"--

"But I wasn't your friend," he interrupted. "I loved you."

"Well," she sighed, in gentle perplexity, "then you can't be my friend?"

Never. But I shall always love you. If it would do any good, I would stay, as you ask it. I should n't mind myself. But I should be a nuisance to you."

"No, no!" she exclaimed. "I will take the risk of that. I need your advice, your--sympathy, your--You won't trouble me, indeed you won't. Perhaps you have mistaken your--feeling about me. It's such a very little time since we met," she pleaded.

"That makes no difference,--the time. And I'm not mistaken."

"Well, stay at least till Mrs. Maynard is well, and we can all go away together. Promise me that!" She instinctively put out her hand toward him in entreaty. He took it, and pressing it to his lips covered it with kisses.

"Oh!" she grieved in reproachful surprise.

"There!" he cried. "You see that I must go!"

"Yes," she sighed in assent, "you must go."

They did not look at each other again, but remained in a lamentable silence while the boat pushed swiftly before the freshening breeze; and when they reached the place where the dory lay, he dropped the sail and threw out the anchor without a word.

He was haggard to the glance she stole at him, when they had taken their places in the dory, and he confronted her, pulling hard at the oars. He did not lift his eyes to hers, but from time to time he looked over his shoulder at the boat's prow, and he rowed from one point to another for a good landing. A dreamy pity for him filled her; through the memories of her own suffering, she divined the soreness of his heart.

She started from her reverie as the bottom of the dory struck the sand. The shoal water stretched twenty feet beyond. He pulled in the oars and rose desperately. "It's of no use: I shall have to carry you ashore."

She sat staring up into his face, and longing to ask him something, to accuse him of having done this purposely. But she had erred in so many doubts, her suspicions of him had all recoiled so pitilessly upon her, that she had no longer the courage to question or reproach him. "Oh, no, thank you," she said weakly. "I won't trouble you. I--I will wait till the tide is out."

"The tide's out now," he answered with coldness, "and you can't wade."

She rose desperately. "Why, of course!" she cried in self-contempt, glancing at the water, into which he promptly stepped to his boot-tops. "A woman must n't get her feet wet."

VIII.

Grace went to her own room to lay aside her shawl and hat, before going to Mrs. Maynard, and found her mother sewing there.

"Why, who is with Mrs. Maynard?" she asked.

"Miss Gleason is reading to her," said Mrs. Breen. "If she had any sort

of active treatment, she could get well at once. I couldn't take the responsibility of doing anything for her, and it was such a worry to stay and see everything going wrong, that when Miss Gleason came in I was glad to get away. Miss Gleason seems to believe in your Dr. Mulbridge."

"My Dr. Mulbridge!" echoed Grace.

"She talked of him as if he were yours. I don't know what you've been saying to her about him; but you had better be careful. The woman is a fool." She now looked up at her daughter for the first time. "Why, what is the matter with you what kept you so long? You look perfectly wild."

"I feel wild," said Grace calmly. "The wind went down."

"Was that all? I don't see why that should make you feel wild," said her mother, dropping her spectacles to her sewing again.

"It was n't all," answered the girl, sinking provisionally upon the side of a chair, with her shawl still on her arm, and her hat in her hand.

"Mother, have you noticed anything peculiar about Mr. Libby?"

"He's the only person who seems to be of the slightest use about here; I've noticed that," said Mrs. Breen. "He's always going and coming for you and Mrs. Maynard. Where is that worthless husband of hers? Has n't he had time to come from Cheyenne yet?"

"He's on the way. He was out at his ranch when Mr. Libby telegraphed first, and had to be sent for. We found a despatch from him at Leyden, saying he had started," Grace explained.

"What business had he to be so far away at all?" demanded her mother. It was plain that Mrs. Breen was in her most censorious temper, which had probably acquired a sharper edge towards Maynard from her reconciliation with his wife.

Grace seized her chance to meet the worst. "Do you think that I have done anything to encourage Mr. Libby?" she asked, looking bravely at her mother.

"Encourage him to do what?" asked Mrs. Breen, without lifting her eyes from her work.

"Encouraged him to--think I cared for him; to--to be in love with me."

Mrs. Breen lifted her head now, and pushed her spectacles up on her forehead, while she regarded her daughter in silence. "Has he been making love to you?"

"Yes."

Her mother pushed her spectacles down again; and, turning the seam which she had been sewing, flattened it with her thumb-nail. She made this action expressive of having foreseen such a result, and of having

struggled against it, neglected and alone. "Very well, then. I hope you accepted him?" she asked quietly.

"Mother!"

"Why not? You must like him," she continued in the same tone. "You have been with him every moment the last week that you have n't been with Mrs. Maynard. At least I've seen nothing of you, except when you came to tell me you were going to walk or to drive with him. You seem to have asked him to take you most of the time."

"How can you say such a thing, mother?" cried the girl.

"Did n't you ask him to let you go with him this afternoon? You told me you did."

"Yes, I did. I did it for a purpose."

"Ah! for a purpose," said Mrs. Breen, taking a survey of the new seam, which she pulled from her knee, where one end of it was pinned, towards her chin. She left the word to her daughter, who was obliged to take it.

"I asked him to let me go with him because Louise had tortured me about making her go out in his boat, till I could n't bear it any longer. It seemed to me that if I took the same risk myself, it would be something; and I hoped there would be a storm."

"I should think you had taken leave of your senses," Mrs. Breen observed, with her spectacles intent upon her seam. "Did you think it would be any consolation to him if you were drowned, or to her? And if," she added, her conscience rising equal to the vicarious demand upon it, "you hoped there would be danger, had you any right to expose him to it? Even if you chose to risk your own life, you had no right to risk his." She lifted her spectacles again, and turned their austere glitter upon her daughter.

"Yes, it all seems very silly now," said the girl, with a hopeless sigh.

"Silly!" cried her mother. "I'm glad you can call it silly."

"And it seemed worse still when he told me that he had never believed it was going to storm that day, when he took Louise out. His man said it was, and he repeated it because he saw I did n't want her to go."

"Perhaps," suggested Mrs. Breen, "if he was willing to deceive her then, he is willing to deceive you now."

"He didn't deceive her. He said what he had heard. And he said it because he--I wished it."

"I call it deceiving. Truth is truth. That is what I was taught; and that's what I supposed I had taught you."

"I would trust Mr. Libby in anything," returned the daughter. "He is perfectly frank about himself. He confessed that he had done it to please me. He said that nothing else could excuse it."

"Oh, then you have accepted him!"

"No, mother, I haven't. I have refused him, and he is going away as soon as Mr. Maynard comes." She sat looking at the window, and the tears stole into her eyes, and blurred the sea and sky together where she saw their meeting at the horizon line.

"Well," said her mother, "their that is the end of it, I presume."

"Yes, that's the end," said Grace. "But--I felt sorry for him, mother. Once," she went on, "I thought I had everything clear before me; but now I seem only to have made confusion of my life. Yes," she added drearily, "it was foolish and wicked, and it was perfectly useless, too. I can't escape from the consequences of what I did. It makes no difference what he believed or any one believed. I drove them on to risk their lives because I thought myself so much better than they; because I was self-righteous and suspicious and stubborn. Well, I must bear the penalty: and oh, if I could only bear it alone!" With a long sigh she took back the burden which she had been struggling to cast off, and from which for a time she had actually seemed to escape. She put away her hat and shawl, and stood before the glass, smoothing her hair. "When will it ever end?" she moaned to the reflection there, rather than to her mother, who did not interrupt this spiritual ordeal. In another age, such a New England girl would have tortured herself with inquisition as to some neglected duty to God;--in ours, when religion is so largely humanified, this Puritan soul could only wreak itself in a sense of irreparable wrong to her fellow-creature.

When she went out she met Miss Gleason half-way down the corridor to Mrs. Maynard's door. The latter had a book in her hand, and came forward whispering. "She's asleep," she said very sibilantly. "I have read her to sleep, and she's sleeping beautifully. Have you ever read it?" she asked, with hoarse breaks from her undertone, as she held up one of those cheap library-editions of a novel toward Grace.

"Jane Eyre? Why, of course. Long ago."

"So have I," said Miss Gleason. "But I sent and got it again, to refresh my impressions of Rochester. We all think Dr. Mulbridge is just like him. Rochester is my ideal character,--a perfect conception of a man: so abrupt, so rough, so savage. Oh, I like those men! Don't you?" she fluted. "Mrs. Maynard sees the resemblance, as well as the rest of us. But I know! You don't approve of them. I suppose they can't be defended on some grounds; but I can see how, even in such a case as this, the perfect mastery of the man-physician constitutes the highest usefulness of the woman-physician. The advancement of women must be as women. 'Male and female created he them,' and it is only in remembering this that we are helping Gawd, whether as an anthropomorphic conception or a universally pervading instinct of love, don't you think?"

With her novel clapped against her breast, she leaned winningly over toward Grace, and fixed her with her wide eyes, which had rings of white round the pupils.

"Do tell me!" she ran on without waiting an answer. "Didn't you go with Mr. Libby because you hoped it might storm, and wished to take the same risk as Mrs. Maynard? I told Mrs. Alger you did!"

Grace flushed guiltily, and Miss Gleason cowered a little, perhaps interpreting the color as resentment. "I should consider that a very silly motive," she said, helplessly ashamed that she was leaving the weight of the blow upon Miss Gleason's shoulders instead of her own.

"Of course," said Miss Gleason enthusiastically, "you can't confess it. But I know you are capable of such a thing--of anything heroic! Do forgive me," she said, seizing Grace's hand. She held it a moment, gazing with a devouring fondness into her face, which she stooped a little sidewise to peer up into. Then she quickly dropped her hand, and, whirling away, glided slimly out of the corridor.

Grace softly opened Mrs. Maynard's door, and the sick woman opened her eyes. "I was n't asleep," she said hoarsely, "but I had to pretend to be, or that woman would have killed me."

Grace went to her and felt her hands and her flushed forehead.

"I am worse this evening," said Mrs. Maynard.

"Oh, no," sighed the girl, dropping into a chair at the bedside, with her eyes fixed in a sort of fascination on the lurid face of the sick woman.

"After getting me here," continued Mrs. Maynard, in the same low, hoarse murmur, "you might at least stay with me a little. What kept you so long?"

"The wind fell. We were becalmed."

"We were not becalmed the day I went out with Mr. Libby. But perhaps nobody forced you to go."

Having launched this dart, she closed her eyes again with something more like content than she had yet shown: it had an aim of which she could always be sure.

"We have heard from Mr. Maynard," said Grace humbly. "There was a despatch waiting for Mr. Libby at Leyden. He is on his way."

Mrs. Maynard betrayed no immediate effect of this other than to say, "He had better hurry," and did not open her eyes.

Grace went about the room with a leaden weight in every fibre, putting

the place in order, and Mrs. Maynard did not speak again till she had finished. Then she said, "I want you to tell me just how bad Dr. Mulbridge thinks I am."

"He has never expressed any anxiety," Grace began, with her inaptness at evasion.

"Of course he has n't," murmured the sick woman. "He isn't a fool! What does he say?"

This passed the sufferance even of remorse. "He says you mustn't talk," the girl flashed out. "And if you insist upon doing so, I will leave you, and send some one else to take care of you."

"Very well, then. I know what that means. When a doctor tells you not to talk, it's because he knows he can't do you any good. As soon as George Maynard gets here I will have some one that can cure me, or I will know the reason why." The conception of her husband as a champion seemed to commend him to her in novel degree. She shed some tears, and after a little reflection she asked, "How soon will he be here?"

"I don't know," said Grace. "He seems to have started yesterday morning."

"He can be here by day after to-morrow," Mrs. Maynard computed. "There will be some one to look after poor little Bella then," she added, as if, during her sickness, Bella must have been wholly neglected. "Don't let the child be all dirt when her father comes."

"Mother will look after Bella," Grace replied, too meek again to resent the implication. After a pause, "Oh, Louise," she added beseechingly, "I've suffered so much from my own wrong-headedness and obstinacy that I couldn't bear to see you taking the same risk, and I'm so glad that you are going to meet your husband in the right spirit."

"What right spirit?" croaked Mrs. Maynard.

"The wish to please him, to"--

"I don't choose to have him say that his child disgraces him," replied Mrs. Maynard, in the low, husky, monotonous murmur in which she was obliged to utter everything.

"But, dear Louise!" cried the other, "you choose something else too, don't you? You wish to meet him as if no unkindness had parted you, and as if you were to be always together after this? I hope you do! Then I should feel that all this suffering and, trouble was a mercy."

"Other people's misery is always a mercy to them," hoarsely suggested Mrs. Maynard.

"Yes, I know that," Grace submitted, with meek conviction. "But, Louise," she pleaded, "you will make up with your husband, won't you?"

Whatever he has done, that will surely be best. I know that you love him, and that he must love you, yet. It's the only way. If you were finally separated from him, and you and he could be happy apart, what would become of that poor child? Who will take a father's place with her? That's the worst about it. Oh, Louise, I feel so badly for you-- for what you have lost, and may lose. Marriage must change people so that unless they live to each other, their lives will be maimed and useless. It ought to be so much easier to forgive any wrong your husband does you than to punish it; for that perpetuates the wrong, and forgiveness ends it, and it's the only thing that can end a wrong. I am sure that your husband will be ready to do or say anything you wish; but if he shouldn't, Louise, you will receive him forgivingly, and make the first advance? It's a woman's right to make the advances in forgiving."

Mrs. Maynard lay with her hands stretched at her side under the covering, and only her face visible above it. She now turned her head a little, so as to pierce the earnest speaker with a gleam from her dull eye. "Have you accepted Walter Libby?" she asked.

"Louise!" cried Grace, with a blush that burned like fire.

"That's the way I used to talk when I was first engaged. Wait till you're married a while. I want Bella to have on her pique, and her pink sash,--not the cherry one. I should think you would have studied to be a minister instead of a doctor. But you need n't preach to me; I shall know how to behave to George Maynard when he comes,--if he ever does come. And now I should think you had made me talk enough!"

"Yes, Yes," said Grace, recalled to her more immediate duty in alarm.

All her helpfulness was soon to be needed. The disease, which had lingered more than usual in the early stages, suddenly approached a crisis. That night Mrs. Maynard grew so much worse that Grace sent Libby at daybreak for Dr. Mulbridge; and the young man, after leading out his own mare to see if her lameness had abated, ruefully put her back in the stable, and set off to Corbitant with the splay-foot at a rate of speed unparalleled, probably, in the animal's recollection of a long and useful life. In the two anxious days that followed, Libby and Grace were associated in the freedom of a common interest outside of themselves; she went to him for help and suggestion, and he gave them, as if nothing had passed to restrict or embarrass their relations. There was that, in fact, in the awe of the time and an involuntary disoccupation of hers that threw them together even more constantly than before. Dr. Mulbridge remained with his patient well into the forenoon; in the afternoon he came again, and that night he did not go away. He superseded Grace as a nurse no less completely than he had displaced her as a physician. He let her relieve him when he flung himself down for a few minutes' sleep, or when he went out for the huge meals which he devoured, preferring the unwholesome things with a depravity shocking to the tender physical consciences of the ladies who looked on; but when he returned to his charge, he showed himself jealous of all that Grace had done involving the exercise of more than a servile discretion. When she asked him once if there were nothing else that she could do, he said, "fires, keep those

women and children quiet," in a tone that classed her with both. She longed to ask him what he thought of Mrs. Maynard's condition; but she had not the courage to invoke the intelligence that ignored her so completely, and she struggled in silence with such disheartening auguries as her theoretical science enabled her to make.

The next day was a Sunday, and the Sabbath hush which always hung over Jocelyn's was intensified to the sense of those who ached between hope and fear for the life that seemed to waver and flicker in that still air.

Dr. Mulbridge watched beside his patient, noting every change with a wary intelligence which no fact escaped and no anxiety clouded; alert, gentle, prompt; suffering no question, and absolutely silent as to all impressions. He allowed Grace to remain with him when she liked, and let her do his bidding in minor matters; but when from time to time she escaped from the intolerable tension in which his reticence and her own fear held her, he did not seem to see whether she went or came. Toward nightfall she met him coming out of Mrs. Maynard's room, as she drew near in the narrow corridor.

"Where is your friend--the young man--the one who smokes?" he asked, as if nothing unusual had occupied him. "I want him to give me a cigar."

"Dr. Mulbridge," she said, "I will not bear this any longer. I must know the worst--you have no right to treat me in this way. Tell me now--tell me instantly: will she live?"

He looked at her with an imaginable apprehension of hysterics, but as she continued firm, and placed herself resolutely in his way, he relaxed his scrutiny, and said, with a smile, "Oh, I think so. What made you think she would n't?"

She drew herself aside, and made way for him.

"Go!" she cried. She would have said more, but her indignation choked her.

He did not pass at once, and he did not seem troubled at her anger. "Dr. Breen," he said, "I saw a good deal of pneumonia in the army, and I don't remember a single case that was saved by the anxiety of the surgeon."

He went now, as people do when they fancy themselves to have made a good point; and she heard him asking Barlow for Libby, outside, and then walking over the gravel toward the stable. At that moment she doubted and hated him so much that she would have been glad to keep Libby from talking or even smoking with him. But she relented a little toward him afterwards, when he returned and resumed the charge of his patient with the gentle, vigilant cheerfulness which she had admired in him from the first, omitting no care and betraying none. He appeared to take it for granted that Grace saw an improvement, but he recognized it by nothing explicit till he rose and said, "I think I will leave Mrs. Maynard with you to-night, Dr. Breen."

The sick woman's eyes turned to him imploringly from her pillow, and

Grace spoke the terror of both when she faltered in return, "Are you--you are not going home?"

"I shall sleep in the house."

"Oh, thank you!" she cried fervently.

"And you can call me if you wish. But there won't be any occasion. Mrs. Maynard is very much better. "He waited to give, in a sort of absent-minded way, certain directions. Then he went out, and Grace sank back into the chair from which she had started at his rising, and wept long and silently with a hidden face. When she took away her hands and dried her tears, she saw Mrs. Maynard beckoning to her. She went to the bedside.

"What is it, dear?" she asked tenderly.

"Stoop down," whispered the other; and as Grace bowed her ear Mrs. Maynard touched her cheek with her dry lips. In this kiss doubtless she forgave the wrong which she had hoarded in her heart, and there perverted into a deadly injury. But they both knew upon what terms the pardon was accorded, and that if Mrs. Maynard had died, she would have died holding Grace answerable for her undoing.

IX.

In the morning Dr. Mulbridge drove back to Corbitant, and in the evening Libby came over from New Leyden with Maynard, in a hired wagon. He was a day later than his wife had computed, but as she appeared to have reflected, she had left the intervening Sunday out of her calculation; this was one of the few things she taxed herself to say. For the rest, she seemed to be hoarding her strength against his coming.

Grace met him at a little distance from the house, whither she had walked with Bella, for a breath of the fresh air after her long day in the sick-room, and did not find him the boisterous and jovial Hoosier she had imagined him. It was, in fact, hardly the moment for the expression of Western humor. He arrived a sleep-broken, travel-creased figure, with more than the Western man's usual indifference to dress; with sad, dull eyes, and an untrimmed beard that hung in points and tags, and thinly hid the corners of a large mouth. He took her hand laxly in his, and bowing over her from his lank height listened to her report of his wife's state, while he held his little girl on his left arm, and the child fondly pressed her cheek against his bearded face, to which he had quietly lifted her as soon as he alighted from Libby's buggy.

Libby introduced Grace as Dr. Breen, and drove on, and Maynard gave her the title whenever he addressed her, with a perfect effect of single-mindedness in his gravity, as if it were an every-day thing with him to meet young ladies who were physicians. He had a certain neighborly

manner of having known her a long time, and of being on good terms with her; and somewhere there resided in his loosely knit organism a powerful energy. She had almost to run in keeping at his side, as he walked on to the house, carrying his little girl on his arm, and glancing about him; and she was not sure at last that she had succeeded in making him understand how serious the case had been.

"I don't know whether I ought to let you go in," she said, "without preparing her."

"She's been expecting me, has n't she?" he asked.

"Yes, but"--

"And she's awake?"

"Then I'll just go in and prepare her myself. I'm a pretty good hand at preparing people to meet me. You've a beautiful location here, Dr. Breen; and your town has a chance to grow. I like to see a town have some chance," he added, with a sadness past tears in his melancholy eyes. "Bella can show me the way to the room, I reckon," he said, setting the little one down on the piazza, and following her indoors; and when Grace ventured, later, to knock at the door, Maynard's voice bade her come in.

He sat beside his wife's pillow, with her hand in his left; on his right arm perched the little girl, and rested her head on his shoulder. They did not seem to have been talking, and they did not move when Grace entered the room. But, apparently, Mrs. Maynard had known how to behave to George Maynard, and peace was visibly between them.

"Now, you tell me about the medicines, Dr. Breen, and then you go and get some rest," said Maynard in his mild, soothing voice. "I used to understand Mrs. Maynard's ways pretty well, and I can take care of her. Libby told me all about you and your doings, and I know you must feel as pale as you look."

"But you can't have had any sleep on the way," Grace began.

"Sleep?" Maynard repeated, looking wanly at her. "I never sleep. I'd as soon think of digesting."

After she had given him the needed instructions he rose from the rocking-chair in-which he had been softly swinging to and fro, and followed her out into the corridor, caressing with his large hand the child that lay on his shoulder. "Of course," she said, "Mrs. Maynard is still very sick, and needs the greatest care and attention."

"Yes, I understand that. But I reckon it will come out all right in the end," he said, with the optimistic fatalism which is the real religion of our orientalizing West. "Good-night, doctor."

She went away, feeling suddenly alone in this exclusion from the cares that had absorbed her. There was no one on the piazza, which the

moonlight printed with the shadows of the posts and the fanciful jigsaw work of the arches between them. She heard a step on the sandy walk round the corner, and waited wistfully.

It was Barlow who came in sight, as she knew at once, but she asked, "Mr. Barlow?"

"Yes'm," said Barlow. "What can I do for you?"

"Nothing. I thought it might be Mr. Libby at first. Do you know where he is?"

"Well, I know where he ain't," said Barlow; and having ineffectually waited to be questioned further, he added, "He ain't here, for one place. He's gone back to Leyden. He had to take that horse back."

"Oh!" she said.

"N' I guess he's goin' to stay."

"To stay? Where?"

"Well, there you've got me again. All I know is I've got to drive that mare of his'n over to-morrow, if I can git off, and next day if I can't. Did n't you know he was goin'?" asked Barlow, willing to recompense himself for the information he had given.

"Well!" he added sympathetically, at a little hesitation of hers:

Then she said, "I knew he must go. Good-night, Mr. Barlow," and went indoors. She remembered that he had said he would go as soon as Maynard came, and that she had consented that this would be best. But his going now seemed abrupt, though she approved it. She thought that she had something more to say to him, which might console him or reconcile him; she could not think what this was, but it left an indefinite longing, an unsatisfied purpose in her heart; and there was somewhere a tremulous sense of support withdrawn. Perhaps this was a mechanical effect of the cessation of her anxiety for Mrs. Maynard, which had been a support as well as a burden. The house was strangely quiet, as if some great noise had just been hushed, and it seemed empty. She felt timid in her room, but she dreaded the next day more than the dark. Her life was changed, and the future, which she had once planned so clearly, and had felt so strong to encounter, had fallen to a ruin, in which she vainly endeavored to find some clew or motive of the past. She felt remanded to the conditions of the girlhood that she fancied she had altogether outlived; she turned her face upon her pillow in a grief of bewildered aspiration and broken pride, and shed tears scarcely predicable of a doctor of medicine.

But there is no lapse or aberration of character which can be half so surprising to others as it is to one's self. She had resented Libby's treating her upon a theory, but she treated herself upon a theory, and we all treat ourselves upon a theory. We proceed each of us upon the theory

that he is very brave, or generous, or gentle, or liberal, or truthful, or loyal, or just. We may have the defects of our virtues, but nothing is more certain than that we have our virtues, till there comes a fatal juncture, not at all like the juncture in which we had often imagined ourselves triumphing against temptation. It passes, and the hero finds, to his dismay and horror, that he has run away; the generous man has been niggard; the gentleman has behaved like a ruffian, and the liberal like a bigot; the champion of truth has foolishly and vainly lied; the steadfast friend has betrayed his neighbor, the just person has oppressed him. This is the fruitful moment, apparently so sterile, in which character may spring and flower anew; but the mood of abject humility in which the theorist of his own character is plunged and struggles for his lost self-respect is full of deceit for others. It cannot last: it may end in disowning and retrieving the error, or it may end in justifying it, and building it into the reconstructed character, as something upon the whole unexpectedly fine; but it must end, for after all it is only a mood. In such a mood, in the anguish of her disappointment at herself, a woman clings to whatever support offers, and it is at his own risk that the man who chances to be this support accepts the weight with which she casts herself upon him as the measure of her dependence, though he may make himself necessary to her, if he has the grace or strength to do it.

Without being able to understand fully the causes of the dejection in which this girl seemed to appeal to him, Mulbridge might well have believed himself the man to turn it in his favor. If he did not sympathize with her distress, or even clearly divine it, still his bold generalizations, he found, always had their effect with women, whose natures are often to themselves such unknown territory that a man who assumes to know them has gone far to master them. He saw that a rude moral force alone seemed to have a charm with his lady patients,--women who had been bred to ease and wealth, and who had cultivated, if not very disciplined, minds. Their intellectual dissipation had apparently made them a different race from the simpler-hearted womenkind of his neighbors, apt to judge men in a sharp ignorance of what is fascinating in heroes; and it would not be strange if he included Grace in the sort of contemptuous amusement with which he regarded these-flatteringly dependent and submissive invalids. He at least did not conceive of her as she conceived of herself; but this may be impossible to any man with regard to any woman.

With his experience of other women's explicit and even eager obedience, the resistance which he had at first encountered in Grace gave zest to her final submission. Since he had demolished the position she had attempted to hold against him, he liked her for having imagined she could hold it; and she had continued to pique and interest him. He relished all her scruples and misgivings, and the remorse she had tried to confide to him; and if his enjoyment of these foibles of hers took too little account of her pain, it was never his characteristic to be tender of people in good health. He was, indeed, as alien to her Puritan spirit as if he had been born in Naples instead of Corbitant. He came of one of those families which one finds in nearly every New England community, as thoroughly New England in race as the rest, but flourishing in a hardy scepticism and contempt of the general sense. Whatever relation such

people held to the old Puritan commonwealth when Puritanism was absolute, they must later have taken an active part in its disintegration, and were probably always a destructive force at its heart.

Mulbridge's grandfather was one of the last captains who sailed a slaver from Corbitant. When this commerce became precarious, he retired from the seas, took a young wife in second marriage, and passed his declining days in robust inebriety. He lived to cast a dying vote for General Jackson, and his son, the first Dr. Mulbridge, survived to illustrate the magnanimity of his fellow-townsmen during the first year of the civil war, as a tolerated Copperhead. Then he died, and his son, who was in the West, looking up a location for practice, was known to have gone out as surgeon with one of the regiments there. It was not supposed that he went from patriotism; but when he came back, a year before the end of the struggle, and settled in his native place, his service in the army was accepted among his old neighbors as evidence of a better disposition of some sort than had hitherto been attributable to any of his name.

In fact, the lazy, good-natured boy, whom they chiefly remembered before his college days, had always been well enough liked among those who had since grown to be first mates and ship captains in the little port where he was born and grew up. They had now all retired from the sea, and, having survived its manifold perils, were patiently waiting to be drowned in sail-boats on the bay. They were of the second generation of ships' captains still living in Corbitant; but they would be the last. The commerce of the little port had changed into the whaling trade in their time; this had ceased in turn, and the wharves had rotted away. Dr. Mulbridge found little practice among them; while attending their appointed fate, they were so thoroughly salted against decay as to preserve even their families. But he gradually gathered into his hands, from the clairvoyant and the Indian doctor, the business which they had shared between them since his father's death. There was here and there a tragical case of consumption among the farming families along the coast, and now and then a frightful accident among the fishermen; the spring and autumn brought their typhoid; the city people who came down to the neighboring hotels were mostly sick, or fell sick; and with the small property his father had left, he and his mother contrived to live.

They dwelt very harmoniously together; for his mother, who had passed more than a quarter of a century in strong resistance to her husband's will, had succumbed, as not uncommonly happens with such women, to the authority of her son, whom she had no particular pleasure or advantage in thwarting. In the phrase and belief of his neighbors, he took after her, rather than his father; but there was something ironical and baffling in him, which the local experts could not trace to either the Mulbridges or the Gardiners. They had a quiet, indifferent faith in his ability to make himself a position and name anywhere; but they were not surprised that he had come back to live in Corbitant, which was so manifestly the best place in the world, and which, if somewhat lacking in opportunity, was ample in the leisure they believed more congenial to him than success. Some of his lady patients at the hotels, who felt at times that they could not live without him, would have carried him back to the city with them by a gentle violence; but there was nothing in anything he said

or did that betrayed ambition on his part. He liked to hear them talk, especially of their ideas of progress, as they called them, at which, with the ready adaptability of their sex, they joined him in laughing when they found that he could not take them seriously. The social, the emotional expression of the new scientific civilization struck him as droll, particularly in respect to the emancipation of women; and he sometimes gave these ladies the impression that he did not value woman's intellect at its true worth. He was far from light treatment of them, he was considerate of the distances that should be guarded; but he conveyed the sense of his scepticism as to their fitness for some things to which the boldest of them aspired.

His mother would have been willing to have him go to the city if he wished, but she was too ignorant of the world outside of Corbitant to guess at his possibilities in it, and such people as she had seen from it had not pleased her with it. Those summer-boarding lady patients who came to see him were sometimes suffered to wait with her till he came in, and they used to tell her how happy she must be to keep such a son with her, and twittered their patronage of her and her nice old-fashioned parlor, and their praises of his skill in such wise against her echoless silence that she conceived a strong repugnance for all their tribe, in which she naturally included Grace when she appeared. She had decided the girl to be particularly forth-putting, from something prompt and self-reliant in her manner that day; and she viewed with tacit disgust her son's toleration of a handsome young woman who had taken up a man's profession. They were not people who gossiped together, or confided in each other, and she would have known nothing and asked nothing from him about her, further than she had seen for herself. But Barlow had folks, as he called them, at Corbitant; and without her own connivance she had heard from them of all that was passing at Jocelyn's.

It was her fashion to approach any subject upon which she wished her son to talk as if they had already talked of it, and he accepted this convention with a perfect understanding that she thus expressed at once her deference to him and her resolution to speak whether he liked it or not. She had not asked him about Mrs. Maynard's sickness, or shown any interest in it; but after she learned from the Barlows that she was no longer in danger, she said to her son one morning, before he drove away upon his daily visit, "Is her husband going to stay with her, or is he going back?"

"I don't know, really," he answered, glancing at her where she sat erect across the table from him, with her hand on the lid of the coffee-pot, and her eyes downcast; it was the face of silent determination not to be put off, which he knew. "I don't suppose you care, mother," he added pleasantly.

"She's nothing to me," she assented. "What's that friend of hers going to do?"

"Which friend?"

"You know. The one that came after you."

"Oh! Dr. Breen. Yes. What did you think of her?"

"I don't see why you call her doctor."

"Oh, I do it out of politeness. Besides, she is one sort of doctor. Little pills," he added, with an enjoyment of his mother's grimness on this point.

"I should like to see a daughter of mine pretending to be a doctor," said Mrs. Mulbridge.

"Then you would n't like Dr. Breen for a daughter," returned her son, in the same tone as before.

"She wouldn't like me for a mother," Mrs. Mulbridge retorted.

Her son laughed, and helped himself to more baked beans and a fresh slice of rye-and-Indian. He had the homely tastes and the strong digestion of the people from whom he sprung; and he handed his cup to be filled with his mother's strong coffee in easy defiance of consequences. As he took it back from her he said, "I should like to see you and Mrs. Breen together. You would make a strong team." He buttered his bread, with another laugh in appreciation of his conceit. "If you happened to pull the same way. If you did n't, something would break. Mrs. Breen is a lady of powerful convictions. She thinks you ought to be good, and you ought to be very sorry for it, but not so sorry as you ought to be for being happy. I don't think she has given her daughter any reason to complain on the last score." He broke into his laugh again, and watched his mother's frown with interest. "I suspect that she does n't like me very well. You could meet on common ground there: you don't like her daughter."

"They must be a pair of them," said Mrs. Mulbridge immovably. "Did her mother like her studying for a doctor?"

"Yes, I understand so. Her mother is progressive she believes in the advancement of women; she thinks the men would oppress them if they got a chance."

"If one half the bold things that are running about the country had masters it would be the best thing," said Mrs. Mulbridge, opening the lid of the coffee-pot, and clapping it to with force, after a glance inside.

"That's where Mrs. Green wouldn't agree with you. Perhaps because it would make the bold things happy to have masters, though she does n't say so. Probably she wants the women to have women doctors so they won't be so well, and can have more time to think whether they have been good or not. You ought to hear some of the ladies over there talk, mother."

"I have heard enough of their talk."

"Well, you ought to hear Miss Gleason. There are very few things that

Miss Gleason does n't think can be done with cut flowers, from a wedding to a funeral."

Mrs. Mulbridge perceived that her son was speaking figuratively of Miss Gleason's sentimentality, but she was not very patient with the sketch he, enjoyed giving of her. "Is she a friend of that Breen girl's?" she interrupted to ask.

"She's an humble friend, an admirer, a worshipper. The Breen girl is her ideal woman. She thinks the Breen girl is so superior to any man living that she would like to make a match for her." His mother glanced sharply at him, but he went on in the tone of easy generalization, and with a certain pleasure in the projection of these strange figures against her distorting imagination: "You see, mother, that the most advanced thinkers among those ladies are not so very different, after all, from you old-fashioned people. When they try to think of the greatest good fortune that can befall an ideal woman, it is to have her married. The only trouble is to find a man good enough; and if they can't find one, they're apt to invent one. They have strong imaginations."

"I should think they would make you sick, amongst them," said his mother. "Are you going to have anything more to eat?" she asked, with a housekeeper's latent impatience to get her table cleared away.

"Yes," said Dr. Mulbridge; "I have n't finished yet. And I'm in no hurry this morning. Sit still, mother; I want you to hear something more about my lady friends at Jocelyn's. Dr. Breen's mother and Miss Gleason don't feel alike about her. Her mother thinks she was weak in giving up Mrs. Maynard's case to me; but Miss Gleason told me about their discussion, and she thinks it is the great heroic act of Dr. Breen's life."

"It showed some sense, at least," Mrs. Mulbridge replied. She had tacitly offered to release her son from telling her anything when she had made her motion to rise; if he chose to go on now, it was his own affair. She handed him the plate of biscuit, and he took one.

"It showed inspiration, Miss Gleason says. The tears came into her eyes; I understood her to say it was godlike. 'And only to think, doctor,'" he continued, with a clumsy, but unmistakable suggestion of Miss Gleason's perfervid manner, "'that such a girl should be dragged down by her own mother to the level of petty, every-day cares and duties, and should be blamed for the most beautiful act of self-sacrifice! Is n't it too bad?'"

"Rufus, Rufus!" cried his mother, "I can't stun' it! Stop!"

"Oh, Dr. Breen is n't so bad--not half so divine as Miss Gleason thinks her. And Mrs. Maynard does n't consider her surrendering the case an act of self-sacrifice at all."

"I should hope not!" said Mrs. Mulbridge. "I guess she would n't have been alive to tell the tale, if it had n't been for you."

"Oh, you can't be sure of that. You must n't believe too much in doctors, mother. Mrs. Maynard is pretty tough. And she's had wonderfully good nursing. You've only heard the Barlow side of the matter," said her son, betraying now for the first time that he had been aware of any knowledge of it on her part. That was their way: though they seldom told each other anything, and went on as if they knew nothing of each other's affairs, yet when they recognized this knowledge it was without surprise on either side. "I could tell you a different story. She's a very fine girl, mother; cool and careful under instruction, and perfectly tractable and intelligent. She's as different from those other women you've seen as you are. You would like her!" He had suddenly grown earnest, and crushing the crust of a biscuit in the strong left hand which he rested on the table, he gazed keenly at her undemonstrative face. "She's no baby, either. She's got a will and a temper of her own. She's the only one of them I ever saw that was worth her salt."

"I thought you did n't like self-willed women," said his mother impassively.

"She knows when to give up," he answered, with unrelaxed scrutiny.

His mother did not lift her eyes, yet. "How long shall you have to visit over there?"

"I've made my last professional visit."

"Where are you going this morning?"

"To Jocelyn's."

Mrs. Mulbridge now looked up, and met her son's eye. "What makes you think she'll have you?"

He did not shrink at her coming straight to the point the moment the way was clear. He had intended it, and he liked it. But he frowned a little as he said, "Because I want her to have me, for one thing." His jaw closed heavily, but his face lost a certain brutal look almost as quickly as it had assumed it. "I guess," he said, with a smile, "that it's the only reason I've got."

"You no need to say that," said his mother, resenting the implication that any woman would not have him.

"Oh, I'm not pretty to look at, mother, and I'm not particularly young; and for a while I thought there might be some one, else."

"Who?"

"The young fellow that came with her, that day."

"That whipper-snapper?"

Dr. Mulbridge assented by his silence. "But I guess I was mistaken. I

guess he's tried and missed it. The field is 'clear, for all I can see. And she's made a failure in one way, and then you know a woman is in the humor to try it in another. She wants a good excuse for giving up. That's what I think."

"Well," said his mother, "I presume you know what you're about, Rufus!"

She took up the coffee-pot on the lid of which she had been keeping her hand, and went into the kitchen with it. She removed the dishes, and left him sitting before the empty table-cloth. When she came for that, he took hold of her hand, and looked up into her face, over which a scarcely discernible tremor passed. "Well, mother?"

"It's what I always knew I had got to come to, first or last. And I suppose I ought to feel glad enough I did n't have to come to it at first."

"No!" said her son. "I'm not a stripling any longer." He laughed, keeping his mother's hand.

She freed it and taking up the table-cloth folded it lengthwise and then across, and laid it neatly away in the cupboard. "I sha'n't interfere with you, nor any woman that you bring here to be your wife. I've had my day, and I'm not one of the old fools that think they're going to have and to hold forever. You've always been a good boy to me, and I guess you hain't ever had to complain' of your mother stan'in' in your way. I sha'n't now. But I did think"

She stopped and shut her lips firmly. "Speak up, mother!" he cried.

"I guess I better not," she answered, setting her chair back against the wall.

"I know what you mean. You mean about my laughing at women that try to take men's places in the world. Well, I did laugh at them. They're ridiculous. I don't want to marry this girl because she's a doctor. That was the principal drawback, in my mind. But it does n't make any difference, and wouldn't now, if she was a dozen doctors."

His mother let down the leaves of the table, and pushed it against the wall, and he rose from the chair in which he was left sitting in the middle of the room. "I presume," she said, with her back toward him, as she straightened the table accurately against the mopboard, "that you can let me have the little house at Grant's Corner."

"Why, mother!" he cried. "You don't suppose I should ever let you be turned out of house and home? You can stay here as long as you live. But it has n't come to that, yet. I don't know that she cares anything about me. But there are chances, and there are signs. The chances are that she won't have the courage to take up her plan of life again, and that she'll consider any other that's pressed home upon her. And I take it for a good sign that she's sent that fellow adrift. If her mind had n't been set on some one else, she'd have taken him, in this broken-up

state of hers. Besides, she has formed the habit of doing what I say, and there's a great deal in mere continuity of habit. It will be easier for her to say yes than to say no; it would be very hard for her to say no."

While he eagerly pressed these arguments his mother listened stonily, without apparent interest or sympathy. But at the end she asked, "How are you going to support a wife? Your practice here won't do it. Has she got anything?"

"She has property, I believe," replied her son. "She seems to have been brought up in that way."

"She won't want to come and live here, then. She'll have notions of her own. If she's like the rest of them, she'll never have you."

"If she were like the rest of them, I'd never have her. But she is n't. As far as I'm concerned, it's nothing against her that she's studied medicine. She did n't do it from vanity, or ambition, or any abnormal love of it. She did it, so far so I can find out, because she wished to do good that way. She's been a little notional, she's had her head addled by women's talk, and she's in a queer freak; but it's only a girl's freak after all: you can't say anything worse of her. She's a splendid woman, and her property's neither here nor there. I could support her."

"I presume," replied his mother, "that she's been used to ways that ain't like our ways. I've always stuck up for you, Rufus, stiff enough, I guess; but I ain't agoin' to deny that you're country born and bred. I can see that, and she can see it, too. It makes a great difference with girls. I don't know as she'd call you what they call a gentleman."

Dr. Mulbridge flushed angrily. Every American, of whatever standing or breeding, thinks of himself as a gentleman, and nothing can gall him more than the insinuation that he is less. "What do you mean, mother?"

"You hain't ever been in such ladies' society as hers in the same way. I know that they all think the world of you, and flatter you up, and they're as biddable as you please when you're doctorin' 'em; but I guess it would be different if you was to set up for one of their own kind amongst 'em."

"There is n't one of them," he retorted, "that I don't believe I could have for the turn of my hand, especially if it was doubled into a fist. They like force."

"Oh, you've only seen the sick married ones. I guess you'll find a well girl is another thing."

"They're all alike. And I think I should be something of a relief if I was n't like what she's been used to hearing called a gentleman; she'd prefer me on that account. But if you come to blood, I guess the Mulbridges and Gardiner, can hold up their heads with the best,

anywhere."

"Yes, like the Camfers and Raflins." These were people of ancestral consequence and local history, who had gone up to Boston from Corbitant, and had succeeded severally as green-grocers and retail dry-goods men, with the naturally attendant social distinction.

"Pshaw!" cried her son. "If she cares for me at all, she won't care for the cut of my clothes, or my table manners."

"Yes, that's so. 'T ain't on my account that I want you should make sure she doos care."

He looked hard at her immovable face, with its fallen eyes, and then went out of the room. He never quarrelled with his mother, because his anger, like her own, was dumb, and silenced him as it mounted. Her misgivings had stung him deeply, and at the bottom of his indolence and indifference was a fiery pride, not easily kindled, but unquenchable. He flung the harness upon his old unkempt horse, and tackled him to the mud-encrusted buggy, for whose shabbiness he had never cared before. He was tempted to go back into the house, and change his uncouth Canada homespun coat for the broadcloth frock which he wore when he went to Boston; but he scornfully resisted it, and drove off in his accustomed figure.

His mother's last words repeated themselves to him, and in that dialogue, in which he continued to dramatize their different feelings, he kept replying, "Well, the way to find out whether she cares is to ask her."

X.

During her convalescence Mrs. Maynard had the time and inclination to give Grace some good advice. She said that she had thought a great deal about it throughout her sickness, and she had come to the conclusion that Grace was throwing away her life.

"You're not fit to be a doctor, Grace," she said. "You're too nervous, and you're too conscientious. It is n't merely your want of experience. No matter how much experience you had, if you saw a case going wrong in your hands, you'd want to call in some one else to set it right. Do you suppose Dr. Mulbridge would have given me up to another doctor because he was afraid he couldn't cure me? No, indeed! He'd have let me die first, and I should n't have blamed him. Of course I know what pressure I brought to bear upon you, but you had no business to mind me. You oughtn't to have minded my talk any more than the buzzing of a mosquito, and no real doctor would. If he wants to be a success, he must be hard-hearted; as hard-hearted as"--she paused for a comparison, and failing any other added--"as all possessed." To the like large-minded and impartial effect, she, ran on at great length. "No, Grace," she concluded, "what you want to do is to get married. You would be a good wife, and you would be a good mother. The only trouble is that I don't

know any man worthy of you, or half worthy. No, I don't!"

Now that her recovery was assured, Mrs. Maynard was very forgiving and sweet and kind with every one. The ladies who came in to talk with her said that she was a changed creature; she gave them all the best advice, and she had absolutely no shame whatever for the inconsistency involved by her reconciliation with her husband. She rather flaunted the happiness of her reunion in the face of the public, and she vouchsafed an explanation to no one. There had never been anything definite in her charges against him, even to Grace, and her tacit withdrawal of them succeeded perfectly well. The ladies, after some cynical tittering, forgot them, and rejoiced in the spectacle of conjugal harmony afforded them: women are generous creatures, and there is hardly any offence which they are not willing another woman should forgive her husband, when once they have said that they do not see how she could ever forgive him.

Mrs. Maynard's silence seemed insufficient to none but Mrs. Breen and her own husband. The former vigorously denounced its want of logic to Grace as all but criminal, though she had no objection to Mr. Maynard. He, in fact, treated her with a filial respect which went far to efface her preconceptions; and he did what he could to retrieve himself from the disgrace of a separation in Grace's eyes. Perhaps he thought that the late situation was known to her alone, when he casually suggested, one day, that Mrs. Maynard was peculiar.

"Yes," said Grace mercifully; "but she has been out of health so long. That makes a great difference. She's going to be better now."

"Oh, it's going to come out all right in the end," he said, with his unbuoyant hopefulness, "and I reckon I've got to help it along. Why, I suppose every man's a trial at times, doctor?"

"I dare say. I know that every woman is," said the girl.

"Is that so? Well, may be you're partly right. But you don't suppose but what a man generally begins it, do you? There was Adam, you know. He did n't pull the apple; but he fell off into that sleep, and woke up with one of his ribs dislocated, and that's what really commenced the trouble. If it had n't been for Adam, there would n't have been any woman, you know; and you could n't blame her for what happened after she got going? "There was no gleam of insinuation in his melancholy eye, and Grace listened without quite knowing what to make of it all. "And then I suppose he was n't punctual at meals, and stood round talking politics at night, when he ought to have been at home with his family?"

"Who?" asked Grace.

"Adam," replied Mr. Maynard lifelessly. "Well, they got along pretty well outside," he continued. "Some of the children didn't turn out just what you might have expected; but raising children is mighty uncertain business. Yes, they got along." He ended his parable with a sort of weary sigh, as if oppressed by experience. Grace looked at his slovenly figure, his smoky complexion, and the shaggy outline made by his

untrimmed hair and beard, and she wondered how Louise could marry him; but she liked him, and she was willing to accept for all reason the cause of unhappiness at which he further hinted. "You see, doctor, an incompatibility is a pretty hard thing to manage. You can't forgive it like a real grievance. You have to try other things, and find out that there are worse things, and then you come back to it and stand it. We're talking Wyoming and cattle range, now, and Mrs. Maynard is all for the new deal; it's going to make us healthy, wealthy, and wise. Well, I suppose the air will be good for her, out there. You doctors are sending lots of your patients our way, now." The gravity with which he always assumed that Grace was a physician in full and regular practice would have had its edge of satire, coming from another; but from him, if it was ironical, it was also caressing, and she did not resent it. "I've had some talk with your colleague, here, Dr. Mulbridge, and he seems to think it will be the best thing for her. I suppose you agree with him?"

"Oh, yes," said Grace, "his opinion would be of great value. It wouldn't be at all essential that I should agree with him:'

"Well, I don't know about that," said Maynard. "I reckon he thinks a good deal of your agreeing with him. I've been talking with him about settling out our way. We've got a magnificent country, and there's bound to be plenty of sickness there, sooner or later. Why, doctor, it would be a good opening for you! It 's just the place for you. You 're off here in a corner, in New England, and you have n't got any sort of scope; but at Cheyenne you'd have the whole field to yourself; there is n't another lady doctor in Cheyenne. Now, you come out with us. Bring your mother with you, and grow up with the country. Your mother would like it. There's enough moral obliquity in Cheyenne to keep her conscience in a state of healthful activity all the time. Yes, you'd get along out there."

Grace laughed, and shook her head. It was part of the joke which life seemed to be with Mr. Maynard that the inhabitants of New England were all eager to escape from their native section, and that they ought to be pitied and abetted in this desire. As soon as his wife's convalescence released him from constant attendance upon her, he began an inspection of the region from the compassionate point of view; the small, frugal husbandry appealed to his commiseration, and he professed to have found the use of canvas caps upon the haycocks intolerably pathetic. "Why, I'm told," he said, "that they have to blanket the apple-trees while the fruit is setting; and they kill off our Colorado bugs by turning them loose, one at a time, on the potato-patches: the bug starves to death in forty-eight hours. But you've got plenty of schoolhouses, doctor; it does beat all, about the schoolhouses. And it's an awful pity that there are no children to go to school in them. Why, of course the people go West as fast as they can, but they ought to be helped; the Government ought to do something. They're good people; make first-rate citizens when you get them waked up, out there. But they ought all to be got away, and let somebody run New England' as a summer resort. It's pretty, and it's cool and pleasant, and the fishing is excellent; milk, eggs, and all kinds of berries and historical associations on the premises; and it could be made very attractive three months of the year; but my goodness!

you oughtn't to ask anybody to live here. You come out with us, doctor, and see that country, and you'll know what I mean."

His boasts were always uttered with a wan, lack-lustre irony, as if he were burlesquing the conventional Western brag and enjoying the mystifications of his listener, whose feeble sense of humor often failed to seize his intention, and to whom any depreciation of New England was naturally unintelligible. She had not come to her final liking for him without a season of serious misgiving, but after that she rested in peace upon what every one knowing him felt to be his essential neighborliness. Her wonder had then come to be how he could marry Louise, when they sat together on the seaward piazza, and he poured out his easy talk, unwearied and unwearying, while, with one long, lank leg crossed upon the other, he swung his unblackened, thin-soled boot to and fro.

"Well, he was this kind of a fellow: When we were in Switzerland, he was always climbing some mountain or other. They could n't have hired me to climb one of their mountains if they'd given me all their scenery, and thrown their goatres in. I used to tell him that the side of a house was good enough for me. But nothing but the tallest mountains would do him; and one day when he was up there on the comb of the roof somewhere, tied with a rope round his waist to the guide and a Frenchman, the guide's foot slipped, and he commenced going down. The Frenchman was just going to cut the rope and let the guide play it alone; but he knocked the knife out of his hand with his long-handled axe, and when the jerk came he was on the other side of the comb, where he could brace himself, and brought them both up standing. Well, he's got muscles like bunches of steel wire. Did n't he ever tell you about it?"

"No," said Grace sadly.

"Well, somebody ought to expose Libby. I don't suppose I should ever have known about it myself, if I hadn't happened to see the guide's friends and relations crying over him next day as if he was the guide's funeral. Hello! There's the doctor." He unlimbered his lank legs, and rose with an effect of opening his person like a pocket-knife. "As I understand it, this is an unprofessional visit, and the doctor is here among us as a guest. I don't know exactly what to do under the circumstances, whether we ought to talk about Mrs. Maynard's health or the opera; but I reckon if we show our good intentions it will come out all right in the end."

He went forward to meet the doctor, who came up to shake hands with Grace, and then followed him in-doors to see Mrs. Maynard. Grace remained in her place, and she was still sitting there when Dr. Mulbridge returned without him. He came directly to her, and said, "I want to speak with you, Miss Breen. Can I see you alone?"

"Is--is Mrs. Maynard worse?" she asked, rising in a little trepidation.

"No; it has nothing to do with her. She's practically well now; I can remand the case to you. I wish to see you--about yourself." She hesitated at this peculiar summons, but some pressure was upon her to

obey Dr. Mulbridge, as there was upon most people where he wished to obey him. "I want to talk with you," he added, "about what you are going to do,--about your future. Will you come?"

"Oh, yes," she answered; and she suffered him to lead the way down from the piazza, and out upon one of the sandy avenues toward the woods, in which it presently lost itself. "But there will be very little to talk about," she continued, as they moved away, "if you confine yourself to my future. I have none."

"I don't see how you've got rid of it," he rejoined. "You've got a future as much as you have a past, and there's this advantage,--that you can do something with your future."

"Do you think so?" she asked, with a little bitterness. "That has n't been my experience."

"It's been mine," he said, "and you can make it yours. Come, I want to talk with you about your future, because I have been thinking very seriously about my own. I want to ask your advice and to give you mine. I'll commence by asking yours. What do you think of me as a physician? I know you are able to judge."

She was flattered, in spite of herself. There were long arrears of cool indifference to her own claims in that direction, which she might very well have resented; but she did not. There was that flattery in his question which the junior in any vocation feels in the appeal of his senior; and there was the flattery which any woman feels in a man's recourse to her judgment. Still, she contrived to parry it with a little thrust. "I don't suppose the opinion of a mere homoeopathist can be of any value to a regular practitioner."

He laughed. "You have been a regular practitioner yourself for the last three weeks. What do you think of my management of the case?"

"I have never abandoned my principles," she began.

"Oh, I know all about that? What do you think of me as a doctor?" he persisted.

"Of course I admire you. Why do you ask me that?"

"Because I wished to know. And because I wished to ask you something else. You have been brought up in a city, and I have always lived here in the country, except the two years I was out with the army. Do you think I should succeed if I pulled up here, and settled in Boston?"

"I have not lived in Boston," she answered. "My opinion wouldn't be worth much on that point."

"Yes, it would. You know city people, and what they are. I have seen a good deal of them in my practice at the hotels about here, and some of the ladies--when they happened to feel more comfortable--have advised me

to come to Boston." His derision seemed to throw contempt on all her sex; but he turned to her, and asked again earnestly, "What do you think? Some of the profession know me there. When I left the school, some of the faculty urged me to try my chance in the city."

She waited a moment before she answered. "You know that I must respect your skill, and I believe that you could succeed anywhere. I judge your fitness by my own deficiency. The first time I saw you with Mrs. Maynard, I saw that you had everything that I hadn't. I saw that I was a failure, and why, and that it would be foolish for me to keep up the struggle."

"Do you mean that you have given it up?" he demanded, with a triumph in which there was no sympathy.

"It has given me up. I never liked it,--I told you that before,--and I never took it up from any ambitious motive. It seemed a shame for me to be of no use in the world; and I hoped that I might do something in a way that seemed natural for women. And I don't give up because I'm unfit as a woman. I might be a man, and still be impulsive and timid and nervous, and everything that I thought I was not."

"Yes, you might be all that, and be a man; but you'd be an exceptional man, and I don't think you're an exceptional woman. If you've failed, it is n't your temperament that's to blame."

"I think it is. The wrong is somewhere in me individually. I know it is."

Dr. Mulbridge, walking beside her, with his hands clasped behind him, threw up his head and laughed. "Well, have it your own way, Miss Breen. Only I don't agree with you. Why should you wish to spare your sex at your own expense? But that's the way with some ladies, I've noticed. They approve of what women attempt because women attempt it, and they believe the attempt reflects honor on them. It's tremendous to think what men could accomplish for their sex, if they only hung together as women do. But they can't. They haven't the generosity."

"I think you don't understand me," said Grace, with a severity that amused him. "I wished to regard myself, in taking up this profession, entirely as I believed a man would have regarded himself."

"And were you able to do it?"

"No," she unintentionally replied to this unexpected question.

"Haw, haw, haw!" laughed Dr. Mulbridge at her helpless candor. "And are you sure that you give it up as a man would?"

"I don't know how you mean," she said, vexed and bewildered.

"Do you do it fairly and squarely because you believe that you're a failure, or because you partly feel that you have n't been fairly dealt

with?"

"I believe that if Mrs. Maynard had had the same confidence in me that she would have had in any man I should not have failed. But every woman physician has a double disadvantage that I hadn't the strength to overcome,--her own inexperience and the distrust of other women."

"Well, whose fault is that?"

"Not the men's. It is the men alone who give women any chance. They are kind and generous and liberal-minded. I have no blame for them, and I have no patience with women who want to treat them as the enemies of women's advancement. Women can't move a step forwards without their sufferance and help. Dr. Mulbridge," she cried, "I wish to apologize for the hasty and silly words I used to you the day I came to ask you to consult with me. I ought to have been grateful to you for consenting at first, and when you took back your consent I ought to have considered your position. You were entirely right. We had no common ground to meet on, and I behaved like a petulant, foolish, vulgar girl!"

"No, no," he protested, laughing in recollection of the scene. "You were all right, and I was in a fix; and if your own fears had n't come to the rescue, I don't know how I should have got out of it. It would have been disgraceful, wouldn't it, to refuse a lady's request. You don't know how near I was to giving way. I can tell you, now that it's all over. I had never seen a lady of our profession before," he added hastily, "and my curiosity was up. I always had my doubts about the thoroughness of women's study, and I should have liked to see where your training failed. I must say I found it very good,--I've told you that. You wouldn't fail individually: you would fail because you are a woman."

"I don't believe that," said Grace.

"Well, then, because your patients are women. It's all one. What will you do?"

"I shall not do anything. I shall give it all up."

"But what shall you do then?"

"I--don't know."

"What are you going to be? A fashionable woman? Or are you going to Europe, and settle down there with the other American failures? I've heard about them,--in Rome and Florence and Paris. Are you going to throw away the study you've put into this profession? You took it up because you wanted to do good. Don't you want to do good any more? Has the human race turned out unworthy?"

She cowered at this arraignment, in which she could not separate the mocking from the justice. "What do you advise me to do? Do you think I could ever succeed?"

"You could never succeed alone."

"Yes, I know that; I felt that from the first. But I have planned to unite with a woman physician older than myself."

"And double your deficiency. Sit down here," he said; "I wish to talk business." They had entered the border of the woods encompassing Jocelyn's, and he painted to a stump, beside which lay the fallen tree. She obeyed mechanically, and he remained standing near her, with one foot lifted to the log; he leaned forward over her, and seemed to seize a physical advantage in the posture. "From your own point of view, you would have no right to give up your undertaking if there was a chance of success in it. You would have no more right to give up than a woman who had gone out as a missionary."

"I don't pretend to compare myself with such a woman; but I should have no more right to give up," she answered, helpless against the logic of her fate, which he had somehow divined.

"Well, then, listen to me. I can give you this chance. Are you satisfied that with my advice you could have succeeded in Mrs. Maynard's case?"

"Yes, I think so. But what"--

"I think so, too. Don't rise!"

His will overcame the impulse that had betrayed itself, and she sank back to her seat. "I offer you my advice from this time forward; I offer you my help."

"That is very good of you," she murmured; "and I appreciate your generosity more than I can say. I know the prejudice you must have had to overcome in regard to women physicians before you could bring yourself to do this; and I know how you must have despised me for failing in my attempt, and giving myself up to my feeble temperament. But"--

"Oh, we won't speak of all that," he interrupted. "Of course I felt the prejudice against women entering the profession which we all feel; it was ridiculous and disgusting to me till I saw you. I won't urge you from any personal motive to accept my offer. But I know that if you do you can realize all your hopes of usefulness; and I ask you to consider that certainly. But you know the only way it could be done."

She looked him in the eyes, with dismay in her growing intelligence.

"What--what do you mean?"

"I mean that I ask you to let me help you carry out your plan of life, and to save all you have done, and all you have hoped, from waste--as your husband. Think"--

She struggled to her feet as if he were opposing a palpable resistance,

so strongly she felt the pressure of his will. "It can't be, Dr. Mulbridge. Oh, it can't, indeed! Let us go back; I wish to go back!"

But he had planted himself in her way, and blocked her advance, unless she chose to make it a flight.

"I expected this," he said, with a smile, as if her wild trepidation interested him as an anticipated symptom. "The whole idea is new and startling to you. But I know you won't dismiss it abruptly, and I won't be discouraged."

"Yes, yes, you must! I will not think of it! I can't! I do dismiss it at once. Let me go!"

"Then you really choose to be like the rest,--a thing of hysterical impulses, without conscience or reason! I supposed the weakest woman would be equal to an offer of marriage. And you had dreamt of being a physician and useful!"

"I tell you," she cried, half quelled by his derision, "that I have found out that I am not fit for it,--that I am a failure and a disgrace; and you had no right to expect me to be anything else."

"You are no failure, and I had a right to expect anything of you after the endurance and the discretion you have shown in the last three weeks. Without your help I should have failed myself. You owe it to other women to go on."

"They must take care of themselves," she said. "If my weakness throws shame on them, they must bear it. I thank you for what you say. I believe you mean it. But if I was of any use to you I did n't know it."

"It was probably inspiration, then," he interrupted coolly. "Come, this isn't a thing to be frightened at. You're not obliged to do what I say. But I think you ought to hear me out. I haven't spoken without serious thought, and I didn't suppose you would reject me without a reason."

"Reason?" she repeated. "There is no reason in it."

"There ought to be. There is, on my side. I have all kinds of reasons for asking you to be my wife: I believe that I can make you happy in the fulfilment of your plans; I admire you and respect you more than any other woman I ever saw; and I love you."

"I don't love you, and that is reason enough."

"Yes, between boys and girls. But between men and women it isn't enough. Do you dislike me?"

"No."

"Am I repulsive in any way?"

"No, no!"

"I know that I am not very young and that I am not very good-looking."

"It is n't that at all."

"Of course I know that such things weigh with women, and that personal traits and habits are important in an affair like this. I am slovenly and indifferent about my dress; but it's only because I have lived where every sort of spirit and ambition was useless. I don't know about city ways, but I could pick up all of them that were worth while. I spoke of going to Boston; but I would go anywhere else with you, east or west, that you chose, and I know that I should succeed. I haven't done what I might have done with myself, because I've never had an object in life. I've always lived in the one little place, and I've never been out of it except when I was in the army. I've always liked my profession; but nothing has seemed worth while. You were a revelation to me; you have put ambition and hope into me. I never saw any woman before that I would have turned my hand to have. They always seemed to me fit to be the companions of fools, or the playthings of men. But of all the simpletons, the women who were trying to do something for woman, as they called it, trying to exemplify and illustrate a cause, were the silliest that I came across. I never happened to have met a woman doctor before you came to me; but I had imagined them, and I could n't believe in you when I saw you. You were not supersensitive, you were not presumptuous, and you gave up, not because you distrusted yourself, but because your patient distrusted you. That was right: I should have done the same thing myself. Under my direction, you have shown yourself faithful, docile, patient, intelligent beyond anything I have seen. I have watched you, and I know; and I know what your peculiar trials have been from that woman. You have taught me a lesson,--I 'm not ashamed to say it; and you've given me a motive. I was wrong to ask you to marry me so that you might carry out your plans: that was no way to appeal to you. What I meant was that I might make your plans my own, and that we might carry them out together. I don't care for making money; I have always been poor, and I had always expected to be so; and I am not afraid of hard work. There is n't any self-sacrifice you've dreamed of that I wouldn't gladly and proudly share with you. You can't do anything by yourself, but we could do anything together. If you have any scruple about giving up your theory of medicine, you needn't do it; and the State Medical Association may go to the devil. I've said my say. What do you say?"

She looked all round, as if seeking escape from a mesh suddenly flung about her, and then she looked imploringly up at him. "I have nothing to say," she whispered huskily. "I can't answer you."

" Well, that's all I ask," he said, moving a few steps, away, and suffering her to rise. "Don't answer me now. Take time,--all the time you want, all the time there is."

"No," she said, rising, and gathering some strength from the sense of being on foot again. "I don't mean that. I mean that I don't--I can't consent."

"You don't believe in me? You don't think I would do it?"

"I don't believe in myself. I have no right to doubt you. I know that I ought to honor you for what you propose."

"I don't think it calls for any great honor. Of course I shouldn't propose it to every lady physician." He smiled with entire serenity and self-possession. "Tell me one thing: was there ever a time when you would have consented?" She did not answer. "Then you will consent yet?"

"No. Don't deceive yourself. I shall never consent."

"I'll leave that to the logic of your own conscience. You will do what seems your duty."

"You must n't trust to my conscience. I fling it away! I won't have anything to do with it. I've been tortured enough by it. There is no sense or justice in it!"

He laughed easily at her vehemence. "I 'll trust your conscience. But I won't stay to worry you now. I'm coming again day after to-morrow, and I'm not afraid of what you will say then."

He turned and left her, tearing his way through the sweet-fern and low blackberry vines, with long strides, a shape of uncouth force. After he was out of sight, she followed, scared and trembling at herself, as if she had blasphemed.

XI.

Grace burst into the room where her mother sat; and flung her hat aside with a desperate gesture. "Now, mother, you have got to listen to me. Dr. Mulbridge has asked me to marry him!"

Mrs. Green put up her spectacles on her forehead, and stared at her daughter, while some strong expressions, out of the plebeian or rustic past which lies only a generation or two behind most of us, rose to her lips. I will not repeat them here; she had long denied them to herself as an immoral self-indulgence, and it must be owned that such things have a fearful effect, coming from old ladies. "What has got into all the men? What in nature does he want you to marry him for?"

"Oh, for the best reasons in the world," exclaimed the daughter. "For reasons that will make you admire and respect him," she added ironically. "For great, and unselfish, and magnanimous reasons!"

"I should want to believe they were the real ones, first," interrupted Mrs. Breen.

"He wants to marry me because he knows that I can't fulfil my plans of life alone, and because we could fulfil them together. We shall not only be husband and wife, but we shall be physicians in partnership. I may continue a homoeopath, he says, and the State Medical Association may go to the devil." She used his language, that would have been shocking to her ordinary moods, without blenching, and in their common agitation her mother accepted it as fit and becoming. "He counts upon my accepting him because I must see it as my duty, and my conscience won't let me reject the only opportunity I shall have of doing some good and being of some use in the world. What do you think I ought to do, mother?"

"There's reason in what he says. It is an opportunity. You could be of use, in that way, and perhaps it's the only way. Yes," she continued, fascinated by the logic of the position, and its capabilities for vicarious self-sacrifice. "I don't see how you can get out of it: You have spent years and years of study, and a great deal of money, to educate yourself for a profession that you're too weak to practise alone. "You can't say that I ever advised your doing it. It was your own idea, and I did n't oppose it. But when you've gone so far, you've formed an obligation to go on. It's your duty not to give up, if you know of any means to continue. That's your duty, as plain as can be. To say nothing of the wicked waste of your giving up now, you're bound to consider the effect it would have upon other women who are trying to do something for themselves. The only thing," she added, with some misgiving, "is whether you believe he was in earnest and would keep his word to you."

"I think he was secretly laughing at me, and that he would expect to laugh me out of his promise."

"Well, then, you ought to take time to reflect, and you ought to be sure that you're right about him."

"Is that what you really think, mother?"

"I am always governed by reason, Grace, and by right; and I have brought you up on that plan. If you have ever departed from it, it has not been with my consent, nor for want of my warning. I have simply laid the matter before you."

"Then you wish me to marry him?"

This was perhaps a point that had not occurred to Mrs. Breen in her recognition of the strength of Dr. Mulbridge's position. It was one thing to trace the path of duty; another to support the aspirant in treading it. "You ought to take time to reflect," Mrs. Green repeated, with evasion that she never used in behalf of others.

"Well, mother," answered Grace, "I didn't take time to reflect, and I should n't care whether I was right about him or not. I refused him because I did n't love him. If I had loved him that would have been the only reason I needed to marry him. But all the duty in the world wouldn't be enough without it. Duty? I am sick of duty! Let the other

women who are trying to do something for themselves, take care of themselves as men would. I don't owe them more than a man would owe other men, and I won't be hoodwinked into thinking I do. As for the waste, the past is gone, at any rate; and the waste that I lament is the years I spent in working myself up to an undertaking that I was never fit for. I won't continue that waste, and I won't keep up the delusion that because I was very unhappy I was useful, and that it was doing good to be miserable. I like pleasure and I like dress; I like pretty things. There is no harm in them. Why should n't I have them?"

"There is harm in them for you,"--her mother began.

"Because I have tried to make my life a horror? There is no other reason, and that is no reason. When we go into Boston this winter I shall go to the theatre. I shall go to the opera, and I hope there will be a ballet. And next summer, I am going to Europe; I am going to Italy." She whirled away toward the door as if she were setting out.

"I should think you had taken leave of your conscience!" cried her mother.

"I hope I have, mother. I am going to consult my reason after this."

"Your reason!"

"Well, then, my inclination. I have had enough of conscience,--of my own, and of yours, too. That is what I told him, and that is what I mean. There is such a thing as having too much conscience, and of getting stupefied by it, so that you can't really see what's right. But I don't care. I believe I should like to do wrong for a while, and I will do wrong if it's doing right to marry him."

She had her hand on the door-knob, and now she opened the door, and closed it after her with something very like a bang.

She naturally could not keep within doors in this explosive state, and she went downstairs, and out upon the piazza. Mr. Maynard was there, smoking, with his boots on top of the veranda-rail, and his person thrown back in his chair at the angle requisite to accomplish this elevation of the feet. He took them down, as he saw her approach, and rose, with the respect in which he never failed for women, and threw his cigar away.

"Mr. Maynard," she asked abruptly, "do you know where Mr. Libby is?"

"No, I don't, doctor, I'm sorry to say. If I did, I would send and borrow some more cigars of him. I think that the brand our landlord keeps must have been invented by Mr. Track, the great anti-tobacco reformer."

"Is he coming back? Is n't he coming back?" she demanded breathlessly.

"Why, yes, I reckon he must be coming back. Libby generally sees his friends through. And he'll have some curiosity to know how Mrs. Maynard

and I have come out of it all." He looked at her with something latent in his eye; but what his eye expressed was merely a sympathetic regret that he could not be more satisfactory.

"Perhaps," she suggested, "Mr. Barlow might know something."

"Well, now," said Maynard, "perhaps he might, that very thing. I'll go round and ask him." He went to the stable, and she waited for his return. "Barlow says," he reported, "that he guesses he's somewhere about Leyden. At any rate, his mare, 's there yet, in the stable where Barlow left her. He saw her there, yesterday."

"Thanks. That's all I wished to know," said Grace. "I wished to write to him," she added boldly.

She shut herself in her room and spent the rest of the forenoon in writing a letter, which when first finished was very long, but in its ultimate phase was so short as to occupy but a small space on a square correspondence-card. Having got it written on the card, she was dissatisfied with it in that shape, and copied it upon a sheet of note-paper. Then she sealed and addressed it, and put it into her pocket; after dinner she went down to the beach, and walked a long way upon the sands. She thought at first that she would ask Barlow to get it to him, somehow; and then she determined to find out from Barlow the address of the people who had Mr. Libby's horse, and send it to them for him by the driver of the barge. She would approach the driver with a nonchalant, imperious air, and ask him to please have that delivered to Mr. Libby immediately; and in case he learned from the stable-people that he was not in Leyden, to bring the letter back to her. She saw how the driver would take it, and then she figured Libby opening and reading it. She sometimes figured him one way, and sometimes another. Sometimes he rapidly scanned the lines, and then instantly ordered his horse, and feverishly hastened the men; again he deliberately read it, and then tore it into stall pieces, with a laugh, and flung them away. This conception of his behavior made her heart almost stop beating; but there was a luxury in it, too, and she recurred to it quite as often as to the other, which led her to a dramatization of their meeting, with all their parley minutely realized, and every most intimate look and thought imagined. There is of course no means of proving that this sort of mental exercise was in any degree an exercise of the reason, or that Dr. Breen did not behave unprofessionally in giving herself up to it. She could only have claimed in self-defence that she was no longer aiming at a professional behavior; that she was in fact abandoning herself to a recovered sense of girlhood and all its sweetest irresponsibilities. Those who would excuse so weak and capricious a character may urge, if they like, that she was behaving as wisely as a young physician of the other sex would have done in the circumstances.

She concluded to remain on the beach, where only the children were playing in the sand, and where she could easily escape any other companionship that threatened. After she had walked long enough to spend the first passion of her reverie, she sat down under the cliff, and presently grew conscious of his boat swinging at anchor in its wonted

place, and wondered that she had not thought he must come back for that. Then she had a mind to tear up her letter as superfluous; but she did not. She rose from her place under the cliff, and went to look for the dory. She found it drawn up on the sand in a little cove. It was the same place, and the water was so shoal for twenty feet out that no one could have rowed the dory to land; it must be dragged up. She laughed and blushed, and then boldly amused herself by looking for footprints; but the tide must have washed them out long ago; there were only the light, small footprints of the children who had been playing about the dory. She brushed away some sand they had scattered over the seat, and got into the boat and sat down there. It was a good seat, and commanded a view of the sail-boat in the foreground of the otherwise empty ocean; she took out her letter, and let it lie in the open hands which she let lie in her lap.

She was not impatient to have the time pass; it went only too soon. Though she indulged that luxury of terror in imagining her letter torn up and scornfully thrown away, she really rested quite safe as to the event; but she liked this fond delay, and the soft blue afternoon might have lasted forever to her entire content.

A little whiff of breeze stole up, and suddenly caught the letter from her open hands, and whisked it out over the sand. With a cry she fled after it, and when she had recaptured it, she thought to look at her watch. It was almost time for the barge, and now she made such needless haste, in order not to give herself chance for misgiving or retreat, that she arrived too soon at the point where she meant to intercept the driver on his way to the house; for in her present mutiny she had resolved to gratify a little natural liking for manoeuvre, long starved by the rigid discipline to which she had subjected herself. She had always been awkward at it, but she liked it; and now it pleased her to think that she should give her letter secretly to the driver, and on her way to meet him she forgot that she had meant to ask Barlow for part of the address. She did not remember this till it was too late to go back to the hotel, and she suddenly resolved not to consult Barlow, but to let the driver go about from one place to another with the letter till he found the right one. She kept walking on out into the forest through which the road wound, and she had got a mile away before she saw the weary bowing of the horses' heads as they tugged the barge through the sand at a walk. She stopped involuntarily, with some impulses to flight; and as the vehicle drew nearer, she saw the driver turned round upon his seat, and talking to a passenger behind. She had never counted upon his having a passenger, and the fact undid all.

She remained helpless in the middle of the road; the horses came to a stand-still a few paces from her, and the driver ceased from the high key of conversation, and turned to see what was the matter.

"My grief!" he shouted. "If it had n't been for them horses o' mine, I sh'd 'a' run right over ye."

"I wished to speak with you," she began. "I wished to send"--

She stopped, and the passenger leaned forward to learn what was going on. "Miss Breen!" he exclaimed, and leaped out of the back of the barge and ran to her.

"You--you got my letter!" she gasped.

"No! What letter? Is there anything the matter?"

She did not answer. She had become conscious of the letter, which she had never ceased to hold in the hand that she had kept in her pocket for that purpose. She crushed it into a small wad.

Libby turned his head, and said to the driver of the barge, "Go ahead."

"Will you take my arm?" he added to her. "It's heavy walking in this sand."

"No, thank you," she murmured, recoiling. "I'm not tired."

"Are you well? Have you been quite well?"

"Oh, yes, perfectly. I did n't know you were coming back."

"Yes. I had to come back. I'm going to Europe next week, and I had to come to look after my boat, here; and I wanted to say good-by to Maynard. I was just going to speak to Maynard, and then sail my boat over to Leyden."

"It will be very pleasant," she said, without looking at him. "It's moonlight now."

"Oh, I sha'n't have any use for the moon. I shall get over before nightfall, if this breeze holds."

She tried to think of something else, and to get away from this talk of a sail to Leyden, but she fatally answered, "I saw your boat this afternoon. I had n't noticed before that it was still here."

He hesitated a moment, and then asked, "Did you happen to notice the dory?"

"Yes, it was drawn up on the sand."

"I suppose it's all right--if it's in the same place."

"It seemed to be," she answered faintly.

"I'm going to give the boat to Johnson."

She did not say anything, for she could think of nothing to say, but that she had looked for seals on the reef, but had not seen any, and this would have been too shamelessly leading. That left the word to him, and he asked timidly,--

"I hope my coming don't seem intrusive, Miss Breen?"

She did not heed this, but "You are going to be gone a great while?" she asked, in turn.

"I don't know," he replied, in an uncertain tone, as if troubled to make out whether she was vexed with him or not. "I thought," he added, "I would go up the Nile this time. I've never been up the Nile, you know."

"No, I didn't know that. Well," she added to herself, "I wish you had not come back! You had better not have come back. If you had n't come, you would have got my letter. And now it can never be done! No, I can't go through it all again, and no one has the right to ask it. We have missed the only chance," she cried to herself, in such keen reproach of him that she thought she must have spoken aloud.

"Is Mrs. Maynard all right again?" he asked.

"Yes, she is very much better," she answered, confusedly, as if he had heard her reproach and had ignored it.

"I hope you're not so tired as you were."

"No, I 'm not tired now."

"I thought you looked a little pale," he said sympathetically, and now she saw that he was so. It irritated her that she should be so far from him, in all helpfulness, and she could scarcely keep down the wish that ached in her heart.

We are never nearer doing the thing we long to do than when we have proclaimed to ourselves that it must not and cannot be.

"Why are you so pale?" she demanded, almost angrily.

"I? I didn't know that I was," he answered. "I supposed I was pretty well. I dare say I ought to be ashamed of showing it in that way. But if you ask me, well, I will tell you; I don't find it any easier than I did at first."

"You are to blame, then!" she cried. "If I were a man, I should not let such a thing wear upon me for a moment"

"Oh, I dare say I shall live through it," he answered, with the national whimsicality that comes to our aid in most emergencies.

A little pang went through her heart, but she retorted, "I would n't go to Europe to escape it, nor up the Nile. I would stay and fight it where I was." "Stay?" He seemed to have caught hopefully at the word.

"I thought you were stronger. If you give up in this way how can you

expect me"--She stopped; she hardly knew what she had intended to say; she feared that he knew.

But he only said: "I'm sorry. I didn't intend to trouble you with the sight of me. I had a plan for getting over the cliff without letting you know, and having Maynard come down to me there."

"And did you really mean," she cried piteously, "to go away without trying to see me again?"

"Yes," he owned simply. "I thought I might catch a glimpse of you, but I did n't expect to speak to you."

"Did you hate me so badly as that? What had I done to you?"

"Done?" He gave a sorrowful laugh; and added, with an absent air, "Yes, it's really like doing something to me! And sometimes it seems as if you had done it purposely."

"You know I did n't! Now, then," she cried, "you have insulted me, and you never did that before. You were very good and noble and generous, and would n't let me blame myself for anything. I wanted always to remember that of you; for I did n't believe that any man could be so magnanimous. But it seems that you don't care to have me respect you!"

"Respect?" he repeated, in the same vague way. "No, I should n't care about that unless it was included in the other. But you know whether I have accused you of anything, or whether I have insulted you. I won't excuse myself. I think that ought to be insulting to your common sense."

"Then why should you have wished to avoid seeing me to-day? Was it to spare yourself?" she demanded, quite incoherently now. "Or did you think I should not be equal to the meeting?"

"I don't know what to say to you," answered the young man. "I think I must be crazy." He halted, and looked at her in complete bewilderment. "I don't understand you at all."

"I wished to see you very much. I wanted your advice, as--as--a friend." He shook his head. "Yes! you shall be my friend, in this at least. I can claim it--demand it. You had no right to--to--make me--trust you so much, and--and then--desert me."

"Oh, very well," he answered. "If any advice of mine--But I couldn't go through that sacrilegious farce of being near you and not"--She waited breathlessly, a condensed eternity, for him to go on; but he stopped at that word, and added: "How can I advise you?"

The disappointment was so cruel that the tears came into her eyes and ran down her face, which she averted from him. When she could control herself she said, "I have an opportunity of going on in my profession now, in a way that makes me sure of success."

"I am very glad on your account. You must be glad to realize"

"No, no!" she retorted wildly. "I am not glad!"

"I thought you"--

"But there are conditions! He says he will go with me anywhere, and we can practise our profession together, and I can carry out all my plans. But first--first--he wants me to--marry him!"

"Who?"

"Don't you know? Dr. Mulbridge!"

"That--I beg your pardon. I've no right to call him names." The young fellow halted, and looked at her downcast face. "Well, do you want me to tell you to take him? That is too much. I did n't know you were cruel."

"You make me cruel! You leave me to be cruel!"

"I leave you to be cruel?"

"Oh, don't play upon my words, if you won't ask me what I answered!"

"How can I ask that? I have no right to know."

"But you shall know!" she cried. "I told him that I had no plans. I have given them all up because--because I'm too weak for them, and because I abhor him, and because--But it was n't enough. He would not take what I said for answer, and he is coming again for an answer."

"Coming again?"

"Yes. He is a man who believes that women may change, for reason or no reason; and"--

"You--you mean to take him when he comes back?" gasped the young man.

"Never! Not if he came a thousand times!"

"Then what is it you want me to advise you about?" he faltered.

"Nothing!" she answered, with freezing hauteur. She suddenly put up her arms across her eyes, with the beautiful, artless action of a shame-smitten child, and left her young figure in bewildering relief. "Oh, don't you see that I love you?"

"Could n't you understand,--couldn't you see what I meant?" she asked again that night, as they lost themselves on the long stretch of the moonlit beach. With his arm close about that lovely shape they would have seemed but one person to the inattentive observer, as they paced along in the white splendor.

"I couldn't risk anything. I had spoken, once for all. I always thought that for a man to offer himself twice was indelicate and unfair. I could never have done it."

"That's very sweet in you," she said; and perhaps she would have praised in the same terms the precisely opposite sentiment. "It's some comfort," she added, with a deep-fetched sigh, "to think I had to speak."

He laughed. "You didn't find it so easy to make love!"

"Oh, NOTHING is easy that men have to do!" she answered, with passionate earnestness.

There are moments of extreme concession, of magnanimous admission, that come but once in a lifetime.

XII.

Dr. Mulbridge did not wait for the time he had fixed for his return. He may have judged that her tendency against him would strengthen by delay, or he may have yielded to his own impatience in coming the next day. He asked for Grace with his wonted abruptness, and waited for her coming in the little parlor of the hotel, walking up and down the floor, with his shaggy head bent forward, and his big hands clasped behind him.

As she hovered at the door before entering, she could watch him while he walked the whole room's length away, and she felt a pang at sight of him. If she could have believed that he loved her, she could not have faced him, but must have turned and run away; and even as it was she grieved for him. Such a man would not have made up his mind to this step without a deep motive, if not a deep feeling. Her heart had been softened so that she could not think of frustrating his ambition, if it were no better than that, without pity. One man had made her feel very kindly toward all other men; she wished in the tender confusion of the moment that she need not reject her importunate suitor, whose importunity even she could not resent.

He caught sight of her as soon as he made his turn at the end of the room, and with a quick "Ah, Ah!" he hastened to meet her, with the smile in which there was certainly something attractive. "You see I've come back a day sooner than I promised. I haven't the sort of turnout you've been used to, but I want you to drive with me." "I can't drive with you, Dr. Mulbridge," she faltered.

"Well, walk, then. I should prefer to walk."

"You must excuse me," she answered, and remained standing before him.

"Sit down," he bade her, and pushed up a chair towards her. His audacity, if it had been a finer courage, would have been splendid, and

as it was she helplessly obeyed him, as if she were his patient, and must do so. "If I were superstitious I should say that you receive me ominously," he said, fixing his gray eyes keenly upon her.

"I do!" she forced herself to reply. "I wish you had not come."

"That's explicit, at any rate. Have you thought it over?"

"No; I had no need to do that, I had fully resolved when I spoke yesterday. Dr. Mulbridge, why didn't you spare me this? It's unkind of you to insist, after what I said. You know that I must hate to repeat it. I do value you so highly in some ways that I blame you for obliging me to hurt you--if it does hurt--by telling you again that I don't love you."

He drew in a long breath, and set his teeth hard upon his lip. "You may depend upon its hurting," he said, "but I was glad to risk the pain, whatever it was, for the chance of getting you to reconsider. I presume I'm not the conventional wooer. I'm too old for it, and I'm too blunt and plain a man. I've been thirty-five years making up my mind to ask you to marry me. You're the first woman, and you shall be the last. You couldn't suppose I was going to give you up for one no?"

"You had better."

"Not for twenty! I can understand very well how you never thought of me in this way; but there's no reason why you shouldn't. Come, it's a matter that we can reason about, like anything else."

"No. I told you, it's something we can't reason about. Or yes, it is. I will reason with you. You say that you love me?"

"Yes."

"If you did n't love me, you would n't ask me to marry you?"

"No."

"Then how can you expect me to marry you without loving you?"

"I don't. All that I ask is that you won't refuse me. I know that you can love me."

"No, no, never!"

"And I only want you to take time to try."

"I don't wish to try. If you persist, I must leave the room. We had better part. I was foolish to see you. But I thought--I was sorry--I hoped to make it less unkind to you."

"In spite of yourself, you were relenting."

"Not at all!"

"But if you pitied me, you did care for me a little?"

"You know that I had the highest respect for you as a physician. I tell you that you were my ideal in that way, and I will tell you that if"--she stopped, and he continued for her.

"If you had not resolved to give it up, you might have done what I asked."

"I did not say that," she answered indignantly.

"But why do you give it up?"

"Because I am not equal to it."

"How do you know it? Who told you?"

"You have told me,--by every look and act of yours,--and I'm grateful to you for it."

"And if I told you now by word that you were fit for it."

"I shouldn't believe you."

"You would n't believe my word?" She did not answer. "I see," he said presently, "that you doubt me somehow as a man. What is it you think of me?"

"You wouldn't like to know."

"Oh, yes, I should."

"Well, I will tell you. I think you are a tyrant, and that you want a slave, not a wife. You wish to be obeyed. You despise women. I don't mean their minds,--they're despicable enough, in most cases, as men's are,--but their nature."

"This is news to me," he said, laughing. "I never knew that I despised women's nature."

"It's true, whether you knew it or not."

"Do I despise you?"

"You would, if you saw that I was afraid of you: Oh, why do you force me to say such things? Why don't you spare me--spare yourself?"

"In this cause I couldn't spare myself. I can't bear to give you up! I'm what I am, whatever you say; but with you, I could be whatever you would. I could show you that you are wrong if you gave me the chance. I know that I could make you happy. Listen to me a moment."

"It's useless."

"No! If you have taken the trouble to read me in this way, there must have been a time when you might have cared."

"There never was any such time. I read you from the first."

"I will go away," he said, after a pause, in which she had risen, and began a retreat towards the door. "But I will not--I cannot--give you up. I will see you again."

"No, sir. You shall not see me again. I will not submit to it. I will not be persecuted." She was trembling, and she knew that he saw her tremor.

"Well," he said, with a smile that recognized her trepidation, "I will not persecute you. I'll renounce these pretensions. But I'll ask you to see me once more, as a friend,--an acquaintance."

"I will not see you again."

"You are rather hard with me, I think," he urged gently. "I don't think I'm playing the tyrant with you now."

"You are,--the baffled tyrant."

"But if I promised not to offend again, why should you deny me your acquaintance?"

"Because I don't believe you." She was getting nearer the door, and as she put her hand behind her and touched the knob, the wild terror she had felt, lest he should reach it first and prevent her escape, left her.

"You are treating me like a child that does n't know its own mind, or has none to know. You are laughing at me--playing with me; you have shown me that you despise me."

He actually laughed. "Well, you've shown that you are not afraid of me. Why are you not afraid?"

"Because," she answered, and she dealt the blow now without pity, "I'm engaged,--engaged to Mr. Libby!" She whirled about and vanished through the door, ashamed, indignant, fearing that if she had not fled, he would somehow have found means to make his will prevail even yet.

He stood, stupefied, looking at the closed door, and he made a turn or two about the room before he summoned intelligence to quit it. When death itself comes, the sense of continuance is not at once broken in the survivors. In these moral deaths, which men survive in their own lives, there is no immediate consciousness of an end. For a while, habit and the automatic tendency of desire carry them on.

He drove back to Corbitant perched on the rickety seat of his rattling

open buggy, and bowed forward as his wont was, his rounded shoulders bringing his chin well over the dashboard. As he passed down the long sandy street, toward the corner where his own house stood, the brooding group of loafers, waiting in Hackett's store for the distribution of the mail, watched him through the open door, and from under the boughs of the weatherbeaten poplar before it. Hackett had been cutting a pound of cheese out of the thick yellow disk before him, for the Widow Holman, and he stared at the street after Mulbridge passed, as if his mental eye had halted him there for the public consideration, while he leaned over the counter, and held by the point the long knife with which he had cut the cheese.

"I see some the folks from over to Jocelyn's, yist'd'y," he said, in a spasm of sharp, crackling speech, "and they seemed to think 't Mis' Mulbridge'd got to step round pretty spry 'f she did n't want another the same name in the house with her."

A long silence followed, in which no one changed in any wise the posture in which he found himself when Hackett began to speak. Cap'n George Wray, tilted back against the wall in his chair, continued to stare at the store-keeper; Cap'n Jabez Wray, did not look up from whittling the chair between his legs; their cousin, Cap'n Wray Storrell, seated on a nailkeg near the stove, went on fretting the rust on the pipe with the end of a stiff, cast-off envelope; two other captains, more or less akin to them, continued their game of checkers; the Widow Seth Wray's boy rested immovable, with his chin and hand on the counter, where he had been trying since the Widow Holman went out to catch Hackett's eye and buy a corn-ball. Old Cap'n Billy Wray was the first to break the spell. He took his cigar from his mouth, and held it between his shaking thumb and forefinger, while he pursed his lips for speech. "Jabez," he said, "did Cap'n Sam'I git that coalier?"

"No," answered the whittler, cutting deeper into his chair, "she did n't signal for him till she got into the channel, and then he'd got a couple o' passengers for Leyden; and Cap'n Jim brought her up."

"I don't know," said Cap'n Billy, with a stiff yet tremulous reference of himself to the storekeeper, "as spryness would help her, as long as he took the notion. I guess he's master of his own ship. Who's he going to marry? The grahs-widow got well enough?"

"No. As I understand," crackled the store-keeper, "her husband's turned up. Folks over there seem to think't he's got his eye on the other doctor."

"Going to marry with her, hey? Well, if either of 'em gets sick they won't have to go far for advice, and they won't have any doctor's bills to pay. Still, I shouldn't ha' picked out just that kind of a wife for him."

"As I understand," the storekeeper began; but here he caught sight of Widow Seth Wray's boy, and asked, "What's wanted, Bub? Corn-ball?" and turning to take that sweetmeat from the shelf behind him he added the

rest in the mouth of the hollowly reverberating jar, "She's got prop'ty."

"Well, I never knew a Mulbridge yet 't objected to prop'ty,--especially, other folks's."

"Barlow he's tellin' round that she 's very fine appearin'." He handed the corn-ball to Widow Seth Wray's boy, who went noiselessly out on his bare feet.

Cap'n Billy drew several long breaths. When another man might have been supposed to have dismissed the subject he said, "Well, I never knew a Mulbridge that objected to good looks in women folks. They've all merried hahnsome wives, ever since the old gentleman set 'em the example with his second one. They got their own looks from the first. Well," he added, "I hope she's a tough one. She's got either to bend or to break."

"They say," said Cap'n George Wray, like one rising from the dead to say it, so dumb and motionless had he been till now, "that Mis' Mulbridge was too much for the old doctor."

"I don't know about that," Cap'n Billy replied, "but I guess her son's too much for her: she's only Gardiner, and he's Gardiner and Mulbridge both."

No one changed countenance, but a sense of Cap'n Billy's wit sparely yet satisfyingly glimmered from the eyes of Cap'n George and the storekeeper, and Cap'n Jabez closed his knife with a snap and looked up. "Perhaps," he suggested, "she's seen enough of him to know beforehand that there would be too much of him."

"I never rightly understood," said Hackett, "just what it was about him, there in the army--coming out a year beforehand, that way."

"I guess you never will,--from him," said Cap'n Jabez.

"Laziness, I guess,--too much work," said old Cap'n Billy. "What he wants is a wife with money. There ain't a better doctor anywhere. I've heard 't up to Boston, where he got his manifest, they thought everything of him. He's smart enough, but he's lazy, and he always was lazy, and harder'n a nut. He's a curious mixtur'. N'I guess he's been on the lookout for somethin' of this kind ever sence he begun practising among the summer boarders. Guess he's had an eye out."

"They say he's poplar among 'em," observed the storekeeper thoughtfully.

"He's been pooty p'tic'lar, or they have," said Cap'n Jabez.

"Well, most on 'em's merried women," Hackett urged. "It's astonishin' how they do come off and leave their husbands, the whole summer long. They say they're all out o' health, though."

"I wonder," said old Cap'n Billy, "if them coaliers is goin' to make a settled thing of haulin' inside before they signal a pilot."

"I know one thing," answered Cap'n Jabez, "that if any coalier signals me in the channel, I'll see her in hell first" He slipped his smooth, warm knife into his pocket, and walked out of the store amid a general silence.

"He's consid'ble worked up, about them coaliers," said old Cap'n Billy. "I don't know as I've heard Jabez swear before--not since he was mate of the Gallatin. He used to swear then, consid'able."

"Them coaliers is enough to make any one swear," said Cap'n George. "If it's any ways fair weather they won't take you outside, and they cut you down from twenty-five dollars to two dollars if they take you inside."

Old Cap'n Billy did not answer before he had breathed awhile, and then, having tried his cigar and found it out, he scraped a match on his coat-sleeve. He looked at the flame while it burned from blue to yellow.

"Well, I guess if anybody's been p'tic'lar, it's been him. There ain't any doubt but what he's got a takin' way with the women. They like him. He's masterful, and he ain't a fool, and women most gen'ly like a man that ain't a fool. I guess if he 's got his eye on the girl's prop'ty, she'll have to come along. He'd begin by havin' his own way about her answer; he'd hang on till she said Yes, if she did n't say it first-off; and he'd keep on as he'd begun. I guess if he wants her it's a match." And Cap'n Billy threw his own into the square box of tobacco-stained sawdust under the stove.

Mrs. Maynard fully shared the opinion which rocked Dr. Mulbridge's defeat with a belief in his invincible will. When it became necessary, in the course of events which made Grace and Libby resolve upon a short engagement, to tell her that they were going to be married, she expressed a frank astonishment. "Walter Libby!" she cried. "Well, I am surprised. When I was talking to you the other day about getting married, of course I supposed it was going to be Dr. Mulbridge. I did n't want you to marry him, but I thought you were going to."

"And why," demanded Grace, with mounting sensation, "did you think that?"

"Oh, I thought you would have to."

"Have to?"

"Oh, you have such a weak will. Or I always thought you had. But perhaps it's only a weak will with other women. I don't know! But Walter Libby! I knew he was perfectly gone upon you, and I told you so at the beginning; but I never dreamt of your caring for him. Why, it seems too ridiculous."

"Indeed! I'm glad that it amuses you."

"Oh no, you're not, Grace. But you know what I mean. He seems so much younger."

"Younger? He's half a year older than I am."

"I did n't say he was younger. But you're so very grave and he's so very light. Well, I always told Walter Libby I should get him a wife, but you were the last person I should have thought of. What's going to become of all your high purposes? You can't do anything with them when you're married! But you won't have any occasion for them, that's one comfort."

"It's not my idea of marriage that any high purpose will be lost in it."

"Oh, it is n't anybody's, before they get married. I had such high purposes I couldn't rest. I felt like hiring a hall, as George says, all the time. Walter Libby is n't going to let you practise, is he? You mustn't let him! I know he'd be willing to do anything you said, but a husband ought to be something more than a mere & Co."

Grace laughed at the impudent cynicism of all this, for she was too happy to be vexed with any one just then. "I'm, glad you've come to think so well of husbands' rights at last, Louise," she said.

Mrs. Maynard took the little puncture in good part. "Oh, yes, George and I have had a good deal of light let in on us. I don't suppose my character was much changed outwardly in my sickness," she suggested.

"It was not," answered Grace warmly. "It was intensified, that was all."

Mrs. Maynard laughed in her turn, with real enjoyment of the conception. "Well, I wasn't going to let on, unless it came to the worst; I did n't say much, but I kept up an awful thinking. It would have been easy enough to get a divorce, and George would n't have opposed it; but I looked at it in this way: that the divorce wouldn't have put us back where we were, anyway, as I had supposed it would. We had broken into each other's lives, and we couldn't get out again, with all the divorces under the sun. That's the worst of getting married: you break into each other's lives. You said something like it to me, that day when you came back from your sail with Walter Libby. And I just concluded that there could n't be any trial that would n't be a great deal easier to bear than getting rid of all your trials; and I just made up my mind that if any divorce was to be got, George Maynard might get it himself; a temporary separation was bad enough for me, and I told him so, about the first words I could speak. And we're going to try the new departure on that platform. We don't either of us suspect we can have things perfectly smooth, but we've agreed to rough it together when we can't. We've found out that we can't marry and then become single, any more than we could die and come to life again. And don't you forget it, Grace! You don't half know yourself, now. You know what you have been; but getting married lets loose all your possibilities. You don't know what a temper you've got, nor how badly you can behave--how much like a naughty, good-for-nothing little girl; for a husband and wife are just two children together: that's what makes the sweetness of it, and that's what makes the dreadfulness. Oh, you'll have need of all your good principles, I can tell you, and if you've a mind to do anything practical in the way of

high purposes, I reckon there'll be use for them all."

Another lady who was astonished at Grace's choice was more incurably disappointed and more grieved for the waste of those noble aims with which her worshipping fancy had endowed the girl even more richly than her own ambition. It was Grace's wish to pass a year in Europe before her husband should settle down in charge of his mills; and their engagement, marriage, and departure followed so swiftly upon one another, that Miss Gleason would have had no opportunity to proffer remonstrance or advice. She could only account for Grace's course on the theory that Dr. Mulbridge had failed to offer himself; but this explained her failure to marry him, without explaining her marriage with Mr. Libby. That remained for some time a mystery, for Miss Gleason firmly refused to believe that such a girl could be in love with a man so much her inferior: the conception disgraced not only her idol, but cast shame upon all other women, whose course in such matters is notoriously governed by motives of the highest sagacity and judgment.

Mrs. Breen hesitated between the duty of accompanying the young couple on their European travels, and that of going to the village where Libby's mills were situated,--in southern New Hampshire. She was not strongly urged to a decision by her children, and she finally chose the latter course. The mill property had been a long time abandoned before Libby's father bought it, and put it in a repair which he did not hasten to extend to the village. This had remained in a sort of picturesque neglect, which harmonized with the scenery of the wild little valley where it nestled; and Mrs. Breen found, upon the vigorous inquiry which she set on foot, that the operatives were deplorably destitute of culture and drainage. She at once devoted herself to the establishment of a circulating library and an enlightened system of cess-pools, to such an effect of ingratitude in her beneficiaries that she was quite ready to remand them to their former squalor when her son-in-law returned. But he found her work all so good that he mediated between her and the inhabitants, and adopted it with a hearty appreciation that went far to console her, and finally popularized it. In fact, he entered into the spirit of all practical reforms with an energy and intelligence that quite reconciled her to him. It was rather with Grace than with him that she had fault to find. She believed that the girl had returned from Europe materialized and corrupted; and she regarded the souvenirs of travel with which the house was filled as so many tokens of moral decay. It is undeniable that Grace seemed for a time, to have softened to, a certain degree of self-indulgence. During the brief opera season the first winter after her return, she spent a week in Boston; she often came to the city, and went to the theatres and the exhibitions of pictures. It was for some time Miss Gleason's opinion that these escapades were the struggles of a magnanimous nature, unequally mated, to forget itself. When they met she indulged the habit of regarding Mrs. Libby with eyes of latent pity, till one day she heard something that gave her more relief than she could ever have hoped for. This was the fact, perfectly ascertained by some summer sojourners in the neighborhood; that Mrs. Libby was turning her professional training to account by treating the sick children among her husband's operatives.

In the fall Miss Gleason saw her heroine at an exhibition of pictures. She rushed across the main hall of the Museum to greet her. "Congratulate you!" she deeply whispered, "on realizing your dream! Now you are happy, now you can be at peace!"

"Happy? At peace?"

"In the good work you have taken up. Oh, nothing, under Gawd, is lost!" she exclaimed, getting ready to run away, and speaking with her face turned over her shoulder towards Mrs. Libby.

"Dream? Good work? What do you mean?"

"Those factory children!"

"Oh!" said Mrs. Libby coldly, "that was my husband's idea."

"Your husband's!" cried Miss Gleason, facing about again, and trying to let a whole history of suddenly relieved anxiety speak in her eyes. "How happy you make me! Do let me thank you!"

In the effort to shake hands with Mrs. Libby she knocked the catalogue out of her hold, and vanished in the crowd without knowing it. Some gentleman picked it up, and gave it to her again, with a bow of burlesque devotion.

Mrs. Libby flushed tenderly. "I might have known it would be you, Walter. Where did you spring from?"

"I've been here ever since you came."

"What in the world doing?"

"Oh, enjoying myself."

"Looking at the pictures?"

"Watching you walk round:"

"I thought you couldn't be enjoying the pictures," she said simply. "I'm not."

She was not happy, indeed, in any of the aesthetic dissipations into which she had plunged, and it was doubtless from a shrewder knowledge of her nature than she had herself that her husband had proposed this active usefulness, which she once intended under such different conditions. At the end of the ends she was a Puritan; belated, misdated, if the reader will, and cast upon good works for the consolation which the Puritans formerly found in a creed. Riches and ease were sinful to her, and somehow to be atoned for; and she had no real love for anything that was not of an immediate humane and spiritual effect. Under the shelter of her husband's name the benevolent use of her skill was no queerer than the charity to which many ladies devote themselves; though they are

neither of them people to have felt the anguish which comes from the fear of what other people will think. They go their way in life, and are probably not disturbed by any misgivings concerning them. It is thought, on one hand, that he is a man of excellent head, and of a heart so generous that his deference to her in certain matters is part of the devoted flattery which would spoil any other woman, but that she consults his judgment in every action of her life, and trusts his sense with the same completeness that she trusts his love. On the other hand, when it is felt that she ought to have done for the sake of woman what she could not do for herself, she is regarded as sacrificed in her marriage. If, it is feared, she is not infatuated with her husband, she is in a disgraceful subjection, without the hope of better or higher things. If she had children, they might be a compensation and refuge for her; in that case, to be sure, she must be cut off from her present resource in caring for the children of others; though the conditions under which she now exercises her skill certainly amount to begging the whole question of woman's fitness for the career she had chosen.

Both parties to this contention are, strange to say, ladies. If it has not been made clear from the events and characters of the foregoing history which opinion is right, I am unable to decide. It is well, perhaps, not to be too explicitly in the confidence of one's heroine. After her marriage perhaps it is not even decorous.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

A boat's like your own fireside for snugness
All treat ourselves upon a theory
Character of all-compelling lady's-novel hero
Critical spirit of a recent arrival
Delusion that because I was very unhappy I was useful
Divination of her unexpressed desires
Evasion that she never used in behalf of others
Every woman physician has a double disadvantage
Feeble sense of humor often failed to seize his intention
Husband and wife are just two children together
Intention not to tell him something she wished to tell him
Kind, without being at any moment unprofitably sympathetic
Knew when to listen and when not to listen
Laugh, which had its edge of patronage and conceit
Long to be consoled and even flattered for having been silly
New England attractive three months of the year
Optimistic fatalism
Professional finality
Raising children is mighty uncertain business
Results at war with all the precepts
Robust inebriety
She likes to share her sufferings with her friends
Short cuts through the elaborate and reluctant statements
Success looks a good deal like failure from the inside

Talking vapidities
The rule is to disturb a doctor
Titter of self-applause
Tremble at the suggestion of a change for the better
Village seemed to get afloat at last
Vouchsafed an explanation to no one
Willing another woman should forgive her husband
You must n't believe too much in doctors

End of this Project Gutenberg Etext of Dr. Breen's Practice
by William Dean Howells

FENNEL AND RUE

By William Dean Howells

I.

The success of Verrian did not come early, and it did not come easily. He had been trying a long time to get his work into the best magazines, and when he had won the favor of the editors, whose interest he had perhaps had from the beginning, it might be said that they began to accept his work from their consciences, because in its way it was so good that they could not justly refuse it. The particular editor who took Verrian's serial, after it had come back to the author from the editors of the other leading periodicals, was in fact moved mainly by the belief that the story would please the better sort of his readers. These, if they were not so numerous as the worse, he felt had now and then the right to have their pleasure studied.

It was a serious story, and it was somewhat bitter, as Verrian himself was, after his struggle to reach the public with work which he knew merited recognition. But the world which does not like people to take themselves too seriously also likes them to take themselves seriously, and the bitterness in Verrian's story proved agreeable to a number of readers unexpectedly great. It intimated a romantic personality in the author, and the world still likes to imagine romantic things of authors. It likes especially to imagine them of novelists, now that there are no longer poets; and when it began to like Verrian's serial, it began to write him all sorts of letters, directly, in care of the editor, and indirectly to the editor, whom they asked about Verrian more than about his story.

It was a man's story rather than a woman's story, as these may be distinguished; but quite for that reason women seemed peculiarly taken with it. Perhaps the women had more leisure or more courage to write to the author and the editor; at any rate, most of the letters were from women; some of the letters were silly and fatuous enough, but others were of an intelligence which was none the less penetrating for being emotional rather than critical. These maids or matrons, whoever or whichever they were, knew wonderfully well what the author would be at, and their interest in his story implied a constant if not a single devotion. Now and then Verriar was tempted to answer one of them, and under favor of his mother, who had been his confidant at every point of his literary career, he yielded to the temptation; but one day there came a letter asking an answer, which neither he nor his mother felt competent to deal with. They both perceived that they must refer it to the editor of the magazine, and it seemed to them so important that they decided Verriar must go with it in person to the editor. Then he must be so far ruled by him, if necessary, as to give him the letter and put himself, as the author, beyond an appeal which he found peculiarly poignant.

The letter, which had overcome the tacit misgivings of his mother as they read it and read it again together, was from a girl who had perhaps no need to confess herself young, or to own her inexperience of the world where stories were written and printed. She excused herself with a delicacy which Verriar's correspondents by no means always showed for intruding upon him, and then pleaded the power his story had over her as the only shadow of right she had in addressing him. Its fascination, she said, had begun with the first number, the first chapter, almost the first paragraph. It was not for the plot that she cared; she had read too many stories to care for the plot; it was the problem involved. It was one which she had so often pondered in her own mind that she felt, in a way she hoped he would not think conceited, almost as if the story was written for her. She had never been able to solve the problem; how he would solve it she did not see how she could wait to know; and here she made him a confidence without which, she said, she should not have the courage to go on. She was an invalid, and her doctor had told her that, though she might live for months, there were chances that she might die at any moment suddenly. He would think it strange, and it was strange that she should tell him this, and stranger still that she should dare to ask him what she was going to ask. The story had yet four months to run, and she had begun to have a morbid foreboding that she should not live to read it in the ordinary course. She was so ignorant about writers that she did not know whether such a thing was ever done, or could be done; but if he could tell her how the story was to come out he would be doing more for her than anything else that could be done for her on earth. She had read that sometimes authors began to print their serial stories before they had written them to the end, and he might not be sure of the end himself; but if he had finished this story of his, and could let her see the last pages in print, she would owe him the gratitude she could never express.

The letter was written in an educated hand, and there were no foibles of form or excesses of fashion in the stationery to mar the character of sincerity the simple wording conveyed. The postal address, with the

date, was fully given, and the name signed at the end was evidently genuine.

Verrian himself had no question of the genuineness of the letter in any respect; his mother, after her first misgivings, which were perhaps sensations, thought as he did about it. She said the story dealt so profoundly with the deepest things that it was no wonder a person, standing like that girl between life and death, should wish to know how the author solved its problem. Then she read the letter carefully over again, and again Verrian read it, with an effect not different from that which its first perusal had made with him. His faith in his work was so great, so entire, that the notion of any other feeling about it was not admissible.

"Of course," he said, with a sigh of satisfaction, "I must show the letter to Armiger at once."

"Of course," his mother replied. "He is the editor, and you must not do anything without his approval."

The faith in the writer of the letter, which was primary with him, was secondary with her, but perhaps for that reason, she was all the more firmly grounded in it.

II.

There was nothing to cloud the editor's judgment, when Verrian came to him, except the fact that he was a poet as well as an editor. He read in a silence as great as the author's the letter which Verrian submitted. Then he remained pondering it for as long a space before he said, "That is very touching."

Verrian jumped to his question. "Do you mean that we ought to send her the proofs of the story?"

"No," the editor faltered, but even in this decision he did not deny the author his sympathy. "You've touched bottom in that story, Verrian. You may go higher, but you can never go deeper."

Verrian flushed a little. "Oh, thank you!"

"I'm not surprised the girl wants to know how you manage your problem-- such a girl, standing in the shadow of the other world, which is always eclipsing this, and seeing how you've caught its awful outline."

Verrian made a grateful murmur at the praise. "That is what my mother felt. Then you have no doubt of the good faith--"

"No," the editor returned, with the same quantity, if not the same quality, of reluctance as before. "You see, it would be too daring."

"Then why not let her have the proofs?"

"The thing is so unprecedented--"

"Our doing it needn't form a precedent."

"No."

"And if you've no doubt of its being a true case--"

"We must prove that it is, or, rather, we must make her prove it. I quite feel with you about it. If I were to act upon my own impulse, my own convictions, I should send her the rest of the story and take the chances. But she may be an enterprising journalist in disguise it's astonishing what women will do when they take to newspaper work--and we have no right to risk anything, for the magazine's sake, if not yours and mine. Will you leave this letter with me?"

"I expected to leave the whole affair in your hands. Do you mind telling me what you propose to do? Of course, it won't be anything--abrupt--"

"Oh no; and I don't mind telling you what has occurred to me. If this is a true case, as you say, and I've no question but it is, the writer will be on confidential terms with her pastor as well as her doctor and I propose asking her to get him to certify, in any sort of general terms, to her identity. I will treat the matter delicately--Or, if you prefer to write to her yourself--"

"Oh no, it's much better for you to do it; you can do it authoritatively."

"Yes, and if she isn't the real thing, but merely a woman journalist trying to work us for a 'story' in her Sunday edition, we shall hear no more from her."

"I don't see anything to object to in your plan," Verrian said, upon reflection. "She certainly can't complain of our being cautious."

"No, and she won't. I shall have to refer the matter to the house--"

"Oh, will you?"

"Why, certainly! I couldn't take a step like that without the approval of the house."

"No," Verrian assented, and he made a note of the writer's address from the letter. Then, after a moment spent in looking hard at the letter, he gave it back to the editor and went abruptly away.

He had proof, the next morning, that the editor had acted promptly, at least so far as regarded the house. The house had approved his plan, if one could trust the romantic paragraph which Verrian found in his paper

at breakfast, exploiting the fact concerned as one of the interesting evidences of the hold his serial had got with the magazine readers. He recognized in the paragraph the touch of the good fellow who prepared the weekly bulletins of the house, and offered the press literary intelligence in a form ready for immediate use. The case was fairly stated, but the privacy of the author's correspondent was perfectly guarded; it was not even made known that she was a woman. Yet Verrian felt, in reading the paragraph, a shock of guilty dismay, as if he had betrayed a confidence reposed in him, and he handed the paper across the table to his mother with rather a sick look.

After his return from the magazine office the day before, there had been a good deal of talk between them about that girl. Mrs. Verrian had agreed with him that no more interesting event could have happened to an author, but she had tried to keep him from taking it too personally, and from making himself mischievous illusions from it. She had since slept upon her anxieties, with the effect of finding them more vivid at waking, and she had been casting about for an opening to penetrate him with them, when fortune put this paragraph in her way.

"Isn't it disgusting?" he asked. "I don't see how Armiger could let them do it. I hope to heaven she'll never see it!"

His mother looked up from the paragraph and asked,

"Why?"

"What would she think of me?"

"I don't know. She might have expected something of the kind."

"How expect something of the kind? Am I one of the self-advertisers?"

"Well, she must have realized that she was doing rather a bold thing."

"Bold?"

"Venturesome," Mrs. Verrian compromised to the kindling anger in her son's eyes.

"I don't understand you, mother. I thought you agreed with me about the writer of that letter--her sincerity, simplicity."

"Sincerity, yes. But simplicity--Philip, a thoroughly single-minded girl never wrote that letter. You can't feel such a thing as I do. A man couldn't. You can paint the character of women, and you do it wonderfully--but, after all, you can't know them as a woman does."

"You talk," he answered, a little sulkily, "as if you knew some harm of the girl."

"No, my son, I know nothing about her, except that she is not single-minded, and there is no harm in not being single-minded. A great many

single-minded women are fools, and some double-minded women are good."

"Well, single-minded or double-minded, if she is what she says she is, what motive on earth could she have in writing to me except the motive she gives? You don't deny that she tells the truth about herself?"

"Don't I say that she is sincere? But a girl doesn't always know her own motives, or all of them. She may have written to you because she would like to begin a correspondence with an author. Or she may have done it out of the love of excitement. Or for the sake of distraction, to get away from herself and her gloomy forebodings."

"And should you blame her for that?"

"No, I shouldn't. I should pity her for it. But, all the same, I shouldn't want you to be taken in by her."

"You think, then, she doesn't care anything about the story?"

"I think, very probably, she cares a great deal about it. She is a serious person, intellectually at least, and it is a serious story. No wonder she would like to know, at first hand, something about the man who wrote it."

This flattered Verrian, but he would not allow its reasonableness. He took a gulp of coffee before saying, uncandidly, "I can't make out what you're driving at, mother. But, fortunately, there's no hurry about your meaning. The thing's in the only shape we could possibly give it, and I am satisfied to leave it in Armiger's hands. I'm certain he will deal wisely with it-and kindly."

"Yes, I'm sure he'll deal kindly. I should be very unhappy if he didn't. He could easily deal more wisely, though, than she has."

Verrian chose not to follow his mother in this. "All is," he said, with finality, "I hope she'll never see that loathsome paragraph."

"Oh, very likely she won't," his mother consoled him.

III.

Only four days after he had seen Armiger, Verrian received an envelope covering a brief note to himself from the editor, a copy of the letter he had written to Verrian's unknown correspondent, and her answer in the original. Verrian was alone when the postman brought him this envelope, and he could indulge a certain passion for method by which he read its contents in the order named; if his mother had been by, she would have made him read the girl's reply first of all. Armiger wrote:

"MY DEAR VERRIAN,--I enclose two exhibits which will possess you of all

the facts in the case of the young lady who feared she might die before she read the end of your story, but who, you will be glad to find, is likely to live through the year. As the story ends in our October number, she need not be supplied with advance sheets. I am sorry the house hurried out a paragraph concerning the matter, but it will not be followed by another. Perhaps you will feel, as I do, that the incident is closed. I have not replied to the writer, and you need not return her letter. Yours ever,

"M. ARMIGER."

The editor's letter to the young lady read:

"DEAR MADAM,--Mr. P. S. Verriar has handed me your letter of the 4th, and I need not tell you that it has interested us both.

"I am almost as much gratified as he by the testimony your request bears to the importance of his work, and if I could have acted upon my instant feeling I should have had no hesitation in granting it, though it is so very unusual as to be, in my experience as an editor, unprecedented. I am sure that you would not have made it so frankly if you had not been prepared to guard in return any confidence placed in you; but you will realize that as you are quite unknown to us, we should not be justified in taking a step so unusual as you propose without having some guarantee besides that which Mr. Verriar and I both feel from the character of your letter. Simply, then, for purposes of identification, as the phrase is, I must beg you to ask the pastor of your church, or, better still, your family physician, to write you a line saying that he knows you, as a sort of letter of introduction to me. Then I will send you the advance proofs of Mr. Verriar's story. You may like to address me personally in the care of the magazine, and not as the editor.

"Yours very respectfully,

"M. ARMIGER."

The editor's letter was dated the 6th of the month; the answer, dated the 8th, betrayed the anxious haste of the writer in replying, and it was not her fault if what she wrote came to Verriar when he was no longer able to do justice to her confession. Under the address given in her first letter she now began, in, a hand into which a kindlier eye might have read a pathetic perturbation:

"DEAR SIR,--I have something awful to tell you. I might write pages without making you think better of me, and I will let you think the worst at once. I am not what I pretended to be. I wrote to Mr. Verriar saying what I did, and asking to see the rest of his story on the impulse of the moment. I had been reading it, for I think it is perfectly fascinating; and a friend of mine, another girl, and I got together trying to guess how he would end it, and we began to dare each other to write to him and ask. At first we did not dream of doing such a thing, but we went on, and just for the fun of it we drew lots to see which should write to him. The lot fell to me; but we composed that letter together, and we put in about my dying for a joke. We never intended to send it; but then one thing led to another, and I signed it with my real name and we sent it. We did not really expect to hear anything from it, for we supposed he

must get lots of letters about his story and never paid any attention to them. We did not realize what we had done till I got your letter yesterday. Then we saw it all, and ever since we have been trying to think what to do, and I do not believe either of us has slept a moment. We have come to the conclusion that there was only one thing we could do, and that was to tell you just exactly how it happened and take the consequences. But there is no reason why more than one person should be brought into it, and so I will not let my friend sign this letter with me, but I will put my own name alone to it. You may not think it is my real name, but it is; you can find out by writing to the postmaster here. I do not know whether you will publish it as a fraud for the warning of others, but I shall not blame you if you do. I deserve anything.

Yours truly,

"JERUSA PEREGRINE BROWN."

If Verriar had been an older man life might have supplied him with the means of judging the writer of this letter. But his experience as an author had not been very great, and such as it was it had hardened and sharpened him. There was nothing wild or whirling in his mood, but in the deadly hurt which had been inflicted upon his vanity he coldly and carefully studied what deadlier hurt he might inflict again. He was of the crueller intent because he had not known how much of personal vanity there was in the seriousness with which he took himself and his work. He had supposed that he was respecting his ethics and aesthetics, his ideal of conduct and of art, but now it was brought home to him that he was swollen with the conceit of his own performance, and that, however well others thought of it, his own thought of it far outran their will to honor it. He wished to revenge himself for this consciousness as well as the offence offered him; of the two the consciousness was the more disagreeable.

His mother, dressed for the street, came in where he sat quiet at his desk, with the editor's letters and the girl's before him, and he mutely referred them to her with a hand lifted over his shoulder. She read them, and then she said, "This is hard to bear, Philip. I wish I could bear it for you, or at least with you; but I'm late for my engagement with Mrs. Alfred, as it is--No, I will telephone her I'm detained and we'll talk it over--"

"No, no! Not on any account! I'd rather think it out for myself. You couldn't help me. After all, it hasn't done me any harm--"

"And you've had a great escape! And I won't say a word more now, but I'll be back soon, and then we--Oh, I'm so sorry I'm going."

Verriar gave a laugh. "You couldn't do anything if you stayed, mother. Do go!"

"Well--" She looked at him, smoothing her muff with her hand a moment, and then she dropped a fond kiss on his cheek and obeyed him.

Verrian still sat at his desk, thinking, with his burning face in his hands. It was covered with shame for what had happened to him, but his humiliation had no quality of pity in it. He must write to that girl, and write at once, and his sole hesitation was as to the form he should give his reply. He could not address her as Dear Miss Brown or as Dear Madam. Even Madam was not sharp and forbidding enough; besides, Madam, alone or with the senseless prefix, was archaic, and Verrian wished to be very modern with this most offensive instance of the latest girl. He decided upon dealing with her in the third person, and trusting to his literary skill to keep the form from clumsiness.

He tried it in that form, and it was simply disgusting, the attitude stiff and swelling, and the diction affected and unnatural. With a quick reversion to the impossible first type, he recast his letter in what was now the only possible shape.

"MY DEAR MISS BROWN,--The editor of the American Miscellany has sent me a copy of his recent letter to you and your own reply, and has remanded to me an affair which resulted from my going to him with your request to see the close of my story now publishing in his magazine.

"After giving the matter my best thought, I have concluded that it will be well to enclose all the exhibits to you, and I now do this in the hope that a serious study of them will enable you to share my surprise at the moral and social conditions in which the business could originate. I willingly leave with you the question which is the more trustworthy, your letter to me or your letter to him, or which the more truly represents the interesting diversity of your nature. I confess that the first moved me more than the second, and I do not see why I should not tell you that as soon as I had your request I went with it to Mr. Armiger and did what I could to prompt his compliance with it. In putting these papers out of my hands, I ought to acknowledge that they have formed a temptation to make literary use of the affair which I shall now be the better fitted to resist. You will, of course, be amused by the ease with which you could abuse my reliance on your good faith, and I am sure you will not allow any shame for your trick to qualify your pleasure in its success.

"It will not be necessary for you to acknowledge this letter and its enclosures. I will register the package, so that it will not fail to reach you, and I will return any answer of yours unopened, or, if not recognizably addressed, then unread.

"Yours sincerely,

"P. S. VERRIAN."

He read and read again these lines, with only the sense of their insufficiency in doing the effect of the bitterness in his heart. If the letter was insulting, it was by no means as insulting as he would have liked to make it. Whether it would be wounding enough was something that depended upon the person whom he wished to wound. All that was proud and vain and cruel in him surged up at the thought of the trick that had been played upon him, and all that was sweet and kind and gentle in him, when he believed the trick was a genuine appeal, turned to their counter qualities. Yet, feeble and inadequate as his letter was, he knew that he could not do more or worse by trying, and he so much feared that by waiting he might do less and better that he hurried it into the post at once. If his mother had been at hand he would have shown it her, though he might not have been ruled by her judgment of it. He was glad that she was not with him, for either she would have had her opinion of what would be more telling, or she would have insisted upon his delaying any sort of reply, and he could not endure the thought of difference or delay.

He asked himself whether he should let her see the rough first draft of his letter or not, and he decided that he would not. But when she came into his study on her return he showed it her.

She read it in silence, and then she seemed to temporize in asking, "Where are her two letters?"

"I've sent them back with the answer."

His mother let the paper drop from her hands. "Philip! You haven't sent this!"

"Yes, I have. It wasn't what I wanted to make it, but I wished to get the detestable experience out of my mind, and it was the best I could do at the moment. Don't you like it?"

"Oh--" She seemed beginning to say something, but without saying anything she took the fallen leaf up and read it again.

"Well!" he demanded, with impatience.

"Oh, you may have been right. I hope you've not been wrong."

"Mother!"

"She deserved the severest things you could say; and yet--"

"Well?"

"Perhaps she was punished enough already."

"What do you mean?"

"I don't like your being-vindictive."

"Vindictive?"

"Being so terribly just, then." She added, at his blank stare, "This is killing, Philip."

He gave a bitter laugh. "I don't think it will kill her. She isn't that kind."

"She's a girl," his mother said, with a kind of sad absence.

"But not a single-minded girl, you warned me. I wish I could have taken your warning. It would have saved me from playing the fool before myself and giving myself away to Armiger, and letting him give himself away. I don't think Miss Brown will suffer much before she dies. She will 'get together,' as she calls it, with that other girl and have 'a real good time' over it. You know the village type and the village conditions, where the vulgar ignorance of any larger world is so thick you could cut it with a knife. Don't be troubled by my vindictiveness or my justice, mother! I begin to think I have done justice and not fallen short of it, as I was afraid."

Mrs. Verrian sighed, and again she gave his letter back to her son.

"Perhaps you are right, Philip. She is probably so tough as not to feel it very painfully."

"She's not so tough but she'll be very glad to get out of it so lightly. She has had a useful scare, and I've done her a favor in making the scare a sharp one. I suppose," Verrian mused, "that she thinks I've kept copies of her letters."

"Yes. Why didn't you?" his mother asked.

Verrian laughed, only a little less bitterly than before. "I shall begin to believe you're all alike, mother."

I didn't keep copies of her letters because I wanted to get her and her letters out of my mind, finally and forever. Besides, I didn't choose to emulate her duplicity by any sort of dissimulation.

"I see what you mean," his mother said. "And, of course, you have taken the only honorable way."

Then they were both silent for a time, thinking their several thoughts.

Verrian broke the silence to say, "I wish I knew what sort of 'other girl' it was that she 'got together with.'"

"Why?"

"Because she wrote a more cultivated letter than this magnanimous creature who takes all the blame to herself."

"Then you don't believe they're both the same?"

"They are both the same in stationery and chirography, but not in literature."

"I hope you won't get to thinking about her, then," his mother entreated, intelligibly but not definitely.

"Not seriously," Verrian reassured her. "I've had my medicine."

V.

Continuity is so much the lesson of experience that in the course of a life by no means long it becomes the instinctive expectation. The event that has happened will happen again; it will prolong itself in a series of recurrences by which each one's episode shares in the unending history of all. The sense of this is so pervasive that humanity refuses to accept death itself as final. In the agonized affections, the shattered hopes, of those who remain, the severed life keeps on unbrokenly, and when time and reason prevail, at least as to the life here, the defeated faith appeals for fulfilment to another world, and the belief of immortality holds against the myriad years in which none of the numberless dead have made an indisputable sign in witness of it. The lost limb still reports its sensations to the brain; the fixed habit mechanically attempts its repetition when the conditions render it impossible.

Verrian was aware how deeply and absorbingly he had brooded upon the incident which he had done his utmost to close, when he found himself expecting an answer of some sort from his unknown correspondent. He perceived, then, without owning the fact, that he had really hoped for some protest, some excuse, some extenuation, which in the end would suffer him to be more merciful. Though he had wished to crush her into silence, and to forbid her all hope of his forgiveness, he had, in a manner, not meant to do it. He had kept a secret place in his soul where the sinner against him could find refuge from his justice, and when this sanctuary remained unattempted he found himself with a regret that he had barred the way to it so effectually. The regret was so vague, so formless, however, that he could tacitly deny it to himself at all times, and explicitly deny it to his mother at such times as her touch taught him that it was tangible.

One day, after ten or twelve days had gone by, she asked him, "You haven't heard anything more from that girl?"

"What girl?" he returned, as if he did not know; and he frowned. "You mean the girl that wrote me about my story?"

He continued to frown rather more darkly. "I don't see how you could expect me to hear from her, after what I wrote. But, to be categorical, I haven't, mother."

"Oh, of course not. Did you think she would be so easily silenced?"

"I did what I could to crush her into silence."

"Yes, and you did quite right; I am more and more convinced of that. But such a very tough young person might have refused to stay crushed. She might very naturally have got herself into shape again and smoothed out the creases, at least so far to try some further defence."

"It seems that she hasn't," Verrian said, still darkly, but not so frowningly.

"I should have fancied," his mother suggested, "that if she had wanted to open a correspondence with you--if that was her original object--she would not have let it drop so easily."

"Has she let it drop easily? I thought I had left her no possible chance of resuming it."

"That is true," his mother said, and for the time she said no more about the matter.

Not long after this he came home from the magazine office and reported to her from Armiger that the story was catching on more and more with the best class of readers. The editor had shown Verrian some references to it in newspapers of good standing and several letters about it.

"I thought you might like to look at the letters," Verrian said, and he took some letters from his pocket and handed them to her across the lunch-table. She did not immediately look at them, because he went on to add something that they both felt to be more important. "Armiger says there has been some increase of the sales, which I can attribute to my story if I have the cheek."

"That is good."

"And the house wants to publish the book. They think, down there, that it will have a very pretty success--not be a big seller, of course, but something comfortable."

Mrs. Verrian's eyes were suffused with pride and fondness. "And you can always think, Philip, that this has come to you without the least lowering of your standard, without forsaking your ideal for a moment."

"That is certainly a satisfaction."

She kept her proud and tender gaze upon him. "No one will ever know as I do how faithful you have been to your art. Did any of the newspapers recognize that--or surmise it, or suspect it?"

"No, that isn't the turn they take. They speak of the strong love interest involved in the problem. And the abundance of incident."

I looked out to keep something happening, you know. I'm sorry I didn't ask Armiger to let me bring the notices home to you. I'm not sure that I did wisely not to subscribe to that press-clippings bureau."

His mother smiled. "You mustn't let prosperity corrupt you, Philip. Wouldn't seeing what the press is saying of it distract you from the real aim you had in your story?"

"We're all weak, of course. It might, if the story were not finished; but as it is, I think I could be proof against the stupidest praise."

"Well, for my part, I'm glad you didn't subscribe to the clippings bureau. It would have been a disturbing element." She now looked down at the letters as if she were going to take them up, and he followed the direction of her eyes. As if reminded of the fact by this, he said:

"Armiger asked me if I had ever heard anything more from that girl."

"Has he?" his mother eagerly asked, transferring her glance from the letters to her son's face.

"Not a word. I think I silenced her thoroughly."

"Yes," his mother said. "There could have been no good object in prolonging the affair and letting her confirm herself in the notion that she was of sufficient importance either to you or to him for you to continue the correspondence with her. She couldn't learn too distinctly that she had done--a very wrong thing in trying to play such a trick on you."

"That was the way I looked at it," Verrian said, but he drew a light sigh, rather wearily.

"I hope," his mother said, with a recurrent glance at the letters, "that there is nothing of that silly kind among these."

"No, these are blameless enough, unless they are to be blamed for being too flattering. That girl seems to be sole of her kind, unless the girl that she 'got together with' was really like her."

"I don't believe there was any other girl. I never thought there was more than one."

"There seemed to be two styles and two grades of culture, such as they were."

"Oh, she could easily imitate two manners. She must have been a clever girl," Mrs. Verrian said, with that admiration for any sort of cleverness in her sex which even very good women cannot help feeling.

"Well, perhaps she was punished enough for both the characters she assumed," Verrian said, with a smile that was not gay.

"Don't think about her!" his mother returned, with a perception of his mood. "I'm only thankful that she's out of our lives in every sort of way."

VI.

Verrian said nothing, but he reflected with a sort of gloomy amusement how impossible it was for any woman, even a woman so wide-minded and high-principled as his mother, to escape the personal view of all things and all persons which women take. He tacitly noted the fact, as the novelist notes whatever happens or appears to him, but he let the occasion drop out of his mind as soon as he could after it had dropped out of his talk.

The night when the last number of his story came to them in the magazine, and was already announced as a book, he sat up with his mother celebrating, as he said, and exulting in the future as well as the past. They had a little supper, which she cooked for him in a chafing-dish, in the dining-room of the tiny apartment where they lived together, and she made some coffee afterwards, to carry off the effect of the Newburg lobster. Perhaps because there was nothing to carry off the effect of the coffee, he heard her, through the partition of their rooms, stirring restlessly after he had gone to bed, and a little later she came to his door, which she set ajar, to ask, "Are you awake, Philip?"

"You seem to be, mother," he answered, with an amusement at her question which seemed not to have imparted itself to her when she came in and stood beside his bed in her dressing-gown.

"You don't think we have judged her too harshly, Philip?"

"Do you, mother?"

"No, I think we couldn't be too severe in a thing like that. She probably thought you were like some of the other story-writers; she couldn't feel differences, shades. She pretended to be taken with the circumstances of your work, but she had to do that if she wanted to fool you. Well, she has got her come-uppings, as she would probably say."

Verrian replied, thoughtfully, "She didn't strike me as a country person --at least, in her first letter."

"Then you still think she didn't write both?"

"If she did, she was trying her hand in a personality she had invented."

"Girls are very strange," his mother sighed. "They like excitement, adventure. It's very dull in those little places. I shouldn't wish you to think any harm of the poor thing."

"Poor thing? Why this magnanimous compassion, mother?"

"Oh, nothing. But I know how I was myself when I was a girl. I used almost to die of hunger for something to happen. Can you remember just what you said in your letter?"

Verrian laughed. "NO, I can't. But I don't believe I said half enough. You're nervous, mother."

"Yes, I am. But don't you get to worrying. I merely got to thinking how I should hate to have anybody's unhappiness mixed up with this happiness of ours. I do so want your pleasure in your success to be pure, not tainted with the pain of any human creature."

Verrian answered with light cynicism: "It will be tainted with the pain of the fellows who don't like me, or who haven't succeeded, and they'll take care to let me share their pain if ever they can. But if you mean that merry maiden up country, she's probably thinking, if she thinks about it at all, that she's the luckiest girl in the United States to have got out of an awful scrape so easily. At the worst, I only had fun with her in my letter. Probably she sees that she has nothing to grieve for but her own break."

"No, and you did just as you should have done; and I am glad you don't feel bitterly about it. You don't, do you?"

"Not the least."

His mother stooped over and kissed him where he lay smiling. "Well, that's good. After all, it's you I cared for. Now I can say good-night." But she lingered to tuck him in a little, from the persistence of the mother habit. "I wish you may never do anything that you will be sorry for."

"Well, I won't--if it's a good action."

They laughed together, and she left the room, still looking back to see if there was anything more she could do for him, while he lay smiling, intelligently for what she was thinking, and patiently for what she was doing.

VII.

Even in the time which was then coming and which now is, when successful authors are almost as many as millionaires, Verrian's book brought him a pretty celebrity; and this celebrity was in a way specific. It related to the quality of his work, which was quietly artistic and psychological, whatever liveliness of incident it uttered on the surface. He belonged to the good school which is of no fashion and of every time, far both from actuality and unreality; and his recognition came from people whose

recognition was worth having. With this came the wider notice which was not worth having, like the notice of Mrs. Westangle, since so well known to society reporters as a society woman, which could not be called recognition of him, because it did not involve any knowledge of his book, not even its title. She did not read any sort of books, and she assimilated him by a sort of atmospheric sense. She was sure of nothing but the attention paid him in a certain very goodish house, by people whom she heard talking in unintelligible but unmistakable praise, when she said, casually, with a liquid glitter of her sweet, small eyes, "I wish you would come down to my place, Mr. Verrian. I'm asking a few young people for Christmas week. Will you?"

"Why, thank you--thank you very much," Verrian said, waiting to hear more in explanation of the hospitality launched at him. He had never seen Mrs. Westangle till then, or heard of her, and he had not the least notion where she lived. But she seemed to have social authority, though Verrian, in looking round at his hostess and her daughter, who stood near, letting people take leave, learned nothing from their common smile. Mrs. Westangle had glided close to him, in the way she had of getting very near without apparently having advanced by steps, and she stood gleaming and twittering up at him.

"I shall send you a little note; I won't let you forget," she said. Then she suddenly shook hands with the ladies of the house and was flashingly gone.

Verrian thought he might ask the daughter of the house, "And if I don't forget, am I engaged to spend Christmas week with her?"

The girl laughed. "If she doesn't forget, you are. But you'll have a good time. She'll know how to manage that." Other guests kept coming up to take leave, and Verrian, who did not want to go just yet, was retired to the background, where the girl's voice, thrown over her shoulder at him, reached him in the words, as gay as if they were the best of the joke, "It's on the Sound."

The inference was that Mrs. Westangle's place was on the Sound; and that was all Verrian knew about it till he got her little note. Mrs. Westangle knew how to write in a formless hand, but she did not know how to spell, and she had thought it best to have a secretary who could write well and spell correctly. Though, as far as literacy was concerned, she was such an almost incomparably ignorant woman, she had all the knowledge the best society wants, or, if she found herself out of any, she went and bought some; she was able to buy almost anything.

Verrian thanked the secretary for remembering him, in the belief that he was directly thanking Mrs. Westangle, whose widespread consciousness his happiness in accepting did not immediately reach; and in the very large house party, which he duly joined under her roof, he was aware of losing distinctiveness almost to the point of losing identity. This did not quite happen on the way to Belford, for, when he went to take his seat in the drawing-room car, a girl in the chair fronting him put out her hand with the laugh of Miss Macroyd.

"She did remember you!" she cried out. "How delightful! I don't see how she ever got onto you"--she made the slang her own--"in the first place, and she must have worked hard to be sure of you since."

Verrian hung up his coat and put his suit-case behind his chair, the porter having put it where he could not wheel himself vis-a-vis with the girl. "She took all the time there was," he answered. "I got my invitation only the day before yesterday, and if I had been in more demand, or had a worse conscience--"

"Oh, do say worse conscience! It's so much more interesting," the girl broke in.

"--I shouldn't have the pleasure of going to Seasands with you now," he concluded, and she gave her laugh. "Do I understand that simply my growing fame wouldn't have prevailed with her?"

Anything seemed to make Miss Macroyd laugh. "She couldn't have cared about that, and she wouldn't have known. You may be sure that it was a social question with her after the personal question was settled. She must have liked your looks!" Again Miss Macroyd laughed.

"On that side I'm invulnerable. It's only a literary vanity to be soothed or to be wounded that I have," Verrian said.

"Oh, there wouldn't be anything personal in her liking your looks. It would be merely deciding that personally you would do," Miss Macroyd laughed, as always, and Verrian put on a mock seriousness in asking:

"Then I needn't be serious if there should happen to be anything so Westangular as a Mr. Westangle?"

"Not the least in the world."

"But there is something?"

"Oh, I believe so. But not probably at Seasands."

"Is that her house?"

"Yes. Every other name had been used, and she couldn't say Soundsands."

"Then where would the Mr. Westangle part more probably be found?"

"Oh, in Montana or Mesopotamia, or any of those places. Don't you know about him? How ignorant literary people can be! Why, he was the Amalgamated Clothespin. You haven't heard of that?"

She went on to tell him, with gay digressions, about the invention which enabled Westangle to buy up the other clothes-pins and merge them in his own--to become a commercial octopus, clutching the throats of other clothespin inventors in the tentacles of the Westangle pin. "But he

isn't in clothespins now. He's in mines, and banks, and steamboats, and railroads, and I don't know what all; and Mrs. Westangle, the second of her name, never was in clothespins."

Miss Macroyd laughed all through her talk, and she was in a final burst of laughing when the train slowed into Stamford. There a girl came into the car trailing her skirts with a sort of vivid debility and overturning some minor pieces of hand-baggage which her draperies swept out of their shelter beside the chairs. She had to take one of the seats which back against the wall of the state-room, where she must face the whole length of the car. She sat weakly fallen back in the chair and motionless, as if almost unconscious; but after the train had begun to stir she started up, and with a quick flinging of her veil aside turned to look out of the window. In the flying instant Verrian saw a colorless face with pinched and sunken eyes under a worn-looking forehead, and a withered mouth whose lips parted feebly.

On her part, Miss Macroyd had doubtless already noted that the girl was, with no show of expensiveness, authoritatively well gowned and personally hatted. She stared at her, and said, "What a very hunted and escaping effect."

"She does look rather-fugitive," Verrian agreed, staring too.

"One might almost fancy--an asylum."

"Yes, or a hospital."

They continued both to stare at her, helpless for what ever different reasons to take their eyes away, and they were still interested in her when they heard her asking the conductor, "Must I change and take another train before we get to Belford? My friends thought--"

"No, this train stops at Southfield," the conductor answered, absently biting several holes into her drawing-room ticket.

"Can she be one of us?" Miss Macroyd demanded, in a dramatic whisper.

"She might be anything," Verrian returned, trying instantly, with a whirl of his inventive machinery, to phrase her. He made a sort of luxurious failure of it, and rested content with her face, which showed itself now in profile and now fronted him in full, and now was restless and now subsided in a look of delicate exhaustion. He would have said, if he would have said anything absolute, that she was a person who had something on her mind; at instants she had that hunted air, passing at other instants into that air of escape. He discussed these appearances with Miss Macroyd, but found her too frankly disputatious; and she laughed too much and too loud.

At Southfield, where they all descended, Miss Macroyd promptly possessed herself of a groom, who came forward tentatively, touching his hat.

"Miss Macroyd?" she suggested.

"Yes, miss," the man said, and led the way round the station to the victoria which, when Miss Macroyd's maid had mounted to the place beside her, had no room; for any one else.

Verrian accounted for her activity upon the theory of her quite justifiable wish not to arrive at Seasands with a young man whom she might then have the effect of having voluntarily come all the way with; and after one or two circuits of the station it was apparent to him that he was not to have been sent for from Mrs. Westangle's, but to have been left to the chances of the local drivers and their vehicles. These were reduced to a single carryall and a frowsy horse whose rough winter coat recalled the aspect of his species in the period following the glacial epoch. The mud, as of a world-thaw, encrusted the wheels and curtains of the carryall.

Verrian seized upon it and then went into the waiting-room, where he had left his suit-case. He found the stranger there in parley with the young woman in the ticket-office about a conveyance to Mrs. Westangle's. It proved that he had secured not only the only thing of the sort, but the only present hope of any other, and in the hard case he could not hesitate with distress so interesting. It would have been brutal to drive off and leave that girl there, and it would have been a vulgar flourish to put the entire vehicle at her service. Besides, and perhaps above all, Verrian had no idea of depriving himself of such a chance as heaven seemed to offer him.

He advanced with the delicacy of the highest-bred hero he could imagine, and said, "I am going to Mrs. Westangle's, and I'm afraid I've got the only conveyance--such as it is. If you would let me offer you half of it? Mr. Verrian," he added, at the light of acceptance instantly kindling in her face, which flushed thinly, as with an afterglow of invalidism.

"Why, thank you; I'm afraid I must, Mr. Merriam," and Verrian was aware of being vexed at her failure to catch his name; the name of Verrian ought to have been unmistakable. "The young lady in the office says there won't be another, and I'm expected promptly." She added, with a little tremor of the lip, "I don't understand why Mrs. Westangle--" But then she stopped.

Verrian interpreted for her: "The sea-horses must have given out at Seasands. Or probably there's some mistake," and he reflected bitterly upon the selfishness of Miss Macroyd in grabbing that victoria for herself and her maid, not considering that she could not know, and has no business to ask, whether this girl was going to Mrs. Westangle's, too. "Have you a check?" he asked. "I think our driver could find room for something besides my valise. Or I could have it come--"

"Not at all," the girl said. "I sent my trunk ahead by express."

A frowsy man, to match the frowsy horse, looked in impatiently. "Any other baggage?"

"No," Verrian answered, and he led the way out after the vanishing driver. "Our chariot is back here in hiding, Miss--"

"Shirley," she said, and trailed before him through the door he opened.

He felt that he did not do it as a man of the world would have done it, and in putting her into the ramshackle carryall he knew that he had not the grace of the sort of man who does nothing else. But Miss Shirley seemed to have grace enough, of a feeble and broken sort, for both, and he resolved to supply his own lack with sincerity. He therefore set his jaw firmly and made its upper angles jut sharply through his clean-shaven cheeks. It was well that Miss Shirley had some beauty to spare, too, for Verrian had scarcely enough for himself. Such distinction as he had was from a sort of intellectual tenseness which showed rather in the gaunt forms of his face than in the gray eyes, heavily lashed above and below, and looking serious but dull with their rank, black brows. He was chewing a cud of bitterness in the accusation he made himself of having forced Miss Shirley to give her name; but with that interesting personality at his side, under the same tattered and ill-scented Japanese goat-skin, he could not refuse to be glad, with all his self-blame.

"I'm afraid it's rather a long drive-for you, Miss Shirley," he ventured, with a glance at her face, which looked very little under her hat. "The driver says it's five miles round through the marshes."

"Oh, I shall not mind," she said, courageously, if not cheerfully, and he did not feel authorized further to recognize the fact that she was an invalid, or at best a convalescent.

"These wintry tree-forms are fine, though," he found himself obliged to conclude his apology, rather irrelevantly, as the wheels of the rattling, and tilting carry all crunched the surface of the road in the succession of jerks responding to the alternate walk and gallop of the horse.

"Yes, they are," Miss Shirley answered, looking around with a certain surprise, as if seeing them now for the first time. "So much variety of color; and that burnished look that some of them have." The trees, far and near, were giving their tones and lustres in the low December sun.

"Yes," he said, "it's decidedly more refined than the autumnal coloring we brag of."

"It is," she approved, as with novel conviction. "The landscape is really beautiful. So nice and flat," she added.

He took her intention, and he said, as he craned his neck out of the carryall to include the nearer roadside stretches, with their low bushes lifting into remoter trees, "It's restful in a way that neither the

mountains nor the sea, quite manage."

"Oh yes," she sighed, with a kind of weariness which explained itself in what she added: "It's the kind of thing you'd like to have keep on and on." She seemed to say that more to herself than to him, and his eyes questioned her. She smiled slightly in explaining: "I suppose I find it all the more beautiful because this is my first real look into the world after six months indoors."

"Oh!" he said, and there was no doubt a prompting in his tone.

She smiled still. "Sick people are terribly, egotistical, and I suppose it's my conceit of having been the centre of the universe so lately that makes me mention it." And here she laughed a little at herself, showing a charming little peculiarity in the catch of her upper lip on her teeth. "But this is divine--this air and this sight." She put her head out of her side of the carryall, and drank them in with her lungs and eyes.

When she leaned back again on the seat she said, "I can't get enough of it."

"But isn't this old rattletrap rather too rough for you?" he asked.

"Oh no," she said, visiting him with a furtive turn of her eyes. "It's quite ideally what invalids in easy circumstances are advised to take carriage exercise."

"Yes, it's certainly carriage exercise," Verrian admitted in the same spirit, if it was a drolling spirit. He could not help being amused by the situation in which they had been brought together, through the vigorous promptitude of Miss Macroyd in making the victoria her own, and the easy indifference of Mrs. Westangle as to how they should get to her house. If he had been alone he might have felt the indifference as a slight, but as it was he felt it rather a favor. If Miss Shirley was feeling it a slight, she was too secret or too sweet to let it be known, and he thought that was nice of her. Still, he believed he might recognize the fact without deepening a possible hurt of hers, and he added, with no apparent relevance, "If Mrs. Westangle was not looking for us on this train, she will find that it is the unexpected which happens."

"We are certainly going to happen," the girl said, with an acceptance of the plural which deepened the intimacy of the situation, and which was not displeasing to Verrian when she added, "If our friend's vehicle holds out." Then she turned her face full upon him, with what affected him as austere resolution, in continuing, "But I can't let you suppose that you're conveying a society person, or something of that sort, to Mrs. Westangle's." His own face expressed his mystification, and she concluded, "I'm simply going there to begin my work."

He smiled provisionally in temporizing with the riddle. "You women are wonderful, nowadays, for the work you do."

"Oh, but," she protested, nervously, anxiously, "it isn't good work that

I'm going to do--I understand what you mean--it's work for a living. I've no business to be arriving with an invited guest, but it seemed to be a question of arriving or not at the time when I was due."

IX.

Verrian stared at her now from a visage that was an entire blank, though behind it conjecture was busy, and he was asking himself whether his companion was some new kind of hair-dresser, or uncommonly cultivated manicure, or a nursery governess obeying a hurry call to take a place in Mrs. Westangle's household, or some sort of amateur housekeeper arriving to supplant a professional. But he said nothing.

Miss Shirley said, with a distress which was genuine, though he perceived a trace of amusement in it, too, "I see that I will have to go on."

"Oh, do!" he made out to utter.

"I am going to Mrs. Westangle's as a sort of mistress of the revels. The business is so new that it hasn't got its name yet, but if I fail it won't need any. I invented it on a hint I got from a girl who undertakes the floral decorations for parties. I didn't see why some one shouldn't furnish suggestions for amusements, as well as flowers. I was always rather lucky at that in my own fam--at my father's--" She pulled herself sharply up, as if danger lay that way. "I got an introduction to Mrs. Westangle, and she's to let me try. I am going to her simply as part of the catering, and I'm not to have any recognition in the hospitalities. So it wasn't necessary for her to send for me at the station, except as a means of having me on the ground in good season. I have to thank you for that, and--I thank you." She ended in a sigh.

"It's very interesting," Verrian said, and he hoped he was not saying it in any ignoble way.

He was very presently to learn. Round a turn of the road there came a lively clacking of horses' shoes on the hard track, with the muted rumble of rubber-tired wheels, and Mrs. Westangle's victoria dashed into view. The coachman had made a signal to Verrian's driver, and the vehicles stopped side by side. The footman instantly came to the door of the carryall, touching his hat to Verrian.

"Going to Mrs. Westangle's, sir?"

"Yes."

"Mrs. Westangle's carriage. Going to the station for you, sir."

"Miss Shirley," Verrian said, "will you change?"

"Oh no," she answered, quickly, "it's better for me to go on as I am."

But the carriage was sent for you. You must--"

Verrian interrupted to ask the footman, "How far is it yet to Mrs. Westangle's?"

"About a mile, sir."

"I think I won't change for such a short distance. I'll keep on as I am," Verrian said, and he let the goatskin, which he had half lifted to free Miss Shirley for dismounting, fall back again. "Go ahead, driver."

She had been making several gasping efforts at speech, accompanied with entreating and protesting glances at Verrian in the course of his brief colloquy with the footman. Now, as the carryall lurched forward again, and the victoria wheeled and passed them on its way back, she caught her handkerchief to her face, and to Verrian's dismay sobbed into it. He let her cry, as he must, in the distressful silence which he could not be the first to break. Besides, he did not know how she was taking it all till she suddenly with threw her handkerchief and pulled down her veil. Then she spoke three heart-broken words, "How could you!" and he divined that he must have done wrong.

"What ought I to have done?" he asked, with sullen humility.

"You ought to have taken the victoria."

"How could I?"

"You ought to have done it."

"I think you ought to have done it yourself, Miss Shirley," Verrian said, feeling like the worm that turns. He added, less resentfully, "We ought both to have taken it."

"No, Mrs. Westangle might have felt, very properly, that it was presumptuous in me, whether I came alone in it or with you. Now we shall arrive together in this thing, and she will be mortified for you and vexed with me. She will blame me for it, and she will be right, for it would have been very well for me to drive up in a shabby station carryall; but an invited guest--"

"No, indeed, she shall not blame you, Miss Shirley. I will make a point of taking the whole responsibility. I will tell her--"

"Mr. Merriam!" she cried, in anguish. "Will you please do nothing of the kind? Do you want to make bad worse? Leave the explaining altogether to me, please. Will you promise that?"

"I will promise that--or anything--if you insist," Verrian sulked.

She instantly relented a little. "You mustn't think me unreasonable. But I was determined to carry my undertaking through on business principles, and you have spoiled my chance--I know you meant it kindly

or, if not spoiled, made it more difficult. Don't think me ungrateful.
Mr. Merriam--"

"My name isn't Merriam," he resented, at last, a misnomer which had annoyed him from the first.

"Oh, I am so glad! Don't tell me what it is!" she said, giving a laugh which had to go on a little before he recognized the hysterical quality in it. When she could check it she explained: "Now we are not even acquainted, and I can thank a stranger for the kindness you have shown me. I am truly grateful. Will you do me another favor?"

"Yes," Verriam assented; but he thought he had a right to ask, as though he had not promised, "What is it?"

"Not to speak of me to Mrs. Westangle unless she speaks of me first."

"That's simple. I don't know that I should have any right to speak of you."

"Oh yes, you would. She will expect you, perhaps, to laugh about the little adventure, and I would rather she began the laughing you have been so good."

"All right. But wouldn't my silence make it rather more awkward?"

"I will take care of the awkwardness, thank you. And you promise?"

"Yes, I promise."

"That is very good of you." She put her hand impulsively across the goat-skin, and gave his, with which he took it in some surprise, a quick clasp. Then they were both silent, and they got out of the carryall under Mrs. Westangle's porte-cochere without having exchanged another word. Miss Shirley did not bow to him or look at him in parting.

X.

Verriam kept seeing before his inner eyes the thin face of the girl, dimmed rather than lighted with her sick yes. When she should be stronger, there might be a pale flush in it, like sunset on snow, but Verriam had to imagine that. He did not find it difficult to imagine many things about the girl, whom, in another mood, a more judicial mood, he might have accused of provoking him to imagine them. As it was, he could not help noting to that second self which we all have about us, that her confidences, such as they were, had perhaps been too voluntary; certainly they had not been quite obligatory, and they could not be quite accounted for, except upon the theory of nerves not yet perfectly under her control. To be sure, girls said all sorts of things to one, ignorantly and innocently; but she did not seem the kind of girl who, in

different circumstances, would have said anything that she did not choose or that she did not mean to say. She had been surprisingly frank, and yet, at heart, Verrian would have thought she was a very reticent person or a secret person--that is, mentally frank and sentimentally secret; possibly she was like most women in that. What he was sure of was that the visual impression of her which he had received must have been very vivid to last so long in his consciousness; all through his preparations for going down to afternoon tea her face remained subjectively before him, and when he went down and found himself part of a laughing and chattering company in the library he still found it, in his inner sense, here, there, and yonder.

He was aware of suffering a little disappointment in Mrs. Westangle's entire failure to mention Miss Shirley, though he was aware that his disappointment was altogether unreasonable, and he more reasonably decided that if she knew anything of his arrival, or the form of it, she had too much of the making of a grande dame to be recognizant of it. He did not know from her whether she had meant to send for him at the station or not, or whether she had sent her carriage back for him when he did not arrive in it at first. Nothing was left in her manner of such slight specialization as she had thrown into it when, at the Macroyds', she asked him down to her house party; she seemed, if there were any difference, to have acquired an additional ignorance of who and what he was, though she twittered and flittered up close to his elbow, after his impersonal welcome, and asked him if she might introduce him to the young lady who was pouring tea for her, and who, after the brief drama necessary for possessing him of a cup of it, appeared to have no more use for him than Mrs. Westangle herself had. There were more young men than young women in the room, but he imagined the usual superabundance of girlhood temporarily absent for repair of the fatigues of the journey. Every girl in the room had at least one man talking to her, and the girl who was pouring tea had one on each side of her and was trying to fix them both with an eye lifted towards each, while she struggled to keep her united gaze watchfully upon the tea-urn and those who came up with cups to be filled or refilled.

Verrian thought his fellow-guests were all amiable enough looking, though he made his reflection that they did not look, any of them, as if they would set the Sound on fire; and again he missed the companion of his arrival.

After he had got his cup of tea, he stood sipping it with a homeless air which he tried to conceal, and cast a furtive eye round the room till it rested upon the laughing face of Miss Macroyd. A young man was taking away her teacup, and Verrian at once went up and seized his place.

"How did you get here?" she asked, rather shamelessly, since she had kept him from coming in the victoria, but amusingly, since she seemed to see it as a joke, if she saw it at all.

"I walked," he answered.

"Truly?"

"No, not truly."

"But, truly, how did you? Because I sent the carriage back for you."

"That was very thoughtful of you. But I found a delightful public vehicle behind the station, and I came in that. I'm so glad to know that it wasn't Mrs. Westangle who had the trouble of sending the carriage back for me."

Miss Macroyd laughed and laughed at his resentment. "But surely you met it on the way? I gave the man a description of you. Didn't he stop for you?"

"Oh yes, but I was too proud to change by that time. Or perhaps I hated the trouble."

Miss Macroyd laughed the more; then she purposely darkened her countenance so as to suit it to her lugubrious whisper, "How did she get here?"

"What she?"

"The mysterious fugitive. Wasn't she coming here, after all?"

"After all your trouble in supposing so?" Verrian reflected a moment, and then he said, deliberately, "I don't know."

Miss Macroyd was not going to let him off like that. "You don't know how she came, or you don't know whether she was coming?"

"I didn't say."

Her laugh resounded again. "Now you are trying to be wicked, and that is very wrong for a novelist."

"But what object could I have in concealing the fact from you, Miss Macroyd?" he entreated, with mock earnestness.

"That is what I want to find out."

"What are you two laughing so about?" the voice of Mrs. Westangle twittered at Verrian's elbow, and, looking down, he found her almost touching it. She had a very long, narrow neck, and, since it was long and narrow, she had the good sense not to palliate the fact or try to dress the effect of it out of sight. She took her neck in both hands, as it were, and put it more on show, so that you had really to like it. Now it lifted her face, though she was not a tall person, well towards the level of his; to be sure, he was himself only of the middle height of men, though an aquiline profile helped him up.

He stirred the tea which he had ceased to drink, and said, "I wasn't 'laughing so about,' Mrs. Westangle. It was Miss Macroyd."

"And I was laughing so about a mysterious stranger that came up on the train with us and got out at your station."

"And I was trying to make out what was so funny in a mysterious stranger, or even in her getting out at your station."

Mrs. Westangle was not interested in the case, or else she failed to seize the joke. At any rate, she turned from them without further question and went away to another part of the room, where she semi-attached herself in like manner to another couple, and again left it for still another. This was possibly her idea of looking after her guests; but when she had looked after them a little longer in that way she left the room and let them look after themselves till dinner.

"Come, Mr. Verrian," Miss Macroyd resumed, "what is the secret? I'll never tell if you tell me."

"You won't if I don't."

"Now you are becoming merely trivial. You are ceasing even to be provoking." Miss Macroyd, in token of her displeasure, laughed no longer.

"Am I?" he questioned; thoughtfully. "Well, then, I am tempted to act upon impulse."

"Oh, do act upon impulse for once," she urged. "I'm sure you'll enjoy it."

"Do you mean that I'm never impulsive?"

"I don't think you look it."

"If you had seen me an hour ago you would have said I was very impulsive. I think I may have exhausted myself in that direction, however. I feel the impulse failing me now."

XI.

His impulse really had failed him. It had been to tell Miss Macroyd about his adventure and frankly trust her with it. He had liked her at several former meetings rather increasingly, because she had seemed open and honest beyond the most of women, but her piggish behavior at the station had been rather too open and honest, and the sense of this now opportunely intervened between him and the folly he was about to commit. Besides, he had no right to give Miss Shirley's part in his adventure away, and, since the affair was more vitally hers than his, to take it at all out of her hands. The early-falling dusk had favored an unnoticed advent for them, and there were other chances that had helped keep

unknown their arrival together at Mrs. Westangle's in that squalid carryall, such as Miss Shirley's having managed instantly to slip indoors before the man came out for Verrian's suit-case, and of her having got to her own appointed place long before there was any descent of the company to the afternoon tea.

It was not for him now to undo all that and begin the laughing at the affair, which she had pathetically intimated that she would rather some one else should begin. He recoiled from his imprudence with a shock, but he had the pleasure of having mystified Miss Macroyd. He felt dismissal in the roving eye which she cast from him round the room, and he willingly let another young man replace him at her side.

Yet he was not altogether satisfied. A certain meaner self that there was in him was not pleased with his relegation even merely in his own consciousness to the championship of a girl who was going to make her living in a sort of menial way. It had better be owned for him that, in his visions of literary glory, he had figured in social triumphs which, though vague, were resplendent with the glitter of smart circles. He had been so ignorant of such circles as to suppose they would have some use for him as a brilliant young author; and though he was outwearing this illusion, he still would not have liked a girl like Julia Macroyd, whose family, if not smart, was at least chic, to know that he had come to the house with a professional mistress of the revels, until Miss Shirley should have approved herself chic, too. The notion of such an employment as hers was in itself chic, but the girl was merely a paid part of the entertainment, as yet, and had not risen above the hireling status. If she had sunk to that level from a higher rank it would be all right, but there was no evidence that she had ever been smart. Verrian would, therefore, rather not be mixed up with her--at any rate, in the imagination of a girl like Julia Macroyd; and as he left her side he drew a long breath of relief and went and put down his teacup where he had got it.

By this time the girl who was "pouring" had exhausted one of the two original guards on whom she had been dividing her vision, and Verrian made a pretence, which she favored, that he had come up to push the man away. The man gracefully submitted to be dislodged, and Verrian remained in the enjoyment of one of the girl's distorted eyes till, yet another man coming up, she abruptly got rid of Verrian by presenting him to yet another girl. In such manoeuvres the hour of afternoon tea will pass; and the time really wore on till it was time to dress for dinner.

By the time that the guests came down to dinner they were all able to participate in the exchange of the discovery which each had made, that it was snowing outdoors, and they kept this going till one girl had the good-luck to say, "I don't see anything so astonishing in that at this time of year. Now, if it was snowing indoors, it would be different."

This relieved the tension in a general laugh, and a young man tried to contribute further to the gayety by declaring that it would not be surprising to have it snow in-doors. He had once seen the thing done in a crowded hall, one night, when somebody put up a window, and the

freezing current of air congealed the respiration of the crowd, which came down in a light fall of snow-flakes. He owned that it was in Boston.

"Oh, that excuses it, then," Miss Macroyd said. But she lost the laugh which was her due in the rush which some of the others made to open a window and see whether it could be made to snow in-doors there.

"Oh, it isn't crowded enough here," the young man explained who had alleged the scientific marvel.

"And it isn't Boston," Miss Macroyd tried again on the same string, and this time she got her laugh.

The girl who had first spoken remained, at the risk of pneumonia, with her arm prettily lifted against the open sash, for a moment peering out, and then reported, in dashing it down with a shiver, "It seems to be a very soft snow."

"Then it will be rain by morning," another predicted, and the girl tried hard to think of something to say in support of the hit she had made already. But she could not, and was silent almost through the whole first course at dinner.

In spite of its being a soft snow, it continued to fall as snow and not as rain. It lent the charm of stormy cold without to the brightness and warmth within. Much later, when between waltzes some of the dancers went out on the verandas for a breath of air, they came back reporting that the wind was rising and the snow was drifting.

Upon the whole, the snow was a great success, and her guests congratulated Mrs. Westangle on having thought to have it. The felicitations included recognition of the originality of her whole scheme. She had downed the hoary superstition that people had too much of a good time on Christmas to want any good time at all in the week following; and in acting upon the well-known fact that you never wanted a holiday so much as the day after you had one, she had made a movement of the highest social importance. These were the ideas which Verrian and the young man of the in-doors snow-storm urged upon her; his name was Bushwick, and he and Verrian found that they were very good-fellows after they had rather supposed the contrary.

Mrs. Westangle received their ideas with the twittering reticence that deceived so many people when they supposed she knew what they were talking about.

XII.

At breakfast, where the guests were reasonably punctual, they were all able to observe, in the rapid succession in which they descended from

their rooms, that it had stopped snowing and the sun was shining brilliantly.

"There isn't enough for sleighing," Mrs. Westangle proclaimed from the head of the table in her high twitter, "and there isn't any coasting here in this flat country for miles."

"Then what are we going to do with it?" one of the young ladies humorously pouted.

"That's what I was going to suggest," Mrs. Westangle replied. She pronounced it 'sujjest', but no one felt that it mattered. "And, of course," she continued, "you needn't any of you do it if you don't like."

"We'll all do it, Mrs. Westangle," Bushwick said. "We are unanimous in that."

"Perhaps you'll think it rather funny--odd," she said.

"The odder the better, I think," Verrian ventured, and another man declared that nothing Mrs. Westangle would do was odd, though everything was original.

"Well, there is such a thing as being too original," she returned. Then she turned her head aside and looked down at something beside her plate and said, without lifting her eyes, "You know that in the Middle Ages there used to be flower-fights among the young nobility in Italy. The women held a tower, and the men attacked it with roses and flowers generally."

"Why, is this a speech?" Miss Macroyd interrupted.

"A speech from the throne, yes," Bushwick solemnly corrected her. "And she's got it written down, like a queen--haven't you, Mrs. Westangle?"

"Yes, I thought it would be more respectful."

"She coming out," Bushwick said to Verrian across the table.

"And if I got mixed up I could go back and straighten it," the hostess declared, with a good-humored candor that took the general fancy, "and you could understand without so much explaining. We haven't got flowers enough at this season," she went on, looking down again at the paper beside her plate, "but we happen to have plenty of snowballs, and the notion is to have the women occupy a snow tower and the men attack them with snowballs."

"Why," Bushwick said, "this is the snow-fort business of our boyhood! Let's go out and fortify the ladies at once." He appealed to Verrian and made a feint of pushing his chair back. "May we use water-soaked snowballs, or must they all be soft and harmless?" he asked of Mrs. Westangle, who was now the centre of a storm of applause and question from the whole table.

She kept her head and referred again to her paper. "The missiles of the assailants are to be very soft snowballs, hardly more than mere clots, so that nobody can be hurt in the assault, but the defenders may repel the assailants with harder snowballs."

"Oh," Miss Macroyd protested, "this is consulting the weakness of our sex."

"In the fury of the onset we'll forget it," Verrian reassured her.

"Do you think you really will, Mr. Verrian?" she asked. "What is all our athletic training to go for if you do?"

Mrs. Westangle read on:

"The terms of capitulation can be arranged on the ground, whether the castle is carried or the assailing party are made prisoners by its defenders."

"Hopeless captivity in either case!" Bushwick lamented.

"Isn't it rather academic?" Miss Macroyd asked of Verrian, in a low voice.

"I'm afraid, rather," he owned.

"But why are you so serious?" she pursued.

"Am I serious?" he retorted, with a trace of exasperation; and she laughed.

Their parley was quite lost in the clamor which raged up and down the table till Mrs. Westangle ended it by saying, "There's no obligation on any one to take part in the hostilities. There won't be any conscription; it's a free fight that will be open to everybody." She folded the paper she had been reading from and put it in her lap, in default of a pocket. She went on impromptu:

"You needn't trouble about building the fort, Mr. Bushwick. I've had the farmer and his men working at the castle since daybreak, and the ladies will find it all ready for them, when they're ready to defend it, down in the meadow beyond the edge of the birchlot. The battle won't begin till eleven o'clock."

She rose, and the clamor rose again with her, and her guests crushed about her, demanding to be allowed at least to go and look at the castle immediately.

One of the men's voices asked, "May I be one of the defenders, Mrs. Westangle? I want to be on the winning side, sure."

"Oh, is this going to be a circus chariot-race?" another lamented.

"No, indeed," a girl cried, "it's to be the real thing."

It fell to Verrian, in the assortment of couples in which Mrs. Westangle's guests sallied out to view the proposed scene of action, to find himself, not too willingly, at Miss Macroyd's side. In his heart and in his mind he was defending the amusement which he instantly divined as no invention of Mrs. Westangle's, and both his heart and his mind misgave him about this first essay of Miss Shirley in her new enterprise. It was, as Miss Macroyd had suggested, academic, and at the same time it had a danger in it of being tomboyish. Golf, tennis, riding, boating, swimming--all the vigorous sports in which women now excel--were boldly athletic, and yet you could not feel quite that they were tomboyish. Was it because the bent of Miss Shirley was so academic that she was periling upon tomboyishness without knowing it in this primal inspiration of hers? Inwardly he resented the word academic, although outwardly he had assented to it when Miss Macroyd proposed it. To be academic would be even more fatal to Miss Shirley's ambition than to be tomboyish, and he thought with pathos of that touch about the Italian nobility in the Middle Ages, and how little it could have moved the tough fancies of that crowd of well-groomed young people at the breakfast-table when Mrs. Westangle brought it out with her ignorant acceptance of it as a social force. After all, Miss Macroyd was about the only one who could have felt it in the way it was meant, and she had chosen to smile at it. He wondered if possibly she could feel the secondary pathos of it as he did. But to make talk with her he merely asked:

"Do you intend to take part in the fray?"

"Not unless I can be one of the reserve corps that won't need to be brought up till it's all over. I've no idea of getting my hair down."

"Ah," he sighed, "you think it's going to be rude:"

"That is one of the chances. But you seem to be suffering about it, Mr. Verrian!" she said, and, of course, she laughed.

"Who? I?" he returned, in the temptation to deny it. But he resisted.

"I always suffer when there's anything silly happening, as if I were doing it myself. Don't you?"

"No, thank you, I believe not. But perhaps you are doing this? One can't suppose Mrs. Westangle imagined it."

"No, I can't plead guilty. But why isn't it predicable of Mrs. Westangle?"

"You mustn't ask too much of me, Mr. Verrian. Somehow, I won't say how, it's been imagined for her. She's heard of its being done somewhere. It can't be supposed she's read of it, anywhere."

"No, I dare say not."

Miss Macroyd came out with her laugh. "I should like to know what she makes of you, Mr. Verrian, when she is alone with herself. She must have looked you up and authenticated you in her own way, but it would be as far from your way as--well, say--the Milky Way."

"You don't think she asked me because she met me at your house?"

"No, that wouldn't be enough, from her point of view. She means to go much further than we've ever got."

"Then a year from now she wouldn't ask me?"

"It depends upon who asks you in the mean time."

"You might get to be a fad, and then she would feel that she would have to have you."

"You're not flattering me?"

"Do you find it flattering?"

"It isn't exactly my idea of the reward I've been working for. What shall I do to be a fad?"

"Well, rather degrading stunts, if you mean in the smart set. Jump about on all fours and pick up a woman's umbrella with your teeth, and bark. Anything else would be easier for you among chic people, where your brilliancy would count."

"Brilliancy? Oh, thank you! Go on."

"Now, a girl--if you were a girl--"

"Oh yes, if I were a girl! That will be so much more interesting."

"A girl," Miss Macroyd continued, "might do it by posing effectively for amateur photography. Or doing something original in dramatics or pantomimics or recitation--but very original, because chic people are critical. Or if she had a gift for getting up things that would show other girls off; or suggesting amusements; but that would be rather in the line of swell people, who are not good at getting up things and are glad of help."

"I see, I see!" Verrian said, eagerly. But he walked along looking down at the snow, and not meeting the laughing glance that Miss Macroyd cast at his face. "Well?"

"I believe that's all," she said, sharply. She added, less sharply: "She couldn't afford to fail, though, at any point. The fad that fails is extinguished forever. Will these simple facts do for fiction? Or is it for somebody in real life you're asking, Mr. Verrian?"

"Oh, for fiction. And thank you very much. Oh, that's rather pretty!"

XIII.

They had come into the meadow where the snow battle was to be, and on its slope, against the dark weft of the young birch-trees, there was a mimic castle outlined in the masonry of white blocks quarried from the drifts and built up in courses like rough blocks of marble. A decoration of green from the pines that mixed with the birches had been suggested rather than executed, and was perhaps the more effective for its sketchiness.

"Yes, it's really beautiful," Miss Macroyd owned, and though she did not join her cries to those of the other girls, who stood scattered about admiring it, and laughing and chattering with the men whose applause, of course, took the jocose form, there was no doubt but she admired it. "What I can't understand is how Mrs. Westangle got the notion of this. There's the soprano note in it, and some woman must have given it to her."

"Not contralto, possibly?" Verrian asked.

"I insist upon the soprano," she said.

But he did not notice what she said. His eyes were following a figure which seemed to be escaping up through the birches behind the snow castle and ploughing its way through the drifts; in front of the structure they had been levelled to make an easier battle-field. He knew that it was Miss Shirley, and he inferred that she had been in the castle directing the farm-hands building it, and now, being caught by the premature arrival of the contesting forces, had fled before them and left her subordinates to finish the work. He felt, with a throe of helpless sympathy, that she was undertaking too much. It was hazardous enough to attempt the practice of her novel profession under the best of circumstances, but to keep herself in abeyance so far as not to be known at all in it, and, at the same time, to give way to her interest in it to the extent of coming out, with her infirmly established health, into that wintry weather, and superintending the preparations for the first folly she had planned, was a risk altogether too great for her.

Who in the world, "Miss Macroyd suddenly demanded, "is the person floundering about in the birch woods?"

"Perhaps the soprano," Verrian returned, hardily.

Bushwick detached himself from a group of girls near by and intercepted any response from Miss Macroyd to Verrian by calling to her before he came up, "Are you going to be one of the enemy, Miss Macroyd?"

"No, I think I will be neutral." She added, "Is there going to be any such thing as an umpire?"

"We hadn't thought of that. There could be. The office could be created; but, you know, it's the post of danger."

Verrian joined the group that Bushwick has left. He found a great scepticism as to the combat, mixed with some admiration for the castle, and he set himself to contest the prevalent feeling. What was the matter with a snow-fight? he demanded. It would be great fun. Decidedly he was going in for it. He revived the drooping sentiment in its favor, and then, flown with his success, he went from group to group and couple to couple, and animated all with his zeal, which came, he hardly knew whence; what he pretended to the others was that they were rather bound not to let Mrs. Westangle's scheme fall through. Their doubts vanished before him, and the terms of the battle were quickly arranged. He said he had read of one of those mediaeval flower-fights, and he could tell them how that was done. Where it would not fit into the snow-fight, they could trust to inspiration; every real battle was the effect of inspiration.

He came out, and some of the young women and most of the young men, who had dimly known of him as a sort of celebrity, and suspected him of being a prig, were reconciled, and accepted him for a nice fellow, and became of his opinion as to the details of the amusement before them.

It was not very Homeric, when it came off, or very mediaeval, but it was really lots of fun, or far more fun than one would have thought. The storming of the castle was very sincere, and the fortress was honestly defended. Miss Macroyd was made umpire, as she wished, and provided with a large snowball to sit on at a safe distance; as she was chosen by the men, the girls wanted to have an umpire of their own, who would be really fair, and they voted Verrian into the office. But he refused, partly because he did not care about being paired off with Miss Macroyd so conspicuously, and partly because he wished to help the fight along.

Attacks were made and repelled, and there were feats of individual and collective daring on the side of the defenders which were none the less daring because the assailants stopped to cheer them, and to disable themselves by laughing at the fury of the foe. A detachment of the young men at last stormed the castle and so weakened its walls that they toppled inward; then the defenders, to save themselves from being buried under the avalanche, swarmed out into the open and made the entire force of the enemy prisoners.

The men pretended that this was what might have been expected from the beginning, but by this time the Berserker madness had possessed Miss Macroyd, too; she left her throne of snow and came forward shouting that it had been perfectly fair, and that the men had been really beaten, and they had no right to pretend that they had given themselves up purposely. The sex-partisanship, which is such a droll fact in women when there is any question of their general opposition to men, possessed them all, and they stood as, one girl for the reality of their triumph. This did not prevent them from declaring that the men had behaved with outrageous unfairness, and that the only one who fought with absolute sincerity from

first to last was Mr. Verrian.

Neither their unity of conviction concerning the general fact nor the surprising deduction from it in Verrian's case operated to make them refuse the help of their captives in getting home. When they had bound up their tumbled hair, in some cases, and repaired the ravages of war among their feathers and furs and draperies, in other cases, they accepted the hands of the late enemy at difficult points of the path. But they ran forward when they neared the house, and they were prompt to scream upon Mrs. Westangle that there never had been such a success or such fun, and that they were almost dead, and soon as they had something to eat they were going to bed and never going to get up again.

In the details which they were able to give at luncheon, they did justice to Verrian's noble part in the whole affair, which had saved the day, not only in keeping them up to the work when they had got thinking it couldn't be carried through, but in giving the combat a validity which it would not have had without him. They had to thank him, next to Mrs. Westangle herself, whom they praised beyond any articulate expression, for thinking up such a delightful thing. They wondered how she could ever have thought of it--such a simple thing too; and they were sure that when people heard of it they would all be wanting to have snow battles.

Mrs. Westangle took her praises as passively, if not as modestly, as Verrian received his. She made no show of disclaiming them, but she had the art, invaluable in a woman who meant to go far in the line she had chosen, of not seeming to have done anything, or of not caring whether people liked it or not. Verrian asked himself, as he watched her twittering back at those girls, and shedding equally their thanks and praises from her impermeable plumage, how she would have behaved if Miss Shirley's attempt had been an entire failure. He decided that she would have ignored the failure with the same impersonality as that with which she now ignored the success. It appeared that in one point he did her injustice, for when he went up to dress for dinner after the long stroll he took towards night he found a note under his door, by which he must infer that Mrs. Westangle had not kept the real facts of her triumph from the mistress of the revels.

"DEAR MR. VERRIAN, I am not likely to see you, but I must thank you.

M. SHIRLEY.

"P. S. Don't try to answer, please."

Verrian liked, the note, he even liked the impulse which had dictated it, and he understood the impulse; but he did not like getting the note. If Miss Shirley meant business in taking up the line of life she had professed to have entered upon seriously, she had better, in the case of a young man whose acquaintance she had chanced to make, let her gratitude wait. But when did a woman ever mean business, except in the one great business?

XIV.

To have got that sillily superfluous note to Verrian without any one's knowing besides, Miss Shirley must have stolen to his door herself and slipped it under. In order to do this unsuspected and unseen, she must have found out in some sort that would not give her away which his room was, and then watched her chance. It all argued a pervasiveness in her, after such a brief sojourn in the house, and a mastery of finesse that he did not like, though, he reflected, he was not authorized to like or dislike anything about her. He was thirty-seven years old, and he had not lived through that time, with his mother at his elbow to suggest inferences from facts, without being versed in wiles which, even when they were honest, were always wiles, and in lures which, when they were of the most gossamer tenuity, were yet of texture close enough to make the man who blundered through them aware that they had been thrown across his path. He understood, of course, that they were sometimes helplessly thrown across it, and were mere expressions of abstract woman with relation to abstract man, but that did not change their nature. He did not abhor them, but he believed he knew them, and he believed now that he detected one of them in Miss Shirley's note. Of course, one could take another view of it. One could say to one's self that she was really so fervently grateful that she could not trust some accident to bring them together in a place where she was merely a part of the catering, as she said, and he was a guest, and that she was excusable, or at least mercifully explicable, in her wish to have him know that she appreciated his goodness. Verrian had been very good, he knew that; he had saved the day for the poor thing when it was in danger of the dreariest kind of slump. She was a poor thing, as any woman was who had to make her own way, and she had been sick and was charming. Besides, she had found out his name and had probably recognized a quality of celebrity in it, unknown to the other young people with whom he found himself so strangely assorted under Mrs. Westangle's roof.

In the end, and upon the whole, Verrian would rather have liked, if the thing could have been made to happen, meeting Miss Shirley long enough to disclaim meriting her thanks, and to ascribe to the intrinsic value of her scheme the brilliant success it had achieved. This would not have been true, but it would have been encouraging to her; and in the reverie which followed upon his conditional desire he had a long imaginary conversation with her, and discussed all her other plans for the revels of the week. These had not the trouble of defining themselves very distinctly in the conversation in order to win his applause, and their consideration did not carry him with Miss Shirley beyond the strictly professional ground on which they met.

She had apparently invented nothing for that evening, and the house party was left to its own resources in dancing and sitting out dances, which apparently fully sufficed it. They were all tired, and broke up early. The women took their candles and went off to bed, and the men went to the billiard-room to smoke. On the way down from his room, where he had gone to put on his smoking-jacket, Verrian met Miss Macroyd coming up, candle in hand, and received from her a tacit intimation that he might stop her

for a joking good-night.

"I hope you'll sleep well on your laurels as umpire," he said.

"Oh, thank you," she returned, "and I hope your laurels won't keep you awake. It must seem to you as if it was blowing a perfect gale in them."

"What do you mean? I did nothing."

"Oh, I don't mean your promotion of the snow battle. But haven't you heard?" He stared. "You've been found out!"

"Found out?" Verrian's soul was filled with the joy of literary fame.

"Yes. You can't conceal yourself now. You're Verrian the actor."

"The actor?" Verrian frowned blackly in his disgust, so blackly that Miss Macroyd laughed aloud.

"Yes, the coming matinee idol. One of the girls recognized you as soon as you came into the house, and the name settled it, though, of course, you're supposed to be here incognito."

The mention of that name which he enjoyed in common with the actor made Verrian furious, for when the actor first appeared with it in New York Verrian had been at the pains to find out that it was not his real name, and that he had merely taken it because of the weak quality of romance in it, which Verrian himself had always disliked. But, of course, he could not vent his fury on Miss Macroyd. All he could do was to ask, "Then they have got my photograph on their dressing-tables, with candles burning before it?"

"No, I don't believe I can give you that comfort. The fact is, your acting is not much admired among the girls here, but they think you are unexpectedly nice as a private person."

"That's something. And does Mrs. Westangle think I'm the actor, too?"

"How should Mrs. Westangle know what she thinks? And if she doesn't, how should I?"

"That's true. And are you going to give me away?"

"I haven't done it yet. But isn't it best to be honest?"

"It mightn't be a success."

"The honesty?"

"My literary celebrity."

"There's that," Miss Macroyd rejoiced. "Well, so far I've merely said I was sure you were not Verrian the actor. I'll think the other part

over." She went on up-stairs, with the sound of her laugh following her, and Verrian went gloomily back to the billiard-room, where he found most of the smokers conspicuously yawning. He lighted a fresh cigar, and while he smoked they dropped away one by one till only Bushwick was left.

"Some of the fellows are going Thursday," he said. "Are you going to stick it out to the bitter end?"

Till then it had not occurred to Verrian that he was not going to stay through the week, but now he said, "I don't know but I may go Thursday. Shall you?"

"I might as well stay on. I don't find much doing in real estate at Christmas. Do you?"

This was fishing, but it was better than openly taking him for that actor, and Verrian answered, unresentfully, "I don't know. I'm not in that line exactly."

"Oh, I beg your pardon," Bushwick said. "I thought I had seen your name with that of a West Side concern."

"No, I have a sort of outside connection with the publishing business."

"Oh," Bushwick returned, politely, and it would have been reassuringly if Verrian had wished not to be known as an author. The secret in which he lived in that regard was apparently safe from that young, amiable, good-looking real-estate broker. He inferred, from the absence of any allusion to the superstition of the women as to his profession, that it had not spread to Bushwick at least, and this inclined him the more to like him. They sat up talking pleasantly together about impersonal affairs till Bushwick finished his cigar. Then he started for bed, saying, "Well, good-night. I hope Mrs. Westangle won't have anything so active on the tapis for tomorrow."

"Try and sleep it off. Good-night."

XV.

Verrian remained to finish his cigar, but at the end he was not yet sleepy, and he thought he would get a book from the library, if that part of the house were still lighted, and he looked out to see. Apparently it was as brilliantly illuminated as when the company had separated there for the night, and he pushed across the foyer hall that separated the billiard-room from the drawing-room and library. He entered the drawing-room, and in the depths of the library, relieved against the rows of books in their glass cases, he startled Miss Shirley from a pose which she seemed to be taking there alone.

At the instant of their mutual recognition she gave a little muted

shriek, and then gasped out, "I beg your pardon," while he was saying, too, "I beg your pardon."

After a tacit exchange of forgiveness, he said, "I am afraid I startled you. I was just coming for a book to read myself asleep with. I--"

"Not at all," she returned. "I was just--" Then she did not say what, and he asked:

"Making some studies?"

"Yes," she owned, with reluctant promptness.

"I mustn't ask what," he suggested, and he made an effort to smile away what seemed a painful perturbation in her as he went forward to look at the book-shelves, from which, till then, she had not slipped aside.

"I'm in your way," she said, and he answered, "Not at all." He added to the other sentence he had spoken, "If it's going to be as good as what you gave us today--"

"You are very kind." She hesitated, and then she said, abruptly: "What I did to-day owed everything to you, Mr. Verrian," and while he desisted from searching the book-shelves, she stood looking anxiously at him, with the pulse in her neck visibly throbbing. Her agitation was really painful, but Verrian did not attribute it to her finding herself there alone with him at midnight; for though the other guests had all gone to bed, the house was awake in some of the servants, and an elderly woman came in presently bringing a breadth of silvery gauze, which she held up, asking if it was that.

"Not exactly, but it will do nicely, Mrs. Stager. Would you mind getting me the very pale-blue piece that electric blue?"

"I'm looking for something good and dull," Verrian said, when the woman was gone.

"Travels are good, or narratives, for sleeping on," she said, with a breathless effort for calm. "I found," she panted, "in my own insomnia, that merely the broken-up look of a page of dialogue in a novel racked my nerves so that I couldn't sleep. But narratives were beautifully soothing."

"Thank you," he responded; "that's a good idea." And stooping, with his hands on his knees, he ranged back and forth along the shelves. "But Mrs. Westangle's library doesn't seem to be very rich in narrative."

He had not his mind on the search perhaps, and perhaps she knew it. She presently said, "I wish I dared ask you a favor--I mean your advice, Mr. Verrian."

He lifted himself from his stooping posture and looked at her, smiling. "Would that take much courage?" His smile was a little mocking; he was

thinking that a girl who would hurry that note to him, and would personally see that it did not fail to reach him, would have the courage for much more.

She did not reply directly. "I should have to explain, but I know you won't tell. This is going to be my piece de resistance, my grand stunt. I'm going to bring it off the last night." She stopped long enough for Verrian to revise his resolution of going away with the fellows who were leaving the middle of the week, and to decide on staying to the end. "I am going to call it Seeing Ghosts."

"That's good," Verrian said, provisionally.

"Yes, I might say I was surprised at my thinking it up."

"That would be one form of modesty."

"Yes," she said, with a wan smile she had, "and then again it mightn't be another." She went on, abruptly, "As many as like can take part in the performance. It's to be given out, and distinctly understood beforehand, that the ghost isn't a veridical phantom, but just an honest, made-up, every-day spook. It may change its pose from time to time, or its drapery, but the setting is to be always the same, and the people who take their turns in seeing it are to be explicitly reassured, one after another, that there's nothing in it, you know. The fun will be in seeing how each one takes it, after they know what it really is."

"Then you're going to give us a study of temperaments."

"Yes," she assented. And after a moment, given to letting the notion get quite home with her, she asked, vividly, "Would you let me use it?"

"The phrase? Why, certainly. But wouldn't it be rather too psychological? I think just Seeing Ghosts would be better."

"Better than Seeing Ghosts: A Study of Temperaments? Perhaps it would. It would be simpler."

"And in this house you need all the simplicity you can get," he suggested.

She smiled, intelligently but reticently. "My idea is that every one somehow really believes in ghosts--I know I do--and so fully expects to see one that any sort of make-up will affect them for the moment just as if they did see one. I thought--that perhaps--I don't know how to say it without seeming to make use of you--"

"Oh, do make use of me, Miss Shirley!"

"That you could give me some hints about the setting, with your knowledge of the stage--" She stopped, having rushed forward to that point, while he continued to look steadily at her without answering her. She faced him courageously, but not convincingly.

"Did you think that I was an actor?" he asked, finally.

"Mrs. Westangle seemed to think you were."

"But did you?"

"I'm sure I didn't mean--I beg your pardon--"

"It's all right. If I were an actor I shouldn't be ashamed of it. But I was merely curious to know whether you shared the prevalent superstition. I'm afraid I can't help you from a knowledge of the stage, but if I can be of use, from a sort of amateur interest in psychology, with an affair like this I shall be only too glad."

"Thank you," she said, somewhat faintly, with an effect of dismay disproportionate to the occasion.

She sank into a chair before which she had been standing, and she looked as if she were going to swoon.

He started towards her with an alarmed "Miss Shirley."

She put out a hand weakly to stay him. "Don't!" she entreated.

"I'm a little--I shall be all right in a moment."

"Can't I get you something--call some one?"

"Not for the world!" she commanded, and she pulled herself together and stood up. "But I think I'll stop for to-night. I'm glad my idea strikes you favorably. It's merely--Oh, you found it, Mrs. Stager!" She broke off to address the woman who had now come back and was holding up the trailing breadths of the electric-blue gauze. "Isn't it lovely?" She gave herself time to adore the drapery, with its changes of meteoric lucence, before she rose and took it. She went with it to the background in the library, where, against the glass door of the cases, she involved herself in it and stood shimmering. A thrill pierced to Verrian's heart; she was indeed wraithlike, so that he hated to have her call, "How will that do?"

Mrs. Stager modestly referred the question to him by her silence.

"I will answer for its doing, if it does for the others as it's done for me."

She laughed. "And you doubly knew what it was. Yes, I think it will go." She took another pose, and then another. "What do you think of it, Mrs. Stager?" she called to the woman standing respectfully abeyant at one side.

"It's awful. I don't know but I'll be afraid to go to my room."

"Sit down, and I'll go to your room with you when I'm through. I won't be long, now."

She tried different gauzes, which she had lying on one of the chairs, and crowned herself with triumph in the applauses of her two spectators, rejoicing with a glee that Verrian found childlike and winning.

"If they're all like you, it will be the greatest success!"

"They'll all be like me, and more," he said, "I'm really very severe."

"Are you a severe person?" she asked, coming forward to him. "Ought people to be afraid of you?"

"Yes, people with bad consciences. I'm rattier afraid of myself for that reason."

"Have you got a bad conscience?" she asked, letting her eyes rest on his.

"Yes. I can't make my conduct square with my ideal of conduct."

"I know what that is!" she sighed. "Do you expect to be punished for it?"

"I expect to be got even with."

"Yes, one is. I've noticed that myself. But I didn't suppose that actors--Oh, I forgot! I beg your pardon again, Mr. Verrian. Oh--Goodnight!" She faced him evanescently in going out, with the woman after her, but, whether she did so more in fear or more in defiance, she left him standing motionless in his doubt, and she did nothing to solve his doubt when she came quickly back alone, before he was aware of having moved, to say, "Mr. Verrian, I want to--I have to--tell you that--I didn't think you were the actor." Then she was finally gone, and Verrian had nothing for it but to go up to his room with the book he found he had in his hand and must have had there all the time.

If he had read it, the book would not have eased him off to sleep, but he did not even try, to read it. He had no wish to sleep. The waking dream in which he lost himself was more interesting than any vision of slumber could have been, and he had no desire to end it. In that he could still be talking with the girl whose mystery appealed to him so pleasingly. It was none the less pleasing because, at what might be called her first blushes, she did not strike him as altogether ingenuous, but only able to discipline herself into a final sincerity from a consciousness which had been taught wisdom by experience.

She was still a scarcely recovered invalid, and it was pathetic that she should be commencing the struggle of life with strength so little proportioned to the demand upon it; and the calling she had taken up was of a fantasticality in some aspects which was equally pathetic. But all the undertakings of women, he mused, were piteous, not only because women were unequal to the struggle at the best, but because they were hampered always with themselves, with their sex, their femininity, and the necessity of getting it out of the way before they could really begin to fight. Whatever they attempted it must be in relation to the man's world

in which livings were made; but the immemorial conditions were almost wholly unchanged. A woman approached this world as a woman, with the inborn instinct of tempting it as a woman, to win it to love her and make her a wife and mother; and although she might stoically overcome the temptation at last, it might recur at any moment and overcome her. This was perpetually weakening and imperilling her, and she must feel it at the encounter with each man she met. She must feel the tacit and even unconscious irony of his attitude towards her in her enterprise, and the finer her make the crueller and the more humiliating and disheartening this must be.

Of course, this Miss Shirley felt Verrian's irony, which he had guarded from any expression with genuine compassion for her. She must feel that to his knowledge of life she and her experiment had an absurdity which would not pass, whatever their success might be. If she meant business, and business only, they ought to have met as two men would have met, but he knew that they had not done so, and she must have known it. All that was plain sailing enough, but beyond this lay a sea of conjecture in which he found himself without helm or compass. Why, should she have acted a fib about his being an actor, and why, after the end, should she have added an end, in which she returned to own that she had been fibbing? For that was what it came to; and though Verrian tasted a delicious pleasure in the womanish feat by which she overcame her womanishness, he could not puzzle out her motive. He was not sure that he wished to puzzle it out. To remain with illimitable guesses at his choice was more agreeable, for the present at least, and he was not aware of having lapsed from them when he woke so late as to be one of the breakfasters whose plates were kept for them after the others were gone.

XVI.

It was the first time that Verrian had come down late, and it was his novel experience to find himself in charge of Mrs. Stager at breakfast, instead of the butler and the butler's man, who had hitherto served him at the earlier hour. There were others, somewhat remote from him, at table, who were ending when he was beginning, and when they had joked themselves out of the room and away from Mrs. Stager's ministrations he was left alone to her. He had instantly appreciated a quality of motherliness in her attitude towards him, and now he was sensible of a kindly intimacy to which he rather helplessly addressed himself.

"Well, Mrs. Stager, did you see a ghost on your way to bed?"

"I don't know as I really expected to," she said. "Won't you have a few more of the buckwheats?"

"Do you think I'd better? I believe I won't. They're very tempting. Miss Shirley makes a very good ghost," he suggested.

Mrs. Stager would not at first commit herself further than to say in

bringing him the butter, "She's just up from a long fit of sickness."
She impulsively added, "She ain't hardly strong enough to be doing what she is, I tell her."

"I understood she had been ill," Verrian said. "We drove over from the station together, the other day."

"Yes," Mrs. Stager admitted. "Kind of a nervous breakdown, I believe. But she's got an awful spirit. Mrs. Westangle don't want her to do all she is doing."

Verrian looked at her in surprise. He had not expected that of the India-rubber nature he had attributed to Mrs. Westangle. In view of Mrs. Stager's privity to the unimagined kindness of his hostess, he relaxed himself in a further interest in Miss Shirley, as if it would now be safe. "She's done splendidly, so far," he said, meaning the girl. "I'm glad Mrs. Westangle appreciates her work."

"I guess," Mrs. Stager said, "that if it hadn't been for you at the snow-fight--She got back from getting ready for it, that morning, almost down sick, she was afraid so it was going to fail."

"I didn't do anything," Verrian said, putting the praise from him.

Mrs. Stager lowered her voice in an octave of deeper confidentiality. "You got the note? I put it under, and I didn't know."

"Oh yes, I got it," Verrian said, sensible of a relief, which he would not assign to any definite reason, in knowing that Miss Shirley had not herself put it under his door. But he now had to take up another burden in the question whether Miss Shirley were of an origin so much above that of her confidant that she could have a patrician fearlessness in making use of her, or were so near Mrs. Stager's level of life that she would naturally turn to her for counsel and help. Miss Shirley had the accent, the manners, and the frank courage of a lady; but those things could be learned; they were got up for the stage every day.

Verrian was roused from the muse he found he had fallen into by hearing Mrs. Stager ask, "Won't you have some more coffee?"

"No, thank you," he said. And now he rose from the table, on which he dreamily dropped his napkin, and got his hat and coat and went out for a walk. He had not studied the art of fiction so long, in the many private failures that had preceded his one public success, without being made to observe that life sometimes dealt in the accidents and coincidences which his criticism condemned as too habitually the resource of the novelist. Hitherto he had disdained them for this reason; but since his serial story was off his hands, and he was beginning to look about him for fresh material, he had doubted more than once whether his severity was not the effect of an unjustifiable prejudice.

It struck him now, in turning the corner of the woodlot above the meadow where the snow-battle had taken place, and suddenly finding himself face

to face with Miss Shirley, that nature was in one of her uninventive moods and was helping herself out from the old stock-in-trade of fiction. All the same, he felt a glow of pleasure, which was also a glow of pity; for while Miss Shirley looked, as always, interesting, she look tired, too, with a sort of desperate air which did not otherwise account for itself. She had given, at sight of him, a little start, and a little "Oh!" dropped from her lips, as if it had been jostled from them. She made haste to go on, with something like the voluntary hardiness of the courage that plucks itself from the primary emotion of fear, "You are going down to try the skating?"

"Do I look it, without skates?"

"You may be going to try the sliding," she returned. "I'm afraid there won't be much of either for long. This soft air is going to make havoc of my plans for to-morrow."

"That's too bad of it. Why not hope for a hard freeze to-night? You might as well. The weather has been known to change its mind. You might even change your plans."

"No, I can't do that. I can't think of anything else. It's to bridge over the day that's left before Seeing Ghosts. If it does freeze, you'll come to Mrs. Westangle's afternoon tea on the pond?"

"I certainly shall. How is it to be worked?"

"She's to have her table on a platform, with runners, in a bower of evergreen boughs, and be pushed about, and the people are to skate up for the tea. There are to be tea and chocolate, and two girls to pour, just as in real life. It isn't a very dazzling idea, but I thought it might do; and Mrs. Westangle is so good-natured. Now, if the thermometer will do its part!"

"I am sure it will," Verrian said, but a glance at the gray sky did not confirm him in his prophetic venture. The snow was sodden under foot; a breath from the south stirred the pines to an Aeolian response and moved the stiff, dry leaves of the scrub-oaks. A sapsucker was marking an accurate circle of dots round the throat of a tall young maple, and enjoying his work in a low, guttural soliloquy, seemingly, yet, dismayingly, suggestive of spring.

"It's lovely, anyway," she said, following his glance with an upward turn of her face.

"Yes, it's beautiful. I think this sort of winter day is about the best the whole year can do. But I will sacrifice the chance of another like it to your skating-tea, Miss Shirley."

He did not know why he should have made this speech to her, but apparently she did, and she said, "You're always coming to my help, Mr. Verrian."

"Don't mention it!"

"I won't, then," she said, with a smile that showed her thin face at its thinnest and left her lip caught on her teeth till she brought it down voluntarily. It was a small but full lip and pretty, and this trick of it had a fascination. She added, gravely, "I don't believe you will like my ice-tea."

"I haven't any active hostility to it. You can't always be striking twelve--twelve midnight--as you will be in Seeing Ghosts. But your ice-tea will do very well for striking five. I'm rather elaborate!"

"Not too elaborate to hide your real opinion. I wonder what you do think of my own elaboration--I mean of my scheme."

"Yes?"

They had moved on, at his turning to walk with her, so as not to keep her standing in the snow, and now she said, looking over her shoulder at him, "I've decided that it won't do to let the ghost have all the glory. I don't think it will be fair to let the people merely be scared, even when they've been warned that they're to see a ghost and told it isn't real."

She seemed to refer the point to him, and he said, provisionally, "I don't know what more they can ask."

"They can ask questions. I'm going to let each person speak to the ghost, if not scared dumb, and ask it just what they please; and I'm going to answer their questions if I can."

"Won't it be something of an intellectual strain?"

"Yes, it will. But it will be fun, too, a little, and it will help the thing to go off. What do you think?"

"I think it's fine. Are you going to give it out, so that they can be studying up their questions?"

"No, their questions have got to be impromptu. Or, at least, the first one has. Of course, after the scheme has once been given away, the ghost-seers will be more or less prepared, and the ghost will have to stand it."

"I think it's great. Are you going to let me have a chance with a question?"

"Are you going to see a ghost?"

"To be sure I am. May I really ask it what I please?"

"If you're honest."

"Oh, I shall be honest--"

He stopped breathlessly, but she did not seem called upon to supply any meaning for his abruptness. "I'm awfully glad you like the idea," she said, "I have had to think the whole thing out for myself, and I haven't been quite certain that the question-asking wasn't rather silly, or, at least, sillier than the rest. Thank you so much, Mr. Verrian."

"I've thought of my question," he began again, as abruptly as he had stopped before. "May I ask it now?"

Cries of laughter came up from the meadow below, and the voices seemed coming nearer.

"Oh, I mustn't be seen!" Miss Shirley lamented. "Oh, dear! If I'm seen the whole thing is given away. What shall I do?" She whirled about and ran down the road towards a path that entered the wood.

He ran after her. "My question is, May I come to see you when you get back to town?"

"Yes, certainly. But don't come now! You mustn't be seen with me! I'm not supposed to be in the house at all."

If Verrian's present mood had been more analytic, it might have occurred to him that the element of mystery which Miss Shirley seemed to cherish in regard to herself personally was something that she could dramatically apply with peculiar advantage to the phantasmal part she was to take in her projected entertainment. But he was reduced from the exercise of his analytic powers to a passivity in which he was chiefly conscious of her pathetic fascination. This seemed to emanate from her frail prettiness no less than from the sort of fearful daring with which she was pushing her whole enterprise through; it came as much from her undecided blondness--from her dust-colored hair, for instance--as from the entreating look of her pinched eyes, only just lighting their convalescent fires, and from the weakness that showed, with the grace, in her run through the wintry woods, where he watched her till the underbrush thickened behind her and hid her from him. Altogether his impression was very complex, but he did not get so far even as the realization of this, in his mental turmoil, as he turned with a deep sigh and walked meditatively homeward through the incipient thaw.

It did not rain at night, as it seemed so likely to do, and by morning the cloudiness of the sky had so far thinned that the sun looked mildly through it without more than softening the frozen surface of the pond, so that Mrs. Westangle's ice-tea (as everybody called it, by a common inspiration, or by whatever circuitous adoption of Verrian's phrase) came off with great success. People from other houses were there, and they all said that they wondered how she came to have such a brilliant idea, and they kept her there till nearly dark. Then the retarded rain began, in a fine drizzle, and her house guests were forced homeward, but not too soon to get a good, long rest before dressing for dinner. She was praised for her understanding with the weather, and for her meteorological forecast as much as for her invention in imagining such a

delightful and original thing as an ice-tea, which no one else had ever thought of. Some of the women appealed to Verrian to say if he had ever heard of anything like it; and they felt that Mrs. Westangle was certainly arriving, and by no beaten track.

None of the others put it in these terms, of course; it was merely a consensus of feeling with them, and what was more articulate was dropped among the ironies with which Miss Macroyd more confidentially celebrated the event. Out of hearing of the others, in slowly following them with Verrian, she recurred to their talk. "Yes, it's only a question of money enough for Newport, after this. She's chic now, and after a season there she will be smart. But oh, dear! How came she to be chic? Can you imagine?"

Verrian did not feel bound to a categorical answer, and in his private reflections he dealt with another question. This was how far Miss Shirley was culpable in the fraud she was letting Mrs. Westangle practise on her innocent guests. It was a distasteful question, and he did not find it much more agreeable when it subdivided itself into the question of necessity on her part, and of a not very clearly realized situation on Mrs. Westangle's. The girl had a right to sell her ideas, and perhaps the woman thought they were her own when she had paid for them. There could be that view of it all. The furtive nature of Miss Shirley's presence in the house might very well be a condition of that grand event she was preparing. It was all very mysterious.

XVII.

It rained throughout the evening, with a wailing of the wind in the gables, and a weeping and a sobbing of the water from the eaves that Mrs. Westangle's guests, securely housed from the storm, made the most of for weirdness. There had been a little dancing, which gave way to so much sitting-out that the volunteer music abruptly ceased as if in dudgeon, and there was nothing left but weirdness to bring young hearts together. Weirdness can do a good deal with girls lounging in low chairs, and young men on rugs round a glowing hearth at their feet; and every one told some strange thing that had happened at first hand, or second or third hand, either to himself or herself, or to their fathers or brothers or grandmothers or old servants. They were stimulated in eking out these experiences not only by the wildness of the rain without, but by the mystery of being shut off from the library into the drawing-room and hall while the preparations for the following night were beginning. But weirdness is not inexhaustible, even when shared on such propitious terms between a group of young people rapidly advanced in intimacy by a week's stay under the same roof, and at the first yawn a gay dispersion of the votaries ended it all.

The yawn came from Bushwick, who boldly owned, when his guilt was brought home to him, that he was sleepy, and then as he expected to be scared out of a year's growth the next night, and not be able to sleep for a week

afterwards, he was now going to bed. He shook hands with Mrs. Westangle for good-night. The latest to follow him was Verrian, who, strangely alert, and as far from drowsiness as he had ever known himself, was yet more roused by realizing that Mrs. Westangle was not letting his hand go at once, but, unless it was mere absent-mindedness, was conveying through it the wish to keep him. She fluttered a little more closely up to him, and twittered out, "Miss Shirley wants me to let you know that she has told me about your coming together, and everything."

"Oh, I'm very glad," Verrian said, not sure that it was the right thing.

"I don't know why she feels so, but she has a right to do as she pleases about it. She's not a guest."

"No," Verrian assented.

"It happens very well, though, for the ghost-seeing that people don't know she's here. After that I shall tell them. In fact, she wants me to, for she must be on the lookout for other engagements. I am going to do everything I can for her, and if you hear of anything--"

Verrian bowed, with a sense of something offensive in her words which he could not logically feel, since it was a matter of business and was put squarely on a business basis. "I should be very glad," he said, noncommittally.

"She was sure from the first," Mrs. Westangle went on, as if there were some relation between the fact and her request, "that you were not the actor. She knew you were a writer."

"Oh, indeed!" Verrian said.

"I thought that if you were writing for the newspapers you might know how to help her--"

"I'm not a newspaper writer," Verrian answered, with a resentment which she seemed to feel, for she said, with a sort of apology in her tone:

"Oh! Well, I don't suppose it matters. She doesn't know I'm speaking to you about that; it just came into my head. I like to help in a worthy object, you know. I hope you'll have a good night's rest."

She turned and looked round with the air of distraction which she had after speaking to any one, and which Verrian fancied came as much from a paucity as from a multiplicity of suggestion in her brain, and so left him standing. But she came back to say, "Of course, it's all between ourselves till after to-morrow night, Mr. Verrian."

"Oh, certainly," he replied, and went vaguely off in the direction of the billiard-room. It was light and warm there, though the place was empty, and he decided upon a cigar as a proximate or immediate solution. He sat smoking before the fire till the tobacco's substance had half turned into a wraith of ash, and not really thinking of anything very definitely,

except the question whether he should be able to sleep after he went to bed, when he heard a creeping step on the floor. He turned quickly, with a certain expectance in his nerves, and saw nothing more ghostly than Bushwick standing at the corner of the table and apparently hesitating how to speak to him.

He said, "Hello!" and at this Bushwick said:

"Look here!"

"Well?" Verrian asked, looking at him.

"How does it happen you're up so late, after everybody else is wrapped in slumber?"

"I might ask the same of you."

"Well, I found I wasn't making it a case of sleep, exactly, and so I got up."

"Well, I hadn't gone to bed for much the same reason. Why couldn't you sleep? A real-estate broker ought to have a clean conscience."

"So ought a publisher, for that matter. What do you think of this ghost-dance, anyway?"

"It might be amusing--if it fails." Verrian was tempted to add the condition by the opportunity for a cynicism which he did not feel. It is one of the privileges of youth to be cynical, whether or no.

Bushwick sat down before the fire and rubbed his shins with his two hands unrestfully, drawing in a long breath between his teeth. "These things get on to my nerves sometimes. I shouldn't want the ghost-dance to fail."

"On Mrs. Westangle's account?"

"I guess Mrs. Westangle could stand it. Look here!" It was rather a customary phrase of his, Verrian noted. As he now used it he looked alertly round at Verrian, with his hands still on his shins. "What's the use of our beating round the bush?"

Verrian delayed his answer long enough to decide against the aimless pun of asking, "What Bushwick?" and merely asked, "What bush?"

"The bush where the milk in the cocoanut grows. You don't pretend that you believe Mrs. Westangle has been getting up all these fairy stunts?"

Verrian returned to his cigar, from which the ashen wraith dropped into his lap. "I guess you'll have to be a little clearer." But as Bushwick continued silently looking at him, the thing could not be left at this point, and he was obliged to ask of his own initiative, "How much do you know?"

Bushwick leaned back in his chair, with his eyes still on Verrian's profile. "As much as Miss Macroyd could tell me."

"Ah, I'm still in the dark," Verrian politely regretted, but not with a tacit wish to wring Miss Macroyd's neck, which he would not have known how to account for.

"Well, she says that Mrs. Westangle has a professional assistant who's doing the whole job for her, and that she came down on the same train with herself and you."

"Did she say that she grabbed the whole victoria for herself and maid at the station?" Verrian demanded, in a burst of rage, "and left us to get here the best way we could?"

Bushwick grinned. "She supposed there were other carriages, and when she found there weren't she hurried the victoria back for you."

"You think she believes all that? I'm glad she has the decency to be ashamed of her behavior."

"I'm not defending her. Miss Macroyd knows how to take care of herself."

The matter rather dropped for the moment, in which Bushwick filled a pipe he took from his pocket and lighted it. After the first few whiffs he took it from his mouth, and, with a droll look across at Verrian, said, "Who was your fair friend?"

If Verrian was going to talk of this thing, he was not going to do it with the burden of any sort of reserve or contrivance on his soul. "This afternoon?" Bushwick nodded; and Verrian added, "That was she." Then he went on, wrathfully: "She's a girl who has to make her living, and she's doing it in a new way that she's invented for herself. She has supposed that the stupid rich, or the lazy rich, who want to entertain people may be willing to pay for ideas, and she proposes to supply the ideas for a money consideration. She's not a guest in the house, and she won't take herself on a society basis at all. I don't know what her history is, and I don't care. She's a lady by training, and, if she had the accent, I should say she was from the South, for she has the enterprise of the South that comes North and tries to make its living. It's all inexpressibly none of my business, but I happen to be knowing to so much of the case, and if you're knowing to anything else, Mr. Bushwick, I want you to get it straight. That's why I'm talking of it, and not because I think you've any right to know anything about it."

"Thank you," Bushwick returned, unruffled. "It's about what Miss Macroyd told me. That's the reason I don't want the ghost-dance to fail."

Verrian did not notice him. He found it more important to say: "She's so loyal to Mrs. Westangle that she wouldn't have wished, in Mrs. Westangle's interest, to have her presence, or her agency in what is going on, known; but, of course, if Mrs. Westangle chooses to, tell it,

that's her affair."

"She would have had to tell it, sooner or later, Mrs. Westangle would; and she only told it to Miss Macroyd this afternoon on compulsion, after Miss Macroyd and I had seen you in the wood-road, and Mrs. Westangle had to account for the young lady's presence there in your company. Then Miss Macroyd had to tell me; but I assure you, my dear fellow, the matter hasn't gone any further."

"Oh, it's quite indifferent to me," Verrian retorted. "I'm nothing but a dispassionate witness of the situation."

"Of course," Bushwick assented, and then he added, with a bonhomie really so amiable that a man with even an unreasonable grudge could hardly resist it, "If you call it dispassionate."

Verrian could not help laughing. "Well, passionate, then. I don't know why it should be so confoundedly vexatious. But somehow I would have chosen Miss Macroyd--Is she specially dear to you?"

"Not the least!"

"I would have chosen her as the last person to have the business, which is so inexpressibly none of my business--"

"Or mine, as I think you remarked," Bushwick interposed.

"Come out through," Verrian concluded, accepting his interposition with a bow.

"I see what you mean," Bushwick said, after a moment's thought. "But, really, I don't think it's likely to go further. If you want to know, I believe Miss Macroyd feels the distinction of being in the secret so much that she'll prefer to hint round till Mrs. Westangle gives the thing away. She had to tell me, because I was there with her when she saw you with the young lady, to keep me from going with my curiosity to you. Come, I do think she's honest about it."

"Don't you think they're rather more dangerous when they're honest?"

"Well, only when they're obliged to be. Cheer up! I don't believe Miss Macroyd is one to spoil sport."

"Oh, I think I shall live through it," Verrian said, rather stiffening again. But he relaxed, in rising from his chair, and said, "Well, good-night, old fellow. I believe I shall go to bed now."

"You won't wait for me till my pipe's out?"

"No, I think not. I seem to be just making it, and if I waited I might lose my grip." He offered Bushwick a friendly hand.

"Do you suppose it's been my soothing conversation? I'm like the actor

that the doctor advised to go and see himself act. I can't talk myself sleepy."

"You might try it," Verrian said, going out.

XVIII.

The men who had talked of going away on Thursday seemed to have found it practicable to stay. At any rate, they were all there on the Saturday night for the ghost-seeing, and, of course, none of the women had gone. What was more remarkable, in a house rather full of girls, nobody was sick; or, at least, everybody was well enough to be at dinner, and, after dinner, at the dance, which impatiently, if a little ironically, preceded the supernatural part of the evening's amusement. It was the decorum of a woman who might have been expected not to have it that Mrs. Westangle had arranged that the evening's amusement should not pass the bound between Saturday night and Sunday morning. The supper was to be later, but that was like other eating and drinking on the Sabbath; and it was to be a cold supper.

At half-past ten the dancing stopped in the foyer and the drawing-room, and by eleven the guests were all seated fronting the closed doors of the library. There were not so many of them but that in the handsome space there was interval enough to lend a desired distance to the apparitions; and when the doors were slid aside it was applausively found that there was a veil of gauze falling from the roof to the floor, which promised its aid in heightening the coming mystery. This was again heightened by the universal ignorance as to how the apparitions were to make their advents and on what terms.

It was with an access of a certain nervous anxiety that Verrian found himself next Miss Macroyd, whose frank good-fellowship first expressed itself in a pleasure at the chance which he did not share, and then extended to a confidential sympathy for the success of the enterprise which he did not believe she felt. She laughed, but *'sotto voce'*, in bending her head close to his and whispering, "I hope she'll be equal to her *'mise en scene'*. It's really very nice. So simple." Besides the gauze veil, there was no preparation except in the stretch of black drapery which hid the book-shelves at the farther wall of the library.

"Mrs. Westangle's note is always simplicity," Verrian returned.

"Oh yes, indeed! And you wish to keep up the Westangle convention?"

"I don't see any reason for dropping it."

"Oh, none in the world," she mocked.

He determined to push her, since she had tried to push him, and he asked, "What reason could there be?"

"Now, Mr. Verrian, asking a woman for a reason! I shall begin to think some one else wrote your book, too! Perhaps she'll take up supplying ideas to authors as well as hostesses. Of course, I mean Mrs. Westangle."

Verrian wished he had not tried to push Miss Macroyd, and he was still grinding his teeth in a vain endeavor to get out some fit retort between them, when he saw Bushwick shuffling to his feet, in the front row of the spectators, and heard him beginning a sort of speech.

"Ladies and gentlemen: Mrs. Westangle has chosen me, because a real-estate broker is sometimes an auctioneer, and may be supposed to have the gift of oratory, to make known the conditions on which you may interview the ghosts which you are going to see. Anybody may do it who will comply with the conditions. In the first place, you have got to be serious, and to think up something that you would really like to know about your past, present, or future. Remember, this is no joking matter, and the only difference between the ghost that you will see here and a real materialization under professional auspices is that the ghost won't charge you anything. Of course, if any lady or gentleman--especially lady--wishes to contribute to any charitable object, after a satisfactory interview with the ghost, a hat will be found at the hall-door for the purpose, and Mrs. Westangle will choose the object: I have put in a special plea for my own firm, at a season when the real-estate business is not at its best." By this time Bushwick had his audience laughing, perhaps the more easily because they were all more or less in a hysterical mood, which, whether we own it or not, is always induced by an approximation to the supernatural. He frowned and said, "NO laughing!" and then they laughed the more. When he had waited for them to be quiet he went on gravely, "The conditions are simply these: Each person who chooses may interview the ghost, keeping a respectful distance, but not so far off but that the ghost can distinctly hear a stage whisper. The question put must be seriously meant, and it must be the question which the questioner would prefer to have answered above everything else at the time being. Certain questions will be absolutely ruled out, such as, 'Does Maria love me?' or, 'Has Reuben ever been engaged before?' The laughter interrupted the speaker again, and Verrian hung his head in rage and shame; this stupid ass was spoiling the hope of anything beautiful in the spectacle and turning it into a gross burlesque. Somehow he felt that the girl who had invented it had meant, in the last analysis, something serious, and it was in her behalf that he would have liked to choke Bushwick. All the time he believed that Miss Macroyd, whose laugh sounded above the others, was somehow enjoying his indignation and divining its reason.

"Other questions, touching intemperance or divorce, the questioner will feel must not be asked; though it isn't necessary to more than suggest this, I hope; it will be left entirely to the good taste and good feeling of the--party. We all know what the temptations of South Dakota and the rum fiend are, and that to err is human, and forgive divine." He paused, having failed to get a laugh, but got it by asking, confidentially, "Where was I? Oh!"--he caught himself up--" I remember. Those of you

who are in the habit of seeing ghosts need not be told that a ghost never speaks first; and those who have never met an apparition before, but are in the habit of going to the theatre, will recall the fact that in W. Shakespeare's beautiful play of 'Hamlet' the play could not have gone on after the first scene if Horatio had not spoken to the ghost of Hamlet's father and taken the chances of being snubbed. Here there are no chances of that kind; the chances are that you'll wish the ghost had not been entreated: I think that is the phrase."

In the laugh that followed a girl on Miss Macroyd's other hand audibly asked her, "Oh, isn't he too funny?"

"Delicious!" Miss Macroyd agreed. Verrian felt she said it to vex him.

"Now, there's just one other point," Bushwick resumed, "and then I have done. Only one question can be allowed to each person, but if the questioner is a lady she can ask a question and a half, provided she is not satisfied with the answer. In this case, however, she will only get half an answer. Now I have done, and if my arguments have convinced any one within the sound of my voice that our ghost really means business, I shall feel fully repaid for the pains and expense of getting up these few impromptu remarks, to which I have endeavored to give a humorous character, in order that you may all laugh your laugh out, and no unseemly mirth may interrupt the subsequent proceedings. We will now have a little music, and those who can recall my words will be allowed to sing them."

In the giggling and chatter which ensued the chords softly played passed into ears that might as well have been deaf; but at last there was a general quiescence of expectation, in which every one's eyes were strained to pierce through the gauze curtain to the sombre drapery beyond. The wait was so long that the tension relaxed and a whispering began, and Verrian felt a sickness of pity for the girl who was probably going to make a failure of it. He asked himself what could have happened to her. Had she lost courage? Or had her physical strength, not yet fully renewed, given way under the stress? Or had she, in sheer disgust for the turn the affair had been given by that brute Bushwick, thrown up the whole business? He looked round for Mrs. Westangle; she was not there; he conjectured--he could only conjecture--that she was absent conferring with Miss Shirley and trying to save the day.

A long, deeply sighed "Oh-h-h-h!" shuddering from many lips made him turn abruptly, and he saw, glimmering against the pall at the bottom of the darkened library, a figure vaguely white, in which he recognized a pose, a gesture familiar to him. For the others the figure was It, but for him it was precious She. It was she, and she was going to carry it through; she was going to triumph, and not fail. A lump came into his throat, and a mist blurred his eyes, which, when it cleared again, left him staring at nothing.

A girl's young voice uttered the common feeling, "Why, is that all?"

"It is, till some one asks the ghost a question; then it will reappear,"

Bushwick rose to say. "Will Miss Andrews kindly step forward and ask the question nearest her heart?"

"Oh no!" the girl answered, with a sincerity that left no one quite free to laugh.

"Some other lady, then?" Bushwick suggested. No one moved, and he added, "This is a difficulty which had been foreseen. Some gentleman will step forward and put the question next his heart." Again no one offered to go forward, and there was some muted laughter, which Bushwick checked. "This difficulty had been foreseen, too. I see that I shall have to make the first move, and all that I shall require of the audience is that I shall not be supposed to be in collusion with the illusion. I hope that after my experience, whatever it is, some young woman of courage will follow."

He passed into the foyer, and from that came into the library, where he showed against the dark background in an attitude of entreaty slightly burlesqued. The ghost reappeared.

"Shall I marry the woman I am thinking of?" he asked.

The phantom seemed to hesitate; it wavered like a pale reflection cast against the pall. Then, in the tones which Verrian knew, the answer came:

"Ask her. She will tell you."

The phantom had scored a hit, and the applause was silenced with difficulty; but Verrian felt that Miss Shirley had lost ground. It could not have been for the easy cleverness of such a retort that she had planned the affair. Yet, why not? He was taking it too seriously. It was merely business with her.

"And I haven't even the right to half a question more!" Bushwick lamented, in a dramatized dejection, and crossed slowly back from the library to his place.

"Why, haven't you got enough?" one of the men asked, amidst the gay clamor of the women.

The ghost was gone again, and its evanescence was discussed with ready wonder. Another of the men went round to tempt his fate, and the phantom suddenly reappeared so near him that he got a laugh by his start of dismay. "I forgot what I was going to ask, he faltered.

"I know what it was," the apparition answered. "You had better sell."

"But they say it will go to a hundred!" the man protested.

"No back--talk, Rogers!" Bushwick interposed. "That was the understanding.

"But we didn't understand," one of the girls said, coming to the rescue, "that the ghost was going to answer questions that were not asked. That would give us all away."

"Then the only thing is for you to go and ask before it gets a chance to answer," Bushwick said.

"Well, I will," the girl returned. And she swept round into the library, where she encountered the phantom with a little whoop as it started into sight before her. "I'm not going to be scared out of it!" she said, defiantly. "It's simply this: Did the person I suspect really take the ring."

The answer came, "Look on the floor under your dressing-table!"

"Well, if I find it there," the girl addressed the company, "I'm a spiritualist from this time forth." And she came back to her place, where she remained for some time explaining to those near how she had lately lost her ring and suspected her maid, whom she had dismissed.

Upon the whole, the effect was serious. The women, having once started, needed no more urging. One after another they confronted and questioned the oracle with increasing sincerity.

Miss Macroyd asked Verrian, "Hadn't you better take your chance and stop this flow of fatuity, Mr. Verrian?"

"I'm afraid I should be fatuous, too," he said. "But you?"

"Oh, thank you, I don't believe in ghosts, though this seems to be a very pretty one--very graceful, I mean. I suppose a graceful woman would be graceful even when a disembodied spirit. I should think she would be getting a little tried with all this questioning; but perhaps we're only reading the fatigue into her. The ghost may be merely overdone."

"It might easily be that," Verrian assented.

"Oh, may I ask it something now?" a girl's voice appealed to Bushwick. It was the voice of that Miss Andrews who had spoken first, and first refused to question the ghost. She was the youngest of Mrs. Westangle's guests, and Verrian had liked her, with a sense of something precious in the prolongation of a child's unconsciousness into the consciousness of girlhood which he found in her. She was always likelier than not to say the thing she thought and felt, whether it was silly and absurd, or whether, as also happened, there was a touch of inspired significance in it, as there is apt to be in the talk of children. She was laughed at, but she was liked, and the freshness of her soul was pleasant to the girls who were putting on the world as hard as they could. She could be trusted to do and say the unexpected. But she was considered a little morbid, and certainly she had an exaltation of the nerves that was at times almost beyond her control.

"Oh, dear!" Miss Macroyd whispered. "What is that strange simpleton

going to do, I wonder?"

Verrian did not feel obliged to answer a question not addressed to him, but he, too, wondered and doubted.

The girl, having got her courage together, fluttered with it from her place round to the ghost's in a haste that expressed a fear that it might escape her if she delayed to put it to the test. The phantom was already there, as if it had waited her in the curiosity that followed her. They were taking each other seriously, the girl and the ghost, and if the ghost had been a veridical phantom, in which she could have believed with her whole soul, the girl could not have entreated it more earnestly, more simply.

She bent forward, in her slim, tall figure, with her hands outstretched, and with her tender voice breaking at times in her entreaty. "Oh, I don't know how to begin," she said, quite as if she and the phantom were alone together, and she had forgotten its supernatural awfulness in a sense of its human quality. "But you will understand, won't you! You'll think it very strange, and it is very unlike the others; but if I'm going to be serious--"

The white figure stood motionless; but Verrian interpreted its quiet as a kindly intelligence, and the girl made a fresh start in a note a little more piteous than before. "It's about the--the truth. Do you think if sometimes we don't tell it exactly, but we wish we had very, very much, it will come round somehow the same as if we had told it?"

"I don't understand," the phantom answered. "Say it again--or differently."

"Can our repentance undo it, or make the falsehood over into the truth?"

"Never!" the ghost answered, with a passion that thrilled to Verrian's heart.

"Oh, dear!" the girl said; and then, as if she had been going to continue, she stopped.

"You've still got your half-question, Miss Andrews," Bushwick interposed.

"Even if we didn't mean it to deceive harmfully?" the girl pursued.

"If it was just on impulse, something we couldn't seem to help, and we didn't see it in its true light at the time--"

The ghost made no answer. It stood motionless.

"It is offended," Bushwick said, without knowing the Shakespearian words.

"You've asked it three times half a question, Miss Andrews. Now, Mr. Verrian, it's your turn. You can ask it just one-quarter of a question. Miss Andrews has used up the rest of your share."

Verrian rose awkwardly and stood a long moment before his chair. Then he

dropped back again, saying, dryly, "I don't think I want to ask it anything."

The phantom sank straight down as if sinking through the floor, but lay there like a white shawl trailed along the bottom of the dark curtain.

"And is that all?" Miss Macroyd asked Verrian. "I was just getting up my courage to go forward. But now, I suppose--"

"Oh, dear!" Miss Andrews called out. "Perhaps it's fainted. Hadn't we better--"

There were formless cries from the women, and the men made a crooked rush forward, in which Verrian did not join. He remained where he had risen, with Miss Macroyd beside him.

"Perhaps it's only a coup de theatre!" she said, with her laugh. "Better wait."

Bushwick was gathering the prostrate figure up. "She has fainted!" he called. "Get some water, somebody!"

XIX.

The early Monday morning train which brought Verrian up to town was so very early that he could sit down to breakfast with his mother only a little later than their usual hour.

She had called joyfully to him from her room, when she heard the rattling of his key as he let himself into the apartment, and, after an exchange of greetings, shouted back and forth before they saw each other, they could come at once to the history of his absence over their coffee.

"You must have had a very good time, to stay so long. After you wrote that you would not be back Thursday, I expected it would be Saturday till I got your telegram. But I'm glad you stayed. You certainly needed the rest."

"Yes, if those things are ever a rest." He looked down at his cup while he stirred the coffee in it, and she studied his attitude, since she could not see his face fully, for the secret of any vital change that might have come upon him. It could be that in the interval since she had seen him he had seen the woman who was to take him from her. She was always preparing herself for that, knowing that it must come almost as certainly as death, and knowing that with all her preparation she should not be ready for it. "I've got rather a long story to tell you and rather a strange story," he said, lifting his head and looking round, but not so impersonally that his mother did not know well enough to say to the Swedish serving-woman:

"You needn't stay, Margit. I'll give Mr. Philip his breakfast. Well!"

she added, when they were alone.

"Well," he returned, with a smile that she knew he was forcing, "I have seen the girl that wrote that letter."

"Not Jerusha Brown?"

"Not Jerusha Brown, but the girl all the same."

"Now go on, Philip, and don't miss a single word!" she commanded him, with an imperious breathlessness. "You know I won't hurry you or interrupt you, but you must--you really must--tell me everything. Don't leave out the slightest detail."

"I won't," he said. But she was aware, from time to time, that she was keeping her word better than he was keeping his, in his account of meeting Miss Shirley and all the following events.

"You can imagine," he said, "what a sensation the swooning made, and the commotion that followed it."

"Yes, I can imagine that," she answered. But she was yet so faithful that she would not ask him to go on.

He continued, unasked, "I don't know just how, now, to account for its coming into my head that it was Miss Andrews who was my unknown correspondent. I suppose I've always unconsciously expected to meet that girl, and Miss Andrews's hypothetical case was psychologically so parallel--"

"Yes, yes!"

"And I've sometimes been afraid that I judged it too harshly--that it was a mere girlish freak without any sort of serious import."

"I was sometimes afraid so, Philip. But--"

"And I don't believe now that the hypothetical case brought any intolerable stress of conscience upon Miss Shirley, or that she fainted from any cause but exhaustion from the general ordeal. She was still weak from the sickness she had been through--too weak to bear the strain of the work she had taken up. Of course, the catastrophe gave the whole surface situation away, and I must say that those rather banal young people behaved very humanely about it. There was nothing but interest of the nicest kind, and, if she is going on with her career, it will be easy enough for her to find engagements after this."

"Why shouldn't she go on?" his mother asked, with a suspicion which she kept well out of sight.

"Well, as well as she could explain afterwards, the catastrophe took her work out of the category of business and made her acceptance in it a matter of sentiment."

"She explained it to you herself?"

"Yes, the general sympathy had penetrated to Mrs. Westangle, though I don't say that she had been more than negatively indifferent to Miss Shirley's claim on her before. As it was, she sent for me to her room the next morning, and I found Miss Shirley alone there. She said Mrs. Westangle would be down in a moment."

Now, indeed, Mrs. Verrian could not govern herself from saying, "I don't like it, Philip."

"I knew you wouldn't. It was what I said to myself at the time. You were so present with me that I seemed to have you there chaperoning the interview." His mother shrugged, and he went on: "She said she wished to tell me something first, and then she said, 'I want to do it while I have the courage, if it's courage; perhaps it's just desperation. I am Jerusha Brown.'"

His mother began, "But you said--" and then stopped herself.

"I know that I said she wasn't, but she explained, while I sat there rather mum, that there was really another girl, and that the other girl's name was really Jerusha Brown. She was the daughter of the postmaster in the village where Miss Shirley was passing the summer. In fact, Miss Shirley was boarding in the postmaster's family, and the girls had become very friendly. They were reading my story together, and talking about it, and trying to guess how it would come out, just as the letter said, and they simultaneously hit upon the notion of writing to me. It seemed to them that it would be a good joke--I'm not defending it, mother, and I must say Miss Shirley didn't defend it, either--to work upon my feelings in the way they tried, and they didn't realize what they had done till Armiger's letter came. It almost drove them wild, she said; but they had a lucid interval, and they took the letter to the girl's father and told him what they had done. He was awfully severe with them for their foolishness, and said they must write to Armiger at once and confess the fact. Then they said they had written already, and showed him the second letter, and explained they had decided to let Miss Brawn write it in her person alone for the reason she gave in it. But Miss Shirley told him she was ready to take her full share of the blame, and, if anything came of it, she authorized him to put the whole blame on her."

Verrian made a pause which his mother took for invitation or permission to ask, "And was he satisfied with that?"

"I don't know. I wasn't, and it's only just to Miss Shirley to say that she wasn't, either. She didn't try to justify it to me; she merely said she was so frightened that she couldn't have done anything. She may have realized more than the Brown girl what they had done."

"The postmaster, did he regard it as anything worse than foolishness?"

"I don't believe he did. At any rate, he was satisfied with what his

daughter had done in owning up."

"Well, I always liked that girl's letter. And did they show him your letter?"

"It seems that they did."

"And what did he say about that?"

"I suppose, what I deserved. Miss Shirley wouldn't say, explicitly. He wanted to answer it, but they wouldn't let him. I don't know but I should feel better if he had. I haven't been proud of that letter of mine as time has gone on, mother; I think I behaved very narrow-mindedly, very personally in it."

"You behaved justly."

"Justly? I thought you had your doubts of that. At any rate, I had when it came to hearing the girl accusing herself as if she had been guilty of some monstrous wickedness, and I realized that I had made her feel so."

"She threw herself on your pity!"

"No, she didn't, mother. Don't make it impossible for me to tell you just how it was."

"I won't. Go on."

"I don't say she was manly about it; that couldn't be, but she was certainly not throwing herself on my pity, unless--unless--"

"What?"

"Unless you call it so for her to say that she wanted to own up to me, because she could have no rest till she had done so; she couldn't put it behind her till she had acknowledged it; she couldn't work; she couldn't get well."

He saw his mother trying to consider it fairly, and in response he renewed his own resolution not to make himself the girl's advocate with her, but to continue the dispassionate historian of the case. At the same time his memory was filled with the vision of how she had done and said the things he was telling, with what pathos, with what grace, with what beauty in her appeal. He saw the tears that came into her eyes at times and that she indignantly repressed as she hurried on in the confession which she was voluntarily making, for there was no outward stress upon her to say anything. He felt again the charm of the situation, the sort of warmth and intimacy, but he resolved not to let that feeling offset the impartiality of his story.

"No, I don't say she threw herself on your mercy," his mother said, finally. "She needn't have told you anything."

"Except for the reason she gave--that she couldn't make a start for herself till she had done so. And she has got her own way to make; she is poor. Of course, you may say her motive was an obsession, and not a reason."

"There's reality in it, whatever it is; it's a genuine motive," Mrs. Verrian conceded.

"I think so," Verrian said, in a voice which he tried to keep from sounding too grateful.

Apparently his mother did not find it so. She asked, "What had been the matter with her, did she say?"

"In her long sickness? Oh! A nervous fever of some sort."

"From worrying about that experience?"

Verrian reluctantly admitted, "She said it made her want to die. I don't suppose we can quite realize--"

"We needn't believe everything she said to realize that she suffered. But girls exaggerate their sufferings. I suppose you told her not to think of it any more?"

Verrian gave an odd laugh. "Well, not unconditionally. I tried to give her my point of view. And I stipulated that she should tell Jerusha Brown all about it, and keep her from having a nervous fever, too."

"That was right. You must see that even cowardice couldn't excuse her selfishness in letting that girl take all the chances."

"And I'm afraid I was not very unselfish myself in my stipulations," Verrian said, with another laugh. "I think that I wanted to stand well with the postmaster."

There was a note of cynical ease in this which Mrs. Verrian found morally some octaves lower than the pitch of her son's habitual seriousness in what concerned himself, but she could not make it a censure to him. "And you were able to reassure her, so that she needn't think of it any more?"

"What would you have wished me to do?" he returned, dryly. "Don't you think she had suffered enough?"

"Oh, in this sort of thing it doesn't seem the question of suffering. If there's wrong done the penalty doesn't right it."

The notion struck Verrian's artistic sense. "That's true. That would make the 'donnee' of a strong story. Or a play. It's a drama of fate. It's Greek. But I thought we lived under another dispensation."

"Will she try to get more of the kind of thing she was doing for Mrs. Westangle at once? Or has she some people?"

"No; only friends, as I understand."

"Where is she from? Up country?"

"No, she's from the South."

"I don't like Southerners!"

"I know you don't, mother. But you must honor the way they work and get on when they come North and begin doing for themselves. Besides, Miss Shirley's family went South after the war--"

"Oh, not even a REAL Southerner!"

"Mother!"

"I know! I'm not fair. I ought to beg her pardon. And I ought to be glad it's all over. Shall you see her again?"

"It might happen. But I don't know how or when. We parted friends, but we parted strangers, so far as any prevision of the future is concerned," Verrian said.

His mother drew a long breath, which she tried to render inaudible.

"And the girl that asked her the strange questions, did you see her again?"

"Oh yes. She had a curious fascination. I should like to tell you about her. Do you think there's such a thing as a girl's being too innocent?"

"It isn't so common as not being innocent enough."

"But it's more difficult?"

"I hope you'll never find it so, my son," Mrs. Verrian said. And for the first time she was intentionally personal. "Go on."

"About Miss Andrews?"

"Whichever you please."

"She waylaid me in the afternoon, as I was coming home from a walk, and wanted to talk with me about Miss Shirley."

"I suppose Miss Shirley was the day's heroine after what had happened?"

"The half-day's, or quarter-day's heroine, perhaps. She left on the church train for town yesterday morning soon after I saw her. Miss Andrews seemed to think I was an authority on the subject, and she approached me with a large-eyed awe that was very amusing, though it was affecting, too. I suppose that girls must have many worships for other girls before they have any worship for a man. This girl couldn't

separate Miss Shirley, on the lookout for another engagement, from the psychical part she had played. She raved about her; she thought she was beautiful, and she wanted to know all about her and how she could help her. Miss Andrews's parents are rich but respectable, I understand, and she's an only child. I came in for a share of her awe; she had found out that I was not only not Verrian the actor, but an author of the same name, and she had read my story with passionate interest, but apparently in that unliterary way of many people without noticing who wrote it; she seemed to have thought it was Harding Davis or Henry James; she wasn't clear which. But it was a good deal to have had her read it at all in that house; I don't believe anybody else had, except Miss Shirley and Miss Macroyd."

Mrs. Verrian deferred a matter that would ordinarily have interested her supremely to an immediate curiosity. "And how came she to think you would know so much about Miss Shirley?"

Verrian frowned. "I think from Miss Macroyd. Miss Macroyd seems to have taken a grandmotherly concern in my affairs through the whole week. Perhaps she resented having behaved so piggishly at the station the day we came, and meant to take it out of Miss Shirley and myself. She had seen us together in the woods, one day, and she must have told it about. Mrs. Westangle wouldn't have spoken of us together, because she never speaks of anything unless it is going to count; and there was no one else who knew of our acquaintance."

"Why, my son, if you went walking in the woods with the girl, any one might have seen you."

"I didn't. It was quite by accident that we met there. Miss Shirley was anxious to keep her presence in the house a secret from everybody."

Mrs. Verrian would not take any but the open way, with this. She would not deal indirectly, with it, or in any wise covertly or surreptitiously. "It seems to me that Miss Shirley has rather a fondness for secrecy," she said.

"I think she has," Verrian admitted. "Though, in this case, it was essential to the success of her final scheme. But she is a curious study. I suppose that timidity is at the bottom of all fondness for secrecy, isn't it?"

"I don't know. She doesn't seem to be timid in everything."

"Say it out, mother!" Verrian challenged her with a smile. "You're not timid, anyway!"

"She had the courage to join in that letter, but not the courage to own her part in it. She was brave enough to confess that she had been sick of a nervous fever from the answer you wrote to the Brown girl, but she wouldn't have been brave enough to confess anything at all if she had believed she would be physically or morally strong enough to keep it."

"Perhaps nobody--nobody but you, mother--is brave in the right time and place."

She knew that this was not meant in irony. "I am glad you say that, Philip."

"It's only your due. But aren't you a little too hard upon cowards, at times? For the sort of person she is, if you infer the sort from the worst appearance she has made in the whole business, I think she has done pretty well."

"Why had she left the Brown girl to take all your resentment alone for the last six or eight months?"

"She may have thought that she was getting her share of the punishment in the fever my resentment brought on?"

"Philip, do you really believe that her fever, if she had one, came from that?"

"I think she believes it, and there's no doubt but she was badly scared."

"Oh, there's no doubt of that!"

"But come, mother, why should we take her at the worst? Of course, she has a complex nature. I see that as clearly as you do. I don't believe we look at her diversely, in the smallest particular. But why shouldn't a complex nature be credited with the same impulses towards the truth as a single nature? Why shouldn't we allow that Miss Shirley had the same wish to set herself right with me as Miss Andrews would have had in her place?"

"I dare say she wished to set herself right with you, but not from the same wish that Miss Andrews would have had. Miss Andrews would not have wished you to know the truth for her own sake. Her motive would have been direct-straight."

"Yes; and we will describe her as a straight line, and Miss Shirley as a waving line. Why shouldn't the waving line, at its highest points, touch the same altitude as the straight line?"

"It wouldn't touch it all the time, and in character, or nature, as you call it, that is the great thing. It's at the lowest points that the waving line is dangerous."

"Well, I don't deny that. But I'm anxious to be just to a person who hasn't experienced a great deal of mercy for what, after all, wasn't such a very heinous thing as I used to think it. You must allow that she wasn't obliged to tell me anything about herself."

"Yes, she was, Philip. As I said before, she hadn't the physical or moral strength to keep it from you when she was brought face to face with you. Besides--" Mrs. Verrian hesitated.

"Out with it, mother! We, at least, won't have any concealments."

"She may have thought, she could clinch it in that way."

"Clinch what?"

"You know. Is she pretty?"

"She's--interesting."

"That can always be managed. Is she tall?"

"NO, I think she's rather out of style there; she's rather petite."

"And what's her face like?"

"Well, she has no particular complexion, but it's not thick. Her eyes are the best of her, though there isn't much of them. They're the 'waters on a starry night' sort, very sweet and glimmering. She has a kind of ground-colored hair and a nice little chin. Her mouth helps her eyes out; it looks best when she speaks; it's pathetic in the play of the lips."

"I see," Mrs. Verrian said.

XX.

The following week Verrian and his mother were at a show of paintings, in the gallery at the rear of a dealer's shop, and while they were bending together to look at a picture he heard himself called to in a girlish voice, "Oh, Mr. Verrian!" as if his being there was the greatest wonder in the world.

His mother and he lifted themselves to encounter a tall, slim girl, who was stretching her hand towards him, and who now cried out, joyously, "Oh, Mr. Verrian, I thought it must be you, but I was afraid it wasn't as soon as I spoke. Oh, I'm so glad to see you; I want so much to have you know my mother--Mr. Verrian," she said, presenting him.

"And I you mine," Verrian responded, in a violent ellipse, and introduced his own mother, who took in the fact of Miss Andrews's tall thinness, topped with a wide, white hat and waving white plumes, and her little face, irregular and somewhat gaunt, but with a charm in the lips and eyes which took the elder woman's heart with pathos. She made talk with Mrs. Andrews, who affected one as having the materials of social severity in her costume and manner.

"Oh, I didn't believe I should ever see you again," the girl broke out impulsively upon Verrian. "Oh, I wanted to ask you so about Miss

Shirley. Have you seen her since you got back?"

"No," Verrian said, "I haven't seen her."

"Oh, I thought perhaps you had. I've been to the address that Mrs. Westangle gave me, but she isn't there any more; she's gone up into Harlem somewhere, and I haven't been able to call again. Oh, I do feel so anxious about her. Oh, I do hope she isn't ill. Do you think she is?"

"I don't believe so," Verrian began. But she swept over his prostrate remark.

"Oh, Mr. Verrian, don't you think she's wonderful? I've been telling mother about it, and I don't feel at all the way she does. Do you?"

"How does she feel? I must know that before I say."

"Why, of course! I hadn't told you! She thinks it was a make-up between Miss Shirley and that Mr. Bushwick. But I say it couldn't have been. Do you think it could?"

Verrian found the suggestion so distasteful, for a reason which he did not quite seize himself, that he answered, resentfully, "It could have been, but I don't think it was."

"I will tell her what you say. Oh, may I tell her what you say?"

"I don't see why you shouldn't. It isn't very important, either way, is it?"

"Oh, don't you think so? Not if it involved pretending what wasn't true?"

She bent towards him in such anxious demand that he could not help smiling.

"The whole thing was a pretence, wasn't it?" he suggested.

"Yes, but that would have been a pretence that we didn't know of."

"It would be incriminating to that extent, certainly," Verrian owned, ironically. He found the question of Miss Shirley's blame for the collusion as distasteful as the supposition of the collusion, but there was a fascination in the innocence before him, and he could not help playing with it.

Sometimes Miss Andrews apparently knew that he was playing with her innocence, and sometimes she did not. But in either case she seemed to like being his jest, from which she snatched a fearful joy. She was willing to prolong the experience, and she drifted with him from picture to picture, and kept the talk recurrently to Miss Shirley and the phenomena of Seeing Ghosts.

Her mother and Mrs. Verrian evidently got on together better than either of them at first expected. When it came to their parting, through Mrs. Andrews's saying that she must be going, she shook hands with Mrs. Verrian and said to Philip, "I am so glad to have met you, Mr. Verrian. Will you come and see us?"

"Yes, thank you," he answered, taking the hand she now offered him, and then taking Miss Andrews's hand, while the girl's eyes glowed with pleasure. "I shall be very glad."

"Oh, shall you?" she said, with her transparent sincerity. "And you won't forget Thursdays! But any day at five we have tea."

"Thank you," Verrian said. "I might forget the Thursdays, but I couldn't forget all the days of the week."

Miss Andrews laughed and blushed at once. "Then we shall expect you every day."

"Well, every day but Thursday," he promised.

When the mother and daughter had gone Mrs. Verrian said, "She is a great admirer of yours, Philip. She's read your story, and I suspect she wants an opportunity to talk with you about it."

"You mean Mrs. Andrews?"

"Yes. I suppose the daughter hasn't waited for an opportunity. The mother had read that publisher's paragraph about your invalid, and wanted to know if you had ever heard from her again. Women are personal in their literary interests."

Philip asked, in dismay, "You didn't give it away did you, mother?"

"Certainly not, my dear. You have brought me up too carefully."

"Of course. I didn't imagine you had."

Then, as they could not pretend to look at the pictures any longer, they went away, too. Their issue into the open air seemed fraught with novel emotion for Mrs. Verrian. "Well, now," she said, "I have seen the woman I would be willing my son should marry."

"Child, you mean," Philip said, not pretending that he did not know she meant Miss Andrews.

"That girl," his mother returned, "is innocence itself. Oh, Philip, dear, do marry her!"

"Well, I don't know. If her mother is behaving as sagely with her as you are with me the chances are that she won't let me. Besides, I don't know that I want to marry quite so much innocence."

"She is conscience incarnate," his mother uttered, fervently.

"You could put your very soul in her keeping."

"Then you would be out of a job, mother."

"Oh, I am not worthy of the job, my dear. I have always felt that. I am too complex, and sometimes I can't see the right alone, as she could."

Philip was silent a moment while he lost the personal point of view.

"I suspect we don't see the right when we see it alone. We ought to see the wrong, too."

"Ah, Philip, don't let your fancy go after that girl!"

"Miss Andrews? I thought--"

"Don't you be complex, my dear. You know I mean Miss Shirley. What has become of her, I wonder. I heard Miss Andrews asking you."

"I wasn't able to tell her. Do you want me to try telling you?"

"I would rather you never could."

Philip laughed sardonically. "Now, I shall forget Thursdays and all the other days, too. You are a very unwise parent, mother."

They laughed with each other at each other, and treated her enthusiasm for Miss Andrews as the joke it partly was. Mrs. Verrian did not follow him up about her idol, and a week or so later she was able to affect a decent surprise when he came in at the end of an afternoon and declined the cup of tea she proposed on the ground that he had been taking a cup of tea with the Andrewses. "You have really been there?"

"Didn't you expect me to keep my promise?"

"But I was afraid I had put a stumbling-block in the way."

"Oh, I found I could turn the consciousness you created in me into literary material, and so I was rather eager to go. I have got a point for my new story out of it. I shall have my fellow suffer all I didn't suffer in meeting the girl he knows his mother wants him to marry. I got on very well with those ladies. Mrs. Andrews is the mother of innocence, but she isn't innocence. She managed to talk of my story without asking about the person who wanted to anticipate the conclusion. That was what you call complex. She was insincere; it was the only thing she wanted to talk about."

"I don't believe it, Philip. But what did Miss Andrews talk about?"

"Well, she is rather an optimistic conscience. She talked about books and plays that some people do not think are quite proper. I have a notion that, where the point involved isn't a fact of her own experience,

she is not very severe about it. You think that would be quite safe for me?"

"Philip, I don't like your making fun of her!"

"Oh, she wasn't insipid; she was only limpid. I really like her, and, as for reverencing her, of course I feel that in a way she is sacred." He added, after a breath, "Too sacred. We none of us can expect to marry Eve before the Fall now; perhaps we have got over wanting to."

"You are very perverse, my dear. But you will get over that."

"Don't take away my last defence, mother."

Verrian began to go rather regularly to the Andrews house, or, at least, he was accused of doing it by Miss Macroyd when, very irregularly, he went one day to see her. "How did you know it?" he asked.

"I didn't say I knew it. I only wished to know it. Now I am satisfied. I met another friend of yours on Sunday." She paused for him to ask who; but he did not ask. "I see you are dying to know what friend: Mr. Bushwick."

"Oh, he's a good-fellow. I wonder I don't run across him."

"Perhaps that's because you never call on Miss Shirley." Miss Macroyd waited for this to take effect, but he kept a glacial surface towards her, and she went on:

"They were walking together in the park at noon. I suppose they had been to church together."

Verrian manifested no more than a polite interest in the fact. He managed so well that he confirmed Miss Macroyd in a tacit conjecture. She went on: "Miss Shirley was looking quite blooming for her. But so was he, for that matter. Why don't you ask if they inquired for you?"

"I thought you would tell me without."

"I will tell you if he did. He was very cordial in his inquiries; and I had to pretend, to gratify him, that you were very well. I implied that you came here every Tuesday, but your Thursdays were dedicated to Miss Andrews."

"You are a clever woman, Miss Macroyd. I should never have thought of so much to say on such an uninteresting subject. And Miss Shirley showed no curiosity?"

"Ah, she is a clever woman, too. She showed the prettiest kind of curiosity--so perfectly managed. She has a studio--I don't know just how she puts it to use--with a painter girl in one of those studio apartment houses on the West Side: The Veronese, I believe. You must go and see her; I'll let you have next Tuesday off; Tuesday's her day, too."

"You are generosity itself, Miss Macroyd."

"Yes, there's nothing mean about me," she returned, in slang rather older than she ordinarily used. "If you're not here next Tuesday I shall know where you are."

"Then I must take a good many Tuesdays off, unless I want to give myself away."

"Oh, don't do that, Mr. Verrian! Please! Or else I can't let you have any Tuesday off."

XXI.

Upon the whole, Verrian thought he would go to see Miss Shirley the next Tuesday, but he did not say so to Miss Macroyd. Now that he knew where the girl was, all the peculiar interest she had inspired in him renewed itself. It was so vivid that he could not pay his usual Thursday call at Miss Andrews's, and it filled his mind to the exclusion of the new story he had begun to write. He loafed his mornings away at his club, and he lunched there, leaving his mother to lunch alone, and was dreamily preoccupied in the evenings which he spent at home, sitting at his desk, with the paper before him, unable to coax the thoughts from his brain to its alluring blank, but restive under any attempts of hers to talk with him.

In his desperation he would have gone to the theatre, but the fact that the ass who rightfully called himself Verrian was playing at one of them blocked his way, through his indignation, to all of them. By Saturday afternoon the tedious time had to be done something with, and he decided to go and see what the ass was like.

He went early, and found himself in the end seat of a long row of many rows of women, who were prolonging the time of keeping their hats on till custom obliged them to take them off. He gave so much notice to the woman next him as to see that she was deeply veiled as well as widely hatted, and then he lapsed into a dreary muse, which was broken by the first strains of the overture. Then he diverted himself by looking round at all those ranks of women lifting their arms to take out their hat-pins and dropping them to pin their hats to the seat-backs in front of them, or to secure them somehow in their laps. Upon the whole, he thought the manoeuvre graceful and pleasing; he imagined a consolation in it for the women, who, if they were forced by public opinion to put off their charming hats, would know how charmingly they did it. Each turned a little, either her body or her head, and looked in any case out of the corner of her eyes; and he was phrasing it all for a scene in his story, when he looked round at his neighbor to see how she had managed, or was managing, with her veil. At the same moment she looked at him, and their eyes met.

"Mr. Verrian!"

"Miss Shirley!"

The stress of their voices fell upon different parts of the sentences they uttered, but did not commit either of them to a special role.

"How very strange we should meet here!" she said, with pleasure in her voice. "Do you know, I have been wanting to come all winter to see this man, on account of his name? And to think that I should meet the other Mr. Verrian as soon as I yielded to the temptation."

"I have just yielded myself," Verrian said. "I hope you don't feel punished for yielding."

"Oh, dear, no! It seems a reward."

She did not say why it seemed so, and he suggested, "The privilege of comparing the histrionic and the literary Verrian?"

"Could there be any comparison?" she came back, gayly.

"I don't know. I haven't seen the histrionic Verrian yet."

They were laughing when the curtain rose, and the histrionic Verrian had his innings for a long, long first act. When the curtain fell she turned to the literary Verrian and said, "Well?"

"He lasted a good while," Verrian returned.

"Yes. Didn't he?" She looked at the little watch in her wristlet.

"A whole hour! Do you know, Mr. Verrian, I am going to seem very rude. I am going to leave you to settle this question of superiority; I know you'll be impartial. I have an appointment--with the dressmaker, to be specific--at half-past four, and it's half-past three now, and I couldn't well leave in the middle of the next act. So I will say good-bye now--"

"Don't!" he entreated. "I couldn't bear to be left alone with this dreadful double of mine. Let me go out with you."

"Can I accept such self-sacrifice? Well!"

She had put on her hat and risen, and he now stepped out of his place to let her pass and then followed her. At the street entrance he suggested, "A hansom, or a simple trolley?"

"I don't know," she murmured, meditatively, looking up the street as if that would settle it. "If it's only half-past three now, I should have time to get home more naturally."

"Oh! And will you let me walk with you?"

"Why, if you're going that way."

"I will say when I know which way it is."

They started on their walk so blithely that they did not sadden in the retrospect of their joint experiences at Mrs. Westangle's. By the time they reached the park gate at Columbus Circle they had come so distinctly to the end of their retrospect that she made an offer of letting him leave her, a very tacit offer, but unmistakable, if he chose to take it. He interpreted her hesitation as he chose. "No," he said, "it won't be any longer if we go up through the park."

She drew in her breath softly, smoothing down her muff with her right hand while she kept her left in it. "And it will certainly be pleasanter." When they were well up the path, in that part of it where it deflects from the drive without approaching the street too closely, and achieves something of seclusion, she said:

"Your speaking of him just now makes me want to tell you something, Mr. Verrian. You would hear of it very soon, anyway, and I feel that it is always best to be very frank with you; but you'll regard it as a secret till it comes out."

The currents that had been playing so warmly in and out of Verrian's heart turned suddenly cold. He said, with joyless mocking, "You know, I'm used to keeping your secrets. I--shall feel honored, I'm sure, if you trust me with another."

"Yes," she returned, pathetically, "you have always been faithful--even in your wounds." It was their joint tribute to the painful past, and they had paid no other. She was looking away from him, but he knew she was aware of his hanging his head. "That's all over now," she uttered, passionately. "What I wanted to say--to tell you--is that I am engaged to Mr. Bushwick."

He could have answered that she had no need to tell him. The cold currents in and out of his heart stiffened frozenly and ceased to flow; his heart itself stood still for an eternal instant. It was in this instant that he said, "He is a fine fellow." Afterwards, amid the wild bounding of his recovered pulse, he could add, "I congratulate him; I congratulate you both."

"Thank you," she said. "No one knows as I do how good he is--has been, all through." Probably she had not meant to convey any reproach to Verrian by Bushwick's praise, but he felt reproach in it. "It only happened last week. You do wish me happy, don't you? No one knows what a winter I have had till now. Everything seeming to fail--"

She choked, and did not say more. He said, aimlessly, "I am sorry--"

"Let me sit down a moment," she begged. And she dropped upon the bench at which she faltered, and rested there, as if from the exhaustion of running. When she could get her breath she began again: "There is

something else I want to tell you."

She stopped. And he asked, to prompt her, "Yes?"

"Thank you," she answered, piteously. And she added, with superficial inconsequence, "I shall always think you were very cruel."

He did not pretend not to know what she meant, and he said, "I shall always think so, too. I tried to revenge myself for the hurt your harmless hoax did my vanity. Of course, I made believe at the time that I was doing an act of justice, but I never was able to brave it out afterwards."

"But you were--you were doing an act of justice. I deserved what you said, but I didn't deserve what has followed. I meant no harm--it was a silly prank, and I have suffered for it as if it were a crime, and the consequences are not ended yet. I should think that, if there is a moral government of the universe, the Judge of all the earth would know when to hold his hand. And now the worst of it is to come yet." She caught Verrian's arm, as if for help.

"Don't--don't!" he besought her. "What will people think?"

"Yes, Yes!" she owned, releasing him and withdrawing to the other end of the seat.

"But it almost drives me wild. What shall I do? You ought to know. It is your fault. You have frightened me out of daring to tell the truth."

Had he, indeed, done that? Verrian asked himself, and it seemed to him that he had done something like it. If it was so, he must help her over her fear now. He answered, bluntly, harshly: "You must tell him all about it--"

"But if he won't believe me? Do you think he will believe me? Would you believe me?"

"You have nothing to do with that. There is nothing for you but to tell him the whole story. You mustn't share such a secret with any one but your husband. When you tell him it will cease to be my secret."

"Yes, yes."

"Well, then, you must tell him, unless--"

"Yes," she prompted.

Then they were both silent, looking intensely into each other's eyes. In that moment all else of life seemed to melt and swim away from Verrian and leave him stranded upon an awful eminence confronting her.

"Hello, hello!" a gay voice called, as if calling to them both. "What

are you two conspiring?" Bushwick, as suddenly as if he had fallen from the sky or started up from the earth, stood before them, and gave a hand to each--his right to Verrian, his left to Miss Shirley. "How are you, Verrian? How are you, Miss Shirley?" He mocked her in the formality of his address. "I've been shadowing you ever since you came into the park, but I thought I wouldn't interrupt till you seemed to have got through your conversation. May I ask what it was all about? It seemed very absorbing, from a respectful distance."

"Very absorbing, indeed," Miss Shirley said, making room for him between them. "Sit down and let me tell you. You're to be a partner in the secret."

"Silent partner," Bushwick suggested.

"I hope you'll always be silent," the girl shared in his drolling.

She began and told the whole story to the last detail, sparing neither herself nor Verrian, who listened as if he were some one else not concerned, and kept saying to himself, "what courage!" Bushwick listened as mutely, with a face that, to Verrian's eye, seemed to harden from its light jocosity into a severity he had not seen in it before. "It was something," she ended towards Bushwick, with a catch in her breath, "that you had to know."

"Yes," he answered, tonelessly.

"And now"--she attempted a little forlorn playfulness--"don't you think he gave me what I deserved?"

Bushwick rose up and took her hand under his arm, keeping his left hand upon hers.

"He! Who?"

"Mr. Verrian."

"I don't know any Mr. Verrian. Come, you'll take cold here."

He turned his back on Verrian, who fancied a tremor in her hat, as if she would look round at him; but then, as if she divined Bushwick's intention, she did not look round, and together they left him.

It was days before Verrian could confess himself of the fact to his mother, who listened with the justice instinctive in her. She still had not spoken when he ended, and he said, "I have thought it all over, and I feel that he did right. He did the only thing that a man in love with her could do. And I don't wonder he's in love with her. Yes"--he stayed his mother, imperatively--"and such a man as he, though he ground me in the dirt and stamped on me, I will say, it, is worthy of any woman. He can believe in a woman, and that's the first thing that's needed to make a woman like her, true. I don't envy his job." He was speaking self-contradictorily, irrelevantly, illogically, as a man thinks. He went on in that way, getting himself all out. "She isn't single-hearted, but

she's faithful. She'll never betray him now. She's never given him any reason to distrust her. She's the kind that can keep on straight with any one she's begun. straight with. She told him all that before me because she wanted me to know--to realize--that she had told him. It took courage."

Mrs. Verrian had thought of generalizing, but she seized a single point. "Perhaps not so much courage as you think. You mustn't let such bravado impose upon you, Philip. I've no doubt she knew her ground."

"She took the chance of his casting her off."

"She knew he wouldn't. She knew him, and she knew you. She knew that if he cast her off--"

"Mother! Don't say it! I can't bear it!"

His mother did not say it, or anything more, then. Late at night she came to him. "Are you asleep, Philip?"

"Asleep? !!"

"I didn't suppose you were. But I have had a note to-day which I must answer. Mrs. Andrews has asked us to dinner on Saturday. Philip, if you could see that sweet girl as I do, in all her goodness and sincerity--"

"I think I do, mother. And I wouldn't be guilty of her unhappiness for the world. You must decline."

"Well, perhaps you are right." Mrs. Verrian went away, softly, sighing. As she sealed her reply to Mrs. Andrews, she sighed again, and made the reflection which a mother seldom makes with regard to her son, before his marriage, that men do not love women for their goodness.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Almost incomparably ignorant woman
Almost to die of hunger for something to happen
Belief of immortality--without one jot of evidence
Brave in the right time and place
Continuity becomes the instinctive expectation
Found her too frankly disputatious
Girls who were putting on the world as hard as they could
If there's wrong done the penalty doesn't right it
Never wanted a holiday so much as the day after you had one
Personal view of all things and all persons which women take
Proof against the stupidest praise
Read too many stories to care for the plot
She laughed too much and too loud
Sick people are terribly, egotistical

The fad that fails is extinguished forever
Timidity is at the bottom of all fondness for secrecy

End of this Project Gutenberg Etext of Fennel and Rue,
by William Dean Howells

THE KENTONS

By William Dean Howells

I.

The Kentons were not rich, but they were certainly richer than the average in the pleasant county town of the Middle West, where they had spent nearly their whole married life. As their circumstances had grown easier, they had mellowed more and more in the keeping of their comfortable home, until they hated to leave it even for the short outings, which their children made them take, to Niagara or the Upper Lakes in the hot weather. They believed that they could not be so well anywhere as in the great square brick house which still kept its four acres about it, in the heart of the growing town, where the trees they had planted with their own hands topped it on three aides, and a spacious garden opened southward behind it to the summer wind. Kenton had his library, where he transacted by day such law business as he had retained in his own hands; but at night he liked to go to his wife's room and sit with her there. They left the parlors and piazzas to their girls, where they could hear them laughing with the young fellows who came to make the morning calls, long since disused in the centres of fashion, or the evening calls, scarcely more authorized by the great world. She sewed, and he read his paper in her satisfactory silence, or they played checkers together. She did not like him to win, and when she found herself unable to bear the prospect of defeat, she refused to let him make the move that threatened the safety of her men. Sometimes he laughed at her, and sometimes he scolded, but they were very good comrades, as elderly married people are apt to be. They had long ago quarrelled out their serious differences, which mostly arose from such differences of temperament as had first drawn them together; they criticised each other to their children from time to time, but they atoned for this defection by complaining of the children to each other, and they united in giving way to them on all points concerning their happiness, not to say their pleasure.

They had both been teachers in their youth before he went into the war,

and they had not married until he had settled himself in the practice of the law after he left the army. He was then a man of thirty, and five years older than she; five children were born to them, but the second son died when he was yet a babe in his mother's arms, and there was an interval of six years between the first boy and the first girl. Their eldest son was already married, and settled next them in a house which was brick, like their own, but not square, and had grounds so much less ample that he got most of his vegetables from their garden. He had grown naturally into a share of his father's law practice, and he had taken it all over when Renton was elected to the bench. He made a show of giving it back after the judge retired, but by that time Kenton was well on in the fifties. The practice itself had changed, and had become mainly the legal business of a large corporation. In this form it was distasteful to him; he kept the affairs of some of his old clients in his hands, but he gave much of his time, which he saved his self-respect by calling his leisure, to a history of his regiment in-the war.

In his later life he had reverted to many of the preoccupations of his youth, and he believed that Tuskingum enjoyed the best climate, on the whole, in the union; that its people of mingled Virginian, Pennsylvanian, and Connecticut origin, with little recent admixture of foreign strains, were of the purest American stock, and spoke the best English in the world; they enjoyed obviously the greatest sum of happiness, and had incontestably the lowest death rate and divorce rate in the State. The growth of the place was normal and healthy; it had increased only to five thousand during the time he had known it, which was almost an ideal figure for a county-town. There was a higher average of intelligence than in any other place of its size, and a wider and evener diffusion of prosperity. Its record in the civil war was less brilliant, perhaps, than that of some other localities, but it was fully up to the general Ohio level, which was the high-water mark of the national achievement in the greatest war of the greatest people under the sun. It was Kenton's pride and glory that he had been a part of the finest army known in history. He believed that the men who made history ought to write it, and in his first Commemoration-Day oration he urged his companions in arms to set down everything they could remember of their soldiering, and to save the letters they had written home, so that they might each contribute to a collective autobiography of the regiment. It was only in this way, he held, that the intensely personal character of the struggle could be recorded. He had felt his way to the fact that every battle is essentially episodic, very campaign a sum of fortuities; and it was not strange that he should suppose, with his want of perspective, that this universal fact was purely national and American. His zeal made him the repository of a vast mass of material which he could not have refused to keep for the soldiers who brought it to him, more or less in a humorous indulgence of his whim. But he even offered to receive it, and in a community where everything took the complexion of a joke, he came to be affectionately regarded as a crank on that point; the shabbily aging veterans, whom he pursued to their workbenches and cornfields, for the documents of the regimental history, liked to ask the colonel if he had brought his gun. They, always give him the title with which he had been breveted at the close of the war; but he was known to the, younger, generation of his fellow-citizens as the judge. His wife called him Mr.

Kenton in the presence of strangers, and sometimes to himself, but to his children she called him Poppa, as they did.

The steady-going eldest son, who had succeeded to his father's affairs without giving him the sense of dispossession, loyally accepted the popular belief that he would never be the man his father was. He joined with his mother in a respect for Kenton's theory of the regimental history which was none the less sincere because it was unconsciously a little sceptical of the outcome; and the eldest daughter was of their party. The youngest said frankly that she had no use for any history, but she said the same of nearly everything which had not directly or indirectly to do with dancing. In this regulation she had use for parties and picnics, for buggy-rides and sleigh-rides, for calls from young men and visits to and from other girls, for concerts, for plays, for circuses and church sociables, for everything but lectures; and she devoted herself to her pleasures without the shadow of chaperonage, which was, indeed, a thing still unheard of in Tuskingum.

In the expansion which no one else ventured, or, perhaps, wished to set bounds to, she came under the criticism of her younger brother, who, upon the rare occasions when he deigned to mingle in the family affairs, drew their mother's notice to his sister's excesses in carrying-on, and required some action that should keep her from bringing the name, of Kenton to disgrace. From being himself a boy of very slovenly and lawless life he had suddenly, at the age of fourteen, caught himself up from the street, reformed his dress and conduct, and confined himself in his large room at the top of the house, where, on the pursuits to which he gave his spare time, the friends who frequented his society, and the literature which nourished his darkling spirit, might fitly have been written Mystery. The sister whom he reprobated was only two years his elder, but since that difference in a girl accounts for a great deal, it apparently authorized her to take him more lightly than he was able to take himself. She said that he was in love, and she achieved an importance with him through his speechless rage and scorn which none of the rest of his family enjoyed. With his father and mother he had a bearing of repressed superiority which a strenuous conscience kept from unmasking itself in open contempt when they failed to make his sister promise to behave herself. Sometimes he had lapses from his dignified gloom with his mother, when, for no reason that could be given, he fell from his habitual majesty to the tender dependence of a little boy, just as his voice broke from its nascent base to its earlier treble at moments when he least expected or wished such a thing to happen. His stately but vague ideal of himself was supported by a stature beyond his years, but this rendered it the more difficult for him to bear the humiliation of his sudden collapses, and made him at other times the easier prey of Lottie's ridicule. He got on best, or at least most evenly, with his eldest sister. She took him seriously, perhaps because she took all life so; and she was able to interpret him to his father when his intolerable dignity forbade a common understanding between them. When he got so far beyond his depth that he did not know what he meant himself, as sometimes happened, she gently found him a safe footing nearer shore.

Kenton's theory was that he did not distinguish among his children.

He said that he did not suppose they were the best children in the world, but they suited him; and he would not have known how to change them for the better. He saw no harm in the behavior of Lottie when it most shocked her brother; he liked her to have a good time; but it flattered his nerves to have Ellen about him. Lottie was a great deal more accomplished, he allowed that; she could play and sing, and she had social gifts far beyond her sister; but he easily proved to his wife that Nelly knew ten times as much.

Nelly read a great deal; she kept up with all the magazines, and knew all the books in his library. He believed that she was a fine German scholar, and in fact she had taken up that language after leaving school, when, if she had been better advised than she could have been in Tuskingum, she would have kept on with her French. She started the first book club in the place; and she helped her father do the intellectual honors of the house to the Eastern lecturers, who always stayed with the judge when they came to Tuskingum. She was faithfully present at the moments, which her sister shunned in derision, when her father explained to them respectively his theory of regimental history, and would just, as he said, show them a few of the documents he had collected. He made Ellen show them; she knew where to put her hand on the most characteristic and illustrative; and Lottie offered to bet what one dared that Ellen would marry some of those lecturers yet; she was literary enough.

She boasted that she was not literary herself, and had no use for any one who was; and it could not have been her culture that drew the most cultivated young man in Tuskingum to her. Ellen was really more beautiful; Lottie was merely very pretty; but she had charm for them, and Ellen, who had their honor and friendship, had no charm for them. No one seemed drawn to her as they were drawn to her sister till a man came who was not one of the most cultivated in Tuskingum; and then it was doubtful whether she was not first drawn to him. She was too transparent to hide her feeling from her father and mother, who saw with even more grief than shame that she could not hide it from the man himself, whom they thought so unworthy of it.

He had suddenly arrived in Tuskingum from one of the villages of the county, where he had been teaching school, and had found something to do as reporter on the Tuskingum 'Intelligencer', which he was instinctively characterizing with the spirit of the new journalism, and was pushing as hardily forward on the lines of personality as if he had dropped down to it from the height of a New York or Chicago Sunday edition. The judge said, with something less than his habitual honesty, that he did not mind his being a reporter, but he minded his being light and shallow; he minded his being flippant and mocking; he minded his bringing his cigarettes and banjo into the house at his second visit. He did not mind his push; the fellow had his way to make and he had to push; but he did mind his being all push; and his having come out of the country with as little simplicity as if he had passed his whole life in the city. He had no modesty, and he had no reverence; he had no reverence for Ellen herself, and the poor girl seemed to like him for that.

He was all the more offensive to the judge because he was himself to blame for their acquaintance, which began when one day the fellow had called after him in the street, and then followed down the shady sidewalk beside him to his hour, wanting to know what this was he had heard about his history, and pleading for more light upon his plan in it. At the gate he made a flourish of opening and shutting it for the judge, and walking up the path to his door he kept his hand on the judge's shoulder most offensively; but in spite of this Kenton had the weakness to ask him in, and to call Ellen to get him the most illustrative documents of the history.

The interview that resulted in the 'Intelligencer' was the least evil that came of this error. Kenton was amazed, and then consoled, and then afflicted that Ellen was not disgusted with it; and in his conferences with his wife he fumed and fretted at his own culpable folly, and tried to get back of the time he had committed it, in that illusion which people have with trouble that it could somehow be got rid of if it could fairly be got back of; till the time came when his wife could no longer share his unrest in this futile endeavor.

She said, one night when they had talked late and long, "That can't be helped now; and the question is what are we going to do to stop it."

The judge evaded the point in saying, "The devil of it is that all the nice fellows are afraid of her; they respect her too much, and the very thing which ought to disgust her with this chap is what gives him his power over her. I don't know what we are going to do, but we must break it off, somehow."

"We might take her with us somewhere," Mrs. Kenton suggested.

"Run away from the fellow? I think I see myself! No, we have got to stay and face the thing right here. But I won't have him about the house any more, understand that. He's not to be let in, and Ellen mustn't see him; you tell her I said so. Or no! I will speak to her myself." His wife said that he was welcome to do that; but he did not quite do it. He certainly spoke to his daughter about her, lover, and he satisfied himself that there was yet nothing explicit between them. But she was so much less frank and open with him than she had always been before that he was wounded as well as baffled by her reserve. He could not get her to own that she really cared for the fellow; but man as he was, and old man as he was, he could not help perceiving that she lived in a fond dream of him.

He went from her to her mother. "If he was only one-half the man she thinks he is!"--he ended his report in a hopeless sigh.

"You want to give in to her!" his wife pitilessly interpreted. "Well, perhaps that would be the best thing, after all."

"No, no, it wouldn't, Sarah; it would be the easiest for both of us, I admit, but it would be the worst thing for her. We've got to let it run along for a while yet. If we give him rope enough he may hang himself;

there's that chance. We can't go away, and we can't shut her up, and we can't turn him out of the house. We must trust her to find him out for herself."

"She'll never do that," said the mother. "Lottie says Ellen thinks he's just perfect. He cheers her up, and takes her out of herself. We've always acted with her as if we thought she was different from other girls, and he behaves to her as if she was just like all of them, just as silly, and just as weak, and it pleases her, and flatters her; she likes it."

"Oh, Lord!" groaned the father. "I suppose she does."

This was bad enough; it was a blow to his pride in Ellen; but there was something that hurt him still worse. When the fellow had made sure of her, he apparently felt himself so safe in her fondness that he did not urge his suit with her. His content with her tacit acceptance gave the bitterness of shame to the promise Kenton and his wife had made each other never to cross any of their children in love. They were ready now to keep that promise for Ellen, if he asked it of them, rather than answer for her lifelong disappointment, if they denied him. But, whatever he meant finally to do, he did not ask it; he used his footing in their house chiefly as a basis for flirtations beyond it. He began to share his devotions to Ellen with her girl friends, and not with her girl friends alone. It did not come to scandal, but it certainly came to gossip about him and a silly young wife; and Kenton heard of it with a torment of doubt whether Ellen knew of it, and what she would do; he would wait for her to do herself whatever was to be done. He was never certain how much she had heard of the gossip when she came to her mother, and said with the gentle eagerness she had, "Didn't poppa talk once of going South this winter?"

"He talked of going to New York," the mother answered, with a throb of hope.

"Well," the girl returned, patiently, and Mrs. Kenton read in her passivity an eagerness to be gone from sorrow that she would not suffer to be seen, and interpreted her to her father in such wise that he could not hesitate.

II.

If such a thing could be mercifully ordered, the order of this event had certainly been merciful; but it was a cruel wrench that tore Kenton from the home where he had struck such deep root. When he actually came to leave the place his going had a ghastly unreality, which was heightened by his sense of the common reluctance. No one wanted to go, so far as he could make out, not even Ellen herself, when he tried to make her say she wished it. Lottie was in open revolt, and animated her young men to a share in the insurrection. Her older brother was kindly and helpfully

acquiescent, but he was so far from advising the move that Kenton had regularly to convince himself that Richard approved it, by making him say that it was only for the winter and that it was the best way of helping Ellen get rid of that fellow. All this did not enable Kenton to meet the problems of his younger son, who required him to tell what he was to do with his dog and his pigeons, and to declare at once how he was to dispose of the cocoons he had amassed so as not to endanger the future of the moths and butterflies involved in them. The boy was so fertile in difficulties and so importunate for their solution, that he had to be crushed into silence by his father, who ached in a helpless sympathy with his reluctance.

Kenton came heavily upon the courage of his wife, who was urging forward their departure with so much energy that he obscurely accused her of being the cause of it, and could only be convinced of her innocence when she offered to give the whole thing up if he said so. When he would not say so, she carried the affair through to the bitter end, and she did not spare him some, pangs which she perhaps need not have shared with him. But people are seldom man and wife for half their lives without wishing to impart their sufferings as well as their pleasures to each other; and Mrs. Kenton, if she was no worse, was no better than other wives in pressing to her husband's lips the cup that was not altogether sweet to her own. She went about the house the night before closing it, to see that everything was in a state to be left, and then she came to Kenton in his library, where he had been burning some papers and getting others ready to give in charge to his son, and sat down by his cold hearth with him, and wrung his soul with the tale of the last things she had been doing. When she had made him bear it all, she began to turn the bright side of the affair to him. She praised the sense and strength of Ellen, in the course the girl had taken with herself, and asked him if he, really thought they could have done less for her than they were doing. She reminded him that they were not running away from the fellow, as she had once thought they must, but Ellen was renouncing him, and putting him out of her sight till she could put him out of her mind. She did not pretend that the girl had done this yet; but it was everything that she wished to do it, and saw that it was best. Then she kissed him on his gray head, and left him alone to the first ecstasy of his homesickness.

It was better when they once got to New York, and were settled in an apartment of an old-fashioned down-town hotel. They thought themselves very cramped in it, and they were but little easier when they found that the apartments over and under them were apparently thought spacious for families of twice their numbers. It was the very quietest place in the whole city, but Kenton was used to the stillness of Tuskingum, where, since people no longer kept hens, the nights were stiller than in the country itself; and for a week he slept badly. Otherwise, as soon as they got used to living in six rooms instead of seventeen, they were really very comfortable.

He could see that his wife was glad of the release from housekeeping, and she was growing gayer and seemed to be growing younger in the inspiration of the great, good-natured town. They had first come to New York on their wedding journey, but since that visit she had always let him go

alone on his business errands to the East; these had grown less and less frequent, and he had not seen New York for ten or twelve years. He could have waited as much longer, but he liked her pleasure in the place, and with the homesickness always lurking at his heart he went about with her to the amusements which she frequented, as she said, to help Ellen take her mind off herself. At the play and the opera he sat thinking of the silent, lonely house at Tuskingum, dark among its leafless maples, and the life that was no more in it than if they had all died out of it; and he could not keep down a certain resentment, senseless and cruel, as if the poor girl were somehow to blame for their exile. When he betrayed this feeling to his wife, as he sometimes must, she scolded him for it, and then offered, if he really thought anything like that, to go back to Tuskingum at once; and it ended in his having to own himself wrong, and humbly promise that he never would let the child dream how he felt, unless he really wished to kill her. He was obliged to carry his self-punishment so far as to take Lottie very sharply to task when she broke out in hot rebellion, and declared that it was all Ellen's fault; she was not afraid of killing her sister; and though she did not say it to her, she said it of her, that anybody else could have got rid of that fellow without turning the whole family out of house and home.

Lottie, in fact, was not having a bit good time in New York, which she did not find equal in any way to Tuskingum for fun. She hated the dull propriety of the hotel, where nobody got acquainted, and every one was as afraid as death of every one else; and in her desolation she was thrown back upon the society of her brother Boyne. They became friends in their common dislike of New York; and pending some chance of bringing each other under condemnation they lamented their banishment from Tuskingum together. But even Boyne contrived to make the heavy time pass more lightly than she in the lessons he had with a tutor, and the studies of the city which he carried on. When the skating was not good in Central Park he spent most of his afternoons and evenings at the vaudeville theatres. None of the dime museums escaped his research, and he conversed with freaks and monsters of all sorts upon terms of friendly confidence. He reported their different theories of themselves to his family with the same simple-hearted interest that he criticised the song and dance artists of the vaudeville theatres. He became an innocent but by no means uncritical connoisseur of their attractions, and he surprised with the constancy and variety of his experience in them a gentleman who sat next him one night. Boyne thought him a person of cultivation, and consulted him upon the opinion he had formed that there was not so much harm in such places as people said. The gentleman distinguished in saying that he thought you would not find more harm in them, if you did not bring it with you, than you would in the legitimate theatres; and in the hope of further wisdom from him, Boyne followed him out of the theatre and helped him on with his overcoat. The gentleman walked home to his hotel with him, and professed a pleasure in his acquaintance which he said he trusted they might sometime renew.

All at once the Kentons began to be acquainted in the hotel, as often happens with people after they have long ridden up and down in the elevator together in bonds of apparently perpetual strangeness. From one friendly family their acquaintance spread to others until they were,

almost without knowing it, suddenly and simultaneously on smiling and then on speaking terms with the people of every permanent table in the dining-room. Lottie and Boyne burst the chains of the unnatural kindness which bound them, and resumed their old relations of reciprocal censure. He found a fellow of his own age in the apartment below, who had the same country traditions and was engaged in a like inspection of the city; and she discovered two girls on another floor, who said they received on Saturdays and wanted her to receive with them. They made a tea for her, and asked some real New Yorkers; and such a round of pleasant little events began for her that Boyne was forced to call his mother's attention to the way Charlotte was going on with the young men whom she met and frankly asked to call upon her without knowing anything about them; you could not do that in New York, he said.

But by this time New York had gone to Mrs. Kenton's head, too, and she was less fitted to deal with Lottie than at home. Whether she had succeeded or not in helping Ellen take her mind off herself, she had certainly freed her own from introspection in a dream of things which had seemed impossible before. She was in that moment of a woman's life which has a certain pathos for the intelligent witness, when, having reared her children and outgrown the more incessant cares of her motherhood, she sometimes reverts to her girlish impulses and ideals, and confronts the remaining opportunities of life with a joyful hope unknown to our heavier and sullener sex in its later years. It is this peculiar power of rejuvenescence which perhaps makes so many women outlive their husbands, who at the same age regard this world as an accomplished fact. Mrs. Kenton had kept up their reading long after Kenton found himself too busy or too tired for it; and when he came from his office at night and fell asleep over the book she wished him to hear, she continued it herself, and told him about it. When Ellen began to show the same taste, they read together, and the mother was not jealous when the father betrayed that he was much prouder of his daughter's culture than his wife's. She had her own misgivings that she was not so modern as Ellen, and she accepted her judgment in the case of some authors whom she did not like so well.

She now went about not only to all the places where she could make Ellen's amusement serve as an excuse, but to others when she could not coax or compel the melancholy girl. She was as constant at matinees of one kind as Boyne at another sort; she went to the exhibitions of pictures, and got herself up in schools of painting; she frequented galleries, public and private, and got asked to studio teas; she went to meetings and conferences of aesthetic interest, and she paid an easy way to parlor lectures expressive of the vague but profound ferment in women's souls; from these her presence in intellectual clubs was a simple and natural transition. She met and talked with interesting people, and now and then she got introduced to literary people. Once, in a bookstore, she stood next to a gentleman leaning over the same counter, whom a salesman addressed by the name of a popular author, and she remained staring at him breathless till he left the place. When she bragged of the prodigious experience at home, her husband defied her to say how it differed from meeting the lecturers who had been their guests in Tuskingum, and she answered that none of them compared with this author;

and, besides, a lion in his own haunts was very different from a lion going round the country on exhibition. Kenton thought that was pretty good, and owned that she had got him there.

He laughed at her, to the children, but all the same she believed that she was living in an atmosphere of culture, and with every breath she was sensible of an intellectual expansion. She found herself in the enjoyment of so wide and varied a sympathy with interests hitherto strange to her experience that she could not easily make people believe she had never been to Europe. Nearly every one she met had been several times, and took it for granted that she knew the Continent as well as they themselves.

She denied it with increasing shame; she tried to make Kenton understand how she felt, and she might have gone further if she had not seen how homesick he was for Tuskingum. She did her best to coax him and scold him into a share of the pleasure they were all beginning to have in New York. She made him own that Ellen herself was beginning to be gayer; she convinced him that his business was not suffering in his absence and that he was the better from the complete rest he was having. She defied him, to say, then, what was the matter with him, and she bitterly reproached herself, in the event, for not having known that it was not homesickness alone that was the trouble. When he was not going about with her, or doing something to amuse the children, he went upon long, lonely walks, and came home silent and fagged. He had given up smoking, and he did not care to sit about in the office of the hotel where other old fellows passed the time over their papers and cigars, in the heat of the glowing grates. They looked too much like himself, with their air of unrecognized consequence, and of personal loss in an alien environment. He knew from their dress and bearing that they were country people, and it wounded him in a tender place to realize that they had each left behind him in his own town an authority and a respect which they could not enjoy in New York. Nobody called them judge, or general, or doctor, or squire; nobody cared who they were, or what they thought; Kenton did not care himself; but when he missed one of them he envied him, for then he knew that he had gone back to the soft, warm keeping of his own neighborhood, and resumed the intelligent regard of a community he had grown up with. There were men in New York whom Kenton had met in former years, and whom he had sometimes fancied looking up; but he did not let them know he was in town, and then he was hurt that they ignored him. He kept away from places where he was likely to meet them; he thought that it must have come to them that he was spending the winter in New York, and as bitterly as his nature would suffer he resented the indifference of the Ohio Society to the presence of an Ohio man of his local distinction. He had not the habit of clubs, and when one of the pleasant younger fellows whom he met in the hotel offered to put him up at one, he shrank from the courtesy shyly and almost dryly. He had outlived the period of active curiosity, and he did not explore the city as he would once have done. He had no resorts out of the hotel, except the basements of the secondhand book-dealers. He haunted these, and picked up copies of war histories and biographies, which, as fast as he read them, he sent off to his son at Tuskingum, and had him put them away with the documents for the life of his regiment. His wife could see,

with compassion if not sympathy, that he was fondly strengthening by these means the ties that bound him to his home, and she silently proposed to go back to it with him whenever he should say the word.

He had a mechanical fidelity, however, to their agreement that they should stay till spring, and he made no sign of going, as the winter wore away to its end, except to write out to Tuskingum minute instructions for getting the garden ready. He varied his visits to the book-stalls by conferences with seedsmen at their stores; and his wife could see that he had as keen a satisfaction in despatching a rare find from one as from the other.

She forbore to make him realize that the situation had not changed, and that they would be taking their daughter back to the trouble the girl herself had wished to escape. She was trusting, with no definite hope, for some chance of making him feel this, while Kenton was waiting with a kind of passionate patience for the term of his exile, when he came in one day in April from one of his long walks, and said he had been up to the Park to see the blackbirds. But he complained of being tired, and he lay down on his bed. He did not get up for dinner, and then it was six weeks before he left his room.

He could not remember that he had ever been sick so long before, and he was so awed by his suffering, which was severe but not serious, that when his doctor said he thought a voyage to Europe would be good for him he submitted too meekly for Mrs. Kenton. Her heart smote her for her guilty joy in his sentence, and she punished herself by asking if it would not do him more good to get back to the comfort and quiet of their own house. She went to the length of saying that she believed his attack had been brought on more by homesickness than anything else. But the doctor agreed rather with her wish than her word, and held out that his melancholy was not the cause but the effect of his disorder. Then she took courage and began getting ready to go. She did not flag even in the dark hours when Kenton got back his courage with his returning strength, and scoffed at the notion of Europe, and insisted that as soon as they were in Tuskingum he should be all right again.

She felt the ingratitude, not to say the perfidy, of his behavior, and she fortified herself indignantly against it; but it was not her constant purpose, or the doctor's inflexible opinion, that prevailed with Kenton at last a letter came one day for Ellen which she showed to her mother, and which her mother, with her distress obscurely relieved by a sense of its powerful instrumentality, brought to the girl's father. It was from that fellow, as they always called him, and it asked of the girl a hearing upon a certain point in which, it had just come to his knowledge, she had misjudged him. He made no claim upon her, and only urged his wish to right himself with her because she was the one person in the whole world, after his mother, for whose good opinion he cared. With some tawdriness of sentiment, the letter was well worded; it was professedly written for the sole purpose of knowing whether, when she came back to Tuskingum, she would see him, and let him prove to her that he was not wholly unworthy of the kindness she had shown him when he was without other friends.

"What does she say?" the judge demanded.

"What do you suppose?" his wife retorted. "She thinks she ought to see him."

"Very well, then. We will go to Europe."

"Not on my account!" Mrs. Kenton consciously protested.

"No; not on your account, or mine, either. On Nelly's account. Where is she? I want to talk with her."

"And I want to talk with you. She's out, with Lottie; and when she comes back I will tell her what you say. But I want to know what you think, first."

III.

It was some time before they arrived at a common agreement as to what Kenton thought, and when they reached it they decided that they must leave the matter altogether to Ellen, as they had done before. They would never force her to anything, and if, after all that her mother could say, she still wished to see the fellow, they would not deny her.

When it came to this, Ellen was a long time silent, so long a time that her mother was beginning restively to doubt whether she was going to speak at all. Then she drew a long, silent breath. "I suppose I ought to despise myself, mamma, for caring for him, when he's never really said that he cared for me."

"No, no," her mother faltered.

"But I do, I do!" she gave way piteously. "I can't help it! He doesn't say so, even now."

"No, he doesn't." It hurt her mother to own the fact that alone gave her hope.

The girl was a long time silent again before she asked, "Has poppa got the tickets?"

"Why, he wouldn't, Ellen, child, till he knew how you felt," her mother tenderly reproached her.

"He'd better not wait!" The tears ran silently down Ellen's cheeks, and her lips twitched a little between these words and the next; she spoke as if it were still of her father, but her mother understood. "If he ever does say so, don't you speak a word to me, mamma; and don't you let poppa."

"No; indeed I won't," her mother promised. "Have we ever interfered, Ellen? Have we ever tried to control you?"

"He WOULD have said so, if he hadn't seen that everybody was against him." The mother bore without reply the ingratitude and injustice that she knew were from the child's pain and not from her will. "Where is his letter? Give me his letter!" She nervously twitched it from her mother's hand and ran it into her pocket. She turned away to go and put off her hat, which she still wore from coming in with Lottie; but she stopped and looked over her shoulder at her mother. "I'm going to answer it, and I don't want you ever to ask me what I've said. Will you?"

"No, I won't, Nelly."

"Well, then!"

The next night she went with Boyne and Lottie to the apartment overhead to spend their last evening with the young people there, who were going into the country the next day. She came back without the others, who wished to stay a little longer, as she said, with a look of gay excitement in her eyes, which her mother knew was not happiness. Mrs. Kenton had an impulse to sweep into her lap the lithograph plans of the steamer, and the passage ticket which lay open on the table before herself and her husband. But it was too late to hide them from Ellen. She saw them, and caught up the ticket, and read it, and flung it down again. "Oh, I didn't think you would do it!" she burst out; and she ran away to her room, where they could hear her sobbing, as they sat haggardly facing each other.

"Well, that settles it," said Benton at last, with a hard gulp.

"Oh, I suppose so," his wife assented.

On his part, now, he had a genuine regret for her disappointment from the sad safety of the trouble that would keep them at home; and on her part she could be glad of it if any sort of comfort could come out of it to him.

"Till she says go," he added, "we've got to stay."

"Oh yes," his wife responded. "The worst of it is, we can't even go back to Tuskingum." He looked up suddenly at her, and she saw that he had not thought of this. She made "Tchkl!" in sheer amaze at him.

"We won't cross that river till we come to it," he said, sullenly, but half-ashamed. The next morning the situation had not changed overnight, as they somehow both crazily hoped it might, and at breakfast, which they had at a table grown more remote from others with the thinning out of the winter guests of the hotel, the father and mother sat down alone in silence which was scarcely broken till Lottie and Boyne joined them.

"Where's Ellen?" the boy demanded.

"She's having her breakfast in her room," Mrs. Kenton answered.

"She says she don't want to eat anything," Lottie reported. "She made the man take it away again."

The gloom deepened in the faces of the father and mother, but neither spoke, and Boyne resumed the word again in a tone of philosophic speculation. "I don't see how I'm going to get along, with those European breakfasts. They say you can't get anything but cold meat or eggs; and generally they don't expect to give you anything but bread and butter with your coffee. I don't think that's the way to start the day, do you, poppa?"

Kenton seemed not to have heard, for he went on silently eating, and the mother, who had not been appealed to, merely looked distractedly across the table at her children.

"Mr. Plumpton says he's coming down to see us off," said Lottie, smoothing her napkin in her lap. "Do you know the time of day when the boat sails, mamma?"

"Yes," her brother broke in, "and if I had been mamma I'd have boxed your ears for the way you went on with him. You fairly teased him to come. The way Lottie goes on with men is a shame, mamma."

"What time does the boat sail, mamma!" Lottie blandly persisted. "I promised to let Mr. Plumpton know."

"Yes, so as to get a chance to write to him," said Boyne. "I guess when he sees your spelling!"

"Momma! Do wake up! What time does our steamer sail?"

A light of consciousness came into Mrs. Renton's eyes at last, and she sighed gently. "We're not going, Lottie."

"Not going! Why, but we've got the tickets, and I've told--"

"Your father has decided not to go, for the present. We may go later in the summer, or perhaps in the fall."

Boyne looked at his father's troubled face, and said nothing, but Lottie was not stayed from the expression of her feelings by any ill-timed consideration for what her father's might be. "I just know," she fired, "it's something to do with that nasty Bittridge. He's been a bitter dose to this family! As soon as I saw Ellen have a letter I was sure it was from him; and she ought to be ashamed. If I had played the simpleton with such a fellow I guess you wouldn't have let me keep you from going to Europe very much. What is she going to do now? Marry him? Or doesn't he want her to?"

"Lottie!" said her mother, and her father glanced up at her with a face

that silenced her.

"When you've been half as good a girl as Ellen has been, in this whole matter," he said, darkly, "it will be time for you to complain of the way you've been treated."

"Oh yes, I know you like Ellen the best," said the girl, defiantly.

"Don't say such a thing, Lottie!" said her mother. "Your father loves all his children alike, and I won't have you talking so to him. Ellen has had a great deal to bear, and she has behaved beautifully. If we are not going to Europe it is because we have decided that it is best not to go, and I wish to hear nothing more from you about it."

"Oh yes! And a nice position it leaves me in, when I've been taking good-bye of everybody! Well, I hope to goodness you won't say anything about it till the Plumptions get away. I couldn't have the face to meet them if you did."

"It won't be necessary to say anything; or you can say that we've merely postponed our sailing. People are always doing that."

"It's not to be a postponement," said Kenton, so sternly that no one ventured to dispute him, the children because they were afraid of him, and their mother because she was suffering for him.

At the steamship office, however, the authorities represented that it was now so near the date of his sailing that they could not allow him to relinquish his passages except at his own risk. They would try to sell his ticket for him, but they could not take it back, and they could not promise to sell it. There was reason in what they said, but if there had been none, they had the four hundred dollars which Kenton had paid for his five berths and they had at least the advantage of him in the argument by that means. He put the ticket back in his pocket-book without attempting to answer them, and deferred his decision till he could advise with his wife, who, after he left the breakfast-table upon his errand to the steamship office, had abandoned her children to their own devices, and gone to scold Ellen for not eating.

She had not the heart to scold her when she found the girl lying face downward in the pillow, with her thin arms thrown up through the coils and heaps of her loose-flung hair. She was so alight that her figure scarcely defined itself under the bedclothes; the dark hair, and the white, outstretched arms seemed all there was of her. She did not stir, but her mother knew she was not sleeping. "Ellen," she said, gently, "you needn't be troubled about our going to Europe. Your father has gone down to the steamship office to give back his ticket."

The girl flashed her face round with nervous quickness. "Gone to give back his ticket!"

"Yes, we decided it last night. He's never really wanted to go, and--"

"But I don't wish poppa to give up his ticket!" said Ellen. "He must get it again. I shall die if I stay here, mamma. We have got to go. Can't you understand that?"

Mrs. Kenton did not know what to answer. She had a strong superficial desire to shake her daughter as a naughty child which has vexed its mother, but under this was a stir stronger pity for her as a woman, which easily prevailed. "Why, but, Ellen dear! We thought from what you said last night--"

"But couldn't you SEE," the girl reproached her, and she began to cry, and turned her face into the pillow again and lay sobbing.

"Well," said her mother, after she had given her a little time, "you needn't be troubled. Your father can easily get the ticket again; he can telephone down for it. Nothing has been done yet. But didn't you really want to stay, then?"

"It isn't whether I want to stay or not," Ellen spoke into her pillow. "You know that. You know that I have got to go. You know that if I saw him--Oh, why do you make me talk?"

"Yes, I understand, child." Then, in the imperious necessity of blaming some one, Mrs. Kenton added: "You know how it is with your father. He is always so precipitate; and when he heard what you said, last night, it cut him to the heart. He felt as if he were dragging you away, and this morning he could hardly wait to get through his breakfast before he rushed down to the steamship office. But now it's all right again, and if you want to go, we'll go, and your father will only be too glad."

"I don't want father to go against his will. You said he never wanted to go to Europe." The girl had turned her face upon her mother again; and fixed her with her tearful, accusing eyes.

"The doctors say he ought to go. He needs the change, and I think we should all be the better far getting away."

"I shall not," said Ellen. "But if I don't--"

"Yes," said her mother, soothingly.

"You know that nothing has changed. He hasn't changed and I haven't. If he was bad, he's as bad as ever, and I'm just as silly. Oh, it's like a drunkard! I suppose they know it's killing them, but they can't give it up! Don't you think it's very strange, mamma? I don't see why I should be so. It seems as if I had no character at all, and I despise myself so! Do you believe I shall ever get over it? Sometimes I think the best thing for me would be to go into an asylum."

"Oh yes, dear; you'll get over it, and forget it all. As soon as you see others--other scenes--and get interested--"

"And you don't you don't think I'd better let him come, and--"

"Ellen!"

Ellen began to sob again, and toss her head upon the pillow. "What shall I do? What shall I do?" she wailed. "He hasn't ever done anything bad to me, and if I can overlook his--his flirting--with that horrid thing, I don't know what the rest of you have got to say. And he says he can explain everything. Why shouldn't I give him the chance, mamma? I do think it is acting very cruel not to let him even say a word."

"You can see him if you wish, Ellen," said her mother, gravely. "Your father and I have always said that. And perhaps it would be the best thing, after all."

"Oh, you say that because you think that if I did see him, I should be so disgusted with him that I'd never want to speak to him again. But what if I shouldn't?"

"Then we should wish you to do whatever you thought was for your happiness, Ellen. We can't believe it would be for your good; but if it would be for your happiness, we are willing. Or, if you don't think it's for your happiness, but only for his, and you wish to do it, still we shall be willing, and you know that as far as your father and I are concerned, there will never be a word of reproach--not a whisper."

"Lottie would despise me; and what would Richard say?"

"Richard would never say anything to wound you, dear, and if you don't despise yourself, you needn't mind Lottie."

"But I should, mamma; that's the worst of it! I should despise myself, and he would despise me too. No, if I see him, I am going to do it because I am selfish and wicked, and wish to have my own way, no matter who is harmed by it, or--anything; and I'm not going to have it put on any other ground. I could see him," she said, as if to herself, "just once more--only once more--and then if I didn't believe in him, I could start right off to Europe."

Her mother made no answer to this, and Ellen lay awhile apparently forgetful of her presence, inwardly dramatizing a passionate scene of dismissal between herself and her false lover. She roused herself from the reverie with a long sigh, and her mother said, "Won't you have some breakfast, now; Ellen?"

"Yes; and I will get up. You needn't be troubled any more about me, mamma. I will write to him not to come, and poppa must go back and get his ticket again."

"Not unless you are doing this of your own free will, child. I can't have you feeling that we are putting any pressure upon you."

"You're not. I'm doing it of my own will. If it isn't my free will, that isn't your fault. I wonder whose fault it is? Mine, or what made

me so silly and weak?"

"You are not silly and weak," said her mother, fondly, and she bent over the girl and would have kissed her, but Ellen averted her face with a piteous "Don't!" and Mrs. Kenton went out and ordered her breakfast brought back.

She did not go in to make her eat it, as she would have done in the beginning of the girl's trouble; they had all learned how much better she was for being left to fight her battles with herself singlehanded.

Mrs. Kenton waited in the parlor till her husband came in, looking gloomy and tired. He put his hat down and sank into a chair without speaking.

"Well?" she said.

"We have got to lose the price of the ticket, if we give it back. I thought I had better talk with you first," said Kenton, and he explained the situation.

"Then you had better simply have it put off till the next steamer.

I have been talking with Ellen, and she doesn't want to stay. She wants to go." His wife took advantage of Kenton's mute amazement (in the nervous vagaries even of the women nearest him a man learns nothing from experience) to put her own interpretation on the case, which, as it was creditable to the girl's sense and principle, he found acceptable if not imaginable. "And if you will take my advice," she ended, "you will go quietly back to the steamship office and exchange your ticket for the next steamer, or the one after that, if you can't get good rooms, and give Ellen time to get over this before she leaves. It will be much better for her to conquer herself than to run away, for that would always give her a feeling of shame, and if she decides before she goes, it will strengthen her pride and self-respect, and there will be less danger-- when we come back."

"Do you think he's going to keep after her!"

"How can I tell? He will if he thinks it's to his interest, or he can make anybody miserable by it."

Kenton said nothing to this, but after a while he suggested, rather timorously, as if it were something he could not expect her to approve, and was himself half ashamed of, "I believe if I do put it off, I'll run out to Tuskingum before we sail, and look after a little matter of business that I don't think Dick can attend to so well."

His wife knew why he wanted to go, and in her own mind she had already decided that if he should ever propose to go, she should not gainsay him. She had, in fact, been rather surprised that he had not proposed it before this, and now she assented, without taxing him with his real motive, and bringing him to open disgrace before her. She even went further in saying: "Very well, then you had better go. I can get on very well here, and I think it will leave Ellen freer to act for herself if you are away. And there are some things in the house that I want, and that Richard would be sure to send his wife to get if I asked him, and I

won't have her rummaging around in my closets. I suppose you will want to go into the house?"

"I suppose so," said Renton, who had not let a day pass, since he left his house, without spending half his homesick time in it. His wife suffered his affected indifference to go without exposure, and trumped up a commission for him, which would take him intimately into the house.

IV

The piety of his son Richard had maintained the place at Tuskingum in perfect order outwardly, and Kenton's heart ached with tender pain as he passed up the neatly kept walk from the gate, between the blooming ranks of syringas and snowballs, to his door, and witnessed the faithful care that Richard's hired man had bestowed upon every detail. The grass between the banks of roses and rhododendrons had been as scrupulously lawn-mowed and as sedulously garden-hosed as if Kenton himself had been there to look after its welfare, or had tended the shrubbery as he used to do in earlier days with his own hand. The oaks which he had planted shook out their glossy green in the morning gale, and in the tulip-trees, which had snowed their petals on the ground in wide circles defined by the reach of their branches, he heard the squirrels barking; a red-bird from the woody depths behind the house mocked the cat-birds in the quince-trees. The June rose was red along the trellis of the veranda, where Lottie ought to be sitting to receive the morning calls of the young men who were sometimes quite as early as Kenton's present visit in their devotions, and the sound of Ellen's piano, played fitfully and absently in her fashion, ought to be coming out irrespective of the hour. It seemed to him that his wife must open the door as his steps and his son's made themselves heard on the walk between the box borders in their upper orchard, and he faltered a little.

"Look here, father," said his son, detecting his hesitation. "Why don't you let Mary come in with you, and help you find those things?"

"No, no," said Kenton, sinking into one of the wooden seats that flanked the door-way. "I promised your mother that I would get them myself. You know women don't like to have other women going through their houses."

"Yes, but Mary!" his son urged.

"Ah! It's just Mary, with her perfect housekeeping, that your mother wouldn't like to have see the way she left things," said Kenton, and he smiled at the notion of any one being housekeeper enough to find a flaw in his wife's. "My, but this is pleasant!" he added. He took off his hat and let the breeze play through the lank, thin hair which was still black on his fine, high forehead. He was a very handsome old man, with a delicate aquiline profile, of the perfect Roman type which is perhaps oftener found in America than ever it was in Rome. "You've kept it very nice, Dick," he said, with a generalizing wave of his hat.

"Well, I couldn't tell whether you would be coming back or not, and I thought I had better be ready for you."

"I wish we were," said the old man, "and we shall be, in the fall, or the latter part of the summer. But it's better now that we should go--on Ellen's account."

"Oh, you'll enjoy it," his son evaded him.

"You haven't seen anything of him lately?" Kenton suggested.

"He wasn't likely to let me see anything of him," returned the son.

"No," said the father. "Well!" He rose to put the key into the door, and his son stepped down from the little porch to the brick walk.

"Mary will have dinner early, father; and when you've got through here, you'd better come over and lie down a while beforehand."

Kenton had been dropped at eight o'clock from a sleeper on the Great Three, and had refused breakfast at his son's house, upon the plea that the porter had given him a Southern cantaloupe and a cup of coffee on the train, and he was no longer hungry.

"All right," he said. "I won't be longer than I can help." He had got the door open and was going to close it again.

His son laughed. "Better not shut it, father. It will let the fresh air in."

"Oh, all right," said the old man.

The son lingered about, giving some orders to the hired man in the vegetable garden, for an excuse, in the hope that his father might change his mind and ask him to come into the house with him; he felt it so forlorn for him to be going through those lifeless rooms alone. When he looked round, and saw his father holding the door ajar, as if impatiently waiting for him to be gone, he laughed and waved his hand to him. "All right, father? I'm going now." But though he treated the matter so lightly with his father, he said grimly to his wife, as he passed her on their own porch, on his way to his once, "I don't like to think of father being driven out of house and home this way."

"Neither do I, Dick. But it can't be helped, can it?"

"I think I could help it, if I got my hands on that fellow once."

"No, you couldn't, Dick. It's not he that's doing it. It's Ellen; you know that well enough; and you've just got to stand it."

"Yes, I suppose so," said Richard Kenton.

"Of course, my heart aches for your poor old father, but so it would if Ellen had some kind of awful sickness. It is a kind of sickness, and you can't fight it any more than if she really was sick."

"No," said the husband, dejectedly. "You just slip over there, after a while, Mary, if father's gone too long, will you? I don't like to have him there alone."

"Deed and 'deed I won't, Dick. He wouldn't like it at all, my spying round. Nothing can happen to him, and I believe your mother's just made an excuse to send him after something, so that he can be in there alone, and realize that the house isn't home any more. It will be easier for him to go to Europe when he finds that out. I believe in my heart that was her idea in not wanting me to find the things for him, and I'm not going to meddle myself."

With the fatuity of a man in such things, and with the fatuity of age regarding all the things of the past, Kenton had thought in his homesickness of his house as he used to be in it, and had never been able to picture it without the family life. As he now walked through the empty rooms, and up and down the stairs, his pulse beat low as if in the presence of death. Everything was as they had left it, when they went out of the house, and it appeared to Kenton that nothing had been touched there since, though when he afterwards reported to his wife that there was not a speck of dust anywhere she knew that Mary had been going through the house, in their absence, not once only, but often, and she felt a pang of grateful jealousy. He got together the things that Mrs. Kenton had pretended to want, and after glancing in at the different rooms, which seemed to be lying stealthily in wait for him, with their emptiness and silence, he went down-stairs with the bundle he had made, and turned into his library. He had some thought of looking at the collections for his history, but, after pulling open one of the drawers in which they were stored, he pushed it to again, and sank listlessly into his leather-covered swivel-chair, which stood in its place before the wide writing-table, and seemed to have had him in it before he sat down. The table was bare, except for the books and documents which he had sent home from time to time during the winter, and which Richard or his wife had neatly arranged there without breaking their wraps. He let fall his bundle at his feet, and sat staring at the ranks of books against the wall, mechanically relating them to the different epochs of the past in which he or his wife or his children had been interested in them, and aching with tender pain. He had always supposed himself a happy and strong and successful man, but what a dreary ruin his life had fallen into! Was it to be finally so helpless and powerless (for with all the defences about him that a man can have, he felt himself fatally vulnerable) that he had fought so many years? Why, at his age, should he be going into exile, away from everything that could make his days bright and sweet? Why could not he come back there, where he was now more solitary than he could be anywhere else on earth, and reanimate the dead body of his home with his old life? He knew why, in an immediate sort, but his quest was for the cause behind the cause. What had he done, or left undone? He had tried to be a just man, and fulfil all his duties both to his family and to his neighbors; he had wished to be kind, and

not to harm any one; he reflected how, as he had grown older, the dread of doing any unkindness had grown upon him, and how he had tried not to be proud, but to walk meekly and humbly. Why should he be punished as he was, stricken in a place so sacred that the effort to defend himself had seemed a kind of sacrilege? He could not make it out, and he was not aware of the tears of self-pity that stole slowly down his face, though from time to time he wiped them away.

He heard steps in the hall without, advancing and pausing, which must be those of his son coming back for him, and with these advances and pauses giving him notice of his approach; but he did not move, and at first he did not look up when the steps arrived at the threshold of the room where he sat. When he lifted his eyes at last he saw Bittridge lounging in the door-way, with one shoulder supported against the door-jamb, his hands in his pockets and his hat pushed well back on his forehead. In an instant all Kenton's humility and soft repining were gone. "Well, what is it?" he called.

"Oh," said Bittridge, coming forward. He laughed and explained, "Didn't know if you recognized me."

"I recognized you," said Kenton, fiercely. "What is it you want?"

"Well, I happened to be passing, and I saw the door open, and I thought maybe Dick was here."

It was on Kenton's tongue to say that it was a good thing for him Dick was not there. But partly the sense that this would be unbecoming bluster, and partly the suffocating resentment of the fellow's impudence, limited his response to a formless gasp, and Bittridge went on: "But I'm glad to find you here, judge. I didn't know that you were in town. Family all well in New York?" He was not quelled by the silence of the judge on this point, but, as if he had not expected any definite reply to what might well pass for formal civility, he now looked aslant into his breast-pocket from which he drew a folded paper. "I just got hold of a document this morning that I think will interest you. I was bringing it round to Dick's wife for you." The intolerable familiarity of all this was fast working Kenton to a violent explosion, but he contained himself, and Bittridge stepped forward to lay the paper on the table before him. "It's the original roster of Company C, in your regiment, and--"

"Take it away!" shouted Kenton, "and take yourself away with it!" and he grasped the stick that shook in his hand.

A wicked light came into Bittridge's eye as he drawled, in lazy scorn, "Oh, I don't know." Then his truculence broke in a malicious amusement. "Why, judge, what's the matter?" He put on a face of mock gravity, and Kenton knew with helpless fury that he was enjoying his vantage. He could fall upon him and beat him with his stick, leaving the situation otherwise undefined, but a moment's reflection convinced Kenton that this would not do. It made him sick to think of striking the fellow, as if in that act he should be striking Ellen, too. It did not occur to him that he could be physically worsted, or that his vehement age would be no

match for the other's vigorous youth. All he thought was that it would not avail, except to make known to every one what none but her dearest could now conjecture. Bittridge could then publicly say, and doubtless would say, that he had never made love to Ellen; that if there had been any love-making it was all on her side; and that he had only paid her the attentions which any young man might blamelessly pay a pretty girl. This would be true to the facts in the case, though it was true also that he had used every tacit art to make her believe him in love with her. But how could this truth be urged, and to whom? So far the affair had been quite in the hands of Ellen's family, and they had all acted for the best, up to the present time. They had given Bittridge no grievance in making him feel that he was unwelcome in their house, and they were quite within their rights in going away, and making it impossible for him to see her again anywhere in Tuskingum. As for his seeing her in New York, Ellen had but to say that she did not wish it, and that would end it. Now, however, by treating him rudely, Kenton was aware that he had bound himself to render Bittridge some account of his behavior throughout, if the fellow insisted upon it.

"I want nothing to do with you, sir," he said, less violently, but, as he felt, not more effectually. "You are in my house without my invitation, and against my wish!"

"I didn't expect to find you here. I came in because I saw the door open, and I thought I might see Dick or his wife and give them, this paper for you. But I'm glad I found you, and if you won't give me any reason for not wanting me here, I can give it myself, and I think I can make out a very good case for you." Kenton quivered in anticipation of some mention of Ellen, and Bittridge smiled as if he understood. But he went on to say: "I know that there were things happened after you first gave me the run of your house that might make you want to put up the bars again--if they were true. But they were not true. And I can prove that by the best of all possible witnesses--by Uphill himself. He stands shoulder to shoulder with me, to make it hot for any one who couples his wife's name with mine."

"Humph!" Kenton could not help making this comment, and Bittridge, being what he was, could not help laughing.

"What's the use?" he asked, recovering himself. "I don't pretend that I did right, but you know there wasn't any harm in it. And if there had been I should have got the worst of it. Honestly, judge, I couldn't tell you how much I prized being admitted to your house on the terms I was. Don't you think I could appreciate the kindness you all showed me? Before you took me up, I was alone in Tuskingum, but you opened every door in the place for me. You made it home to me; and you won't believe it, of course, because you're prejudiced; but I felt like a son and brother to you all. I felt towards Mrs. Kenton just as I do towards my own mother. I lost the best friends I ever had when you turned against me. Don't you suppose I've seen the difference here in Tuskingum? Of course, the men pass the time of day with me when we meet, but they don't look me up, and there are more near-sighted girls in this town!" Kenton could not keep the remote dawn of a smile out of his eyes, and Bittridge

caught the far-off gleam. "And everybody's been away the whole winter. Not a soul at home, anywhere, and I had to take my chance of surprising Mrs. Dick Kenton when I saw your door open here." He laughed forlornly, as the gleam faded out of Kenton's eye again. "And the worst of it is that my own mother isn't at home to me, figuratively speaking, when I go over to see her at Ballardsville. She got wind of my misfortune, somehow, and when I made a clean breast of it to her, she said she could never feel the same to me till I had made it all right with the Kentons. And when a man's own mother is down on him, judge!"

Bittridge left Kenton to imagine the desperate case, and in spite of his disbelief in the man and all he said, Kenton could not keep his hardness of heart towards him. "I don't know what you're after, young man," he began. "But if you expect me to receive you under my roof again--"

"Oh, I don't, judge, I don't!" Bittridge interposed. "All I want is to be able to tell my mother--I don't care for anybody else--that I saw you, and you allowed me to say that I was truly sorry for the pain--if it was pain; or annoyance, anyway--that I had caused you, and to go back to her with the hope of atoning for it sometime or somehow. That's all."

"Look here!" cried Renton. "What have you written to my daughter for?"

"Wasn't that natural? I prized her esteem more than I do yours even; but did I ask her anything more than I've asked you? I didn't expect her to answer me; all I wanted was to have her believe that I wasn't as black as I was painted--not inside, anyway. You know well enough--anybody knows--that I would rather have her think well of me than any one else in this world, except my mother. I haven't got the gift of showing out what's good in me, if there is any good, but I believe Miss Ellen would want to think well of me if I gave her a chance. If ever there was an angel on earth, she's one. I don't deny that I was hopeful of mercy from her, because she can't think evil, but I can lay my hand on my heart and say that I wasn't selfish in my hopes. It seemed to me that it was her due to understand that a man whom she had allowed to be her friend wasn't altogether unworthy. That's as near as I can come to putting into words the motive I had in writing to her. I can't even begin to put into words the feeling I have towards her. It's as if she was something sacred."

This was the feeling Renton himself had towards his daughter, and for the first time he found himself on common ground with the scapegrace who professed it, and whose light, mocking face so little enforced his profession. If Bittridge could have spoken in the dark, his words might have carried a conviction of his sincerity, but there, in plain day, confronting the father of Ellen, who had every wish to believe him true, the effect was different. Deep within his wish to think the man honest, Kenton recoiled from him. He vaguely perceived that it was because she could not think evil that this wretch had power upon her, and he was sensible, as he had not been before, that she had no safety from him except in absence. He did not know what to answer; he could not repel him in open terms, and still less could he meet him with any words that would allow him to resume his former relations with his family. He said, finally: "We will let matters stand. We are going to Europe in a week,

and I shall not see you again. I will tell Mrs. Kenton what you say."

"Thank you, judge. And tell her that I appreciate your kindness more than I can say!" The judge rose from his chair and went towards the window, which he had thrown open. "Going to shut up? Let me help you with that window; it seems to stick. Everything fast up-stairs?"

"I--I think so," Kenton hesitated.

"I'll just run up and look," said Bittridge, and he took the stairs two at a time, before Kenton could protest, when they came out into the hall together. "It's all right," he reported on his quick return. "I'll just look round below here," and he explored the ground-floor rooms in turn. "No, you hadn't opened any other window," he said, glancing finally into the library. "Shall I leave this paper on your table?"

"Yes, leave it there," said Kenton, helplessly, and he let Bittridge close the front door after him, and lock it.

"I hope Miss Lottie is well," he suggested in handing the key to Kenton. "And Boyne" he added, with the cordiality of an old family friend. "I hope Boyne has got reconciled to New York a little. He was rather anxious about his pigeons when he left, I understand. But I guess Dick's man has looked after them. I'd have offered to take charge of the cocoons myself if I'd had a chance." He walked, gayly chatting, across the intervening lawn with Kenton to his son's door, where at sight of him he vanished. Richard Kenton evanesced into the interior so obviously that Bittridge could not offer to come in. "Well, I shall see you all when you come back in the fall, judge, and I hope you'll have a pleasant voyage and a good time in Europe."

"Thank you," said Kenton, briefly.

"Remember me to the ladies!" and Bittridge took off his hat with his left hand, while he offered the judge his right. "Well, good-bye!"

Kenton made what response he could, and escaped in-doors, where his daughter-in-law appeared from the obscurity into which she had retired from Bittridge. "Well, that fellow does beat all! How, in the world did he find you, father?"

"He came into the house," said the judge, much abashed at his failure to deal adequately with Bittridge. He felt it the more in the presence of his son's wife. "I couldn't, seem to get rid of him in any way short of kicking him out."

"No, there's nothing equal to his impudence. I do believe he would have come in here, if he hadn't seen me first. Did you tell him when you were going back, father? Because he'd be at the train to see you off, just as sure!"

"No, I didn't tell him," said Kenton, feeling more shaken now from the interview with Bittridge than he had realized before. He was ashamed to

let Mary know that he had listened to Bittridge's justification, which he now perceived was none, and he would have liked to pretend that he had not silently condoned his offences, but Mary did not drive him to these deceptions by any further allusions to Bittridge.

"Well, now, you must go into the sitting-room and lie down on the lounge; I promised Dick to make you. Or would you rather go up-stairs to your room?"

"I think I'll go to my room," said Kenton.

He was asleep there on the bed when Richard came home to dinner and looked softly in. He decided not to wake him, and Mary said the sleep would do him more good than the dinner. At table they talked him over, and she told her husband what she knew of the morning's adventure.

"That was pretty tough for father," said Richard. "I wouldn't go into the house with him, because I knew he wanted to have it to himself; and then to think of that dirty hound skulking in! Well, perhaps it's for the best. It will make it easier, for father to go and leave the place, and they've got to go. They've got to put the Atlantic Ocean between Ellen and that fellow."

"It does seem as if something might be done," his wife rebelled.

"They've done the best that could be done," said Richard. "And if that skunk hasn't got some sort of new hold upon father, I shall be satisfied. The worst of it is that it will be all over town in an hour that Bittridge has made up with us. I don't blame father; he couldn't help it; he never could be rude to anybody."

"I think I'll try if I can't be rude to Mr. Bittridge, if he ever undertakes to show in my pretence that he has made it up with us," said Mary.

Richard tenderly found out from his father's shamefaced reluctance, later, that no great mischief had been done. But no precaution on his part availed to keep Bittridge from demonstrating the good feeling between himself and the Kentons when the judge started for New York the next afternoon. He was there waiting to see him off, and he all but took the adieus out of Richard's hands. He got possession of the judge's valise, and pressed past the porter into the sleeping-car with it, and remained lounging on the arm of the judge's seat, making conversation with him and Richard till the train began to move. Then he ran outside, and waved his hand to the judge's window in farewell, before all that leisure of Tuskingum which haunted the arrival and departure of the trains.

Mary Kenton was furious when her husband came home and reported the fact to her.

"How in the world did he find out when father was going?"

"He must have come to all the through trains since he say him yesterday. But I think even you would have been suited, Mary, if you had seen his failure to walk off from the depot arm-in-arm with me:

"I wouldn't have been suited with anything short of your knocking, him down, Dick."

"Oh, that wouldn't have done," said Richard. After a while he added, patiently, "Ellen is making a good deal of trouble for us."

This was what Mary was thinking herself, and it was what she might have said, but since Dick had said it she was obliged to protest. "She isn't to blame for it."

"Oh, I know she isn't to blame."

V.

The father of the unhappy girl was of the same mixed mind as he rode sleeplessly back to New York in his berth, and heard the noises of slumber all round him. From time to time he groaned softly, and turned from one cheek to the other. Every half-hour or so he let his window-curtain fly up, and lay watching the landscape fleeting past; and then he pulled the curtain down again and tried to sleep. After passing Albany he dozed, but at Poughkeepsie a zealous porter called him by mistake, and the rest of the way to New York he sat up in the smoking-room. It seemed a long while since he had drowsed; the thin nap had not rested him, and the old face that showed itself in the glass, with the frost of a two days' beard on it, was dry-eyed and limply squared by the fall of the muscles at the corners of the chin.

He wondered how he should justify to his wife the thing which he felt as accountable for having happened to him as if he could have prevented it. It would not have happened, of course, if he had not gone to Tuskingum, and she could say that to him; now it seemed to him that his going, which had been so imperative before he went, was altogether needless. Nothing but harm had come of it, and it had been a selfish indulgence of a culpable weakness.

It was a little better for Kenton when he found himself with his family, and they went down together to the breakfast which the mother had engaged the younger children to make as pleasant as they could for their father, and not worry him with talk about Tuskingum. They had, in fact, got over their first season of homesickness, and were postponing their longing for Tuskingum till their return from Europe, when they would all go straight out there. Kenton ran the gauntlet of welcome from the black elevator-boys and bell-boys and the head-waiter, who went before him to pull out the judge's chair, with commanding frowns to his underlings to do the like for the rest of the family; and as his own clumsy Irish waiter stood behind his chair, breathing heavily upon the judge's head, he gave his

order for breakfast, with a curious sense of having got home again from some strange place. He satisfied Boyne that his pigeons and poultry had been well cared for through the winter, and he told Lottie that he had not met much of anybody except Dick's family, before he recollected seeing half a dozen of her young men at differed times. She was not very exacting about them and her mind seemed set upon Europe, or at least she talked of nothing else. Ellen was quiet as she always was, but she smiled gently on her father, and Mrs. Kenton told him of the girl's preparations for going, and congratulated herself on their wisdom in having postponed their sailing, in view of all they had to do; and she made Kenton feel that everything was in the best possible shape. As soon as she got him alone in their own room, she said, "Well, what is it, poppa?"

Then he had to tell her, and she listened with ominous gravity. She did not say that now he could see how much better it would have been if he had not gone, but she made him say it for her; and she would not let him take comfort in the notion of keeping the fact of his interview with Bittridge from Ellen. "It would be worse than useless. He will write to her about it, and then she will know that we have been, concealing it."

Kenton was astonished at himself for not having thought of that. "And what are you going to do, Sarah?"

"I am going to tell her," said Mrs. Kenton.

"Why didn't poppa tell me before?" the girl perversely demanded, as soon as her another had done so.

"Ellen, you are a naughty child! I have a great mind not to have a word more to say to you. Your father hasn't been in the house an hour. Did you want him to speak before Lottie and Boyne!"

"I don't see why he didn't tell me himself. I know there is something you are keeping back. I know there is some word--"

"Oh, yon poor girl!" said her mother, melting into pity against all sense of duty. "Have we ever tried to deceive you?"

"No," Ellen sobbed, with her face in her hands. "Now I will tell you every word that passed," said Mrs. Kenton, and she told, as well as she could remember, all that the judge had repeated from Bittridge. "I don't say he isn't ashamed of himself," she commented at the end. "He ought to be, and, of course, he would be glad to be in with us again when we go back; but that doesn't alter his character, Ellen. Still, if you can't see that yourself, I don't want to make you, and if you would rather go home to Tuskingum, we will give up the trip to Europe."

"It's too late to do that now," said the girl, in cruel reproach.

Her mother closed her lips resolutely till she could say, "Or you can write to him if you want to."

"I don't want to," said Ellen, and she dragged herself up out of her chair, and trailed slowly out of the room without looking at her mother.

"Well?" the judge asked, impatiently, when he came in as soon after this as he decently could. They observed forms with regard to talking about Ellen which, after all, were rather for themselves than for her; Mrs. Kenton, at least, knew that the girl knew when they were talking about her.

"She took it as well as I expected."

"What is she going to do?"

"She didn't say. But I don't believe she will do anything."

"I wish I had taken our tickets for next Saturday," said Kenton.

"Well, we must wait now," said his wife. "If he doesn't write to her, she won't write to him."

"Has she ever answered that letter of his?"

"No, and I don't believe she will now."

That night Ellen came to her mother and said she need not be afraid of her writing to Bittridge. "He hasn't changed, if he was wrong, by coming and saying those things to poppa, and nothing has changed."

"That is the way I hoped you would see it; Ellen." Her mother looked wistfully at her, but the girl left her without letting her satisfy the longing in the mother's heart to put her arms round her child, and pull her head down upon her breast for a cry.

Kenton slept better that night than his wife, who was kept awake by a formless foreboding. For the week that followed she had the sense of literally pushing the hours away, so that at times she found herself breathless, as if from some heavy physical exertion. At such times she was frantic with the wish to have the days gone, and the day of their sailing come, but she kept her impatience from her husband and children, and especially from Ellen. The girl was passive enough; she was almost willing, and in the preparation for their voyage she did her share of the shopping, and discussed the difficult points of this business with her mother and sister as if she had really been thinking about it all. But her mother doubted if she had, and made more of Ellen's sunken eyes and thin face than of her intelligent and attentive words. It was these that she reported to her husband, whom she kept from talking with Ellen, and otherwise quelled.

"Let her alone," she insisted, one morning of the last week. "What can you do by speaking to her about it? Don't you see that she is making the best fight she can? You will weaken her if you interfere. It's less than a week now, and if you can only hold out, I know she can."

Kenton groaned. "Well, I suppose you're right, Sarah. But I don't like the idea of forcing her to go, unless--"

"Then you had better write to that fellow, and ask him to come and get her."

This shut Kenton's mouth, and he kept on with his shaving. When he had finished he felt fresher, if not stronger, and he went down to breakfast, which he had alone, not only with reference to his own family, but all the other guests of the hotel. He was always so early that sometimes the dining-room was not open; when this happened, he used to go and buy a newspaper at the clerk's desk, for it was too early then for the newsstand to be open. It happened so that morning, and he got his paper without noticing the young man who was writing his name in the hotel register, but who looked briskly up when the clerk bade Kenton good-morning by name.

"Why, judge!" he said, and he put out a hand which Kenton took with trembling reluctance and a dazed stare. "I thought you sailed last Saturday!"

"We sail next Saturday," said Kenton.

"Well, well! Then I misunderstood," said Bittridge, and he added: "Why, this is money found in the road! How are all the family? I've got my mother here with me; brought her on for a kind of a little outing. She'll be the most surprised woman in New York when I tell her you're here yet. We came to this hotel because we knew you had been here, but we didn't suppose you were here! Well! This is too good! I saw Dick, Friday, but he didn't say anything about your sailing; I suppose he thought I knew. Didn't you tell me you were going in a week, that day in your house?"

"Perhaps I did," Kenton faltered out, his eyes fixed on Bittridge's with a helpless fascination.

"Well, it don't matter so long as you're here. Mother's in the parlor waiting for me; I won't risk taking you to her now, judge--right off the train, you know. But I want to bring her to call on Mrs. Kenton as soon after breakfast as you'll let me. She just idolizes Mrs. Kenton, from what I've told her about her. Our rooms ready?" He turned to the clerk, and the clerk called "Front!" to a bellboy, who ran up and took Bittridge's hand-baggage, and stood waiting to follow him into the parlor. "Well, you must excuse me now, judge. So long!" he said, gayly, and Kenton crept feebly away to the dining-room.

He must have eaten breakfast, but he was not aware of doing so; and the events of his leaving the table and going up in the elevator and finding himself in his wife's presence did not present themselves consecutively, though they must all have successively occurred. It did not seem to him that he could tell what he knew, but he found himself doing it, and her hearing it with strange quiet.

"Very well," she said. "I must tell Ellen, and, if she wishes, we must stay in and wait for their call."

"Yes," the judge mechanically consented.

It was painful for Mrs. Kenton to see how the girl flushed when she announced the fact of Bittridge's presence, for she knew what a strife of hope and shame and pride there was in Ellen's heart. At first she said that she did not wish to see him, and then when Mrs. Kenton would not say whether she had better see him or not, she added, vaguely, "If he has brought his mother--"

"I think we must see them, Ellen. You wouldn't wish to think you had been unkind; and he might be hurt on his mother's account. He seems really fond of her, and perhaps--"

"No, there isn't any perhaps, mamma," said the girl, gratefully. "But I think we had better see them, too. I think we had better ALL see them."

"Just as you please, Ellen. If you prefer to meet them alone--"

"I don't prefer that. I want poppa to be there, and Lottie and Boyne even."

Boyne objected when he was told that his presence was requested at this family rite, and he would have excused himself if the invitation had been of the form that one might decline. "What do I want to see him for?" he puffed. "He never cared anything about me in Tuskingum. What's he want here, anyway?"

"I wish you to come in, my son," said his mother, and that ended it.

Lottie was not so tractable. "Very well, mamma," she said. "But don't expect me to speak to him. I have some little self-respect, if the rest of you haven't. Am I going to shake hands with him! I never took the least notice of him at home, and I'm not going to here."

Bittridge decided the question of hand-shaking for her when they met. He greeted her glooming brother with a jolly "Hello, Boyne!" and without waiting for the boy's tardy response he said "Hello, Lottie!" to the girl, and took her hand and kept it in his while he made an elaborate compliment to her good looks and her gain in weight. She had come tardily as a proof that she would not have come in at all if she had not chosen to do so, and Mrs. Bittridge was already seated beside Ellen on the sofa, holding her hand, and trying to keep her mobile, inattentive eyes upon Ellen's face. She was a little woman, youthfully dressed, but not dressed youthfully enough for the dry, yellow hair which curled tightly in small rings on her skull, like the wig of a rag-doll. Her restless eyes were round and deep-set, with the lids flung up out of sight; she had a lax, formless mouth, and an anxious smile, with which she constantly watched her son for his initiative, while she recollected herself from time to time, long enough to smooth Ellen's hand between her own, and say, "Oh, I just think the world of Clarence; and I guess he

thinks his mother is about right, too," and then did not heed what Ellen answered.

The girl said very little, and it was Bittridge who talked for all, dominating the room with a large, satisfied presence, in which the judge sat withdrawn, his forehead supported on his hand, and his elbow on the table. Mrs. Kenton held herself upright, with her hands crossed before her, stealing a look now and then at her daughter's averted face, but keeping her eyes from Mrs. Bittridge, who, whenever she caught Mrs. Kenton's glance, said something to her about her Clarence, and how he used to write home to her at Ballardsville about the Kentons, so that she felt acquainted with all of them. Her reminiscences were perfunctory; Mrs. Bittridge had voluntarily but one topic, and that was herself, either as she was included in the interest her son must inspire, or as she included him in the interest she must inspire. She said that, now they had met at last, she was not going to rest till the Kentons had been over to Ballardsville, and made her a good, long visit; her son had some difficulty in making her realize that the Kentons were going to Europe. Then she laughed, and said she kept forgetting; and she did wish they were all coming back to Tuskingum.

If it is a merit to treat a fatuous mother with deference, Bittridge had that merit. His deference was of the caressing and laughing sort, which took the spectator into the joke of her peculiarities as something they would appreciate and enjoy with him. She had been a kittenish and petted person in her youth, perhaps, and now she petted herself, after she had long ceased to be a kitten. What was respectable and what was pathetic in her was her wish to promote her son's fortunes with the Kentons, but she tried to do this from not a very clear understanding of her part, apparently, and little sense of the means. For Ellen's sake, rather than hers, the father and mother received her overtures to their liking kindly; they answered her patiently, and Mrs. Kenton even tried to lead the way for her to show herself at her best, by talking of her journey on to New York, and of the city, and what she would see there to interest her. Lottie and Boyne, sternly aloof together in one of their momentary alliances, listened to her replies with a silent contempt that almost included their mother; Kenton bore with the woman humbly and sadly.

He was, in fact, rather bewildered with the situation, for which he felt himself remotely if not immediately responsible. Bittridge was there among them not only on good terms, but apparently in the character of a more than tolerated pretendant to Ellen's favor. There were passages of time in which the father was not sure that the fellow was not engaged to his daughter, though when these instants were gone he was aware that there had been no overt love-making between them and Bittridge had never offered himself. What was he doing there, then? The judge asked himself that, without being able to answer himself. So far as he could make out, his wife and he were letting him see Ellen, and show her off to his mother, mainly to disgust her with them both, and because they were afraid that if they denied her to him, it would be the worse for them through her suffering. The judge was not accustomed to apply the tests by which people are found vulgar or not; these were not of his simple world; all that he felt about Mrs. Bittridge was that she was a very

foolish, false person, who was true in nothing but her admiration of her rascal of a son; he did not think of Bittridge as a rascal violently, but helplessly, and with a heart that melted in pity for Ellen.

He longed to have these people gone, not so much because he was so unhappy in their presence as because he wished to learn Ellen's feeling about them from his wife. She would know, whether Allen said anything to her or not. But perhaps if Mrs. Kenton had been asked to deliver her mind on this point at once she would have been a little puled. All that she could see, and she saw it with a sinking of the heart, was that Ellen looked more at peace than she had been since Bittridge was last in their house at Tuskingum. Her eyes covertly followed him as he sat talking, or went about the room, making himself at home among them, as if he were welcome with every one. He joked her more than the rest, and accused her of having become a regular New-Yorker; he said he supposed that when she came back from Europe she would not know anybody in Tuskingum; and his mother, playing with Ellen's fingers, as if they had been the fringe of a tassel, declared that she must not mind him, for he carried on just so with everybody; at the same time she ordered him to stop, or she would go right out of the room.

She gave no other sign of going, and it was her son who had to make the movement for her at last; she apparently did not know that it was her part to make it. She said that now the Kentons must come and return her call, and be real neighborly, just the same as if they were all at home together. When her son shook hands with every one she did so too, and she said to each, "Well, I wish you good-morning," and let him push her before him, in high delight with the joke, out of the room.

When they were gone the Kentons sat silent, Ellen with a rapt smile on her thin, flushed face, till Lottie said, "You forgot to ask him if we might BREATHE, poppa," and paced out of the room in stately scorn, followed by Boyne, who had apparently no words at the command of his dumb rage. Kenton wished to remain, and he looked at his wife for instruction. She frowned, and he took this for a sign that he had better go, and he went with a light sigh.

He did not know what else to do with himself, and he went down to the reading-room. He found Bittridge there, smoking a cigar, and the young man companionably offered to bestow one upon him; but the judge stiffly refused, saying he did not wish to smoke just then. He noted that Bittridge was still in his character of family favorite, and his hand trembled as he passed it over the smooth knob of his stick, while he sat waiting for the fellow to take himself away. But Bittridge had apparently no thought of going. He was looking at the amusements for the evening in a paper he had bought, and he wished to consult the judge as to which was the best theatre to go to that night; he said he wanted to take his mother. Kenton professed not to know much about the New York theatres, and then Bittridge guessed he must get the clerk to tell him. But still he did not part with the judge. He sat down beside him, and told him how glad he was to see his family looking so well, especially Miss Ellen; he could not remember ever seeing her so strong-looking. He said that girl had captured his mother, who was in love with pretty much

the whole Kenton family, though.

"And by-the-way," he added, "I want to thank you and Mrs. Kenton, judge, for the way you received my mother. You made her feel that she was among friends. She can't talk about anything else, and I guess I sha'n't have much trouble in making her stay in New York as long as you're here. She was inclined to be homesick. The fact is, though I don't care to have it talked about yet, and I wish you wouldn't say anything to Dick about it when you write home, I think of settling in New York. I've been offered a show in the advertising department of one of the big dailies--I'm not at liberty to say which--and it's a toss-up whether I stay here or go to Washington; I've got a chance there, too, but it's on the staff of a new enterprise, and I'm not sure about it. I've brought my mother along to let her have a look at both places, though she doesn't know it, and I'd rather you wouldn't speak of it before her; I'm going to take her on to Washington before we go back. I want to have my mother with me, judge. It's better for a fellow to have that home-feeling in a large place from the start; it keeps him out of a lot of things, and I don't pretend to be better than other people, or not more superhuman. If I've been able to keep out of scrapes, it's more because I've had my mother near me, and I don't intend ever to be separated from her, after this, till I have a home of my own. She's been the guiding-star of my life."

Kenton was unable to make any formal response, and, in fact, he was so preoccupied with the question whether the fellow was more a fool or a fraud that he made no answer at all, beyond a few inarticulate grumblings of assent. These sufficed for Bittridge, apparently, for he went on contentedly: "Whenever I've been tempted to go a little wild, the thought of how mother would feel has kept me on the track like nothing else would. No, judge, there isn't anything in this world like a good mother, except the right kind of a wife."

Kenton rose, and said he believed he must go upstairs. Bittridge said, "All right; I'll see you later, judge," and swung easily off to advise with the clerk as to the best theatre.

VI.

Kenton was so unhappy that he could not wait for his wife to come to him in their own room; he broke in upon her and Ellen in the parlor, and at his coming the girl flitted out, in the noiseless fashion which of late had made her father feel something ghostlike in her. He was afraid she was growing to dislike him, and trying to avoid him, and now he presented himself quite humbly before his wife, as if he had done wrong in coming. He began with a sort of apology for interrupting, but his wife said it was all right, and she added, "We were not talking about anything in particular." She was silent, and then she added again: "Sometimes I think Ellen hasn't very fine perceptions, after all. She doesn't seem to feel about people as I supposed she would."

"You mean that she doesn't feel as you would suppose about those people?"

Mrs. Kenton answered, obliquely. "She thinks it's a beautiful thing in him to be so devoted to his mother."

"Humph! And what does she think of his mother?"

"She thinks she has very pretty hair."

Mrs. Kenton looked gravely down at the work she had in her hands, and Kenton did not know what to make of it all. He decided that his wife must feel, as he did, a doubt of the child's sincerity, with sense of her evasiveness more tolerant than his own. Yet he knew that if it came to a question of forcing Ellen to do what was best for her, or forbidding her to do what was worst, his wife would have all the strength for the work, and he none. He asked her, hopelessly enough, "Do you think she still cares for him?"

"I think she wishes to give him another trial; I hope she will." Kenton was daunted, and he showed it. "She has got to convince herself, and we have got to let her. She believes, of course, that he's here on her account, and that flatters her. Why should she be so different from other girls?" Mrs. Kenton demanded of the angry protest in her husband's eye.

His spirit fell, and he said, "I only wish she were more like them."

"Well, then, she is just as headstrong and as silly, when it comes to a thing like this. Our only hope is to let her have her own way."

"Do you suppose he cares for her, after all?"

Mrs. Kenton was silent, as if in exhaustive self-question. Then she answered: "No, I don't in that way. But he believes he can get her."

"Then, Sarah, I think we have a duty to the poor child. You must tell her what you have told me."

Mrs. Kenton smiled rather bitterly, in recognition of the fact that the performance of their common duty must fall wholly to her. But she merely said: "There is no need of my telling her. She knows it already."

"And she would take him in spite of knowing that he didn't really care for her?"

"I don't say that. She wouldn't own it to herself."

"And what are you going to do?"

"Nothing. We must let things take their course."

They had a great deal more talk that came to the same end. They played their sad comedy, he in the part of a father determined to save his child

from herself, and she in hers of resisting and withholding him. It ended as it had so often ended before--he yielded, with more faith in her wisdom than she had herself.

At luncheon the Bittridges could not join the Kentons, or be asked to do so, because the table held only four, but they stopped on their way to their own table, the mother to bridle and toss in affected reluctance, while the son bragged how he had got the last two tickets to be had that night for the theatre where he was going to take his mother. He seemed to think that the fact had a special claim on the judge's interest, and she to wish to find out whether Mrs. Kenton approved of theatre-going. She said she would not think of going in Ballardsville, but she supposed it was more rutable in New York.

During the afternoon she called at the Kenton apartment to consult the ladies about what she ought to wear. She said she had nothing but a black 'barege' along, and would that do with the hat she had on? She had worn it to let them see, and now she turned her face from aide to side to give them the effect of the plumes, that fell like a dishevelled feather-duster round and over the crown. Mrs. Kenton could only say that it would do, but she believed that it was the custom now for ladies to take their hats off in the theatre.

Mrs. Bittridge gave a hoarse laugh. "Oh, dear! Then I'll have to fix my hair two ways? I don't know what Clarence WILL say."

The mention of her son's name opened the way for her to talk of him in relation to herself, and the rest of her stay passed in the celebration of his filial virtues, which had been manifest from the earliest period. She could not remember that she ever had to hit the child a lick, she said, or that he had ever made her shed a tear.

When she went, Boyne gloomily inquired, "What makes her hair so much darker at the roots than it is at the points?" and his mother snubbed him promptly.

"You had no business to be here, Boyne. I don't like boys hanging about where ladies are talking together, and listening."

This did not prevent Lottie from answering, directly for Boyne, and indirectly for Ellen, "It's because it's begun to grow since the last bleach."

It was easier to grapple with Boyne than with Lottie, and Mrs. Kenton was willing to allow her to leave the room with her brother unrebuked. She was even willing to have had the veil lifted from Mrs. Bittridge's hair with a rude hand, if it would help Ellen.

"I don't want you to think, mamma," said the girl, "that I didn't know about her hair, or that I don't see how silly she is. But it's all the more to his credit if he can be so good to her, and admire her. Would you like him better if he despised her?"

Mrs. Kenton felt both the defiance and the secret shame from which it sprang in her daughter's words; and she waited for a moment before she answered, "I would like to be sure he didn't!"

"If he does, and if he hides it from her, it's the same as if he didn't; it's better. But you all wish to dislike him."

"We don't wish to dislike him, Ellen, goodness knows. But I don't think he would care much whether we disliked him or not. I am sure your poor father and I would be only too glad to like him."

"Lottie wouldn't," said Ellen, with a resentment her mother found pathetic, it was so feeble and aimless.

"Lottie doesn't matter," she said. She could not make out how nearly Ellen was to sharing the common dislike, or how far she would go in fortifying herself against it. She kept with difficulty to her negative frankness, and she let the girl leave the room with a fretful sigh, as if provoked that her mother would not provoke her further. There were moments when Mrs. Kenton believed that Ellen was sick of her love, and that she would pluck it out of her heart herself if she were left alone. She was then glad Bittridge had come, so that Ellen might compare with the reality the counterfeit presentment she had kept in her fancy; and she believed that if she could but leave him to do his worst, it would be the best for Ellen.

In the evening, directly after dinner, Bittridge sent up his name for Mrs. Kenton. The judge had remained to read his paper below, and Lottie and Boyne had gone to some friends in another apartment. It seemed to Mrs. Kenton a piece of luck that she should be able to see him alone, and she could not have said that she was unprepared for him to come in, holding his theatre-tickets explanatorily in his hand, or surprised when he began:

"Mrs. Kenton, my mother's got a bad headache, and I've come to ask a favor of you. She can't use her ticket for to-night, and I want you to let Miss Ellen come with me. Will you?"

Bittridge had constituted himself an old friend of the whole family from the renewal of their acquaintance, and Mrs. Kenton was now made aware of his being her peculiar favorite, in spite of the instant repulsion she felt, she was not averse to what he proposed. Her fear was that Ellen would be so, or that she could keep from influencing her to this test of her real feeling for Bittridge. "I will ask her, Mr. Bittridge," she said, with a severity which was a preliminary of the impartiality she meant to use with Ellen.

"Well, that's right," he answered, and while she went to the girl's room he remained examining the details of the drawing-room decorations in easy security, which Mrs. Kenton justified on her return.

"Ellen will be ready to go with you, Mr. Bittridge."

"Well, that's good," said the young man, and while he talked on she sat wondering at a nature which all modesty and deference seemed left out of, though he had sometimes given evidence of his intellectual appreciation of these things. He talked to Mrs. Kenton not only as if they were in every-wise equal, but as if they were of the same age, almost of the same sex.

Ellen came in, cloaked and hatted, with her delicate face excited in prospect of the adventure; and her mother saw Bittridge look at her with more tenderness than she had ever seen in him before. "I'll take good care of her, Mrs. Kenton," he said, and for the first time she felt herself relent a little towards him.

A minute after they were gone Lottie bounced into the room, followed by Boyne.

"Momma!" she shouted, "Ellen isn't going to the theatre with that fellow?"

"Yes, she is."

"And you let her, momma! Without a chaperon?"

Boyne's face had mirrored the indignation in his sister's, but at this unprecedented burst of conventionality he forgot their momentary alliance. "Well, you're a pretty one to talk about chaperons! Walking all over Tuskingum with fellows at night, and going buggy-riding with everybody, and out rowing, and here fairly begging Jim Plumpton to come down to the steamer and see you off again!"

"Shut up!" Lottie violently returned, "or I'll tell momma how you've been behaving with Rita Plumpton yourself."

"Well, tell!" Boyne defied her.

"Oh, it don't matter what a brat of a boy says or does, anyway," said Lottie. "But I think Ellen is disgracing the family. Everybody in the hotel is laughing at that wiggly old Mrs. Bittridge, with her wobbly eyes, and they can see that he's just as green! The Plumptons have been laughing so about them, and I told them that we had nothing to do with them at home, and had fairly turned Bittridge out of the house, but he had impudence enough for anything; and now to find Ellen going off to the theatre with him alone!"

Lottie began to cry with vexation as she whipped out of the room, and Boyne, who felt himself drawn to her side again, said, very seriously: "Well, it ain't the thing in New York, you know, momma; and anybody can see what a jay Bittridge is. I think it's too bad to let her."

"It isn't for you to criticise your mother, Boyne," said Mrs. Kenton, but she was more shaken than she would allow. Her own traditions were so simple that the point of etiquette which her children had urged had not occurred to her. The question whether Ellen should go with Bittridge at

all being decided, she would, of course, go in New York as she would go in Tuskingum. Now Mrs. Kenton perceived that she must not, and she had her share of humiliation in the impression which his mother, as her friend, apparently, was making with her children's acquaintances in the hotel. If they would think everybody in Tuskingum was like her, it would certainly be very unpleasant, but she would not quite own this to herself, still less to a fourteen-year-old boy. "I think what your father and I decide to be right will be sufficient excuse for you with your friends."

"Does father know it?" Boyne asked, most unexpectedly.

Having no other answer ready, Mrs. Kenton said, "You had better go to bed, my son."

"Well," he grumbled, as he left the room, "I don't know where all the pride of the Kentons is gone to."

In his sense of fallen greatness he attempted to join Lottie in her room, but she said, "Go away, nasty thing!" and Boyne was obliged to seek his own room, where he occupied himself with a contrivance he was inventing to enable you to close your door and turn off your gas by a system of pulleys without leaving your bed, when you were tired of reading.

Mrs. Kenton waited for her husband in much less comfort, and when he came, and asked, restlessly, "Where are the children?" she first told him that Lottie and Boyne were in their rooms before she could bring herself to say that Ellen had gone to the theatre with Bittridge.

It was some relief to have him take it in the dull way he did, and to say nothing worse than, "Did you think it was well to have her!"

"You may be sure I didn't want her to. But what would she have said if I had refused to let her go? I can tell you it isn't an easy matter to manage her in this business, and it's very easy for you to criticise, without taking the responsibility."

"I'm not criticising," said Kenton. "I know you have acted for the best."

"The children," said Mrs. Kenton, wishing to be justified further, "think she ought to have had a chaperon. I didn't think of that; it isn't the custom at home; but Lottie was very saucy about it, and I had to send Boyne to bed. I don't think our children are very much comfort to us."

"They are good children," Kenton said, said--provisionally.

"Yes, that is the worst of it. If they were bad, we wouldn't expect any comfort from them. Ellen is about perfect. She's as near an angel as a child can be, but she could hardly have given us more anxiety if she had been the worst girl in the world."

"That's true," the father sadly assented.

"She didn't really want to go with him to-night, I'll say that for her, and if I had said a single word against it she wouldn't have gone. But all at once, while she sat there trying to think how I could excuse her, she began asking me what she should wear. There's something strange about it, Rufus. If I believed in hypnotism, I should say she had gone because he willed her to go."

"I guess she went because she wanted to go because she's in love with him," said Kenton, hopelessly.

"Yes," Mrs. Kenton agreed. "I don't see how she can endure the sight of him. He's handsome enough," she added, with a woman's subjective logic. "And there's something fascinating about him. He's very graceful, and he's got a good figure."

"He's a hound!" said Kenton, exhaustively.

"Oh yes, he's a hound," she sighed, as if there could be no doubt on that point. "It don't seem right for him to be in the same room with Ellen. But it's for her to say. I feel more and more that we can't interfere without doing harm. I suppose that if she were not so innocent herself she would realize what he was better. But I do think he appreciates her innocence. He shows more reverence for her than for any one else."

"How was it his mother didn't go?" asked Kenton.

"She had a headache, he said. But I don't believe that. He always intended to get Ellen to go. And that's another thing Lottie was vexed about; she says everybody is laughing at Mrs. Bittridge, and it's mortifying to have people take her for a friend of ours."

"If there were nothing worse than that," said Kenton, "I guess we could live through it. Well, I don't know how it's going to all end."

They sat talking sadly, but finding a certain comfort in their mutual discouragement, and in their knowledge that they were doing the best they could for their child, whose freedom they must not infringe so far as to do what was absolutely best; and the time passed not so heavily till her return. This was announced by the mounting of the elevator to their landing, and then by low, rapid pleading in a man's voice outside. Kenton was about to open the door, when there came the formless noise of what seemed a struggle, and Ellen's voice rose in a muffled cry: "Oh! Oh! Let me be! Go away! I hate you!" Kenton the door open, and Ellen burst in, running to hide her face in her mother's breast, where she sobbed out, "He--he kissed me!" like a terrified child more than an insulted woman. Through the open door came the clatter of Bittridge's feet as he ran down-stairs.

When Mrs. Kenton came from quieting the hysterical girl in her room she had the task, almost as delicate and difficult, of quieting her husband. She had kept him, by the most solemn and exhaustive entreaty, from following Bittridge downstairs and beating him with his stick, and now she was answerable to him for his forbearance. "If you don't behave yourself, Rufus," she had to say, "you will have some sort of stroke. After all, there's no harm done."

"No harm! Do you call it no harm for that hound to kiss Ellen?"

"He wouldn't have attempted it unless something had led up to it, I suppose."

"Sarah! How can you speak so of that angel?"

"Oh, that angel is a girl like the rest. You kissed me before we were engaged."

"That was very different."

"I don't see how. If your daughter is so sacred, why wasn't her mother? You men don't think your wives are sacred. That's it!"

"No, no, Sarah! It's because I don't think of you as apart from myself, that I can't think of you as I do of Ellen. I beg your pardon if I seemed to set her above you. But when I kissed you we were very young, and we lived in a simple day, when such things meant no harm; and I was very fond of you, and you were the holiest thing in the world to me. Is Ellen holy to that fellow?"

"I know," Mrs. Kenton relented. "I'm not comparing him to you. And there is a difference with Ellen. She isn't like other girls. If it had been Lottie--"

"I shouldn't have liked it with Lottie, either," said the major, stiffly.

"But if it had been Lottie she would have boxed his ears for him, instead of running to you. Lottie can take care of herself. And I will take care of Ellen. When I see that scoundrel in the morning--"

"What will you do, an old man like you! I can tell you, it's something you've just got to bear it if you don't want the scandal to fill the whole hotel. It's a very fortunate thing, after all. It'll put an end to the whole affair."

"Do you think so, Sarah? If I believed that. What does Ellen say?"

"Nothing; she won't say anything--just cries and hides her face. I believe she is ashamed of having made a scene before us. But I know that she's so disgusted with him that she will never look at him again, and if it's brought her to that I should think his kissing her the greatest blessing in the world to us all. Yes, Ellen!"

Mrs. Kenton hurried off at a faint call from the girl's room, and when

she came again she sat down to a long discussion of the situation with her husband, while she slowly took down her hair and prepared it for the night. Her conclusion, which she made her husband's, was that it was most fortunate they should be sailing so soon, and that it was the greatest pity they were not sailing in the morning. She wished him to sleep, whether she slept herself or not, and she put the most hopeful face possible upon the matter. "One thing you can rest assured of, Rufus, and that is that it's all over with Ellen. She may never speak to you about him, and you mustn't ever mention him, but she feels just as you could wish. Does that satisfy you? Some time I will tell you all she says."

"I don't care to hear," said Kenton. "All I want is for him to keep away from me. I think if he spoke to me I should kill him."

"Rufus!"

"I can't help it, Sarah. I feel outraged to the bottom of my soul. I could kill him."

Mrs. Kenton turned her head and looked steadfastly at him over her shoulder. "If you strike him, if you touch him, Mr. Kenton, you will undo everything that the abominable wretch has done for Ellen, and you will close my mouth and tie my hands. Will you promise that under no provocation whatever will you do him the least harm? I know Ellen better than you do, and I know that you will make her hate you unless--"

"Oh, I will promise. You needn't be afraid. Lord help me!" Kenton groaned. "I won't touch him. But don't expect me to speak to him."

"No, I don't expect that. He won't offer to speak to you."

They slept, and in the morning she stayed to breakfast with Ellen in their apartment, and let her husband go down with their younger children. She could trust him now, whatever form his further trial should take, and he felt that he was pledging himself to her anew, when Bittridge came hilariously to meet him in the reading-room, where he went for a paper after breakfast.

"Ah, judge!" said the young man, gayly. "Hello, Boyne!" he added to the boy, who had come with his father; Lottie had gone directly up-stairs from the breakfast-room. "I hope you're all well this morning? Play not too much for Miss Ellen?"

Kenton looked him in the face without answering, and then tried to get away from him, but Bittridge followed him up, talking, and ignoring his silence.

"It was a splendid piece, judge. You must take Mrs. Kenton. I know you'll both like it. I haven't ever seen Miss Ellen so interested. I hope the walk home didn't fatigue her. I wanted to get a cab, but she would walk: The judge kept moving on, with his head down. He did not speak, and Bittridge was forced to notice his silence. "Nothing the

matter, I hope, with Miss Ellen, judge?"

"Go away," said the judge, in a low voice, fumbling the head of his stick.

"Why, what's up?" asked Bittridge, and he managed to get in front of Kenton and stay him at a point where Kenton could not escape. It was a corner of the room to which the old man had aimlessly tended, with no purpose but to avoid him:

"I wish you to let me alone, sir," said Kenton at last. "I can't speak to you."

"I understand what you mean, judge," said Bittridge, with a grin, all the more maddening because it seemed involuntary. "But I can explain everything. I just want a few words with you. It's very important; it's life or death with me, sir," he said, trying to look grave. "Will you let me go to your rooms with you?"

Kenton made no reply.

Bittridge began to laugh. "Then let's sit down here, or in the ladies' parlor. It won't take me two minutes to make everything right. If you don't believe I'm in earnest I know you don't think I am, but I can assure you--Will you let me speak with you about Miss Ellen?"

Still Kenton did not answer, shutting his lips tight, and remembering his promise to his wife.

Bittridge laughed, as if in amusement at what he had done. "Judge, let me say two words to you in private! If you can't now, tell me when you can. We're going back this evening, mother and I are; she isn't well, and I'm not going to take her to Washington. I don't want to go leaving you with the idea that I wanted to insult Miss Ellen. I care too much for her. I want to see you and Mrs. Kenton about it. I do, indeed. And won't you let me see you, somewhere?"

Kenton looked away, first to one side and then to another, and seemed stifling.

"Won't you speak to me! Won't you answer me? See here! I'd get down on my knees to you if it would do you any good. Where will you talk with me?"

"Nowhere!" shouted Kenton. "Will you go away, or shall I strike you with my stick?"

"Oh, I don't think," said Bittridge, and suddenly, in the wantonness of his baffled effrontery, he raised his hand and rubbed the back of it in the old man's face.

Boyne Kenton struck wildly at him, and Bittridge caught the boy by the arm and flung him to his knees on the marble floor. The men reading in

the arm-chairs about started to their feet; a porter came running, and took hold of Bittridge. "Do you want an officer, Judge Kenton?" he panted.

"No, no!" Kenton answered, choking and trembling. "Don't arrest him. I wish to go to my rooms, that's all. Let him go. Don't do anything about it."

"I'll help you, judge," said the porter. "Take hold of this fellow," he said to two other porters who came up. "Take him to the desk, and tell the clerk he struck Judge Kenton, but the judge don't want him arrested."

Before Kenton reached the elevator with Boyne, who was rubbing his knees and fighting back the tears, he heard the clerk's voice saying, formally, to the porters, "Baggage out of 35 and 37" and adding, as mechanically, to Bittridge: "Your rooms are wanted. Get out of them at once!"

It seemed the gathering of neighborhood about Kenton, where he had felt himself so unfriended, against the outrage done him, and he felt the sweetness of being personally championed in a place where he had thought himself valued merely for the profit that was in him; his eyes filled, and his voice failed him in thanking the elevator-boy for running before him to ring the bell of his apartment.

VIII.

The next day, in Tuskingum, Richard, Kenton found among the letters of his last mail one which he easily knew to be from his sister Lottie, by the tightly curled-up handwriting, and by the unliterary look of the slanted and huddled address of the envelope: The only doubt he could have felt in opening it was from the unwonted length at which she had written him; Lottie usually practised a laconic brevity in her notes, which were suited to the poverty of her written vocabulary rather than the affluence of her spoken word.

"Dear Dick" [her letter ran, tripping and stumbling in its course],
"I have got to tell you about something that has just happened here, and you needent laugh at the speling, or the way I tell it, but just pay attention to the thing itself, if you please. That disgusting Bittridge has been here with his horrid wiggly old mother, and momma let him take Ellen to the theatre. On the way home he tried to make her promise she would marry him and at the door he kissed her. They had an awful night with her hiseterics, and I heard momma going in and out, and trying to comfort her till daylight, nearly. In the morning I went down with poppy and Boyne to breakfast, and after I came up, father went to the reading-room to get a paper, and that Bittridge was there waiting for him, and wanted to speak with him about Ellen. Poppa wouldent say a word to him, and he kept following poppa up, to make him. Boyne says be wouldent take no for an ansir, and hung on and hungon, till poppa threatened to hitt him

with his cane. Then he saw it was no use, and he took his hand and rubbed it in poppa's face, and Boyne believes he was trying to pull poppa's nose. Boyne acted like I would have done; he pounded Bittridge in the back; but of course Bittridge was too strong for him, and threw him on the floor, and Boyne scraped his knee so that it bled. Then the porters came up, and caught Bittridge, and wanted to send for a policeman, but father wouldnt let them, and the porters took Bittridge to the desk and the clerk told him to get out instantly and they left as soon as old Wiggy could get her things on. I don't know where they went, but he told poppa they were going home to-day any way. Now, Dick, I don't know what you will want to do, and I am not going to put you up to anything, but I know what I would do, pretty well, the first time Bittridge showed himself in Tuskingum. You can do just as you please, and I don't ask you to believe me if you're think I'm so exciteable that I cant tell the truth. I guess Boyne will say the same. Much love to Mary. Your affectionate sister,

"Lottie.

"P. S.--Every word Lottie says is true, but I am not sure he meant to pull his nose. The reason why he threw me down so easily is, I have grown about a foot, and I have not got up my strength. BOYNE.

"This is strictly confidential. They don't know we are writing. LATTIE."

After reading this letter, Richard Kenton tore it into small pieces, so that there should not be even so much witness as it bore to facts that seemed to fill him with fury to the throat. His fury was, in agreement with his temperament, the white kind and cold kind. He was able to keep it to himself for that reason; at supper his wife knew merely that he had something on his mind that he did not wish to talk of; and experience had taught her that it would be useless to try making him speak.

He slept upon his wrath, and in the morning early, at an hour when he knew there would be no loafers in the place, he went to an out-dated saddler's shop, and asked the owner, a veteran of his father's regiment, "Welks, do you happen to have a cowhide among your antiquities?"

"Regular old style?" Welks returned. "Kind they make out of a cow's hide and use on a man's?"

"Something of that sort," said Richard, with a slight smile.

The saddler said nothing more, but rummaged among the riff-raff on an upper shelf. He got down with the tapering, translucent, wicked-looking thing in his hand. "I reckon that's what you're after, squire."

"Reckon it is, Welks," said Richard, drawing it through his tubed left hand. Then he buttoned it under his coat, and paid the quarter which Welks said had always been the price of a cowhide even since he could remember, and walked away towards the station.

"How's the old colonel" Welks called after him, having forgotten to ask before.

"The colonel's all right," Richard called back, without looking round.

He walked up and down in front of the station. A local train came in from Ballardsville at 8.15, and waited for the New York special, and then returned to Ballardsville. Richard had bought a ticket for that station, and was going to take the train back, but among the passengers who descended from it when it drew in was one who saved him the trouble of going.

Bittridge, with his overcoat hanging on his arm, advanced towards him with the rest, and continued to advance, in a sort of fascination, after his neighbors, with the instinct that something was about to happen, parted on either side of Richard, and left the two men confronted. Richard did not speak, but deliberately reached out his left hand, which he caught securely into Bittridge's collar; then he began to beat him with the cowhide wherever he could strike his writhing and twisting shape. Neither uttered a word, and except for the whir of the cowhide in the air, and the rasping sound of its arrest upon the body of Bittridge, the thing was done in perfect silence. The witnesses stood well back in a daze, from which they recovered when Richard released Bittridge with a twist of the hand that tore his collar loose and left his cravat dangling, and tossed the frayed cowhide away, and turned and walked homeward. Then one of them picked up Bittridge's hat and set it aslant on his head, and others helped pull his collar together and tie his cravat.

For the few moments that Richard Kenton remained in sight they scarcely found words coherent enough for question, and when they did, Bittridge had nothing but confused answers to give to the effect that he did not know what it meant, but he would find out. He got into a hack and had himself driven to his hotel, but he never made the inquiry which he threatened.

In his own house Richard Kenton lay down awhile, deadly sick, and his wife had to bring him brandy before he could control his nerves sufficiently to speak. Then he told her what he had done, and why, and Mary pulled off his shoes and put a hot-water bottle to his cold feet. It was not exactly the treatment for a champion, but Mary Kenton was not thinking of that, and when Richard said he still felt a little sick at the stomach she wanted him to try a drop of camphor in addition to the brandy. She said he must not talk, but she wished him so much to talk that she was glad when he began.

"It seemed to be something I had to do, Mary, but I would give anything if I had not been obliged to do it:

"Yes, I know just how you feel, Dick, and I think it's pretty hard this has come on you. I do think Ellen might--"

"It wasn't her fault, Mary. You mustn't blame her. She's had more to bear than all the rest of us." Mary looked stubbornly unconvinced, and she was not moved, apparently, by what he went on to say. "The thing now is to keep what I've done from making more mischief for her."

"What do you mean, Dick? You don't believe he'll do anything about it, do you?"

"No, I'm not afraid of that. His mouth is shut. But you can't tell how Ellen will take it. She may side with him now."

"Dick! If I thought Ellen Kenton could be such a fool as that!"

"If she's in love with him she'll take his part."

"But she can't be in love with him when she knows how he acted to your father!"

"We can't be sure of that. I know how he acted to father; but at this minute I pity him so that I could take his part against father. And I can understand how Ellen--Anyway, I must make a clean breast of it. What day is this Thursday? And they sail Saturday! I must write--"

He lifted himself on his elbow, and made as if to throw off the shawl she had spread upon him.

"No, no! I will write, Dick! I will write to your mother. What shall I say?" She whirled about, and got the paper and ink out of her writing-desk, and sat down near him to keep him from getting up, and wrote the date, and the address, "Dear Mother Kenton," which was the way she always began her letters to Mrs. Kenton, in order to distinguish her from her own mother. "Now what shall I say?"

"Simply this," answered Richard. "That I knew of what had happened in New York, and when I met him this morning I cowhided him. Ugh!"

"Well, that won't do, Dick. You've got to tell all about it. Your mother won't understand."

"Then you write what you please, and read it to me. It makes me sick to think of it." Richard closed his eyes, and Mary wrote:

"DEAR MOTHER KENTON,--I am sitting by Richard, writing at his request, about what he has done. He received a letter from New York telling him of the Bittridges' performances there, and how that wretch had insulted and abused you all. He bought a cowhide; meaning to go over to Ballardsville, and use it on him there, but B. came over on the Accommodation this morning, and Richard met him at the station. He did not attempt to resist, for Richard took him quite by surprise. Now, Mother Kenton, you know that Richard doesn't approve of violence, and the dear, sweet soul is perfectly broken-down by what he had to do. But he had to do it, and he wishes you to know at, once that he did it. He dreads the effect

upon Ellen, and we must leave it to your judgment about telling her. Of course, sooner or later she must find it out. You need not be alarmed about Richard. He is just nauseated a little, and he will be all right as soon as his stomach is settled. He thinks you ought to have this letter before you sail, and with affectionate good-byes to all, in which Dick joins,

"Your loving daughter,
"Mary KENTON."

"There! Will that do?"

"Yes, that is everything that can be said," answered Richard, and Mary kissed him gratefully before sealing her letter.

"I will put a special delivery on it," she said, and her precaution availed to have the letter delivered to Mrs. Kenton the evening the family left the hotel, when it was too late to make any change in their plans, but in time to give her a bad night on the steamer, in her doubt whether she ought to let the family go, with this trouble behind them.

But she would have had a bad night on the steamer in any case, with the heat, and noise, and smell of the docks; and the steamer sailed with her at six o'clock the next morning with the doubt still open in her mind. The judge had not been of the least use to her in helping solve it, and she had not been able to bring herself to attack Lottie for writing to Richard. She knew it was Lottie who had made the mischief, but she could not be sure that it was mischief till she knew its effect upon Ellen. The girl had been carried in the arms of one of the stewards from the carriage to her berth in Lottie's room, and there she had lain through the night, speechless and sleepless.

IX.

Ellen did not move or manifest any consciousness when the steamer left her dock and moved out into the stream, or take any note of the tumult that always attends a great liner's departure. At breakfast-time her mother came to her from one of the brief absences she made, in the hope that at each turn she should find her in a different mood, and asked if she would not have something to eat.

"I'm not hungry," she answered. "When will it sail?"

"Why, Ellen! We sailed two hours ago, and the pilot has just left us."

Ellen lifted herself on her elbow and stared at her. "And you let me!" she said, cruelly.

"Ellen! I will not have this!" cried her mother, frantic at the reproach. "What do you mean by my letting you? You knew that we were going to sail, didn't you? What else did you suppose we had come to the

steamer for?"

"I supposed you would let me stay, if I wanted to: But go away, mamma, go away! You're all against me--you, and poppa, and Lottie, and Boyne. Oh, dear! oh, dear!" She threw herself down in her berth and covered her face with the sheet, sobbing, while her mother stood by in an anguish of pity and anger. She wanted to beat the girl, she wanted to throw herself upon her, and weep with her in the misery which she shared with her.

Lottie came to the door of the state-room with an arm-load of long-stemmed roses, the gift of the young Mr. Plumpton, who had not had so much to be entreated to come down to the steamer and see her off as Boyne had pretended. "Momma," she said, "I have got to leave these roses in here, whether Ellen likes it or not. Boyne won't have them in his room, because he says the man that's with him would have a right to object; and this is half my room, anyway."

Mrs. Kenton frowned and shook her head, but Ellen answered from under the sheet, "I don't mind the roses, Lottie. I wish you'd stay with me a little while."

Lottie hesitated, having in mind the breakfast for which the horn had just sounded. But apparently she felt that one good turn deserved another, and she answered: "All right; I will, Nell. Momma, you tell Boyne to hurry, and come to Ellen as soon as he's done, and then I will go. Don't let anybody take my place."

"I wish," said Ellen, still from under the sheet, "that mamma would have your breakfast sent here. I don't want Boyne."

Women apparently do not require any explanation of these swift vicissitudes in one another, each knowing probably in herself the nerves from which they proceed. Mrs. Kenton promptly assented, in spite of the sulky reluctance which Lottie's blue eyes looked at her; she motioned her violently to silence, and said: "Yes, I will, Ellen. I will send breakfast for both of you."

When she was gone, Ellen uncovered her face and asked Lottie to dip a towel in water and give it to her. As she bathed her eyes she said, "You don't care, do you, Lottie?"

"Not very much," said Lottie, unsparingly. "I can go to lunch, I suppose."

"Maybe I'll go to lunch with you," Ellen suggested, as if she were speaking of some one else.

Lottie wasted neither sympathy nor surprise on the question. "Well, maybe that would be the best thing. Why don't you come to breakfast?"

"No, I won't go to breakfast. But you go."

When Lottie joined her family in the dining-saloon she carelessly

explained that Ellen had said she wanted to be alone. Before the young man, who was the only other person besides the Kentons at their table, her mother could not question her with any hope that the bad would not be made worse, and so she remained silent. Judge Kenton sat with his eyes fixed on his plate, where as yet the steward had put no breakfast for him; Boyne was supporting the dignity of the family in one of those moments of majesty from which he was so apt to lapse into childish dependence. Lottie offered him another alternative by absently laying hold of his napkin on the table.

"That's mine," he said, with husky gloom.

She tossed it back to him with prompt disdain and a deeply eye-lashed glance at a napkin on her right. The young man who sat next it said, with a smile, "Perhaps that's yours-unless I've taken my neighbor's."

Lottie gave him a stare, and when she had sufficiently punished him for his temerity said, rather sweetly, "Oh, thank you," and took the napkin.

"I hope we shall all have use for them before long," the young man ventured again.

"Well, I should think as much," returned the girl, and this was the beginning of a conversation which the young man shared successively with the judge and Mrs. Kenton as opportunity offered. He gave the judge his card across the table, and when the judge had read on it, "Rev. Hugh Breckon," he said that his name was Kenton, and he introduced the young man formally to his family. Mr. Breckon had a clean-shaven face, with an habitual smile curving into the cheeks from under a long, straight nose; his chin had a slight whopper-jaw twist that was charming; his gay eyes were blue, and a full vein came down his forehead between them from his smooth hair. When he laughed, which was often, his color brightened.

Boyne was named last, and then Mr. Breckon said, with a smile that showed all his white teeth, "Oh yes, Mr. Boyne and I are friends already--ever since we found ourselves room-mates," and but for us, as Lottie afterwards noted, they might never have known Boyne was rooming with him, and could easily have made all sorts of insulting remarks about Mr. Breckon in their ignorance.

The possibility seemed to delight Mr. Breckon; he invited her to make all the insulting remarks she could think of, any way, and professed himself a loser, so far as her real opinion was withheld from him by reason of his rashness in giving the facts away. In the electrical progress of their acquaintance she had begun walking up and down the promenade with him after they came up from breakfast; her mother had gone to Ellen; the judge had been made comfortable in his steamer-chair, and Boyne had been sent about his business.

"I will try to think some up," she promised him, "as soon as I HAVE any real opinion of you," and he asked her if he might consider that a beginning.

She looked at him out of her indomitable blue eyes, and said, "If it hadn't been for your card, and the Reverend on it, I should have said you were an actor."

"Well, well," said Mr. Breckon, with a laugh, perhaps I am, in a way. I oughtn't to be, of course, but if a minister ever forces himself, I suppose he's acting."

"I don't see," said Lottie, instantly availing herself of the opening, "how you can get up and pray, Sunday after Sunday, whether you feel like it or not."

The young man said, with another laugh, but not so gay, "Well, the case has its difficulties."

"Or perhaps you just read prayers," Lottie sharply conjectured.

"No," he returned, "I haven't that advantage--if you think it one. I'm a sort of a Unitarian. Very advanced, too, I'm afraid."

"Is that a kind of Universalist?"

"Not--not exactly. There's an old joke--I'm not sure it's very good--which distinguishes between the sects. It's said that the Universalists think God is too good to damn them, and the Unitarians think they are too good to be damned." Lottie shrank a little from him. "Ah!" he cried, "you think it sounds wicked. Well, I'm sorry. I'm not clerical enough to joke about serious things."

He looked into her face with a pretended anxiety. "Oh, I don't know," she said, with a little scorn. "I guess if you can stand it, I can."

"I'm not sure that I can. I'm afraid it's more in keeping with an actor's profession than my own. Why," he added, as if to make a diversion, "should you have thought I was an actor?"

"I suppose because you were clean-shaved; and your pronunciation. So Englishy."

"Is it? Perhaps I ought to be proud. But I'm not an Englishman. I am a plain republican American. May I ask if you are English?"

"Oh!" said Lottie. "As if you thought such a thing. We're from Ohio."

Mr. Breckon said, "Ah!" Lottie could not make out in just what sense.

By this time they were leaning on the rail of the promenade, looking over at what little was left of Long Island, and she said, abruptly: "I think I will go and see how my father is getting along."

"Oh, do take me with you, Miss Kenton!" Mr. Breckon entreated. "I am feeling very badly about that poor old joke. I know you don't think well of me for it, and I wish to report what I've been saying to your father,

and let him judge me. I've heard that it's hard to live up to Ohio people when you're at your best, and I do hope you'll believe I have not been quite at my best. Will you let me come with you?"

Lottie did not know whether he was making fun of her or not, but she said, "Oh, it's a free country," and allowed him to go with her.

His preface made the judge look rather grave; but when he came to the joke, Kenton laughed and said it was not bad.

"Oh, but that isn't quite the point," said Mr. Breckon. "The question is whether I am good in repeating it to a young lady who was seeking serious instruction on a point of theology."

"I don't know what she would have done with the instruction if she had got it," said the judge, dryly, and the young man ventured in her behalf:

"It would be difficult for any one to manage, perhaps."

"Perhaps," Kenton assented, and Lottie could see that he was thinking Ellen would know what to do with it.

She resented that, and she was in the offence that girls feel when their elders make them the subject of comment with their contemporaries.

"Well, I'll leave you to discuss it alone. I'm going to Ellen," she said, the young man vainly following her a few paces, with apologetic gurgles of laughter.

"That's right," her father consented, and then he seized the opening to speak about Ellen. "My eldest daughter is something of an invalid, but I hope we shall have her on deck before the voyage is over. She is more interested in those matters than her sister."

"Oh!" Mr. Breckon interpolated, in a note of sympathetic interest. He could not well do more.

It was enough for Judge Kenton, who launched himself upon the celebration of Ellen's gifts and qualities with a simple-hearted eagerness which he afterwards denied when his wife accused him of it, but justified as wholly safe in view of Mr. Breckon's calling and his obvious delicacy of mind. It was something that such a person would understand, and Kenton was sure that he had not unduly praised the girl. A less besotted parent might have suspected that he had not deeply interested his listener, who seemed glad of the diversion operated by Boyne's coming to growl upon his father, "Mother's bringing Ellen up."

"Oh, then, I mustn't keep your chair," said the minister, and he rose promptly from the place he had taken beside the judge, and got himself away to the other side of the ship before the judge could frame a fitting request for him to stay.

"If you had," Mrs. Kenton declared, when he regretted this to her, "I don't know what I would have done. It's bad enough for him to hear

you bragging about the child without being kept to help take care of her, or keep her amused, as you call it. I will see that Ellen is kept amused without calling upon strangers." She intimated that if Kenton did not act with more self-restraint she should do little less than take Ellen ashore, and abandon him to the voyage alone. Under the intimidation he promised not to speak of Ellen again.

At luncheon, where Mr. Breckon again devoted himself to Lottie, he and Ellen vied in ignoring each other after their introduction, as far as words went. The girl smiled once or twice at what he was saying to her sister, and his glance kindled when it detected her smile. He might be supposed to spare her his conversation in her own interest, she looked so little able to cope with the exigencies of the talk he kept going.

When he addressed her she answered as if she had not been listening, and he turned back to Lottie. After luncheon he walked with her, and their acquaintance made such a swift advance that she was able to ask him if he laughed that way with everybody.

He laughed, and then he begged her pardon if he had been rude.

"Well, I don't see what there is to laugh at so much. When you ask me a thing I tell you just what I think, and it seems to set you off in a perfect gale. Don't you expect people to say what they think?"

"I think it's beautiful," said the young man, going into the gale, and I've got to expecting it of you, at any rate. But--but it's always so surprising! It isn't what you expect of people generally, is it?"

"I don't expect it of you," said Lottie.

"No?" asked Mr. Breckon, in another gale. "Am I so uncandid?"

"I don't know about uncandid. But I should say you were slippery."

At this extraordinary criticism the young man looked graver than he had yet been able to do since the beginning of their acquaintance. He said, presently, "I wish you would explain what you mean by slippery."

"You're as close as a trap!"

"Really?"

"It makes me tired."

"If you're not too tired now I wish you would say how."

"Oh, you understand well enough. You've got me to say what I think about all sorts of things, and you haven't expressed your opinion on a single, solitary point?"

Lottie looked fiercely out to sea, turning her face so as to keep him from peering around into it in the way he had. For that reason, perhaps,

he did not try to do so. He answered, seriously: "I believe you are partly right. I'm afraid I haven't seemed quite fair. Couldn't you attribute my closeness to something besides my slipperiness?" He began to laugh again. "Can't you imagine my being interested in your opinions so much more than my own that I didn't care to express mine?"

Lottie said, impatiently, "Oh, pshaw!" She had hesitated whether to say, "Rats!"

"But now," he pursued, "if you will suggest some point on which I can give you an opinion, I promise solemnly to do so," but he was not very solemn as he spoke.

"Well, then, I will," she said. "Don't you think it's very strange, to say the least, for a minister to be always laughing so much?"

Mr. Breckon gave a peal of delight, and answered, "Yes, I certainly do." He controlled himself so far as to say: "Now I think I've been pretty open with you, and I wish you'd answer me a question. Will you?"

"Well, I will--one," said Lottie.

"It may be two or three; but I'll begin with one. Why do you think a minister ought to be more serious than other men?"

"Why? Well, I should think you'd know. You wouldn't laugh at a funeral, would you?"

"I've been at some funerals where it would have been a relief to laugh, and I've wanted to cry at some weddings. But you think it wouldn't do?"

"Of course it wouldn't. I should think you'd know as much as that," said Lottie, out of patience with him.

"But a minister isn't always marrying or burying people; and in the intervals, why shouldn't he be setting them an example of harmless cheerfulness?"

"He ought to be thinking more about the other world, I should say."

"Well, if he believes there is another world--"

"Why! Don't you?" she broke out on him.

Mr. Breckon ruled himself and continued--"as strenuously and unquestionably as he ought, he has greater reason than other men for gayety through his faith in a happier state of being than this. That's one of the reasons I use against myself when I think of leaving off laughing. Now, Miss Kenton," he concluded, "for such a close and slippery nature, I think I've been pretty frank," and he looked round and down into her face with a burst of laughter that could be heard on the other side of the ship. He refused to take up any serious topic after that, and he returned to his former amusement of making her give herself

away.

That night Lottie came to her room with an expression so decisive in her face that Ellen, following it with vague, dark eyes as it showed itself in the glass at which her sister stood taking out the first dismantling hairpins before going to bed, could not fail of something portentous in it.

"Well," said Lottie, with severe finality, "I haven't got any use for THAT young man from this time out. Of all the tiresome people, he certainly takes the cake. You can have him, Ellen, if you want him."

"What's the matter with him?" asked Ellen, with a voice in sympathy with the slow movement of her large eyes as she lay in her berth, staring at Lottie.

"There's everything the matter, that oughtn't to be. He's too trivial for anything: I like a man that's serious about one thing in the universe, at least, and that's just what Mr. Breckon isn't." She went at such length into his disabilities that by the time she returned to the climax with which she started she was ready to clamber into the upper berth; and as she snapped the electric button at its head she repeated, "He's trivial."

"Isn't it getting rough?" asked Ellen. "The ship seems to be tipping."

"Yes, it is," said Lottie, crossly. "Good-night."

If the Rev. Mr. Breckon was making an early breakfast in the hope of sooner meeting Lottie, who had dismissed him the night before without encouraging him to believe that she wished ever to see him again, he was destined to disappointment. The deputation sent to breakfast by the paradoxical family whose acquaintance he had made on terms of each forbidding intimacy, did not include the girl who had frankly provoked his confidence and severely snubbed it. He had left her brother very sea-sick in their state-room, and her mother was reported by her father to be feeling the motion too much to venture out. The judge was, in fact, the only person at table when Breckon sat down; but when he had accounted for his wife's absence, and confessed that he did not believe either of his daughters was coming, Ellen gainsaid him by appearing and advancing quite steadily along the saloon to the place beside him. It had not gone so far as this in the judge's experience of a neurotic invalid without his learning to ask her no questions about herself. He had always a hard task in refraining, but he had grown able to refrain, and now he merely looked unobtrusively glad to see her, and asked her where Lottie was.

"Oh, she doesn't want any breakfast, she says. Is mamma sick, too? Where's Boyne?"

The judge reported as to her mother, and Mr. Breckon, after the exchange of a silent salutation with the girl, had a gleeful moment in describing Boyne's revolt at the steward's notion of gruel. "I'm glad to see you so

well, Miss Kenton," he concluded.

"I suppose I will be sick, too, if it gets rougher," she said, and she turned from him to give a rather compendious order to the table steward.

"Well, you've got an appetite, Ellen," her father ventured.

"I don't believe I will eat anything," she checked him, with a falling face.

Breckon came to the aid of the judge. "If you're not sick now, I prophesy you won't be, Miss Kenton. It can't get much rougher, without doing something uncommon."

"Is it a storm?" she asked, indifferently.

"It's what they call half a gale, I believe. I don't know how they measure it."

She smiled warily in response to his laugh, and said to her father, "Are you going up after breakfast, poppa?"

"Why, if you want to go, Ellen--"

"Oh, I wasn't asking for that; I am going back to Lottie. But I should think you would like the air. Won't it do you good?"

"I'm all right," said the judge, cheered by her show of concern for some one else. "I suppose it's rather wet on deck?" he referred himself to Breckon.

"Well, not very, if you keep to the leeward. She doesn't seem a very wet boat."

"What is a wet boat" Ellen asked, without lifting her sad eyes.

"Well, really, I'm afraid it's largely a superstition. Passengers like to believe that some boats are less liable to ship seas--to run into waves--than others; but I fancy that's to give themselves the air of old travellers."

She let the matter lapse so entirely that he supposed she had forgotten it in all its bearings, when she asked, "Have you been across many times?"

"Not many-four or five."

"This is our first time," she volunteered.

"I hope it won't be your last. I know you will enjoy it." She fell listless again, and Breckon imagined he had made a break. "Not," he added, with an endeavor for lightness, "that I suppose you're going for pleasure altogether. Women, nowadays, are above that, I understand.

They go abroad for art's sake, and to study political economy, and history, and literature--"

"My daughter," the judge interposed, "will not do much in that way, I hope."

The girl bent her head over her plate and frowned.

"Oh, then," said Breckon, "I will believe that she's going for purely selfish enjoyment. I should like to be justified in making that my object by a good example."

Ellen looked up and gave him a look that cut him short in his glad note. The lifting of her eyelids was like the rise of the curtain upon some scene of tragedy which was all the more impressive because it seemed somehow mixed with shame. This poor girl, whom he had pitied as an invalid, was a sufferer from some spiritual blight more pathetic than broken health. He pulled his mind away from the conjecture that tempted it and went on: "One of the advantages of going over the fourth or fifth time is that you're relieved from a discoverer's duties to Europe. I've got absolutely nothing before me now, but at first I had to examine every object of interest on the Continent, and form an opinion about thousands of objects that had no interest for me. I hope Miss Kenton will take warning from me."

He had not addressed Ellen directly, and her father answered: "We have no definite plans as yet, but we don't mean to overwork ourselves even if we've come for a rest. I don't know," he added, "but we had better spend our summer in England. It's easier getting about where you know the language."

The judge seemed to refer his ideas to Breckon for criticism, and the young man felt authorized to say, "Oh, so many of them know the language everywhere now, that it's easy getting about in any country."

"Yes, I suppose so," the judge vaguely deferred.

"Which," Ellen demanded of the young man with a nervous suddenness, "do you think is the most interesting country?"

He found himself answering with equal promptness, "Oh, Italy, of course."

"Can we go to Italy, poppa?" asked the girl.

"I shouldn't advise you to go there at once" Breckon intervened, smiling. "You'd find it Pretty hot there now. Florence, or Rome, or Naples"--you can't think of them."

"We have it pretty hot in Central Ohio," said the judge, with latent pride in his home climate, "What sort of place is Holland?"

"Oh, delightful! And the boat goes right on to Rotterdam, you know."

"Yes. We had arranged to leave it at Boulogne," but we could change. Do you think your mother would like Holland?" The judge turned to his daughter.

"I think she would like Italy better. She's read more about it," said the girl.

"Rise of the Dutch Republic," her father suggested.

"Yea, I know. But she's read more about Italy!"

"Oh, well," Breckon yielded, "the Italian lakes wouldn't be impossible. And you might find Venice fairly comfortable."

"We could go to Italy, then," said the judge to his daughter, "if your mother prefers."

Breckon found the simplicity of this charming, and he tasted a yet finer pleasure in the duplicity; for he divined that the father was seeking only to let his daughter have her way in pretending to yield to her mother's preference.

It was plain that the family's life centred, as it ought, about this sad, sick girl, the heart of whose mystery he perceived, on reflection, he had not the wish to pluck out. He might come to know it, but he would not try to know it; if it offered itself he might even try not to know it. He had sometimes found it more helpful with trouble to be ignorant of its cause.

In the mean time he had seen that these Kentons were sweet, good people, as he phrased their quality to himself. He had come to terms of impersonal confidence the night before with Boyne, who had consulted him upon many more problems and predicaments of life than could have yet beset any boy's experience, probably with the wish to make provision for any possible contingency of the future. The admirable principles which Boyne evolved for his guidance from their conversation were formulated with a gravity which Breckon could outwardly respect only by stifling his laughter in his pillow. He rather liked the way Lottie had tried to weigh him in her balance and found him, as it were, of an imponderable levity. With his sense of being really very light at most times, and with most people, he was aware of having been particularly light with Lottie, of having been slippery, of having, so far as responding to her frankness was concerned, been close. He relished the unsparing honesty with which she had denounced him, and though he did not yet know his outcast condition with relation to her, he could not think of her without a smile of wholly disinterested liking. He did not know, as a man of earlier date would have known, all that the little button in the judge's lapel meant; but he knew that it meant service in the civil war, a struggle which he vaguely and impersonally revered, though its details were of much the same dimness for him as those of the Revolution and the War of 1812. The modest distrust which had grown upon the bold self-confidence of Kenton's earlier manhood could not have been more tenderly and reverently imagined; and Breckon's conjecture of things suffered for

love's sake against sense and conviction in him were his further tribute to a character which existed, of course, mainly in this conjecture. It appeared to him that Kenton was held not only in the subjection to his wife's, judgment, which befalls, and doubtless becomes, a man after many years of marriage, but that he was in the actual performance of more than common renunciation of his judgment in deference to the good woman. She in turn, to be sure, offered herself a sacrifice to the whims of the sick girl, whose worst whim was having no wish that could be ascertained, and who now, after two days of her mother's devotion, was cast upon her own resources by the inconstant barometer. It had become apparent that Miss Kenton was her father's favorite in a special sense, and that his partial affection for her was of much older date than her mother's. Not less charming than her fondness for her father was the openness with which she disabled his wisdom because of his partiality to her.

X

When they left the breakfast table the first morning of the rough weather, Breckon offered to go on deck with Miss Kenton, and put her where she could see the waves. That had been her shapeless ambition, dreamily expressed with reference to some time, as they rose. Breckon asked, "Why not now?" and he promised to place her chair on deck where she could enjoy the spectacle safe from any seas the boat might ship. Then she recoiled, and she recoiled the further upon her father's urgency. At the foot of the gangway she looked wistfully up the reeling stairs, and said that she saw her shawl and Lottie's among the others solemnly swaying from the top railing. "Oh, then," Breckon pressed her, "you could be made comfortable without the least trouble."

"I ought to go and see how Lottie is getting along," she murmured.

Her father said he would see for her, and on this she explicitly renounced her ambition of going up. "You couldn't do anything," she said, coldly.

"If Miss Lottie is very sea-sick she's beyond all earthly aid," Breckon ventured. "She'd better be left to the vain ministrations of the stewardess."

Ellen looked at him in apparent distrust of his piety, if not of his wisdom. "I don't believe I could get up the stairs," she said.

"Well," he admitted, "they're not as steady as land--going stairs." Her father discreetly kept silence, and, as no one offered to help her, she began to climb the crazy steps, with Breckon close behind her in latent readiness for her fall.

From the top she called down to the judge, "Tell mamma I will only stay a minute." But later, tucked into her chair on the lee of the bulkhead, with Breckon bracing himself against it beside her, she showed no

impatience to return. "Are they never higher than that" she required of him, with her wan eyes critically on the infinite procession of the surges.

"They must be," Breckon answered, "if there's any truth in common report. I've heard of their running mountains high. Perhaps they used rather low mountains to measure them by. Or the measurements may not have been very exact. But common report never leaves much to the imagination."

"That was the way at Niagara," the girl assented; and Breckon obligingly regretted that he had never been there. He thought it in good taste that she should not tell him he ought to go. She merely said, "I was there once with poppa," and did not press her advantage. "Do they think," she asked, "that it's going to be a very long voyage?"

"I haven't been to the smoking-room--that's where most of the thinking is done on such points; the ship's officers never seem to know about it--since the weather changed. Should you mind it greatly?"

"I wouldn't care if it never ended," said the girl, with such a note of dire sincerity that Breckon instantly changed his first mind as to her words implying a pose. She took any deeper implication from them in adding, "I didn't know I should like being at sea."

"Well, if you're not sea-sick," he assented, "there are not many pleasanter things in life."

She suggested, "I suppose I'm not well enough to be sea-sick." Then she seemed to become aware of something provisional in his attendance, and she said, "You mustn't stay on my account. I can get down when I want to."

"Do let me stay," he entreated, "unless you'd really rather not," and as there was no chair immediately attainable, he crouched on the deck beside hers.

"It makes me think," she said, and he perceived that she meant the sea, "of the cold-white, heavy plunging foam in 'The Dream of Fair Women.' The words always seemed drenched!"

"Ah, Tennyson, yes," said Breckon, with a disposition to smile at the simple-heartedness of the literary allusion. "Do young ladies read poetry much in Ohio?"

"I don't believe they do," she answered. "Do they anywhere?"

"That's one of the things I should like to know. Is Tennyson your favorite poet?"

"I don't believe I have any," said Ellen. "I used to like Whither, and Emerson; and Longfellow, too."

"Used to! Don't you now?"

"I don't read them so much now," and she made a pause, behind which he fancied her secret lurked. But he shrank from knowing it if he might.

"You're all great readers in your family," he suggested, as a polite diversion.

"Lottie isn't," she answered, dreamily. "She hates it."

"Ah, I referred more particularly to the others," said Breckon, and he began to laugh, and then checked himself. "Your mother, and the judge-- and your brother--"

"Boyne reads about insects," she admitted.

"He told me of his collection of cocoons. He seems to be afraid it has suffered in his absence."

"I'm afraid it has," said Ellen, and then remained silent.

"There!" the young man broke out, pointing seaward. "That's rather a fine one. Doesn't that realize your idea of something mountains high? Unless your mountains are very high in Ohio!"

"It is grand. And the gulf between! But we haven't any in our part. It's all level. Do you believe the tenth wave is larger than the rest?"

"Why, the difficulty is to know which the tenth wave is, or when to begin counting."

"Yes," said the girl, and she added, vaguely: "I suppose it's like everything else in that. We have to make-believe before we can believe anything."

"Something like an hypothesis certainly seems necessary," Breckon assented, with a smile for the gravity of their discourse. "We shouldn't have the atomic theory without it." She did not say anything, and he decided that the atomic theory was beyond the range of her reading. He tried to be more concrete. "We have to make-believe in ourselves before we can believe, don't we? And then we sometimes find we are wrong!" He laughed, but she asked, with tragical seriousness:

"And what ought you to do when you find out you are mistaken in yourself?"

"That's what I'm trying to decide," he replied. "Sometimes I feel like renouncing myself altogether; but usually I give myself another chance. I dare say if I hadn't been so forbearing I might have agreed with your sister about my unfitness for the ministry."

"With Lottie?"

"She thinks I laugh too much!"

"I don't see why a minister shouldn't laugh if he feels like it. And if there's something to laugh at."

"Ah, that's just the point! Is there ever anything to laugh at? If we looked closely enough at things, oughtn't we rather to cry?" He laughed in retreat from the serious proposition. "But it wouldn't do to try making each other cry instead of laugh, would it? I suppose your sister would rather have me cry."

"I don't believe Lottie thought much about it," said Ellen; and at this point Mr. Breckon yielded to an impulse.

"I should think I had really been of some use if I had made you laugh, Miss Kenton."

"Me?"

"You look as if you laughed with your whole heart when you did laugh."

She glanced about, and Breckon decided that she had found him too personal. "I wonder if I could walk, with the ship tipping so?" she asked.

"Well, not far," said Breckon, with a provisional smile, and then he was frightened from his irony by her flinging aside her wraps and starting to her feet. Before he could scramble to his own, she had slid down the reeling promenade half to the guard, over which she seemed about to plunge. He hurled himself after her; he could not have done otherwise; and it was as much in a wild clutch for support as in a purpose to save her that he caught her in his arms and braced himself against the ship's slant. "Where are you going? What are you trying to do?" he shouted.

"I wanted to go down-stairs," she protested, clinging to him.

"You were nearer going overboard," he retorted. "You shouldn't have tried." He had not fully formulated his reproach when the ship righted herself with a counter-roll and plunge, and they were swung staggering back together against the bulkhead. The door of the gangway was within reach, and Breckon laid hold of the rail beside it and put the girl within. "Are you hurt?" he asked.

"No, no; I'm not hurt," she panted, sinking on the cushioned benching where usually rows of semi-sea-sick people were lying.

"I thought you might have been bruised against the bulkhead," he said. "Are you sure you're not hurt that I can't get you anything? From the steward, I mean?"

"Only help me down-stairs," she answered. "I'm perfectly well," and Breckon was so willing on these terms to close the incident that he was not aware of the bruise on his own arm, which afterwards declared itself in several primitive colors. "Don't tell them," she added. "I want to

come up again."

"Why, certainly not," he consented; but Boyne Kenton, who had been an involuntary witness of the fact from a point on the forward promenade, where he had stationed himself to study the habits of the stormy petrel at a moment so favorable to the acquaintance of the petrel (having left a seasick bed for the purpose), was of another mind. He had been alarmed, and, as it appeared in the private interview which he demanded of his mother, he had been scandalized.

"It is bad enough the way Lottie is always going on with fellows. And now, if Ellen is going to begin!"

"But, Boyne, child," Mrs. Kenton argued, in an equilibrium between the wish to laugh at her son and the wish to box his ears, "how could she help his catching her if he was to save her from pitching overboard?"

"That's just it! He will always think that she did it just so he would have to catch her."

"I don't believe any one would think that of Ellen," said Mrs. Kenton, gravely.

"Momma! You don't know what these Eastern fellows are. There are so few of them that they're used to having girls throw themselves at them, and they will think anything, ministers and all. You ought to talk to Ellen, and caution her. Of course, she isn't like Lottie; but if Lottie's been behaving her way with Mr. Breckon, he must suppose the rest of the family is like her."

"Boyne," said his mother, provisionally, "what sort of person is Mr. Breckon?"

"Well, I think he's kind of frivolous."

"Do you, Boyne?"

"I don't suppose he means any harm by it, but I don't like to see a minister laugh so much. I can't hardly get him to talk seriously about anything. And I just know he makes fun of Lottie. I don't mean that he always makes fun with me. He didn't that night at the vaudeville, where I first saw him."

"What do you mean?"

"Don't you remember? I told you about it last winter."

"And was Mr. Breckon that gentleman?"

"Yes; but he didn't know who I was when we met here."

"Well, upon my word, Boyne, I think you might have told us before," said his mother, in not very definite vexation. "Go along, now!"

Boyne stood talking to his mother, with his hands, which he had not grown to, largely planted on the jambs of her state-room door. She was keeping her berth, not so much because she was sea-sick as because it was the safest place in the unsteady ship to be in. "Do you want me to send Ellen to you!"

"I will attend to Ellen, Boyne," his mother snubbed him. "How is Lottie?"

"I can't tell whether she's sick or not. I went to see about her and she motioned me away, and fairly screamed when I told her she ought to keep out in the air. Well, I must be going up again myself, or--"

Before lunch, Boyne had experienced the alternative which he did not express, although his theory and practice of keeping in the open air ought to have rendered him immune. Breckon saw his shock of hair, and his large eyes, like Ellen's in their present gloom, looking out of it on the pillow of the upper berth, when he went to their room to freshen himself for the luncheon, and found Boyne averse even to serious conversation: He went to lunch without him. None of the Kentons were at table, and he had made up his mind to lunch alone when Ellen appeared, and came wavering down the aisle to the table. He stood up to help her, but seeing how securely she stayed herself from chair to chair he sank down again.

"Poppy is sick, too, now," she replied, as if to account for being alone.

"And you're none the worse for your little promenade?" The steward came to Breckon's left shoulder with a dish, and after an effort to serve himself from it he said, with a slight gasp, "The other side, please." Ellen looked at him, but did not speak, and he made haste to say: "The doctor goes so far as to admit that its half a gale. I don't know just what measure the first officer would have for it. But I congratulate you on a very typical little storm, Miss Kenton; perfectly safe, but very decided. A great many people cross the Atlantic without anything half as satisfactory. There is either too much or too little of this sort of thing." He went on talking about the weather, and had got such a distance from the point of beginning that he had cause to repent being brought back to it when she asked:

"Did the doctor think, you were hurt?"

"Well, perhaps I ought to be more ashamed than I am," said Breckon. "But I thought I had better make sure. And it's only a bruise--"

"Won't you let ME help you!" she asked, as another dish intervened at his right. "I hurt you."

Breckon laughed at her solemn face and voice. "If you'll exonerate yourself first," he answered: "I couldn't touch a morsel that conveyed confession of the least culpability on your part. Do you consent? Otherwise, I pass this dish. And really I want some!"

"Well," she sadly consented, and he allowed her to serve his plate.

"More yet, please," he said. "A lot!"

"Is that enough?"

"Well, for the first helping. And don't offer to cut it up for me! My proud spirit draws the line at cutting up. Besides, a fork will do the work with goulash."

"Is that what it is?" she asked, but not apparently because she cared to know.

"Unless you prefer to naturalize it as stew. It seems to have come in with the Hungarian bands. I suppose you have them in--"

"Tuskingum? No, it is too small. But I heard them at a restaurant in New York where my brother took us."

"In the spirit of scientific investigation? It's strange how a common principle seems to pervade both the Hungarian music and cooking--the same wandering airs and flavors--wild, vague, lawless harmonies in both. Did you notice it?"

Ellen shook her head. The look of gloom which seemed to Breckon habitual in it came back into her face, and he had a fantastic temptation to see how far he could go with her sad consciousness before she should be aware that he was experimenting upon it. He put this temptation from him, and was in the enjoyment of a comfortable self-righteousness when it returned in twofold power upon him with the coming of some cutlets which capriciously varied the repast.

"Ah, now, Miss Kenton, if you were to take pity on my helplessness!"

"Why, certainly!" She possessed herself of his plate, and began to cut up the meat for him. "Am I making the bites too small?" she asked, with an upward glance at him.

"Well, I don't know. Should you think so?" he returned, with a smile that out-measured the morsels on the plate before her.

She met his laughing eyes with eyes that questioned his honesty, at first sadly, and then indignantly. She dropped the knife and fork upon the plate and rose.

"Oh, Miss Kenton!" he penitently entreated.

But she was down the slanting aisle and out of the reeling door before he could decide what to do.

XI.

It seemed to Breckon that he had passed through one of those accessions of temperament, one of those crises of natural man, to put it in the terms of an older theology than he professed, that might justify him in recurring to his original sense of his unfitness for his sacred calling, as he would hardly have called it: He had allowed his levity to get the better of his sympathy, and his love of teasing to overpower that love of helping which seemed to him his chief right and reason for being a minister: To play a sort of poor practical joke upon that melancholy girl (who was also so attractive) was not merely unbecoming to him as a minister; it was cruel; it was vulgar; it was ungentlemanly. He could not say less than ungentlemanly, for that seemed to give him the only pang that did him any good. Her absolute sincerity had made her such an easy prey that he ought to have shrunk from the shabby temptation in abhorrence.

It is the privilege of a woman, whether she wills it or not, to put a man who is in the wrong concerning her much further in the wrong than he could be from his offence. Breckon did not know whether he was suffering more or less because he was suffering quite hopelessly, but he was sure that he was suffering justly, and he was rather glad, if anything, that he must go on suffering. His first impulse had been to go at once to Judge Kenton and own his wrong, and take the consequences--in fact, invite them. But Breckon forbore for two reasons: one, that he had already appeared before the judge with the confession of having possibly made an unclerical joke to his younger daughter; the other, that the judge might not consider levity towards the elder so venial; and though Breckon wished to be both punished and pardoned, in the final analysis, perhaps, he most wished to be pardoned. Without pardon he could see no way to repair the wrong he had done. Perhaps he wished even to retrieve himself in the girl's eyes, or wished for the chance of trying.

Ellen went away to her state-room and sat down on the sofa opposite Lottie, and she lost herself in a muse in which she was found by the voice of the sufferer in the berth.

"If you haven't got anything better to do than come in here and stare at me, I wish you would go somewhere else and stare. I can tell you it isn't any joke."

"I didn't know I was staring at you," said Ellen, humbly.

"It would be enough to have you rising and sinking there, without your staring at all: If you're going to stay, I wish you'd lie down. I don't see why you're so well, anyway, after getting us all to come on this wild-goose chase."

"I know, I know," Ellen strickenly deprecated. "But I'm not going to stay. I jest came for my things."

"Is that giggling simpleton sick? I hope he is!"

"Mr. Breckon?" Ellen asked, though she knew whom Lottie meant. "No, he isn't sick. He was at lunch."

"Was poppa?"

"He was at breakfast."

"And mamma?"

"She and Boyne are both in bed. I don't know whether they're very sick."

"Well, then, I'll just tell you what, Ellen Kenton!" Lottie sat up in accusal. "You were staring at something he said; and the first thing we all know it will be another case of Bittridge!" Ellen winced, but Lottie had no pity. "You don't know it, because you don't know anything, and I'm not blaming you; but if you let that simpleton--I don't care if he is a minister!--go 'round with you when your family are all sick abed, you'll be having the whole ship to look after you."

"Be still, Lottie!" cried Ellen. "You are awful," and, with a flaming face, she escaped from the state-room.

She did not know where else to go, and she beat along the sides of the corridor as far as the dining-saloon. She had a dim notion of trying to go up into the music-room above, but a glance at the reeling steep of the stairs forbade. With her wraps on her arm and her sea-cap in her hand, she stood clinging to the rail-post.

Breckon came out of the saloon. "Oh, Miss Kenton," he humbly entreated, "don't try to go on deck! It's rougher than ever."

"I was going to the music-room," she faltered.

"Let me help you, then," he said again. They mounted the gangway-steps, but this time with his hand under her elbow, and his arm alert as before in a suspended embrace against her falling.

She had lost the initiative of her earlier adventure; she could only submit herself to his guidance. But he almost outdid her in meekness, when he got her safely placed in a corner whence she could not be easily flung upon the floor. "You must have found it very stuffy below; but, indeed, you'd better not try going out."

"Do you think it isn't safe here?" she asked.

"Oh yes. As long as you keep quiet. May I get you something to read? They seem to have a pretty good little library."

They both glanced at the case of books; from which the steward-librarian was setting them the example of reading a volume.

"No, I don't want to read. You musn't let me keep you from it."

"Well, one can read any time. But one hasn't always the chance to say that one is ashamed. Don't pretend you don't understand, Miss Kenton! I didn't really mean anything. The temptation to let you exaggerate my disability was too much for me. Say that you despise me! It would be such a comfort."

"Weren't you hurt?"

"A little--a little more than a little, but not half so much as I deserved--not to the point of not being able to cut up my meat. Am I forgiven? I'll promise to cut up all your meat for you at dinner! Ah, I'm making it worse!"

"Oh no. Please don't speak of it"

"Could you forbid my thinking of it, too?" He did not wait for her to answer. "Then here goes! One, two, three, and the thought is banished forever. Now what shall we speak of, or think of? We finished up the weather pretty thoroughly this morning. And if you have not the weather and the ship's run when you're at sea, why, you are at sea. Don't you think it would be a good plan, when they stick those little flags into the chart, to show how far we've come in the last twenty-four hours, if they'd supply a topic for the day? They might have topics inscribed on the flags--standard topics, that would serve for any voyage. We might leave port with History--say, personal history; that would pave the way to a general acquaintance among the passengers. Then Geography, and if the world is really round, and what keeps the sea from spilling. Then Politics, and the comparative advantages of monarchical and republican governments, for international discussion. Then Pathology, and whether you're usually sea-sick, and if there is any reliable remedy. Then--for those who are still up--Poetry and Fiction; whether women really like Kipling, and what kind of novels you prefer. There ought to be about ten topics. These boats are sometimes very slow. Can't you suggest something, Miss Kenton? There is no hurry! We've got four to talk over, for we must bring up the arrears, you know. And now we'll begin with personal history. Your sister doesn't approve of me, does she?"

"My sister?" Ellen faltered, and, between the conscience to own the fact and the kindness to deny it, she stopped altogether.

"I needn't have asked. She told me so herself, in almost as many words. She said I was slippery, and as close as a trap. Miss Kenton! I have the greatest wish to know whether I affect you as both slippery and close!"

"I don't always know what Lottie means."

"She means what she says; and I feel that I am under condemnation till I reform. I don't know how to stop being slippery, but I'm determined to stop being close. Will you tell her that for me? Will you tell her that you never met an opener, franker person?--of course, except herself!--and that so far from being light I seemed to you particularly heavy? Say

that I did nothing but talk about myself, and that when you wanted to talk about yourself you couldn't get in a word edgewise. Do try, now, Miss Kenton, and see if you can! I don't want you to invent a character for me, quite."

"Why, there's nothing to say about me," she began in compliance with his gayety, and then she fell helpless from it.

"Well, then, about Tuskingum. I should like to hear about Tuskingum, so much!"

"I suppose we like it because we've always lived there. You haven't been much in the West, have you?"

"Not as much as I hope to be." He had found that Western people were sometimes sensitive concerning their section and were prepared to resent complacent ignorance of it. "I've always thought it must be very interesting."

"It isn't," said the girl. "At least, not like the East. I used to be provoked when the lecturers said anything like that; but when you've been to New York you see what they mean."

"The lecturers?" he queried.

"They always stayed at our house when they lectured in Tuskingum."

"Ah! Oh yes," said Breckon, grasping a situation of which he had heard something, chiefly satirical. "Of course. And is your father--is Judge Kenton literary? Excuse me!"

"Only in his history. He's writing the history of his regiment; or he gets the soldiers to write down all they can remember of the war, and then he puts their stories together."

"How delightful!" said Breckon. "And I suppose it's a great pleasure to him."

"I don't believe it is," said Ellen. "Poppa doesn't believe in war any more."

"Indeed!" said Breckon. "That is very interesting."

"Sometimes when I'm helping him with it--"

"Ah, I knew you must help him!"

"And he comes to a place where there has been a dreadful slaughter, it seems as if he felt worse about it than I did. He isn't sure that it wasn't all wrong. He thinks all war is wrong now."

"Is he--has he become a follower of Tolstoy?"

"He's read him. He says he's the only man that ever gave a true account of battles; but he had thought it all out for himself before he read Tolstoy about fighting. Do you think it is right to revenge an injury?"

"Why, surely not!" said Breckon, rather startled.

"That is what we say," the girl pursued. "But if some one had injured you--abused your confidence, and--insulted you, what would you do?"

"I'm not sure that I understand," Breckon began. The inquiry was superficially impersonal, but he reflected that women are never impersonal, or the sons of women, for that matter, and he suspected an intimate ground. His suspicions were confirmed when Miss Kenton said: "It seems easy enough to forgive anything that's done to yourself; but if it's done to some one else, too, have you the right--isn't it wrong to let it go?"

"You think the question of justice might come in then? Perhaps it ought. But what is justice? And where does your duty begin to be divided?" He saw her following him with alarming intensity, and he shrank from the responsibility before him. What application might not she make of his words in the case, whatever it was, which he chose not to imagine? "To tell you the truth, Miss Kenton, I'm not very clear on that point --I'm not sure that I'm disinterested."

"Disinterested?"

"Yes; you know that I abused your confidence at luncheon; and until I know whether the wrong involved any one else--" He looked at her with hovering laughter in his eyes which took wing at the reproach in hers. "But if we are to be serious--"

"Oh no," she said, "it isn't a serious matter." But in the helplessness of her sincerity she could not carry it off lightly, or hide from him that she was disappointed.

He tried to make talk about other things. She responded vaguely, and when she had given herself time she said she believed she would go to Lottie; she was quite sure she could get down the stairs alone. He pursued her anxiously, politely, and at the head of her corridor took leave of her with a distinct sense of having merited his dismissal.

"I see what you mean, Lottie," she said, "about Mr. Breckon."

Lottie did not turn her head on the pillow. "Has it taken you the whole day to find it out?"

XII.

The father and the mother had witnessed with tempered satisfaction the

interest which seemed to be growing up between Ellen and the young minister. By this time they had learned not to expect too much of any turn she might take; she reverted to a mood as suddenly as she left it. They could not quite make out Breckon himself; he was at least as great a puzzle to them as their own child was.

"It seems," said Mrs. Kenton, in their first review of the affair, after Boyne had done a brother's duty in trying to bring Ellen under their mother's censure, "that he was the gentleman who discussed the theatre with Boyne at the vaudeville last winter. Boyne just casually mentioned it. I was so provoked!"

"I don't see what bearing the fact has," the judge remarked.

"Why, Boyne liked him very much that night, but now he seems to feel very much as Lottie does about him. He thinks he laughs too much."

"I don't know that there's much harm in that," said the judge. "And I shouldn't value Boyne's opinion of character very highly."

"I value any one's intuitions--especially children's."

"Boyne's in that middle state where he isn't quite a child. And so is Lottie, for that matter."

"That is true," their mother assented. "And we ought to be glad of anything that takes Ellen's mind off herself. If I could only believe she was forgetting that wretch!"

"Does she ever speak of him?"

"She never hints of him, even. But her mind may be full of him all the time."

The judge laughed impatiently. "It strikes me that this young Mr. Breckon hasn't much advantage of Ellen in what Lottie calls closeness!"

"Ellen has always been very reserved. It would have been better for her if she hadn't. Oh, I scarcely dare to hope anything! Rufus, I feel that in everything of this kind we are very ignorant and inexperienced."

"Inexperienced!" Renton retorted. "I don't want any more experience of the kind Ellen has given us."

"I don't mean that. I mean--this Mr. Breckon. I can't tell what attracts him in the child. She must appear very crude and uncultivated to him. You needn't resent it so! I know she's read a great deal, and you've made her think herself intellectual--but the very simple-heartedness of the way she would show out her reading would make such a young man see that she wasn't like the girls he was used to. They would hide their intellectuality, if they had any. It's no use your trying to fight it Mr. Kenton. We are country people, and he knows it."

"Tuskingum isn't country!" the judge declared.

"It isn't city. And we don't know anything about the world, any of us. Oh, I suppose we can read and write! But we don't know the a, b, c of the things he, knows. He, belongs to a kind of society--of people--in New York that I had glimpses of in the winter, but that I never imagined before. They made me feel very belated and benighted--as if I hadn't, read or thought anything. They didn't mean to; but I couldn't help it, and they couldn't."

"You--you've been frightened out of your propriety by what you've seen in New York," said her husband.

"I've been frightened, certainly. And I wish you had been, too. I wish you wouldn't be so conceited about Ellen. It scares me to see you so. Poor, sick thing, her looks are all gone! You must see that. And she doesn't dress like the girls he's used to. I know we've got her things in New York; but she doesn't wear them like a New-Yorker. I hope she isn't going in for MORE unhappiness!"

At the thought of this the judge's crest fell. "Do you believe she's getting interested in him?" he asked, humbly.

"No, no; I don't say that. But promise me you won't encourage her in it. And don't, for pity's sake, brag about her to him."

"No, I won't," said the judge, and he tacitly repented having done so.

The weather had changed, and when he went up from this interview with his wife in their stateroom he found a good many people strung convalescently along the promenade on their steamer-chairs. These, so far as they were women, were of such sick plainness that when he came to Ellen his heart throbbed with a glad resentment of her mother's aspersion of her health and beauty. She looked not only very well, and very pretty, but in a gay red cap and a trig jacket she looked, to her father's uncritical eyes, very stylish. The glow left his heart at sight of the empty seat beside her.

"Where is Lottie?" he asked, though it was not Lottie's whereabouts that interested him.

"Oh, she's walking with Mr. Breckon somewhere," said Ellen.

"Then she's made up her mind to tolerate him, has she?" the father asked, more lightly than he felt.

Ellen smiled. "That wasn't anything very serious, I guess. At any rate, she's walking with him."

"What book is that?" he asked, of the volume she was tilting back and forth under her hand.

She showed it. "One of his. He brought it up to amuse me, he said."

"While he was amusing himself with Lottie," thought the judge, in his jealousy for her. "It is going the same old way. Well!" What he said aloud was, "And is it amusing you?"

"I haven't looked at it yet," said the girl. "It's amusing enough to watch the sea. Oh, poppa! I never thought I should care so much for it."

"And you're glad we came?"

"I don't want to think about that. I just want to know that I'm here." She pressed his arm gently, significantly, where he sat provisionally in the chair beside her, and he was afraid to speak lest he should scare away the hope her words gave him.

He merely said, "Well, well!" and waited for her to speak further. But her impulse had exhausted itself, as if her spirit were like one of those weak forms of life which spend their strength in a quick run or flight, and then rest to gather force for another. "Where's Boyne?" he asked, after waiting for her to speak.

"He was here a minute ago. He's been talking with some of the deck passengers that are going home because they couldn't get on in America. Doesn't that seem pitiful, poppa? I always thought we had work enough for the whole world."

"Perhaps these fellows didn't try very hard to find it," said the judge.

"Perhaps," she assented.

"I shouldn't want you to get to thinking that it's all like New York. Remember how comfortable everybody is in Tuskingum."

"Yes," she said, sadly. "How far off Tuskingum seems!"

"Well, don't forget about it; and remember that wherever life is simplest and purest and kindest, that is the highest civilization."

"How much like old times it seems to hear you talk that way, poppa! I should think I was in the library at home. And I made you leave it!" she sighed.

"Your mother was glad of any excuse. And it will do us all good, if we take it in the right way," said the judge, with a didactic severity that did not hide his pang from her.

"Poor poppa!" she said.

He went away, saying that he was going to look Lottie up. His simple design was to send Lottie to her mother, so that Breckon might come back to Ellen; but he did not own this to himself.

Lottie returned from another direction with Boyne, and Ellen said, "Poppa's gone to look for you."

"Has he?" asked Lottie, dropping decisively into her chair. "Well, there's one thing; I won't call him poppa any more."

"What will you call him?" Boyne demanded, demurely.

"I'll call him father, if you want to know; and I'm going to call mamma, mother. I'm not going to have those English laughing at us, and I won't say papa and mamma. Everybody that knows anything says father and mother now."

Boyne kept looking from one sister to another during Lottie's declaration, and, with his eyes on Ellen, he said, "It's true, Ellen. All the Plumptions did." He was very serious.

Ellen smiled. "I'm too old to change. I'd rather seem queer in Europe than when I get back to Tuskingum."

"You wouldn't be queer there a great while," said Lottie. "They'll all be doing it in a week after I get home."

Upon the encouragement given him by Ellen, Boyne seized the chance of being of the opposition. "Yes," he taunted Lottie, "and you think they'll say woman and man, for lady and gentleman, I suppose."

"They will as soon as they know it's the thing."

"Well, I know I won't," said Boyne. "I won't call mamma a woman."

"It doesn't matter what you do, Boyne dear," his sister serenely assured him.

While he stood searching his mind for a suitable retort, a young man, not apparently many years his senior, came round the corner of the music-room, and put himself conspicuously in view at a distance from the Kentons.

"There he is, now," said Boyne. "He wants to be introduced to Lottie." He referred the question to Ellen, but Lottie answered for her.

"Then why don't you introduce him?"

"Well, I would if he was an American. But you can't tell about these English." He resumed the dignity he had lost in making the explanation to Lottie, and ignored her in turning again to Ellen. "What do you think, Ellen?"

"Oh, don't know about such things, Boyne," she said, shrinking from the responsibility.

"Well; upon my word!" cried Lottie. "If Ellen can talk by the hour with

that precious Mr. Breckon, and stay up here along with him, when everybody else is down below sick, I don't think she can have a great deal to say about a half-grown boy like that being introduced to me."

"He's as old as you are," said Boyne, hotly.

"Oh! I saw him associating with you, and I thought he was a boy, too. Pardon me!" Lottie turned from giving Boyne his coup-de-grace, to plant a little stab in Ellen's breast. "To be sure, now Mr. Breckon has found those friends of his, I suppose he won't want to flirt with Ellen any more."

"Ah, ha, ha!" Boyne broke in. "Lottie is mad because he stopped to speak to some ladies he knew. Women, I suppose she'd call them."

"Well, I shouldn't call him a gentleman, anyway," said Lottie.

The pretty, smooth-faced, fresh-faced young fellow whom their varying debate had kept in abeyance, looked round at them over his shoulder as he leaned on the rail, and seemed to discover Boyne for the first time. He came promptly towards the Kentons.

"Now," said Lottie, rapidly, "you'll just HAVE to."

The young fellow touched his cap to the whole group, but he ventured to address only Boyne.

"Every one seems to be about this morning," he said, with the cheery English-rising infection.

"Yes," answered Boyne, with such snubbing coldness that Ellen's heart was touched.

"It's so pleasant," she said, "after that dark weather."

"Isn't it?" cried the young fellow, gratefully. "One doesn't often get such sunshine as this at sea, you know."

"My sister, Miss Kenton, Mr. Pogis," Boyne solemnly intervened. "And Miss Lottie Kenton."

The pretty boy bowed to each in turn, but he made no pretence of being there to talk with Ellen. "Have you been ill, too?" he actively addressed himself to Lottie.

"No, just mad," she said. "I wasn't very sick, and that made it all the worse being down in a poky state-room when I wanted to walk."

"And I suppose you've been making up for lost time this morning?"

"Not half," said Lottie.

"Oh, do finish the half with me!"

Lottie instantly rose, and flung her sister the wrap she had been holding ready to shed from the moment the young man had come up. "Keep that for me, Nell. Are you good at catching?" she asked him.

"Catching?"

"Yes! People," she explained, and at a sudden twist of the ship she made a clutch at his shoulder.

"Oh! I think I can catch you."

As they moved off together, Boyne said, "Well, upon my word!" but Ellen did not say anything in comment on Lottie. After a while she asked, "Who were the ladies that Mr. Breckon met?"

"I didn't hear their names. They were somebody he hadn't seen before since the ship started. They looked like a young lady and her mother. It made Lottie mad when he stopped to speak with them, and she wouldn't wait till he could get through. Ran right away, and made me come, too."

XIII.

Breckon had not seen the former interest between himself and Ellen lapse to commonplace acquaintance without due sense of loss. He suffered justly, but he did not suffer passively, or without several attempts to regain the higher ground. In spite of these he was aware of being distinctly kept to the level which he accused himself of having chosen, by a gentle acquiescence in his choice more fatal than snubbing. The advances that he made across the table, while he still met Miss Kenton alone there, did not carry beyond the rack supporting her plate. She talked on whatever subject he started with that angelic sincerity which now seemed so far from him, but she started none herself; she did not appeal to him for his opinion upon any question more psychological than the barometer; and,

"In a tumultuous privacy of storm,"

he found himself as much estranged from her as if a fair-weather crowd had surrounded them. He did not believe that she resented the levity he had shown; but he had reason to fear that she had finally accepted it as his normal mood, and in her efforts to meet him in it, as if he had no other, he read a tolerance that was worse than contempt. When he tried to make her think differently, if that was what she thought of him, he fancied her rising to the notion he wished to give her, and then shrinking from it, as if it must bring her the disappointment of some trivial joke.

It was what he had taught her to expect of him, and he had himself to

blame. Now that he had thrown that precious chance away, he might well have overvalued it. She had certain provincialisms which he could not ignore. She did not know the right use of will and shall, and would and should, and she pronounced the letter 'r' with a hard mid-Western twist. Her voice was weak and thin, and she could not govern it from being at times a gasp and at times a drawl. She did not dress with the authority of women who know more of their clothes than the people they buy them of; she did not carry herself like a pretty girl; she had not the definite stamp of young-ladyism. Yet she was undoubtedly a lady in every instinct; she wore with pensive grace the clothes which she had not subjected to her personal taste; and if she did not carry herself like a pretty girl, she had a beauty which touched and entreated.

More and more Breckon found himself studying her beauty--her soft, brown brows, her gentle, dark eyes, a little sunken, and with the lids pinched by suffering; the cheeks somewhat thin, but not colorless; the long chin, the clear forehead, and the massed brown hair, that seemed too heavy for the drooping neck. It was not the modern athletic type; it was rather of the earlier period, when beauty was associated with the fragility despised by a tanned and golfing generation. Ellen Kenton's wrists were thin, and her hands long and narrow. As he looked at her across the racks during those two days of storm, he had sometimes the wish to take her long, narrow hands in his, and beg her to believe that he was worthier her serious friendship than he had shown himself. What he was sure of at all times now was that he wished to know the secret of that patient pathos of hers. She was not merely, or primarily, an invalid. Her family had treated her as an invalid, but, except Lottie, whose rigor might have been meant sanatively, they treated her more with the tenderness people use with a wounded spirit; and Breckon fancied moments of something like humility in her, when she seemed to cower from his notice. These were not so imaginable after her family took to their berths and left her alone with him, but the touching mystery remained, a sort of bewilderment, as he guessed it, a surprise such as a child might show at some incomprehensible harm. It was this grief which he had refused not merely to know--he still doubted his right to know it--but to share; he had denied not only his curiosity but his sympathy, and had exiled himself to a region where, when her family came back with the fair weather, he felt himself farther from her than before their acquaintance began.

He had made an overture to its renewal in the book he lent her, and then Mrs. Rasmith and her daughter had appeared on deck, and borne down upon him when he was walking with Lottie Kenton and trying to begin his self-retrieval through her. She had left him; but they had not, and in the bonds of a prophet and his followers he found himself bound with them for much more conversation than he had often held with them ashore. The parochial duties of an ethical teacher were not strenuous, and Breckon had not been made to feel them so definitely before. Mrs. Rasmith held that they now included promising to sit at her table for the rest of the voyage; but her daughter succeeded in releasing him from the obligation; and it was she who smilingly detached the clinging hold of the elder lady. "We mustn't keep Mr. Breckon from his friends, mother," she said, brightly, and then he said he should like the pleasure of introducing

them, and both of the ladies declared that they would be delighted.

He bowed himself off, and half the ship's-length away he was aware, from meeting Lottie with her little Englishman, that it was she and not Ellen whom he was seeking. As the couple paused in whirring past Breckon long enough to let Lottie make her hat fast against the wind, he heard the Englishman shout:

"I say, that sister of yours is a fine girl, isn't she?"

"She's a pretty good--looker," Lottie answered back. "What's the matter with HER sister?"

"Oh, I say!" her companion returned, in a transport with her slangy pertness, which Breckon could not altogether refuse to share.

He thought that he ought to condemn it, and he did condemn Mrs. Kenton for allowing it in one of her daughters, when he came up to her sitting beside another whom he felt inexpressibly incapable of it. Mrs. Kenton could have answered his censure, if she had known it, that daughters, like sons, were not what their mothers but what their environments made them, and that the same environment sometimes made them different, as he saw. She could have told him that Lottie, with her slangy pertness, had the truest and best of the men she knew at her feet, and that Ellen, with her meekness, had been the prey of the commonest and cheapest spirit in her world, and so left him to make an inference as creditable to his sex as he could. But this bold defence was as far from the poor lady as any spoken reproach was from him. Her daughter had to check in her a mechanical offer to rise, as if to give Breckon her place, the theory and practice of Tuskingum being that their elders ought to leave young people alone together.

"Don't go, mamma," Ellen whispered. "I don't want you to go."

Breckon, when he arrived before them, remained talking on foot, and, unlike Lottie's company, he talked to the mother. This had happened before from him, but she had not got used to it, and now she deprecated in everything but words his polite questions about her sufferings from the rough weather, and his rejoicing that the worst was probably over. She ventured the hope that it was so, for she said that Mr. Kenton had about decided to keep on to Holland, and it seemed to her that they had had enough of storms. He said he was glad that they were going right on; and then she modestly recurred to the earlier opinion he had given her husband that it would be better to spend the rest of the summer in Holland than to go to Italy, as if she wished to conform herself in the wisdom of Mr. Kenton's decision. He repeated his conviction, and he said that if he were in their place he should go to The Hague as soon as they had seen Rotterdam, and make it their headquarters for the exploration of the whole country.

"You can't realize how little it is; you can get anywhere in an hour; the difficulty is to keep inside of Holland when you leave any given point. I envy you going there."

Mrs. Kenton inferred that he was going to stop in France, but if it were part of his closeness not to tell, it was part of her pride not to ask. She relented when he asked if he might get a map of his and prove the littleness of Holland from it, and in his absence she could not well avoid saying to Ellen, "He seems very pleasant."

"Yes; why not?" the girl asked.

"I don't know. Lottie is so against him."

"He was very kind when you were all sick."

"Well, you ought to know better than Lottie; you've seen him so much more." Ellen was silent, and her mother advanced cautiously, "I suppose he is very cultivated."

"How can I tell? I'm not."

"Why, Ellen, I think you are. Very few girls have read so much."

"Yes, but he wouldn't care if I were cultivated, Ha is like all the rest. He would like to joke and laugh. Well, I think that is nice, too, and I wish I could do it. But I never could, and now I can't try. I suppose he wonders what makes me such a dead weight on you all."

"You know you're not that, Ellen! You musn't let yourself be morbid. It hurts me to have you say such things."

"Well, I should like to tell him why, and see what he would say."

"Ellen!"

"Why not? If he is a minister he must have thought about all kinds of things. Do you suppose he ever knew of a girl before who had been through what I have? Yes, I would like to know what he would really say."

"I know what he ought to say! If he knew, he would say that no girl had ever behaved more angelically."

"Do you think he would? Perhaps he would say that if I hadn't been so proud and silly--Here he comes! Shall we ask him?"

Breckon approached with his map, and her mother gasped, thinking how terrible such a thing would be if it could be; Ellen smiled brightly up at him. "Will you take my chair? And then you can show mamma your map. I am going down," and while he was still protesting she was gone.

"Miss Kenton seems so much better than she did the first day," he said, as he spread the map out on his knees, and gave Mrs. Kenton one end to hold.

"Yes," the mother assented, as she bent over to look at it.

She followed his explanation with a surface sense, while her nether mind was full of the worry of the question which Ellen had planted in it. What would such a man think of what she had been through? Or, rather, how would he say to her the only things that in Mrs. Kenton's belief he could say? How could the poor child ever be made to see it in the light of some mind not colored with her family's affection for her? An immense, an impossible longing possessed itself of the mother's heart, which became the more insistent the more frantic it appeared. She uttered "Yes" and "No" and "Indeed" to what he was saying, but all the time she was rehearsing Ellen's story in her inner sense. In the end she remembered so little what had actually passed that her dramatic reverie seemed the reality, and when she left him she got herself down to her state-room, giddy with the shame and fear of her imaginary self-betrayal. She wished to test the enormity, and yet not find it so monstrous, by submitting the case to her husband, and she could scarcely keep back her impatience at seeing Ellen instead of her father.

"Momma, what have you been saying to Mr. Breckon about me?"

"Nothing," said Mrs. Kenton, aghast at first, and then astonished to realize that she was speaking the simple truth. "He said how much better you were looking; but I don't believe I spoke a single word. We were looking at the map."

"Very well," Ellen resumed. "I have been thinking it all over, and now I have made up my mind."

She paused, and her mother asked, tremulously, "About what, Ellen?"

"You know, mamma. I see all now. You needn't be afraid that I care anything about him now," and her mother knew that she meant Bittridge, "or that I ever shall. That's gone forever. But it's gone," she added, and her mother quaked inwardly to hear her reason, "because the wrong and the shame was all for me--for us. That's why I can forgive it, and forget. If we had done anything, the least thing in the world, to revenge ourselves, or to hurt him, then--Don't you see, mamma?"

"I think I see, Ellen."

"Then I should have to keep thinking about it, and what we had made him suffer, and whether we hadn't given him some claim. I don't wish ever to think of him again. You and poppa were so patient and forbearing, all through; and I thank goodness now for everything you put up with; only I wish I could have borne everything myself."

"You had enough to bear," Mrs. Kenton said, in tender evasion.

"I'm glad that I had to bear so much, for bearing it is what makes me free now." She went up to her mother and kissed her, and gazed into her face with joyful, tearful looks that made her heart sink.

XIV.

Mrs. Kenton did not rest till she had made sure from Lottie and Boyne that neither of them had dropped any hint to Ellen of what happened to Bittridge after his return to Tuskingum. She did not explain to them why she was so very anxious to know, but only charged them the more solemnly not to let the secret, which they had all been keeping from Ellen, escape them.

They promised, but Lottie said, "She's got to know it some time, and I should think the sooner the better."

"I will be judge of that, Lottie," said her mother, and Boyne seized his chance of inculcating her with his friend, Mr. Pogis. He said she was carrying on awfully with him already; and an Englishman could not understand, and Boyne hinted that he would presume upon her American freedom.

"Well, if he does, I'll get you to cowhide him, Boyne," she retorted, and left him fuming helplessly, while she went to give the young Englishman an opportunity of resuming the flirtation which her mother had interrupted.

With her husband Mrs. Kenton found it practicable to be more explicit. "I haven't had such a load lifted off my heart since I don't know when. It shows me what I've thought all along: that Ellen hasn't really cared anything for that miserable thing since he first began going with Mrs. Uphill a year ago. When he wrote that letter to her in New York she wanted to be sure she didn't, and when he offered himself and misbehaved so to both of you, she was afraid that she and you were somehow to blame. Now she's worked it out that no one else was wronged, and she is satisfied. It's made her feel free, as she says. But, oh, dear me!" Mrs. Kenton broke off, "I talk as if there was nothing to bind her; and yet there is what poor Richard did! What would she say if she knew that? I have been cautioning Lottie and Boyne, but I know it will come out somehow. Do you think it's wise to keep it from her? Hadn't we better tell her? Or shall we wait and see--"

Kenton would not allow to her or to himself that his hopes ran with hers; love is not business with a man as it is with a woman; he feels it indecorous and indelicate to count upon it openly, where she thinks it simply a chance of life, to be considered like another. All that Kenton would say was, "I see no reason for telling her just yet. She will have to know in due time. But let her enjoy her freedom now."

"Yes," Mrs. Kenton doubtfully assented.

The judge was thoughtfully silent. Then he said: "Few girls could have worked out her problem as Ellen has. Think how differently Lottie would have done it!"

"Lottie has her good points, too," said Mrs. Kenton. "And, of course, I don't blame Richard. There are all kinds of girls, and Lottie means no more harm than Ellen does. She's the kind that can't help attracting; but I always knew that Ellen was attractive, too, if she would only find it out. And I knew that as soon as anything worth while took up her mind she would never give that wretch another thought."

Kenton followed her devious ratiocinations to a conclusion which he could not grasp. "What do you mean, Sarah?"

"If I only," she explained, in terms that did not explain, "felt as sure of him as I do about him!"

Her husband looked densely at her. "Bittridge?"

"No. Mr. Breckon. He is very nice, Rufus. Yes, he is! He's been showing me the map of Holland, and we've had a long talk. He isn't the way we thought--or I did. He is not at all clerical, or worldly. And he appreciates Ellen. I don't suppose he cares so much for her being cultivated; I suppose she doesn't seem so to him. But he sees how wise she is--how good. And he couldn't do that without being good himself! Rufus! If we could only hope such a thing. But, of course, there are thousands after him!"

"There are not thousands of Ellens after him," said the judge, before he could take time to protest. "And I don't want him to suppose that she is after him at all. If he will only interest her and help her to keep her mind off herself, it's all I will ask of him. I am not anxious to part with her, now that she's all ours again."

"Of course," Mrs. Kenton soothingly assented. "And I don't say that she dreams of him in any such way. She can't help admiring his mind. But what I mean is that when you see how he appreciates her, you can't help wishing he could know just how wise, and just how good she is. It did seem to me as if I would give almost anything to have him know what she had been through with that--rapscallion!"

"Sarah!"

"Oh, you may Sarah me! But I can tell you what, Mr. Kenton: I believe that you could tell him every word of it, and only make him appreciate her the more. Till you know that about Ellen, you don't know what a character she is. I just ached to tell him!"

"I don't understand you, my dear," said Kenton. "But if you mean to tell him--"

"Why, who could imagine doing such a thing? Don't you see that it is impossible? Such a thing would never have come into my head if it hadn't been for some morbid talk of Ellen's."

"Of Ellen's?"

"Oh, about wanting to disgust him by telling him why she was such a burden to us."

"She isn't a burden!"

"I am saying what she said. And it made me think that if such a person could only know the high-minded way she had found to get out of her trouble! I would like somebody who is capable of valuing her to value her in all her preciousness. Wouldn't you be glad if such a man as he is could know how and why she feels free at last?"

"I don't think it's necessary," said Kenton, haughtily, "There's only one thing that could give him the right to know it, and we'll wait for that first. I thought you said that he was frivolous."

"Boyne said that, and Lottie. I took it for granted, till I talked with him to-day. He is light-hearted and gay; he likes to laugh and joke; but he can be very serious when he wants to."

"According to all precedent," said the judge, glumly, "such a man ought to be hanging round Lottie. Everybody was that amounted to anything in Tuskingum."

"Oh, in Tuskingum! And who were the men there that amounted to anything? A lot of young lawyers, and two students of medicine, and some railroad clerks. There wasn't one that would compare with Mr. Breckon for a moment."

"All the more reason why he can't really care for Ellen. Now see here, Sarah! You know I don't interfere with you and the children, but I'm afraid you're in a craze about this young fellow. He's got these friends of his who have just turned up, and we'll wait and see what he does with them. I guess he appreciates the young lady as much as he does Ellen."

Mrs. Kenton's heart went down. "She doesn't compare with Ellen!" she piteously declared.

"That's what we think. He may think differently."

Mrs. Kenton was silenced, but all the more she was determined to make sure that Mr. Breckon was not interested in Miss Rasmith in any measure or manner detrimental to Ellen. As for Miss Rasmith herself, Mrs. Kenton would have had greater reason to be anxious about her behavior with Boyne than Mr. Breckon. From the moment that the minister had made his two groups of friends acquainted, the young lady had fixed upon Boyne as that member of the Kenton group who could best repay a more intimate friendship. She was polite to them all, but to Boyne she was flattering, and he was too little used to deference from ladies ten years his senior not to be very sensible of her worth in offering it. To be unremittingly treated as a grown-up person was an experience so dazzling that his vision was blinded to any possibilities in the behavior that formed it; and before the day ended Boyne had possessed Miss Rasmith of all that it

was important for any fellow-being to know of his character and history. He opened his heart to eyes that had looked into others before his, less for the sake of exploiting than of informing himself. In the rare intelligence of Miss Rasmith he had found that serious patience with his problems which no one else, not Ellen herself, had shown, and after trying her sincerity the greater part of the day he put it to the supreme test, one evening, with a book which he had been reading. Boyne's literature was largely entomological and zoological, but this was a work of fiction treating of the fortunes of a young American adventurer, who had turned his military education to account in the service of a German princess. Her Highness's dominions were not in any map of Europe, and perhaps it was her condition of political incognito that rendered her the more fittingly the prey of a passion for the American head of her armies. Boyne's belief was that this character veiled a real identity, and he wished to submit to Miss Rasmith the question whether in the exclusive circles of New York society any young millionaire was known to have taken service abroad after leaving west Point. He put it in the form of a scoffing incredulity which it was a comfort to have her take as if almost hurt by his doubt. She said that such a thing might very well be, and with rich American girls marrying all sorts of titles abroad, it was not impossible for some brilliant young fellow to make his way to the steps of a throne. Boyne declared that she was laughing at him, and she protested that it was the last thing she should think of doing; she was too much afraid of him. Then he began to argue against the case supposed in the romance; he proved from the book itself that the thing could not happen; such a princess would not be allowed to marry the American, no matter how rich he was. She owned that she had not heard of just such an instance, and he might think her very romantic; and perhaps she was; but if the princess was an absolute princess, such as she was shown in that story, she held that no power on earth could keep her from marrying the young American. For herself she did not see, though, how the princess could be in love with that type of American. If she had been in the princess's place she should have fancied something quite different. She made Boyne agree with her that Eastern Americans were all, more or less, Europeanized, and it stood to reason, she held, that a European princess would want something as un-European as possible if she was falling in love to please herself. They had some contention upon the point that the princess would want a Western American; and then Miss Rasmith, with a delicate audacity, painted an heroic portrait of Boyne himself which he could not recognize openly enough to disown; but he perceived resemblances in it which went to his head when she demurely rose, with a soft "Good-night, Mr. Kenton. I suppose I mustn't call you Boyne?"

"Oh yes, do!" he entreated. "I'm-I'm not grown up yet, you know."

"Then it will be safe," she sighed. "But I should never have thought of that. I had got so absorbed in our argument. You are so logical, Mr. Kenton--Boyne, I mean--thank you. You must get it from your father. How lovely your sister is!"

"Ellen?"

"Well, no. I meant the other one. But Miss Kenton is beautiful, too."

You must be so happy together, all of you." She added, with a rueful smile, "There's only one of me! Good-night."

Boyne did not know whether he ought not in humanity, if not gallantry, to say he would be a brother to her, but while he stood considering, she put out a hand to him so covered with rings that he was afraid she had hurt herself in pressing his so hard, and had left him before he could decide.

Lottie, walking the deck, had not thought of bidding Mr. Pogis good-night. She had asked him half a dozen times how late it was, and when he answered, had said as often that she knew better, and she was going below in another minute. But she stayed, and the flow of her conversation supplied him with occasion for the remarks of which he seldom varied the formula. When she said something too audacious for silent emotion, he called out, "Oh, I say!" If she advanced an opinion too obviously acceptable, or asked a question upon some point where it seemed to him there could not be two minds, he was ready with the ironical note, "Well, rather!" At times she pressed her studies of his character and her observations on his manner and appearance so far that he was forced to protest, "You are so personal!" But these moments were rare; for the most part, "Oh I say!" and "Well, rather!" perfectly covered the ground. He did not generally mind her parody of his poverty of phrase, but once, after she had repeated "Well rather!" and "Oh, I say!" steadily at everything he said for the whole round of the promenade they were making, he intimated that there were occasions when, in his belief, a woman's abuse of the freedom generously allowed her sex passed the point of words.

"And when it passes the point of words" she taunted him, "what do you do?"

"You will see," he said, "if it ever does," and Lottie felt justified by her inference that he was threatening to kiss her, in answering:

"And if I ever SEE, I will box your ears."

"Oh, I say!" he retorted. "I should like to have you try."

He had ideas of the rightful mastery of a man in all things, which she promptly pronounced brutal, and when he declared that his father's conduct towards his wife and children was based upon these ideas, she affirmed the superiority of her own father's principles and behavior. Mr. Pogis was too declared an admirer of Judge Kenton to question his motives or method in anything, and he could only generalize, "The Americans spoil their women."

"Well, their women are worth it," said Lottie, and after allowing the paradox time to penetrate his intelligence, he cried out, in a glad transport:

"Oh, I SAY!"

At the moment Boyne's intellectual seance with Miss Rasmith was coming to

an end. Lottie had tacitly invited Mr. Pogis to prolong the comparison of English and American family life by stopping in front of a couple of steamer-chairs, and confessing that she was tired to death. They sat down, and he told her about his mother, whom, although his father's subordinate, he seemed to be rather fonder of. He had some elder brothers, most of them in the colonies, and he had himself been out to America looking at something his father had found for him in Buffalo.

"You ought to come to Tuskingum," said Lottie.

"Is that a large place?" Mr. Pogis asked. "As large as Buffalo?"

"Well, no," Lottie admitted. "But it's a growing place. And we have the best kind of times."

"What kind?" The young man easily consented to turn the commercial into a social inquiry.

"Oh, picnics, and river parties, and buggy-rides, and dances."

"I'm keen on dancing," said Mr. Pogis. "I hope they'll give us a dance on board. Will you put me down for the first dance?"

"I don't care. Will you send me some flowers? The steward must have some left in the refrigerator."

"Well, rather! I'll send you a spray, if he's got enough."

"A spray? What's a spray?"

"Oh, I say! My sister always wears one. It's a long chain of flowers reachin' from your shoulder diagonally down to your waist."

Does your sister always have her sprays sent to her?"

"Well, rather! Don't they send flowers to girls for dances in the States?"

"Well, rather! Didn't I just ask you?"

This was very true, and after a moment of baffle Mr. Pogis said, in generalization, "If you go with a young lady in a party to the theatre you send her a box of chocolates."

"Only when you go to theatre! I couldn't get enough, then, unless you asked me every night," said Lottie, and while Mr. Pogis was trying to choose between "Oh, I say!" and something specific, like, "I should like to ask you every night," she added, "And what would happen if you sent a girl a spray for the theatre and chocolates for a dance? Wouldn't it jar her?"

Now, indeed, there was nothing for him but to answer, "Oh, I say!"

"Well, say, then! Here comes Boyne, and I must go. Well, Boyne," she called, from the dark nook where she sat, to her brother as he stumbled near, with his eyes to the stars, "has the old lady retired?"

He gave himself away finely. "What old lady!"

"Well, maybe at your age you don't consider her very old. But I don't think a boy ought to sit up mooning at his grandmother all night. I know Miss Rasmith's no relation, if that's what you're going to say!"

"Oh, I say!" Mr. Pogis chuckled. "You are so personal."

"Well, rather!" said Lottie, punishing his presumption. "But I don't think it's nice for a kid, even if she isn't."

"Kid!" Boyne ground, through his clenched teeth.

By this time Lottie was up out of her chair and beyond repartee in her flight down the gangway stairs. She left the two youngsters confronted.

"What do you say to a lemon-squash?" asked Mr. Pogis, respecting his friend's wounded dignity, and ignoring Lottie and her offence.

"I don't care if I do," said Boyne in gloomy acquiescence.

XV.

Few witnesses of the fact that Julia Rasmith and her mother had found themselves on the same steamer with the Rev. Hugh Breckon would have been of such a simple mind as to think they were there by accident, if they had also been witnesses of their earlier history. The ladies could have urged that in returning from California only a few days before the Amstel sailed, and getting a state-room which had been unexpectedly given up, they had some claim to a charitable interpretation of their behavior, but this plea could not have availed them with any connoisseur of women. Besides, it had been a matter of notoriety among such of Mr. Breckon's variegated congregation as knew one another that Mrs. Rasmith had set her heart on him, if Julia had not set her cap for him. In that pied flock, where every shade and dapple of doubt, from heterodox Jew to agnostic Christian, foregathered, as it has been said, in the misgiving of a blessed immortality, the devotion of Mrs. Rasmith to the minister had been almost a scandal. Nothing had saved the appearance from this character but Mr. Breckon's open acceptance of her flatteries and hospitalities; this was so frank, and the behavior of Julia herself so judicious under the circumstances, that envy and virtue were, if not equally silenced, equally baffled. So far from pretending not to see her mother's manoeuvres, Julia invited public recognition of them; in the way of joking, which she kept within the limits of filial fondness, she made fun of her mother's infatuation to Breckon himself, and warned him against the moment when her wiles might be too much for him. Before

other people she did not hesitate to save him from her mother, so that even those who believed her in the conspiracy owned that no girl could have managed with more cleverness in a situation where not every one would have refused to be placed. In this situation Julia Rasmith had the service of a very clear head, and as was believed by some, a cool heart; if she and her mother had joint designs upon the minister, hers was the ambition, and her mother's the affection that prompted them. She was a long, undulant girl, of a mixed blondness that left you in doubt, after you had left her, whether her hair or her complexion were not of one tint; but her features were good, and there could be no question of her captivating laugh, and her charming mouth, which she was always pulling down with demure irony. She was like her mother in her looks, but her indolent, droning temperament must have been from her father, whose memory was lost in that antiquity which swallows up the record of so many widows' husbands, and who could not have left her what was left of her mother's money, for none of it had ever been his. It was still her mother's, and it was supposed to be the daughter's chief attraction. There must, therefore, have been a good deal of it, for those who were harshest with the minister did not believe that a little money would attract him. Not that they really thought him mercenary; some of his people considered him gay to the verge of triviality, but there were none that accused him of insincerity. They would have liked a little more seriousness in him, especially when they had not much of their own, and would have had him make up in severity of behavior for what he lacked, and what they wished him to lack, in austerity of doctrine.

The Amstel had lost so much time in the rough weather of her first days out that she could not make it up with her old-fashioned single screw. She was at best a ten-day boat, counting from Sandy Hook to Boulogne, and she had not been four days out when she promised to break her record for slowness. Three days later Miss Rasmith said to Breckon, as he took the chair which her mother agilely abandoned to him beside her: "The head steward says it will be a twelve-day trip, and our bedroom steward thinks more. What is the consensus of opinion in the smoking-room? Where are you going, mother? Are you planning to leave Mr. Breckon and me alone again? It isn't necessary. We couldn't get away from each other if we tried, and all we ask--Well, I suppose age must be indulged in its little fancies," she called after Mrs. Rasmith.

Breckon took up the question she had asked him. "The odds are so heavily in favor of a fifteen-days' run that there are no takers."

"Now you are joking again," she said. "I thought a sea-voyage might make you serious."

"It has been tried before. Besides, it's you that I want to be serious."

"What about? Besides, I doubt it."

"About Boyne."

"Oh! I thought you were going to say some one else."

"No, I think that is very well settled."

"You'll never persuade my mother," said Miss Rasmith, with a low, comfortable laugh.

"But if you are satisfied--"

"She will have to resign herself? Well, perhaps. But why do you wish me to be serious about Boyne?"

"I have no doubt he amuses you. But that doesn't seem a very good reason why you should amuse yourself with him."

"No? Why not?"

"Well, because the poor boy is in earnest; and you're not exactly-- contemporaries."

"Why, how old is Boyne?" she asked, with affected surprise.

"About fifteen, I think," said Breckon, gravely.

"And I'm but a very few months past thirty. I don't see the great disparity. But he is merely a brother to me--an elder brother--and he gives me the best kind of advice."

"I dare say you need it, but all the same, I am afraid you are putting ideas into his head."

"Well, if he began it? If he put them in mine first?"

She was evidently willing that he should go further, and create the common ground between them that grows up when one gives a reproof and the other accepts it; but Breckon, whether he thought that he had now done his duty, and need say no more, or because he was vexed with her, left the subject.

"Mrs. Rasmith says you are going to Switzerland for the rest of the summer."

"Yes, to Montreux. Are you going to spend it in Paris?"

"I'm going to Paris to see. I have had some thoughts of Etretat; I have cousins there."

"I wish that I could go to the sea-side. But this happens to be one of the summers when nothing but mountains can save my mother's life. Shall you get down to Rome before you go back?"

"I don't know. If I sail from Naples I shall probably pass through Rome."

"You had better stop off. We shall be there in November, and they say

Rome is worth seeing," she laughed demurely. "That is what Boyne understands. He's promised to use his influence with his family to let him run down to see us there, if he can't get them all to come. You might offer to personally conduct them."

"Yes." said Breckon, with the effect of cloture. "Have you made many acquaintances an board?"

"What! Two lone women? You haven't introduced us to any but the Kentons. But I dare say they are the best. The judge is a dear, and Mrs. Kenton is everything that is motherly and matronly. Boyne says she is very well informed, and knows all about the reigning families. If he decides to marry into them, she can be of great use in saving him from a mesalliance. I can't say very much for Miss Lottie. Miss Lottie seems to me distinctly of the minx type. But that poor, pale girl is adorable. I wish she liked me!"

"What makes you think she doesn't like you?" Breckon asked.

"What? Women don't require anything to convince them that other women can't bear them. They simply know it. I wonder what has happened to her?"

"Why do you think anything has happened to her?"

"Why? Well, girls don't have that air of melancholy absence for nothing. She is brooding upon something, you may be sure. But you have had so many more opportunities than I! Do you mean that you haven't suspected a tragical past far her?"

"I don't know," said Breckon, a little restively, "that I have allowed myself to speculate about her past."

"That is, you oughtn't to have allowed yourself to do so. Well, there I agree with you. But a woman may do so without impertinence, and I am sure that Miss Kenton has a story. I have watched her, and her face has told me everything but the story."

Breckon would not say that some such revelation had been made to him, and in the absence of an answer from him Miss Rasmith asked, "Is she cultivated, too?"

"Too?"

"Like her mother."

"Oh! I should say she had read a good dial. And she's bookish, yes, in a simple-hearted kind of way."

"She asks you if you have read 'the book of the year,' and whether you don't think the heroine is a beautiful character?"

"Not quite so bad as that. But if you care to be serious about her!"

"Oh, I do!"

"I doubt it. Then, I should say that she seems to have grown up in a place where the interests are so material that a girl who was disposed to be thoughtful would be thrown back upon reading for her society more than in more intellectual centres--if there are such things. She has been so much with books that she does not feel odd in speaking of them as if they were the usual topics of conversation. It gives her a certain quaintness."

"And that is what constitutes her charm?"

"I didn't know that we were speaking of her charm."

"No, that is true. But I was thinking of it. She fascinates me. Are they going to get off at Boulogne?"

"No, they are going on to Rotterdam."

"To be sure! Boyne told me. And are you going on with them?"

"I thought we talked of my going to Paris." Breckon looked round at her, and she made a gesture of deprecation.

"Why, of course! How could I forget? But I'm so much interested in Miss Kenton that I can't think of anything else."

"Not even of Miss Rasmith?"

"Not even of Miss Rasmith. I know that she has a history, and that it's a sad one." She paused in ironical hesitation. "You've been so good as to caution me about her brother--and I never can be grateful enough--and that makes me almost free to suggest--"

She stopped again, and he asked, hardily, "What?"

"Oh, nothing. It isn't for me to remind my pastor, my ghostly adviser"--she pulled down her mouth and glanced at him demurely--"and I will only offer the generalization that a girl is never so much in danger of having her heart broken as when she's had it broken--Oh, are you leaving me?" she cried, as Breckon rose from his chair.

"Well, then, send Boyne to me." She broke into a laugh as he faltered. "Are you going to sit down again? That is right. And I won't talk any more about Miss Kenton."

"I don't mind talking of her," said Breckon. "Perhaps it will even be well to do so if you are in earnest. Though it strikes me that you have rather renounced the right to criticise me."

"Now, is that logical? It seems to me that in putting myself in the attitude of a final friend at the start, and refusing to be anything

more, I leave established my right to criticise you on the firmest basis. I can't possibly be suspected of interested motives. Besides, you've just been criticizing me, if you want a woman's reason!"

"Well, go on."

"Why, I had finished. That's the amusing part. I should have supposed that I could go on forever about Miss Kenton, but I have nothing to go upon. She has kept her secret very well, and so have the rest of them. You think I might have got it out of Boyne? Perhaps I might, but you know I have my little scruples. I don't think it would be quite fair, or quite nice."

"You are scrupulous. And I give you credit for having been more delicate than I've been."

"You don't mean you've been trying to find it out!"

"Ah, now I'm not sure about the superior delicacy!"

"Oh, how good!" said Miss Rasmith. "What a pity you should be wasted in a calling that limits you so much."

"You call it limiting? I didn't know but I had gone too far."

"Not at all! You know there's nothing I like so much as those little digs."

"I had forgotten. Then you won't mind my saying that this surveillance seems to me rather more than I have any right to from you."

"How exquisitely you put it! Who else could have told me to mind my own business so delightfully? Well, it isn't my business. I acknowledge that, and I spoke only because I knew you would be sorry if you had gone too far. I remembered our promise to be friends."

She threw a touch of real feeling into her tone, and he responded, "Yes, and I thank you for it, though it isn't easy."

She put out her hand to him, and, as he questioningly took it, she pressed his with animation. "Of course it isn't! Or it wouldn't be for any other man. But don't you suppose I appreciate that supreme courage of yours? There is nobody else--nobody!--who could stand up to an impertinence and turn it to praise by such humility."

"Don't go too far, or I shall be turning your praise to impertinence by my humility. You're quite right, though, about the main matter. I needn't suppose anything so preposterous as you suggest, to feel that people are best left alone to outlive their troubles, unless they are of the most obvious kind."

"Now, if I thought I had done anything to stop you from offering that sort of helpfulness which makes you a blessing to everybody, I should

never forgive myself."

"Nothing so dire as that, I believe. But if you've made me question the propriety of applying the blessing in all cases, you have done a very good thing."

Miss Rasmith was silent and apparently serious. After a moment she said, "And I, for my part, promise to let poor little Boyne alone."

Breckon laughed. "Don't burlesque it! Besides, I haven't promised anything."

"That is very true," said Miss Rasmith, and she laughed, too.

XVI.

In one of those dramatic reveries which we all hold with ourselves when fortune has pressingly placed us, Ellen Kenton had imagined it possible for her to tell her story to the man who had so gently and truly tried to be her friend. It was mostly in the way of explaining to him how she was unworthy of his friendship that the story was told, and she fancied telling it without being scandalized at violating the conventions that should have kept her from even dreaming of such a thing. It was all exalted to a plane where there was no question of fit or unfit in doing it, but only the occasion; and he would never hear of the unworthiness which she wished to ascribe to herself. Sometimes he mournfully left her when she persisted, left her forever, and sometimes he refused, and retained with her in a sublime kindness, a noble amity, lofty and serene, which did not seek to become anything else. In this case she would break from her reveries with self-accusing cries, under her breath, of "Silly, silly! Oh, how disgusting!" and if at that moment Breckon were really coming up to sit by her, she would blush to her hair, and wish to run away, and failing the force for this, would sit cold and blank to his civilities, and have to be skilfully and gradually talked back to self-respect and self-tolerance.

The recurrence of these reveries and their consequence in her made it difficult for him to put in effect the promise he had given himself in Miss Rasmith's presence. If Ellen had been eager to welcome his coming, it would have been very simple to keep away from her, but as she appeared anxious to escape him, and had to be entreated, as it were, to suffer his society, something better than his curiosity was piqued, though that was piqued, too. He believed that he saw her lapsing again into that morbid state from which he had seemed once able to save her, and he could not help trying again. He was the more bound to do so by the ironical observance of Miss Rasmith, who had to be defied first, and then propitiated; certainly, when she saw him apparently breaking faith with her, she had a right to some sort of explanation, but certainly also she had no right to a blind and unreasoning submission from him. His embarrassment was heightened by her interest in Miss Kenton, whom, with

an admirable show of now finding her safe from Breckon's attractions, she was always wishing to study from his observation. What was she really like? The girl had a perfect fascination for her; she envied him his opportunities of knowing her, and his privileges of making that melancholy face light up with that heart-breaking smile, and of banishing that delicious shyness with which she always seemed to meet him. Miss Rasmith had noticed it; how could she help noticing it?

Breckon wished to himself that she had been able to help noticing it, or were more capable of minding her own business than she showed herself, and his heart closed about Ellen with a tenderness that was dangerously indignant. At the same time he felt himself withheld by Miss Rasmith's witness from being all to the girl that he wished to be, and that he now seemed to have been in those first days of storm, while Miss Rasmith and her mother were still keeping their cabin. He foresaw that it would end in Miss Rasmith's sympathetic nature not being able to withhold itself from Ellen's need of cheerful companionship, and he was surprised, as little as he was pleased, one morning, when he came to take the chair beside her to find Miss Rasmith in it, talking and laughing to the girl, who perversely showed herself amused. Miss Rasmith made as if to offer him the seat, but he had to go away disappointed, after standing long enough before them to be aware that they were suspending some topic while he stayed.

He naturally supposed the topic to be himself, but it was not so, or at least not directly so. It was only himself as related to the scolding he had given Miss Rasmith for trifling with the innocence of Boyne, which she wished Miss Kenton to understand as the effect of a real affection for her brother. She loved all boys, and Boyne was simply the most delightful creature in the world. She went on to explain how delightful he was, and showed a such an appreciation of the infantile sweetness mingled with the mature severity of Boyne's character that Ellen could not help being pleased and won. She told some little stories of Boyne that threw a light also their home life in Tuskingum, and Miss Rasmith declared herself perfectly fascinated, and wished that she could go and live in Tuskingum. She protested that she should not find it dull; Boyne alone would be entertainment enough; and she figured a circumstance so idyllic from the hints she had gathered, that Ellen's brow darkened in silent denial, and Miss Rasmith felt herself, as the children say in the game, very hot in her proximity to the girl's secret. She would have liked to know it, but whether she felt that she could know it when she liked enough, or whether she should not be so safe with Breckon in knowing it, she veered suddenly away, and said that she was so glad to have Boyne's family know the peculiar nature of her devotion, which did not necessarily mean running away with him, though it might come to that. She supposed she was a little morbid about it from what Mr. Breckon had been saying; he had a conscience that would break the peace of a whole community, though he was the greatest possible favorite, not only with his own congregation, which simply worshipped him, but with the best society, where he was in constant request.

It was not her fault if she did not overdo these history, but perhaps it was all true about the number of girls who were ready and willing to

marry him. It might even be true, though she had no direct authority for saying it, that he had made up his mind never to marry, and that was the reason why he felt himself so safe in being the nicest sort of friend. He was safe, Miss Rasmith philosophized, but whether other people were so safe was a different question. There were girls who were said to be dying for him; but of course those things were always said about a handsome young minister. She had frankly taken him on his own ground, from the beginning, and she believed that this was what he liked. At any rate, they had agreed that they were never to be anything but the best of friends, and they always had been.

Mrs. Kenton came and shyly took the chair on Miss Rasmith's other side, and Miss Rasmith said they had been talking about Mr. Breckon, and she repeated what she had been saying to Ellen. Mrs. Kenton assented more openly than Ellen could to her praises, but when she went away, and her daughter sat passive, without comment or apparent interest, the mother drew a long, involuntary sigh.

"Do you like her, Ellen?"

"She tries to be pleasant, I think."

"Do you think she really knows much about Mr. Breckon?"

"Oh yes. Why not? She belongs to his church."

"He doesn't seem to me like a person who would have a parcel of girls tagging after him."

"That is what they do in the East, Boyne says."

"I wish she would let Boyne alone. She is making a fool of the child. He's round with her every moment. I think she ought to be ashamed, such an old thing!"

Ellen chose to protest, or thought it fair to do so. "I don't believe she is doing him any harm. She just lets him talk out, and everybody else checks him up so. It was nice of her to come and talk with me, when we had all been keeping away from her. Perhaps he sent her, though. She says they have always been such good friends because she wouldn't be anything else from the beginning."

"I don't see why she need have told you that."

"Oh, it was just to show he was run after. I wonder if he thinks we are running after him? Momma, I am tired of him! I wish he wouldn't speak to me any more."

"Why! do you really dislike him, Ellen?"

"No, not dislike him. But it tires me to have him trying to amuse me. Don't you understand?"

Mrs. Kenton said yes, she understood, but she was clear only of the fact that Ellen seemed flushed and weak at that moment. She believed that it was Miss Rasmith and not Mr. Breckon who was to blame, but she said: "Well, you needn't worry about it long. It will only be a day or two now till we get to Boulogne, and then he will leave us. Hadn't you better go down now, and rest awhile in your berth? I will bring your things."

Ellen rose, pulling her wraps from her skirts to give them to her mother. A voice from behind said between their meeting shoulders: "Oh, are you going down? I was just coming to beg Miss Kenton to take a little walk with me," and they looked round together and met Breckon's smiling face.

"I'm afraid," Mrs. Kenton began, and then, like a well-trained American mother, she stopped and left the affair to her daughter.

"Do you think you can get down with them, mamma?" the girl asked, and somehow her mother's heart was lightened by her evasion, not to call it uncandor. It was at least not morbid, it was at least like other girls, and Mrs. Kenton imparted what comfort there was in it to the judge, when he asked where she had left Ellen.

"Not that it's any use," she sighed, when she had seen him share it with a certain shamefacedness. "That woman has got her grip on him, and she doesn't mean to let go."

Kenton understood Miss Rasmith by that woman; but he would not allow himself to be so easily cast down. This was one of the things that provoked Mrs. Kenton with him; when he had once taken hope he would not abandon it without reason. "I don't see any evidence of her having her grip on him. I've noticed him, and he doesn't seem attentive to her. I should say he tried to avoid her. He certainly doesn't avoid Ellen."

"What are you thinking of, Rufus?"

"What are you? You know we'd both be glad if he fancied her."

"Well, suppose we would? I don't deny it. He is one of the most agreeable gentlemen I ever saw; one of the kindest and nicest."

"He's more than that," said the judge. "I've been sounding him on various points, and I don't see where he's wrong. Of course, I don't know much about his religious persuasion, if it is one, but I think I'm a pretty fair judge of character, and that young man has character. He isn't a light person, though he likes joking and laughing, and he appreciates Ellen."

"Yes, so do we. And there's about as much prospect of his marrying her. Rufus, it's pretty hard! She's just in the mood to be taken with him, but she won't let herself, because she knows it's of no use. That Miss Rasmith has been telling her how much he is run after, and I could see that that settled it for Ellen as plainly as if she said so. More plainly, for there's enough of the girl in her to make her say one thing when she means another. She was just saying she was sick of him, and

never wanted to speak to him again, when he came up and asked her to walk, and she went with him instantly. I knew what she meant. She wasn't going to let him suppose that anything Miss Rasmith had said was going to change her."

"Well, then," said the judge, "I don't see what you're scared at."

I'm not SCARED. But, oh, Rufus! It can't come to anything! There isn't time!" An hysterical hope trembled in her asseveration of despair that made him smile.

"I guess if time's all that's wanted--"

"He is going to get off at Boulogne."

"Well, we can get off there, too."

"Rufus, if you dare to think of such a thing!"

"I don't. But Europe isn't so big but what he can find us again if he wants to."

"Ah, if he wants to!"

Ellen seemed to have let her mother take her languor below along with the shawls she had given her. Buttoned into a close jacket, and skirted short for the sea, she pushed against the breeze at Breckon's elbow with a vigor that made him look his surprise at her. Girl-like, she took it that something was wrong with her dress, and ran herself over with an uneasy eye.

Then he explained: "I was just thinking how much you were like Miss Lottie-if you'll excuse my being so personal. And it never struck me before."

"I didn't suppose we looked alike," said Ellen.

"No, certainly. I shouldn't have taken you for sisters. And yet, just now, I felt that you were like her. You seem so much stronger this morning--perhaps it's that the voyage is doing you good. Shall you be sorry to have it end?"

"Shall you? That's the way Lottie would answer."

Breckon laughed. "Yes, it is. I shall be very sorry. I should be willing to have it rough again, it that would make it longer. I liked it's being rough. We had it to ourselves." He had not thought how that sounded, but if it sounded particular, she did not notice it.

She merely said, "I was surprised not to be seasick, too."

"And should you be willing to have it rough again?"

"You wouldn't see anything more of your friends, then."

"Ah, yes; Miss Rasmith. She is a great talker, Did you find her interesting?"

"She was very interesting."

"Yes? What did she talk about?"

Ellen realized the fact too late to withhold "Why, about you."

"And was that what made her interesting?"

"Now, what would Lottie say to such a thing as that?" asked Ellen, gayly.

"Something terribly cutting, I'm afraid. But don't you! From you I don't want to believe I deserve it, no matter what Miss Rasmith said me."

"Oh, she didn't say anything very bad. Unless you mind being a universal favorite."

"Well, it makes a man out rather silly."

"But you can't help that."

"Now you remind me of Miss Lottie again!"

"But I didn't mean that," said Ellen, blushing and laughing. "I hope you wouldn't think I could be so pert."

"I wouldn't think anything that wasn't to your praise," said Breckon, and a pause ensued, after which the words he added seemed tame and flat. "I suspect Miss Rasmith has been idealizing the situation. At any rate, I shouldn't advise you to trust her report implicitly. I'm at the head of a society, you know, ethical or sociological, or altruistic, whatever you choose to call it, which hasn't any very definite object of worship, and yet meets every Sunday for a sort of worship; and I have to be in the pulpit. So you see?"

Ellen said, "I think I understand," with a temptation to smile at the ruefulness of his appeal.

Breckon laughed for her. "That's the mischief and the absurdity of it. But it isn't so bad as it seems. They're really most of them hard-headed people; and those that are not couldn't make a fool of a man that nature hadn't begun with. Still, I'm not very well satisfied with my work among them--that is, I'm not satisfied with myself." He was talking soberly enough, and he did not find that she was listening too seriously. "I'm going away to see whether I shall come back." He looked at her to make sure that she had taken his meaning, and seemed satisfied that she had. "I'm not sure that I'm fit for any sort of ministry, and I may find the winter in England trying to find out. I was at school in England, you

know."

Ellen confessed that she had not known that.

"Yes; I suppose that's what made me seem 'so Englishy' the first day to Miss Lottie, as she called it. But I'm straight enough American as far as parentage goes. Do you think you will be in England-later?"

"I don't know. If poppa gets too homesick we will go back in the fall."

"Miss Kenton," said the young man, abruptly, "will you let me tell you how much I admire and revere your father?"

Tears came into her eyes and her throat swelled. "But you don't know," she begun; and then she stopped.

"I have been wanting to submit something to his judgment; but I've been afraid. I might seem to be fishing for his favor."

"Poppa wouldn't think anything that was unjust," said Ellen, gravely.

"Ah," Breckon laughed, "I suspect that I should rather have him unjust. I wish you'd tell me what he would think."

"But I don't know what it is," she protested, with a reflected smile.

"I was in hopes Miss Rasmith might have told you. Well, it is simply this, and you will see that I'm not quite the universal favorite she's been making you fancy me. There is a rift in my lute, a schism in my little society, which is so little that I could not have supposed there was enough of it to break in two. There are some who think their lecturer--for that's what I amount to--ought to be an older, if not a graver man. They are in the minority, but they're in the right, I'm afraid; and that's why I happen to be here telling you all this. It's a question of whether I ought to go back to New York or stay in London, where there's been a faint call for me." He saw the girl listening devoutly, with that flattered look which a serious girl cannot keep out of her face when a man confides a serious matter to her. "I might safely promise to be older, but could I keep my word if I promised to be graver? That's the point. If I were a Calvinist I might hold fast by faith, and fight it out with that; or if I were a Catholic I could cast myself upon the strength of the Church, and triumph in spite of temperament. Then it wouldn't matter whether I was grave or gay; it might be even better if I were gay. But," he went on, in terms which, doubtless, were not then for the first time formulated in his mind, "being merely the leader of a sort of forlorn hope in the Divine Goodness, perhaps I have no right to be so cheerful."

The note of a sad irony in his words appealed to such indignation for him in Ellen as she never felt for herself. But she only said, "I don't believe Poppa could take that in the wrong way if you told him."

Breckon stared. "Yes your father! What would he say?"

"I can't tell you. But I'm sure he would know what you meant."

"And you," he pursued, "what should YOU say?"

"I? I never thought about such a thing. You mustn't ask me, if you're serious; and if you're not--"

"But I am; I am deeply serious. I would like, to know how the case strikes you. I shall be so grateful if you will tell me."

"I'm sorry I can't, Mr. Breckon. Why don't you ask poppa?"

"No, I see now I sha'n't be able. I feel too much, after telling you, as if I had been posing. The reality has gone out of it all. And I'm ashamed."

"You mustn't be," she said, quietly; and she added, "I suppose it would be like a kind of defeat if you didn't go back?"

"I shouldn't care for the appearance of defeat," he said, courageously. "The great question is, whether somebody else wouldn't be of more use in my place."

"Nobody could be," said she, in a sort of impassioned absence, and then coming to herself, "I mean, they wouldn't think so, I don't believe."

"Then you advise--"

"No, no! I can't; I don't. I'm not fit to have an opinion about such a thing; it would be crazy. But poppa--"

They were at the door of the gangway, and she slipped within and left him. His nerves tingled, and there was a glow in his breast. It was sweet to have surprised that praise from her, though he could not have said why he should value the praise or a girl of her open ignorance and inexperience in everything that would have qualified her to judge him. But he found himself valuing it supremely, and wonderingly wishing to be worthy of it.

XVII.

Ellen discovered her father with a book in a distant corner of the dining-saloon, which he preferred to the deck or the library for his reading, in such intervals as the stewards, laying and cleaning the tables, left him unmolested in it. She advanced precipitately upon him, and stood before him in an excitement which, though he lifted his dazed eyes to it from his page, he was not entirely aware of till afterwards. Then he realized that her cheeks were full of color, and her eyes of light, and that she panted as if she had been running when she spoke.

"Poppa," she said, "there is something that Mr. Breckon wants to speak to you--to ask you about. He has asked me, but I want you to see him, for I think he had better tell you himself."

While he still stared at her she was as suddenly gone as she had come, and he remained with his book, which the meaning had as suddenly left. There was no meaning in her words, except as he put it into them, and after he had got it in he struggled with it in a sort of perfunctory incredulity. It was not impossible; it chiefly seemed so because it seemed too good to be true; and the more he pondered it the more possible, if not probable, it became. He could not be safe with it till he had submitted it to his wife; and he went to her while he was sure of repeating Ellen's words without varying from them a syllable.

To his astonishment, Mrs. Kenton was instantly convinced. "Why, of course," she said, "it can't possibly mean anything else. Why should it be so very surprising? The time hasn't been very long, but they've been together almost every moment; and he was taken with her from the very beginning--I could see that. Put on your other coat," she said, as she dusted the collar of the coat the judge was wearing. "He'll be looking you up, at once. I can't say that it's unexpected," and she claimed a prescience in the matter which all her words had hitherto denied.

Kenton did not notice her inconsistency. "If it were not so exactly what I wished," he said, "I don't know that I should be surprised at it myself. Sarah, if I had been trying to imagine any one for Ellen, I couldn't have dreamed of a person better suited to her than this young man. He's everything that I could wish him to be. I've seen the pleasure and comfort she took in his way from the first moment. He seemed to make her forget--Do you suppose she has forgotten that miserable wretch Do you think--"

"If she hadn't, could she be letting him come to speak to you? I don't believe she ever really cared for Bittridge--or not after he began flirting with Mrs. Uphill." She had no shrinking from the names which Kenton avoided with disgust. "The only question for you is to consider what you shall say to Mr. Breckon."

"Say to him? Why, of course, if Ellen has made up her mind, there's only one thing I can say."

"Indeed there is! He ought to know all about that disgusting Bittridge business, and you have got to tell him."

"Sarah, I couldn't. It is too humiliating. How would it do to refer him to--You could manage that part so much better. I don't see how I could keep it from seeming an indelicate betrayal of the poor child--"

"Perhaps she's told him herself," Mrs. Kenton provisionally suggested.

The judge eagerly caught at the notion. "Do you think so? It would be like her! Ellen would wish him to know everything."

He stopped, and his wife could see that he was trembling with excitement.

"We must find out. I will speak to Ellen--"

"And--you don't think I'd better have the talk with him first?"

"Certainly not!"

"Why, Rufus! You were not going to look him up?"

"No," he hesitated; but she could see that some such thing had been on his mind.

"Surely," she said, "you must be crazy!" But she had not the heart to blight his joy with sarcasm, and perhaps no sarcasm would have blighted it.

"I merely wondered what I had better say in case he spoke to me before you saw Ellen--that's all. Sarah! I couldn't have believed that anything could please me so much. But it does seem as if it were the assurance of Ellen's happiness; and she has deserved it, poor child! If ever there was a dutiful and loving daughter--at least before that wretched affair--she was one."

"She has been a good girl," Mrs. Kenton stoically admitted.

"And they are very well matched. Ellen is a cultivated woman. He never could have cause to blush for her, either her mind or her manners, in any circle of society; she would do him credit under any and all circumstances. If it were Lottie--"

"Lottie is all right," said her mother, in resentment of his preference; but she could not help smiling at it. "Don't you be foolish about Ellen. I approve of Mr. Breckon as much as you do. But it's her prettiness and sweetness that's taken his fancy, and not her wisdom, if she's got him."

"If she's got him?"

"Well, you know what I mean. I'm not saying she hasn't. Dear knows, I don't want to! I feel just as you do about it. I think it's the greatest piece of good fortune, coming on top of all our trouble with her. I couldn't have imagined such a thing."

He was instantly appeased. "Are you going to speak with Ellen" he radiantly inquired.

"I will see. There's no especial hurry, is there?"

"Only, if he should happen to meet me--"

"You can keep out of his way, I reckon. Or You can put him off, somehow."

"Yes," Kenton returned, doubtfully. "Don't," he added, "be too blunt with Ellen. You know she didn't say anything explicit to me."

"I think I will know how to manage, Mr. Kenton."

"Yes, of course, Sarah. I'm not saying that."

Breckon did not apparently try to find the judge before lunch, and at table he did not seem especially devoted to Ellen in her father's jealous eyes. He joked Lottie, and exchanged those passages or repartee with her in which she did not mind using a bludgeon when she had not a rapier at hand; it is doubtful if she was very sensible of the difference. Ellen sat by in passive content, smiling now and then, and Boyne carried on a dignified conversation with Mr. Pogis, whom he had asked to lunch at his table, and who listened with one ear to the vigorous retorts of Lottie in her combat with Breckon.

The judge witnessed it all with a grave displeasure, more and more painfully apparent to his wife. She could see the impatience, the gathering misgiving, in his face, and she perceived that she must not let this come to conscious dissatisfaction with Breckon; she knew her husband capable of indignation with trifling which would complicate the situation, if it came to that. She decided to speak with Ellen as soon as possible, and she meant to follow her to her state-room when they left the table. But fate assorted the pieces in the game differently. Boyne walked over to the place where Miss Rasmith was sitting with her mother; Lottie and Mr. Pogis went off to practise duets together, terrible, four-handed torments under which the piano presently clamored; and Ellen stood for a moment talked to by Mr. Breckon, who challenged her then for a walk on deck, and with whom she went away smiling.

Mrs. Kenton appealed with the reflection of the girl's happiness in her face to the frowning censure in her husband's; but Kenton spoke first. "What does he mean?" he demanded, darkly. "If he is making a fool of her he'll find that that game can't be played twice, with impunity. Sarah, I believe I should choke him."

"Mr. Kenton!" she gasped, and she trembled in fear of him, even while she kept herself with difficulty from shaking him for his folly. "Don't say such a thing! Can't you see that they want to talk it over? If he hasn't spoken to you it's because he wants to know how you took what she said." Seeing the effect of these arguments, she pursued: "Will you never have any sense? I will speak to Ellen the very minute I get her alone, and you have just got to wait. Don't you suppose it's hard for me, too? Have I got nothing to bear?"

Kenton went silently back to his book, which he took with him to the reading-room, where from time to time his wife came to him and reported that Ellen and Breckon were still walking up and down together, or that they were sitting down talking, or were forward, looking over at the prow, or were watching the deck-passengers dancing. Her husband received her successive advices with relaxing interest, and when she had brought the last she was aware that the affair was entirely in her hands with all

the responsibility. After the gay parting between Ellen and Breckon, which took place late in the afternoon, she suffered an interval to elapse before she followed the girl down to her state-room. She found her lying in her berth, with shining eyes and glad, red cheeks; she was smiling to herself.

"That is right, Ellen," her mother said. "You need rest after your long tramp."

"I'm not tired. We were sitting down a good deal. I didn't think how late it was. I'm ever so much better. Where's Lottie?"

"Off somewhere with that young Englishman," said Mrs. Kenton, as if that were of no sort of consequence. "Ellen," she added, abruptly, trying within a tremulous smile to hide her eagerness, "what is this that Mr. Breckon wants to talk with your father about?"

"Mr. Breckon? With poppa?"

"Yes, certainly. You told him this morning that Mr. Breckon--"

"Oh! Oh yes!" said Ellen, as if recollecting something that had slipped her mind. "He wants poppa to advise him whether to go back to his congregation in New York or not."

Mrs. Kenton sat in the corner of the sofa next the door, looking into the girl's face on the pillow as she lay with her arms under her head. Tears of defeat and shame came into her eyes, and she could not see the girl's light nonchalance in adding:

"But he hasn't got up his courage yet. He thinks he'll ask him after dinner. He says he doesn't want poppa to think he's posing. I don't know what he means."

Mrs. Kenton did not speak at once. Her bitterest mortification was not for herself, but for the simple and tender father-soul which had been so tried already. She did not know how he would bear it, the disappointment, and the cruel hurt to his pride. But she wanted to fall on her knees in thankfulness that he had betrayed himself only to her.

She started in sudden alarm with the thought. "Where is he now-- Mr. Breckon?"

"He's gone with Boyne down into the baggage-room."

Mrs. Kenton sank back in her corner, aware now that she would not have had the strength to go to her husband even to save him from the awful disgrace of giving himself away to Breckon. "And was that all?" she faltered.

"All?"

"That he wanted to speak to your father about?"

She must make irrefragably sure, for Kenton's sake, that she was not misunderstanding.

"Why, of course! What else? Why, mamma! what are you crying about?"

"I'm not crying, child. Just some foolishness of your father's. He understood--he thought--" Mrs. Kenton began to laugh hysterically. "But you know how ridiculous he is; and he supposed--No, I won't tell you!"

It was not necessary. The girl's mind, perhaps because it was imbued already with the subject, had possessed itself of what filled her mother's. She dropped from the elbow on which she had lifted herself, and turned her face into the pillow, with a long wail of shame.

XVIII.

Mrs. Kenton's difficulties in setting her husband right were indefinitely heightened by the suspicion that the most unsuspecting of men fell into concerning Breckon. Did Breckon suppose that the matter could be turned off in that way? he stupidly demanded; and when he was extricated from this error by his wife's representation that Breckon had not changed at all, but had never told Ellen that he wished to speak with him of anything but his returning to his society, Kenton still could not accept the fact. He would have contended that at least the other matter must have been in Breckon's mind; and when he was beaten from this position, and convinced that the meaning they had taken from Ellen's words had never been in any mind but their own, he fell into humiliation so abject that he could hide it only by the hauteur with which he carried himself towards Breckon when they met at dinner. He would scarcely speak to the young man; Ellen did not come to the table; Lottie and Boyne and their friend Mr. Pogis were dining with the Rasmiths, and Mrs. Kenton had to be, as she felt, cringingly kind to Breckon in explaining just the sort of temporary headache that kept her eldest daughter away. He was more than ordinarily sympathetic and polite, but he was manifestly bewildered by Kenton's behavior. He refused an hilarious invitation from Mrs. Rasmith, when he rose from table, to stop and have his coffee with her on his way out of the saloon. His old adorer explained that she had ordered a small bottle of champagne in honor of its being the night before they were to get into Boulogne, and that he ought to sit down and help her keep the young people straight. Julia, she brokenly syllabled, with the gay beverage bubbling back into her throat, was not the least use; she was worse than any. Julia did not look it, in the demure regard which she bent upon her amusing mother, and Breckon persisted in refusing. He said he thought he might safely leave them to Boyne, and Mrs. Rasmith said into her handkerchief, "Oh yes! Boyne!" and pressed Boyne's sleeve with her knobbed and jewelled fingers.

It was evident where most of the small bottle had gone, but Breckon was none the cheerfuller for the spectacle of Mrs. Rasmith. He could not

have a moment's doubt as to the sort of work he had been doing in New York if she were an effect of it, and he turned his mind from the sad certainty back to the more important inquiry as to what offence his wish to advise with Judge Kenton could have conveyed. Ellen had told him in the afternoon that she had spoken with her father about it, and she had not intimated any displeasure or reluctance on him; but apparently he had decided not to suffer himself to be approached.

It might be as well. Breckon had not been able to convince himself that his proposal to consult Judge Kenton was not a pose. He had flashes of owning that it was contemplated merely as a means of ingratiating himself with Ellen. Now, as he found his way up and down among the empty steamer-chairs, he was aware, at the bottom of his heart, of not caring in the least for Judge Kenton's repellent bearing, except as it possibly, or impossibly, reflected some mood of hers. He could not make out her not coming to dinner; the headache was clearly an excuse; for some reason she did not wish to see him, he argued, with the egotism of his condition.

The logic of his conclusion was strengthened at breakfast by her continued absence; and this time Mrs. Kenton made no apologies for her. The judge was a shade less severe; or else Breckon did not put himself so much in the way to be withheld as he had the night before. Boyne and Lottie carried on a sort of muted scrap, unrebuked by their mother, who seemed too much distracted in some tacit trouble to mind them. From time to time Breckon found her eyes dwelling upon him wonderingly, entreatingly; she dropped them, if she caught his, and colored.

In the afternoon it was early evident that they were approaching Boulogne. The hatch was opened and the sailors began getting up the baggage of the passengers who were going to disembark. It seemed a long time for everybody till the steamer got in; those going ashore sat on their hand-baggage for an hour before the tug came up to take, them off. Mr. Pogis was among them; he had begun in the forenoon to mark the approaching separation between Lottie and himself by intervals of unmistakable withdrawal. Another girl might have cared, but Lottie did not care, for her failure to get a rise out of him by her mockingly varied "Oh, I say!" and "Well, rather!" In the growth of his dignified reserve Mr. Pogis was indifferent to jeers. By whatever tradition of what would or would not do he was controlled in relinquishing her acquaintance, or whether it was in obedience to some imperative ideal, or some fearful domestic influence subtly making itself felt from the coasts of his native island, or some fine despair of equalling the imagined grandeur of Lottie's social state in Tuskingum by anything he could show her in England, it was certain that he was ending with Lottie then and there. At the same time he was carefully defining himself from the Rasmiths, with whom he must land. He had his state-room things put at an appreciable distance, where he did not escape a final stab from Lottie.

"Oh, do give me a rose out of that," she entreated, in travestied imploring, as he stood looking at a withered bouquet which the steward had brought up with his rugs.

"I'm takin' it home," he explained, coldly.

"And I want to take a rose back to New York. I want to give it to a friend of mine there."

Mr. Pogis hesitated. Then he asked, "A man?" "Well, rather!" said Lottie.

He answered nothing, but looked definitively down at the flowers in his hand.

"Oh, I say!" Lottie exulted.

Boyne remained fixed in fealty to the Rasmiths, with whom Breckon was also talking as Mrs. Kenton came up with the judge. She explained how sorry her daughter Ellen was at not being able to say goodbye; she was still not at all well; and the ladies received her excuses with polite patience. Mrs. Rasmith said she did not know what they should do without Boyne, and Miss Rasmith put her arm across his shoulders and pulled him up to her, and implored, "Oh, give him to me, Mrs. Kenton!"

Boyne stole an ashamed look at his mother, and his father said, with an unbending to Breckon which must have been the effect of severe expostulation from Mrs. Kenton, "I suppose you and the ladies will go to Paris together."

"Why, no," Breckon said, and he added, with mounting confusion, "I--I had arranged to keep on to Rotterdam. I was going to mention it."

"Keep on to Rotterdam!" Mrs. Rasmith's eyes expressed the greatest astonishment.

"Why, of course, mother!" said her daughter. "Don't you know? Boyne told us."

Boyne, after their parting, seized the first chance of assuring his mother that he had not told Miss Rasmith that, for he had not known it, and he went so far in her condemnation to wonder how she could say such a thing. His mother said it was not very nice, and then suggested that perhaps she had heard it from some one else, and thought it was he. She acquitted him of complicity with Miss Rasmith in forbearing to contradict her; and it seemed to her a fitting time to find out from Boyne what she honestly could about the relation of the Rasmiths to Mr. Breckon. It was very little beyond their supposition, which every one else had shared, that he was going to land with them at Boulogne, and he must have changed his mind very suddenly. Boyne had not heard the Rasmiths speak of it. Miss Rasmith never spoke of Mr. Breckon at all; but she seemed to want to talk of Ellen; she was always asking about her, and what was the matter with her, and how long she had been sick.

"Boyne," said his mother, with a pang, "you didn't tell her anything about Ellen?"

"Momma!" said the boy, in such evident abhorrence of the idea that she rested tranquil concerning it. She paid little attention to what Boyne told her otherwise of the Rasmiths. Her own horizon were so limited that she could not have brought home to herself within them that wandering life the Rasmiths led from climate to climate and sensation to sensation, with no stay so long as the annually made in New York, where they sometimes passed months enough to establish themselves in giving and taking tea in a circle of kindred nomads. She conjectured as ignorantly as Boyne himself that they were very rich, and it would not have enlightened her to know that the mother was the widow of a California politician, whom she had married in the sort of middle period following upon her less mortuary survival of Miss Rasmith's father, whose name was not Rasmith.

What Mrs. Kenton divined was that they had wanted to get Breckon, and that so far as concerned her own interest in him they had wanted to get him away from Ellen. In her innermost self-confidences she did not permit herself the notion that Ellen had any right to him; but still it was a relief to have them off the ship, and to have him left. Of all the witnesses of the fact, she alone did not find it awkward. Breckon himself found it very awkward. He did not wish to be with the Rasmiths, but he found it uncomfortable not being with them, under the circumstances, and he followed them ashore in tingling reveries of explanation and apology. He had certainly meant to get off at Boulogne, and when he had suddenly and tardily made up his mind to keep on to Rotterdam, he had meant to tell them as soon as he had the labels on his baggage changed. He had not meant to tell them why he had changed his mind, and he did not tell them now in these tingling reveries. He did not own the reason in his secret thoughts, for it no longer seemed a reason; it no longer seemed a cause. He knew what the Rasmiths would think; but he could easily make that right with his conscience, at least, by parting with the Kentons at Rotterdam, and leaving them to find their uncondemned way to any point they chose beyond. He separated himself uncomfortably from them when the tender had put off with her passengers and the ship had got under way again, and went to the smoking-room, while the judge returned to his book and Mrs. Kenton abandoned Lottie to her own devices, and took Boyne aside for her apparently fruitless inquiries.

They were not really so fruitless but that at the end of them she could go with due authority to look up her husband. She gently took his book from him and shut it up. "Now, Mr. Kenton," she began, "if you don't go right straight and find Mr. Breckon and talk with him, I--I don't know what I will do. You must talk to him--"

"About Ellen?" the judge frowned.

"No, certainly not. Talk with him about anything that interests you. Be pleasant to him. Can't you see that he's going on to Rotterdam on our account?"

"Then I wish he wasn't. There's no use in it."

"No matter! It's polite in him, and I want you to show him that you

appreciate it."

"Now see here, Sarah," said the judge, "if you want him shown that we appreciate his politeness why don't you do it yourself?"

"I? Because it would look as if you were afraid to. It would look as if we meant something by it."

"Well, I am afraid; and that's just what I'm afraid of. I declare, my heart comes into my mouth whenever I think what an escape we had. I think of it whenever I look at him, and I couldn't talk to him without having that in my mind all the time. No, women can manage those things better. If you believe he is going along on our account, so as to help us see Holland, and to keep us from getting into scrapes, you're the one to make it up to him. I don't care what you say to show him our gratitude. I reckon we will get into all sorts of trouble if we're left to ourselves. But if you think he's stayed because he wants to be with Ellen, and--"

"Oh, I don't KNOW what I think! And that's silly I can't talk to him. I'm afraid it'll seem as if we wanted to flatter him, and goodness knows we don't want to. Or, yes, we do! I'd give anything if it was true. Rufus, do you suppose he did stay on her account? My, oh, my! If I could only think so! Wouldn't it be the best thing in the world for the poor child, and for all of us? I never saw anybody that I liked so much. But it's too good to be true."

"He's a nice fellow, but I don't think he's any too good for Ellen."

"I'm not saying he is. The great thing is that he's good enough, and gracious knows what will happen if she meets some other worthless fellow, and gets befooled with him! Or if she doesn't take a fancy to some one, and goes back to Tuskingum without seeing any one else she likes, there is that awful wretch, and when she hears what Dick did to him--she's just wrong-headed enough to take up with him again to make amends to him. Oh, dear oh, dear! I know Lottie will let it out to her yet!"

The judge began threateningly, "You tell Lottie from me--"

"What?" said the girl herself, who had seen her father and mother talking together in a remote corner of the music-room and had stolen light-footedly upon them just at this moment.

"Lottie, child," said her mother, undismayed at Lottie's arrival in her larger anxiety, "I wish you would try and be agreeable to Mr. Breckon. Now that he's going on with us to Holland, I don't want him to think we're avoiding him."

"Why?"

"Oh, because."

"Because you want to get him for Ellen?"

"Don't be impudent," said her father. "You do as your mother bids you."

"Be agreeable to that old Breckon? I think I see myself! I'd sooner read! I'm going to get a book now." She left them as abruptly as she had come upon them, and ran across to the bookcase, where she remained two stepping and peering through the glass doors at the literature within, in unaccustomed question concerning it.

"She's a case," said the judge, looking at her not only with relenting, but with the pride in her sufficiency for all the exigencies of life which he could not feel in Ellen. "She can take care of herself."

"Oh yes," Mrs. Kenton sadly assented, "I don't think anybody will ever make a fool of Lottie."

"It's a great deal more likely to be the other way," her father suggested.

"I think Lottie is conscientious," Mrs. Kenton protested. "She wouldn't really fool with a man."

"No, she's a good girl," the judge owned.

"It's girls like Ellen who make the trouble and the care. They are too good, and you have to think some evil in this world. Well!" She rose and gave her husband back his book.

"Do you know where Boyne is?"

"No. Do you want him to be pleasant to Mr. Breckon?"

"Somebody has got to. But it would be ridiculous if nobody but Boyne was."

She did not find Boyne, after no very exhaustive search, and the boy was left to form his bearing towards Breckon on the behavior of the rest of his family. As this continued helplessly constrained both in his father and mother, and voluntarily repellent in Lottie, Boyne decided upon a blend of conduct which left Breckon in greater and greater doubt of his wisdom in keeping on to Rotterdam. There was no good reason which he would have been willing to give himself, from the beginning. It had been an impulse, suddenly coming upon him in the baggage-room where he had gone to get something out of his trunk, and where he had decided to have the label of his baggage changed from the original destination at Boulogne to the final port of the steamer's arrival. When this was once done he was sorry, but he was ashamed to have the label changed back. The most assignable motive for his act was his reluctance to go on to Paris with the Rasmiths, or rather with Mrs. Rasmith; for with her daughter, who was not a bad fellow, one could always manage. He was quite aware of being safely in his own hands against any design of Mrs. Rasmith's, but her machinations humiliated him for her; he hated to see her going through her manoeuvres, and he could not help grieving for her

failures, with a sort of impersonal sympathy, all the more because he disliked her as little as he respected her.

The motive which he did not assign to himself was that which probably prevailed with him, though in the last analysis it was as selfish, no doubt, as the one he acknowledged. Ellen Kenton still piqued his curiosity, still touched his compassion. He had so far from exhausted his wish or his power to befriend her, to help her, that he had still a wholly unsatisfied longing to console her, especially when she drooped into that listless attitude she was apt to take, with her face fallen and her hands let lie, the back of one in the palm of the other, in her lap. It was possibly the vision of this following him to the baggage-room, when he went to open his trunk, that as much as anything decided him to have the label changed on his baggage, but he did not own it then, and still less did he own it now, when he found himself quite on his own hands for his pains.

He felt that for some reason the Kentons were all avoiding him. Ellen, indeed, did not take part, against him, unless negatively, for she had appeared neither at lunch nor at dinner as the vessel kept on its way after leaving Boulogne; and when he ventured to ask for her Mrs. Kenton answered with embarrassment that she was not feeling very well. He asked for her at lunch, but not at dinner, and when he had finished that meal he went on the promenade-deck, and walked forlornly up and down, feeling that he had been a fool.

Mrs. Kenton went below to her daughter's room, and found Ellen there on the sofa, with her book shut on her thumb at the place where the twilight had failed her.

"Ellen, dear," her mother said, "aren't you feeling well?"

"Yes, I'm well enough," said the girl, sensible of a leading in the question. "Why?"

"Oh, nothing. Only--only I can't make your father behave naturally with Mr. Breckon. He's got his mind so full of that mistake we both came so near making that he can't think of anything else. He's so sheepish about it that he can hardly speak to him or even look at him; and I must confess that I don't do much better. You know I don't like to put myself forward where your father is, and if I did, really I don't believe I could make up my mouth to say anything. I did want Lottie to be nice to him, but Lottie dislikes him so! And even Boyne--well, it wouldn't matter about Boyne, if he didn't seem to be carrying out a sort of family plan--Boyne barely answers him when he speaks to him. I don't know what he can think." Ellen was a good listener, and Mrs. Kenton, having begun, did not stop till she had emptied the bag. "I just know that he didn't get off at Boulogne because he wanted to stay on with us, and thought he could be useful to us at The Hague, and everywhere; and here we're acting as ungratefully! Why, we're not even commonly polite to him, and I know he feels it. I know that he's hurt."

Ellen rose and stood before the glass, into which he asked of her

mother's reflected face, while she knotted a fallen coil of hair into its place, "Where is he?"

"I don't know. He went on deck somewhere."

Ellen put on her hat and pinned it, and put on her jacket and buttoned it. Then she started towards the door. Her mother made way for her, faltering, "What are you going to do, Ellen?"

"I am going to do right."

"Don't-catch cold!" her mother called after her figure vanishing down the corridor, but the warning couched in these terms had really no reference to the weather.

The girl's impulse was one of those effects of the weak will in her which were apt to leave her short of the fulfilment of a purpose. It carried her as her as the promenade, which she found empty, and she went and leaned upon the rail, and looked out over the sorrowful North Sea, which was washing darkly away towards where the gloomy sunset had been.

Steps from the other side of the ship approached, hesitated towards her, and then arrested themselves. She looked round.

"Why, Miss Kenton!" said Breckon, stupidly.

"The sunset is over, isn't it?" she answered.

"The twilight isn't." Breckon stopped; then he asked, "Wouldn't you like to take a little walk?"

"Yes," she answered, and smiled fully upon him. He had never known before how radiant a smile she lead.

"Better have my arm. It's getting rather dark."

"Well." She put her hand on his arm and he felt it tremble there, while she palpitated, "We are all so glad you could go on to Rotterdam. My mother wanted me to tell you."

"Oh, don't speak of that," said Breckon, not very appositely. Presently he forced a laugh, in order to add, with lightness, "I was afraid perhaps I had given you all some reason to regret it!"

She said, "I was afraid you would think that--or mamma was--and I couldn't bear to have you."

"Well, then, I won't."

XIX.

Breckon had answered with gayety, but his happiness was something beyond gayety. He had really felt the exclusion from the Kentons in which he had passed the day, and he had felt it the more painfully because he liked them all. It may be owned that he liked Ellen best from the beginning, and now he liked her better than ever, but even in the day's exile he had not ceased to like each of them. They were, in their family affection, as lovable as that sort of selfishness can make people. They were very united and good to one another. Lottie herself, except in her most lurid moments, was good to her brother and sister, and almost invariably kind to her parents. She would not, Breckon saw, have brooked much meddling with her flirtations from them, but as they did not offer to meddle, she had no occasion to grumble on that score. She grumbled when they asked her to do things for Ellen, but she did them, and though she never did them without grumbling, she sometimes did them without being asked. She was really very watchful of Ellen when it would least have been expected, and sometimes she was sweet. She never was sweet with Boyne, but she was often his friend, though this did not keep her from turning upon him at the first chance to give him a little dig, or a large one, for that matter. As for Boyne, he was a mass of helpless sweetness, though he did not know it, and sometimes took himself for an iceberg when he was merely an ice-cream of heroic mould. He was as helplessly sweet with Lottie as with any one, and if he suffered keenly from her treacheries, and seized every occasion to repay them in kind, it was clearly a matter of conscience with him, and always for the good. Their father and mother treated their squabbles very wisely, Breckon thought. They ignored them as much as possible, and they recognized them without attempting to do that justice between them which would have rankled in both their breasts.

To a spectator who had been critical at first, Mr. and Mrs. Kenton seemed an exemplary father and mother with Ellen as well as with their other children. It is easy to be exemplary with a sick girl, but they increasingly affected Breckon as exemplary with Ellen. He fancied that they acted upon each other beneficially towards her. At first he had foreboded some tiresome boasting from the father's tenderness, and some weak indulgence of the daughter's whims from her mother; but there was either never any ground for this, or else Mrs. Kenton, in keeping her husband from boasting, had been obliged in mere consistency to set a guard upon her own fondness.

It was not that. Ellen, he was more and more decided, would have abused the weakness of either; if there was anything more angelic than her patience, it was her wish to be a comfort to them, and, between the caprices of her invalidism, to be a service. It was pathetic to see her remembering to do things for them which Boyne and Lottie had forgotten, or plainly shirked doing, and to keep the fact out of sight. She really kept it out of sight with them, and if she did not hide it from so close an observer as Breckon, that was more his fault than hers. When her father first launched out in her praise, or the praise of her reading, the young man had dreaded a rustic prig; yet she had never been a prig, but simply glad of what book she had known, and meekly submissive to his

knowledge if not his taste. He owned that she had a right to her taste, which he found almost always good, and accounted for as instinctive in the absence of an imaginable culture in her imaginable ambient. So far as he had glimpses of this, he found it so different from anything he had known that the modest adequacy of Mrs. Kenton in the political experiences of modern Europe, as well as the clear judgments of Kenton himself in matters sometimes beyond Breckon himself, mystified him no less than Ellen's taste.

Even with the growth of his respect for their intelligence and his love of their kindness, he had not been able to keep a certain patronage from mingling, and it was not till they evinced not only entire ability, but an apparent wish to get on without his approval, without his acquaintance even, that he had conceived a just sense of them. The like is apt to happen with the best of us, when we are also the finest, and Breckon was not singular in coming to a due consciousness of something valuable only in the hour of its loss. He did not know that the loss was only apparent. He knew that he had made a distinct sacrifice for these people, and that, when he had prepared himself to befriend them little short of self-devotion, they showed themselves indifferent, and almost repellent. In the revulsion of feeling, when Ellen gave him her mother's message, and frankly offered him reparation on behalf of her whole family, he may have overdone his gratitude, but he did not overdo it to her perception. They walked up and down the promenade of the Amstel, in the watery North Sea moon, while bells after bells noted the hour unheeded, and when they parted for the night it was with an involuntary pressure of hands, from which she suddenly pulled hers, and ran down the corridor of her state-room and Lottie's.

He stood watching the narrow space in which she had vanished, and thinking how gentle she was, and how she had contrived somehow to make him feel that now it was she who had been consoling him, and trying to interest him and amuse him. He had not realized that before; he had been used to interesting and amusing her, but he could not resent it; he could not resent the implication of superiority, if such a thing were possible, which her kindness conveyed. The question with Breckon was whether she had walked with him so long because she wished, in the hour, to make up as fully as possible for the day's neglect, or because she had liked to walk up and down with him. It was a question he found keeping itself poignantly, yet pleasantly, in his mind, after he had got into his berth under the solidly slumberous Boyne, and inclining now to one solution and now to the other, with a delicate oscillation that was charming.

The Amstel took her time to get into Rotterdam, and when her passengers had gone ashore the next forenoon the train that carried Breckon to The Hague in the same compartment with the Kentons was in no greater hurry. It arrived with a deliberation which kept it from carrying them on to Amsterdam before they knew it, and Mrs. Kenton had time to place such parts of the wars in the Rise of the Dutch Republic as she could attach to the names of the stations and the general features of the landscape. Boyne was occupied with improvements for the windmills and the canal-boats, which did not seem to him of the quality of the Michigan aerometers, or the craft with which he was familiar on the Hudson River

and on the canal that passed through Tuskingum. Lottie, with respect to the canals, offered the frank observation that they smelt, and in recognizing a fact which travel almost universally ignores in Holland, she watched her chance of popping up the window between herself and Boyne, which Boyne put down with mounting rage. The agriculture which triumphed everywhere on the little half--acre plots lifted fifteen inches above the waters of the environing ditches, and the black and white cattle everywhere attesting the immemorial Dutch ideal of a cow, were what at first occupied Kenton, and he was tardily won from them to the question of fighting over a country like that. It was a concession to his wife's impassioned interest in the overthrow of the Spaniards in a landscape which had evidently not changed since. She said it was hard to realize that Holland was not still a republic, and she was not very patient with Breckon's defence of the monarchy on the ground that the young Queen was a very pretty girl.

"And she is only sixteen," Boyne urged.

"Then she is two years too old for you," said Lottie.

"No such thing!" Boyne retorted. "I was fifteen in June."

"Dear me! I should never have thought it," said his sister.

Ellen seemed hardly to look out of the window at anything directly, but when her father bade her see this thing and that, it seemed that she had seen it already. She said at last, with a quiet sigh, "I never want to go away."

She had been a little shy of Breckon the whole morning, and had kept him asking himself whether she was sorry she had walked so long with him the night before, or, having offered him due reparation for her family, she was again dropping him. Now and then he put her to the test by words explicitly directed at her, and she replied with the dreamy passivity which seemed her normal mood, and in which he could fancy himself half forgotten, or remembered with an effort.

In the midst of this doubt she surprised him--he reflected that she was always surprising him--by asking him how far it was from The Hague to the sea. He explained that The Hague was in the sea like all the rest of Holland, but that if she meant the shore, it was no distance at all. Then she said, vaguely, she wished they were going to the shore. Her father asked Breckon if there was not a hotel at the beach, and the young man tried to give him a notion of the splendors of the Kurhaus at Scheveningen; of Scheveningen itself he despaired of giving any just notion.

"Then we can go there," said the judge, ignoring Ellen, in his decision, as if she had nothing to do with it.

Lottie interposed a vivid preference for The Hague. She had, she said, had enough of the sea for one while, and did not want to look at it again till they sailed for home. Boyne turned to his father as if a good deal

shaken by this reasoning, and it was Mrs. Kenton who carried the day for going first to a hotel in The Hague and prospecting from there in the direction of Scheveningen; Boyne and his father could go down to the shore and see which they liked best.

"I don't see what that has to do with me," said Lottie. No one was alarmed by her announcement that if she did not like Scheveningen she should stay at The Hague, whatever the rest did; in the event fortune favored her going with her family.

The hotel in The Hague was very pleasant, with a garden behind it, where a companionable cat had found a dry spot, and where Lottie found the cat and made friends with it. But she said the hotel was full of Cook's tourists, whom she recognized, in spite of her lifelong ignorance of them, by a prescience derived from the conversation of Mr. Pogis, and from the instinct of a society woman, already rife in her. She found that she could not stay in a hotel with Cook's tourists, and she took her father's place in the exploring party which went down to the watering-place in the afternoon, on the top of a tram-car, under the leafy roof of the adorable avenue of trees which embowers the track to Scheveningen. She disputed Boyne's impressions of the Dutch people, whom he found looking more like Americans than any foreigners he had seen, and she snubbed Breckon from his supposed charge of the party. But after the start, when she declared that Ellen could not go, and that it was ridiculous for her to think of it, she was very good to her, and looked after her safety and comfort with a despotic devotion.

At the Kurhaus she promptly took the lead in choosing rooms, for she had no doubt of staying there after the first glance at the place, and she showed a practical sense in settling her family which at least her mother appreciated when they were installed the next day.

Mrs. Kenton could not make her husband admire Lottie's faculty so readily. "You think it would have been better for her to sit down with Ellen, on the sand and dream of the sea," she reproached him, with a tender resentment on behalf of Lottie. "Everybody can't dream."

"Yes, but I wish she didn't keep awake with such a din," said the judge. After all, he admired Lottie's judgment about the rooms, and he censured her with a sigh of relief from care as he sank back in the easy-chair fronting the window that looked out on the North Sea; Lottie had already made him appreciate the view till he was almost sick of it.

"What is the matter?" said Mrs. Kenton, sharply. "Do you want to be in Tuskingum? I suppose you would rather be looking into Richard's back-yard."

"No," said the judge, mildly, "this is very nice."

"It will do Ellen good, every minute. I don't care how much she sits on the sands and dream. I'll love to see her."

The sitting on the sand was a survival of Mr. Kenton's preoccupations of

the sea-side. As a matter of fact, Ellen was at that moment sitting in one of the hooked wicker arm-chairs which were scattered over the whole vast beach like a growth of monstrous mushrooms, and, confronting her in cosy proximity, Breckon sat equally hidden in another windstuhl. Her father and her mother were able to keep them placed, among the multitude of windstuhls, by the presence of Lottie, who hovered near them, and, with Boyne, fended off the demure, wicked-looking little Scheveningen girls. On a smaller scale these were exactly like their demure, wicked-looking Scheveningen mothers, and they approached with knitting in their hands, and with large stones folded in their aprons, which they had pilfered from the mole, and were trying to sell for footstools. The windstuhl men and they were enemies, and when Breckon bribed them to go away, the windstuhl men chased them, and the little girls ran, making mouths at Boyne over their shoulders. He scorned to notice them; but he was obliged to report the misconduct of Lottie, who began making eyes at the Dutch officers as soon as she could feel that Ellen was safely off her hands. She was the more exasperating and the more culpable to Boyne, because she had asked him to walk up the beach with her, and had then made the fraternal promenade a basis of operations against the Dutch military. She joined her parents in ignoring Boyne's complaints, and continued to take credit for all the pleasant facts of the situation; she patronized her family as much for the table d'hote at luncheon as for the comfort of their rooms. She was able to assure them that there was not a Cook's tourist in the hotel, where there seemed to be nearly every other kind of fellow-creature. At the end of the first week she had acquaintance of as many nationalities as she could reach in their native or acquired English, in all the stages of haughty toleration, vivid intimacy, and cold exhaustion. She had a faculty for getting through with people, or of ceasing to have any use for them, which was perhaps her best safeguard in her adventurous flirting; while the simple aliens were still in the full tide of fancied success, Lottie was sick of them all, and deep in an indiscriminate correspondence with her young men in Tuskingum.

The letters which she had invited from these while still in New York arrived with the first of those readdressed from the judge's London banker. She had more letters than all the rest of the family together, and counted a half-dozen against a poor two for her sister. Mrs. Kenton cared nothing about Lottie's letters, but she was silently uneasy about the two that Ellen carelessly took. She wondered who could be writing to Ellen, especially in a cover bearing a handwriting altogether strange to her.

"It isn't from Bittridge, at any rate," she said to her husband, in the speculation which she made him share. "I am always dreading to have her find out what Richard did. It would spoil everything, I'm afraid, and now everything is going so well. I do wish Richard hadn't, though, of course, he did it for the best. Who do you think has been writing to her?"

"Why don't you ask her?"

"I suppose she will tell me after a while. I don't like to seem to be

following her up. One was from Bessie Pearl, I think."

Ellen did not speak of her letters to her mother, and after waiting a day or two, Mrs. Kenton could not refrain from asking her.

"Oh, I forgot," said Ellen. "I haven't read them yet."

"Haven't read them!" said Mrs. Kenton. Then, after reflection, she added, "You are a strange girl, Ellen," and did not venture to say more.

"I suppose I thought I should have to answer them, and that made me careless. But I will read them." Her mother was silent, and presently Ellen added: "I hate to think of the past. Don't you, mamma?"

"It is certainly very pleasant here," said Mrs. Kenton, cautiously.

"You're enjoying yourself--I mean, you seem to be getting so much stronger."

"Why, mamma, why do you talk as if I had been sick?" Ellen asked.

"I mean you're so much interested."

"Don't I go about everywhere, like anybody?" Ellen pursued, ignoring her explanation.

"Yes, you certainly do. Mr. Breckon seems to like going about."

Ellen did not respond to the suggestion except to say: "We go into all sorts of places. This morning we went up on that schooner that's drawn up on the beach, and the old man who was there was very pleasant. I thought it was a wreck, but Mr. Breckon says they are always drawing their ships that way up on the sand. The old man was patching some of the wood-work, and he told Mr. Breckon--he can speak a little Dutch--that they were going to drag her down to the water and go fishing as soon as he was done. He seemed to think we were brother and sister." She flushed a little, and then she said: "I believe I like the dunes as well as anything. Sometimes when those curious cold breaths come in from the sea we climb up in the little hollows on the other side and sit there out of the draft. Everybody seems to do it."

Apparently Ellen was submitting the propriety of the fact to her mother, who said: "Yes, it seems to be quite the same as it is at home. I always supposed that it was different with young people here. There is certainly no harm in it."

Ellen went on, irrelevantly. "I like to go and look at the Scheveningen women mending the nets on the sand back of the dunes. They have such good gossiping times. They shouted to us last evening, and then laughed when they saw us watching them. When they got through their work they got up and stamped off so strong, with their bare, red arms folded into their aprons, and their skirts sticking out so stiff. Yes, I should like to be like them."

"You, Ellen!"

"Yes; why not?"

Mrs. Kenton found nothing better to answer than,

"They were very material looking."

"They are very happy looking. They live in the present. That is what I should like: living in the present, and not looking backwards or forwards. After all, the present is the only life we've got, isn't it?"

"I suppose you may say it is," Mrs. Kenton admitted, not knowing just where the talk was leading, but dreading to interrupt it.

"But that isn't the Scheveningen woman's only ideal. Their other ideal is to keep the place clean. Saturday afternoon they were all out scrubbing the brick sidewalks, and clear into the middle of the street. We were almost ashamed to walk over the nice bricks, and we picked out as many dirty places as we could find."

Ellen laughed, with a light-hearted gayety that was very strange to her, and Mrs. Kenton, as she afterwards told her husband, did not know what to think.

"I couldn't help wondering," she said, "whether the poor child would have liked to keep on living in the present a month ago."

"Well, I'm glad you didn't say so," the judge answered.

XX.

From the easy conquest of the men who looked at her Lottie proceeded to the subjection of the women. It would have been more difficult to put these down, if the process had not been so largely, so almost entirely subjective. As it was, Lottie exchanged snubs with many ladies of the continental nationalities who were never aware of having offered or received offence. In some cases, when they fearlessly ventured to speak with her, they behaved very amiable, and seemed to find her conduct sufficiently gracious in return. In fact, she was approachable enough, and had no shame, before Boyne, in dismounting from the high horse which she rode when alone with him, and meeting these ladies on foot, at least half-way. She made several of them acquainted with her mother, who, after a timorous reticence, found them very conversable, with a range of topics, however, that shocked her American sense of decorum. One Dutch lady talked with such manly freedom, and with such untrammelled intimacy, that she was obliged to send Boyne and Lottie about their business, upon an excuse that was not apparent to the Dutch lady. She only complimented Mrs. Kenton upon her children and their devotion to each other, and when she learned that Ellen was also her daughter, ventured the surmise she

was not long married.

"It isn't her husband," Mrs. Kenton explained, with inward trouble.

"It's just a gentleman that came over with us," and she went with her trouble to her own husband as soon as she could.

"I'm afraid it isn't the custom to go around alone with young men as much as Ellen thinks," she suggested.

"He ought to know," said the judge. "I don't suppose he would if it wasn't."

"That is true," Mrs. Kenton owned, and for the time she put her misgivings away.

"So long as we do nothing wrong," the judge decided, "I don't see why we should not keep to our own customs."

"Lottie says they're not ours, in New York."

"Well, we are not in New York now."

They had neither of them the heart to interfere with Ellen's happiness, for, after all, Breckon was careful enough of the appearances, and it was only his being constantly with Ellen that suggested the Dutch lady's surmise. In fact, the range of their wanderings was not beyond the dunes, though once they went a little way on one of the neatly bricked country roads that led towards The Hague. As yet there had been no movement in any of the party to see the places that lie within such easy tram-reach of The Hague, and the hoarded interest of the past in their keeping. Ellen chose to dwell in the actualities which were an enlargement of her own present, and Lottie's active spirit found employment enough in the amusements at the Kurhaus. She shopped in the little bazars which make a Saratoga under the colonnades fronting two sides of the great space before the hotel, and she formed a critical and exacting taste in music from a constant attendance at the afternoon concerts; it is true that during the winter in New York she had cast forever behind her the unsophisticated ideals of Tuskingum in the art, so that from the first she was able to hold the famous orchestra that played in the Kurhaus concert-room up to the highest standard. She had no use for anybody who had any use for rag-time, and she was terribly severe with a young American, primarily of Boyne's acquaintance, who tried to make favor with her by asking about the latest coon-songs. She took the highest ethical ground with him about tickets in a charitable lottery which he had bought from the portier, but could not move him on the lower level which he occupied. He offered to give her the picture which was the chief prize, in case he won it, and she assured him beforehand that she should not take it. She warned Boyne against him, under threats of exposure to their mother, as not a good influence, but one afternoon, when the young Queen of Holland came to the concert with the queen-mother, Lottie cast her prejudices to the winds in accepting the places which the wicked fellow-countryman offered Boyne and herself, when they had failed to get any where they could see the queens, as the Dutch

called them.

The hotel was draped with flags, and banked with flowers about the main entrance where the queens were to arrive, and the guests massed themselves in a dense lane for them to pass through. Lottie could not fail to be one of the foremost in this array, and she was able to decide, when the queens had passed, that the younger would not be considered a more than average pretty girl in America, and that she was not very well dressed. They had all stood within five feet of her, and Boyne had appropriated one of the prettiest of the pretty bends which the gracious young creature made to right and left, and had responded to it with an 'empressment' which he hoped had not been a sacrifice of his republican principles.

During the concert he sat with his eyes fixed upon the Queen where she sat in the royal box, with her mother and her ladies behind her, and wondered and blushed to wonder if she had noticed him when he bowed, or if his chivalric devotion in applauding her when the audience rose to receive her had been more apparent than that of others; whether it had seemed the heroic act of setting forth at the head of her armies, to beat back a German invasion, which it had essentially been, with his instantaneous return as victor, and the Queen's abdication and adoption of republican principles under conviction of his reasoning, and her idolized consecration as the first chief of the Dutch republic. His cheeks glowed, and he quaked at heart lest Lottie should surprise his thoughts and expose them to that sarcastic acquaintance, who proved to be a medical student resting at Scheveningen from the winter's courses and clinics in, Vienna. He had already got on to many of Boyne's curves, and had sacrilegiously suggested the Queen of Holland when he found him feeding his fancy on the modern heroic romances; he advised him as an American adventurer to compete with the European princes paying court to her. So thin a barrier divided that malign intelligence from Boyne's most secret dreams that he could never feel quite safe from him, and yet he was always finding himself with him, now that he was separated from Miss Rasmith, and Mr. Breckon was taken up so much with Ellen. On the ship he could put many things before Mr. Breckon which must here perish in his breast, or suffer the blight of this Mr. Trannel's raillery. The student sat near the Kentons at table, and he was no more reverent of the judge's modest convictions than of Boyne's fantastic preoccupations. The worst of him was that you could not help liking him: he had a fascination which the boy felt while he dreaded him, and now and then he did something so pleasant that when he said something unpleasant you could hardly believe it.

At the end of the concert, when he rose and stood with all the rest, while the royal party left their box, and the orchestra played the Dutch national hymn, he said, in a loud whisper, to Boyne: "Now's your time, my boy! Hurry out and hand her into her carriage!"

Boyne fairly reeled at the words which translated a passage of the wild drama playing itself in his brain, and found little support in bidding his tormentor, "Shut up!" The retort, rude as it was, seemed insufficient, but Boyne tried in vain to think of something else. He

tried to punish him by separating Lottie from him, but failed as signally in that. She went off with him, and sat in a windstuhl facing his the rest of the afternoon, with every effect of carrying on.

Boyne was helpless, with his mother against it, when he appealed to her to let him go and tell Lottie that she wanted her. Mrs. Kenton said that she saw no harm in it, that Ellen was sitting in like manner with Mr. Breckon.

"Mr. Breckon is very different, and Ellen knows how to behave," he urged, but his mother remained unmoved, or was too absent about something to take any interest in the matter. In fact, she was again unhappy about Ellen, though she put on such an air of being easy about her. Clearly, so far as her maternal surmise could fathom the case, Mr. Breckon was more and more interested in Ellen, and it was evident that the child was interested in him. The situation was everything that was acceptable to Mrs. Kenton, but she shuddered at the cloud which hung over it, and which might any moment involve it. Again and again she had made sure that Lottie had given Ellen no hint of Richard's ill-advised vengeance upon Bittridge; but it was not a thing that could be kept always, and the question was whether it could be kept till Ellen had accepted Mr. Breckon and married him. This was beyond the question of his asking her to do so, but it was so much more important that Mrs. Kenton was giving it her attention first, quite out of the order of time. Besides, she had every reason, as she felt, to count upon the event. Unless he was trifling with Ellen, far more wickedly than Bittridge, he was in love with her, and in Mrs. Kenton's simple experience and philosophy of life, being in love was briefly preliminary to marrying. If she went with her anxieties to her husband, she had first to reduce him from a buoyant optimism concerning the affair before she could get him to listen seriously. When this was accomplished he fell into such despair that she ended in lifting him up and supporting him with hopes that she did not feel herself. What they were both united in was the conviction that nothing so good could happen in the world, but they were equally united in the old American tradition that they must not lift a finger to secure this supreme good for their child.

It did not seem to them that leaving the young people constantly to themselves was doing this. They interfered with Ellen now neither more nor less than they had interfered with her as to Bittridge, or than they would have interfered with her in the case of any one else. She was still to be left entirely to herself in such matters, and Mrs. Kenton would have kept even her thoughts off her if she could. She would have been very glad to give her mind wholly to the study of the great events which had long interested her here in their scene, but she felt that until the conquest of Mr. Breckon was secured beyond the hazard of Ellen's morbid defection at the supreme moment, she could not give her mind to the history of the Dutch republic.

"Don't bother me about Lottie, Boyne," she said. I have enough to think of without your nonsense. If this Mr. Trannel is an American, that is all that is necessary. We are all Americans together, and I don't believe it will make remark, Lottie's sitting on the beach with him."

"I don't see how he's different from that Bittridge," said Boyne. "He doesn't care for anything; and he plays the banjo just like him."

Mrs. Kenton was too troubled to laugh. She said, with finality, "Lottie can take care of herself," and then she asked, "Boyne, do you know whom Ellen's letters were from?"

"One was from Bessie Pearl--"

"Yes, she showed me that. But you don't know who the other was from?"

"No; she didn't tell me. You know how close Ellen is."

"Yes," the mother sighed, "she is very odd."

Then she added, "Don't you let her know that I asked you about her letters."

"No," said Boyne. His audience was apparently at an end, but he seemed still to have something on his mind. "Momma," he began afresh.

"Well?" she answered, a little impatiently.

"Nothing. Only I got to thinking, Is a person able to control their-- their fancies?"

"Fancies about what?"

"Oh, I don't know. About falling in love." Boyne blushed.

"Why do you want to know? You musn't think about such things, a boy like you! It's a great pity that you ever knew anything about that Bittridge business. It's made you too bold. But it seems to have been meant to drag us down and humiliate us in every way."

"Well, I didn't try to know anything about it," Boyne retorted.

"No, that's true," his mother did him the justice to recognize. "Well, what is it you want to know?" Boyne was too hurt to answer at once, and his mother had to coax him a little. She did it sweetly, and apologized to him for saying what she had said. After all, he was the youngest, and her baby still. Her words and caresses took effect at last, and he stammered out, "Is everybody so, or is it only the Kentons that seem to be always putting--well, their affections--where it's perfectly useless?"

His mother pushed him from her. "Boyne, are you silly about that ridiculous old Miss Rasmith?"

"No!" Boyne shouted, savagely, "I'm NOT!"

"Who is it, then?"

"I sha'n't tell you!" Boyne said, and tears of rage and shame came into his eyes.

XXI.

In his exile from his kindred, for it came practically to that, Boyne was able to add a fine gloom to the state which he commonly observed with himself when he was not giving way to his morbid fancies or his morbid fears, and breaking down in helpless subjection to the nearest member of his household. Lottie was so taken up with her student that she scarcely quarrelled with him any more, and they had no longer those moments of union in which they stood together against the world. His mother had cast him off, as he felt, very heartlessly, though it was really because she could not give his absurdities due thought in view of the hopeful seriousness of Ellen's affair, and Boyne was aware that his father at the best of times was ignorant of him when he was not impatient of him. These were not the best of times with Judge Kenton, and Boyne was not the first object of his impatience. In the last analysis he was living until he could get home, and so largely in the hope of this that his wife at times could scarcely keep him from taking some step that would decide the matter between Ellen and Breckon at once. They were tacitly agreed that they were waiting for nothing else, and, without making their agreement explicit, she was able to quell him by asking what he expected to do in case there was nothing between them? Was he going to take the child back to Tuskingum, which was the same as taking her back to Bittridge? it hurt her to confront him with this question, and she tried other devices for staying and appeasing him. She begged him now, seeing Boyne so forlorn, and hanging about the hotel alone, or moping over those ridiculous books of his, to go off with the boy somewhere and see the interesting places within such easy reach, like Leyden and Delft if he cared nothing for the place where William the Silent was shot, he ought to see the place that the Pilgrims started from. She had counted upon doing those places herself, with her husband, and it was in a sacrifice of her ideal that she now urged him to go with Boyne. But her preoccupation with Ellen's affair forbade her self-abandon to those high historical interests to which she urged his devotion. She might have gone with him and Boyne, but then she must have left the larger half of her divided mind with Ellen, not to speak of Lottie, who refused to be a party to any such excursion. Mrs. Kenton felt the disappointment and grieved at it, but not without hope of repairing it later, and she did not cease from entreating the judge to do what he could at once towards fulfilling the desires she postponed. Once she prevailed with him, and really got him and Boyne off for a day, but they came back early, with signs of having bored each other intolerably, and after that it was Boyne, as much as his father, who relucted from joint expeditions. Boyne did not so much object to going alone, and his father said it was best to let him, though his mother had her fears for her youngest. He spent a good deal of his time on the trams between Scheveningen and The Hague, and he was understood to have explored the capital pretty thoroughly. In fact, he did go about

with a valet de place, whom he got at a cheap rate, and with whom he conversed upon the state of the country and its political affairs. The valet said that the only enemy that Holland could fear was Germany, but an invasion from that quarter could be easily repulsed by cutting the dikes and drowning the invaders. The sea, he taught Boyne, was the great defence of Holland, and it was a waste of money to keep such an army as the Dutch had; but neither the sea nor the sword could drive out the Germans if once they insidiously married a Prussian prince to the Dutch Queen.

There seemed to be no getting away from the Queen, for Boyne. The valet not only talked about her, as the pleasantest subject which he could find, but he insisted upon showing Boyne all her palaces. He took him into the Parliament house, and showed him where she sat while the queen-mother read the address from the throne. He introduced him at a bazar where the shop-girl who spoke English better than Boyne, or at least without the central Ohio accent, wanted to sell him a miniature of the Queen on porcelain. She said the Queen was such a nice girl, and she was herself such a nice girl that Boyne blushed a little in looking at her. He bought the miniature, and then he did not know what to do with it; if any of the family, if Lottie, found out that he had it, or that Trannel, he should have no peace any more. He put it in his pocket, provisionally, and when he came giddily out of the shop he felt himself taken by the elbow and placed against the wall by the valet, who said the queens were coming. They drove down slowly through the crowded, narrow street, bowing right and left to the people flattened against the shops, and again Boyne saw her so near that he could have reached out his hand and almost touched hers.

The consciousness of this was so strong in him that he wondered whether he had not tried to do so. If he had he would have been arrested-- he knew that; and so he knew that he had not done it. He knew that he imagined doing so because it would be so awful to have done it, and he imagined being in love with her because it would be so frantic. At the same time he dramatized an event in which he died for her, and she became aware of his hopeless passion at the last moment, while the anarchist from whom he had saved her confessed that the bomb had been meant for her. Perhaps it was a pistol.

He escaped from the valet as soon as he could, and went back to Scheveningen limp from this experience, but the queens were before him. They had driven down to visit the studio of a famous Dutch painter there, and again the doom was on Boyne to press forward with the other spectators and wait for the queens to appear and get into their carriage. The young Queen's looks were stamped in Boyne's consciousness, so that he saw her wherever he turned, like the sun when one has gazed at it. He thought how that Trannel had said he ought to hand her into her carriage, and he shrank away for fear he should try to do so, but he could not leave the place till she had come out with the queen--mother and driven off. Then he went slowly and breathlessly into the hotel, feeling the Queen's miniature in his pocket. It made his heart stand still, and then bound forward. He wondered again what he should do with it. If he kept it, Lottie would be sure to find it, and he could not bring himself to

the sacrilege of destroying it. He thought he would walk out on the breakwater as far as he could and throw it into the sea, but when he got to the end of the mole he could not do so. He decided that he would give it to Ellen to keep for him, and not let Lottie see it; or perhaps he might pretend he had bought it for her. He could not do that, though, for it would not be true, and if he did he could not ask her to keep it from Lottie.

At dinner Mr. Trannel told him he ought to have been there to see the Queen; that she had asked especially for him, and wanted to know if they had not sent up her card to him. Boyne meditated an apt answer through all the courses, but he had not thought of one when they had come to the 'corbeille de fruits', and he was forced to go to bed without having avenged himself.

In taking rooms for her family at the hotel, Lottie had arranged for her emancipation from the thralldom of rooming with Ellen. She said that had gone on long enough; if she was grown up at all, she was grown up enough to have a room of her own, and her mother had yielded to reasoning which began and ended with this position. She would have interfered so far as to put Lottie into the room next her, but Lottie said that if Boyne was the baby he ought to be next his mother; Ellen might come next him, but she was going to have the room that was furthest from any implication of the dependence in which she had languished; and her mother submitted again. Boyne was not sorry; there had always been hours of the night when he felt the need of getting at his mother for reassurance as to forebodings which his fancy conjured up to trouble him in the wakeful dark. It was understood that he might freely do this, and though the judge inwardly fretted, he could not deny the boy the comfort of his mother's encouraging love. Boyne's visits woke him, but he slept the better for indulging in the young nerves that tremor from impressions against which the old nerves are proof. But now, in the strange fatality which seemed to involve him, Boyne could not go to his mother. It was too weirdly intimate, even for her; besides, when he had already tried to seek her counsel she had ignorantly repelled him.

The night after his day in The Hague, when he could bear it no longer, he put on his dressing-gown and softly opened Ellen's door, awake, Ellen?" he whispered.

"Yes, What is it, Boyne" her gentle voice asked.

"He came and sat down by her bed and stole his hand into hers, which she put out to him. The watery moonlight dripped into the room at the edges of the shades, and the long wash of the sea made itself regularly heard on the sands.

"Can't you sleep?" Ellen asked again. "Are you homesick?"

"Not exactly that. But it does seem rather strange for us to be off here so far, doesn't it?"

"Yes, I don't see how I can forgive myself for making you come," said

Ellen, but her voice did not sound as if she were very unhappy.

"You couldn't help it," said Boyne, and the words suggested a question to him. "Do you believe that such things are ordered, Ellen?"

"Everything is ordered, isn't it?"

"I suppose so. And if they are, we're not, to blame for what happens."

"Not if we try to do right."

"Of course. The Kentons always do that," said Boyne, with the faith in his family that did not fail him in the darkest hour. "But what I mean is that if anything comes on you that you can't foresee and you can't get out of--" The next step was not clear, and Boyne paused. He asked,

"Do you think that we can control our feelings, Ellen?"

"About what?"

"Well, about persons that we like." He added, for safety, "Or dislike."

"I'm afraid not," said Ellen, sadly, "We ought to like persons and dislike them for some good reason, but we don't."

"Yes, that's what I mean," said Borne, with a long breath. "Sometimes it seems like a kind of possession, doesn't it?"

"It seems more like that when we like them," Ellen said.

"Yes, that's what I mean. If a person was to take a fancy to some one that was above him, that was richer, or older, he wouldn't be to blame for it, would he?"

"Was that what you wanted to ask me about?"

Borne hesitated. "Yes" he said. He was in for it now.

Ellen had not noticed Boyne's absorption with Miss Rasmith on the ship, but she vaguely remembered hearing Lottie tease him about her, and she said now, "He wouldn't be to blame for it if he couldn't help it, but if the person was much older it would be a pity!"

"Uh, she isn't so very much older," said Borne, more cheerfully than he had spoken before.

"Is it somebody that you have taken a fancy to Borne?"

"I don't know, Ellen. That's what makes it so kind of awful. I can't tell whether it's a real fancy, or I only think it is. Sometimes I think it is, and sometimes I think that I think so because I am afraid to believe it. Do you under Ellen?"

"It seems to me that I do. But you oughtn't to let your fancy run away with you, Boyne. What a queer boy!"

"It's a kind of fascination, I suppose. But whether it's a real fancy or an unreal one, I can't get away from it."

"Poor boy!" said his sister.

"Perhaps it's those books. Sometimes I think it is, and I laugh at the whole idea; and then again it's so strong that I can't get away from it. Ellen!"

"Well, Boyne?"

I could tell you who it is, if you think that would do any good--if you think it would help me to see it in the true light, or you could help me more by knowing who it is than you can now."

"I hope it isn't anybody that you can't respect, Boyne?"

"No, indeed! It's somebody you would never dream of."

"Well?" Ellen was waiting for him to speak, but he could not get the words out, even to her.

"I guess I'll tell you some other time. Maybe I can get over it myself."

"It would be the best way if you could."

He rose and left her bedside, and then he came back. "Ellen, I've got something that I wish you would keep for me."

"What is it? Of course I will."

"Well, it's--something I don't want you to let Lottie know I've got. She tells that Mr. Trannel everything, and then he wants to make fun. Do you think he's so very witty?"

"I can't help laughing at some things he says."

"I suppose he is," Boyne ruefully admitted. "But that doesn't make you like him any better. Well, if you won't tell Lottie, I'll give it to you now."

"I won't tell anything that you don't want me to, Boyne."

"It's nothing. It's just-a picture of the Queen on porcelain, that I got in The Hague. The guide took me into the store, and I thought I ought to get something."

"Oh, that's very nice, Boyne. I do like the Queen so much. She's so sweet!"

"Yes, isn't she?" said Boyne, glad of Ellen's approval. So far, at least, he was not wrong. "Here it is now."

He put the miniature in Ellen's hand. She lifted herself on her elbow. "Light the candle and let me see it."

"No, no!" he entreated. "It might wake Lottie, and--and--Good-night, Ellen."

"Can you go to sleep now, Boyne?"

"Oh yes. I'm all right. Good-night."

"Good-night, then."

Borne stooped over and kissed her, and went to the door. He came back and asked, "You don't think it was silly, or anything, for me to get it?"

"No, indeed! It's just what you will like to have when you get home. We've all seen her so often. I'll put it in my trunk, and nobody shall know about it till we're safely back in Tuskingum."

Boyne sighed deeply. "Yes, that's what I meant. Good-night."

"Good-night, Boyne."

"I hope I haven't waked you up too much?"

"Oh no. I can get to sleep easily again."

"Well, good-night." Boyne sighed again, but not so deeply, and this time he went out.

XXII.

Mrs. Kenton woke with the clear vision which is sometimes vouchsafed to people whose eyes are holden at other hours of the day. She had heard Boyne opening and shutting Ellen's door, and her heart smote her that he should have gone to his sister with whatever trouble he was in rather than come to his mother. It was natural that she should put the blame on her husband, and "Now, Mr. Kenton," she began, with an austerity of voice which he recognized before he was well awake, "if you won't take Boyne off somewhere to-day, I will. I think we had better all go. We have been here a whole fortnight, and we have got thoroughly rested, and there is no excuse for our wasting our time any longer. If we are going to see Holland, we had better begin doing it."

The judge gave a general assent, and said that if she wanted to go to Flushing he supposed he could find some garden-seeds there, in the flower and vegetable nurseries, which would be adapted to the climate of

Tuskingum, and they could all put in the day pleasantly, looking round the place. Whether it was the suggestion of Tuskingum in relation to Flushing that decided her against the place, or whether she had really meant to go to Leyden, she now expressed the wish, as vividly as if it were novel, to explore the scene of the Pilgrims' sojourn before they sailed for Plymouth, and she reproached him for not caring about the place when they both used to take such an interest in it at home.

"Well," said the judge, "if I were at home I should take an interest in it here."

This provoked her to a silence which he thought it best to break in tacit compliance with her wish, and he asked, "Do you propose taking the whole family and the appurtenances? We shall be rather a large party."

"Ellen would wish to go, and I suppose Mr. Breckon. We couldn't very well go without them."

"And how about Lottie and that young Trannel?"

"We can't leave him out, very well. I wish we could. I don't like him."

"There's nothing easier than not asking him, if you don't want him."

"Yes, there is, when you've got a girl like Lottie to deal with. Quite likely she would ask him herself. We must take him because we can't leave her."

"Yes, I reckon," the judge acquiesced.

"I'm glad," Mrs. Kenton said, after a moment, "that it isn't Ellen he's after; it almost reconciles me to his being with Lottie so much. I only wonder he doesn't take to Ellen, he's so much like that--"

She did not say out what was in her mind, but her husband knew. "Yes, I've noticed it. This young Breckon was quite enough so, for my taste. I don't know what it is that just saves him from it."

"He's good. You could tell that from the beginning."

They went off upon the situation that, superficially or subliminally, was always interesting them beyond anything in the world, and they did not openly recur to Mrs. Kenton's plan for the day till they met their children at breakfast. It was a meal at which Breckon and Trammel were both apt to join them, where they took it at two of the tables on the broad, seaward piazza of the hotel when the weather was fine. Both the young men now applauded her plan, in their different sorts. It was easily arranged that they should go by train and not by tram from The Hague. The train was chosen, and Mrs. Kenton, when she went to her room to begin the preparations for a day's pleasure which constitute so distinctly a part of its pain, imagined that everything was settled. She had scarcely closed the door behind her when Lottie opened it and shut it again behind her.

"Mother," she said, in the new style of address to which she was habituating Mrs. Kenton, after having so long called her momma, "I am not going with you."

"Indeed you are, then!" her mother retorted. "Do you think I would leave you here all day with that fellow? A nice talk we should make!"

"You are perfectly welcome to that fellow, mother, and as he's accepted he will have to go with you, and there won't be any talk. But, as I remarked before, I am not going."

"Why aren't you going, I should like to know?"

"Because I don't like the company."

"What do you mean? Have you got anything against Mr. Breckon?"

"He's insipid, but as long as Ellen don't mind it I don't care. I object to Mr. Trannel!"

"Why?"

"I don't see why I should have to tell you. If I said I liked him you might want to know, but it seems to me that my not liking him is--my not liking him is my own affair." There was a kind of logic in this that silenced Mrs. Kenton for the moment. In view of her advantage Lottie relented so far as to add, "I've found out something about him."

Mrs. Kenton was imperative in her alarm. "What is it?" she demanded.

Lottie answered, obliquely: "Well, I didn't leave The Hague to get rid of them, and then take up with one of them at Scheveningen."

"One of what?"

"COOK'S TOURISTS, if you must know, mother. Mr. Trannel, as you call him, is a Cook's tourist, and that's the end of it. I have got no use for him from this out."

Mrs. Kenton was daunted, and not for the first time, by her daughter's superior knowledge of life. She could put Boyne down sometimes, though not always, when he attempted to impose a novel code of manners or morals upon her, but she could not cope with Lottie. In the present case she could only ask, "Well?"

"Well, they're the cheapest of the cheap. He actually showed me his coupons, and tried to put me down with the idea that everybody used them. But I guess he found it wouldn't work. He said if you were not personally conducted it was all right."

"Now, Lottie, you have got to tell me just what you mean," said Mrs. Kenton, and from having stood during this parley, she sat down to hear

Lottie out at her leisure. But if there was anything more difficult than for Lottie to be explicit it was to make her be so, and in the end Mrs. Kenton was scarcely wiser than she was at the beginning to her daughter's reasons. It appeared that if you wanted to be cheap you could travel with those coupons, and Lottie did not wish to be cheap, or have anything to do with those who were. The Kentons had always held up their heads, and if Ellen had chosen to disgrace them with Bittridge, Dick had made it all right, and she at least was not going to do anything that she would be ashamed of. She was going to stay at home, and have her meals in her room till they got back.

Her mother paid no heed to her repeated declaration. "Lottie," she asked, with the heart-quake that the thought of Richard's act always gave her with reference to Ellen, "have you ever let out the least hint of that?"

"Of course I haven't," Lottie scornfully retorted. "I hope I know what a crank Ellen is."

They were not just the terms in which Mrs. Kenton would have chosen to be reassured, but she was glad to be assured in any terms. She said, vaguely: "I believe in my heart that I will stay at home, too. All this has given me a bad headache."

"I was going to have a headache myself," said Lottie, with injury.

"But I suppose I can get on along without. I can just simply say I'm not going. If he proposes to stay, too, I can soon settle that."

"The great difficulty will be to get your father to go."

"You can make Ellen make him," Lottie suggested.

"That is true," said Mrs. Kenton, with such increasing absence that her daughter required of her:

"Are you staying on my account?"

"I think you had better not be left alone the whole day. But I am not staying on your account. I don't believe we had so many of us better go. It might look a little pointed."

Lottie laughed harshly. "I guess Mr. Breckon wouldn't see the point, he's so perfectly gone."

"Do you really believe it, Lottie?" Mrs. Kenton entreated, with a sudden tenderness for her younger daughter such as she did not always feel.

"I should think anybody would believe it--anybody but Ellen."

"Yes," Mrs. Kenton dreamily assented.

Lottie made her way to the door. "Well, if you do stay, mother, I'm not going to have you hanging round me all day. I can chaperon myself."

"Lottie," her mother tried to stay her, "I wish you would go. I don't believe that Mr. Trannel will be much of an addition. He will be on your poor father's hands all day, or else Ellen's, and if you went you could help off."

"Thank you, mother. I've had quite all I want of Mr. Trannel. You can tell him he needn't go, if you want to."

Lottie at least did not leave her mother to make her excuses to the party when they met for starting. Mrs. Kenton had deferred her own till she thought it was too late for her husband to retreat, and then bunglingly made them, with so much iteration that it seemed to her it would have been far less pointed, as concerned Mr. Breckon, if she had gone. Lottie sunnily announced that she was going to stay with her mother, and did not even try to account for her defection to Mr. Trannel.

"What's the matter with my staying, too?" he asked. "It seems to me there are four wheels to this coach now."

He had addressed his misgiving more to Lottie than the rest; but with the same sunny indifference to the consequence for others that she had put on in stating her decision, she now discharged herself from further responsibility by turning on her heel and leaving it with the party generally. In the circumstances Mr. Trannel had no choice but to go, and he was supported, possibly, by the hope of taking it out of Lottie some other time.

It was more difficult for Mrs. Kenton to get rid of the judge, but an inscrutable frown goes far in such exigencies. It seems to explain, and it certainly warns, and the husband on whom it is bent never knows, even after the longest experience, whether he had better inquire further. Usually he decides that he had better not, and Judge Kenton went off towards the tram with Boyne in the cloud of mystery which involved them both as to Mrs. Kenton's meaning.

XXIII.

Trannel attached himself as well as he could to Breckon and Ellen, and Breckon had an opportunity not fully offered him before to note a likeness between himself and a fellow-man whom he was aware of not liking, though he tried to love him, as he felt it right to love all men. He thought he had not been quite sympathetic enough with Mrs. Kenton in her having to stay behind, and he tried to make it up to Mr. Trannel in his having to come. He invented civilities to show him, and ceded his place next Ellen as if Trannel had a right to it. Trannel ignored him in keeping it, unless it was recognizing Breckon to say, "Oh, I hope I'm not in your way, old fellow?" and then making jokes to Ellen. Breckon could not say the jokes were bad, though the taste of them seemed to him so.

The man had a fleering wit, which scorched whatever he turned it upon, and yet it was wit. "Why don't you try him in American?" he asked at the failure of Breckon and the tram conductor to understand each other in Dutch. He tried the conductor himself in American, and he was so deplorably funny that it was hard for Breckon to help being 'particeps criminus', at least in a laugh.

He asked himself if that were really the kind of man he was, and he grew silent and melancholy in the fear that it was a good deal the sort of man. To this morbid fancy Trannel seemed himself in a sort of excess, or what he would be if he were logically ultimated. He remembered all the triviality of his behavior with Ellen at first, and rather sickened at the thought of some of his early pleasantries. She was talking gayly now with Trannel, and Breckon wondered whether she was falling under the charm that he felt in him, in spite of himself.

If she was, her father was not. The judge sat on the other side of the car, and unmistakably glowered at the fellow's attempts to make himself amusing to Ellen. Trannel himself was not insensible to the judge's mood. Now and then he said something to intensify it. He patronized the judge and he made fun of the tourist character in which Boyne had got himself up, with a field-glass slung by a strap under one arm and a red Baedeker in his hand. He sputtered with malign laughter at a rather gorgeous necktie which Boyne had put on for the day, and said it was not a very good match for the Baedeker.

Boyne retorted rudely, and that amused Trannel still more. He became personal to Breckon, and noted the unclerical cut of his clothes. He said he ought to have put on his uniform for an expedition like that, in case they got into any sort of trouble. To Ellen alone he was inoffensive, unless he overdid his polite attentions to her in carrying her parasol for her, and helping her out of the tram, when they arrived, shouldering every one else away, and making haste to separate her from the others and then to walk on with her a little in advance.

Suddenly he dropped her, and fell back to Boyne and his father, while Breckon hastened forward to her side. Trannel put his arm across Boyne's shoulders and asked him if he were mad, and then laughed at him. "You're all right, Boyne, but you oughtn't to be so approachable. You ought to put on more dignity, and repel familiarity!"

Boyne could only twitch away in silence that he made as haughty as he could, but not so haughty that Trannel did not find it laughable, and he laughed in a teasing way that made Breckon more and more serious. He was aware of becoming even solemn with the question of his likeness to Trannel. He was of Trannel's quality, and their difference was a matter of quantity, and there was not enough difference. In his sense of their likeness Breckon vowed himself to a gravity of behavior evermore which he should not probably be able to observe, but the sample he now displayed did not escape the keen vigilance of Trannel.

"With the exception of Miss Kenton," he addressed himself to the party, "you're all so easy and careless that if you don't look out you'll lose

me. Miss Kenton, I wish you would keep an eye on me. I don't want to get lost."

Ellen laughed--she could not help it--and her laughing made it less possible than before for Breckon to unbend and meet Trannel on his own ground, to give him joke for joke, to exchange banter with him. He might never have been willing to do that, but now he shrank from it, in his realization of their likeness, with an abhorrence that rendered him rigid.

The judge was walking ahead with Boyne, and his back expressed such severe disapproval that, between her fear that Trannel would say something to bring her father's condemnation on him and her sense of their inhospitable attitude towards one who was their guest, in a sort, she said, with her gentle gayety, "Then you must keep near me, Mr. Trannel. I'll see that nothing happens."

"That's very sweet of you," said Trannel, soberly. Whether he had now vented his malicious humor and was ready to make himself agreeable, or was somewhat quelled by the unfriendly ambient he had created, or was wrought upon by her friendliness, he became everything that could be wished in a companion for a day's pleasure. He took the lead at the station, and got them a compartment in the car to themselves for the little run to Leyden, and on the way he talked very well. He politely borrowed Boyne's Baedeker, and decided for the party what they had best see, and showed an acceptable intelligence, as well as a large experience in the claims of Leyden upon the visitor's interest. He had been there often before, it seemed, and in the event it appeared that he had chosen the days sightseeing wisely.

He no longer addressed himself respectfully to Ellen alone, but he re-established himself in Boyne's confidence with especial pains, and he conciliated Breckon by a recognition of his priority with Ellen with a delicacy refined enough for even the susceptibility of a lover alarmed for his rights. If he could not overcome the reluctance of the judge, he brought him to the civil response which any one who tried for Kenton's liking achieved, even if he did not merit it, and there remained no more reserve in Kenton's manner than there had been with the young man from the first. He had never been a persona grata to the judge, and if he did not become so now, he at least ceased to be actively displeasing.

That was the year before the young Queen came to her own, and in the last days of her minority she was visiting all the cities of her future dominion with the queen-mother. When Kenton's party left the station they found Leyden as gay for her reception as flags and banners could make the gray old town, and Trannel relapsed for a moment so far as to suggest that the decorations were in honor of Boyne's presence, but he did not abuse the laugh that this made to Boyne's further shame.

There was no carriage at the station which would hold the party of five, and they had to take two vehicles. Trannel said it was lucky they wanted two, since there were no more, and he put himself in authority to assort the party. The judge, he decided, must go with Ellen and Breckon, and he

hoped Boyne would let him go in his carriage, if he would sit on the box with the driver. The judge afterwards owned that he had weakly indulged his dislike of the fellow, in letting him take Boyne, and not insisting on going himself with Tramiel, but this was when it was long too late. Ellen had her misgivings, but, except for that gibe about the decorations, Trannel had been behaving so well that she hoped she might trust Boyne with him. She made a kind of appeal for her brother, bidding him and Trannel take good care of each other, and Trannel promised so earnestly to look after Boyne that she ought to have been alarmed for him. He took the lead, rising at times to wave a reassuring hand to her over the back of his carriage, and, in fact, nothing evil could very well happen from him, with the others following so close upon him. They met from time to time in the churches they visited, and when they lost sight of one another, through a difference of opinion in the drivers as to the best route, they came together at the place Trannel had appointed for their next reunion.

He showed himself a guide so admirably qualified that he found a way for them to objects of interest that had at first denied themselves in anticipation of the visit from the queens; when they all sat down at lunch in the restaurant which he found for them, he could justifiably boast that he would get them into the Town Hall, which they had been told was barred for the day against anything but sovereign curiosity. He was now on the best terms with Boyne, who seemed to have lost all diffidence of him, and treated him with an easy familiarity that showed itself in his slapping him on the shoulder and making dints in his hat. Trannel seemed to enjoy these caresses, and, when they parted again for the afternoon's sight-seeing, Ellen had no longer a qualm in letting Boyne drive off with him.

He had, in fact, known how to make himself very acceptable to Boyne. He knew all the originals of his heroical romances, and was able to give the real names and the geographical position of those princesses who had been in love with American adventurers. Under promise of secrecy he disclosed the real names of the adventurers themselves, now obscured in the titles given them to render them worthy their union with sovereigns. He resumed his fascinating confidences when they drove off after luncheon, and he resumed them after each separation from the rest of the party. Boyne listened with a flushed face and starting eyes, and when at last Trannel offered, upon a pledge of the most sacred nature from him never to reveal a word of what he said, he began to relate an adventure of which he was himself the hero. It was a bold travesty of one of the latest romances that Boyne had read, involving the experience of an American very little older than Boyne himself, to whom a wilful young crown-princess, in a little state which Trannel would not name even to Boyne, had made advances such as he could not refuse to meet without cruelty. He was himself deeply in love with her, but he felt bound in honor not to encourage her infatuation as long as he could help, for he had been received by her whole family with such kindness and confidence that he had to consider them.

"Oh, pshaw!" Boyne broke in upon him, doubting, and yet wishing not to doubt, "that's the same as the story of 'Hector Folleyne'."

"Yes," said Trannel, quietly. "I thought you would recognize it."

"Well, but," Boyne went on, "Hector married the princess!"

"In the book, yes. The fellow I gave the story to said it would never do not to have him marry her, and it would help to disguise the fact. That's what he said, after he had given the whole thing away."

"And do you mean to say it was you? Oh, you can't stuff me! How did you get out of marrying her, I should like to know, when the chancellor came to you and said that the whole family wanted you to, for fear it would kill her if--"

"Well, there was a scene, I can't deny that. We had a regular family conclave--father, mother, Aunt Hitty, and all the folks--and we kept it up pretty much all night. The princess wasn't there, of course, and I could convince them that I was right. If she had been, I don't believe I could have held out. But they had to listen to reason, and I got away between two days."

"But why didn't you marry her?"

"Well, for one thing, as I told you, I thought I ought to consider her family. Then there was a good fellow, the crown-prince of Saxe-Wolfenbutten, who was dead in love with her, and was engaged to her before I turned up. I had been at school with him, and I felt awfully sorry for him; and I thought I ought to sacrifice myself a little to him. But I suppose the thing that influenced me most was finding out that if I married the princess I should have to give up my American citizenship and become her subject."

"Well?" Boyne panted.

"Well, would you have done it?"

"Couldn't you have got along without doing that?"

"That was the only thing I couldn't get around, somehow. So I left."

"And the princess, did she--die?"

"It takes a good deal more than that to kill a fifteen-year-old princess," said Trannel, and he gave a harsh laugh. "She married Saxe-Wolfenbutten." Boyne was silent. "Now, I don't want you to speak of this till after I leave Scheveningen--especially to Miss Lottie. You know how girls are, and I think Miss Lottie is waiting to get a bind on me, anyway. If she heard how I was cut out of my chance with that princess she'd never let me believe I gave her up of my own free will?"

"NO, no; I won't tell her."

Boyne remained in a silent rapture, and he did not notice they were no

longer following the rest of their party in the other carriage. This had turned down a corner, at which Mr. Breckon, sitting on the front seat, had risen and beckoned their driver to follow, but their driver, who appeared afterwards to have not too much a head of his own, or no head at all, had continued straight on, in the rear of a tram-car, which was slowly finding its way through the momentarily thickening crowd. Boyne was first aware that it was a humorous crowd when, at a turn of the street, their equipage was greeted with ironical cheers by a group of gay young Dutchmen on the sidewalk. Then he saw that the sidewalks were packed with people, who spread into the street almost to the tram, and that the house fronts were dotted with smiling Dutch faces, the faces of pretty Dutch girls, who seemed to share the amusement of the young fellows below.

Trannel lay back in the carriage. "This is something like," he said. "Boyne, they're on to the distinguished young Ohioan--the only Ohioan out of office in Europe."

"Yes," said Boyne, trying to enjoy it. "I wonder what they are holloing at."

Trannel laughed. "They're holloing at your Baedeker, my dear boy. They never saw one before," and Boyne was aware that he was holding his red-backed guide conspicuously in view on his lap. "They know you're a foreigner by it."

"Don't you think we ought to turn down somewhere? I don't see poppa anywhere." He rose and looked anxiously back over the top of their carriage. The crowd, closing in behind it, hailed his troubled face with cries that were taken up by the throng on the sidewalks. Boyne turned about to find that the tram-car which they had been following had disappeared round a corner, but their driver was still keeping on. At a wilder burst of applause Trannel took off his hat and bowed to the crowd, right and left.

"Bow, bow!" he said to Boyne. "They'll be calling for a speech the next thing. Bow, I tell you!"

"Tell him to turn round!" cried the boy.

"I can't speak Dutch," said Trannel, and Boyne leaned forward and poked the driver in the back.

"Go back!" he commanded.

The driver shook his head and pointed forward with his whip. "He's all right," said Trannel. "He can't turn now. We've got to take the next corner." The street in front was empty, and the people were crowding back on the sidewalks. Loud, vague noises made themselves heard round the corner to which the driver had pointed. "By Jove!" Trannel said, "I believe they're coming round that way."

"Who are coming?" Boyne palpitated.

"The queens."

"The queens?" Boyne gasped; it seemed to him that he shrieked the words.

"Yes. And there's a tobacconist's now," said Trannel, as if that were what he had been looking for all along. "I want some cigarettes."

He leaped lightly from the carriage, and pushed his way out of sight on the sidewalk. Boyne remained alone in the vehicle, staring wildly round; the driver kept slowly and stupidly on, Boyne did not know how much farther. He could not speak; he felt as if he could not stir. But the moment came when he could not be still. He gave a galvanic jump to the ground, and the friendly crowd on the sidewalk welcomed him to its ranks and closed about him. The driver had taken the lefthand corner, just before a plain carriage with the Queen and the queen-mother came in sight round the right. The young Queen was bowing to the people, gently, and with a sort of mechanical regularity. Now and then a brighter smile than that she conventionally wore lighted up her face. The simple progress was absolutely without state, except for the aide-de-camp on horseback who rode beside the carriage, a little to the front.

Boyne stood motionless on the curb, where a friendly tall Dutchman had placed him in front that he might see the Queen.

"Hello!" said the voice of Trannel, and elbowing his way to Boyne's side, he laughed and coughed through the smoke of his cigarette. "I was afraid you had lost me. Where's your carriage?"

Boyne did not notice his mockeries. He was entranced in that beatific vision; his boy-heart went out in worship to the pretty young creature with a reverence that could not be uttered. The tears came into his eyes.

"There, there! She's bowing to you, Boyne. she's smiling right at you. By Jove! She's beckoning to you!"

"You be still!" Boyne retorted, finding his tongue. "She isn't doing any such a thing."

"She is, I swear she is! She's doing it again! She's stopping the carriage. Oh, go out and see what she wants! Don't you know that a queen's wish is a command? You've got to go!"

Boyne never could tell just how it happened. The carriage did seem to be stopping, and the Queen seemed to be looking at him. He thought he must, and he started into the street towards her, and the carriage came abreast of him. He had almost reached the carriage when the aide turned and spurred his horse before him. Four strong hands that were like iron clamps were laid one on each of Boyne's elbows and shoulders, and he was haled away, as if by superhuman force. "Mr. Trannel!" he called out. in his agony, but the wretch had disappeared, and Boyne was left with his captors, to whom he could have said nothing if he could have thought of

anything to say.

The detectives pulled him through the crowd and hurried him swiftly down the side street. A little curiosity straggled after him in the shape of small Dutch boys, too short to look over the shoulders of men at the queens, and too weak to make their way through them to the front; but for them, Boyne seemed alone in the world with the relentless officers, who were dragging him forward and hurting him so with the grip of their iron hands. He lifted up his face to entreat them not to hold him so tight, and suddenly it was as if he beheld an angel standing in his path. It was Breckon who was there, staring at him aghast.

"Why, Boyne!" he cried.

"Oh, Mr. Breckon!" Boyne wailed back. "Is it you? Oh, do tell them I didn't mean to do anything! I thought she beckoned to me."

"Who? Who beckoned to you?"

"The Queen!" Boyne sobbed, while the detectives pulled him relentlessly on.

Breckon addressed them suavely in their own tongue which had never come in more deferential politeness from human lips. He ventured the belief that there was a mistake; he assured them that he knew their prisoner, and that he was the son of a most respectable American family, whom they could find at the Kurhaus in Scheveningen. He added some irrelevancies, and got for all answer that they had made Boyne's arrest for sufficient reasons, and were taking him to prison. If his friends wished to intervene in his behalf they could do so before the magistrate, but for the present they must admonish Mr. Breckon not to put himself in the way of the law.

"Don't go, Mr. Breckon!" Boyne implored him, as his captors made him quicken his pace after slowing a little for their colloquy with Breckon.

"Oh, where is poppa? He could get me away. Oh, where is poppa?"

"Don't! Don't call out, Boyne," Breckon entreated. "Your father is right here at the end of the street. He's in the carriage there with Miss Kenton. I was coming to look for you. Don't cry out so!"

"No, no, I won't, Mr. Breckon. I'll be perfectly quiet now. Only do get poppa quick! He can tell them in a minute that it's all right!"

He made a prodigious effort to control himself, while Breckon ran a little ahead, with some wild notion of preparing Ellen. As he disappeared at the corner, Boyne choked a sob into a muffled bellow, and was able to meet the astonished eyes of his father and sister in this degree of triumph.

They had not in the least understood Breckon's explanation, and, in fact, it had not been very lucid. At sight of her brother strenuously upheld between the detectives, and dragged along the sidewalk, Ellen sprang from

the carriage and ran towards him. "Why, what's the matter with Boyne?" she demanded. "Are you hurt, Boyne, dear? Are they taking him to the hospital?"

Before he could answer, and quite before the judge could reach the tragical group, she had flung her arms round Boyne's neck, and was kissing his tear-dabbled face, while he lamented back, "They're taking me to prison."

"Taking you to prison? I should like to know what for! What are you taking my brother to prison for?" she challenged the detectives, who paused, bewildered, while all the little Dutch boys round admired this obstruction of the law, and several Dutch housewives, too old to go out to see the queens, looked down from their windows. It was wholly illegal, but the detectives were human. They could snub such a friend of their prisoner as Breckon, but they could not meet the dovelike ferocity of Ellen with unkindness. They explained as well as they might, and at a suggestion which Kenton made through Breckon, they admitted that it was not beside their duty to take Boyne directly to a magistrate, who could pass upon his case, and even release him upon proper evidence of his harmlessness, and sufficient security for any demand that justice might make for his future appearance.

"Then," said the judge, quietly, "tell them that we will go with them. It will be all right, Boyne. Ellen, you and I will get back into the carriage, and--"

"No!" Boyne roared. "Don't leave me, Nelly!"

"Indeed, I won't leave you, Boyne! Mr. Breckon, you get into the carriage with poppa, and I--"

"I think I had better go with you, Miss Kenton," said Breckon, and in a tender superfluity they both accompanied Boyne on foot, while the judge remounted to his place in the carriage and kept abreast of them on their way to the magistrate's.

XXIV.

The magistrate conceived of Boyne's case with a readiness that gave the judge a high opinion of his personal and national intelligence. He even smiled a little, in accepting the explanation which Breckon was able to make him from Boyne, but he thought his duty to give the boy a fatherly warning for the future. He remarked to Breckon that it was well for Boyne that the affair had not happened in Germany, where it would have been found a much more serious matter, though, indeed, he added, it had to be seriously regarded anywhere in these times, when the lives of sovereigns were so much at the mercy of all sorts of madmen and miscreants. He relaxed a little from his severity in his admonition to say directly to Boyne that queens, even when they wished to speak with

people, did not beckon them in the public streets. When this speech translated to Boyne by Breckon, whom the magistrate complimented on the perfection of his Dutch, Boyne hung his head sheepishly, and could not be restored to his characteristic dignity again in the magistrate's presence. The judge gratefully shook hands with the friendly justice, and made him a little speech of thanks, which Breckon interpreted, and then the justice shook hand with the judge, and gracefully accepted the introduction which he offered him to Ellen. They parted with reciprocal praises and obeisances, which included even the detectives. The judge had some question, which he submitted to Breckon, whether he ought not to offer them something, but Breckon thought not.

Breckon found it hard to abdicate the sort of authority in which his knowledge of Dutch had placed him, and when he protested that he had done nothing but act as interpreter, Ellen said, "Yes, but we couldn't have done anything without you," and this was the view that Mrs. Kenton took of the matter in the family conclave which took place later in the evening. Breckon was not allowed to withdraw from it, in spite of many modest efforts, before she had bashfully expressed her sense of his service to him, and made Boyne share her thanksgiving. She had her arm about the boy's shoulder in giving Breckon her hand, and when Breckon had got away she pulled Boyne to her in a more peremptory embrace.

"Now, Boyne," she said, "I am not going to have any more nonsense. I want to know why you did it."

The judge and Ellen had already conjectured clearly enough, and Boyne did not fear them. But he looked at his younger sister as he sulkily answered, "I am not going to tell you before Lottie."

"Come in here, then," said his mother, and she led him into the next room and closed the door. She quickly returned without him. "Yes," she began, "it's just as I supposed; it was that worthless fellow who put him up to it. Of course, it began with those fool books he's been reading, and the notions that Miss Rasmith put into his head. But he never would have done anything if it hadn't been for Mr. Trannel."

Lottie had listened in silent scorn to the whole proceedings up to this point, and had refused a part in the general recognition of Breckon as a special providence. Now she flashed out with a terrible volubility: "What did I tell you? What else could you expect of a Cook's tourist? And mom--mother wanted to make me go with you, after I told her what he was! Well, if I had have gone, I'll bet I could have kept him from playing his tricks. I'll bet he wouldn't have taken any liberties, with me along. I'll bet if he had, it wouldn't have been Boyne that got arrested. I'll bet he wouldn't have got off so easily with the magistrate, either! But I suppose you'll all let him come bowing and smiling round in the morning, like butter wouldn't melt in your mouths. That seems to be the Kenton way. Anybody can pull our noses, or get us arrested that wants to, and we never squeak." She went on a long time to this purpose, Mrs. Kenton listening with an air almost of conviction, and Ellen patiently bearing it as a right that Lottie had in a matter where she had been otherwise ignored.

The judge broke out, not upon Lottie, but upon his wife. "Good heavens, Sarah, can't you make the child hush?"

Lottie answered for her mother, with a crash of nerves and a gush of furious tears: "Oh, I've got to hush, I suppose. It's always the way when I'm trying to keep up the dignity of the family. I suppose it will be cabled to America, and by tomorrow it will be all over Tuskingum how Boyne was made a fool of and got arrested. But I bet there's one person in Tuskingum that won't have any remarks to make, and that's Bittridge. Not, as long as Dick's there he won't."

"Lottie!" cried her mother, and her father started towards her, while Ellen still sat patiently quiet.

"Oh, well!" Lottie submitted. "But if Dick was here I know this Trannel wouldn't get off so smoothly. Dick would give him a worse cowhiding than he did Bittridge."

Half the last word was lost in the bang of the door which Lottie slammed behind her, leaving her father and mother to a silence which Ellen did not offer to break. The judge had no heart to speak, in his dismay, and it was Mrs. Kenton who took the word.

"Ellen," she began, with compassionate gentleness, "we tried to keep it from you. We knew how you would feel. But now we have got to tell you. Dick did cowhide him when he got back to Tuskingum. Lottie wrote out to Dick about it, how Mr. Bittridge had behaved in New York. Your father and I didn't approve of it, and Dick didn't afterwards; but, yes, he did do it."

"I knew it, mamma," said Ellen, sadly.

"You knew it! How?"

"That other letter I got when we first came--it was from his mother."

"Did she tell--"

"Yes. It was terrible she seemed to feel so. And I was sorry for her. I thought I ought to answer it, and I did. I told her I was sorry, too. I tried not to blame Richard. I don't believe I did. And I tried not to blame him. She was feeling badly enough without that."

Her father and mother looked at each other; they did not speak, and she asked, "Do you think I oughtn't to have written?"

Her father answered, a little tremulously: "You did right, Ellen. And I am sure that you did it in just the right way."

"I tried to. I thought I wouldn't worry you about it."

She rose, and now her mother thought she was going to say that it put an

end to everything; that she must go back and offer herself as a sacrifice to the injured Bittridges. Her mind had reverted to that moment on the steamer when Ellen told her that nothing had reconciled her to what had happened with Bittridge but the fact that all the wrong done had been done to themselves; that this freed her. In her despair she could not forbear asking, "What did you write to her, Ellen?"

"Nothing. I just said that I was very sorry, and that I knew how she felt. I don't remember exactly."

She went up and kissed her mother. She seemed rather fatigued than distressed, and her father asked her. "Are you going to bed, my dear?"

"Yes, I'm pretty tired, and I should think you would be, too, poppa. I'll speak to poor Boyne. Don't mind Lottie. I suppose she couldn't help saying it." She kissed her father, and slipped quietly into Boyne's room, from which they could hear her passing on to her own before they ventured to say anything to each other in the hopeful bewilderment to which she had left them.

"Well?" said the judge.

"Well?" Mrs. Kenton returned, in a note of exasperation, as if she were not going to let herself be forced to the initiative.

"I thought you thought--"

"I did think that. Now I don't know what to think. We have got to wait."

"I'm willing to wait for Ellen!"

"She seems," said Mrs. Kenton, "to have more sense than both the other children put together, and I was afraid--"

"She might easily have more sense than Boyne, or Lottie, either."

"Well, I don't know," Mrs. Kenton began. But she did not go on to resent the disparagement which she had invited. "What I was afraid of was her goodness. It was her goodness that got her into the trouble, to begin with. If she hadn't been so good, that fellow could never have fooled her as he did. She was too innocent."

The judge could not forbear the humorous view. "Perhaps she's getting wickeder, or not so innocent. At any rate, she doesn't seem to have been take in by Trannel."

"He didn't pay any attention to her. He was all taken up with Lottie."

"Well, that was lucky. Sarah," said the judge, "do you think he is like Bittridge?"

"He's made me think of him all the time."

"It's curious," the judge mused. "I have always noticed how our faults repeat themselves, but I didn't suppose our fates would always take the same shape, or something like it." Mrs. Kenton stared at him. "When this other one first made up to us on the boat my heart went down. I thought of Bittridge so."

"Mr. Breckon?"

"Yes, the same lightness; the same sort of trifling--Didn't you notice it?"

"No--yes, I noticed it. But I wasn't afraid for an instant. I saw that he was good."

"Oh!"

"What I'm afraid of now is that Ellen doesn't care anything about him."

"He isn't wicked enough?"

"I don't say that. But it would be too much happiness to expect in one short life."

The judge could not deny the reasonableness of her position. He could only oppose it. "Well, I don't think we've had any more than our share of happiness lately."

No one except Boyne could have made Trannel's behavior a cause of quarrel, but the other Kentons made it a cause of coldness which was quite as effective. In Lottie this took the form of something so active, so positive, that it was something more than a mere absence of warmth. Before she came down to breakfast the next morning she studied a stare in her mirror, and practised it upon Trannel so successfully when he came up to speak to her that it must have made him doubt whether he had ever had her acquaintance. In his doubt he ventured to address her, and then Lottie turned her back upon him in a manner that was perfectly convincing. He attempted a smiling ease with Mrs. Kenton and the judge, but they shared neither his smile nor his ease, and his jocose questions about the end of yesterday's adventures, which he had not been privy to, did not seem to appeal to the American sense of humor in them. Ellen was not with them, nor Boyne, but Trannel was not asked to take either of the vacant places at the table, even when Breckon took one of them, after a decent exchange of civilities with him. He could only saunter away and leave Mrs. Kenton to a little pang.

"Tchk!" she made. "I'm sorry for him!"

"So am I," said the judge. "But he will get over it--only too soon, I'm afraid. I don't believe he's very sorry for himself."

They had not advised with Breckon, and he did not feel authorized to make any comment. He seemed preoccupied, to Mrs. Kenton's eye, when she

turned it upon him from Trannel's discomfited back, lessening in the perspective, and he answered vaguely to her overture about his night's rest. Lottie never made any conversation with Breckon, and she now left him to himself, with some remnants of the disapproval which she found on her hands after crushing Trannel. It could not be said that Breckon was aware of her disapproval, and the judge had no apparent consciousness of it. He and Breckon tried to make something of each other, but failed, and it all seemed a very defeating sequel to Mrs. Kenton after the triumphal glow of the evening before. When Lottie rose, she went with her, alleging her wish to see if Boyne had eaten his breakfast. She confessed, to Breckon's kind inquiry, that Boyne did not seem very well, and that she had made him take his breakfast in his room, and she did not think it necessary to own, even to so friendly a witness as Mr. Breckon, that Boyne was ashamed to come down, and dreaded meeting Trannel so much that she was giving him time to recover his self-respect and courage.

As soon as she and Lottie were gone Breckon began, rather more formidably than he liked, but helplessly so: "Judge Kenton, I should be glad of a few moments with you on--on an important--on a matter that is important to me."

"Well," said the judge, cautiously. Whatever was coming, he wished to guard himself from the mistake that he had once so nearly fallen into, and that still made him catch his breath to think of. "How can I be of use to you?"

"I don't know that you can be of any use--I don't know that I ought to speak to you. But I thought you might perhaps save me from--save me taking a false step."

He looked at Kenton as if he would understand, and Kenton supposed that he did. He said, "My daughter once mentioned your wish to talk with me."

"Your daughter?" Breckon stared at him in stupefaction.

"Yes; Ellen. She said you wished to consult me about going back to your charge in New York, when we were on the ship together. But I don't know that I'm very competent to give advice in such--"

"Oh!" Breckon exclaimed, in a tone of immense relief, which did not continue itself in what he went on to say. "That! I've quite made up my mind to go back." He stopped, and then he burst out, "I want to speak with you about her." The judge sat steady, still resolute not to give himself away, and the young man scarcely recovered from what had been a desperate plunge in adding: "I know that it's usual to speak with her--with the lady herself first, but--I don't know! The circumstances are peculiar. You only know about me what you've seen of me, and I would rather make my mistakes in the order that seems right to me, although it isn't just the American way."

He smiled rather piteously, and the judge said, rather encouragingly, "I don't quite know whether I follow you."

Breckon blushed, and sought help in what remained of his coffee. "The way isn't easy for me. But it's this: I ask your leave to ask Miss Ellen to marry me." The worst was over now, and looked as if it were a relief. "She is the most beautiful person in the world to me, and the best; but as you know so little of me, I thought it right to get your leave--to tell you--to--to--That is all." He fell back in his chair and looked at Kenton.

"It is unusual," the judge began.

"Yes, Yes; I know that. And for that reason I speak first to you. I'll be ruled by you implicitly."

"I don't mean that," Kenton said. "I would have expected that you would speak to her first. But I get your point of view, and I must say I think you're right. I think you are behaving--honorably. I wish that every one was like you. But I can't say anything now. I must talk with her mother. My daughter's life has not been happy. I can't tell you. But as far as I am concerned, and I think Mrs. Kenton, too, I would be glad --We like you Mr. Breckon. We think you are a good man.

"Oh, thank you. I'm not so sure--"

"We'd risk it. But that isn't all. Will you excuse me if I don't say anything more just yet--and if I leave you?"

"Why, certainly." The judge had risen and pushed back his chair, and Breckon did the same. "And I shall--hear from you?"

"Why, certainly," said the judge in his turn.

"It isn't possible that you put him off!" his wife reproached him, when he told what had passed between him and Breckon. "Oh, you couldn't have let him think that we didn't want him for her! Surely you didn't!"

"Will you get it into your head," he flamed back, "that he hasn't spoken to Ellen yet, and I couldn't accept him till she had?"

"Oh yes. I forgot that." Mrs. Kenton struggled with the fact, in the difficulty of realizing so strange an order of procedure. "I suppose it's his being educated abroad that way. But, do go back to him, Rufus, and tell him that of course--"

"I will do nothing of the kind, Sarah! What are you thinking of?"

"Oh, I don't know what I'm thinking of! I must see Ellen, I suppose. I'll go to her now. Oh, dear, if she doesn't--if she lets such a chance slip through her fingers--But she's quite likely to, she's so obstinate! I wonder what she'll want us to do."

She fled to her daughter's room and found Boyne there, sitting beside his sister's bed, giving her a detailed account of his adventure of the day before, up to the moment Mr. Breckon met him, in charge of the

detectives. Up to that moment, it appeared to Boyne, as nearly as he could recollect, that he had not broken down, but had behaved himself with a dignity which was now beginning to clothe his whole experience. In the retrospect, a quiet heroism characterized his conduct, and at the moment his mother entered the room he was questioning Ellen as to her impressions of his bearing when she first saw him in the grasp of the detectives.

His mother took him by the arm, and said, "I want to speak with Ellen, Boyne," and put him out of the door.

Then she came back and sat down in his chair. "Ellen. Mr. Breckon has been speaking to your father. Do you know what about?"

"About his going back to New York?" the girl suggested.

Her mother kept her patience with difficulty. "No, not about that. About you! He's asked your father--I can't understand yet why he did it, only he's so delicate and honorable, and goodness known we appreciate it--whether he can tell you that--that--" It was not possible for such a mother as Mrs. Kenton to say "He loves you"; it would have sounded as she would have said, too sickish, and she compromised on: "He likes you, and wants to ask you whether you will marry him. And, Ellen," she continued, in the ample silence which followed, "if you don't say you will, I will have nothing more to do With such a simpleton. I have always felt that you behaved very foolishly about Mr. Bittridge, but I hoped that when you grew older you would see it as we did, and--and behave differently. And now, if, after all we've been through with you, you are going to say that you won't have Mr. Breckon--"

Mrs. Kenton stopped for want of a figure that would convey all the disaster that would fall upon Ellen in such an event, and she was given further pause when the girl gently answered, "I'm not going to say that, mamma."

"Then what in the world are you going to say?" Mrs. Kenton demanded.

Ellen had turned her face away on the pillow, and now she answered, quietly, "When Mr. Breckon asks me I will tell him."

"Well, you had better!" her mother threatened in return, and she did not realize the falsity of her position till she reported Ellen's words to the judge.

Well, Sarah, I think she had you there," he said, and Mrs. Kenton then said that she did not care, if the child was only going to behave sensibly at last, and she did believe she was.

"Then it's all right" said the judge, and he took up the Tuskingum Intelligencer, lying till then unread in the excitements which had followed its arrival the day before, and began to read it.

Mrs. Kenton sat dreamily watching him, with her hands fallen in her lap.

She suddenly started up, with the cry, "Good gracious! What are we all thinking of?"

Kenton stared at her over the top of his paper. "How, thinking of?"

"Why Mr. Breckon! He must be crazy to know what we've decided, poor fellow!"

"Oh," said the judge, folding the *Intelligencer* on his knee. "I had forgotten. Somehow, I thought it was all settled."

Mrs. Kenton took his paper from him, and finished folding it. "It hasn't begun to be settled. You must go and let him know."

"Won't he look me up?" the judge suggested.

"You must look him up. Go at once dear! Think how anxious he must be!"

Kenton was not sure that Breckon looked very anxious when he found him on the brick promenade before the Kurhaus, apparently absorbed in noting the convulsions of a large, round German lady in the water, who must have supposed herself to be bathing. But perhaps the young man did not see her; the smile on his face was too vague for such an interest when he turned at Kenton's approaching steps.

The judge hesitated for an instant, in which the smile left Breckon's face. "I believe that's all right, Mr. Breckon," he said. "You'll find Mrs. Kenton in our parlor," and then the two men parted, with an "Oh, thank you!" from Breckon, who walked back towards the hotel, and left Kenton to ponder upon the German lady; as soon as he realized that she was not a barrel, the judge continued his walk along the promenade, feeling rather ashamed.

Mrs. Kenton had gone to Ellen's room again when she had got the judge off upon his mission. She rather flung in upon her. "Oh, you are up!" she apologized to Ellen's back. The girl's face was towards the glass, and she was tilting her head to get the effect of the hat on it, which she now took off.

"I suppose poppa's gone to tell him," she said, sitting tremulously down.

"Didn't you want him to?" her mother asked, stricken a little at sight of her agitation.

"Yes, I wanted him to, but that doesn't make it any easier. It makes it harder. Momma!"

"Well, Ellen?"

"You know you've got to tell him, first."

"Tell him?" Mrs. Kenton repeated, but she knew what Ellen meant.

"About--Mr. Bittridge. All about it. Every single thing. About his kissing me that night."

At the last demand Mrs. Kenton was visibly shaken in her invisible assent to the girl's wish. "Don't you think, Ellen, that you had better tell him that--some time?"

"No, now. And you must tell him. You let me go to the theatre with him." The faintest shadow of resentment clouded the girl's face, but still Mrs. Kenton, thought she knew her own guilt, could not yield.

"Why, Ellen," she pleaded, not without a reproachful sense of vulgarity in such a plea, "don't you suppose HE ever--kissed any one?"

"That doesn't concern me, mamma," said Ellen, without a trace of consciousness that she was saying anything uncommon. "If you won't tell him, then that ends it. I won't see him."

"Oh, well!" her mother sighed. "I will try to tell him. But I'd rather be whipped. I know he'll laugh at me."

"He won't laugh at you," said the girl, confidently, almost comfortingly. "I want him to know everything before I meet him. I don't want to have a single thing on my mind. I don't want to think of myself!"

Mrs. Kenton understood the woman--soul that spoke in these words. "Well," she said, with a deep, long breath, "be ready, then."

But she felt the burden which had been put upon her to be so much more than she could bear that when she found her husband in their parlor she instantly resolved to cast it upon him. He stood at the window with his hat on.

"Has Breckon been here yet?" he asked.

"Have you seen him yet?" she returned.

"Yes, and I thought he was coming right here. But perhaps he stopped to screw his courage up. He only knew how little it needed with us!"

"Well, now, it's we who've got to have the courage. Or you have. Do you know what Ellen wants to have done?" Mrs. Kenton put it in these impersonal terms, and as a preliminary to shirking her share of the burden.

"She doesn't want to have him refused?"

"She wants to have him told all about Bittridge."

After a momentary revolt the judge said, "Well, that's right. It's like Ellen."

"There's something else that's more like her," said Mrs. Kenton,

indignantly. "She wants him to be told about what Bittridge did that night--about him kissing her."

The judge looked disgusted with his wife for the word; then he looked aghast. "About--"

"Yes, and she won't have a word to say to him till he is told, and unless he is told she will refuse him."

"Did she say that?"

"No, but I know she will."

"If she didn't say she would, I think we may take the chances that she won't."

"No, we mustn't take any such chances. You must tell him."

"I? No, I couldn't manage it. I have no tact, and it would sound so confoundedly queer, coming from one man to another. It would be--indelicate. It's something that nobody but a woman--Why doesn't she tell him herself?"

"She won't. She considers it our part, and something we ought to do before he commits himself."

"Very well, then, Sarah, you must tell him. You can manage it so it won't be so--queer."

"That is just what I supposed you would say, Mr. Kenton, but I must say I didn't expect it of you. I think it's cowardly."

"Look out, Sarah! I don't like that word."

"Oh, I suppose you're brave enough when it comes to any kind of danger. But when it comes to taking the brunt of anything unpleasant--"

"It isn't unpleasant--it's queer."

"Why do you keep saying that over and over? There's nothing queer about it. It's Ellenish but isn't it right?"

"It's right, yes, I suppose. But it's squeamish."

"I see nothing squeamish about it. But I know you're determined to leave it to me, and so I shall do it. I don't believe Mr. Breckon will think it's queer or squeamish."

"I've no doubt he'll take it in the right way; you'll know how to--"

Kenton looked into his hat, which he had taken off and then put it on again. His tone and his manner were sufficiently sneaking, and he could not make them otherwise. It was for this reason, no doubt, that he would not prolong the interview.

"Oh yes, go!" said Mrs. Kenton, as he found himself with his hand on the door. "Leave it all to me, do!" and he was aware of skulking out of the room. By the time that it would have taken him so long as to walk to the top of the grand stairway he was back again. "He's coming!" he said, breathlessly. "I saw him at the bottom of the stairs. Go into your room and wash your eyes. I'LL tell him."

"No, no, Rufus! Let me! It will be much better. You'll be sure to bungle it."

"We must risk that. You were quite right, Sarah. It would have been cowardly in me to let you do it."

"Rufus! You know I didn't mean it! Surely you're not resenting that?"

"No. I'm glad you made me see it. You're all right, Sarah, and you'll find that it will all come out all right. You needn't be afraid I'll bungle it. I shall use discretion. Go--"

"I shall not stir a step from this parlor! You've got back all your spirit, dear," said the old wife, with young pride in her husband.

"But I must say that Ellen is putting more upon you than she has any right to. I think she might tell him herself."

"No, it's our business--my business. We allowed her to get in for it. She's quite right about it. We must not let him commit himself to her till he knows the thing that most puts her to shame. It isn't enough for us to say that it was really no shame. She feels that it casts a sort of stain--you know what I mean, Sarah, and I believe I can make this young man know. If I can't, so much the worse for him. He shall never see Ellen again."

"Oh, Rufus!"

"Do you think he would be worthy of her if he couldn't?"

"I think Ellen is perfectly ridiculous."

"Then that shows that I am right in deciding not to leave this thing to you. I feel as she does about it, and I intend that he shall."

"Do you intend to let her run the chance of losing him?"

"That is what I intend to do."

"Well, then, I'll tell you what: I am going to stay right here. We will both see him; it's right for us to do it." But at a rap on the parlor door Mrs. Kenton flew to that of her own room, which she closed upon her with a sort of Parthian whimper, "Oh, do be careful, Rufus!"

Whether Kenton was careful or not could never be known, from either Kenton himself or from Breckon. The judge did tell him everything, and

the young man received the most damning details of Ellen's history with a radiant absence which testified that they fell upon a surface sense of Kenton, and did not penetrate to the all-pervading sense of Ellen herself below. At the end Kenton was afraid he had not understood.

"You understand," he said, "that she could not consent to see you before you knew just how weak she thought she had been." The judge stiffened to defiance in making this humiliation. "I don't consider, myself, that she was weak at all."

"Of course not!" Breckon beamed back at him.

"I consider that throughout she acted with the greatest--greatest--And that in that affair, when he behaved with that--that outrageous impudence, it was because she had misled the scoundrel by her kindness, her forbearance, her wish not to do him the least shadow of injustice, but to give him every chance of proving himself worthy of her tolerance; and--"

The judge choked, and Breckon eagerly asked, "And shall I--may I see her now?"

"Why--yes," the judge faltered. "If you're sure--"

"What about?" Breckon demanded.

"I don't know whether she will believe that I have told you."

"I will try to convince her. Where shall I see her?"

"I will go and tell her you are here. I will bring her--"

Kenton passed into the adjoining room, where his wife laid hold of him, almost violently. "You did it beautifully, Rufus," she huskily whispered, "and I was so afraid you would spoil everything. Oh, how manly you were, and how perfect he was! But now it's my turn, and I will go and bring Ellen--You will let me, won't you?"

"You may do anything you please, Sarah. I don't want to have any more of this," said the judge from the chair he had dropped into.

"Well, then, I will bring her at once," said Mrs. Kenton, staying only in her gladness to kiss him on his gray head; he received her embrace with a superficial sultriness which did not deceive her.

Ellen came back without her mother, and as soon as she entered the room, and Breckon realized that she had come alone, he ran towards her as if to take her in his arms. But she put up her hand with extended fingers, and held him lightly off.

"Did poppa tell you?" she asked, with a certain defiance. She held her head up fiercely, and spoke steadily, but he could see the pulse beating in her pretty neck.

"Yes, he told me--"

"And--well?"

"Oh, I love you, Ellen--"

"That isn't it. Did you care?"

Breckon had an inspiration, an inspiration from the truth that dwelt at the bottom of his soul and had never yet failed to save him. He let his arms fall and answered, desperately: "Yes, I did. I wished it hadn't happened." He saw the pulse in her neck cease to beat, and he swiftly added, "But I know that it happened just because you were yourself, and were so--"

"If you had said you didn't care," she breathlessly whispered, "I would never have spoken to you. He felt a conditional tremor creeping into the fingers which had been so rigid against his breast. "I don't see how I lived through it! Do you think you can?"

"I think so," he returned, with a faint, far suggestion of levity that brought from her an imperative, imploring--

"Don't!"

Then he added, solemnly, "It had no more to do with you, Ellen, than an offence from some hateful animal--"

"Oh, how good you are!" The fingers folded themselves, and her arms weakened so that there was nothing to keep him from drawing her to him. "What--what are you doing?" she asked, with her face smothered against his.

"Oh, Ell-en, Ellen, Ellen! Oh, my love, my dearest, my best!"

"But I have been such a fool!" she protested, imagining that she was going to push him from her, but losing herself in him more and more.

"Yes, yes, darling! I know it. That's why I love you so!"

XXVI.

"There is just one thing," said the judge, as he wound up his watch that night, "that makes me a little uneasy still."

Mrs. Kenton, already in her bed turned her face upon him with a despairing "Tchk! Dear! What is it? I thought we had talked over everything,"

"We haven't got Lottie's consent yet."

"Well, I think I see myself asking Lottie!" Mrs. Kenton began, before she realized her husband's irony. She added, "How could you give me such a start?"

"Well, Lottie has bossed us so long that I couldn't help mentioning it," said the judge.

It was a lame excuse, and in its most potential implication his suggestion proved without reason. If Lottie never gave her explicit approval to Ellen's engagement, she never openly opposed it. She treated it, rather, with something like silent contempt, as a childish weakness on Ellen's part which was beneath her serious consideration. Towards Breckon, her behavior hardly changed in the severity which she had assumed from the moment she first ceased to have any use for him.

"I suppose I will have to kiss him," she said, gloomily, when her mother told her that he was to be her brother, and she performed the rite with as much coldness as was ever put in that form of affectionate welcome.

It is doubtful if Breckon perfectly realized its coldness; he never knew how much he enraged her by acting as if she were a little girl, and saying lightly, almost trivially, "I'm so glad you're going to be a sister to me."

With Ellen, Lottie now considered herself quits, and from the first hour of Ellen's happiness she threw off all the care with all the apparent kindness which she had used towards her when she was a morbid invalid. Here again, if Lottie had minded such a thing, she might have been as much vexed by Ellen's attitude as by Breckon's. Ellen never once noticed the withdrawal of her anxious oversight, or seemed in the least to miss it. As much as her meek nature would allow, she arrogated to herself the privileges and prerogatives of an elder sister, and if it had been possible to make Lottie ever feel like a chit, there were moments when Ellen's behavior would have made her feel like a chit. It was not till after their return to Tuskingum that Lottie took her true place in relation to the affair, and in the preparations for the wedding, which she appointed to be in the First Universalist Church, overruling both her mother's and sister's preferences for a home wedding, that Lottie rose in due authority. Mrs. Kenton had not ceased to feel quelled whenever her younger daughter called her mother instead of momma, and Ellen seemed not really to care. She submitted the matter to Breckon, who said, "Oh yes, if Lottie wishes," and he laughed when Ellen confessed, "Well, I said we would."

With the lifting of his great anxiety, he had got back to that lightness which was most like him, and he could not always conceal from Lottie herself that he regarded her as a joke. She did not mind it, she said, from such a mere sop as, in the vast content of his love, he was.

This was some months after Lottie had got at Scheveningen from Mr. Plumpton that letter which decided her that she had no use for him. There came the same day, and by the same post with it, a letter from one of her young men in Tuskingum, who had faithfully written to her all the

winter before, and had not intermitted his letters after she went abroad. To Kenton he had always seemed too wise if not too good for Lottie, but Mrs. Kenton, who had her own doubts of Lottie, would not allow this when it came to the question, and said, woundedly, that she did not see why Lottie was not fully his equal in every way.

"Well," the judge suggested, "she isn't the first young lawyer at the Tuskingum bar."

"Well, I wouldn't wish her to be," said Mrs. Kenton, who did not often make jokes.

"Well, I don't know that I would," her husband assented, and he added, "Pretty good, Sarah."

"Lottie," her mother summed up, "is practical, and she is very neat. She won't let Mr. Elroy go around looking so slovenly. I hope she will make him have his hair cut, and not look as if it were bitten off. And I don't believe he's had his boots blacked since--"

"He was born," the judge proposed, and she assented.

"Yes. She is very saving, and he is wasteful. It will be a very good match. You can let them build on the other corner of the lot, if Ellen is going to be in New York. I would miss Lottie more than Ellen about the housekeeping, though the dear knows I will miss them both badly enough."

"Well, you can break off their engagements," said the judge.

As yet, and until Ellen was off her hands, Lottie would not allow Mr. Elroy to consider himself engaged to her. His conditional devotion did not debar him from a lover's rights, and, until Breckon came on from New York to be married, there was much more courtship of Lottie than of Ellen in the house. But Lottie saved herself in the form if not the fact, and as far as verbal terms were concerned, she was justified by them in declaring that she would not have another sop hanging round.

It was Boyne, and Boyne alone, who had any misgivings in regard to Ellen's engagement, and these were of a nature so recondite that when he came to impart them to his mother, before they left Scheveningen, and while there was yet time for that conclusion which his father suggested to Mrs. Kenton too late, Boyne had an almost hopeless difficulty in stating them. His approaches, even, were so mystical that his mother was forced to bring him to book sharply.

"Boyne, if you don't tell me right off just what you mean, I don't know what I will do to you! What are you driving at, for pity's sake? Are you saying that she oughtn't to be engaged to Mr. Breckon?"

"No, I'm not saying that, mamma," said Boyne, in a distress that caused his mother to take a reef in her impatience.

"Well, what are you saying, then?"

"Why, you know how Ellen is, mamma. You know how conscientious and--and --sensitive. Or, I don't mean sensitive, exactly."

"Well?"

"Well, I don't think she ought to be engaged to Mr. Breckon out of--gratitude."

"Gratitude?"

"Yes. I just know that she thinks--or it would be just like her--that he saved me that day. But he only met me about a second before we came to her and poppa, and the officers were taking me right along towards them." Mrs. Kenton held herself stormily in, and he continued: "I know that he translated for us before the magistrate, but the magistrate could speak a little English, and when he saw poppa he saw that it was all right, anyway. I don't want to say anything against Mr. Breckon, and I think he behaved as well any one could; but if Ellen is going to marry him out of gratitude for saving me--"

Mrs. Kenton could hold in no longer. "And is this what you've been bothering the life half out of me for, for the last hour?"

"Well, I thought you ought to look at it in that light, mamma."

"Well, Boyne," said his mother, "sometimes I think you're almost a fool!" and she turned her back upon her son and left him.

Boyne's place in the Kenton family, for which he continued to have the highest regard, became a little less difficult, a little less incompatible with his self-respect as time went on. His spirit, which had lagged a little after his body in stature, began, as his father said, to catch up. He no longer nourished it so exclusively upon heroic romance as he had during the past year, and after his return to Tuskingum he went into his brother Richard's office, and manifested a certain curiosity in the study of the law. He read Blackstone, and could give a fair account of his impressions of English law to his father. He had quite outlived the period of entomological research, and he presented his collections of insects (somewhat moth-eaten) to his nephew, on whom he also bestowed his postage-stamp album; Mary Kenton accepted them in trust, the nephew being of yet too tender years for their care. In the preoccupations of his immediate family with Ellen's engagement, Boyne became rather close friends with his sister-in-law, and there were times when he was tempted to submit to her judgment the question whether the young Queen of Holland did not really beckon to him that day. But pending the hour when he foresaw that Lottie should come out with the whole story, in some instant of excitement, Boyne had not quite the heart to speak of his experience. It assumed more and more respectability with him, and lost that squalor which had once put him to shame while it was yet new. He thought that Mary might be reasoned into regarding him as the hero of an adventure, but he is still hesitating whether to confide

in her. In the meantime she knows all about it. Mary and Richard both approved of Ellen's choice, though they are somewhat puzzled to make out just what Mr. Breckon's religion is, and what his relations to his charge in New York may be. These do not seem to them quite pastoral, and he himself shares their uncertainty. But since his flock does not include Mrs. Rasmith and her daughter, he is content to let the question remain in abeyance. The Rasmiths are settled in Rome with an apparent permanency which they have not known elsewhere for a long time, and they have both joined in the friendliest kind of letter on his marriage to their former pastor, if that was what Breckon was. They have professed to know from the first that he was in love with Ellen, and that he is in love with her now is the strong present belief of his flock, if they are a flock, and if they may be said to have anything so positive as a belief in regard to anything.

Judge Kenton has given the Elroys the other corner of the lot, and has supplied them the means of building on it. Mary and Lottie run diagonally into the home-house every day, and nothing keeps either from coming into authority over the old people except the fear of each other in which they stand. The Kentons no longer make any summer journeys, but in the winter they take Boyne and go to see Ellen in New York. They do not stay so long as Mrs. Kenton would like. As soon as they have fairly seen the Breckons, and have settled comfortably down in their pleasant house on West Seventy-fourth Street, she detects him in a secret habit of sighing, which she recognizes as the worst symptom of homesickness, and then she confides to Ellen that she supposes Mr. Kenton will make her go home with him before long. Ellen knows it is useless to interfere. She even encourages her father's longings, so far as indulging his clandestine visits to the seedsman's, and she goes with him to pick up second-hand books about Ohio in the War at the dealers', who remember the judge very flatteringly.

As February draws on towards March it becomes impossible to detain Kenton. His wife and son return with him to Tuskingum, where Lottie has seen to the kindling of a good fire in the furnace against their arrival, and has nearly come to blows with Mary about provisioning them for the first dinner. Then Mrs. Kenton owns, with a comfort which she will not let her husband see, that there is no place like home, and they take up their life in the place where they have been so happy and so unhappy. He reads to her a good deal at night, and they play a game of checkers usually before they go to bed; she still cheats without scruple, for, as she justly says, he knows very well that she cannot bear to be beaten.

The colonel, as he is still invariably known to his veterans, works pretty faithfully at the regimental autobiography, and drives round the country, picking up material among them, in a buggy plastered with mud. He has imagined, since his last visit to Breckon, who dictates his sermons, if they are sermons, taking a stenographer with him, and the young lady, who is in deadly terror of the colonel's driving, is of the greatest use to him, in the case of veterans who will not or cannot give down (as they say in their dairy-country parlance), and has already rescued many reminiscences from perishing in their faltering memories. She writes them out in the judge's library when the colonel gets home,

and his wife sometimes surprises Mr. Kenton correcting them there at night after she supposes he has gone to bed.

Since it has all turned out for the best concerning Bittridge, she no longer has those pangs of self-reproach for Richard's treatment of him which she suffered while afraid that if the fact came to Ellen's knowledge it might make her refuse Breckon. She does not find her daughter's behavior in the matter so anomalous as it appears to the judge.

He is willing to account for it on the ground of that inconsistency which he has observed in all human behavior, but Mrs. Kenton is not inclined to admit that it is so very inconsistent. She contends that Ellen had simply lived through that hateful episode of her psychological history, as she was sure to do sooner or later and as she was destined to do as soon as some other person arrived to take her fancy.

If this is the crude, common-sense view of the matter, Ellen herself is able to offer no finer explanation, which shall at the same time be more thorough. She and her husband have not failed to talk the affair over, with that fulness of treatment which young married people give their past when they have nothing to conceal from each other. She has attempted to solve the mystery by blaming herself for a certain essential levity of nature which, under all her appearance of gravity, sympathized with levity in others, and, for what she knows to the contrary, with something ignoble and unworthy in them. Breckon, of course, does not admit this, but he has suggested that she was first attracted to him by a certain unseriousness which reminded her of Bittridge, in enabling him to take her seriousness lightly. This is the logical inference which he makes from her theory of herself, but she insists that it does not follow; and she contends that she was moved to love him by an instant sense of his goodness, which she never lost, and in which she was trying to equal herself with him by even the desperate measure of renouncing her happiness, if that should ever seem her duty, to his perfection. He says this is not very clear, though it is awfully gratifying, and he does not quite understand why Mrs. Bittridge's letter should have liberated Ellen from her fancied obligations to the past. Ellen can only say that it did so by making her so ashamed ever to have had anything to do with such people, and making her see how much she had tried her father and mother by her folly. This again Breckon contends is not clear, but he says we live in a universe of problems in which another, more or less, does not much matter. He is always expecting that some chance shall confront him with Bittridge, and that the man's presence will explain everything; for, like so many Ohio people who leave their native State, the Bittridges have come East instead of going West, in quitting the neighborhood of Tuskingum. He is settled with his idolized mother in New York, where he is obscurely attached to one of the newspapers. That he has as yet failed to rise from the ranks in the great army of assignment men may be because moral quality tells everywhere, and to be a clever blackguard is not so well as to be simply clever. If ever Breckon has met his alter ego, as he amuses himself in calling him, he has not known it, though Bittridge may have been wiser in the case of a man of Breckon's publicity, not to call it distinction. There was a time, immediately

after the Breckons heard from Tuskingum that the Bittridges were in New York, when Ellen's husband consulted her as to what might be his duty towards her late suitor in the event which has not taken place, and when he suggested, not too seriously, that Richard's course might be the solution. To his suggestion Ellen answered: "Oh no, dear! That was wrong," and this remains also Richard's opinion.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

A nature which all modesty and deference seemed left out of
All but took the adieus out of Richard's hands
Americans spoil their women! "Well, their women are worth it"
An inscrutable frown goes far in such exigencies
Another problem, more or less, does not much matter
Certain comfort in their mutual discouragement
Conscience to own the fact and the kindness to deny it
Fatuity of a man in such things
Fatuity of age regarding all the things of the past
Fertile in difficulties and so importunate for their solution
Girl is never so much in danger of having her heart broken
Good comrades, as elderly married people are apt to be
He was too little used to deference from ladies
Impart their sufferings as well as their pleasures to each other
Know more of their clothes than the people they buy them of
Learning to ask her no questions about herself
Left him alone to the first ecstasy of his homesickness
Living in the present
Melting into pity against all sense of duty
Misgiving of a blessed immortality
More faith in her wisdom than she had herself
More helpful with trouble to be ignorant of its cause
Not find more harm in them, if you did not bring it with you
Not what their mothers but what their environments made them
Pain of the preparations for a day's pleasure
Part of her pride not to ask
Performance of their common duty must fall wholly to her
Petted person in her youth, perhaps, and now she petted herself
Place where they have been so happy and so unhappy
Provoked that her mother would not provoke her further
Question whether the fellow was more a fool or a fraud
Relationship when one gives a reproof and the other accepts it
Relieved from a discoverer's duties to Europe
Renunciation of his judgment in deference to the good woman
Waiting with patience for the term of his exile
We have to make-believe before we can believe anything
When he got so far beyond his depth
Why, at his age, should he be going into exile
Wife was glad of the release from housekeeping
Worst whim was having no wish that could be ascertained

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by William Dean Howells

RAGGED LADY.

By William Dean Howells

Part 1.

I.

It was their first summer at Middlemount and the Landers did not know the roads. When they came to a place where they had a choice of two, she said that now he must get out of the carry-all and ask at the house standing a little back in the edge of the pine woods, which road they ought to take for South Middlemount. She alleged many cases in which they had met trouble through his perverse reluctance to find out where they were before he pushed rashly forward in their drives. Whilst she urged the facts she reached forward from the back seat where she sat, and held her hand upon the reins to prevent his starting the horse, which was impartially cropping first the sweet fern on one side and then the blueberry bushes on the other side of the narrow wheel-track. She declared at last that if he would not get out and ask she would do it herself, and at this the dry little man jerked the reins in spite of her, and the horse suddenly pulled the carry-all to the right, and seemed about to upset it.

"Oh, what are you doing, Albe't? "Mrs. Lander lamented, falling helpless against the back of her seat. "Haven't I always told you to speak to the hoss fust?"

"He wouldn't have minded my speakin'," said her husband. "I'm goin' to take you up to the dooa so that you can ask for youaself without gettin' out."

This was so well, in view of Mrs. Lander's age and bulk, and the hardship she must have undergone, if she had tried to carry out her threat, that she was obliged to take it in some sort as a favor; and while the vehicle rose and sank over the surface left rough, after building, in front of the house, like a vessel on a chopping sea, she was silent for several seconds.

The house was still in a raw state of unfinish, though it seemed to have been lived in for a year at least. The earth had been banked up at the

foundations for warmth in winter, and the sheathing of the walls had been splotched with irregular spaces of weather boarding; there was a good roof over all, but the window-casings had been merely set in their places and the trim left for a future impulse of the builder. A block of wood suggested the intention of steps at the front door, which stood hospitably open, but remained unresponsive for some time after the Landers made their appeal to the house at large by anxious noises in their throats, and by talking loud with each other, and then talking low. They wondered whether there were anybody in the house; and decided that there must be, for there was smoke coming out of the stove pipe piercing the roof of the wing at the rear.

Mr. Lander brought himself under censure by venturing, without his wife's authority, to lean forward and tap on the door-frame with the butt of his whip. At the sound, a shrill voice called instantly from the region of the stove pipe, "Clem! Clementina? Go to the front dooa! The'e's somebody knockin'." The sound of feet, soft and quick, made itself heard within, and in a few moments a slim maid, too large for a little girl, too childlike for a young girl, stood in the open doorway, looking down on the elderly people in the buggy, with a face as glad as a flower's. She had blue eyes, and a smiling mouth, a straight nose, and a pretty chin whose firm jut accented a certain wistfulness of her lips. She had hair of a dull, dark yellow, which sent out from its thick mass light prongs, or tendrils, curving inward again till they delicately touched it. Her tanned face was not very different in color from her hair, and neither were her bare feet, which showed well above her ankles in the calico skirt she wore. At sight of the elders in the buggy she involuntarily stooped a little to lengthen her skirt in effect, and at the same time she pulled it together sidewise, to close a tear in it, but she lost in her anxiety no ray of the joy which the mere presence of the strangers seemed to give her, and she kept smiling sunnily upon them while she waited for them to speak.

"Oh!" Mrs. Lander began with involuntary apology in her tone, "we just wished to know which of these roads went to South Middlemount. We've come from the hotel, and we wa'n't quite ce'tain."

The girl laughed as she said, "Both roads go to South Middlemount'm; they join together again just a little piece farther on."

The girl and the woman in their parlance replaced the letter 'r' by vowel sounds almost too obscure to be represented, except where it came last in a word before a word beginning with a vowel; there it was annexed to the vowel by a strong liaison, according to the custom universal in rural New England.

"Oh, do they?" said Mrs. Lander.

"Yes'm," answered the girl. "It's a kind of tu'nout in the wintatime; or I guess that's what made it in the beginning; sometimes folks take one hand side and sometimes the other, and that keeps them separate; but they're really the same road, 'm."

"Thank you," said Mrs. Lander, and she pushed her husband to make him say something, too, but he remained silently intent upon the child's prettiness, which her blue eyes seemed to illumine with a light of their own. She had got hold of the door, now, and was using it as if it was a piece of drapery, to hide not only the tear in her gown, but somehow both her bare feet. She leaned out beyond the edge of it; and then, at moments she vanished altogether behind it.

Since Mr. Lander would not speak, and made no sign of starting up his horse, Mrs. Lander added, "I presume you must be used to havin' people ask about the road, if it's so puzzlin'."

"O, yes'm," returned the girl, gladly. "Almost every day, in the summertime."

"You have got a pretty place for a home, he'e," said Mrs. Lander.

"Well, it will be when it's finished up." Without leaning forward inconveniently Mrs. Lander could see that the partitions of the house within were lathed, but not plastered, and the girl looked round as if to realize its condition and added, "It isn't quite finished inside."

"We wouldn't, have troubled you," said Mrs. Lander, "if we had seen anybody to inquire of."

"Yes'm," said the girl. "It a'n't any trouble."

"There are not many otha houses about, very nea', but I don't suppose you get lonesome; young folks are plenty of company for themselves, and if you've got any brothas and sistas--"

"Oh," said the girl, with a tender laugh, "I've got eva so many of them!"

There was a stir in the bushes about the carriage, and Mrs. Lander was aware for an instant of children's faces looking through the leaves at her and then flashing out of sight, with gay cries at being seen. A boy, older than the rest, came round in front of the horse and passed out of sight at the corner of the house.

Lander now leaned back and looked over his shoulder at his wife as if he might hopefully suppose she had come to the end of her questions, but she gave no sign of encouraging him to start on their way again.

"That your brotha, too?" she asked the girl.

"Yes'm. He's the oldest of the boys; he's next to me."

"I don't know," said Mrs. Lander thoughtfully, "as I noticed how many boys there were, or how many girls."

"I've got two sistas, and three brothas, 'm," said the girl, always smiling sweetly. She now emerged from the shelter of the door, and Mrs. Lander perceived that the slight movements of such parts of her person as

had been evident beyond its edge were the effects of some endeavor at greater presentableness. She had contrived to get about her an overskirt which covered the rent in her frock, and she had got a pair of shoes on her feet. Stockings were still wanting, but by a mutual concession of her shoe-tops and the border of her skirt, they were almost eliminated from the problem. This happened altogether when the girl sat down on the threshold, and got herself into such foreshortening that the eye of Mrs. Lander in looking down upon her could not detect their absence. Her little head then showed in the dark of the doorway like a painted head against its background.

"You haven't been livin' here a great while, by the looks," said Mrs. Lander. "It don't seem to be clea'ed off very much."

"We've got quite a ga'den-patch back of the house," replied the girl, "and we should have had moa, but fatha wasn't very well, this spring; he's eva so much better than when we fust came he'e."

"It has, the name of being a very healthy locality," said Mrs. Lander, somewhat discontentedly, "though I can't see as it's done me so very much good, yit. Both your payrints livin'?"

"Yes'm. Oh, yes, indeed!"

"And your mother, is she real rugged? She need to be, with such a flock of little ones!"

"Yes, motha's always well. Fatha was just run down, the doctas said, and ought to keep more in the open aia. That's what he's done since he came he'e. He helped a great deal on the house and he planned it all out himself."

"Is he a ca'penta?" asked Mrs. Lander.

"No'm; but he's--I don't know how to express it--he likes to do every kind of thing."

"But he's got some business, ha'n't he?" A shadow of severity crept over Mrs. Lander's tone, in provisional reprehension of possible shiftlessness.

"Yes'm. He was a machinist at the Mills; that's what the doctas thought didn't agree with him. He bought a piece of land he'e, so as to be in the pine woods, and then we built this house."

"When did you say you came?"

"Two yea's ago, this summa."

"Well! What did you do befoa you built this house?"

"We camped the first summa."

"You camped? In a tent?"

"Well, it was pahtly a tent, and pahtly bank."

"I should have thought you would have died."

The girl laughed. "Oh, no, we all kept fast-rate. We slept in the tents we had two--and we cooked in the shanty." She smiled at the notion in adding, "At fast the neighbas thought we we'e Gipsies; and the summa folks thought we were Indians, and wanted to get baskets of us."

Mrs. Lander did not know what to think, and she asked, "But didn't it almost perish you, stayin' through the winter in an unfinished house?"

"Well, it was pretty cold. But it was so dry, the aia was, and the woods kept the wind off nicely."

The same shrill voice in the region of the stovepipe which had sent the girl to the Landers now called her from them. "Clem! Come here a minute!"

The girl said to Mrs. Lander, politely, "You'll have to excuse me, now'm. I've got to go to motha."

"So do!" said Mrs. Lander, and she was so taken by the girl's art and grace in getting to her feet and fading into the background of the hallway without visibly casting any detail of her raiment, that she was not aware of her husband's starting up the horse in time to stop him. They were fairly under way again, when she lamented, "What you doin', Albe't? Whe'e you goin'?"

"I'm goin' to South Middlemount. Didn't you want to?"

"Well, of all the men! Drivin' right off without waitin' to say thankye to the child, or take leave, or anything!"

"Seemed to me as if SHE took leave."

"But she was comin' back! And I wanted to ask--"

"I guess you asked enough for one while. Ask the rest to-morra."

Mrs. Lander was a woman who could often be thrown aside from an immediate purpose, by the suggestion of some remoter end, which had already, perhaps, intimated itself to her. She said, "That's true," but by the time her husband had driven down one of the roads beyond the woods into open country, she was a quiver of intolerable curiosity. "Well, all I've got to say is that I sha'n't rest till I know all about 'em."

"Find out when we get back to the hotel, I guess," said her husband.

"No, I can't wait till I get back to the hotel. I want to know now. I want you should stop at the very fust house we come to. Dea'! The'e

don't seem to be any houses, any moa." She peered out around the side of the carry-all and scrutinized the landscape. "Hold on! No, yes it is, too! Whoa! Whoa! The'e's a man in that hay-field, now!"

She laid hold of the reins and pulled the horse to a stand. Mr. Lander looked round over his shoulder at her. "Hadn't you betta wait till you get within half a mile of the man?"

"Well, I want you should stop when you do git to him. Will you? I want to speak to him, and ask him all about those folks."

"I didn't suppose you'd let me have much of a chance," said her husband. When he came within easy hail of the man in the hay-field, he pulled up beside the meadow-wall, where the horse began to nibble the blackberry vines that overran it.

Mrs. Lander beckoned and called to the man, who had stopped pitching hay and now stood leaning on the handle of his fork. At the signs and sounds she made, he came actively forward to the road, bringing his fork with him. When he arrived within easy conversational distance, he planted the tines in the ground and braced himself at an opposite incline from the long smooth handle, and waited for Mrs. Lander to begin.

"Will you please tell us who those folks ah', livin' back there in the edge of the woods, in that new unfinished house?"

The man released his fork with one hand to stoop for a head of timothy that had escaped the scythe, and he put the stem of it between his teeth, where it moved up and down, and whipped fantastically about as he talked, before he answered, "You mean the Claxons?"

"I don't know what thei' name is." Mrs. Lander repeated exactly what she had said.

The farmer said, "Long, red-headed man, kind of sickly-lookin'?"

"We didn't see the man"--

"Little woman, skinny-lookin; pootty tonguey?"

"We didn't see her, eitha; but I guess we hea'd her at the back of the house."

"Lot o' children, about as big as pa'tridges, runnin' round in the bushes?"

"Yes! And a very pretty-appearing girl; about thi'teen or fou'teen, I should think."

The farmer pulled his fork out of the ground, and planted it with his person at new slopes in the figure of a letter A, rather more upright than before. "Yes; it's them," he said. "Ha'n't been in the neightbahood a great while, eitha. Up from down Po'tland way, some'res, I guess.

Built that house last summer, as far as it's got, but I don't believe it's goin' to git much fa'tha."

"Why, what's the matta?" demanded Mrs. Lander in an anguish of interest.

The man in the hay-field seemed to think it more dignified to include Lander in this inquiry, and he said with a glimmer of the eye for him, "Hea'd of do-nothin' folks?"

"Seen 'em, too," answered Lander, comprehensively.

"Well, that a'n't Claxon's complaint exactly. He a'n't a do-nothin'; he's a do-everything. I guess it's about as bad." Lander glimmered back at the man, but did not speak.

"Kind of a machinist down at the Mills, where he come from," the farmer began again, and Mrs. Lander, eager not to be left out of the affair for a moment, interrupted:

"Yes, Yes! That's what the gul said."

"But he don't seem to think't the i'on agreed with him, and now he's goin' in for wood. Well, he did have a kind of a foot-powa tu'nin' lathe, and tuned all sots o' things; cups, and bowls, and u'ns for fence-posts, and vases, and sleeve-buttons and little knick-knacks; but the place bunt down, here, a while back, and he's been huntin' round for wood, the whole winta long, to make canes out of for the summa-folks. Seems to think that the smell o' the wood, whether it's green or it's dry, is goin' to cure him, and he can't git too much of it."

"Well, I believe it's so, Albe't!" cried Mrs. Lander, as if her husband had disputed the theory with his taciturn back. He made no other sign of controversy, and the man in the hay-field went on.

"I hea' he's goin' to put up a wind mill, back in an open place he's got, and use the powa for tu'nin', if he eva gits it up. But he don't seem to be in any great of a hurry, and they scrape along somehow. Wife takes in sewin' and the girl wo'ked at the Middlemount House last season. Whole fam'ly's got to tu'n in and help s'po't a man that can do everything."

The farmer appealed with another humorous cast of his eye to Lander; but the old man tacitly refused to take any further part in the talk, which began to flourish apace, in question and answer, between his wife and the man in the hay-field. It seemed that the children had all inherited the father's smartness. The oldest boy could beat the nation at figures, and one of the young ones could draw anything you had a mind to. They were all clear up in their classes at school, and yet you might say they almost ran wild, between times. The oldest girl was a pretty-behaved little thing, but the man in the hay-field guessed there was not very much to her, compared with some of the boys. Any rate, she had not the name of being so smart at school. Good little thing, too, and kind of mothered the young ones.

Mrs. Lander, when she had wrung the last drop of information out of him, let him crawl back to his work, mentally flaccid, and let her husband drive on, but under a fire of conjecture and asseveration that was scarcely intermitted till they reached their hotel. That night she talked along time about their afternoon's adventure before she allowed him to go to sleep. She said she must certainly see the child again; that they must drive down there in the morning, and ask her all about herself.

"Albe't," she concluded; "I wish we had her to live with us. Yes, I do! I wonder if we could get her to. You know I always did want to adopt a baby."

"You neva said so," Mr. Lander opened his mouth almost for the first time, since the talk began.

"I didn't suppose you'd like it," said his wife.

"Well, she a'n't a baby. I guess you'd find you had your hands full, takon' a half-grown gul like that to bring up."

"I shouldn't be afraid any," the wife declared. "She has just twined herself round my heat. I can't get her pretty looks out of my eyes. I know she's good."

"We'll see how you feel about it in the morning."

The old man began to wind his watch, and his wife seemed to take this for a sign that the incident was closed, for the present at least. He seldom talked, but there came times when he would not even listen. One of these was the time after he had wound his watch. A minute later he had undressed, with an agility incredible of his years, and was in bed, as effectively blind and deaf to his wife's appeals as if he were already asleep.

II.

When Albert Gallatin Lander (he was named for an early Secretary of the Treasury as a tribute to the statesman's financial policy) went out of business, his wife began to go out of health; and it became the most serious affair of his declining years to provide for her invalid fancies. He would have liked to buy a place in the Boston suburbs (he preferred one of the Newtons) where they could both have had something to do, she inside of the house, and he outside; but she declared that what they both needed was a good long rest, with freedom from care and trouble of every kind. She broke up their establishment in Boston, and stored their furniture, and she would have made him sell the simple old house in which they had always lived, on an unfashionable up-and-down-hill street of the West End, if he had not taken one of his stubborn stands, and let it for a term of years without consulting her. But she had her way about their

own movements, and they began that life of hotels, which they had now lived so long that she believed any other impossible. Its luxury and idleness had told upon each of them with diverse effect.

They had both entered upon it in much the same corporal figure, but she had constantly grown in flesh, while he had dwindled away until he was not much more than half the weight of his prime. Their digestion was alike impaired by their joint life, but as they took the same medicines Mrs. Lander was baffled to account for the varying result. She was sure that all the anxiety came upon her, and that logically she was the one who ought to have wasted away. But she had before her the spectacle of a husband who, while he gave his entire attention to her health, did not audibly or visibly worry about it, and yet had lost weight in such measure that upon trying on a pair of his old trousers taken out of storage with some clothes of her own, he found it impossible to use the side pockets which the change in his figure carried so far to the rear when the garment was reduced at the waist. At the same time her own dresses of ten years earlier would not half meet round her; and one of the most corroding cares of a woman who had done everything a woman could to get rid of care, was what to do with those things which they could neither of them ever wear again. She talked the matter over with herself before her husband, till he took the desperate measure of sending them back to storage; and they had been left there in the spring when the Landers came away for the summer.

They always spent the later spring months at a hotel in the suburbs of Boston, where they arrived in May from a fortnight in a hotel at New York, on their way up from hotels in Washington, Ashville, Aiken and St. Augustine. They passed the summer months in the mountains, and early in the autumn they went back to the hotel in the Boston suburbs, where Mrs. Lander considered it essential to make some sojourn before going to a Boston hotel for November and December, and getting ready to go down to Florida in January. She would not on any account have gone directly to the city from the mountains, for people who did that were sure to lose the good of their summer, and to feel the loss all the winter, if they did not actually come down with a fever.

She was by no means aware that she was a selfish or foolish person. She made Mr. Lander subscribe stately to worthy objects in Boston, which she still regarded as home, because they had not dwelt any where else since they ceased to live there; and she took lavishly of tickets for all the charitable entertainments in the hotels where they stayed. Few if any guests at hotels enjoyed so much honor from porters, bell-boys, waiters, chambermaids and bootblacks as the Landers, for they gave richly in fees for every conceivable service which could be rendered them; they went out of their way to invent debts of gratitude to menials who had done nothing for them. He would make the boy who sold papers at the dining-room door keep the change, when he had been charged a profit of a hundred per cent. already; and she would let no driver who had plundered them according to the carriage tariff escape without something for himself.

A sense of their munificence penetrated the clerks and proprietors with a just esteem for guests who always wanted the best of everything, and

questioned no bill for extras. Mrs. Lander, in fact, who ruled these expenditures, had no knowledge of the value of things, and made her husband pay whatever was asked. Yet when they lived under their own roof they had lived simply, and Lander had got his money in an old-fashioned business way, and not in some delirious speculation such as leaves a man reckless of money afterwards. He had been first of all a tailor, and then he had gone into boys' and youths' clothing in a small way, and finally he had mastered this business and come out at the top, with his hands full. He invested his money so prosperously that the income for two elderly people, who had no children, and only a few outlying relations on his side, was far beyond their wants, or even their whims.

She as a woman, who in spite of her bulk and the jellylike majesty with which she shook in her smoothly casing brown silks, as she entered hotel dining-rooms, and the severity with which she frowned over her fan down the length of the hotel drawing-rooms, betrayed more than her husband the commonness of their origin. She could not help talking, and her accent and her diction gave her away for a middle-class New England person of village birth and unfashionable sojourn in Boston. He, on the contrary, lurked about the hotels where they passed their days in a silence so dignified that when his verbs and nominatives seemed not to agree, you accused your own hearing. He was correctly dressed, as an elderly man should be, in the yesterday of the fashions, and he wore with impressiveness a silk hat whenever such a hat could be worn. A pair of drab cloth gaiters did much to identify him with an old school of gentlemen, not very definite in time or place. He had a full gray beard cut close, and he was in the habit of pursing his mouth a great deal. But he meant nothing by it, and his wife meant nothing by her frowning. They had no wish to subdue or overawe any one, or to pass for persons of social distinction. They really did not know what society was, and they were rather afraid of it than otherwise as they caught sight of it in their journeys and sojourns. They led a life of public seclusion, and dwelling forever amidst crowds, they were all in all to each other, and nothing to the rest of the world, just as they had been when they resided (as they would have said) on Pinckney street. In their own house they had never entertained, though they sometimes had company, in the style of the country town where Mrs. Lander grew up. As soon as she was released to the grandeur of hotel life, she expanded to the full measure of its responsibilities and privileges, but still without seeking to make it the basis of approach to society. Among the people who surrounded her, she had not so much acquaintance as her husband even, who talked so little that he needed none. She sometimes envied his ease in getting on with people when he chose; and his boldness in speaking to fellow guests and fellow travellers, if he really wanted anything. She wanted something of them all the time, she wanted their conversation and their companionship; but in her ignorance of the social arts she was thrown mainly upon the compassion of the chambermaids. She kept these talking as long as she could detain them in her rooms; and often fed them candy (which she ate herself with childish greed) to bribe them to further delays. If she was staying some days in a hotel, she sent for the house-keeper, and made all she could of her as a listener, and as soon as she settled herself for a week, she asked who was the best doctor in the place. With doctors she had no reserves, and she poured out upon them the history of her diseases

and symptoms in an inexhaustible flow of statement, conjecture and misgiving, which was by no means affected by her profound and inexpugnable ignorance of the principles of health. From time to time she forgot which side her liver was on, but she had been doctored (as she called it) for all her organs, and she was willing to be doctored for any one of them that happened to be in the place where she fancied a present discomfort. She was not insensible to the claims which her husband's disorders had upon science, and she liked to end the tale of her own sufferings with some such appeal as: "I wish you could do something for Mr. Landa, too, docta." She made him take a little of each medicine that was left for her; but in her presence he always denied that there was anything the matter with him, though he was apt to follow the doctor out of the room, and get a prescription from him for some ailment which he professed not to believe in himself, but wanted to quiet Mrs. Lander's mind about.

He rose early, both from long habit, and from the scant sleep of an elderly man; he could not lie in bed; but his wife always had her breakfast there and remained so long that the chambermaid had done up most of the other rooms and had leisure for talk with her. As soon as he was awake, he stole softly out and was the first in the dining-room for breakfast. He owned to casual acquaintance in moments of expansion that breakfast was his best meal, but he did what he could to make it his worst by beginning with oranges and oatmeal, going forward to beefsteak and fried potatoes, and closing with griddle cakes and syrup, washed down with a cup of cocoa, which his wife decided to be wholesomer than coffee. By the time he had finished such a repast, he crept out of the dining-room in a state of tension little short of anguish, which he confided to the sympathy of the bootblack in the washroom.

He always went from having his shoes polished to get a toothpick at the clerk's desk; and at the Middlemount House, the morning after he had been that drive with Mrs. Lander, he lingered a moment with his elbows beside the register. "How about a buckboa'd?" he asked.

"Something you can drive yourself "--the clerk professionally dropped his eye to the register--"Mr. Lander?"

"Well, no, I guess not, this time," the little man returned, after a moment's reflection. "Know anything of a family named Claxon, down the road, here, a piece?" He twisted his head in the direction he meant.

"This is my first season at Middlemount; but I guess Mr. Atwell will know." The clerk called to the landlord, who was smoking in his private room behind the office, and the landlord came out. The clerk repeated Mr. Lander's questions.

"Pooty good kind of folks, I guess," said the landlord provisionally, through his cigar-smoke. "Man's a kind of univussal genius, but he's got a nice family of children; smaht as traps, all of 'em."

"How about that oldest gul?" asked Mr. Lander.

"Well, the'a," said the landlord, taking the cigar out of his mouth.

"I think she's about the nicest little thing goin'. We've had her up he'e, to help out in a busy time, last summer, and she's got moo sense than guls twice as old. Takes hold like--lightnin'."

"About how old did you say she was?"

"Well, you've got me the'a, Mr. Landa; I guess I'll ask Mis' Atwell."

"The'e's no hurry," said Lander. "That buckboa'd be round pretty soon?" he asked of the clerk.

"Be right along now, Mr. Lander," said the clerk, soothingly. He stepped out to the platform that the teams drove up to from the stable, and came back to say that it was coming. "I believe you said you wanted something you could drive yourself?"

"No, I didn't, young man," answered the elder sharply. But the next moment he added, "Come to think of it, I guess it's just as well. You needn't get me no driver. I guess I know the way well enough. You put me in a hitchin' strap."

"All right, Mr. Lander," said the clerk, meekly.

The landlord had caught the peremptory note in Lander's voice, and he came out of his room again to see that there was nothing going wrong.

"It's all right," said Lander, and went out and got into his buckboard.

"Same horse you had yesterday," said the young clerk. "You don't need to spare the whip."

"I guess I can look out for myself," said Lander, and he shook the reins and gave the horse a smart cut, as a hint of what he might expect.

The landlord joined the clerk in looking after the brisk start the horse made. "Not the way he set off with the old lady, yesterday," suggested the clerk.

The landlord rolled his cigar round in his tubed lips. "I guess he's used to ridin' after a good hoss." He added gravely to the clerk, "You don't want to make very free with that man, Mr. Pane. He won't stan' it, and he's a class of custom that you want to cata to when it comes in your way. I suspicioned what he was when they came here and took the highest cost rooms without tu'nin' a haia. They're a class of custom that you won't get outside the big hotels in the big reso'ts. Yes, sir," said the landlord taking a fresh start, "they're them kind of folks that live the whole yea' round in hotels; no'th in summa, south in winta, and city hotels between times. They want the best their money can buy, and they got plenty of it. She"--he meant Mrs. Lander--"has been tellin' my wife how they do; she likes to talk a little betta than he doos; and I guess when it comes to society, they're away up, and they won't stun' any nonsense."

III.

Lander came into his wife's room between ten and eleven o'clock, and found her still in bed, but with her half-finished breakfast on a tray before her. As soon as he opened the door she said, "I do wish you would take some of that heat- tonic of mine, Albe't, that the docta left for me in Boston. You'll find it in the upper right bureau box, the'a; and I know it'll be the very thing for you. It'll relieve you of that suffocatin' feeling that I always have, comin' up stars. Dea'! I don't see why they don't have an elevata; they make you pay enough; and I wish you'd get me a little more silva, so's't I can give to the chambamaid and the bell-boy; I do hate to be out of it. I guess you been up and out long ago. They did make that polonaise of mine too tight after all I said, and I've been thinkin' how I could get it alt'ed; but I presume there ain't a seamstress to be had around he'e for love or money. Well, now, that's right, Albe't; I'm glad to see you doin' it."

Lander had opened the lid of the bureau box, and uncorked a bottle from it, and tilted this to his lips.

"Don't take too much," she cautioned him, "or you'll lose the effects. When I take too much of a medicine, it's wo'se than nothing, as fah's I can make out. When I had that spell in Thomasville spring before last, I believe I should have been over it twice as quick if I had taken just half the medicine I did. You don't really feel anyways bad about the heat, do you, Albe't?"

"I'm all right," said Lander. He put back the bottle in its place and sat down.

Mrs. Lander lifted herself on her elbow and looked over at him. "Show me on the bottle how much you took."

He got the bottle out again and showed her with his thumb nail a point which he chose at random.

"Well, that was just about the dose for you," she said; and she sank down in bed again with the air of having used a final precaution. "You don't want to slow your heat up too quick."

Lander did not put the bottle back this time. He kept it in his hand, with his thumb on the cork, and rocked it back and forth on his knees as he spoke. "Why don't you get that woman to alter it for you?"

"What woman alta what?"

"Your polonaise. The one whe'e we stopped yestaday."

"Oh! Well, I've been thinkin' about that child, Albe't; I did before I

went to sleep; and I don't believe I want to risk anything with her. It would be a ca'e," said Mrs. Lander with a sigh, "and I guess I don't want to take any moa ca'e than what I've got now. What makes you think she could alta my polonaise?"

"Said she done dress-makin'," said Lander, doggedly.

"You ha'n't been the'a?"

He nodded.

"You didn't say anything to her about her daughta?"

"Yes, I did," said Lander.

"Well, you ce'tainly do equal anything," said his wife. She lay still awhile, and then she roused herself with indignant energy. "Well, then, I can tell you what, Albe't Landa: yon can go right straight and take back everything you said. I don't want the child, and I won't have her. I've got care enough to worry me now, I should think; and we should have her whole family on our hands, with that shiftless father of hers, and the whole pack of her brothas and sistas. What made you think I wanted you to do such a thing?"

"You wanted me to do it last night. Wouldn't ha'dly let me go to bed."

"Yes! And how many times have I told you nova to go off and do a thing that I wanted you to, unless you asked me if I did? Must I die befo'e you can find out that there is such a thing as talkin', and such anotha thing as doin'? You wouldn't get yourself into half as many scrapes if you talked more and done less, in this wo'ld." Lander rose.

"Wait! Hold on! What are you going to say to the pooa thing? She'll be so disappointed!"

"I don't know as I shall need to say anything myself," answered the little man, at his dryest. "Leave that to you."

"Well, I can tell you," returned his wife, "I'm not goin' nea' them again; and if you think--What did you ask the woman, anyway?"

"I asked her," he said, "if she wanted to let the gul come and see you about some sewing you had to have done, and she said she did."

"And you didn't speak about havin' her come to live with us?"

"No."

"Well, why in the land didn't you say so before, Albe't?"

"You didn't ask me. What do you want I should say to her now?"

"Say to who?"

"The gul. She's down in the pahlor, waitin'."

"Well, of all the men!" cried Mrs. Lander. But she seemed to find herself, upon reflection, less able to cope with Lander personally than with the situation generally. "Will you send her up, Albe't?" she asked, very patiently, as if he might be driven to further excesses, if not delicately handled. As soon as he had gone out of the room she wished that she had told him to give her time to dress and have her room put in order, before he sent the child up; but she could only make the best of herself in bed with a cap and a breakfast jacket, arranged with the help of a handglass. She had to get out of bed to put her other clothes away in the closet and she seized the chance to push the breakfast tray out of the door, and smooth up the bed, while she composed her features and her ideas to receive her visitor. Both, from long habit rather than from any cause or reason, were of a querulous cast, and her ordinary tone was a snuffle expressive of deep-seated affliction. She was at once plaintive and voluble, and in moments of excitement her need of freeing her mind was so great that she took herself into her own confidence, and found a more sympathetic listener than when she talked to her husband. As she now whisked about her room in her bed-gown with an activity not predicable of her age and shape, and finally plunged under the covering and drew it up to her chin with one hand while she pressed it out decorously over her person with the other, she kept up a rapid flow of lamentation and conjecture. "I do suppose he'll be right back with her before I'm half ready; and what the man was thinkin' of to do such a thing anyway, I don't know. I don't know as she'll notice much, comin' out of such a lookin' place as that, and I don't know as I need to care if she did. But if the e's care anywhe's around, I presume I'm the one to have it. I presume I did take a fancy to her, and I guess I shall be glad to see how I like her now; and if he's only told her I want some sewin' done, I can scrape up something to let her carry home with her. It's well I keep my things where I can put my hand on 'em at a time like this, and I don't believe I shall sca'e the child, as it is. I do hope Albe't won't hang round half the day before he brings her; I like to have a thing ova."

Lander wandered about looking for the girl through the parlors and the piazzas, and then went to the office to ask what had become of her.

The landlord came out of his room at his question to the clerk. "Oh, I guess she's round in my wife's room, Mr. Landa. She always likes to see Clementina, and I guess they all do. She's a so't o' pet amongst 'em."

"No hurry," said Lander, "I guess my wife ain't quite ready for her yet."

"Well, she'll be right out, in a minute or so," said the landlord.

The old man tilted his hat forward over his eyes, and went to sit on the veranda and look at the landscape while he waited. It was one of the loveliest landscapes in the mountains; the river flowed at the foot of an abrupt slope from the road before the hotel, stealing into and out of the valley, and the mountains, gray in the farther distance, were draped with

folds of cloud hanging upon their flanks and tops. But Lander was tired of nearly all kinds of views and prospects, though he put' up with them, in his perpetual movement from place to place, in the same resignation that he suffered the limitations of comfort in parlor cars and sleepers, and the unwholesomeness of hotel tables. He was chained to the restless pursuit of an ideal not his own, but doomed to suffer for its impossibility as if he contrived each of his wife's disappointments from it. He did not philosophize his situation, but accepted it as in an order of Providence which it would be useless for him to oppose; though there were moments when he permitted himself to feel a modest doubt of its justice. He was aware that when he had a house of his own he was master in it, after a fashion, and that as long as he was in business he was in some sort of authority. He perceived that now he was a slave to the wishes of a mistress who did not know what she wanted, and that he was never farther from pleasing her than when he tried to do what she asked. He could not have told how all initiative had been taken from him, and he had fallen into the mere follower of a woman guided only by her whims, who had no object in life except to deprive it of all object. He felt no rancor toward her for this; he knew that she had a tender regard for him, and that she believed she was considering him first in her most selfish arrangements. He always hoped that sometime she would get tired of her restlessness, and be willing to settle down again in some stated place; and wherever it was, he meant to get into some kind of business again. Till this should happen he waited with an apathetic patience of which his present abeyance was a detail. He would hardly have thought it anything unfit, and certainly nothing surprising, that the landlady should have taken the young girl away from where he had left her, and then in the pleasure of talking with her, and finding her a centre of interest for the whole domestic force of the hotel, should have forgotten to bring her back.

The Middlemount House had just been organized on the scale of a first class hotel, with prices that had risen a little in anticipation of the other improvements. The landlord had hitherto united in himself the functions of clerk and head waiter, but he had now got a senior, who was working his way through college, to take charge of the dining-room, and had put in the office a youth of a year's experience as under clerk at a city hotel. But he meant to relinquish no more authority than his wife who frankly kept the name as well as duty of house-keeper. It was in making her morning inspection of the dusting that she found Clementina in the parlor where Lander had told her to sit down till he should come for her.

"Why, Clem!" she said, "I didn't know you! You have grown so! Youa folks all well? I decla'e you ah' quite a woman now," she added, as the girl stood up in her slender, graceful height. "You look as pretty as a pink in that hat. Make that dress youaself? Well, you do beat the witch! I want you should come to my room with me."

Mrs. Atwell showered other questions and exclamations on the girl, who explained how she happened to be there, and said that she supposed she must stay where she was for fear Mr. Lander should come back and find her gone; but Mrs. Atwell overruled her with the fact that Mrs. Lander's

breakfast had just gone up to her; and she made her come out and see the new features of the enlarged house-keeping. In the dining-room there were some of the waitresses who had been there the summer before, and recognitions of more or less dignity passed between them and Clementina. The place was now shut against guests, and the head-waiter was having it put in order for the one o'clock dinner. As they came near him, Mrs. Atwell introduced him to Clementina, and he behaved deferentially, as if she were some young lady visitor whom Mrs. Atwell was showing the improvements, but he seemed harassed and impatient, as if he were anxious about his duties, and eager to get at them again. He was a handsome little fellow, with hair lighter than Clementina's and a sanguine complexion, and the color coming and going.

"He's smaht," said Mrs. Atwell, when they had left him--he held the dining-room door open for them, and bowed them out. "I don't know but he worries almost too much. That'll wear off when he gets things runnin' to suit him. He's pretty p'tic'la'. Now I'll show you how they've made the office over, and built in a room for Mr. Atwell behind it."

The landlord welcomed Clementina as if she had been some acceptable class of custom, and when the tall young clerk came in to ask him something, and Mrs. Atwell said, "I want to introduce you to Miss Claxon, Mr. Fane," the clerk smiled down upon her from the height of his smooth, acquiline young face, which he held bent encouragingly upon one side.

"Now, I want you should come in and see where I live, a minute," said Mrs. Atwell. She took the girl from the clerk, and led her to the official housekeeper's room which she said had been prepared for her so that folks need not keep running to her in her private room where she wanted to be alone with her children, when she was there. "Why, you a'n't much moa than a child youaself, Clem, and here I be talkin' to you as if you was a mother in Israel. How old ah' you, this summa? Time does go so!"

"I'm sixteen now," said Clementina, smiling.

"You be? Well, I don't see why I say that, eitha! You're full lahge enough for your age, but not seein' you in long dresses before, I didn't realize your age so much. My, but you do all of you know how to do things!"

"I'm about the only one that don't, Mrs. Atwell," said the girl. "If it hadn't been for mother, I don't believe I could have eva finished this dress." She began to laugh at something passing in her mind, and Mrs. Atwell laughed too, in sympathy, though she did not know what at till Clementina said, "Why, Mrs. Atwell, nea'ly the whole family wo'ked on this dress. Jim drew the patte'n of it from the dress of one of the summa boa'das that he took a fancy to at the Centa, and fatha cut it out, and I helped motha make it. I guess every one of the children helped a little."

"Well, it's just as I said, you can all of you do things," said Mrs. Atwell. "But I guess you ah' the one that keeps 'em straight. What did

you say Mr. Landa said his wife wanted of you?"

"He said some kind of sewing that motha could do."

"Well, I'll tell you what! Now, if she ha'n't really got anything that your motha'll want you to help with, I wish you'd come here again and help me. I tuned my foot, here, two-three weeks back, and I feel it, times, and I should like some one to do about half my steppin' for me. I don't want to take you away from her, but IF. You sha'n't go int' the dinin'room, or be under anybody's oddas but mine. Now, will you?"

"I'll see, Mrs. Atwell. I don't like to say anything till I know what Mrs. Landa wants."

"Well, that's right. I decla'e, you've got moa judgment! That's what I used to say about you last summa to my husband: she's got judgment. Well, what's wanted?" Mrs. Atwell spoke to her husband, who had opened her door and looked in, and she stopped rocking, while she waited his answer.

"I guess you don't want to keep Clementina from Mr. Landa much longa. He's settin' out there on the front piazza waitin' for her."

"Well, the'a!" cried Mrs. Atwell. "Ain't that just like me? Why didn't you tell me sooner, Alonzo? Don't you forgit what I said, Clem!"

IV.

Mrs. Lander had taken twice of a specific for what she called her nerve-fag before her husband came with Clementina, and had rehearsed aloud many of the things she meant to say to the girl. In spite of her preparation, they were all driven out of her head when Clementina actually appeared, and gave her a bow like a young birch's obeisance in the wind.

"Take a chaia," said Lander, pushing her one, and the girl tilted over toward him, before she sank into it. He went out of the room, and left Mrs. Lander to deal with the problem alone. She apologized for being in bed, but Clementina said so sweetly, "Mr. Landa told me you were not feeling very well, 'm," that she began to be proud of her ailments, and bragged of them at length, and of the different doctors who had treated her for them. While she talked she missed one thing or another, and Clementina seemed to divine what it was she wanted, and got it for her, with a gentle deference which made the elder feel her age cushioned by the girl's youth. When she grew a little heated from the interest she took in her personal annals, and cast off one of the folds of her bed clothing, Clementina got her a fan, and asked her if she should put up one of the windows a little.

"How you do think of things!" said Mrs. Lander. "I guess I will let you. I presume you get used to thinkin' of othas in a lahge family like youas.

I don't suppose they could get along without you very well," she suggested.

"I've neva been away except last summa, for a little while."

"And where was you then?"

"I was helping Mrs. Atwell."

"Did you like it?"

"I don't know," said Clementina. "It's pleasant to be whe'e things ah' going on."

"Yes--for young folks," said Mrs. Lander, whom the going on of things had long ceased to bring pleasure.

"It's real nice at home, too," said Clementina. "We have very good times--evenings in the winta; in the summer it's very nice in the woods, around there. It's safe for the children, and they enjoy it, and fatha likes to have them. Motha don't ca'e so much about it. I guess she'd ratha have the house fixed up more, and the place. Fatha's going to do it pretty soon. He thinks the'e's time enough."

"That's the way with men," said Mrs. Lander. "They always think the's time enough; but I like to have things over and done with. What chuhch do you 'tend?"

"Well, there isn't any but the Episcopal," Clementina answered. "I go to that, and some of the children go to the Sunday School. I don't believe fatha ca'es very much for going to chuhch, but he likes Mr. Richling; he's the recta. They take walks in the woods; and they go up the mountains togetha."

"They want," said Mrs. Lander, severely, "to be ca'eful how they drink of them cold brooks when they're heated. Mr. Richling a married man?"

"Oh, yes'm! But they haven't got any family."

"If I could see his wife, I sh'd caution her about lettin' him climb mountains too much. A'n't your father afraid he'll ovado?"

"I don't know. He thinks he can't be too much in the open air on the mountains."

"Well, he may not have the same complaint as Mr. Landa; but I know if I was to climb a mountain,' it would lay me up for a yea'."

The girl did not urge anything against this conviction. She smiled politely and waited patiently for the next turn Mrs. Lander's talk should take, which was oddly enough toward the business Clementina had come upon.

"I declare I most forgot about my polonaise. Mr. Landa said your motha thought she could do something to it for me."

"Yes'm."

"Well, I may as well 'let you see it. If you'll reach into that fuhthest closet, you'll find it on the last uppa hook on the right hand, and if you'll give it to me, I'll show you what I want done. Don't mind the looks of that closet; I've just tossed my things in, till I could get a little time and stren'th to put 'em in odda."

Clementina brought the polonaise to Mrs. Lander, who sat up and spread it before her on the bed, and had a happy half hour in telling the girl where she had bought the material and where she had it made up, and how it came home just as she was going away, and she did not find out that it was all wrong till a week afterwards when she tried it on. By the end of this time the girl had commended herself so much by judicious and sympathetic assent, that Mrs. Lander learned with a shock of disappointment that her mother expected her to bring the garment home with her, where Mrs. Lander was to come and have it fitted over for the alterations she wanted made.

"But I supposed, from what Mr. Landa said, that your motha would come here and fit me!" she lamented.

"I guess he didn't undastand, 'm. Motha doesn't eva go out to do wo'k," said Clementina gently but firmly.

"Well, I might have known Mr. Landa would mix it up, if it could be mixed; "Mrs. Lander's sense of injury was aggravated by her suspicion that he had brought the girl in the hope of pleasing her, and confirming her in the wish to have her with them; she was not a woman who liked to have her way in spite of herself; she wished at every step to realize that she was taking it, and that no one else was taking it for her.

"Well," she said dryly, "I shall have to see about it. I'm a good deal of an invalid, and I don't know as I could go back and fo'th to try on. I'm moa used to havin' the things brought to me."

"Yes'm," said Clementina. She moved a little from the bed, on her way to the door, to be ready for Mrs. Lander in leave-taking.

"I'm real sorry," said Mrs. Lander. "I presume it's a disappointment for you, too."

"Oh, not at all," answered Clementina. "I'm sorry we can't do the wo'k he'a; but I know mocha wouldn't like to. Good-mo'ning,'m!"

"No, no! Don't go yet a minute! Won't you just give me my hand bag off the bureau the'a? "Mrs. Lander entreated, and when the girl gave her the bag she felt about among the bank-notes which she seemed to have loose in it, and drew out a handful of them without regard to their value.

"He'a!" she said, and she tried to put the notes into Clementina's hand,

"I want you should get yourself something."

The girl shrank back. "Oh, no'm," she said, with an effect of seeming to know that her refusal would hurt, and with the wish to soften it.

"I--couldn't; indeed I couldn't."

"Why couldn't you? Now you must! If I can't let you have the wo'k the way you want, I don't think it's fair, and you ought to have the money for it just the same."

Clementina shook her head smiling. "I don't believe motha would like to have me take it."

"Oh, now, pshaw!" said Mrs. Lander, inadequately. "I want you should take this for youaself; and if you don't want to buy anything to wea', you can get something to fix your room up with. Don't you be afraid of robbin' us. Land! We got moa money! Now you take this."

Mrs. Lander reached the money as far toward Clementina as she could and shook it in the vehemence of her desire.

"Thank you, I couldn't take it," Clementina persisted. "I'm afraid I must be going; I guess I must bid you good-mo'ning."

"Why, I believe the child's sca'ed of me! But you needn't be. Don't you suppose I know how you feel? You set down in that chai'a there, and I'll tell you how you feel. I guess we've been pooa, too--I don't mean anything that a'n't exactly right--and I guess I've had the same feelin's. You think it's demeanin' to you to take it. A'n't that it?" Clementina sank provisionally upon the edge of the chair. "Well, it did use to be so consid'ed. But it's all changed, nowadays. We travel pretty nee' the whole while, Mr. Lander and me, and we see folks everywhere, and it a'n't the custom to refuse any moa. Now, a'n't there any little thing for your own room, there in your nice new house? Or something your motha's got her heat set on? Or one of your brothas? My, if you don't have it, some one else will! Do take it!"

The girl kept slipping toward the door. "I shouldn't know what to tell them, when I got home. They would think I must be--out of my senses."

"I guess you mean they'd think I was. Now, listen to me a minute!" Mrs. Lander persisted.

"You just take this money, and when you get home, you tell your mother every word about it, and if she says, you bring it right straight back to me. Now, can't you do that?"

"I don't know but I can," Clementina faltered. "Well, then take it!" Mrs. Lander put the bills into her hand but she did not release her at once. She pulled Clementina down and herself up till she could lay her other arm on her neck. "I want you should let me kiss you. Will you?"

"Why, certainly," said Clementina, and she kissed the old woman.

"You tell your mother I'm comin' to see her before I go; and I guess," said Mrs. Lander in instant expression of the idea that came into her mind, "we shall be goin' pretty soon, now."

"Yes'm," said Clementina.

She went out, and shortly after Lander came in with a sort of hopeful apathy in his face.

Mrs. Lander turned her head on her pillow, and so confronted him.

"Albe't, what made you want me to see that child?"

Lander must have perceived that his wife meant business, and he came to it at once. "I thought you might take a fancy to her, and get her to come and live with us."

"Yes?"

"We're both of us gettin' pretty well on, and you'd ought to have somebody to look after you if--I'm not around. You want somebody that can do for you; and keep you company, and read to you, and talk to you--well, moa like a daughta than a suvvan't--somebody that you'd get attached to, maybe"--

"And don't you see," Mrs. Lander broke out severely upon him, "what a ca'e that would be? Why, it's got so already that I can't help thinkin' about her the whole while, and if I got attached to her I'd have her on my mind day and night, and the moa she done for me the more I should be tewin' around to do for her. I shouldn't have any peace of my life any moa. Can't you see that?"

"I guess if you see it, I don't need to," said Lander.

"Well, then, I want you shouldn't eva mention her to me again. I've had the greatest escape! But I've got her off home, and I've give her money enough! had a time with her about it--so that they won't feel as if we'd made 'em trouble for nothing, and now I neva want to hear of her again. I don't want we should stay here a great while longer; I shall be frettin' if I'm in reach of her, and I shan't get any good of the ai'a. Will you promise?"

"Yes."

"Well, then!" Mrs. Lander turned her face upon the pillow again in the dramatization of her exhaustion; but she was not so far gone that she was insensible to the possible interest that a light rap at the door suggested. She once more twisted her head in that direction and called, "Come in!"

The door opened and Clementina came in. She advanced to the bedside smiling joyously, and put the money Mrs. Lander had given her down upon the counterpane.

"Why, you haven't been home, child?"

"No'm," said Clementina, breathlessly. "But I couldn't take it. I knew they wouldn't want me to, and I thought you'd like it better if I just brought it back myself. Good-mo'ning." She slipped out of the door. Mrs. Lander swept the bank-notes from the coverlet and pulled it over her head, and sent from beneath it a stifled wail. "Now we got to go! And it's all youa fault, Albe't."

Lander took the money from the floor, and smoothed each bill out, and then laid them in a neat pile on the corner of the bureau. He sighed profoundly but left the room without an effort to justify himself.

V.

The Landers had been gone a week before Clementina's mother decided that she could spare her to Mrs. Atwell for a while. It was established that she was not to serve either in the dining-room or the carving room; she was not to wash dishes or to do any part of the chamber work, but to carry messages and orders for the landlady, and to save her steps, when she wished to see the head-waiter, or the head-cook; or to make an excuse or a promise to some of the lady-boarders; or to send word to Mr. Atwell about the buying, or to communicate with the clerk about rooms taken or left.

She had a good deal of dignity of her own and such a gravity in the discharge of her duties that the chef, who was a middle-aged Yankee with grown girls of his own, liked to pretend that it was Mrs. Atwell herself who was talking with him, and to discover just as she left him that it was Clementina. He called her the Boss when he spoke of her to others in her hearing, and he addressed her as Boss when he feigned to find that it was not Mrs. Atwell. She did not mind that in him, and let the chef have his joke as if it were not one. But one day when the clerk called her Boss she merely looked at him without speaking, and made him feel that he had taken a liberty which he must not repeat. He was a young man who much preferred a state of self-satisfaction to humiliation of any sort, and after he had endured Clementina's gaze as long as he could, he said, "Perhaps you don't allow anybody but the chef to call you that?"

She did not answer, but repeated the message Mrs. Atwell had given her for him, and went away.

It seemed to him undue that a person who exchanged repartees with the young lady boarders across his desk, when they came many times a day to look at the register, or to ask for letters, should remain snubbed by a girl who still wore her hair in a braid; but he was an amiable youth, and he tried to appease her by little favors and services, instead of trying to bully her.

He was great friends with the head-waiter, whom he respected as a college student, though for the time being he ranked the student socially. He had him in behind the frame of letter-boxes, which formed a sort of little private room for him, and talked with him at such hours of the forenoon and the late evening as the student was off duty. He found comfort in the student's fretful strength, which expressed itself in the pugnacious frown of his hot-looking young face, where a bright sorrel mustache was beginning to blaze on a short upper lip.

Fane thought himself a good-looking fellow, and he regarded his figure with pleasure, as it was set off by the suit of fine gray check that he wore habitually; but he thought Gregory's educational advantages told in his face. His own education had ended at a commercial college, where he acquired a good knowledge of bookkeeping, and the fine business hand he wrote, but where it seemed to him sometimes that the earlier learning of the public school had been hermetically sealed within him by several coats of mathematical varnish. He believed that he had once known a number of things that he no longer knew, and that he had not always been so weak in his double letters as he presently found himself.

One night while Gregory sat on a high stool and rested his elbow on the desk before it, with his chin in his hand, looking down upon Fane, who sprawled sadly in his chair, and listening to the last dance playing in the distant parlor, Fane said. "Now, what'll you bet that they won't every one of 'em come and look for a letter in her box before she goes to bed? I tell you, girls are queer, and there's no place like a hotel to study 'em."

"I don't want to study them," said Gregory, harshly.

"Think Greek's more worth your while, or know 'em well enough already?" Fane suggested.

"No, I don't know them at all," said the student.

"I don't believe," urged the clerk, as if it were relevant, "that there's a girl in the house that you couldn't marry, if you gave your mind to it."

Gregory twitched irascibly. "I don't want to marry them."

"Pretty cheap lot, you mean? Well, I don't know."

"I don't mean that," retorted the student. "But I've got other things to think of."

"Don't you believe," the clerk modestly urged, "that it is natural for a man--well, a young man--to think about girls?"

"I suppose it is."

"And you don't consider it wrong?"

"How, wrong?"

"Well, a waste of time. I don't know as I always think about wanting to marry 'em, or be in love, but I like to let my mind run on 'em. There's something about a girl that, well, you don't know what it is, exactly. Take almost any of 'em," said the clerk, with an air of inductive reasoning. "Take that Claxon girl, now for example, I don't know what it is about her. She's good-looking, I don't deny that; and she's got pretty manners, and she's as graceful as a bird. But it a'n't any one of 'em, and it don't seem to be all of 'em put together that makes you want to keep your eyes on her the whole while. Ever noticed what a nice little foot she's got? Or her hands?"

"No," said the student.

"I don't mean that she ever tries to show them off; though I know some girls that would. But she's not that kind. She ain't much more than a child, and yet you got to treat her just like a woman. Noticed the kind of way she's got?"

"No," said the student, with impatience.

The clerk mused with a plaintive air for a moment before he spoke.

"Well, it's something as if she'd been trained to it, so that she knew just the right thing to do, every time, and yet I guess it's nature. You know how the chef always calls her the Boss? That explains it about as well as anything, and I presume that's what my mind was running on, the other day, when I called her Boss. But, my! I can't get anywhere near her since!"

"It serves you right," said Gregory. "You had no business to tease her."

"Now, do you think it was teasing? I did, at first, and then again it seemed to me that I came out with the word because it seemed the right one. I presume I couldn't explain that to her."

"It wouldn't be easy."

"I look upon her," said Fane, with an effect of argument in the sweetness of his smile, "just as I would upon any other young lady in the house. Do you spell apology with one p or two?"

"One," said the student, and the clerk made a minute on a piece of paper.

"I feel badly for the girl. I don't want her to think I was teasing her or taking any sort of liberty with her. Now, would you apologize to her, if you was in my place, and would you write a note, or just wait your chance and speak to her?"

Gregory got down from his stool with a disdainful laugh, and went out of the place. "You make me sick, Fane," he said.

The last dance was over, and the young ladies who had been waltzing with

one another, came out of the parlor with gay cries and laughter, like summer girls who had been at a brilliant hop, and began to stray down the piazzas, and storm into the office. Several of them fluttered up to the desk, as the clerk had foretold, and looked for letters in the boxes bearing their initials. They called him out, and asked if he had not forgotten something for them. He denied it with a sad, wise smile, and then they tried to provoke him to a belated flirtation, in lack of other material, but he met their overtures discreetly, and they presently said, Well, they guessed they must go; and went. Fane turned to encounter Gregory, who had come in by a side door.

"Fane, I want to beg your pardon. I was rude to you just now."

"Oh, no! Oh, no!" the clerk protested. "That's all right. Sit down a while, can't you, and talk with a fellow. It's early, yet."

"No, I can't. I just wanted to say I was sorry I spoke in that way. Good-night. Is there anything in particular?"

"No; good-night. I was just wondering about--that girl."

"Oh!"

VI.

Gregory had an habitual severity with his own behavior which did not stop there, but was always passing on to the behavior of others; and his days went by in alternate offence and reparation to those he had to do with. He had to do chiefly with the dining-room girls, whose susceptibilities were such that they kept about their work bathed in tears or suffused with anger much of the time. He was not only good-looking but he was a college student, and their feelings were ready to bud toward him in tender efflorescence, but he kept them cropped and blighted by his curt words and impatient manner. Some of them loved him for the hurts he did them, and some hated him, but all agreed fondly or furiously that he was too cross for anything. They were mostly young school-mistresses, and whether they were of a soft and amorous make, or of a forbidding temper, they knew enough in spite of their hurts to value a young fellow whose thoughts were not running upon girls all the time. Women, even in their spring-time, like men to treat them as if they had souls as well as hearts, and it was a saving grace in Gregory that he treated them all, the silliest of them, as if they had souls. Very likely they responded more with their hearts than with their souls, but they were aware that this was not his fault.

The girls that waited at table saw that he did not distinguish in manner between them and the girls whom they served. The knot between his brows did not dissolve in the smiling gratitude of the young ladies whom he preceded to their places, and pulled out their chairs for, any more than in the blandishments of a waitress who thanked him for some correction.

They owned when he had been harshest that no one could be kinder if he saw a girl really trying, or more patient with well meaning stupidity, but some things fretted him, and he was as apt to correct a girl in her grammar as in her table service. Out of work hours, if he met any of them, he recognized them with deferential politeness; but he shunned occasions of encounter with them as distinctly as he avoided the ladies among the hotel guests. Some of the table girls pitied his loneliness, and once they proposed that he should read to them on the back piazza in the leisure of their mid-afternoons. He said that he had to keep up with his studies in all the time he could get; he treated their request with grave civility, but they felt his refusal to be final.

He was seen very little about the house outside of his own place and function, and he was scarcely known to consort with anyone but Fane, who celebrated his high sense of the honor to the lady-guests; but if any of these would have been willing to show Gregory that they considered his work to get an education as something that redeemed itself from discredit through the nobility of its object, he gave them no chance to do so.

The afternoon following their talk about Clementina, Gregory looked in for Fane behind the letter boxes, but did not find him, and the girl herself came round from the front to say that he was out buying, but would be back now, very soon; it was occasionally the clerk's business to forage among the farmers for the lighter supplies, such as eggs, and butter, and poultry, and this was the buying that Clementina meant. "Very well, I'll wait here for him a little while," Gregory answered.

"So do," said Clementina, in a formula which she thought polite; but she saw the frown with which Gregory took a Greek book from his pocket, and she hurried round in front of the boxes again, wondering how she could have displeased him. She put her face in sight a moment to explain, "I have got to be here and give out the lettas till Mr. Fane gets back," and then withdrew it. He tried to lose himself in his book, but her tender voice spoke from time to time beyond the boxes, and Gregory kept listening for Clementina to say, "No'm, there a'n't. Perhaps, the'e'll be something the next mail," and "Yes'm, he'e's one, and I guess this paper is for some of youa folks, too."

Gregory shut his book with a sudden bang at last and jumped to his feet, to go away.

The girl came running round the corner of the boxes. "Oh! I thought something had happened."

"No, nothing has happened," said Gregory, with a sort of violence; which was heightened by a sense of the rings and tendrils of loose hair springing from the mass that defined her pretty head. "Don't you know that you oughtn't to say 'No'm' and 'Yes'm?'" he demanded, bitterly, and then he expected to see the water come into her eyes, or the fire into her cheeks.

Clementina merely looked interested. "Did I say that? I meant to say

Yes, ma'am and No, ma'am; but I keep forgetting."

"You oughtn't to say anything!" Gregory answered savagely, "Just say Yes, and No, and let your voice do the rest."

"Oh!" said the girl, with the gentlest abeyance, as if charmed with the novelty of the idea. "I should be afraid it wasn't polite."

Gregory took an even brutal tone. It seemed to him as if he were forced to hurt her feelings. But his words, in spite of his tone, were not brutal; they might have even been thought flattering. "The politeness is in the manner, and you don't need anything but your manner."

"Do you think so, truly?" asked the girl joyously. "I should like to try it once!"

He frowned again. "I've no business to criticise your way of speaking."

"Oh yes'm--yes, ma'am; sir, I mean; I mean, Oh, yes, indeed! The'a! It does sound just as well, don't it?" Clementina laughed in triumph at the outcome of her efforts, so that a reluctant visional smile came upon Gregory's face, too. I'm very mach obliged to you, Mr. Gregory--I shall always want to do it, if it's the right way."

"It's the right way," said Gregory coldly.

"And don't they," she urged, "don't they really say Sir and Ma'am, whe'e --whe'e you came from?"

He said gloomily, "Not ladies and gentlemen. Servants do. Waiters--like me." He inflicted this stab to his pride with savage fortitude and he bore with self-scorn the pursuit of her innocent curiosity.

"But I thought--I thought you was a college student."

"Were," Gregory corrected her, involuntarily, and she said, "Were, I mean."

"I'm a student at college, and here I'm a servant! It's all right!" he said with a suppressed gritting of the teeth; and he added, "My Master was the servant of the meanest, and I must--I beg your pardon for meddling with your manner of speaking"--

"Oh, I'm very much obliged to you; indeed I am. And I shall not care if you tell me of anything that's out of the way in my talking," said Clementina, generously.

"Thank you; I think I won't wait any longer for Mr. Fane."

"Why, I'm su'a he'll be back very soon, now. I'll try not to disturb you any moa."

Gregory turned from taking some steps towards the door, and said, "I wish

you would tell Mr. Fane something."

"For you? Why, suttainly!"

"No. For you. Tell him that it's all right about his calling you Boss."

The indignant color came into Clementina's face. "He had no business to call me that."

"No; and he doesn't think he had, now. He's truly sorry for it."

"I'll see," said Clementina.

She had not seen by the time Fane got back. She received his apologies for being gone so long coldly, and went away to Mrs. Atwell, whom she told what had passed between Gregory and herself.

"Is he truly so proud?" she asked.

"He's a very good young man," said Mrs. Atwell, "but I guess he's proud. He can't help it, but you can see he fights against it. If I was you, Clem, I wouldn't say anything to the guls about it."

"Oh, no'm--I mean, no, indeed. I shouldn't think of it. But don't you think that was funny, his bringing in Christ, that way?"

"Well, he's going to be a minister, you know."

"Is he really?" Clementina was a while silent. At last she said, "Don't you think Mr. Gregory has a good many freckles?"

"Well, them red-complected kind is liable to freckle," said Mrs. Atwell, judicially.

After rather a long pause for both of them, Clementina asked, "Do you think it would be nice for me to ask Mr. Gregory about things, when I wasn't suttain?"

"Like what?"

"Oh-wo'ds, and pronunciation; and books to read."

"Why, I presume he'd love to have you. He's always correctin' the guls; I see him take up a book one day, that one of 'em was readin', and when she as't him about it, he said it was rubbage. I guess you couldn't have a betta guide."

"Well, that was what I was thinking. I guess I sha'n't do it, though. I sh'd neva have the courage." Clementina laughed and then fell rather seriously silent again.

VII.

One day the shoeman stopped his wagon at the door of the helps' house, and called up at its windows, "Well, guls, any of you want to git a numba fous foot into a rumba two shoe, to-day? Now's youa chance, but you got to be quick about it. The'e ha'r't but just so many numba two shoes made, and the wohld's full o' rumba fous feet."

The windows filled with laughing faces at the first sound of the shoeman's ironical voice; and at sight of his neat wagon, with its drawers at the rear and sides, and its buggy-hood over the seat where the shoeman lounged lazily holding the reins, the girls flocked down the stairs, and out upon the piazza where the shoe man had handily ranged his vehicle.

They began to ask him if he had not this thing and that, but he said with firmness, "Nothin' but shoes, guls. I did carry a gen'l line, one while, of what you may call ankle-wea', such as spats, and stockin's, and gaitas, but I nova did like to speak of such things befoa ladies, and now I stick ex-elusively to shoes. You know that well enough, guls; what's the use?"

He kept a sober face amidst the giggling that his words aroused,--and let his voice sink into a final note of injury.

"Well, if you don't want any shoes, to-day, I guess I must be goin'." He made a feint of jerking his horse's reins, but forebore at the entreaties that went up from the group of girls.

"Yes, we do!" "Let's see them!" "Oh, don't go!" they chorused in an equally histrionic alarm, and the shoeman got down from his perch to show his wares.

"Now, the'a, ladies," he said, pulling out one of the drawers, and dangling a pair of shoes from it by the string that joined their heels, "the'e's a shoe that looks as good as any Sat'd'y-night shoe you eva see. Looks as han'some as if it had a pasteboa'd sole and was split stock all through, like the kind you buy for a dollar at the store, and kick out in the fust walk you take with your fella--'r some other gul's fella, I don't ca'e which. And yet that's an honest shoe, made of the best of material all the way through, and in the best manna. Just look at that shoe, ladies; ex-amine it; sha'n't cost you a cent, and I'll pay for youa lost time myself, if any complaint is made." He began to toss pairs of the shoes into the crowd of girls, who caught them from each other before they fell, with hysterical laughter, and ran away with them in-doors to try them on. "This is a shoe that I'm intaducin'," the shoeman went on, "and every pair is warranted--warranted numba two; don't make any otha size, because we want to cata to a strictly numba two custom. If any lady doos feel 'em a little mite too snug, I'm sorry for her, but I can't do anything to help her in this shoe."

"Too snug !" came a gay voice from in-doors. "Why my foot feels

puffectly lost in this one."

"All right," the shoeman shouted back. "Call it a numba one shoe and then see if you can't find that lost foot in it, some'eres. Or try a little flour, and see if it won't feel more at home. I've hea'd of a shoe that give that sensation of looseness by not goin' on at all."

The girls exulted joyfully together at the defeat of their companion, but the shoeman kept a grave face, while he searched out other sorts of shoes and slippers, and offered them, or responded to some definite demand with something as near like as he could hope to make serve. The tumult of talk and laughter grew till the chef put his head out of the kitchen door, and then came sauntering across the grass to the helps' piazza. At the same time the clerk suffered himself to be lured from his post by the excitement. He came and stood beside the chef, who listened to the shoeman's flow of banter with a longing to take his chances with him.

"That's a nice hawss," he said. "What'll you take for him?"

"Why, hello!" said the shoeman, with an eye that dwelt upon the chef's official white cap and apron, "You talk English, don't you? Fust off, I didn't know but it was one of them foreign dukes come ova he'a to marry some oua poor millionai'es daughtas." The girls cried out for joy, and the chef bore their mirth stoically, but not without a personal relish of the shoeman's up-and-comingness. "Want a hawss?" asked the shoeman with an air of business. "What'll you give?"

"I'll give you thutty-seven dollas and a half," said the chef.

"Sorry I can't take it. That hawss is sellin' at present for just one hundred and fifty dollas."

"Well," said the chef, "I'll raise you a dolla and a quahta. Say thutty-eight and seventy-five."

"W-ell now, you're gittin' up among the figgas where you're liable to own a hawss. You just keep right on a raisin' me, while I sell these ladies some shoes, and maybe you'll hit it yit, 'fo'e night."

The girls were trying on shoes on every side now, and they had dispensed with the formality of going in-doors for the purpose. More than one put out her foot to the clerk for his opinion of the fit, and the shoeman was mingling with the crowd, testing with his hand, advising from his professional knowledge, suggesting, urging, and in some cases artfully agreeing with the reluctance shown.

"This man," said the chef, indicating Fane, "says you can tell moa lies to the square inch than any man out o' Boston."

"Doos he?" asked the shoeman, turning with a pair of high-heeled bronze slippers in his hand from the wagon. "Well, now, if I stood as nea' to him as you do, I believe I sh'd hit him."

"Why, man, I can't dispute him!" said the chef, and as if he had now at last scored a point, he threw back his head and laughed. When he brought down his head again, it was to perceive the approach of Clementina. "Hello," he said for her to hear, "he'e comes the Boss. Well, I guess I must be goin'," he added, in mock anxiety. "I'm a goin', Boss, I'm a goin'."

Clementina ignored him. "Mr. Atwell wants to see you a moment, Mr. Fane," she said to the clerk.

"All right, Miss Claxon," Fane answered, with the sorrowful respect which he always showed Clementina, now, "I'll be right there." But he waited a moment, either in expression of his personal independence, or from curiosity to know what the shoeman was going to say of the bronze slippers.

Clementina felt the fascination, too; she thought the slippers were beautiful, and her foot thrilled with a mysterious prescience of its fitness for them.

"Now, the'e, ladies, or as I may say guls, if you'll excuse it in one that's moa like a fatha to you than anything else, in his feelings"--the girls tittered, and some one shouted derisively--"It's true!"--"now there is a shoe, or call it a slippa, that I've rutha hesitated about showin' to you, because I know that you're all rutha serious-minded, I don't ca'e how young ye be, or how good-lookin' ye be; and I don't presume the'e's one among you that's eve head o' dancin'." In the mirthful hooting and mocking that followed, the shoeman hedged gravely from the extreme position he had taken. "What? Well, maybe you have among some the summa folks, but we all know what summa folks ah', and I don't expect you to patte'n by them. But what I will say is that if any young lady within the sound of my voice,"--he looked round for the applause which did not fail him in his parody of the pulpit style--"should get an invitation to a dance next winta, and should feel it a wo'k of a charity to the young man to go, she'll be sorry--on his account, rememba--that she ha'n't got this pair o' slippas.

"The'a! They're a numba two, and they'll fit any lady here, I don't ca'e how small a foot she's got. Don't all speak at once, sistas! Ample time allowed for meals. That's a custom-made shoe, and if it hadn't b'en too small for the lady they was oddid foh, you couldn't-'a' got 'em for less than seven dollas; but now I'm throwin' on 'em away for three."

A groan of dismay went up from the whole circle, and some who had pressed forward for a sight of the slippers, shrank back again.

"Did I hea' just now," asked the shoeman, with a soft insinuation in his voice, and in the glance he suddenly turned upon Clementina, "a party addressed as Boss?" Clementina flushed, but she did not cower; the chef walked away with a laugh, and the shoeman pursued him with his voice. "Not that I am goin' to folla the wicked example of a man who tries to make spot of young ladies; but if the young lady addressed as Boss"--

"Miss Claxon," said the clerk with ingratiating reverence.

"Miss Claxon--I Stan' corrected," pursued the shoeman. "If Miss Claxon will do me the fava just to try on this slippa, I sh'd be able to tell at the next place I stopped just how it looked on a lady's foot. I see you a'n't any of you disposed to buy 'em this aftanoon, 'and I a'n't complainin'; you done pooty well by me, already, and I don't want to uhge you; but I do want to carry away the picture, in my mind's eye--what you may call a mental photograph--of this slipper on the kind of a foot it was made fob, so't I can praise it truthfully to my next customer. What do you say, ma'am?" he addressed himself with profound respect to Clementina.

"Oh, do let him, Clem!" said one of the girls, and another pleaded, "Just so he needn't tell a story to his next customa," and that made the rest laugh.

Clementina's heart was throbbing, and joyous lights were dancing in her eyes. "I don't care if I do," she said, and she stooped to unlace her shoe, but one of the big girls threw herself on her knees at her feet to prevent her. Clementina remembered too late that there was a hole in her stocking and that her little toe came through it, but she now folded the toe artfully down, and the big girl discovered the hole in time to abet her attempt at concealment. She caught the slipper from the shoeman and harried it on; she tied the ribbons across the instep, and then put on the other. "Now put out youa foot, Clem! Fast dancin' position!" She leaned back upon her own heels, and Clementina daintily lifted the edge of her skirt a little, and peered over at her feet. The slippers might or might not have been of an imperfect taste, in their imitation of the prevalent fashion, but on Clementina's feet they had distinction.

"Them feet was made for them slippas," said the shoeman devoutly.

The clerk was silent; he put his hand helplessly to his mouth, and then dropped it at his side again.

Gregory came round the corner of the building from the dining-room, and the big girl who was crouching before Clementina, and who boasted that she was not afraid of the student, called saucily to him, "Come here, a minute, Mr. Gregory," and as he approached, she tilted aside, to let him see Clementina's slippers.

Clementina beamed up at him with all her happiness in her eyes, but after a faltering instant, his face reddened through its freckles, and he gave her a rebuking frown and passed on.

"Well, I decla'e!" said the big girl. Fane turned uneasily, and said with a sigh, he guessed he must be going, now.

A blight fell upon the gay spirits of the group, and the shoeman asked with an ironical glance after Gregory's retreating figure, "Owna of this propaty?"

"No, just the ea'th," said the big girl, angrily.

The voice of Clementina made itself heard with a cheerfulness which had apparently suffered no chill, but was really a rising rebellion. "How much ah' the slippas?"

"Three dollas," said the shoeman in a surprise which he could not conceal at Clementina's courage.

She laughed, and stooped to untie the slippers. "That's too much for me."

"Let me untie 'em, Clem," said the big girl. "It's a shame for you eva to take 'em off."

"That's right, lady," said the shoeman. "And you don't eva need to," he added, to Clementina, "unless you object to sleepin' in 'em. You pay me what you want to now, and the rest when I come around the latta paht of August."

"Oh keep 'em, Clem!" the big girl urged, passionately, and the rest joined her with their entreaties.

"I guess I betta not," said Clementina, and she completed the work of taking off the slippers in which the big girl could lend her no further aid, such was her affliction of spirit.

"All right, lady," said the shoeman. "Them's youa slippas, and I'll just keep 'em for you till the latta paht of August."

He drove away, and in the woods which he had to pass through on the road to another hotel he overtook the figure of a man pacing rapidly. He easily recognized Gregory, but he bore him no malice. "Like a lift?" he asked, slowing up beside him.

"No, thank you," said Gregory. "I'm out for the walk." He looked round furtively, and then put his hand on the side of the wagon, mechanically, as if to detain it, while he walked on.

"Did you sell the slippers to the young lady?"

"Well, not as you may say sell, exactly," returned the shoeman, cautiously.

"Have you-got them yet?" asked the student.

"Guess so," said the man. "Like to see 'em?"

He pulled up his horse.

Gregory faltered a moment. Then he said, "I'd like to buy them. Quick!"

He looked guiltily about, while the shoeman alertly obeyed, with some delay for a box to put them in. "How much are they?"

"Well, that's a custom made slipper, and the price to the lady that oddid'em was seven dollas. But I'll let you have 'em for three--if you want 'em for a present."--The shoeman was far too discreet to permit himself anything so overt as a smile; he merely let a light of intelligence come into his face.

Gregory paid the money. "Please consider this as confidential," he said, and he made swiftly away. Before the shoeman could lock the drawer that had held the slippers, and clamber to his perch under the buggy-hood, Gregory was running back to him again.

"Stop!" he called, and as he came up panting in an excitement which the shoeman might well have mistaken for indignation attending the discovery of some blemish in his purchase. "Do you regard this as in any manner a deception?" he palpitated.

"Why," the shoeman began cautiously, "it wa'n't what you may call a promise, exactly. More of a joke than anything else, I looked on it. I just said I'd keep 'em for her; but"--

"You don't understand. If I seemed to disapprove--if I led any one to suppose, by my manner, or by--anything--that I thought it unwise or unbecoming to buy the shoes, and then bought them myself, do you think it is in the nature of an acted falsehood?"

"Lo'd no!" said the shoeman, and he caught up the slack of his reins to drive on, as if he thought this amusing maniac might also be dangerous.

Gregory stopped him with another question. "And shall--will you--think it necessary to speak of--of this transaction? I leave you free!"

"Well," said the shoeman. "I don't know what you're after, exactly, but if you think I'm so shot on for subjects that I've got to tell the folks at the next stop that I sold a fellar a pair of slippas for his gul--Go 'long!" he called to his horse, and left Gregory standing in the middle of the road.

VIII.

The people who came to the Middlemount in July were ordinarily the nicest, but that year the August folks were nicer than usual and there were some students among them, and several graduates just going into business, who chose to take their outing there instead of going to the sea-side or the North Woods. This was a chance that might not happen in years again, and it made the house very gay for the young ladies; they ceased to pay court to the clerk, and asked him for letters only at mail-time. Five or six couples were often on the floor together, at the hops,

and the young people sat so thick upon the stairs that one could scarcely get up or down.

So many young men made it gay not only for the young ladies, but also for a certain young married lady, when she managed to shirk her rather filial duties to her husband, who was much about the verandas, purlindly feeling his way with a stick, as he walked up and down, or sitting opaque behind the glasses that preserved what was left of his sight, while his wife read to him. She was soon acquainted with a good many more people than he knew, and was in constant request for such occasions as needed a chaperon not averse to mountain climbing, or drives to other hotels for dancing and supper and return by moonlight, or the more boisterous sorts of charades; no sheet and pillow case party was complete without her; for welsh-rarebits her presence was essential. The event of the conflict between these social claims and her duties to her husband was her appeal to Mrs. Atwell on a point which the landlady referred to Clementina.

"She wants somebody to read to her husband, and I don't believe but what you could do it, Clem. You're a good reader, as good as I want to hear, and while you may say that you don't put in a great deal of elocution, I guess you can read full well enough. All he wants is just something to keep him occupied, and all she wants is a chance to occupy herself with otha folks. Well, she is moa their own age. I d'know as the's any hahm in her. And my foot's so much betta, now, that I don't need you the whole while, any moa."

"Did you speak to her about me?" asked the girl.

"Well, I told her I'd tell you. I couldn't say how you'd like."

"Oh, I guess I should like," said Clementina, with her eyes shining.

"But--I should have to ask motha."

"I don't believe but what your motha'd be willin'," said Mrs. Atwell.

"You just go down and see her about it."

The next day Mrs. Milray was able to take leave of her husband, in setting off to matronize a coaching party, with an exuberance of good conscience that she shared with the spectators. She kissed him with lively affection, and charged him not to let the child read herself to death for him. She captioned Clementina that Mr. Milray never knew when he was tired, and she had better go by the clock in her reading, and not trust to any sign from him.

Clementina promised, and when the public had followed Mrs. Milray away, to watch her ascent to the topmost seat of the towering coach, by means of the ladder held in place by two porters, and by help of the down-stretched hands of all the young men on the coach, Clementina opened the book at the mark she found in it, and began to read to Mr. Milray.

The book was a metaphysical essay, which he professed to find a lighter sort of reading than fiction; he said most novelists were too seriously employed in preventing the marriage of the lovers, up to a certain point,

to be amusing; but you could always trust a metaphysician for entertainment if he was very much in earnest, and most metaphysicians were. He let Clementina read on a good while in her tender voice, which had still so many notes of childhood in it, before he manifested any consciousness of being read to. He kept the smile on his delicate face which had come there when his wife said at parting, "I don't believe I should leave her with you if you could see how pretty she was," and he held his head almost motionlessly at the same poise he had given it in listening to her final charges. It was a fine head, still well covered with soft hair, which lay upon it in little sculpturesque masses, like chiseled silver, and the acquiline profile had a purity of line in the arch of the high nose and the jut of the thin lips and delicate chin, which had not been lost in the change from youth to age. One could never have taken it for the profile of a New York lawyer who had early found New York politics more profitable than law, and after a long time passed in city affairs, had emerged with a name shadowed by certain doubtful transactions. But this was Milray's history, which in the rapid progress of American events, was so far forgotten that you had first to remind people of what he had helped do before you could enjoy their surprise in realizing that this gentle person, with the cast of intellectual refinement which distinguished his face, was the notorious Milray, who was once in all the papers. When he made his game and retired from politics, his family would have sacrificed itself a good deal to reclaim him socially, though they were of a severer social than spiritual conscience, in the decay of some ancestral ideals. But he had rendered their willingness hopeless by marrying, rather late in life, a young girl from the farther West who had come East with a general purpose to get on. She got on very well with Milray, and it was perhaps not altogether her own fault that she did not get on so well with his family, when she began to substitute a society aim for the artistic ambition that had brought her to New York. They might have forgiven him for marrying her, but they could not forgive her for marrying him. They were of New England origin and they were perhaps a little more critical with her than if they had been New Yorkers of Dutch strain. They said that she was a little Western hoyden, but that the stage would have been a good place for her if she could have got over her Pike county accent; in the hush of family councils they confided to one another the belief that there were phases of the variety business in which her accent would have been no barrier to her success, since it could not have been heard in the dance, and might have been disguised in the song.

"Will you kindly read that passage over again?" Milray asked as Clementina paused at the end of a certain paragraph. She read it, while he listened attentively. "Could you tell me just what you understand by that?" he pursued, as if he really expected Clementina to instruct him.

She hesitated a moment before she answered, "I don't believe I understand anything at all."

"Do you know," said Milray, "that's exactly my own case? And I've an idea that the author is in the same box," and Clementina perceived she might laugh, and laughed discreetly.

Milray seemed to feel the note of discreetness in her laugh, and he asked, smiling, "How old did you tell me you were?"

"I'm sixteen," said Clementina.

"It's a great age," said Milray. "I remember being sixteen myself; I have never been so old since. But I was very old for my age, then. Do you think you are?"

"I don't believe I am," said Clementina, laughing again, but still very discreetly.

"Then I should like to tell you that you have a very agreeable voice. Do you sing?"

"No'm--no, sir--no," said Clementina, "I can't sing at all."

"Ah, that's very interesting," said Milray, "but it's not surprising. I wish I could see your face distinctly; I've a great curiosity about matching voices and faces; I must get Mrs. Milray to tell me how you look. Where did you pick up your pretty knack at reading? In school, here?"

"I don't know," answered Clementina. "Do I read-the way you want?"

"Oh, perfectly. You let the meaning come through--when there is any."

"Sometimes," said Clementina ingenuously, "I read too fast; the children ah' so impatient when I'm reading to them at home, and they hurry me. But I can read a great deal slower if you want me to."

"No, I'm impatient, too," said Milray. "Are there many of them,--the children?"

"There ah' six in all."

"And are you the oldest?"

"Yes," said Clementina. She still felt it very blunt not to say sir, too, but she tried to make her tone imply the sir, as Mr. Gregory had bidden her.

"You've got a very pretty name."

Clementina brightened. "Do you like it? Motha gave it to me; she took it out of a book that fatha was reading to her."

"I like it very much," said Milray. "Are you tall for your age?"

"I guess I am pretty tall."

"You're fair, of course. I can tell that by your voice; you've got a light-haired voice. And what are your eyes?"

"Blue!" Clementina laughed at his pursuit.

"Ah, of course! It isn't a gray-eyed blonde voice. Do you think--has anybody ever told you--that you were graceful?"

"I don't know as they have," said Clementina, after thinking.

"And what is your own opinion?" Clementina began to feel her dignity infringed; she did not answer, and now Milray laughed. "I felt the little tilt in your step as you came up. It's all right. Shall we try for our friend's meaning, now?"

Clementina began again, and again Milray stopped her. "You mustn't bear malice. I can hear the grudge in your voice; but I didn't mean to laugh at you. You don't like being made fun of, do you?"

"I don't believe anybody does," said Clementina.

"No, indeed," said Milray. "If I had tried such a thing I should be afraid you would make it uncomfortable for me. But I haven't, have I?"

"I don't know," said Clementina, reluctantly.

Milray laughed gleefully. "Well, you'll forgive me, because I'm an old fellow. If I were young, you wouldn't, would you?"

Clementina thought of the clerk; she had certainly never forgiven him. "Shall I read on?" she asked.

"Yes, yes. Read on," he said, respectfully. Once he interrupted her to say that she pronounced admirable, but he would like now and then to differ with her about a word if she did not mind. She answered, Oh no, indeed; she should like it ever so much, if he would tell her when she was wrong. After that he corrected her, and he amused himself by studying forms of respect so delicate that they should not alarm her pride; Clementina reassured him in terms as fine as his own. She did not accept his instructions implicitly; she meant to bring them to the bar of Gregory's knowledge. If he approved of them, then she would submit.

Milray easily possessed himself of the history of her life and of all its circumstances, and he said he would like to meet her father and make the acquaintance of a man whose mind, as Clementina interpreted it to him, he found so original.

He authorized his wife to arrange with Mrs. Atwell for a monopoly of Clementina's time while he stayed at Middlemount, and neither he nor Mrs. Milray seemed surprised at the good round sum, as the landlady thought it, which she asked in the girl's behalf.

IX.

The Milrays stayed through August, and Mrs. Milray was the ruling spirit of the great holiday of the summer, at Middlemount. It was this year that the landlords of the central mountain region had decided to compete in a coaching parade, and to rival by their common glory the splendor of the East Side and the West Side parades. The boarding-houses were to take part, as well as the hotels; the farms where only three or four summer folks were received, were to send their mountain-wagons, and all were to be decorated with bunting. An arch draped with flags and covered with flowers spanned the entrance to the main street at Middlemount Centre, and every shop in the village was adorned for the event.

Mrs. Milray made the landlord tell her all about coaching parades, and the champions of former years on the East Side and the West Side, and then she said that the Middlemount House must take the prize from them all this year, or she should never come near his house again. He answered, with a dignity and spirit he rarely showed with Mrs. Milray's class of custom, "I'm goin' to drive our hossis myself."

She gave her whole time to imagining and organizing the personal display on the coach. She consulted with the other ladies as to the kind of dresses that were to be worn, but she decided everything herself; and when the time came she had all the young men ravaging the lanes and pastures for the goldenrod and asters which formed the keynote of her decoration for the coach.

She made peace and kept it between factions that declared themselves early in the affair, and of all who could have criticized her for taking the lead perhaps none would have willingly relieved her of the trouble. She freely declared that it was killing her, and she sounded her accents of despair all over the place. When their dresses were finished she made the persons of her drama rehearse it on the coach top in the secret of the barn, where no one but the stable men were suffered to see the effects she aimed at. But on the eve of realizing these in public she was overwhelmed by disaster. The crowning glory of her composition was to be a young girl standing on the highest seat of the coach, in the character of the Spirit of Summer, wreathed and garlanded with flowers, and invisibly sustained by the twelve months of the year, equally divided as to sex, but with the more difficult and painful attitudes assigned to the gentlemen who were to figure as the fall and winter months. It had been all worked out and the actors drilled in their parts, when the Spirit of Summer, who had been chosen for the inoffensiveness of her extreme youth, was taken with mumps, and withdrawn by the doctor's orders. Mrs. Milray had now not only to improvise another Spirit of Summer, but had to choose her from a group of young ladies, with the chance of alienating and embittering those who were not chosen. In her calamity she asked her husband what she should do, with but the least hope that he could tell her. But he answered promptly, "Take Clementina; I'll let you have her for the day," and then waited for the storm of her renunciations and denunciations to spend itself.

"To be sure," she said, when this had happened, "it isn't as if she were

a servant in the house; and the position can be regarded as a kind of public function, anyhow. I can't say that I've hired her to take the part, but I can give her a present afterwards, and it will be the same thing."

The question of clothes for Clementina Mrs. Milray declared was almost as sweeping in its implication as the question of the child's creation." She has got to be dressed new from head to foot," she said, "every stitch, and how am I to manage it in twenty-four hours?"

By a succession of miracles with cheese-cloth, and sashes and ribbons, it was managed; and ended in a triumph so great that Mrs. Milray took the girl in her arms and kissed her for looking the Spirit of Summer to a perfection that the victim of the mumps could not have approached. The victory was not lastingly marred by the failure of Clementina's shoes to look the Spirit of Summer as well as the rest of her costume. No shoes at all would have been the very thing, but shoes so shabby and worn down at one side of the heel as Clementina's were very far from the thing. Mrs. Milray decided that another fold of cheese-cloth would add to the statuesque charm of her figure, and give her more height; and she was richly satisfied with the effect when the Middlemount coach drove up to the great veranda the next morning, with all the figures of her picture in position on its roof, and Clementina supreme among them. She herself mounted in simple, undramatized authority to her official seat beside the landlord, who in coachman's dress, with a bouquet of autumnal flowers in his lapel, sat holding his garlanded reins over the backs of his six horses; and then the coach as she intended it to appear in the parade set out as soon as the turnouts of the other houses joined it. They were all to meet at the Middlemount, which was thickly draped and festooned in flags, with knots of evergreen and the first red boughs of the young swamp maples holding them in place over its irregular facade. The coach itself was amass of foliage and flowers, from which it defined itself as a wheeled vehicle in vague and partial outline; the other wagons and coaches, as they drove tremulously up, with an effect of having been mired in blossoms about their spokes and hubs, had the unwieldiness which seems inseparable from spectacularity. They represented motives in color and design sometimes tasteless enough, and sometimes so nearly very good that Mrs. Milray's heart was a great deal in her mouth, as they arrived, each with its hotel-cry roared and shrilled from a score of masculine and feminine throats, and finally spelled for distinctness sake, with an ultimate yell or growl. But she had not finished giving the lady-representative of a Sunday newspaper the points of her own tableau, before she regained the courage and the faith in which she remained serenely steadfast throughout the parade.

It was when all the equipages of the neighborhood had arrived that she climbed to her place; the ladder was taken away; the landlord spoke to his horses, and the Middlemount coach led the parade, amid the renewed slogans, and the cries and fluttered handkerchiefs of the guests crowding the verandas.

The line of march was by one road to Middlemount Centre, where the prize was to be awarded at the judges' stand, and then the coaches were to

escort the triumphant vehicle homeward by another route, so as to pass as many houses on the way as possible. It was a curious expression of the carnival spirit in a region immemorably starved of beauty in the lives of its people; and whatever was the origin of the mountain coaching parade, or from whatever impulse of sentimentality or advertising it came, the effect was of undeniable splendor, and of phantasmagoric strangeness.

Gregory watched its progress from a hill-side pasture as it trailed slowly along the rising and falling road. The songs of the young girls, interrupted by the explosion of hotel slogans and college cries from the young men, floated off to him on the thin breeze of the cloudless August morning, like the hymns and shouts of a saturnalian rout going in holiday processional to sacrifice to their gods. Words of fierce Hebrew poetry burned in his thought; the warnings and the accusals and the condemnations of the angry prophets; and he stood rapt from his own time and place in a dream of days when the Most High stooped to commune face to face with His ministers, while the young voices of those forgetful or ignorant of Him, called to his own youth, and the garlanded chariots, with their banners and their streamers passed on the road beneath him and out of sight in the shadow of the woods beyond.

When the prize was given to the Middlemount coach at the Center the landlord took the flag, and gallantly transferred it to Mrs. Milray, and Mrs. Milray passed it up to Clementina, and bade her, "Wave it, wave it!"

The village street was thronged with people that cheered, and swung their hats and handkerchiefs to the coach as it left the judges' stand and drove under the triumphal arch, with the other coaches behind it. Then Atwell turned his horses heads homewards, and at the brisker pace with which people always return from festivals or from funerals, he left the village and struck out upon the country road with his long escort before him. The crowd was quick to catch the courteous intention of the victors, and followed them with applause as far beyond the village borders as wind and limb would allow; but the last noisy boy had dropped off breathless before they reached a half-finished house in the edge of some woods. A line of little children was drawn up by the road-side before it, who watched the retinue with grave eagerness, till the Middlemount coach came in full sight. Then they sprang into the air, and beating their hands together, screamed, "Clem! Clem! Oh it's Clem!" and jumped up and down, and a shabby looking work worn woman came round the corner of the house and stared up at Clementina waving her banner wildly to the children, and shouting unintelligible words to them. The young people on the coach joined in response to the children, some simply, some ironically, and one of the men caught up a great wreath of flowers which lay at Clementina's feet, and flung it down to them; the shabby woman quickly vanished round the corner of the house again. Mrs. Milray leaned over to ask the landlord, "Who in the world are Clementina's friends?"

"Why don't you know?" he retorted in abated voice. "Them's her brothas and sistas."

"And that woman?"

"The lady at the conna? That's her motha."

When the event was over, and all the things had been said and said again, and there was nothing more to keep the spring and summer months from going up to their rooms to lie down, and the fall and winter months from trying to get something to eat, Mrs. Milray found herself alone with Clementina.

The child seemed anxious about something, and Mrs. Milray, who wanted to go and lie down, too, asked a little impatiently, "What is it, Clementina?"

"Oh, nothing. Only I was afraid maybe you didn't like my waving to the children, when you saw how queea they looked." Clementina's lips quivered.

"Did any of the rest say anything?"

"I know what they thought. But I don't care! I should do it right over again!"

Mrs. Milray's happiness in the day's triumph was so great that she could indulge a generous emotion. She caught the girl in her arms. "I want to kiss you; I want to hug you, Clementina!"

The notion of a dance for the following night to celebrate the success of the house in the coaching parade came to Mrs. Milray aver a welsh-rarebit which she gave at the close of the evening. The party was in the charge of Gregory, who silently served them at their orgy with an austerity that might have conspired with the viand itself against their dreams, if they had not been so used to the gloom of his ministrations. He would not allow the waitresses to be disturbed in their evening leisure, or kept from their sleep by such belated pleasures; and when he had provided the materials for the rarebit, he stood aloof, and left their combination to Mrs. Milray and her chafing-dish.

She had excluded Clementina on account of her youth, as she said to one of the fall and winter months, who came in late, and noticed Clementina's absence with a "Hello! Anything the matter with the Spirit of Summer?" Clementina had become both a pet and a joke with these months before the parade was over, and now they clamored together, and said they must have her at the dance anyway. They were more tepidly seconded by the spring and summer months, and Mrs. Milray said, "Well, then, you'll have to all subscribe and get her a pair of dancing slippers." They pressed her for her meaning, and she had to explain the fact of Clementina's destitution, which that additional fold of cheese-cloth had hidden so well in the coaching tableau that it had never been suspected. The young men entreated her to let them each buy a pair of slippers for the Spirit of Summer, which she should wear in turn for the dance that she must give each of them; and this made Mrs. Milray declare that, no, the child should not come to the dance at all, and that she was not going to have

her spoiled. But, before the party broke up, she promised that she would see what could be done, and she put it very prettily to the child the next day, and waited for her to say, as she knew she must, that she could not go, and why. They agreed that the cheese-cloth draperies of the Spirit of Summer were surpassingly fit for the dance; but they had to agree that this still left the question of slippers untouched. It remained even more hopeless when Clementina tried on all of Mrs. Milray's festive shoes, and none of her razorpoints and high heels would avail. She went away disappointed, but not yet disheartened; youth does not so easily renounce a pleasure pressed to the lips; and Clementina had it in her head to ask some of the table girls to help her out. She meant to try first with that big girl who had helped her put on the shoeman's bronze slippers; and she hurried through the office, pushing purlblindly past Fane without looking his way, when he called to her in the deference which he now always used with her, "Here's a package here for you, Clementina--Miss Claxon," and he gave her an oblong parcel, addressed in a hand strange to her. "Who is it from?" she asked, innocently, and Fane replied with the same ingenuousness: "I'm sure I don't know." Afterwards he thought of having retorted, "I haven't opened it," but still without being certain that he would have had the courage to say it.

Clementina did not think of opening it herself, even when she was alone in her little room above Mrs. Atwell's, until she had carefully felt it over, and ascertained that it was a box of pasteboard, three or four inches deep and wide, and eight or ten inches long. She looked at the address again, "Miss Clementina Claxon," and at the narrow notched ribbon which tied it, and noted that the paper it was wrapped in was very white and clean. Then she sighed, and loosed the knot, and the paper slipped off the box, and at the same time the lid fell off, and the shoe man's bronze slippers fell out upon the floor.

Either it must be a dream or it must be a joke; it could not be both real and earnest; somebody was trying to tease her; such flattery of fortune could not be honestly meant. But it went to her head, and she was so giddy with it as she caught the slippers from the floor, and ran down to Mrs. Atwell, that she knocked against the sides of the narrow staircase.

"What is it? What does it mean? Who did it?" she panted, with the slippers in her hand. "Whe'e did they come from?" She poured out the history of her trying on these shoes, and of her present need of them and of their mysterious coming, to meet her longing after it had almost ceased to be a hope. Mrs. Atwell closed with her in an exultation hardly short of a clapping the hands. Her hair was gray, and the girl's hair still hung in braids down her back, but they were of the same age in their transport, which they referred to Mrs. Milray, and joined with her in glad but fruitless wonder who had sent Clementina the shoes. Mrs. Atwell held that the help who had seen the girl trying them on had clubbed together and got them for her at the time; and had now given them to her for the honor she had done the Middlemount House in the parade. Mrs. Milray argued that the spring and summer months had secretly dispatched some fall and winter month to ransack the stores at Middlemount Centre for them. Clementina believed that they came from the shoe man himself, who had always wanted to send them, in the hope that

she would keep them, and had merely happened to send them just then in that moment of extremity when she was helpless against them. Each conjecture involved improbabilities so gross that it left the field free to any opposite theory.

Rumor of the fact could not fail to go through the house, and long before his day's work was done it reached the chef, and amused him as a piece of the Boss's luck. He was smoking his evening pipe at the kitchen door after supper, when Clementina passed him on one of the many errands that took her between Mrs. Milray's room and her own, and he called to her: "Boss, what's this I hear about a pair o' glass slippas droppin' out the sky int' youa lap?"

Clementina was so happy that she thought she might trust him for once, and she said, "Oh, yes, Mr. Mahtin! Who do you suppose sent them?" she entreated him so sweetly that it would have softened any heart but the heart of a tease.

"I believe I could give a pooty good guess if I had the facts."

Clementina innocently gave them to him, and he listened with a well-affected sympathy.

"Say Fane fust told you about 'em?"

"Yes. 'He'e's a package for you,' he said. Just that way; and he couldn't tell me who left it, or anything."

"Anybody asked him about it since?"

"Oh, yes! Mrs. Milray, and Mrs. Atwell, and Mr. Atwell, and everybody."

"Everybody." The chef smiled with a peculiar droop of one eye. "And he didn't know when the slippas got into the landlo'd's box?"

"No. The fust thing he knew, the' they we'e!" Clementina stood expectant, but the chef smoked on as if that were all there was to say, and seemed to have forgotten her. "Who do you think put them thea, Mr. Mahtin?"

The chef looked up as if surprised to find her still there. "Oh! Oh, yes! Who d' I think? Why, I know, Boss. But I don't believe I'd betta tell you."

"Oh, do, Mr. Mahtin! If you knew how I felt about it"--

"No, no! I guess I betta not. 'Twouldn't do you any good. I guess I won't say anything moa. But if I was in youa place, and I really wanted to know whe'e them slippas come from"--

"I do--I do indeed"--

The chef paused before he added, "I should go at Fane. I guess what he

don't know ain't wo'th knowin', and I guess nobody else knows anything. Thea! I don't know but I said mo'n I ought, now."

What the chef said was of a piece with what had been more than once in Clementina's mind; but she had driven it out, not because it might not be true, but because she would not have it true. Her head drooped; she turned limp and springless away. Even the heart of the tease was touched; he had not known that it would worry her so much, though he knew that she disliked the clerk.

"Mind," he called after her, too late, "I ain't got no proof 't he done it."

She did not answer him, or look round. She went to her room, and sat down in the growing dusk to think, with a hot lump in her throat.

Mrs. Atwell found her there an hour later, when she climbed to the chamber where she thought she ought to have heard Clementina moving about over her own room.

"Didn't know but I could help you do youa dressin'," she began, and then at sight of the dim figure she broke off: "Why, Clem! What's the matte? Ah' you asleep? Ah' you sick? It's half an hour of the time and"--

"I'm not going," Clementina answered, and she did not move.

"Not goin'! Why the land o'--"

"Oh, I can't go, Mrs. Atwell. Don't ask me! Tell Mrs. Milray, please!"

"I will, when I got something to tell," said Mrs. Atwell. "Now, you just say what's happened, Clementina Claxon! Clementina suffered the woful truth to be drawn from her. "But you don't know whether it's so or not," the landlady protested.

"Yes, yes, I do! It was the fast thing I thought of, and the chef wouldn't have said it if he didn't believe it."

"That's just what he would done," cried Mrs. Atwell. "And I'll give him such a goin' ova, for his teasin', as he ain't had in one while. He just said it to tease. What you goin' to say to Mrs. Milray?"

"Oh, tell her I'm not a bit well, Mrs. Atwell! My head does ache, truly."

"Why, listen," said Mrs. Atwell, recklessly. "If you believe he done it --and he no business to--why don't you just go to the dance, in 'em, and then give 'em back to him after it's ova? It would suv him right."

Clementina listened for a moment of temptation, and then shook her head. "It wouldn't do, Mrs. Atwell; you know it wouldn't," she said, and Mrs. Atwell had too little faith in her suggestion to make it prevail. She went away to carry Clementina's message to Mrs. Milray, and her task was

greatly eased by the increasing difficulty Mrs. Milray had begun to find, since the way was perfectly smoothed for her, in imagining the management of Clementina at the dance: neither child nor woman, neither servant nor lady, how was she to be carried successfully through it, without sorrow to herself or offence to others? In proportion to the relief she felt, Mrs. Milray protested her irreconcilable grief; but when the simpler Mrs. Atwell proposed her going and reasoning with Clementina, she said, No, no; better let her alone, if she felt as she did; and perhaps after all she was right.

XI.

Clementina listened to the music of the dance, till the last note was played; and she heard the gay shouts and laughter of the dancers as they issued from the ball room and began to disperse about the halls and verandas, and presently to call good night to one another. Then she lighted her lamp, and put the slippers back into the box and wrapped it up in the nice paper it had come in, and tied it with the notched ribbon. She thought how she had meant to put the slippers away so, after the dance, when she had danced her fill in them, and how differently she was doing it all now. She wrote the clerk's name on the parcel, and then she took the box, and descended to the office with it. There seemed to be nobody there, but at the noise of her step Fane came round the case of letter-boxes, and advanced to meet her at the long desk.

"What's wanted, Miss Claxon?" he asked, with his hopeless respectfulness. "Anything I can do for you?"

She did not answer, but looked him solemnly in the eyes and laid the parcel down on the open register, and then went out.

He looked at the address on the parcel, and when he untied it, the box fell open and the shoes fell out of it, as they had with Clementina. He ran with them behind the letter-box frame, and held them up before Gregory, who was seated there on the stool he usually occupied, gloomily nursing his knee.

"What do you suppose this means, Frank?"

Gregory looked at the shoes frowningly. "They're the slippers she got to-day. She thinks you sent them to her."

"And she wouldn't have them because she thought I sent them! As sure as I'm standing here, I never did it," said the clerk, solemnly.

"I know it," said Gregory. "I sent them."

"You!"

"What's so wonderful?" Gregory retorted. "I saw that she wanted them

that day when the shoe peddler was here. I could see it, and you could."

"Yes."

"I went across into the woods, and the man overtook me with his wagon. I was tempted, and I bought the slippers of him. I wanted to give them to her then, but I resisted, and I thought I should never give them. To-day, when I heard that she was going to that dance, I sent them to her anonymously. That's all there is about it."

The clerk had a moment of bitterness. "If she'd known it was you, she wouldn't have given them back."

"That's to be seen. I shall tell her, now. I never meant her to know, but she must, because she's doing you wrong in her ignorance."

Gregory was silent, and Fane was trying to measure the extent of his own suffering, and to get the whole bearing of the incident in his mind. In the end his attempt was a failure. He asked Gregory, "And do you think you've done just right by me?"

"I've done right by nobody," said Gregory, "not even by myself; and I can see that it was my own pleasure I had in mind. I must tell her the truth, and then I must leave this place."

"I suppose you want I should keep it quiet," said Fane.

"I don't ask anything of you."

"And she wouldn't," said Fane, after reflection. "But I know she'd be glad of it, and I sha'n't say anything. Of course, she never can care for me; and--there's my hand with my word, if you want it." Gregory silently took the hand stretched toward him and Fane added: "All I'll ask is that you'll tell her I wouldn't have presumed to send her the shoes. She wouldn't be mad at you for it."

Gregory took the box, and after some efforts to speak, he went away. It was an old trouble, an old error, an old folly; he had yielded to impulse at every step, and at every step he had sinned against another or against himself. What pain he had now given the simple soul of Fane; what pain he had given that poor child who had so mistaken and punished the simple soul! With Fane it was over now, but with Clementina the worst was perhaps to come yet. He could not hope to see the girl before morning, and then, what should he say to her? At sight of a lamp burning in Mrs. Atwell's room, which was on a level with the veranda where he was walking, it came to him that first of all he ought to go to her, and confess the whole affair; if her husband were with her, he ought to confess before him; they were there in the place of the child's father and mother, and it was due to them. As he pressed rapidly toward the light he framed in his thought the things he should say, and he did not notice, as he turned to enter the private hallway leading to Mrs. Atwell's apartment, a figure at the door. It shrank back from his contact, and he recognized Clementina. His purpose instantly changed,

and he said, "Is that you, Miss Claxon? I want to speak with you. Will you come a moment where I can?"

"I--I don't know as I'd betta," she faltered. But she saw the box under his arm, and she thought that he wished to speak to her about that, and she wanted to hear what he would say. She had been waiting at the door there, because she could not bear to go to her room without having something more happen.

"You needn't be afraid. I shall not keep you. Come with me a moment. There is something I must tell you at once. You have made a mistake. And it is my fault. Come!"

Clementina stepped out into the moonlight with him, and they walked across the grass that sloped between the hotel and the river. There were still people about, late smokers singly, and in groups along the piazzas, and young couples, like themselves, strolling in the dry air, under the pure sky.

Gregory made several failures in trying to begin, before he said: "I have to tell you that you are mistaken about Mr. Fane. I was there behind the letter boxes when you came in, and I know that you left these shoes because you thought he sent them to you. He didn't send them." Clementina did not say anything, and Gregory was forced to ask: "Do you wish to know who sent them? I won't tell you unless you do wish it."

"I think I ought to know," she said, and she asked, "Don't you?"

"Yes; for you must blame some one else now, for what you thought Fane did. I sent them to you."

Clementina's heart gave a leap in her breast, and she could not say anything. He went on.

"I saw that you wanted them that day, and when the peddler happened to overtake me in the woods where I was walking, after I left you, I acted on a sudden impulse, and I bought them for you. I meant to send them to you anonymously, then. I had committed one error in acting upon impulse--my rashness is my besetting sin--and I wished to add a species of deceit to that. But I was kept from it until-to-day. I hoped you would like to wear them to the dance to-night, and I put them in the post-office for you myself. Mr. Fane didn't know anything about it. That is all. I am to blame, and no one else."

He waited for her to speak, but Clementina could only say, "I don't know what to say."

"You can't say anything that would be punishment enough for me. I have acted foolishly, cruelly."

Clementina did not think so. She was not indignant, as she was when she thought Fane had taken this liberty with her, but if Mr. Gregory thought it was so very bad, it must be something much more serious than she had

imagined. She said, "I don't see why you wanted to do it," hoping that he would be able to tell her something that would make his behavior seem less dreadful than he appeared to think it was.

"There is only one thing that could justify it, and that is something that I cannot justify." It was very mysterious, but youth loves mystery, and Clementina was very young. "I did it," said Gregory solemnly, and he felt that now he was acting from no impulse, but from a wisely considered decision which he might not fail in without culpability, "because I love you."

"Oh!" said Clementina, and she started away from him.

"I knew that it would make me detestable!" he cried, bitterly. "I had to tell you, to explain what I did. I couldn't help doing it. But now if you can forget it, and never think of me again, I can go away, and try to atone for it somehow. I shall be guided."

Clementina did not know why she ought to feel affronted or injured by what he had said to her; but if Mr. Gregory thought it was wrong for him to have spoken so, it must be wrong. She did not wish him to feel badly, even if he had done wrong, but she had to take his view of what he had done. "Why, certainly, Mr. Gregory," she answered. "You mustn't mind it."

"But I do mind it. I have been very, very selfish, very thoughtless. We are both too young. I can't ask you to wait for me till I could marry"--

The word really frightened Clementina. She said, "I don't believe I betta promise."

"Oh, I know it!" said Gregory. "I am going away from here. I am going to-morrow as soon as I can arrange--as soon as I can get away. Good-night--!"--Clementina in her agitation put her hands up to her face. "Oh, don't cry--I can't bear to have you cry."

She took down her hands. "I'm not crying! But I wish I had neva seen those slippas."

They had come to the bank of the river, whose current quivered at that point in a scaly ripple in the moonlight. At her words Gregory suddenly pulled the box from under his arm, and flung it into the stream as far as he could. It caught upon a shallow of the ripple, hung there a moment, then loosed itself, and swam swiftly down the stream.

"Oh!" Clementina moaned.

"Do you want them back?" he demanded. "I will go in for them!"

"No, no! No. But it seemed such a--waste!"

"Yes, that is a sin, too." They climbed silently to the hotel. At Mrs. Atwell's door, he spoke. "Try to forget what I said, and forgive me, if

you can."

"Yes--yes, I will, Mr. Gregory. You mustn't think of it any moa."

XII.

Clementina did not sleep till well toward morning, and she was still sleeping when Mrs. Atwell knocked and called in to her that her brother Jim wanted to see her. She hurried down, and in the confusion of mind left over from the night before she cooed sweetly at Jim as if he had been Mr. Gregory, "What is it, Jim? What do you want me for?"

The boy answered with the disgust a sister's company manners always rouse in a brother. "Motha wants you. Says she's wo'ked down, and she wants you to come and help." Then he went his way.

Mrs. Atwell was used to having help snatched from her by their families at a moment's notice. "I presume you've got to go, Clem," she said.

"Oh, yes, I've got to go," Clementina assented, with a note of relief which mystified Mrs. Atwell.

"You tied readin' to Mr. Milray?"

"Oh, no'm-no, I mean. But I guess I betta go home. I guess I've been away long enough."

"Well, you're a good gul, Clem. I presume your motha's got a right to have you home if she wants you." Clementina said nothing to this, but turned briskly, and started upstairs toward her room again. The landlady called after her, "Shall you speak to Mis' Milray, or do you want I should?"

Clementina looked back at her over her shoulder to warble, "Why, if you would, Mrs. Atwell," and kept on to her room.

Mrs. Milray was not wholly sorry to have her go; she was going herself very soon, and Clementina's earlier departure simplified the question of getting rid of her; but she overwhelmed her with reproaches which Clementina received with such sweet sincerity that another than Mrs. Milray might have blamed herself for having abused her ingenuousness.

The Atwells could very well have let the girl walk home, but they sent her in a buckboard, with one of the stablemen to drive her. The landlord put her neat bundle under the seat of the buckboard with his own hand. There was something in the child's bearing, her dignity and her amiability, which made people offer her, half in fun, and half in earnest, the deference paid to age and state.

She did not know whether Gregory would try to see her before she went.

She thought he must have known she was going, but since he neither came to take leave of her, nor sent her any message, she decided that she had not expected him to do so. About the third week of September she heard that he had left Middlemount and gone back to college.

She kept at her work in the house and helped her mother, and looked after the little ones; she followed her father in the woods, in his quest of stuff for walking sticks, and advised with both concerning the taste of summer folks in dress and in canes. The winter came, and she read many books in its long leisure, mostly novels, out of the rector's library. He had a whole set of Miss Edgeworth, and nearly all of Miss Austen and Miss Gurney, and he gave of them to Clementina, as the best thing for her mind as well as her morals; he believed nothing could be better for any one than these old English novels, which he had nearly forgotten in their details. She colored the faded English life of the stories afresh from her Yankee circumstance; and it seemed the consensus of their testimony that she had really been made love to, and not so very much too soon, at her age of sixteen, for most of their heroines were not much older. The terms of Gregory's declaration and of its withdrawal were mystifying, but not more mystifying than many such things, and from what happened in the novels she read, the affair might be trusted to come out all right of itself in time. She was rather thoughtfuller for it, and once her mother asked her what was the matter with her. "Oh, I guess I'm getting old, motha," she said, and turned the question off. She would not have minded telling her mother about Gregory, but it would not have been the custom; and her mother would have worried, and would have blamed him. Clementina could have more easily trusted her father with the case, but so far as she knew fathers never were trusted with anything of the kind. She would have been willing that accident should bring it to the knowledge of Mrs. Richling; but the moment never came when she could voluntarily confide in her, though she was a great deal with her that winter. She was Mrs. Richling's lieutenant in the social affairs of the parish, which the rector's wife took under her care. She helped her get up entertainments of the kind that could be given in the church parlor, and they managed together some dances which had to be exiled to the town hall. They contrived to make the young people of the village feel that they were having a gay time, and Clementina did not herself feel that it was a dull one. She taught them some of the new steps and figures which she had picked up from the summer folks at the Middlemount, and practised together; she liked doing that; her mother said the child would rather dance than eat, any time. She was never sad, but so much dignity got into her sweetness that the rector now and then complained of feeling put down by her.

She did not know whether she expected Gregory to write to her or not; but when no letters came she decided that she had not expected them. She wondered if he would come back to the Middlemount the next summer; but when the summer came, she heard that they had another student in his place. She heard that they had a new clerk, and that the boarders were not so pleasant. Another year passed, and towards the end of the season Mrs. Atwell wished her to come and help her again, and Clementina went over to the hotel to soften her refusal. She explained that her mother had so much sewing now that she could not spare her; and Mrs. Atwell

said: Well, that was right, and that she must be the greatest kind of dependence for her mother. "You ah' going on seventeen this year, ain't you?"

"I was nineteen the last day of August," said Clementina, and Mrs. Atwell sighed, and said, How the time did fly.

It was the second week of September, but Mrs. Atwell said they were going to keep the house open till the middle of October, if they could, for the autumnal foliage, which there was getting to be quite a class of custom for.

"I presume you knew Mr. Landa was dead," she added, and at Clementina's look of astonishment, she said with a natural satisfaction, "Mm! died the thutteenth day of August. I presumed somehow you'd know it, though you didn't see a great deal of 'em, come to think of it. I guess he was a good man; too good for her, I guess," she concluded, in the New England necessity of blaming some one. "She sent us the papah."

There was an early frost; and people said there was going to be a hard winter, but it was not this that made Clementina's father set to work finishing his house. His turning business was well started, now, and he had got together money enough to pay for the work. He had lately enlarged the scope of his industry by turning gate-posts and urns for the tops of them, which had become very popular, for the front yards of the farm and village houses in a wide stretch of country. They sold more steadily than the smaller wares, the cups, and tops, and little vases and platters which had once been the output of his lathe; after the first season the interest of the summer folks in these fell off; but the gate posts and the urns appealed to a lasting taste in the natives.

Claxon wished to put the finishing touches on the house himself, and he was willing to suspend more profitable labors to do so. After some attempts at plastering he was forced to leave that to the plasterers, but he managed the clap-boarding, with Clementina to hand him boards and nails, and to keep him supplied with the hammer he was apt to drop at critical moments. They talked pretty constantly at their labors, and in their leisure, which they spent on the brown needles under the pines at the side of the house. Sometimes the hammering or the talking would be interrupted by a voice calling, from a passing vehicle in the hidden roadway, something about urns. Claxon would answer, without troubling himself to verify the inquirer; or moving from his place, that he would get round to them, and then would hammer on, or talk on with Clementina.

One day in October a carriage drove up to the door, after the work on the house had been carried as far as Claxon's mood and money allowed, and he and Clementina were picking up the litter of his carpentering. He had replaced the block of wood which once served at the front door by some steps under an arbor of rustic work; but this was still so novel that the younger children had not outgrown their pride in it and were playing at house-keeping there. Clementina ran around to the back door and out through the front entry in time to save the visitor and the children from the misunderstanding they began to fall into, and met her with a smile of

hospitable brilliancy, and a recognition full of compassionate welcome.

Mrs. Lander gave way to her tears as she broke out, "Oh, it ain't the way it was the last time I was he'a! You hea'd that he--that Mr. Landa"--

"Mrs. Atwell told me," said Clementina. "Won't you come in, and sit down?"

"Why, yes." Mrs. Lander pushed in through the narrow door of what was to be the parlor. Her crapes swept about her and exhaled a strong scent of their dyes. Her veil softened her heavy face; but she had not grown thinner in her bereavement.

"I just got to the Middlemount last night," she said, "and I wanted to see you and your payrents, both, Miss Claxon. It doos bring him back so! You won't neva know how much he thought of you, and you'll all think I'm crazy. I wouldn't come as long as he was with me, and now I have to come without him; I held out ag'inst him as long as I had him to hold out ag'inst. Not that he was eva one to push, and I don't know as he so much as spoke of it, afta we left the hotel two yea's ago; but I presume it wa'n't out of his mind a single minute. Time and time again I'd say to him, 'Now, Albe't, do you feel about it just the way you done?' and he'd say, 'I ha'r't had any call to charge my mind about it,' and then I'd begin tryin' to ahgue him out of it, and keep a hectorin', till he'd say, 'Well, I'm not askin' you to do it,' and that's all I could get out of him. But I see all the while 't he wanted me to do it, whateva he asked, and now I've got to do it when it can't give him any pleasure." Mrs. Lander put up her black-bordered handkerchief and sobbed into it, and Clementina waited till her grief had spent itself; then she gave her a fan, and Mrs. Lander gratefully cooled her hot wet face. The children had found the noises of her affliction and the turbid tones of her monologue annoying, and had gone off to play in the woods; Claxon kept incuriously about the work that Clementina had left him to; his wife maintained the confidence which she always felt in Clementina's ability to treat with the world when it presented itself, and though she was curious enough, she did not offer to interrupt the girl's interview with Mrs. Lander; Clementina would know how to behave.

Mrs. Lander, when she had refreshed herself with the fan, seemed to get a fresh grip of her theme, and she told Clementina all about Mr. Lander's last sickness. It had been so short that it gave her no time to try the climate of Colorado upon him, which she now felt sure would have brought him right up; and she had remembered, when too late, to give him a liver-medicine of her own, though it did not appear that it was his liver which was affected; that was the strange part of it. But, brief as his sickness was, he had felt that it was to be his last, and had solemnly talked over her future with her, which he seemed to think would be lonely. He had not named Clementina, but Mrs. Lander had known well enough what he meant; and now she wished to ask her, and her father and mother, how they would all like Clementina to come and spend the winter with her at Boston first, and then further South, and wherever she should happen to go. She apologized for not having come sooner upon this errand; she had resolved upon it as soon as Mr. Lander was gone, but she

had been sick herself, and had only just now got out of bed.

Clementina was too young to feel the pathos of the case fully, or perhaps even to follow the tortuous course of Mrs. Lander's motives, but she was moved by her grief; and she could not help a thrill of pleasure in the vague splendor of the future outlined by Mrs. Lander's proposal. For a time she had thought that Mrs. Milray was going to ask her to visit her in New York; Mrs. Milray had thrown out a hint of something of the kind at parting, but that was the last of it; and now she at once made up her mind that she would like to go with Mrs. Lander, while discreetly saying that she would ask her father and mother to come and talk with her.

XIII.

Her parents objected to leaving their work; each suggested that the other had better go; but they both came at Clementina's urgency. Her father laughed and her mother frowned when she told them what Mrs. Lander wanted, from the same misgiving of her sanity. They partly abandoned this theory for a conviction of Mrs. Lander's mere folly when she began to talk, and this slowly yielded to the perception that she had some streaks of sense. It was sense in the first place to want to have Clementina with her, and though it might not be sense to suppose that they would be anxious to let her go, they did not find so much want of it as Mrs. Lander talked on. It was one of her necessities to talk away her emotions before arriving at her ideas, which were often found in a tangle, but were not without a certain propriety. She was now, after her interview with Clementina, in the immediate presence of these, and it was her ideas that she began to produce for the girl's father and mother. She said, frankly, that she had more money than she knew what to do with, and they must not think she supposed she was doing a favor, for she was really asking one.

She was alone in the world, without near connections of her own, or relatives of her husband's, and it would be a mercy if they could let their daughter come and visit her; she would not call it more than a visit; that would be the best thing on both sides; she told of her great fancy for Clementina the first time she saw her, and of her husband's wish that she would come and visit with them then for the winter. As for that money she had tried to make the child take, she presumed that they knew about it, and she wished to say that she did it because she was afraid Mr. Lander had said so much about the sewing, that they would be disappointed. She gave way to her tears at the recollection, and confessed that she wanted the child to have the money anyway. She ended by asking Mrs. Claxon if she would please to let her have a drink of water; and she looked about the room, and said that they had got it finished up a great deal, now, had not they? She made other remarks upon it, so apt that Mrs. Claxon gave her a sort of permissive invitation to look about the whole lower floor, ending with the kitchen.

Mrs. Lander sat down there while Mrs. Claxon drew from the pipes a glass

of water, which she proudly explained was pumped all over the house by the wind mill that supplied the power for her husband's turning lathes.

"Well, I wish mah husband could have tasted that wata," said Mrs. Lander, as if reminded of husbands by the word, and by the action of putting down the glass. "He was always such a great hand for good, cold wata. My! He'd 'a liked youa kitchen, Mrs. Claxon. He always was such a home-body, and he did get so ti'ed of hotels. For all he had such an appearance, when you see him, of bein'--well!--stiff and proud, he was fah moa common in his tastes--I don't mean common, exactly, eitha--than what I was; and many a time when we'd be drivin' through the country, and we'd pass some o' them long-strung-out houses, don't you know, with the kitchen next to the wood shed, and then an ahchway befoa you get to the stable, Mr. Landa he'd get out, and make an urrand, just so's to look in at the kitchen dooa; he said it made him think of his own motha's kitchen. We was both brought up in the country, that's a fact, and I guess if the truth was known we both expected to settle down and die thea, some time; but now he's gone, and I don't know what'll become o' me, and sometimes I don't much care. I guess if Mr. Landa'd 'a seen youa kitchen, it wouldn't 'a' been so easy to git him out of it; and I do believe if he's livin' anywhe' now he takes as much comfo't in my settin' here as what I do. I presume I shall settle down somewhe's before a great while, and if you could make up youa mind to let your daughta come to me for a little visit till spring, you couldn't do a thing that 'd please Mr. Landa moa."

Mrs. Claxon said that she would talk it over with the child's father; and then Mrs. Lander pressed her to let her take Clementina back to the Middlemount with her for supper, if they wouldn't let her stay the night. After Clementina had driven away, Mrs. Claxon accused herself to her husband of being the greatest fool in the State, but he said that the carriage was one of the Middlemount rigs, and he guessed it was all right. He could see that Clem was wild to go, and he didn't see why she shouldn't.

"Well, I do, then," his wife retorted. "We don't know anything about the woman, or who she is."

"I guess no harm'll come to Clem for one night," said Claxon, and Mrs. Claxon was forced back upon the larger question for the maintenance of her anxiety. She asked what he was going to do about letting Clem go the whole winter with a perfect stranger; and he answered that he had not got round to that yet, and that there were a good many things to be thought of first. He got round to see the rector before dark, and in the light of his larger horizon, was better able to orient Mrs. Lander and her motives than he had been before.

When she came back with the girl the next morning, she had thought of something in the nature of credentials. It was the letter from her church in Boston, which she took whenever she left home, so that if she wished she might unite with the church in any place where she happened to be stopping. It did not make a great impression upon the Klaxons, who were of no religion, though they allowed their children to go to the Episcopal church and Sunday-school, and always meant to go themselves.

They said they would like to talk the matter over with the rector, if Mrs. Lander did not object; she offered to send her carriage for him, and the rector was brought at once.

He was one of those men who have, in the breaking down of the old Puritanical faith, and the dying out of the later Unitarian rationalism, advanced and established the Anglican church so notably in the New England hill-country, by a wise conformity to the necessities and exactions of the native temperament. On the ecclesiastical side he was conscientiously uncompromising, but personally he was as simple-mannered as he was simple-hearted. He was a tall lean man in rusty black, with a clerical waistcoat that buttoned high, and scholarly glasses, but with a belated straw hat that had counted more than one summer, and a farmer's tan on his face and hands. He pronounced the church-letter, though quite outside of his own church, a document of the highest respectability, and he listened with patient deference to the autobiography which Mrs. Lander poured out upon him, and her identifications, through reference to this or that person in Boston whom he knew either at first or second hand. He had not to pronounce upon her syntax, or her social quality; it was enough for him, in behalf of the Claxons, to find her what she professed to be.

"You must think," he said, laughing, "that we are over-particular; but the fact is that we value Clementina rather highly, and we wish to be sure that your hospitable offer will be for her real good."

"Of cou'se," said Mrs. Lander. "I should be just so myself about her."

"I don't know," he continued, "that I've ever said how much we think of her, Mrs. Richling and I, but this seems a good opportunity, as she is not present.

"She is not perfect, but she comes as near being a thoroughly good girl as she can without knowing it. She has a great deal of common-sense, and we all want her to have the best chance."

"Well, that's just the way I feel about her, and that's just what I mean to give her," said Mrs. Lander.

"I am not sure that I make myself quite clear," said the rector.

"I mean, a chance to prove how useful and helpful she can be. Do you think you can make life hard for her occasionally? Can you be peevish and exacting, and unreasonable? Can you do something to make her value superfluity and luxury at their true worth?"

Mrs. Lander looked a little alarmed and a little offended. "I don't know as I undastand what you mean, exactly," she said, frowning rather with perplexity than resentment. "But the child sha'n't have a care, and her own motha couldn't be betta to her than me. There a'n't anything money can buy that she sha'n't have, if she wants it, and all I'll ask of her is 't she'll enjoy herself as much as she knows how. I want her with me because I should love to have her round; and we did from the very fust minute she spoke, Mr. Lander and me, both. She shall have her own money,

and spend it for anything she pleases, and she needn't do a stitch o' work from mohnin' till night. But if you're afraid I shall put upon her"

"No, no," said the rector, and he threw back his head with a laugh.

"When it was all arranged, a few days later, after the verification of certain of Mrs. Lander's references by letters to Boston, he said to Clementina's father and mother, "There's only one danger, now, and that is that she will spoil Clementina; but there's a reasonable hope that she won't know how." He found the Claxons struggling with a fresh misgiving, which Claxon expressed. "The way I look at it is like this. I don't want that woman should eva think Clem was after her money. On the face of it there a'n't very much to her that would make anybody think but what we was after it; and I should want it pooty well undastood that we wa'n't that kind. But I don't seem to see any way of tellin' her."

"No," said the rector, with a sympathetic twinkle, "that would be difficult."

"It's plain to be seen," Mrs. Claxon interposed, "that she thinks a good deal of her money; and I d' know but what she'd think she was doin' Clem most too much of a favor anyway. If it can't be a puffedly even thing, all round, I d' know as I should want it to be at all."

"You're quite right, Mrs. Claxon, quite right. But I believe Mrs. Lander may be safely left to look out for her own interests. After all, she has merely asked Clementina to pass the winter with her. It will be a good opportunity for her to see something of the world; and perhaps it may bring her the chance of placing herself in life. We have got to consider these things with reference to a young girl."

Mrs. Claxon said, "Of cou'se," but Claxon did not assent so readily.

"I don't feel as if I should want Clem to look at it in that light. If the chance don't come to her, I don't want she should go huntin' round for it."

"I thoroughly agree with you," said the rector. "But I was thinking that there was not only no chance worthy of her in Middlemount, but there is no chance at all."

"I guess that's so," Claxon owned with a laugh. "Well, I guess we can leave it to Clem to do what's right and proper everyway. As you say, she's got lots of sense."

From that moment he emptied his mind of care concerning the matter; but husband and wife are never both quite free of care on the same point of common interest, and Mrs. Claxon assumed more and more of the anxieties which he had abandoned. She fretted under the load, and expressed an exasperated tenderness for Clementina when the girl seemed forgetful of any of the little steps to be taken before the great one in getting her clothes ready for leaving home. She said finally that she presumed they were doing a wild thing, and that it looked crazier and crazier the more

she thought of it; but all was, if Clem didn't like, she could come home. By this time her husband was in something of that insensate eagerness to have the affair over that people feel in a house where there is a funeral.

At the station, when Clementina started for Boston with Mrs. Lander, her father and mother, with the rector and his wife, came to see her off. Other friends mistakenly made themselves of the party, and kept her talking vacuities when her heart was full, till the train drew up. Her father went with her into the parlor car, where the porter of the Middlemount House set down Mrs. Lander's hand baggage and took the final fee she thrust upon him. When Claxon came out he was not so satisfactory about the car as he might have been to his wife, who had never been inside a parlor car, and who had remained proudly in the background, where she could not see into it from the outside. He said that he had felt so bad about Clem that he did not notice what the car was like. But he was able to report that she looked as well as any of the folks in it, and that, if there were any better dressed, he did not see them. He owned that she cried some, when he said good-bye to her.

"I guess," said his wife, grimly, "we're a passel o' fools to let her go. Even if she don't like, the'a, with that crazy-head, she won't be the same Clem when she comes back."

They were too heavy-hearted to dispute much, and were mostly silent as they drove home behind Claxon's self-broken colt: a creature that had taken voluntarily to harness almost from its birth, and was an example to its kind in sobriety and industry.

The children ran out from the house to meet them, with a story of having seen Clem at a point in the woods where the train always slowed up before a crossing, and where they had all gone to wait for her. She had seen them through the car-window, and had come out on the car platform, and waved her handkerchief, as she passed, and called something to them, but they could not hear what it was, they were all cheering so.

At this their mother broke down, and went crying into the house. Not to have had the last words of the child whom she should never see the same again if she ever saw her at all, was more, she said, than heart could bear.

The rector's wife arrived home with her husband in a mood of mounting hopefulness, which soared to tops commanding a view of perhaps more of this world's kingdoms than a clergyman's wife ought ever to see, even for another. She decided that Clementina's chances of making a splendid match, somewhere, were about of the nature of certainties, and she contended that she would adorn any station, with experience, and with her native tact, especially if it were a very high station in Europe, where Mrs. Lander would now be sure to take her. If she did not take her to Europe, however, she would be sure to leave her all her money, and this would serve the same end, though more indirectly.

Mr. Richling scoffed at this ideal of Clementina's future with a contempt

which was as little becoming to his cloth. He made his wife reflect that, with all her inherent grace and charm, Clementina was an ignorant little country girl, who had neither the hardness of heart nor the greediness of soul, which gets people on in the world, and repair for them the disadvantages of birth and education. He represented that even if favorable chances for success in society showed themselves to the girl, the intense and inexpugnable vulgarity of Mrs. Lander would spoil them; and he was glad of this, he said, for he believed that the best thing which could happen to the child would be to come home as sweet and good as she had gone away; he added this was what they ought both to pray for.

His wife admitted this, but she retorted by asking if he thought such a thing was possible, and he was obliged to own that it was not possible. He marred the effect of his concession by subjoining that it was no more possible than her making a brilliant and triumphant social figure in society, either at home or in Europe.

XIV.

So far from embarking at once for Europe, Mrs. Lander went to that hotel in a suburb of Boston, where she had the habit of passing the late autumn months, in order to fortify herself for the climate of the early winter months in the city. She was a little puzzled how to provide for Clementina, with respect to herself, but she decided that the best thing would be to have her sleep in a room opening out of her own, with a folding bed in it, so that it could be used as a sort of parlor for both of them during the day, and be within easy reach, for conversation, at all times.

On her part, Clementina began by looking after Mrs. Lander's comforts, large and little, like a daughter, to her own conception and to that of Mrs. Lander, but to other eyes, like a servant. Mrs. Lander shyly shrank from acquaintance among the other ladies, and in the absence of this, she could not introduce Clementina, who went down to an early breakfast alone, and sat apart with her at lunch and dinner, ministering to her in public as she did in private. She ran back to their rooms to fetch her shawl, or her handkerchief, or whichever drops or powders she happened to be taking with her meals, and adjusted with closer care the hassock which the head waiter had officially placed at her feet. They seldom sat in the parlor where the ladies met, after dinner; they talked only to each other; and there, as elsewhere, the girl kept her filial care of the old woman. The question of her relation to Mrs. Lander became so pressing among several of the guests that, after Clementina had watched over the banisters, with throbbing heart and feet, a little dance one night which the other girls had got up among themselves, and had fled back to her room at the approach of one of the kindlier and bolder of them, the landlord felt forced to learn from Mrs. Lander how Miss Claxon was to be regarded. He managed delicately, by saying he would give the Sunday paper she had ordered to her nurse, "Or, I beg your pardon," he added, as

if he had made a mistake. "Why, she a'n't my nuhse," Mrs. Lander explained, simply, neither annoyed nor amused; "she's just a young lady that's visiting me, as you may say," and this put an end to the misgiving among the ladies. But it suggested something to Mrs. Lander, and a few days afterwards, when they came out from Boston where they had been shopping, and she had been lavishing a bewildering waste of gloves, hats, shoes, capes and gowns upon Clementina, she said, "I'll tell you what. We've got to have a maid."

"A maid?" cried the girl.

"It isn't me, or my things I want her for," said Mrs. Lander. "It's you and these dresses of youas. I presume you could look afta them, come to give youa mind to it; but I don't want to have you tied up to a lot of clothes; and I presume we should find her a comfo't in moa ways than one, both of us. I don't know what we shall want her to do, exactly; but I guess she will, if she undastands her business, and I want you should go in with me, to-morrow, and find one. I'll speak to some of the ladies, and find out whe's the best place to go, and we'll get the best there is."

A lady whom Mrs. Lander spoke to entered into the affair with zeal born of a lurking sense of the wrong she had helped do Clementina in the common doubt whether she was not herself Mrs. Lander's maid. She offered to go into Boston with them to an intelligence office, where you could get nice girls of all kinds; but she ended by giving Mrs. Lander the address, and instructions as to what she was to require in a maid. She was chiefly to get an English maid, if at all possible, for the qualifications would more or less naturally follow from her nationality. There proved to be no English maid, but there was a Swedish one who had received a rigid training in an English family living on the Continent, and had come immediately from that service to seek her first place in America. The manager of the office pronounced her character, as set down in writing, faultless, and Mrs. Lander engaged her. "You want to look afta this young lady," she said, indicating Clementina. "I can look afta myself," but Ellida took charge of them both on the train out from Boston with prompt intelligence.

"We got to get used to it, I guess," Mrs. Lander confided at the first chance of whispering to Clementina.

Within a month after washing the faces and combing the hair of all her brothers and sisters who would suffer it at her hands, Clementina's own head was under the brush of a lady's maid, who was of as great a discreetness in her own way as Clementina herself. She supplied the defects of Mrs. Lander's elementary habits by simply asking if she should get this thing and that thing for the toilet, without criticising its absence,--and then asking whether she should get the same things for her young lady. She appeared to let Mrs. Lander decide between having her brushes in ivory or silver, but there was really no choice for her, and they came in silver. She knew not only her own place, but the places of her two ladies, and she presently had them in such training that they were as proficient in what they might and might not do for themselves and

for each other, as if making these distinctions were the custom of their lives.

Their hearts would both have gone out to Ellida, but Ellida kept them at a distance with the smooth respectfulness of the iron hand in the glove of velvet; and Clementina first learned from her to imagine the impassable gulf between mistress and maid.

At the end of her month she gave them, out of a clear sky, a week's warning. She professed no grievance, and was not moved by Mrs. Lander's appeal to say what wages she wanted. She would only say that she was going to take a place on Commonwealth Avenue, where a friend of hers was living, and when the week was up, she went, and left her late mistresses feeling rather blank. "I presume we shall have to get another," said Mrs. Lander.

"Oh, not right away!" Clementina pleaded.

"Well, not right away," Mrs. Lander assented; and provisionally they each took the other into her keeping, and were much freer and happier together.

Soon after Clementina was startled one morning, as she was going in to breakfast, by seeing Mr. Fane at the clerk's desk. He did not see her; he was looking down at the hotel register, to compute the bill of a departing guest; but when she passed out she found him watching for her, with some letters.

"I didn't know you were with us," he said, with his pensive smile, "till I found your letters here, addressed to Mrs. Lander's care; and then I put two and two together. It only shows how small the world is, don't you think so? I've just got back from my vacation; I prefer to take it in the fall of the year, because it's so much pleasanter to travel, then. I suppose you didn't know I was here?"

"No, I didn't," said Clementina. "I never dreamed of such a thing."

"To be sure; why should you?" Fane reflected. "I've been here ever since last spring. But I'll say this, Miss Claxon, that if it's the least unpleasant to you, or the least disagreeable, or awakens any kind of associations"--

"Oh, no!" Clementina protested, and Fane was spared the pain of saying what he would do if it were.

He bowed, and she said sweetly, "It's pleasant to meet any one I've seen before. I suppose you don't know how much it's changed at Middlemount since you were there." Fane answered blankly, while he felt in his breast pocket, Oh, he presumed so; and she added: "Hardly any of the same guests came back this summer, and they had more in July than they had in August, Mrs. Atwell said. Mr. Mahtin, the chef, is gone, and newly all the help is different."

Fane kept feeling in one pocket and then slapped himself over the other pockets. "No," he said, "I haven't got it with me. I must have left it in my room. I just received a letter from Frank--Mr. Gregory, you know, I always call him Frank--and I thought I had it with me. He was asking about Middlemount; and I wanted to read you what he said. But I'll find it upstairs. He's out of college, now, and he's begun his studies in the divinity school. He's at Andover. I don't know what to make of Frank, oftentimes," the clerk continued, confidentially. "I tell him he's a kind of a survival, in religion; he's so aesthetic." It seemed to Fane that he had not meant aesthetic, exactly, but he could not ask Clementina what the word was. He went on to say, "He's a grand good fellow, Frank is, but he don't make enough allowance for human nature. He's more like one of those old fashioned orthodox. I go in for having a good time, so long as you don't do anybody else any hurt."

He left her, and went to receive the commands of a lady who was leaning over the desk, and saying severely, "My mail, if you please," and Clementina could not wait for him to come back; she had to go to Mrs. Lander, and get her ready for breakfast; Ellida had taught Mrs. Lander a luxury of helplessness in which she persisted after the maid's help was withdrawn.

Clementina went about the whole day with the wonder what Gregory had said about Middlemount filling her mind. It must have had something to do with her; he could not have forgotten the words he had asked her to forget. She remembered them now with a curiosity, which had no rancor in it, to know why he really took them back. She had never blamed him, and she had outlived the hurt she had felt at not hearing from him. But she had never lost the hope of hearing from him, or rather the expectation, and now she found that she was eager for his message; she decided that it must be something like a message, although it could not be anything direct. No one else had come to his place in her fancy, and she was willing to try what they would think of each other now, to measure her own obligation to the past by a knowledge of his. There was scarcely more than this in her heart when she allowed herself to drift near Fane's place that night, that he might speak to her, and tell her what Gregory had said. But he had apparently forgotten about his letter, and only wished to talk about himself. He wished to analyze himself, to tell her what sort of person he was. He dealt impartially with the subject; he did not spare some faults of his; and after a week, he proposed a correspondence with her, in a letter of carefully studied spelling, as a means of mutual improvement as well as further acquaintance.

It cost Clementina a good deal of trouble to answer him as she wished and not hurt his feelings. She declined in terms she thought so cold that they must offend him beyond the point of speaking to her again; but he sought her out, as soon after as he could, and thanked her for her kindness, and begged her pardon. He said he knew that she was a very busy person, with all the lessons she was taking, and that she had no time for carrying on a correspondence. He regretted that he could not write French, because then the correspondence would have been good practice for her. Clementina had begun taking French lessons, of a teacher who came out from Boston. She lunched three times a week with

her and Mrs. Lander, and spoke the language with Clementina, whose accent she praised for its purity; purity of accent was characteristic of all this lady's pupils; but what was really extraordinary in Mademoiselle Claxon was her sense of grammatical structure; she wrote the language even more perfectly than she spoke it; but beautifully, but wonderfully; her exercises were something marvellous.

Mrs. Lander would have liked Clementina to take all the lessons that she heard any of the other young ladies in the hotel were taking. One of them went in town every day, and studied drawing at an art-school, and she wanted Clementina to do that, too. But Clementina would not do that; she had tried often enough at home, when her brother Jim was drawing, and her father was designing the patterns of his woodwork; she knew that she never could do it, and the time would be wasted. She decided against piano lessons and singing lessons, too; she did not care for either, and she pleaded that it would be a waste to study them; but she suggested dancing lessons, and her gift for dancing won greater praise, and perhaps sincerer, than her accent won from Mademoiselle Blanc, though Mrs. Lander said that she would not have believed any one could be more complimentary. She learned the new steps and figures in all the fashionable dances; she mastered some fancy dances, which society was then beginning to borrow from the stage; and she gave these before Mrs. Lander with a success which she felt herself.

"I believe I could teach dancing," she said.

"Well, you won't eve haf to, child," returned Mrs. Lander, with an eye on the side of the case that seldom escaped her.

In spite of his wish to respect these preoccupations, Fane could not keep from offering Clementina attentions, which took the form of persecution when they changed from flowers for Mrs. Lander's table to letters for herself. He apologized for his letters whenever he met her; but at last one of them came to her before breakfast with a special delivery stamp from Boston. He had withdrawn to the city to write it, and he said that if she could not make him a favorable answer, he should not come back to Woodlake.

She had to show this letter to Mrs. Lander, who asked: "You want he should come back?"

"No, indeed! I don't want eva to see him again."

"Well, then, I guess you'll know how to tell him so."

The girl went into her own room to write, and when she brought her answer to show it to Mrs. Lander she found her in frowning thought. "I don't know but you'll have to go back and write it all over again, Clementina," she said, "if you've told him not to come. I've been thinkin', if you don't want to have anything to do with him, we betta go ouaselves."

"Yes," answered Clementina, "that's what I've said."

"You have? Well, the witch is in it! How came you to"--

"I just wanted to talk with you about it. But I thought maybe you'd like to go. Or at least I should. I should like to go home, Mrs. Landa."

"Home!" retorted Mrs. Lander. "There's plenty of places where you can be safe from the fella besides home, though I'll take you back there a this minute if you say so. But you needn't to feel worked up about it."

"Oh, I'm not," said Clementina, but with a gulp which betrayed her nervousness.

"I did think," Mrs. Lander went on, "that I should go into the Vonndome, for December and January, but just as likely as not he'd come pesterin' there, too, and I wouldn't go, now, if you was to give me the whole city of Boston. Why shouldn't we go to Florid?"

When Mrs. Lander had once imagined the move, the nomadic impulse mounted irresistably in her. She spoke of hotels in the South, where they could renew the summer, and she mapped out a campaign which she put into instant action so far as to advance upon New York.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

All in all to each other
Chained to the restless pursuit of an ideal not his own
Composed her features and her ideas to receive her visitor
Going on of things had long ceased to bring pleasure
He a'n't a do-nothin'; he's a do-everything
Hopeful apathy in his face
I'm moa used to havin' the things brought to me
Inexhaustible flow of statement, conjecture and misgiving
Kept her talking vacuities when her heart was full
Led a life of public seclusion
Luxury of helplessness
New England necessity of blaming some one
No object in life except to deprive it of all object
Perverse reluctance to find out where they were
Provisional reprehension of possible shiftlessness
Scant sleep of an elderly man
Seldom talked, but there came times when he would'nt even listen
Thrown mainly upon the compassion of the chambermaids
Tone was a snuffle expressive of deep-seated affliction
Unaware that she was a selfish or foolish person
Under a fire of conjecture and asseveration
Weak in his double letters
Wishes of a mistress who did not know what she wanted
You've got a light-haired voice

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RAGGED LADY

By William Dean Howells

Part 2

XV.

Mrs. Lander went to a hotel in New York where she had been in the habit of staying with her husband, on their way South or North. The clerk knew her, and shook hands with her across the register, and said she could have her old rooms if she wanted them; the bell-boy who took up their hand-baggage recalled himself to her; the elevator-boy welcomed her with a smile of remembrance.

Since she was already up, from coming off the sleeping-car, she had no excuse for not going to breakfast like other people; and she went with Clementina to the dining-room, where the head-waiter, who found them places, spoke with an outlandish accent, and the waiter who served them had a parlance that seemed superficially English, but was inwardly something else; there was even a touch in the cooking of the familiar dishes, that needed translation for the girl's inexperienced palate. She was finding a refuge in the strangeness of everything, when she was startled by the sound of a familiar voice calling, "Clementina Claxon! Well, I was sure all along it was you, and I determined I wouldn't stand it another minute. Why, child, how you have changed! Why, I declare you are quite a woman! When did you come? How pretty you are Mrs. Milray took Clementina in her arms and kissed her in proof of her admiration before the whole breakfast room. She was very nice to Mrs. Lander, too, who, when Clementina introduced them, made haste to say that Clementina was there on a visit with her. Mrs. Milray answered that she envied her such a visitor as Miss Claxon, and protested that she should steal her away for a visit to herself, if Mr. Milray was not so much in love with her that it made her jealous. "Mr. Milray has to have his breakfast in his room," she explained to Clementina. "He's not been so well, since he lost his mother. Yes," she said, with decorous solemnity, "I'm still in mourning for her," and Clementina saw that she was in a tempered black. "She died last year, and now I'm taking Mr. Milray abroad to see if it won't cheer him up a little. Are you going South for the winter?" she inquired, politely, of Mrs. Lander. "I wish I was going," she said, when Mrs. Lander guessed they should go, later on. "Well, you must come in

and see me all you can, Clementina; and I shall have the pleasure of calling upon you," she added to Mrs. Lander with state that was lost in the soubrette-like volatility of her flight from them the next moment. "Goodness, I forgot all about Mr. Milray's breakfast! "She ran back to the table she had left on the other side of the room.

"Who is that, Clementina?" asked Mrs. Lander, on their way to their rooms. Clementina explained as well as she could, and Mrs. Lander summed up her feeling in the verdict, "Well, she's a lady, if ever I saw a lady; and you don't see many of 'em, nowadays."

The girl remembered how Mrs. Milray had once before seemed very fond of her, and had afterwards forgotten the pretty promises and professions she had made her. But she went with Mrs. Lander to see her, and she saw Mr. Milray, too, for a little while. He seemed glad of their meeting, but still depressed by the bereavement which Mrs. Milray supported almost with gayety. When he left them she explained that he was a good deal away from her, with his family, as she approved of his being, though she had apparently no wish to join him in all the steps of the reconciliation which the mother's death had brought about among them. Sometimes his sisters came to the hotel to see her, but she amused herself perfectly without them, and she gave much more of her leisure to Clementina and Mrs. Lander.

She soon knew the whole history of the relation between them, and the first time that Clementina found her alone with Mrs. Lander she could have divined that Mrs. Lander had been telling her of the Fane affair, even if Mrs. Milray had not at once called out to her, "I know all about it; and I'll tell you what, Clementina, I'm going to take you over with me and marry you to an English Duke. Mrs. Lander and I have been planning it all out, and I'm going to send down to the steamer office, and engage your passage. It's all settled!"

When she was gone, Mrs. Lander asked, "What do you s'pose your folks would say to your goin' to Europe, anyway, Clementina?" as if the matter had been already debated between them.

Clementina hesitated. "I should want to be su'a Mrs. Milray really wanted me to go ova with her."

"Why, didn't you hear her say so?" demanded Mrs. Lander.

"Yes," sighed Clementina. "Mrs. Lander, I think Mrs. Milray means what she says, at the time, but she is one that seems to forget."

"She thinks the wo'ld of you," Mrs. Lander urged.

"She was very nice to me that summer at Middlemount. I guess maybe she would like to have us go with her," the girl relented.

"I guess we'll wait and see," said Mrs. Lander. "I shouldn't want she should change her mind when it was too late, as you say." They were both silent for a time, and then Mrs. Lander resumed, "But I presume she

ha'n't got the only steams that's crossin'. What should you say about goin' over on some otha steams? I been South a good many wintas, and I should feel kind of lonesome goin' round to the places where I been with Mr. Landa. I felt it since I been here in this hotel, some, and I can't seem to want to go ova the same ground again, well, not right away."

Clementina said, "Why, of cou'se, Mrs. Landa."

"Should you be willin'," asked Mrs. Lander, after another little pause, "if your folks was willin', to go ova the'a, to some of them European countries, to spend the winta?"

"Oh yes, indeed!" said Clementina.

They discussed the matter in one of the full talks they both liked. At the end Mrs. Lander said, "Well, I guess you betta write home, and ask your motha whetha you can go, so't if we take the notion we can go any time. Tell her to telegraph, if she'll let you, and do write all the ifs and ands, so't she'll know just how to answa, without havin' to have you write again."

That evening Mrs. Milray came to their table from where she had been dining alone, and asked in banter: "Well, have you made up your minds to go over with me?"

Mrs. Lander said bluntly, "We can't ha'dly believe yon really want us to, Mrs. Milray."

"I don't want you? Who put such an idea into your head! Oh, I know!" She threatened Clementina with the door-key, which she was carrying in her hand. "It was you, was it? What an artful, suspicious thing! What's got into you, child? Do you hate me?" She did not give Clementina time to protest. "Well, now, I can just tell you I do want you, and I'll be quite heart-broken if you don't come."

"Well, she wrote to her friends this mohning," Mrs. Lander said, "but I guess she won't git an answa in time for youa steamer, even if they do let her go."

"Oh, yes she will," Mrs. Milray protested. "It's all right, now; you've got to go, and there's no use trying to get out of it."

She came to them whenever she could find them in the dining-room, and she knocked daily at their door till she knew that Clementina had heard from home. The girl's mother wrote, without a punctuation mark in her letter, but with a great deal of sense, that such a thing as her going to Europe could not be settled by telegraph. She did not think it worth while to report all the facts of a consultation with the rector which they had held upon getting Clementina's request, and which had renewed all the original question of her relations with Mrs. Lander in an intensified form. He had disposed of this upon much the same terms as before; and they had yielded more readily because the experiment had so far succeeded. Clementina had apparently no complaint to make of Mrs.

Lander; she was eager to go, and the rector and his wife, who had been invited to be of the council, were both of the opinion that a course of European travel would be of the greatest advantage to the girl, if she wished to fit herself for teaching. It was an opportunity that they must not think of throwing away. If Mrs. Lander went to Florence, as it seemed from Clementina's letter she thought of doing, the girl would pass a delightful winter in study of one of the most interesting cities in the world, and she would learn things which would enable her to do better for herself when she came home than she could ever hope to do otherwise. She might never marry, Mr. Richling suggested, and it was only right and fair that she should be equipped with as much culture as possible for the struggle of life; Mrs. Richling agreed with this rather vague theory, but she was sure that Clementina would get married to greater advantage in Florence than anywhere else. They neither of them really knew anything at first hand about Florence; the rector's opinion was grounded on the thought of the joy that a sojourn in Italy would have been to him; his wife derived her hope of a Florentine marriage for Clementina from several romances in which love and travel had gone hand in hand, to the lasting credit of triumphant American girlhood.

The Claxons were not able to enter into their view of the case, but if Mrs. Lander wanted to go to Florence instead of Florida they did not see why Clementina should not go with her to one place as well as the other. They were not without a sense of flattery from the fact that their daughter was going to Europe; but they put that as far from them as they could, the mother severely and the father ironically, as something too silly, and they tried not to let it weigh with them in making up their mind, but to consider only Clementina's best good, and not even to regard her pleasure. Her mother put before her the most crucial questions she could think of, in her letter, and then gave her full leave from her father as well as herself to go if she wished.

Clementina had rather it had been too late to go with the Milrays, but she felt bound to own her decision when she reached it; and Mrs. Milray, whatever her real wish was, made it a point of honor to help get Mrs. Lander berths on her steamer. It did not require much effort; there are plenty of berths for the latest-comers on a winter passage, and Clementina found herself the fellow passenger of Mrs. Milray.

XVI.

As soon as Mrs. Lander could make her way to her state-room, she got into her berth, and began to take the different remedies for sea-sickness which she had brought with her. Mrs. Milray said that was nice, and that now she and Clementina could have a good tune. But before it came to that she had taken pity on a number of lonely young men whom she found on board. She cheered them up by walking round the ship with them; but if any of them continued dull in spite of this, she dropped him, and took another; and before she had been two days out she had gone through with nearly all the lonely young men on the list of cabin passengers. She

introduced some of them to Clementina, but at such times as she had them in charge; and for the most part she left her to Milray. Once, as the girl sat beside him in her steamer-chair, Mrs. Milray shed a wrap on his knees in whirring by on the arm of one of her young men, with some laughed and shouted charge about it.

"What did she say?" he asked Clementina, slanting the down-pulled brim of his soft hat purblindly toward her.

She said she had not understood, and then Milray asked, "What sort of person is that Boston youth of Mrs. Milray's? Is he a donkey or a lamb?"

Clementina said ingenuously, "Oh, she's walking with that English gentleman now--that lo'd."

"Ah, yes," said Milray. "He's not very much to look at, I hear."

"Well, not very much," Clementina admitted; she did not like to talk against people.

"Lords are sometimes disappointing, Clementina," Milray said, "but then, so are other great men. I've seen politicians on our side who were disappointing, and there are clergymen and gamblers who don't look it." He laughed sadly. "That's the way people talk who are a little disappointing themselves. I hope you don't expect too much of yourself, Clementina?"

"I don't know what you mean," she said, stiffening with a suspicion that he might be going to make fun of her.

He laughed more gayly. "Well, I mean we must hold the other fellows up to their duty, or we can't do our own. We need their example. Charity may begin at home, but duty certainly begins abroad." He went on, as if it were a branch of the same inquiry, "Did you ever meet my sisters? They came to the hotel in New York to see Mrs. Milray."

"Yes, I was in the room once when they came in."

"Did you like them?"

"Yes--I sca'cely spoke to them--I only stayed a moment."

"Would you like to see any more of the family?"

"Why, of cou'se!" Clementina was amused at his asking, but he seemed in earnest.

"One of my sisters lives in Florence, and Mrs. Milray says you think of going there, too."

"Mrs. Landa thought it would be a good place to spend the winter. Is it a pleasant place?"

"Oh, delightful! Do you know much about Italy?"

"Not very much, I don't believe."

"Well, my sister has lived a good while in Florence. I should like to give you a letter to her."

"Oh, thank you!" said Clementina.

Milray smiled at her spare acknowledgment, but inquired gravely: "What do you expect to do in Florence?"

"Why, I presume, whatever Mrs. Landa wants to do."

"Do you think Mrs. Lander will want to go into society?"

This question had not occurred to Clementina. "I don't believe she will," she said, thoughtfully.

"Shall you?"

Clementina laughed, "Why, do you think," she ventured, "that society would want me to?"

"Yes, I think it would, if you're as charming as you've tried to make me believe. Oh, I don't mean, to your own knowledge; but some people have ways of being charming without knowing it. If Mrs. Lander isn't going into society, and there should be a way found for you to go, don't refuse, will you?"

"I shall wait and see if I'm asked, fust."

"Yes, that will be best," said Milray. "But I shall give you a letter to my sister. She and I used to be famous cronies, and we went to a great many parties together when we were young people. We thought the world was a fine thing, then. But it changes."

He fell into a muse, and they were both sitting quite silent when Mrs. Milray came round the corner of the music room in the course of her twentieth or thirtieth compass of the deck, and introduced her lord to her husband and to Clementina. He promptly ignored Milray, and devoted himself to the girl, leaning over her with his hand against the bulkhead behind her and talking down upon her.

Lord Lioncourt must have been about thirty, but he had the heated and broken complexion of a man who has taken more than is good for him in twice that number of years. This was one of the wrongs nature had done him in apparent resentment of the social advantages he was born to, for he was rather abstemious, as Englishmen go. He looked a very shy person till he spoke, and then you found that he was not in the least shy. He looked so English that you would have expected a strong English accent of him, but his speech was more that of an American, without the nasality. This was not apparently because he had been much in America; he was

returning from his first visit to the States, which had been spent chiefly in the Territories; after a brief interval of Newport he had preferred the West; he liked rather to hunt than to be hunted, though even in the West his main business had been to kill time, which he found more plentiful there than other game. The natives, everywhere, were much the same thing to him; if he distinguished it was in favor of those who did not suppose themselves cultivated. If again he had a choice it was for the females; they seemed to him more amusing than the males, who struck him as having an exaggerated reputation for humor. He did not care much for Clementina's past, as he knew it from Mrs. Milray, and if it did not touch his fancy, it certainly did not offend his taste. A real aristocracy is above social prejudice, when it will; he had known some of his order choose the mothers of their heirs from the music halls, and when it came to a question of distinctions among Americans, he could not feel them. They might be richer or poorer; but they could not be more patrician or more plebeian.

The passengers, he told Clementina, were getting up, at this point of the ship's run, an entertainment for the benefit of the seaman's hospital in Liverpool, that well-known convention of ocean-travel, which is sure at some time or other, to enlist all the talent on board every English steamer in some sort of public appeal. He was not very clear how he came to be on the committee for drumming up talent for the occasion; his distinction seemed to have been conferred by a popular vote in the smoking room, as nearly as he could make out; but here he was, and he was counting upon Miss Claxon to help him out. He said Mrs. Milray had told him about that charming affair they had got up in the mountains, and he was sure they could have something of the kind again. "Perhaps not a coaching party; that mightn't be so easy to manage at sea. But isn't there something else--some tableaux or something? If we couldn't have the months of the year we might have the points of the compass, and you could take your choice."

He tried to get something out of the notion, but nothing came of it that Mrs. Milray thought possible. She said, across her husband, on whose further side she had sunk into a chair, that they must have something very informal; everybody must do what they could, separately. "I know you can do anything you like, Clementina. Can't you play something, or sing?" At Clementina's look of utter denial, she added, desperately, "Or dance something?" A light came into the girl's face at which she caught. "I know you can dance something! Why, of course! Now, what is it?"

Clementina smiled at her vehemence. "Why, it's nothing. And I don't know whether I should like to."

"Oh, yes," urged Lord Lioncourt. "Such a good cause, you know."

"What is it?" Mrs. Milray insisted. "Is it something you could do alone?"

"It's just a dance that I learned at Woodlake. The teacha said that all the young ladies we'e leaning it. It's a skut-dance"--

"The very thing!" Mrs. Milray shouted. "It'll be the hit of the evening."

"But I've never done it before any one," Clementina faltered.

"They'll all be doing their turns," the Englishman said. "Speaking, and singing, and playing."

Clementina felt herself giving way, and she pleaded in final reluctance, "But I haven't got a pleated skirt in my steamer trunk."

"No matter! We can manage that." Mrs. Milray jumped to her feet and took Lord Lioncourt's arm. "Now we must go and drum up somebody else." He did not seem eager to go, but he started. "Then that's all settled," she shouted over her shoulder to Clementina.

"No, no, Mrs. Milray! "Clementina called after her. "The ship tilts so"--

"Nonsense! It's the smoothest run she ever made in December. And I'll engage to have the sea as steady as a rock for you. Remember, now, you've promised."

Mrs. Milray whirled her Englishman away, and left Clementina sitting beside her husband.

"Did you want to dance for them, Clementina?" he asked.

"I don't know," she said, with the vague smile of one to whom a pleasant hope has occurred.

"I thought perhaps you were letting Mrs. Milray bully you into it. She's a frightful tyrant."

"Oh, I guess I should like to do it, if you think it would be--nice."

"I dare say it will be the nicest thing at their ridiculous show." Milray laughed as if her willingness to do the dance had defeated a sentimental sympathy in him.

"I don't believe it will be that," said Clementina, beaming joyously. "But I guess I shall try it, if I can find the right kind of a dress."

"Is a pleated skirt absolutely necessary," asked Milray, gravely.

"I don't see how I could get on without it," said Clementina.

She was so serious still when she went down to her state-room that Mrs. Lander was distracted from her potential ailments to ask: "What is it, Clementina?"

"Oh, nothing. Mrs. Milray has got me to say that I would do something at

a concert they ah' going to have on the ship." She explained, "It's that skut dance I learnt at Woodlake of Miss Wilson."

"Well, I guess if you're worryin' about that you needn't to."

"Oh, I'm not worrying about the dance. I was just thinking what I should wear. If I could only get at the trunks!"

"It won't make any matte what you wear," said Mrs. Lander. "It'll be the greatest thing; and if 't wa'n't for this sea-sickness that I have to keep fightin' off he'a, night and day, I should come up and see you myself. You ah' just lovely in that dance, Clementina."

"Do you think so, Mrs. Landa?" asked the girl, gratefully. "Well, Mr. Milray didn't seem to think that I need to have a pleated skut. Any rate, I'm going to look over my things, and see if I can't make something else do."

XVII.

The entertainment was to be the second night after that, and Mrs. Milray at first took the whole affair into her own hands. She was willing to let the others consult with her, but she made all the decisions, and she became so prepotent that she drove Lord Lioncourt to rebellion in the case of some theatrical people whom he wanted in the programme. He wished her to let them feel that they were favoring rather than favored, and she insisted that it should be quite the other way. She professed a scruple against having theatrical people in the programme at all, which she might not have felt if her own past had been different, and she spoke with an abhorrence of the stage which he could by no means tolerate in the case. She submitted with dignity when she could not help it. Perhaps she submitted with too much dignity. Her concession verged upon hauteur; and in her arrogant meekness she went back to another of her young men, whom she began to post again as the companion of her promenades.

He had rather an anxious air in the enjoyment of the honor, but the Englishman seemed unconscious of its loss, or else he chose to ignore it. He frankly gave his leisure to Clementina, and she thought he was very pleasant. There was something different in his way from that of any of the other men she had met; something very natural and simple, a way of being easy in what he was, and not caring whether he was like others or not; he was not ashamed of being ignorant of anything he did not know, and she was able to instruct him on some points. He took her quite seriously when she told him about Middlemount, and how her family came to settle there, and then how she came to be going to Europe with Mrs. Lander. He said Mrs. Milray had spoken about it; but he had not understood quite how it was before; and he hoped Mrs. Lander was coming to the entertainment.

He did not seem aware that Mrs. Milray was leaving the affair more and more to him. He went forward with it and was as amiable with her as she would allow. He was so amiable with everybody that he reconciled many true Americans to his leadership, who felt that as nearly all the passengers were Americans, the chief patron of the entertainment ought to have been some distinguished American. The want of an American who was very distinguished did something to pacify them; but the behavior of an English lord who put on no airs was the main agency. When the night came they filled the large music room of the 'Asia Minor', and stood about in front of the sofas and chairs so many deep that it was hard to see or hear through them.

They each paid a shilling admittance; they were prepared to give munificently besides when the hat came round; and after the first burst of blundering from Lord Lioncourt, they led the magnanimous applause. He said he never minded making a bad speech in a good cause, and he made as bad a one as very well could be. He closed it by telling Mark Twain's whistling story so that those who knew it by heart missed the point; but that might have been because he hurried it, to get himself out of the way of the others following. When he had done, one of the most ardent of the Americans proposed three cheers for him.

The actress whom he had secured in spite of Mrs. Milray appeared in woman's dress contrary to her inveterate professional habit, and followed him with great acceptance in her favorite variety-stage song; and then her husband gave imitations of Sir Henry Irving, and of Miss Maggie Kline in "T'row him down, McCloskey," with a cockney accent. A frightened little girl, whose mother had volunteered her talent, gasped a ballad to her mother's accompaniment, and two young girls played a duet on the mandolin and guitar. A gentleman of cosmopolitan military tradition, who sold the pools in the smoking-room, and was the friend of all the men present, and the acquaintance of several, gave selections of his autobiography prefatory to bellowing in a deep bass voice, "They're hanging Danny Deaver," and then a lady interpolated herself into the programme with a kindness which Lord Lioncourt acknowledged, in saying "The more the merrier," and sang Bonnie Dundee, thumping the piano out of all proportion to her size and apparent strength.

Some advances which Clementina had made for Mrs. Milray's help about the dress she should wear in her dance met with bewildering indifference, and she had fallen back upon her own devices. She did not think of taking back her promise, and she had come to look forward to her part with a happiness which the good weather and the even sway of the ship encouraged. But her pulses fluttered, as she glided into the music room, and sank into a chair next Mrs. Milray. She had on an accordion skirt which she had been able to get out of her trunk in the hold, and she felt that the glance of Mrs. Milray did not refuse it approval.

"That will do nicely, Clementina," she said. She added, in careless acknowledgement of her own failure to direct her choice, "I see you didn't need my help after all," and the thorny point which Clementina felt in her praise was rankling, when Lord Lioncourt began to introduce her.

He made rather a mess of it, but as soon as he came to an end of his well-meant blunders, she stood up and began her poses and paces. It was all very innocent, with something courageous as well as appealing. She had a kind of tender dignity in her dance, and the delicate beauty of her face translated itself into the grace of her movements. It was not impersonal; there was her own quality of sylvan, of elegant in it; but it was unconscious, and so far it was typical, it was classic; Mrs. Milray's Bostonian achieved a snub from her by saying it was like a Botticelli; and in fact it was merely the skirt-dance which society had borrowed from the stage at that period, leaving behind the footlights its more acrobatic phases, but keeping its pretty turns and bows and bends. Clementina did it not only with tender dignity, but when she was fairly launched in it, with a passion to which her sense of Mrs. Milray's strange unkindness lent defiance. The dance was still so new a thing then, that it had a surprise to which the girl's gentleness lent a curious charm, and it had some adventitious fascinations from the necessity she was in of weaving it in and out among the stationary armchairs and sofas which still further cramped the narrow space where she gave it. Her own delight in it shone from her smiling face, which was appealingly happy. Just before it should have ended, one of those wandering waves that roam the smoothest sea struck the ship, and Clementina caught herself skilfully from falling, and reeled to her seat, while the room rang with the applause and sympathetic laughter for the mischance she had baffled. There was a storm of encores, but Clementina called out, "The ship tilts so!" and her naivete won her another burst of favor, which was at its height when Lord Lioncourt had an inspiration.

He jumped up and said, "Miss Claxon is going to oblige us with a little bit of dramatics, now, and I'm sure you'll all enjoy that quite as much as her beautiful dancing. She's going to take the principal part in the laughable after-piece of Passing round the Hat, and I hope the audience will--a--a--do the rest. She's consented on this occasion to use a hat--or cap, rather--of her own, the charming Tam O'Shanter in which we've all seen her, and--a--admired her about the ship for the week past."

He caught up the flat woolen steamer-cap which Clementina had left in her seat beside Mrs. Milray when she rose to dance, and held it aloft. Some one called out, "Chorus! For he's a jolly good fellow," and led off in his praise. Lord Lioncourt shouted through the uproar the announcement that while Miss Claxon was taking up the collection, Mr. Ewins, of Boston, would sing one of the student songs of Cambridge--no! Harvard--University; the music being his own.

Everyone wanted to make some joke or some compliment to Clementina about the cap which grew momentarily heavier under the sovereigns and half sovereigns, half crowns and half dollars, shillings, quarters, greenbacks and every fraction of English and American silver; and the actor who had given the imitations, made bold, as he said, to ask his lordship if the audience might not hope, before they dispersed, for something more from Miss Claxon. He was sure she could do something more; he for one would be glad of anything; and Clementina turned from putting her cap into Mrs.

Milray's lap, to find Lord Lioncourt bowing at her elbow, and offering her his arm to lead her to the spot where she had stood in dancing.

The joy of her triumph went to her head; she wished to retrieve herself from any shadow of defeat.

She stood panting a moment, and then, if she had had the professional instinct, she would have given her admirers the surprise of something altogether different from what had pleased them before. That was what the actor would have done, but Clementina thought of how her dance had been brought to an untimely close by the rolling of the ship; she burned to do it all as she knew it, no matter how the sea behaved, and in another moment she struck into it again. This time the sea behaved perfectly, and the dance ended with just the swoop and swirl she had meant it to have at first. The spectators went generously wild over her; they cheered and clapped her, and crowded upon her to tell how lovely it was; but she escaped from them, and ran back to the place where she had left Mrs. Milray. She was not there, and Clementina's cap full of alms lay abandoned on the chair. Lord Lioncourt said he would take charge of the money, if she would lend him her cap to carry it in to the purser, and she made her way into the saloon. In a distant corner she saw Mrs. Milray with Mr. Ewins.

She advanced in a vague dismay toward them, and as she came near Mrs. Milray said to Mr. Ewins, "I don't like this place. Let's go over yonder." She rose and rushed him to the other end of the saloon.

Lord Lioncourt came in looking about. "Ah, have you found her?" he asked, gayly. "There were twenty pounds in your cap, and two hundred dollars."

"Yes," said Clementina, "she's over the'a." She pointed, and then shrank and slipped away.

XVIII.

At breakfast Mrs. Milray would not meet Clementina's eye; she talked to the people across the table in a loud, lively voice, and then suddenly rose, and swept past her out of the saloon.

The girl did not see her again till Mrs. Milray came up on the promenade at the hour when people who have eaten too much breakfast begin to spoil their appetite for luncheon with the tea and bouillon of the deck-stewards. She looked fiercely about, and saw Clementina seated in her usual place, but with Lord Lioncourt in her own chair next her husband, and Ewins on foot before her. They were both talking to Clementina, whom Lord Lioncourt was accusing of being in low spirits unworthy of her last night's triumphs. He jumped up, and offered his place, "I've got your chair, Mrs. Milray."

"Oh, no," she said, coldly, "I was just coming to look after Mr. Milray. But I see he's in good hands."

She turned away, as if to make the round of the deck, and Ewins hurried after her. He came back directly, and said that Mrs. Milray had gone into the library to write letters. He stayed, uneasily, trying to talk, but with the air of a man who has been snubbed, and has not got back his composure.

Lord Lioncourt talked on until he had used up the incidents of the night before, and the probabilities of their getting into Queenstown before morning; then he and Mr. Ewins went to the smoking-room together, and Clementina was left alone with Milray.

"Clementina," he said, gently, "I don't see everything; but isn't there some trouble between you and Mrs. Milray?"

"Why, I don't know what it can be," answered the girl, with trembling lips. "I've been trying to find out, and I can't understand it."

"Ah, those things are often very obscure," said Milray, with a patient smile.

Clementina wanted to ask him if Mrs. Milray had said anything to him about her, but she could not, and he did not speak again till he heard her stir in rising from her chair. Then he said, "I haven't forgotten that letter to my sister, Clementina. I will give it to you before we leave the steamer. Are you going to stay in Liverpool, over night, or shall you go up to London at once?"

"I don't know. It will depend upon how Mrs. Landa feels."

"Well, we shall see each other again. Don't be worried." He looked up at her with a smile, and he could not see how forlornly she returned it.

As the day passed, Mrs. Milray's angry eyes seemed to search her out for scorn whenever Clementina found herself the centre of her last night's celebrity. Many people came up and spoke to her, at first with a certain expectation of knowingness in her, which her simplicity baffled. Then they either dropped her, and went away, or stayed and tried to make friends with her because of this; an elderly English clergyman and his wife were at first compassionately anxious about her, and then affectionately attentive to her in her obvious isolation. Clementina's simple-hearted response to their advances appeared to win while it puzzled them; and they seemed trying to divine her in the strange double character she wore to their more single civilization. The theatrical people thought none the worse of her for her simple-heartedness, apparently; they were both very sweet to her, and wanted her to promise to come and see them in their little box in St. John's Wood. Once, indeed, Clementina thought she saw relenting in Mrs. Milray's glance, but it hardened again as Lord Lioncourt and Mr. Ewins came up to her, and began to talk with her. She could not go to her chair beside Milray, for his wife was now keeping guard of him on the other side with unexampled

devotion. Lord Lioncourt asked her to walk with him and she consented. She thought that Mr. Ewins would go and sit by Mrs. Milray, of course, but when she came round in her tour of the ship, Mrs. Milray was sitting alone beside her husband.

After dinner she went to the library and got a book, but she could not read there; every chair was taken by people writing letters to send back from Queenstown in the morning; and she strayed into the ladies' sitting room, where no ladies seemed ever to sit, and lost herself in a miserable muse over her open page.

Some one looked in at the door, and then advanced within and came straight to Clementina; she knew without looking up that it was Mrs. Milray. "I have been hunting for you, Miss Claxon," she said, in a voice frostily fierce, and with a bearing furiously formal. "I have a letter to Miss Milray that my husband wished me to write for you, and give you with his compliments."

"Thank you," said Clementina. She rose mechanically to her feet, and at the same time Mrs. Milray sat down.

"You will find Miss Milray," she continued, with the same glacial hauteur, "a very agreeable and cultivated lady."

Clementina said nothing; and Mrs. Milray added,

"And I hope she may have the happiness of being more useful to you than I have."

"What do you mean, Mrs. Milray?" Clementina asked with unexpected spirit and courage.

"I mean simply this, that I have not succeeded in putting you on your guard against your love of admiration--especially the admiration of gentlemen. A young girl can't be too careful how she accepts the attentions of gentlemen, and if she seems to invite them--"

"Mrs. Milray cried Clementina. "How can you say such a thing to me?"

"How? I shall have to be plain with you, I see. Perhaps I have not considered that, after all, you know nothing about life and are not to blame for things that a person born and bred in the world would understand from childhood. If you don't know already, I can tell you that the way you have behaved with Lord Lioncourt during the last two or three days, and the way you showed your pleasure the other night in his ridiculous flatteries of you, was enough to make you the talk of the whole steamer. I advise you for your own sake to take my warning in time. You are very young, and inexperienced and ignorant, but that will not save you in the eyes of the world if you keep on." Mrs. Milray rose. "And now I will leave you to think of what I have said. Here is the letter for Miss Milray--"

Clementina shook her head. "I don't want it."

"You don't want it? But I have written it at Mr. Milray's request, and I shall certainly leave it with you!"

"If you do," said Clementina, "I shall not take it!"

"And what shall I say to Mr. Milray?"

"What you have just said to me."

"What have I said to you?"

"That I'm a bold girl, and that I've tried to make men admira me."

Mrs. Milray stopped as if suddenly daunted by a fact that had not occurred to her before. "Did I say that?"

"The same as that."

"I didn't mean that--I--merely meant to put you on your guard. It may be because you are so innocent yourself, that you can't imagine what others think, and--I did it out of my regard for you."

Clementina did not answer.

Mrs. Milray went on, "That was why I was so provoked with you. I think that for a young girl to stand up and dance alone before a whole steamer full of strangers"--Clementina looked at her without speaking, and Mrs. Milray hastened to say, "To be sure I advised you to do it, but I certainly was surprised that you should give an encore. But no matter, now. This letter--"

"I can't take it, Mrs. Milray," said Clementina, with a swelling heart.

"Now, listen!" urged Mrs. Milray. "You think I'm just saying it because, if you don't take it I shall have to tell Mr. Milray I was so hateful to you, you couldn't. Well, I should hate to tell him that; but that isn't the reason. There!" She tore the letter in pieces, and threw it on the floor. Clementina did not make any sign of seeing this, and Mrs. Milray dropped upon her chair again. "Oh, how hard you are! Can't you say something to me?"

Clementina did not lift her eyes. "I don't feel like saying anything just now."

Mrs. Milray was silent a moment. Then she sighed. "Well, you may hate me, but I shall always be your friend. What hotel are you going to in Liverpool?"

"I don't know," said Clementina.

"You had better come to the one where we go. I'm afraid Mrs. Lander won't know how to manage very well, and we've been in Liverpool so often."

May I speak to her about it?"

"If you want to," Clementina coldly assented.

"I see!" said Mrs. Milray. "You don't want to be under the same roof with me. Well, you needn't! But I'll tell you a good hotel: the one that the trains start out of; and I'll send you that letter for Miss Milray." Clementina was silent. "Well, I'll send it, anyway."

Mrs. Milray went away in sudden tears, but the girl remained dry-eyed.

XIX.

Mrs. Lander realized when the ship came to anchor in the stream at Liverpool that she had not been seasick a moment during the voyage. In the brisk cold of the winter morning, as they came ashore in the tug, she fancied a property of health in the European atmosphere, which she was sure would bring her right up, if she stayed long enough; and a regret that she had never tried it with Mr. Lander mingled with her new hopes for herself.

But Clementina looked with home-sick eyes at the strangeness of the alien scene: the pale, low heaven which seemed not to be clouded and yet was so dim; the flat shores with the little railroad trains running in and out over them; the grimy bulks of the city, and the shipping in the river, sparse and sombre after the gay forest of sails and stacks at New York.

She did not see the Milrays after she left the tug, in the rapid dispersal of the steamer's passengers. They both took leave of her at the dock, and Mrs. Milray whispered with penitence in her voice and eyes, "I will write," but the girl did not answer.

Before Mrs. Lander's trunks and her own were passed, she saw Lord Lioncourt going away with his heavily laden man at his heels. Mr. Ewins came up to see if he could help her through the customs, but she believed that he had come at Mrs. Milray's bidding, and she thanked him so prohibitively that he could not insist. The English clergyman who had spoken to her the morning after the charity entertainment left his wife with Mrs. Lander, and came to her help, and then Mr. Ewins went his way.

The clergyman, who appeared to feel the friendlessness of the young girl and the old woman a charge laid upon him, bestowed a sort of fatherly protection upon them both. He advised them to stop at a hotel for a few hours and take the later train for London that he and his wife were going up by; they drove to the hotel together, where Mrs. Lander could not be kept from paying the omnibus, and made them have luncheon with her. She allowed the clergyman to get her tickets, and she could not believe that he had taken second class tickets for himself and his wife. She said that she had never heard of anyone travelling second class before, and she assured him that they never did it in America. She begged him to let

her pay the difference, and bring his wife into her compartment, which the guard had reserved for her. She urged that the money was nothing to her, compared with the comfort of being with some one you knew; and the clergyman had to promise that as they should be neighbors, he would look in upon her, whenever the train stopped long enough.

Before it began to move, Clementina thought she saw Lord Lioncourt hurrying past their carriage-window. At Rugby the clergyman appeared, but almost before he could speak, Lord Lioncourt's little red face showed at his elbow. He asked Clementina to present him to Mrs. Lander, who pressed him to get into her compartment; the clergyman vanished, and Lord Lioncourt yielded.

Mrs. Lander found him able to tell her the best way to get to Florence, whose situation he seemed to know perfectly; he confessed that he had been there rather often. He made out a little itinerary for going straight through by sleeping-car as soon as you crossed the Channel; she had said that she always liked a through train when she could get it, and the less stops the better. She bade Clementina take charge of the plan and not lose it; without it she did not see what they could do. She conceived of him as a friend of Clementina's, and she lost in the strange environment the shyness she had with most people. She told him how Mr. Lander had made his money, and from what beginnings he rose to be ignorant of what he really was worth when he died. She dwelt upon the diseases they had suffered, and at the thought of his death, so unnecessary in view of the good that the air was already doing her in Europe, she shed tears.

Lord Lioncourt was very polite, but there was no resumption of the ship's comradery in his manner. Clementina could not know how quickly this always drops from people who have been fellow-passengers; and she wondered if he were guarding himself from her because she had danced at the charity entertainment. The poison which Mrs. Milray had instilled worked in her thoughts while she could not help seeing how patient he was with all Mrs. Lander's questions; he answered them with a simplicity of his own, or laughed and put them by, when they were quite impossible. Many of them related to the comparative merits of English and American railroads, and what he thought himself of these. Mrs. Lander noted the difference of the English stations; but she did not see much in the landscape to examine him upon. She required him to tell her why the rocks they saw were not crows, and she was not satisfied that he should say the country seat she pointed out was a castle when it was plainly deficient in battlements. She based upon his immovable confidence in respect to it an inquiry into the structure of English society, and she made him tell her what a lord was, and a commoner, and how the royal family differed from both. She asked him how he came to be a lord, and when he said that it was a peerage of George the Third's creation, she remembered that George III. was the one we took up arms against. She found that Lord Lioncourt knew of our revolution generally, but was ignorant of such particulars as the Battle of Bunker Hill, and the Surrender of Cornwallis, as well as the throwing of the Tea into Boston Harbor; he was much struck by this incident, and said, And quite right, he was sure.

He told Clementina that her friends the Milrays had taken the steamer for London in the morning. He believed they were going to Egypt for the winter. Cairo, he said, was great fun, and he advised Mrs. Lander, if she found Florence a bit dull, to push on there. She asked if it was an easy place to get to, and he assured her that it was very easy from Italy.

Mrs. Lander was again at home in her world of railroads and hotels; but she confessed, after he left them at the next station, that she should have felt more at home if he had been going on to London with them. She philosophized him to the disadvantage of her own countrymen as much less offish than a great many New York and Boston people. He had given her a good opinion of the whole English nation; and the clergyman, who had been so nice to them at Liverpool, confirmed her friendly impressions of England by getting her a small omnibus at the station in London before he got a cab for himself and his wife, and drove away to complete his own journey on another road. She celebrated the omnibus as if it were an effect of his goodness in her behalf. She admired its capacity for receiving all their trunks, and saving the trouble and delay of the express, which always vexed her so much in New York, and which had nearly failed in getting her baggage to the steamer in time.

The omnibus remained her chief association with London, for she decided to take the first through train for Italy in the morning. She wished to be settled, by which she meant placed in a Florentine hotel for the winter. That lord, as she now began and always continued to call Lioncourt, had first given her the name of the best little hotel in Florence, but as it had neither elevator nor furnace heat in it, he agreed in the end that it would not do for her, and mentioned the most modern and expensive house on the Lungarno. He told her he did not think she need telegraph for rooms; but she took this precaution before leaving London, and was able to secure them at a price which seemed to her quite as much as she would have had to pay for the same rooms at a first class hotel on the Back Bay.

The manager had reserved for her one of the best suites, which had just been vacated by a Russian princess. "I guess you better cable to your folks where you ah', Clementina," she said. "Because if you're satisfied, I am, and I presume we sha'n't want to change as long as we stay in Florence. My, but it's sightly!" She joined Clementina a moment at the windows looking upon the Arno, and the hills beyond it. "I guess you'll spend most of your time settin' at this winder, and I sha'n't blame you."

They had arrived late in the dull, soft winter afternoon. The landlord led the way himself to their apartment, and asked if they would have fire; a facchino came in and kindled roaring blazes on the hearths; at the same time a servant lighted all the candles on the tables and mantels. They both gracefully accepted the fees that Mrs. Lander made Clementina give them; the facchino kissed the girl's hand. "My!" said Mrs. Lander, "I guess you never had your hand kissed before."

The hotel developed advantages which, if not those she was used to, were still advantages. The halls were warmed by a furnace, and she came to like the little logs burning in her rooms. In the care of her own fire, she went back to the simple time of her life in the country, and chose to kindle it herself when it died out, with the fagots of broom that blazed up so briskly.

In the first days of her stay she made inquiry for the best American doctor in Florence; and she found him so intelligent that she at once put her liver in his charge, with a history of her diseases and symptoms of every kind. She told him that she was sure that he could have cured Mr. Lander, if he had only had him in time; she exacted a new prescription from him for herself, and made him order some quinine pills for Clementina against the event of her feeling debilitated by the air of Florence.

XX.

In these first days a letter came to Clementina from Mrs. Lander's banker, enclosing the introduction which Mrs. Milray had promised to her sister-in-law. It was from Mr. Milray, as before, and it was in Mrs. Milray's handwriting; but no message from her came with it. To Clementina it explained itself, but she had to explain it to Mrs. Lander. She had to tell her of Mrs. Milray's behavior after the entertainment on the steamer, and Mrs. Lander said that Clementina had done just exactly right; and they both decided, against some impulses of curiosity in Clementina's heart, that she should not make use of the introduction.

The 'Hotel des Financieres' was mainly frequented by rich Americans full of ready money, and by rich Russians of large credit. Better Americans and worse, went, like the English, to smaller and cheaper hotels; and Clementina's acquaintance was confined to mothers as shy and ungrammatical as Mrs. Lander herself, and daughters blankly indifferent to her. Mrs. Lander drove out every day when it did not rain, and she took Clementina with her, because the doctor said it would do them both good; but otherwise the girl remained pent in their apartment. The doctor found her a teacher, and she kept on with her French, and began to take lessons in Italian; she spoke with no one but her teacher, except when the doctor came. At the table d'hote she heard talk of the things that people seemed to come to Florence for: pictures, statues, palaces, famous places; and it made her ashamed of not knowing about them. But she could not go to see these things alone, and Mrs. Lander, in the content she felt with all her circumstances, seemed not to suppose that Clementina could care for anything but the comfort of the hotel and the doctor's visits. When the girl began to get letters from home in answer to the first she had written back, boasting how beautiful Florence was, they assumed that she was very gay, and demanded full accounts of her pleasures. Her brother Jim gave something of the village news, but he said he supposed that she would not care for that, and she would probably be too proud to speak to them when she came home. The Richlings had

called in to share the family satisfaction in Clementina's first experiences, and Mrs. Richling wrote her very sweetly of their happiness in them. She charged her from the rector not to forget any chance of self-improvement in the allurements of society, but to make the most of her rare opportunities. She said that they had got a guide-book to Florence, with a plan of the city, and were following her in the expeditions they decided she must be making every day; they were reading up the Florentine history in Sismondi's Italian Republics, and she bade Clementina be sure and see all the scenes of Savonarola's martyrdom, so that they could talk them over together when she returned.

Clementina wondered what Mrs. Richling would think if she told her that all she knew of Florence was what she overheard in the talk of the girls in the hotel, who spoke before her of their dances and afternoon teas, and evenings at the opera, and drives in the Cascine, and parties to Fiesole, as if she were not by.

The days and weeks passed, until Carnival was half gone, and Mrs. Lander noticed one day that Clementina appeared dull. "You don't seem to get much acquainted?" she suggested.

"Oh, there's plenty of time," said Clementina.

"I wish there was somebody you could go round with, and see the place. Shouldn't you like to see the place?" Mrs. Lander pursued.

"There's no hurry about it, Mrs. Lander. It will stay as long as we do."

Mrs. Lander was thoughtfully silent. Then she said, "I declare, I've got half a mind to make you send that letter to Miss Milray, after all. What difference if Mrs. Milray did act so ugly to you? He never did, and she's his sister."

"Oh, I don't want to send it, Mrs. Lander; you mustn't ask me to. I shall get along," said Clementina. The recognition of her forlornness deepened it, but she was cheerfuller, for no reason, the next morning; and that afternoon, the doctor unexpectedly came upon a call which he made haste to say was not professional.

"I've just come from another patient of mine, and I promised to ask if you had not crossed on the same ship with a brother of hers,--Mr. Milray."

Clementina and Mrs. Lander looked guiltily at each other. "I guess we did," Mrs. Lander owned at last, with a reluctant sigh.

"Then, she says you have a letter for her."

The doctor spoke to both, but his looks confessed that he was not ignorant of the fact when Mrs. Lander admitted, "Well Clementina, there she has."

"She wants to know why you haven't delivered it," the doctor blurted out.

Mrs. Lander looked at Clementina. "I guess she ha'n't quite got round to it yet, have you, Clementina?"

The doctor put in: "Well, Miss Milray is rather a dangerous person to keep waiting. If you don't deliver it pretty soon, I shouldn't be surprised if she came to get it." Dr. Welwright was a young man in the early thirties, with a laugh that a great many ladies said had done more than any one thing for them, and he now prescribed it for Clementina. But it did not seem to help her in the trouble her face betrayed.

Mrs. Lander took the word, "Well, I wouldn't say it to everybody. But you're our doctor, and I guess you won't mind it. We don't like the way Mrs. Milray acted to Clementina, in the ship, and we don't want to be beholden to any of her folks. I don't know as Clementina wants me to tell you just what it was, and I won't; but that's the long and sho't of it."

"I'm sorry," the doctor said. "I've never met Mrs. Milray, but Miss Milray has such a pleasant house, and likes to get young people about her. There are a good many young people in your hotel, though, and I suppose you all have a very good time here together." He ended by speaking to Clementina, and now he said he had done his errand, and must be going.

When he was gone, Mrs. Lander faltered, "I don't know but what we made a mistake, Clementina."

"It's too late to worry about it now," said the girl.

"We ha'n't bound to stay in Florence," said Mrs. Lander, thoughtfully.

"I only took the rooms by the week, and we can go, any time, Clementina, if you are uncomf'table bein' here on Miss Milray's account. We could go to Rome; they say Rome's a nice place; or to Egypt."

"Mrs. Milray's in Egypt," Clementina suggested.

"That's true," Mrs. Lander admitted, with a sigh. After a while she went on, "I don't know as we've got any right to keep the letter. It belongs to her, don't it?"

"I guess it belongs to me, as much as it does to her," said Clementina. "If it's to her, it's for me. I am not going to send it, Mrs. Landa."

They were still in this conclusion when early in the following afternoon Miss Milray's cards were brought up for Mrs. Lander and Miss Claxon.

"Well, I decla'e!" cried Mrs. Lander. "That docta: must have gone straight and told her what we said."

"He had no right to," said Clementina, but neither of them was displeased, and after it was over, Mrs. Lander said that any one would have thought the call was for her, instead of Clementina, from the way

Miss Milray kept talking to her. She formed a high opinion of her; and Miss Milray put Clementina in mind of Mr. Milray; she had the same hair of chiseled silver, and the same smile; she moved like him, and talked like him; but with a greater liveliness. She asked fondly after him, and made Clementina tell her if he seemed quite well, and in good spirits; she was civilly interested in Mrs. Milray's health. At the embarrassment which showed itself in the girl, she laughed and said, "Don't imagine I don't know all about it, Miss Claxon! My sister-in-law has owned up very handsomely; she isn't half bad, as the English say, and I think she likes owning up if she can do it safely."

"And you don't think," asked Mrs. Lander, "that Clementina done wrong to dance that way?"

Clementina blushed, and Miss Milray laughed again. "If you'll let Miss Claxon come to a little party I'm giving she may do her dance at my house; but she sha'n't be obliged to do it, or anything she doesn't like. Don't say she hasn't a gown ready, or something of that kind! You don't know the resources of Florence, and how the dress makers here doat upon doing impossible things in no time at all, and being ready before they promise. If you'll put Miss Claxon in my hands, I'll see that she's dressed for my dance. I live out on one of the hills over there, that you see from your windows"--she nodded toward them--"in a beautiful villa, too cold for winter, and too hot for summer, but I think Miss Claxon can endure its discomfort for a day, if you can spare her, and she will consent to leave you to the tender mercies of your maid, and "Miss Milray paused at the kind of unresponsive blank to which she found herself talking, and put up her lorgnette, to glance from Mrs. Lander to Clementina. The girl said, with embarrassment, "I don't think I ought to leave Mrs. Landa, just now. She isn't very well, and I shouldn't like to leave her alone."

"But we're just as much obliged to you as if she could come," Mrs. Lander interrupted; "and later on, maybe she can. You see, we han't got any maid, yit. Well, we did have one at Woodlake, but she made us do so many things for her, that we thought we should like to do a few things for ouaselves, awhile."

If Miss Milray perhaps did not conceive the situation, exactly, she said, Oh, they were quite right in that; but she might count upon Miss Claxon for her dance, might not she; and might not she do anything in her power for them? She rose to go, but Mrs. Lander took her at her word, so far as to say, Why, yes, if she could tell Clementina the best place to get a dress she guessed the child would be glad enough to come to the dance.

"Tell her!" Miss Milray cried. "I'll take her! Put on your hat, my dear," she said to Clementina, "and come with me now. My carriage is at your door."

Clementina looked at Mrs. Lander, who said, "Go, of cou'se, child. I wish I could go, too."

"Do come, too," Miss Milray entreated.

"No, no," said Mrs. Lander, flattered. "I a'n't feeling very well, to-day. I guess I'm better off at home. But don't you hurry back on my account, Clementina." While the girl was gone to put on her hat she talked on about her. "She's the best gul in the wo'ld, and she won't be one of the poorest; and I shall feel that I'm doin' just what Mr. Landa would have wanted I should. He picked her out himself, moa than three yea's ago, when we was drivin' past her house at Middlemount, and it was to humor him afta he was gone, moa than anything else, that I took her. Well, she wa'n't so very easy to git, either, I can tell you." She cut short her history of the affair to say when Clementina came back, "I want you should do the odderin' yourself, Miss Milray, and not let her scrimp with the money. She wants to git some visitin' cahds; and if you miss anything about her that she'd ought to have, or that any otha yong lady's got, won't you just git it for her?"

As soon as she imagined the case, Miss Milray set herself to overcome Mrs. Lander's reluctance from a maid. She prevailed with her to try the Italian woman whom she sent her, and in a day the genial Maddalena had effaced the whole tradition of the bleak Ellida. It was not essential to the understanding which instantly established itself between them that they should have any language in common. They babbled at each other, Mrs. Lander in her Bostonized Yankee, and Maddalena in her guttural Florentine, and Mrs. Lander was flattered to find how well she knew Italian.

Miss Milray had begun being nice to Clementina in fealty to her brother, who so seldom made any proof of her devotion to him, and to whom she had remained passionately true through his shady past. She was eager to humor his whim for the little country girl who had taken his fancy, because it was his whim, and not because she had any hopes that Clementina would justify it. She had made Dr. Welwright tell her all he knew about her, and his report of her grace and beauty had piqued her curiosity; his account of the forlorn dullness of her life with Mrs. Lander in their hotel had touched her heart. But she was still skeptical when she went to get her letter of introduction; when she brought Clementina home from the dressmaker's she asked if she might kiss her, and said she was already in love with her.

Her love might have made her wish to do everything for her that she now began to do, but it simplified the situation to account for her to the world as the ward of Mrs. Lander, who was as rich as she was vulgar, and it was with Clementina in this character that Miss Milray began to make the round of afternoon teas, and inspired invitations for her at pleasant houses, by giving a young ladies' lunch for her at her own. Before the night of her little dance, she had lost any misgiving she had felt at first, in the delight of seeing Clementina take the world as if she had thought it would always behave as amiably as that, and as if she had forgotten her unkind experiences to the contrary. She knew from Mrs. Lander how the girls at their hotel had left her out, but Miss Milray could not see that Clementina met them with rancor, when her authority brought them together. If the child was humiliated by her past in the gross lonely luxury of Mrs. Lander's life or the unconscious poverty of

her own home, she did not show it in the presence of the world that now opened its arms to her. She remained so tranquil in the midst of all the novel differences, that it made her friend feel rather vulgar in her anxieties for her, and it was not always enough to find that she had not gone wrong simply because she had hold still, and had the gift of waiting for things to happen. Sometimes when Miss Milray had almost decided that her passivity was the calm of a savage, she betrayed so sweet and grateful a sense of all that was done for her, that her benefactress decided that, she was not rustic, but was sylvan in a way of her own, and not so much ignorant as innocent. She discovered that she was not ignorant even of books, but with no literary effect from them she had transmitted her reading into the substance of her native gentleness, and had both ideas and convictions. When Clementina most affected her as an untried wilderness in the conventional things she most felt her equality to any social fortune that might befall her, and then she would have liked to see her married to a title, and taking the glory of this world with an unconsciousness that experience would never wholly penetrate. But then again she felt that this would be somehow a profanation, and she wanted to pack her up and get her back to Middlemount before anything of the kind should happen. She gave Milray these impressions of Clementina in the letter she wrote to thank him for her, and to scold him for sending the girl to her. She accused him of wishing to get off on her a riddle which he could not read himself; but she owned that the charm of Clementina's mystery was worth a thousand times the fatigue of trying to guess her out and that she was more and more infatuated with her every day.

In the meantime, Miss Milray's little dance grew upon her till it became a very large one that filled her villa to overflowing when the time came for it. She lived on one of the fine avenues of the Oltrarno region, laid out in the brief period of prosperity which Florence enjoyed as the capital of Italy. The villa was built at that time, and it was much newer than the house on Seventeenth street in New York, where she spent the girlhood that had since prolonged itself beyond middle life with her. She had first lived abroad in the Paris of the Second Empire, and she had been one winter in Rome, but she had settled definitely in Florence before London became an American colony, so that her friends were chiefly Americans, though she had a wide international acquaintance. Perhaps her habit of taking her brother's part, when he was a black sheep, inclined her to mercy with people who had not been so blameless in their morals as they were in their minds and manners. She exacted that they should be interesting and agreeable, and not too threadbare; but if they had something that decently buttoned over the frayed places, she did not frown upon their poverty. Bohemians of all kinds liked her; Philistines liked her too; and in such a place as Florence, where the Philistines themselves are a little Bohemian, she might be said to be very popular. You met persons whom you did not quite wish to meet at her house, but if these did not meet you there, it was your loss.

On the night of the dance the line of private carriages, remises and cabs, lined the Viale Ariosto for a mile up and down before her gates, where young artists of both sexes arrived on foot. By this time her passion for Clementina was at its height. She had Maddalena bring her

out early in the evening, and made her dress under her own eye and her French maid's, while Maddalena went back to comfort Mrs. Lander.

"I hated to leave her," said Clementina. "I don't believe she's very well."

"Isn't she always ill?" demanded Miss Milray. She embraced the girl again, as if once were not enough. "Clementina, if Mrs. Lander won't give you to me, I'm going to steal you. Do you know what I want you to do tonight? I want you to stand up with me, and receive, till the dancing begins, as if it were your coming-out. I mean to introduce everybody to you. You'll be easily the prettiest girl, there, and you'll have the nicest gown, and I don't mean that any of your charms shall be thrown away. You won't be frightened?"

"No, I don't believe I shall," said Clementina. "You can tell me what to do."

The dress she wore was of pale green, like the light seen in thin woods; out of it shone her white shoulders, and her young face, as if rising through the verdurous light. The artists, to a man and woman, wished to paint her, and severally told her so, during the evening which lasted till morning. She was not surprised when Lord Lioncourt appeared, toward midnight, and astonished Miss Milray by claiming acquaintance with Clementina. He asked about Mrs. Lander, and whether she had got to Florence without losing the way; he laughed but he seemed really to care. He took Clementina out to supper, when the time came; and she would have topped him by half a head as she leaned on his arm, if she had not considerably drooped and trailed a little after him.

She could not know what a triumph he was making for her; and it was merely part of the magic of the time that Mr. Ewins should come in presently with one of the ladies. He had arrived in Florence that day, and had to be brought unasked. He put on the effect of an old friend with her; but Clementina's curiosity was chiefly taken with a tall American, whom she thought very handsome. His light yellow hair was brushed smooth across his forehead like a well-behaving boy's; he was dressed like the other men, but he seemed not quite happy in his evening coat, and his gloves which he smote together uneasily from time to time. He appeared to think that somehow the radiant Clementina would know how he felt; he did not dance, and he professed to have found himself at the party by a species of accident. He told her that he was out in Europe looking after a patent right that he had just taken hold of, and was having only a middling good time. He pretended surprise to hear her say that she was having a first-rate time, and he tried to reason her out of it. He confessed that from the moment he came into the room he had made up his mind to take her to supper, and had never been so disgusted in his life as when he saw that little lord toddling off with her, and trying to look as large as life. He asked her what a lord was like, anyway, and he made her laugh all the time.

He told her his name, G. W. Hinkle, and asked whether she would be likely to remember it if they ever met again.

Another man who interested her very much was a young Russian, with curling hair and neat, small features who spoke better English than she did, and said he was going to be a writer, but had not yet decided whether to write in Russian or French; she supposed he had wanted her advice, but he did not wait for it, or seem to expect it. He was very much in earnest, while he fanned her, and his earnestness amused her as much as the American's irony. He asked which city of America she came from, and when she said none, he asked which part of America. She answered New England, and he said, "Oh, yes, that is where they have the conscience." She did not know what he meant, and he put before her the ideal of New England girlhood which he had evolved from reading American novels. "Are you like that?" he demanded.

She laughed, and said, "Not a bit," and asked him if he had ever met such an American girl, and he said, frankly, No; the American girls were all mercenary, and cared for nothing but money, or marrying titles. He added that he had a title, but he would not wear it.

Clementina said she did not believe she cared for titles, and then he said, "But you care for money." She denied it, but as if she had confessed it, he went on: "The only American that I have seen with that conscience was a man. I will tell you of him, if you wish."

He did not wait for her answer. "It was in Naples--at Pompeii. I saw at the first glance that he was different from other Americans, and I resolved to know him. He was there in company with a stupid boy, whose tutor he was; and he told me that he was studying to be a minister of the Protestant church. Next year he will go home to be consecrated. He promised to pass through Florence in the spring, and he will keep his word. Every act, every word, every thought of his is regulated by conscience. It is terrible, but it is beautiful." All the time, the Russian was fanning Clementina, with every outward appearance of flirtation. "Will you dance again? No? I should like to draw such a character as his in a romance."

XXII.

It was six o'clock in the morning before Miss Milray sent Clementina home in her carriage. She would have kept her to breakfast, but Clementina said she ought to go on Mrs. Lander's account, and she wished to go on her own.

She thought she would steal to bed without waking her, but she was stopped by the sound of groans when she entered their apartment; the light gushed from Mrs. Lander's door. Maddalena came out, and blessed the name of her Latin deity (so much more familiar and approachable than the Anglo-Saxon divinity) that Clementina had come at last, and poured upon her the story of a night of suffering for Mrs. Lander. Through her story came the sound of Mrs. Lander's voice plaintively reproachful,

summoning Clementina to her bedside. "Oh, how could you go away and leave me? I've been in such misery the whole night long, and the docta didn't do a thing for me. I'm puffectly wohn out, and I couldn't make my wants known with that Italian crazy-head. If it hadn't been for the portyary comin' in and interpretin', when the docta left, I don't know what I should have done. I want you should give him a twenty-leary note just as quick as you see him; and oh, isn't the docta comin'?"

Clementina set about helping Maddalena put the room, which was in an impassioned disorder, to rights; and she made Mrs. Lander a cup of her own tea, which she had brought from S. S. Pierces in passing through Boston; it was the first thing, the sufferer said, that had saved her life. Clementina comforted her, and promised her that the doctor should be there very soon; and before Mrs. Lander fell away to sleep, she was so far out of danger as to be able to ask how Clementina had enjoyed herself, and to be glad that she had such a good time.

The doctor would not wake her when he came; he said that she had been through a pretty sharp gastric attack, which would not recur, if she ate less of the most unwholesome things she could get, and went more into the air, and walked a little. He did not seem alarmed, and he made Clementina tell him about the dance, which he had been called from to Mrs. Lander's bed of pain. He joked her for not having missed him; in the midst of their fun, she caught herself in the act of yawning, and the doctor laughed, and went away.

Maddalena had to call her, just before dinner, when Mrs. Lander had been awake long enough to have sent for the doctor to explain the sort of gone feeling which she was now the victim of. It proved, when he came, to be hunger, and he prescribed tea and toast and a small bit of steak. Before he came she had wished to arrange for going home at once, and dying in her own country. But his opinion so far prevailed with her that she consented not to telegraph for berths. "I presume," she said, "it'll do, any time before the icebugs begin to run. But I d' know, afta this, Clementina, as I can let you leave me quite as you be'n doin'. There was a lot of flowas come for you, this aftanoon, but I made Maddalena put 'em on the balcony, for I don't want you should get poisoned with 'em in your sleep; I always head they was dangerous in a person's 'bed room. I d' know as they are, eitha."

Maddalena seemed to know that Mrs. Lander was speaking of the flowers. She got them and gave them to Clementina, who found they were from some of the men she had danced with. Mr. Hinkle had sent a vast bunch of violets, which presently began to give out their sweetness in the warmth of the room, and the odor brought him before her with his yellow hair, scrupulously parted at the side, and smoothly brushed, showing his forehead very high up. Most of the gentlemen wore their hair parted in the middle, or falling in a fringe over their brows; the Russian's was too curly to part, and Lord Lioncourt had none except at the sides.

She laughed, and Mrs. Lander said, "Tell about it, Clementina," and she began with Mr. Hinkle, and kept coming back to him from the others. Mrs. Lander wished most to know how that lord had got down to Florence; and

Clementina said he was coming to see her.

"Well, I hope to goodness he won't come to-day, I a'n't fit to see anybody."

"Oh, I guess he won't come till to-morrow," said Clementina; she repeated some of the compliments she had got, and she told of all Miss Milray's kindness to her, but Mrs. Lander said, "Well, the next time, I'll thank her not to keep you so late." She was astonished to hear that Mr. Ewins was there, and "Any of the nasty things out of the hotel the'e?" she asked.

"Yes," Clementina said, "the'e we'e, and some of them we'e very nice. They wanted to know if I wouldn't join them, and have an aftanoon of our own here in the hotel, so that people could come to us all at once."

She went back to the party, and described the rest of it. When she came to the part about the Russian, she told what he had said of American girls being fond of money, and wanting to marry foreign noblemen.

Mrs. Lander said, "Well, I hope you a'n't a going to get married in a hurry, anyway, and when you do I hope you'll pick out a nice American."

"Oh, yes," said Clementina.

Mrs. Lander had their dinner brought to their apartment. She cheered up, and she was in some danger of eating too much, but with Clementina's help she denied herself. Their short evening was one of the gayest; Clementina declared she was not the least sleepy, but she went to bed at nine, and slept till nine the next day.

Mrs. Lander, the doctor confessed, the second morning, was more shaken up by, her little attack than he had expected; but she decided to see the gentleman who had asked to call on Clementina. Lord Lioncourt did not come quite so soon as she was afraid he might, and when he came he talked mostly to Clementina. He did not get to Mrs. Lander until just before he was going. She hospitably asked him what his hurry was, and then he said that he was off for Rome, that evening at seven. He was nice about hoping she was comfortable in the hotel, and he sympathized with her in her wish that there was a set-bowl in her room; she told him that she always tried to have one, and he agreed that it must be very convenient where any one was, as she said, sick so much.

Mr. Hinkle came a day later; and then it appeared that he had a mother whose complaints almost exactly matched Mrs. Lander's. He had her photograph with him, and showed it; he said if you had no wife to carry round a photograph of, you had better carry your mother's; and Mrs. Lander praised him for being a good son. A good son, she added, always made a good husband; and he said that was just what he told the young ladies himself, but it did not seem to make much impression on them. He kept Clementina laughing; and he pretended that he was going to bring a diagram of his patent right for her to see, because she would be interested in a gleaner like that; and he said he wished her father could

see it, for it would be sure to interest the kind of man Mrs. Lander described him to be. "I'll be along up there just about the time you get home, Miss Clementina. Then did you say it would be?"

"I don't know; pretty ea'ly in the spring, I guess."

She looked at Mrs. Lander, who said, "Well, it depends upon how I git up my health. I couldn't bea' the voyage now."

Mr. Hinkle said, "No, best look out for your health, if it takes all summer. I shouldn't want you to hurry on my account. Your time is my time. All I want is for Miss Clementina, here, to personally conduct me to her father. If I could get him to take hold of my gleaner in New England, we could make the blueberry crop worth twice what it is."

Mrs. Lander perceived that he was joking; and she asked what he wanted to run away for when the young Russian's card came up. He said, "Oh, give every man a chance," and he promised that he would look in every few days, and see how she was getting along. He opened the door after he had gone out, and put his head in to say in confidence to Mrs. Lander, but so loud that Clementina could hear, "I suppose she's told you who the belle of the ball was, the other night? Went out to supper with a lord!" He seemed to think a lord was such a good joke that if you mentioned one you had to laugh.

The Russian's card bore the name Baron Belsky, with the baron crossed out in pencil, and he began to attack in Mrs. Lander the demerits of the American character, as he had divined them. He instructed her that her countrymen existed chiefly to make money; that they were more shopkeepers than the English and worse snobs; that their women were trivial and their men sordid; that their ambition was to unite their families with the European aristocracies; and their doctrine of liberty and equality was a shameless hypocrisy. This followed hard upon her asking, as she did very promptly, why he had scratched out the title on his card. He told her that he wished to be known solely as an artist, and he had to explain to her that he was not a painter, but was going to be a novelist. She taxed him with never having been in America, but he contended that as all America came to Europe he had the materials for a study of the national character at hand, without the trouble of crossing the ocean. In return she told him that she had not been the least sea-sick during the voyage, and that it was no trouble at all; then he abruptly left her and went over to beg a cup of tea from Clementina, who sat behind the kettle by the window.

"I have heard this morning from that American I met in Pompeii" he began. "He is coming northward, and I am going down to meet him in Rome."

Mrs. Lander caught the word, and called across the room, "Why, a'n't that whe'e that lo'd's gone?"

Clementina said yes, and while the kettle boiled, she asked if Baron Belsky were going soon.

"Oh, in a week or ten days, perhaps. I shall know when he arrives. Then I shall go. We write to each other every day." He drew a letter from his breast pocket. "This will give you the idea of his character," and he read, "If we believe that the hand of God directs all our actions, how can we set up our theories of conduct against what we feel to be his inspiration?"

"What do you think of that?" he demanded.

"I don't believe that God directs our wrong actions," said Clementina.

"How! Is there anything outside of God?"

"I don't know whether there is or not. But there is something that tempts me to do wrong, sometimes, and I don't believe that is God."

The Russian seemed struck. "I will write that to him!"

"No," said Clementina, "I don't want you to say anything about me to him."

"No, no!" said Baron Belsky, waving his hand reassuringly. "I would not mention your name!"

Mr. Ewins came in, and the Russian said he must go. Mrs. Lander tried to detain him, too, as she had tried to keep Mr. Hinkle, but he was inexorable. Mr. Ewins looked at the door when it had closed upon him. Mrs. Lander said, "That is one of the gentlemen that Clementina met the other night at the dance. He is a baron, but he scratches it out. You'd ought to head him go on about Americans."

"Yes," said Mr. Ewins coldly. "He's at our hotel, and he airs his peculiar opinions at the table d'hote pretty freely. He's a revolutionist of some kind, I fancy." He pronounced the epithet with an abhorrence befitting the citizen of a state born of revolution and a city that had cradled the revolt. "He's a Nihilist, I believe."

Mrs. Lander wished to know what that was, and he explained that it was a Russian who wanted to overthrow the Czar, and set up a government of the people, when they were not prepared for liberty.

"Then, maybe he isn't a baron at all," said Mrs. Lander.

"Oh, I believe he has a right to his title," Ewins answered. "It's a German one."

He said he thought that sort of man was all the more mischievous on account of his sincerity. He instanced a Russian whom a friend of his knew in Berlin, a man of rank like this fellow: he got to brooding upon the condition of working people and that kind of thing, till he renounced his title and fortune and went to work in an iron foundry.

Mr. Ewins also spoke critically of Mrs. Milray. He had met her in Egypt;

but you soon exhausted the interest of that kind of woman. He professed a great concern that Clementina should see Florence in just the right way, and he offered his services in showing her the place.

The Russian came the next day, and almost daily after that, in the interest with which Clementina's novel difference from other American girls seemed to inspire him. His imagination had transmuted her simple Yankee facts into something appreciable to a Slav of his temperament. He conceived of her as the daughter of a peasant, whose beauty had charmed the widow of a rich citizen, and who was to inherit the wealth of her adoptive mother. He imagined that the adoption had taken place at a much earlier period than the time when Clementina's visit to Mrs. Lander actually began, and that all which could be done had been done to efface her real character by indulgence and luxury.

His curiosity concerning her childhood, her home, her father and mother, her brothers and sisters, and his misunderstanding of everything she told him, amused her. But she liked him, and she tried to give him some notion of the things he wished so much to know. It always ended in a dissatisfaction, more or less vehement, with the outcome of American conditions as he conceived them.

"But you," he urged one day, "you who are a daughter of the fields and woods, why should you forsake that pure life, and come to waste yourself here?"

"Why, don't you think it's very nice in Florence?" she asked, with eyes of innocent interest.

"Nice! Nice! Do we live for what is nice? Is it enough that you have what you Americans call a nice time?"

Clementina reflected. "I wasn't doing much of anything at home, and I thought I might as well come with Mrs. Lander, if she wanted me so much." She thought in a certain way, that he was meddling with what was not his affair, but she believed that he was sincere in his zeal for the ideal life he wished her to lead, and there were some things she had heard about him that made her pity and respect him; his self-exile and his renunciation of home and country for his principles, whatever they were; she did not understand exactly. She would not have liked never being able to go back to Middlemount, or to be cut off from all her friends as this poor young Nihilist was, and she said, now, "I didn't expect that it was going to be anything but a visit, and I always supposed we should go back in the spring; but now Mrs. Lander is beginning to think she won't be well enough till fall."

"And why need you stay with her?"

"Because she's not very well," answered Clementina, and she smiled, a little triumphantly as well as tolerantly.

"She could hire nurses and doctors, all she wants with her money."

"I don't believe it would be the same thing, exactly, and what should I do if I went back?"

"Do? Teach! Uplift the lives about you."

"But you say it is better for people to live simply, and not read and think so much."

"Then labor in the fields with them."

Clementina laughed outright. "I guess if anyone saw me wo'king in the fields they would think I was a disgrace to the neighborhood."

Belsky gave her a stupefied glare through his spectacles. "I cannot undertand you Americans."

"Well, you must come ova to America, then, Mr. Belsky"--he had asked her not to call him by his title--"and then you would."

"No, I could not endure the disappointment. You have the great opportunity of the earth. You could be equal and just, and simple and kind. There is nothing to hinder you. But all you try to do is to get more and more money."

"Now, that isn't faia, Mr. Belsky, and you know it."

Well, then, you joke, joke--always joke. Like that Mr. Hinkle. He wants to make money with his patent of a gleaner, that will take the last grain of wheat from the poor, and he wants to joke--joke!

Clementina said, "I won't let you say that about Mr. Hinkle. You don't know him, or you wouldn't. If he jokes, why shouldn't he?"

Belsky made a gesture of rejection. "Oh, you are an American, too."

She had not grown less American, certainly, since she had left home; even the little conformities to Europe that she practiced were traits of Americanism. Clementina was not becoming sophisticated, but perhaps she was becoming more conventionalized. The knowledge of good and evil in things that had all seemed indifferently good to her once, had crept upon her, and she distinguished in her actions. She sinned as little as any young lady in Florence against the superstitions of society; but though she would not now have done a skirt-dance before a shipful of people, she did not afflict herself about her past errors. She put on the world, but she wore it simply and in most matters unconsciously. Some things were imparted to her without her asking or wishing, and merely in virtue of her youth and impressionability. She took them from her environment without knowing it, and in this way she was coming by an English manner and an English tone; she was only the less American for being rather English without trying, when other Americans tried so hard. In the region of harsh nasals, Clementina had never spoken through her nose, and she was now as unaffected in these alien inflections as in the tender cooings which used to rouse the misgivings of her brother Jim. When she

was with English people she employed them involuntarily, and when she was with Americans she measurably lost them, so that after half an hour with Mr. Hinkle, she had scarcely a trace of them, and with Mrs. Lander she always spoke with her native accent.

XXIII

One Sunday night, toward the end of Lent, Mrs. Lander had another of her attacks; she now began to call them so as if she had established an ownership in them. It came on from her cumulative over-eating, again, but the doctor was not so smiling as he had been with regard to the first. Clementina had got ready to drive out to Miss Milray's for one of her Sunday teas, but she put off her things, and prepared to spend the night at Mrs. Lander's bedside. "Well, I should think you would want to," said the sufferer. "I'm goin' to do everything for you, and you'd ought to be willing to give up one of youa junketin's for me. I'm sure I don't know what you see in 'em, anyway."

"Oh, I am willing, Mrs. Lander; I'm glad I hadn't stahed before it began." Clementina busied herself with the pillows under Mrs. Lander's dishevelled head, and the bedclothes disordered by her throes, while Mrs. Lander went on.

"I don't see what's the use of so much gaddin', anyway. I don't see as anything comes of it, but just to get a passal of wo'thless fellas afta you that think you'a going to have money. There's such a thing as two sides to everything, and if the favas is goin' to be all on one side I guess there'd betta be a clear undastandin' about it. I think I got a right to a little attention, as well as them that ha'n't done anything; and if I'm goin' to be left alone he'e to die among strangers every time one of my attacks comes on"--

The doctor interposed, "I don't think you're going to have a very bad attack, this time, Mrs. Lander."

"Oh, thank you, thank you, docta! But you can undastand, can't you, how I shall want to have somebody around that can undastand a little English?"

The doctor said, "Oh yes. And Miss Claxon and I can understand a good deal, between us, and we're going to stay, and see how a little morphine behaves with you."

Mrs. Lander protested, "Oh, I can't bea' mo'phine, docta."

"Did you ever try it?" he asked, preparing his little instrument to imbibe the solution.

"No; but Mr. Landa did, and it 'most killed him; it made him sick."

"Well, you're about as sick as you can be, now, Mrs. Lander, and if you don't die of this pin-prick"--he pushed the needle-point under the skin of her massive fore-arm--"I guess you'll live through it."

She shrieked, but as the pain began to abate, she gathered courage, and broke forth joyfully. "Why, it's beautiful, a'n't it? I declare it wo'ks like a cha'm. Well, I shall always keep mo'phine around after this, and when, I feel one of these attacks comin' on"--

"Send for a physician, Mrs. Lander," said Dr. Welwright, "and he'll know what to do."

"I an't so sure of that," returned Mrs. Lander fondly. "He would if you was the one. I declare I believe I could get up and walk right off, I feel so well."

"That's good. If you'll take a walk day after tomorrow it will help you a great deal more."

"Well, I shall always say that you've saved my life, this time, doctor; and Clementina she's stood by, nobly; I'll say that for her." She twisted her big head round on the pillow to get sight of the girl. "I'm all right, now; and don't you mind what I said. It's just my misery talkin'; I don't know what I did say; I felt so bad. But I'm frustrate, now, and I believe I could drop off to sleep, this minute. Why don't you go to your tea? You can, just as well as not!"

"Oh, I don't want to go, now, Mrs. Lander; I'd ratha stay."

"But there a'n't any more danger now, is the'e, docta?" Mrs. Lander appealed.

"No. There wasn't any danger before. But when you're quite yourself, I want to have a little talk with you, Mrs. Lander, about your diet. We must look after that."

"Why, docta, that's what I do do, now. I eat all the healthy things I lay my hands on, don't I, Clementina? And ha'n't you always at me about it?"

Clementina did not answer, and the doctor laughed. Well, I should like to know what more I could do!"

"Perhaps you could do less. We'll see about that. Better go to sleep, now, if you feel like it."

"Well, I will, if you'll make this silly child go to her tea. I s'pose she won't because I scolded her. She's an awful hand to lay anything up against you. You know you ah', Clementina! But I can say this, doctor: a betta child don't breathe, and I just couldn't live without her. Come he'e, Clementina, I want to kiss you once, before I go to sleep, so's to make su'a you don't bea' malice." She pulled Clementina down to kiss her, and babbled on affectionately and optimistically, till her talk

became the voice of her dreams, and then ceased altogether.

"You could go, perfectly well, Miss Claxon," said the doctor.

"No, I don't ca'e to go," answered Clementina. I'd ratha stay. If she should wake"--

"She won't wake, until long after you've got back; I'll answer for that. I'm going to stay here awhile. Go! I'll take the responsibility."

Clementina's face brightened. She wanted very much to go. She should meet some pleasant people; she always did, at Miss Milray's. Then the light died out of her gay eyes, and she set her lips. "No, I told her I shouldn't go."

"I didn't hear you," said Dr. Welwright. "A doctor has no eyes and ears except for the symptoms of his patients."

"Oh, I know," said Clementina. She had liked Dr. Welwright from the first, and she thought it was very nice of him to stay on, after he left Mrs. Lander's bedside, and help to make her lonesome evening pass pleasantly in the parlor. He jumped up finally, and looked at his watch. "Bless my soul!" he said, and he went in for another look at Mrs. Lander. When he came back, he said, "She's all right. But you've made me break an engagement, Miss Claxon. I was going to tea at Miss Milray's. She promised me I should meet you there."

It seemed a great joke; and Clementina offered to carry his excuses to Miss Milray, when she went to make her own.

She, went the next morning. Mrs. Lander insisted that she should go; she said that she was not going to have Miss Milray thinking that she wanted to keep her all to herself.

Miss Milray kissed the girl in full forgiveness, but she asked, "Did Dr. Welwright think it a very bad attack?"

"Has he been he'a?" returned Clementina.

Miss Milray laughed. "Doctors don't betray their patients--good doctors. No, he hasn't been here, if that will help you. I wish it would help me, but it won't, quite. I don't like to think of that old woman using you up, Clementina."

"Oh, she doesn't, Miss Milray. You mustn't think so. You don't know how good she is to me."

"Does she ever remind you of it?"

Clementina's eyes fell. "She isn't like herself when she doesn't feel well."

"I knew it!" Miss Milray triumphed. "I always knew that she was a

dreadful old tabby. I wish you were safely out of her clutches. Come and live with me, my dear, when Mrs. Lander gets tired of you. But she'll never get tired of you. You're just the kind of helpless mouse that such an old tabby would make her natural prey. But she sha'n't, even if another sort of cat has to get you! I'm sorry you couldn't come last night. Your little Russian was here, and went away early and very bitterly because you didn't come. He seemed to think there was nobody, and said so, in everything but words."

"Oh!" said Clementina. "Don't you think he's very nice, Miss Milray?"

"He's very mystical, or else so very simple that he seems so. I hope you can make him out."

Don't you think he's very much in earnest?

"Oh, as the grave, or the asylum. I shouldn't like him to be in earnest about me, if I were you."

"But that's just what he is!" Clementina told how the Russian had lectured her, and wished her to go back to the country and work in the fields.

"Oh, if that's all!" cried Miss Milray. I was afraid it was another kind of earnestness: the kind I shouldn't like if I were you."

"There's no danger of that, I guess." Clementina laughed, and Miss Milray went on:

"Another of your admirers was here; but he was not so inconsolable, or else he found consolation in staying on and talking about you, or joking."

"Oh, yes; Mr. Hinkle," cried Clementina with the smile that the thought of him always brought. He's lovely."

"Lovely? Well, I don't know why it isn't the word. It suits him a great deal better than some insipid girls that people give it to. Yes, I could really fall in love with Mr. Hinkle. He's the only man I ever saw who would know how to break the fall!"

It was lunch-time before their talk had begun to run low, and it swelled again over the meal. Miss Milray returned to Mrs. Lander, and she made Clementina confess that she was a little trying sometimes. But she insisted that she was always good, and in remorse she went away as soon as Miss Milray rose from table.

She found Mrs. Lander very much better, and willing to have had her stay the whole afternoon with Miss Milray. "I don't want she should have anything to say against me, to you, Clementina; she'd be glad enough to. But I guess it's just as well you're back. That scratched-out baron has been here twice, and he's waitin' for you in the pahla', now. I presume he'll keep comin' till you do see him. I guess you betta have it ova;

whatever it is."

"I guess you're right, Mrs. Lander."

Clementina found the Russian walking up and down the room, and as soon as their greeting was over, he asked leave to continue his promenade, but he stopped abruptly before her when she had sunk upon a sofa.

"I have come to tell you a strange story," he said.

"It is the story of that American friend of mine. I tell it to you because I think you can understand, and will know what to advise, what to do."

He turned upon his heel, and walked the length of the room and back before he spoke again.

"Since several years," he said, growing a little less idiomatic in his English as his excitement mounted, "he met a young girl, a child, when he was still not a man's full age. It was in the country, in the mountains of America, and--he loved her. Both were very poor; he, a student, earning the means to complete his education in the university. He had dedicated himself to his church, and with the temperament of the Puritans, he forbade himself all thoughts of love. But he was of a passionate and impulsive nature, and in a moment of abandon he confessed his love. The child was bewildered, frightened; she shrank from his avowal, and he, filled with remorse for his self-betrayal, bade her let it be as if it had not been; he bade her think of him no more."

Clementina sat as if powerless to move, staring at Belsky. He paused in his walk, and allowed an impressive silence to ensue upon his words.

"Time passed: days, months, years; and he did not see her again. He pursued his studies in the university; at their completion, he entered upon the course of divinity, and he is soon to be a minister of his church. In all that time the image of the young girl has remained in his heart, and has held him true to the only love he has ever known. He will know no other while he lives."

Again he stopped in front of Clementina; she looked helplessly up at him, and he resumed his walk.

"He, with his dreams of renunciation, of abnegation, had thought some day to return to her and ask her to be his. He believed her capable of equal sacrifice with himself, and he hoped to win her not for himself alone, but for the religion which he put before himself. He would have invited her to join her fate with his that they might go together on some mission to the pagan--in the South Seas, in the heart of Africa, in the jungle of India. He had always thought of her as gay but good, unworldly in soul, and exalted in spirit. She has remained with him a vision of angelic loveliness, as he had seen her last in the moonlight, on the banks of a mountain torrent. But he believes that he has disgraced himself before her; that the very scruple for her youth, her ignorance, which made him

entreat her to forget him, must have made her doubt and despise him. He has never had the courage to write to her one word since all those years, but he maintains himself bound to her forever." He stopped short before Clementina and seized her hands. "If you knew such a girl, what would you have her do? Should she bid him hope again? Would you have her say to him that she, too, had been faithful to their dream, and that she too"--

"Let me go, Mr. Belsky, let me go, I say!" Clementina wrenched her hands from him, and ran out of the room. Belsky hesitated, then he found his hat, and after a glance at his face in the mirror, left the house.

XXIV.

The tide of travel began to set northward in April. Many English, many Americans appeared in Florence from Naples and Rome; many who had wintered in Florence went on to Venice and the towns of northern Italy, on their way to Switzerland and France and Germany.

The spring was cold and rainy, and the irresolute Italian railroads were interrupted by the floods. A tawny deluge rolled down from the mountains through the bed of the Arno, and kept the Florentine fire-department on the alert night and day. "It is a curious thing about this country," said Mr. Hinkle, encountering Baron Belsky on the Ponte Trinita, "that the only thing they ever have here for a fire company to put out is a freshet. If they had a real conflagration once, I reckon they would want to bring their life-preservers."

The Russian was looking down over the parapet at the boiling river. He lifted his head as if he had not heard the American, and stared at him a moment before he spoke. It is said that the railway to Rome is broken at Grossetto."

"Well, I'm not going to Rome," said Hinkle, easily. "Are you?"

"I was to meet a friend there; but he wrote to me that he was starting to Florence, and now"--

"He's resting on the way? Well, he'll get here about as quick as he would in the ordinary course of travel. One good thing about Italy is, you don't want to hurry; if you did, you'd get left."

Belsky stared at him in the stupefaction to which the American humor commonly reduced him. "If he gets left on the Grossetto line, he can go back and come up by Orvieto, no?"

"He can, if he isn't in a hurry," Hinkle assented.

"It's a good way, if you've got time to burn."

Belsky did not attempt to explore the American's meaning. "Do you know," he asked, "whether Mrs. Lander and her young friend are still in Florence?"

"I guess they are."

"It was said they were going to Venice for the summer."

"That's what the doctor advised for the old lady. But they don't start for a week or two yet."

"Oh!"

"Are you going to Miss Milray's, Sunday night? Last of the season, I believe."

Belsky seemed to recall himself from a distance.

"No--no," he said, and he moved away, forgetful of the ceremonious salutation which he commonly used at meeting and parting. Hinkle looked after him with the impression people have of a difference in the appearance and behavior of some one whose appearance and behavior do not particularly concern them.

The day that followed, Belsky haunted the hotel where Gregory was to arrive with his pupil, and where the pupil's family were waiting for them. That night, long after their belated train was due, they came; the pupil was with his father and mother, and Gregory was alone, when Belsky asked for him, the fourth or fifth time.

"You are not well," he said, as they shook hands. "You are fevered!"

"I'm tired," said Gregory. "We've had a bad time getting through."

"I come inconveniently! You have not dined, perhaps?"

"Yes, Yes. I've had dinner. Sit down. How have you been yourself?"

"Oh, always well." Belsky sat down, and the friends stared at each other. "I have strange news for you."

"For me?"

"You. She is here."

"She?"

Yes. The young girl of whom you told me. If I had not forbidden myself by my loyalty to you--if I had not said to myself every moment in her presence, 'No, it is for your friend alone that she is beautiful and good!--But you will have nothing to reproach me in that regard."

"What do you mean?" demanded Gregory.

"I mean that Miss Claxon is in Florence, with her protectress, the rich Mrs. Lander. The most admired young lady in society, going everywhere, and everywhere courted and welcomed; the favorite of the fashionable Miss Milray. But why should this surprise you?"

"You said nothing about it in your letters. You"--

"I was not sure it was she; you never told me her name. When I had divined the fact, I was so soon to see you, that I thought best to keep it till we met."

Gregory tried to speak, but he let Belsky go on.

"If you think that the world has spoiled her, that she will be different from what she was in her home among your mountains, let me reassure you. In her you will find the miracle of a woman whom no flattery can turn the head. I have watched her in your interest; I have tested her. She is what you saw her last."

"Surely," asked Gregory, in an anguish for what he now dreaded, "you haven't spoken to her of me?"

"Not by name, no. I could not have that indiscretion"--

"The name is nothing. Have you said that you knew me--Of course not! But have you hinted at any knowledge--Because"--

"You will hear!" said Belsky; and he poured out upon Gregory the story of what he had done. "She did not deny anything. She was greatly moved, but she did not refuse to let me bid you hope"--

"Oh!" Gregory took his head between his hands. "You have spoiled my life!"

"Spoiled" Belsky stopped aghast.

"I told you my story in a moment of despicable weakness--of impulsive folly. But how could I dream that you would ever meet her? How could I imagine that you would speak to her as you have done?" He groaned, and began to creep giddily about the room in his misery. "Oh, oh, oh! What shall I do?"

"But I do not understand!" Belsky began. "If I have committed an error"--

"Oh, an error that never could be put right in all eternity!"

"Then let me go to her--let me tell her"--

"Keep away from her!" shouted Gregory. "Do you hear? Never go near her again!"

"Gregory!"

"Ah, I beg your pardon! I don't know what I'm doing-saying. What will she think--what will she think of me!" He had ceased to speak to Belsky; he collapsed into a chair, and hid his face in his arms stretched out on the table before him.

Belsky watched him in the stupefaction which the artistic nature feels when life proves sentient under its hand, and not the mere material of situations and effects. He could not conceive the full measure of the disaster he had wrought, the outrage of his own behavior had been lost to him in his preoccupation with the romantic end to be accomplished. He had meant to be the friend, the prophet, to these American lovers, whom he was reconciling and interpreting to each other; but in some point he must have misunderstood. Yet the error was not inexpiable; and in his expiation he could put the seal to his devotion. He left the room, where Gregory made no effort to keep him.

He walked down the street from the hotel to the Arno, and in a few moments he stood on the bridge, where he had talked with that joker in the morning, as they looked down together on the boiling river. He had a strange wish that the joker might have been with him again, to learn that there were some things which could not be joked away.

The night was blustering, and the wind that blew the ragged clouds across the face of the moon, swooped in sudden gusts upon the bridge, and the deluge rolling under it and hoarsely washing against its piers. Belsky leaned over the parapet and looked down into the eddies and currents as the fitful light revealed them. He had a fantastic pleasure in studying them, and choosing the moment when he should leap the parapet and be lost in them. The incident could not be used in any novel of his, and no one else could do such perfect justice to the situation, but perhaps afterwards, when the facts leading to his death should be known through the remorse of the lovers whom he had sought to serve, some other artist-nature could distil their subtlest meaning in a memoir delicate as the aroma of a faded flower.

He was willing to make this sacrifice, too, and he stepped back a pace from the parapet when the fitful blast caught his hat from his head, and whirled it along the bridge. The whole current of his purpose changed, and as if it had been impossible to drown himself in his bare head, he set out in chase of his hat, which rolled and gamboled away, and escaped from his clutch whenever he stooped for it, till a final whiff of wind flung it up and tossed it over the bridge into the river, where he helplessly watched it floating down the flood, till it was carried out of sight.

XXV.

Gregory did not sleep, and he did not find peace in the prayers he put up for guidance. He tried to think of some one with whom he might take

counsel; but he knew no one in Florence except the parents of his pupil, and they were impossible. He felt himself abandoned to the impulse which he dreaded, in going to Clementina, and he went without hope, willing to suffer whatever penalty she should visit upon him, after he had disavowed Belsky's action, and claimed the responsibility for it.

He was prepared for her refusal to see him; he had imagined her wounded and pathetic; he had fancied her insulted and indignant; but she met him eagerly and with a mystifying appeal in her welcome. He began at once, without attempting to bridge the time since they had met with any formalities.

"I have come to speak to you about--that--Russian, about Baron Belsky"--

"Yes, yes!" she returned, anxiously. "Then you have hea'd"

"He came to me last night, and--I want to say that I feel myself to blame for what he has done."

"You?"

"Yes; I. I never spoke of you by name to him; I didn't dream of his ever seeing you, or that he would dare to speak to you of what I told him. But I believe he meant no wrong; and it was I who did the harm, whether I authorized it or not."

"Yes, yes!" she returned, with the effect of putting his words aside as something of no moment. "Have they head anything more?"

"How, anything more?" he returned, in a daze.

"Then, don't you know? About his falling into the river? I know he didn't drown himself."

Gregory shook his head. "When--what makes them think"--He stopped and stared at her.

"Why, they know that he went down to the Ponte Trinity last night; somebody saw him going: And then that peasant found his hat with his name in it in the drift-wood below the Cascine"--

"Yes," said Gregory, lifelessly. He let his arms drop forward, and his helpless hands hang over his knees; his gaze fell from her face to the floor.

Neither spoke for a time that seemed long, and then it was Clementina who spoke. "But it isn't true!"

"Oh, yes, it is," said Gregory, as before.

"Mr. Hinkle doesn't believe it is," she urged.

"Mr. Hinkle?"

"He's an American who's staying in Florence. He came this morning to tell me about it. Even if he's drowned Mr. Hinkle believes he didn't mean to; he must have just fallen in."

"What does it matter?" demanded Gregory, lifting his heavy eyes.

"Whether he meant it or not, I caused it. I drove him to it."

"You drove him?"

"Yes. He told me what he had said to you, and I--said that he had spoiled my life--I don't know!"

"Well, he had no right to do it; but I didn't blame you," Clementina began, compassionately.

"It's too late. It can't be helped now." Gregory turned from the mercy that could no longer save him. He rose dizzily, and tried to get himself away.

"You mustn't go!" she interposed. "I don't believe you made him do it. Mr. Hinkle will be back soon, and he will"--

"If he should bring word that it was true?" Gregory asked.

"Well," said Clementina, "then we should have to bear it."

A sense of something finer than the surface meaning of her words pierced his morbid egotism. "I'm ashamed," he said. "Will you let me stay?"

"Why, yes, you must," she said, and if there was any censure of him at the bottom of her heart, she kept it there, and tried to talk him away from his remorse, which was in his temperament, perhaps, rather than his conscience; she made the time pass till there came a knock at the door, and she opened it to Hinkle.

"I didn't send up my name; I thought I wouldn't stand upon ceremony just now," he said.

"Oh, no!" she returned. "Mr. Hinkle, this is Mr. Gregory. Mr. Gregory knew Mr. Belsky, and he thinks"--

She turned to Gregory for prompting, and he managed to say, "I don't believe he was quite the sort of person to--And yet he might--he was in trouble"--

"Money trouble?" asked Hinkle. "They say these Russians have a perfect genius for debt. I had a little inspiration, since I saw you, but there doesn't seem to be anything in it, so far." He addressed himself to Clementina, but he included Gregory in what he said. "It struck me that he might have been running his board, and had used this drowning episode as a blind. But I've been around to his hotel, and he's settled up, all fair and square enough. The landlord tried to think of something he

hadn't paid, but he couldn't; and I never saw a man try harder, either." Clementina smiled; she put her hand to her mouth to keep from laughing; but Gregory frowned his distress in the untimely droning.

"I don't give up my theory that it's a fake of some kind, though. He could leave behind a good many creditors besides his landlord. The authorities have sealed up his effects, and they've done everything but call out the fire department; that's on duty looking after the freshet, and it couldn't be spared. I'll go out now and slop round a little more in the cause, "Hinkle looked down at his shoes and his drabbed trousers, and wiped the perspiration from his face, "but I thought I'd drop in, and tell you not to worry about it, Miss Clementina. I would stake anything you pleased on Mr. Belsky's safety. Mr. Gregory, here, looks like he would be willing to take odds," he suggested.

Gregory commanded himself from his misery to say, "I wish I could believe--I mean"--

"Of course, we don't want to think that the man's a fraud, any more than that he's dead. Perhaps we might hit upon some middle course. At any rate, it's worth trying."

"May I--do you object to my joining you?" Gregory asked.

"Why, come!" Hinkle hospitably assented. "Glad to have you. I'll be back again, Miss Clementina!"

Gregory was going away without any form of leavetaking; but he turned back to ask, "Will you let me come back, too?"

"Why, suttainly, Mr. Gregory," said Clementina, and she went to find Mrs. Lander, whom she found in bed.

"I thought I'd lay down," she explained. "I don't believe I'm goin' to be sick, but it's one of my pooa days, and I might just as well be in bed as not." Clementina agreed with her, and Mrs. Lander asked: "You hea'd anything moa?"

"No. Mr. Hinkle has just been he'a, but he hadn't any news."

Mrs. Lander turned her face toward the wall. "Next thing, he'll be drownin' himself. I neva wanted you should have anything to do with the fellas that go to that woman's. There ain't any of 'em to be depended on."

It was the first time that her growing jealousy of Miss Milray had openly declared itself; but Clementina had felt it before, without knowing how to meet it. As an escape from it now she was almost willing to say, "Mrs. Lander, I want to tell you that Mr. Gregory has just been he'a, too."

"Mr. Gregory?"

"Yes. Don't you remember? At the Middlemount? The first summa? He was the headwaiter--that student."

Mrs. Lander jerked her head round on the pillow. "Well, of all the--What does he want, over her?"

"Nothing. That is--he's travelling with a pupil that he's preparing for college, and--he came to see us"--

"D'you tell him I couldn't see him?"

"Yes"

"I guess he'd think I was a pretty changed person! Now, I want you should stay with me, Clementina, and if anybody else comes"--

Maddalena entered the room with a card which she gave to the girl.

"Who is it?" Mrs. Lander demanded.

"Miss Milray."

"Of course! Well, you may just send word that you can't--Or, no; you must! She'd have it all over the place, by night, that I wouldn't let you see her. But don't you make any excuse for me! If she asks after me, don't you say I'm sick! You say I'm not at home."

"I've come about that little wretch," Miss Milray began, after kissing Clementina. "I didn't know but you had heard something I hadn't, or I had heard something you hadn't. You know I belong to the Hinkle persuasion: I think Belsky's run his board--as Mr. Hinkle calls it."

Clementina explained how this part of the Hinkle theory had failed, and then Miss Milray devolved upon the belief that he had run his tailor's bill or his shoemaker's. "They are delightful, those Russians, but they're born insolvent. I don't believe he's drowned himself. How," she broke off to ask, in a burlesque whisper, "is-the-old-tabby?" She laughed, for answer to her own question, and then with another sudden diversion she demanded of a look in Clementina's face which would not be laughed away, "Well, my dear, what is it?"

"Miss Milray," said the girl, "should you think me very silly, if I told you something--silly?"

"Not in the least!" cried Miss Milray, joyously. "It's the final proof of your wisdom that I've been waiting for?"

"It's because Mr. Belsky is all mixed up in it," said Clementina, as if some excuse were necessary, and then she told the story of her love affair with Gregory. Miss Milray punctuated the several facts with vivid nods, but at the end she did not ask her anything, and the girl somehow felt the freer to add: "I believe I will tell you his name. It is Mr. Gregory--Frank Gregory"--

"And he's been in Egypt?"

"Yes, the whole winta."

"Then he's the one that my sister-in-law has been writing me about!"

"Oh, did he meet her the'a?"

"I should think so! And he'll meet her there, very soon. She's coming, with my poor brother. I meant to tell you, but this ridiculous Belsky business drove it out of my head."

"And do you think," Clementina entreated, "that he was to blame?"

"Why, I don't believe he's done it, you know."

"Oh, I didn't mean Mr. Belsky. I meant--Mr. Gregory. For telling Mr. Belsky?"

"Certainly not. Men always tell those things to some one, I suppose. Nobody was to blame but Belsky, for his meddling."

Miss Milray rose and shook out her plumes for flight, as if she were rather eager for flight, but at the little sigh with which Clementina said, "Yes, that is what I thought," she faltered.

"I was going to run away, for I shouldn't like to mix myself up in your affair--it's certainly a very strange one--unless I was sure I could help you. But if you think I can"--

Clementina shook her head. "I don't believe you can," she said, with a candor so wistful that Miss Milray stopped quite short. "How does Mr. Gregory take this Belsky business?" she asked.

"I guess he feels it moa than I do," said the girl.

"He shows his feeling more?"

"Yes--no--He believes he drove him to it."

Miss Milray took her hand, for parting, but did not kiss her. "I won't advise you, my dear. In fact, you haven't asked me to. You'll know what to do, if you haven't done it already; girls usually have, when they want advice. Was there something you were going to say?"

"Oh, no. Nothing. Do you think," she hesitated, appealingly, "do you think we are-engaged?"

"If he's anything of a man at all, he must think he is."

"Yes," said Clementina, wistfully, "I guess he does."

Miss Milray looked sharply at her. "And does he think you are?"

"I don't know--he didn't say."

"Well," said Miss Milray, rather dryly, "then it's something for you to think over pretty carefully."

XXVI.

Hinkle came back in the afternoon to make a hopeful report of his failure to learn anything more of Belsky, but Gregory did not come with him. He came the next morning long before Clementina expected visitors, and he was walking nervously up and down the room when she appeared. As if he could not speak, he held toward her without speaking a telegram in English, dated that day in Rome:

"Deny report of my death. Have written.

"Belsky."

She looked up at Gregory from the paper, when she had read it, with joyful eyes. "Oh, I am so glad for you! I am so glad he is alive."

He took the dispatch from her hand. "I brought it to you as soon as it came."

"Yes, yes! Of cou'se!"

"I must go now and do what he says--I don't know how yet." He stopped, and then went on from a different impulse. "Clementina, it isn't a question now of that wretch's life and death, and I wish I need never speak of him again. But what he told you was true." He looked steadfastly at her, and she realized how handsome he was, and how well dressed. His thick red hair seemed to have grown darker above his forehead; his moustache was heavier, and it curved in at the corners of his mouth; he bore himself with a sort of self-disdain that enhanced his splendor. "I have never changed toward you; I don't say it to make favor with you; I don't expect to do that now; but it is true. That night, there at Middlemount, I tried to take back what I said, because I believed that I ought."

"Oh, yes, I knew that," said Clementina, in the pause he made.

"We were both too young; I had no prospect in life; I saw, the instant after I had spoken, that I had no right to let you promise anything. I tried to forget you; I couldn't. I tried to make you forget me." He faltered, and she did not speak, but her head drooped a little.

"I won't ask how far I succeeded. I always hoped that the time would come when I could speak to you again. When I heard from Fane that you were at Woodlake, I wished to come out and see you, but I hadn't the

courage, I hadn't the right. I've had to come to you without either, now. Did he speak to you about me?"

"I thought he was beginning to, once; but he neva did."

"It didn't matter; it could only have made bad worse. It can't help me to say that somehow I was wishing and trying to do what was right; but I was."

"Oh, I know that, Mr. Gregory," said Clementina, generously.

"Then you didn't doubt me, in spite of all?"

"I thought you would know what to do. No, I didn't doubt you, exactly."

"I didn't deserve your trust!" he cried. "How came that man to mention me?" he demanded, abruptly, after a moment's silence.

"Mr. Belsky? It was the first night I saw him, and we were talking about Americans, and he began to tell me about an American friend of his, who was very conscientious. I thought it must be you the fust moment," said Clementina, smiling with an impersonal pleasure in the fact.

"From the conscientiousness?" he asked, in bitter self-irony.

"Why, yes," she returned, simply. "That was what made me think of you. And the last time when he began to talk about you, I couldn't stop him, although I knew he had no right to."

"He had no right. But I gave him the power to do it! He meant no harm, but I enabled him to do all the harm."

"Oh, if he's only alive, now, there is no harm!"

He looked into her eyes with a misgiving from which he burst impetuously.

"Then you do care for me still, after all that I have done to make you detest me?" He started toward her, but she shrank back.

"I didn't mean that," she hesitated.

"You know that I love you,--that I have always loved you?"

"Yes," she assented. "But you might be sorry again that you had said it." It sounded like coquetry, but he knew it was not coquetry.

"Never! I've wished to say it again, ever since that night at Middlemount; I have always felt bound by what I said then, though I took back my words for your sake. But the promise was always there, and my life was in it. You believe that?"

"Why, I always believed what you said, Mr. Gregory."

"Well?"

Clementina paused, with her head seriously on one side. "I should want to think about it before I said anything."

"You are right," he submitted, dropping his outstretched arms to his side. "I have been thinking only of myself, as usual."

"No," she protested, compassionately. "But doesn't it seem as if we ought to be su'a, this time? I did ca'e for you then, but I was very young, and I don't know yet--I thought I had always felt just; as you did, but now--Don't you think we had both betta wait a little while till we ah' moa suttain?"

They stood looking at each other, and he said, with a kind of passionate self-denial, "Yes, think it over for me, too. I will come back, if you will let me."

"Oh, thank you!" she cried after him, gratefully, as if his forbearance were the greatest favor.

When he was gone she tried to release herself from the kind of abeyance in which she seemed to have gone back and been as subject to him as in the first days when he had awed her and charmed her with his superiority at Middlemount, and he again older and freer as she had grown since.

He came back late in the afternoon, looking jaded and distraught. Hinkle, who looked neither, was with him. "Well," he began, "this is the greatest thing in my experience. Belsky's not only alive and well, but Mr. Gregory and I are both at large. I did think, one time, that the police would take us into custody on account of our morbid interest in the thing, and I don't believe we should have got off, if the Consul hadn't gone bail for us, so to speak. I thought we had better take the Consul in, on our way, and it was lucky we did."

Clementina did not understand all the implications, but she was willing to take Mr. Hinkle's fun on trust. "I don't believe you'll convince Mrs. Landa that Mr. Belsky's alive and well, till you bring him back to say so."

"Is that so!" said Hinkle. "Well, we must have him brought back by the authorities, then. Perhaps they'll bring him, anyway. They can't try him for suicide, but as I understand the police, here, a man can't lose his hat over a bridge in Florence with impunity, especially in a time of high water. Anyway, they're identifying Belsky by due process of law in Rome, now, and I guess Mr. Gregory"--he nodded toward Gregory, who sat silent and absent "will be kept under surveillance till the whole mystery is cleared up."

Clementina responded gayly still, but with less and less sincerity, and she let Hinkle go at last with the feeling that he knew she wished him to go. He made a brave show of not seeing this, and when he was gone, she remembered that she had not thanked him for the trouble he had taken on her account, and her heart ached after him with a sense of his sweetness

and goodness, which she had felt from the first through his quaint drolling. It was as if the door which closed upon him shut her out of the life she had been living of late, and into the life of the past where she was subject again to the spell of Gregory's mood; it was hardly his will.

He began at once: "I wished to make you say something this morning that I have no right to hear you say, yet; and I have been trying ever since to think how I could ask you whether you could share my life with me, and yet not ask you to do it. But I can't do anything without knowing-- You may not care for what my life is to be, at all!"

Clementina's head drooped a little, but she answered distinctly, "I do ca'e, Mr. Gregory."

"Thank you for that much; I don't count upon more than you have said. Clementina, I am going to be a missionary. I think I shall ask to be sent to China; I've not decided yet. My life will be hard; it will be full of danger and privation; it will be exile. You will have to think of sharing such a life if you think"--

He stopped; the time had come for her to speak, and she said, "I knew you wanted to be a missionary"--

"And--and--you would go with me? You would"--He started toward her, and she did not shrink from him, now; but he checked himself. "But you mustn't, you know, for my sake."

"I don't believe I quite undastand," she faltered.

"You must not do it for me, but for what makes me do it. Without that our life, our work, could have no consecration."

She gazed at him in patient, faintly smiling bewilderment, as if it were something he would unriddle for her when he chose.

"We mustn't err in this; it would be worse than error; it would be sin." He took a turn about the room, and then stopped before her. "Will you-- will you join me in a prayer for guidance, Clementina?"

"I--I don't know," she hesitated. "I will, but--do you think I had betta?"

He began, "Why, surely"--After a moment he asked gravely, "You believe that our actions will be guided aright, if we seek help?"

"Oh, yes--yes"--

"And that if we do not, we shall stumble in our ignorance?"

"I don't know. I never thought of that."

"Never thought of it"--

"We never did it in our family. Father always said that if we really wanted to do right we could find the way." Gregory looked daunted, and then he frowned darkly. "Are you provoked with me? Do you think what I have said is wrong?"

"No, no! You must say what you believe. It would be double hypocrisy in me if I prevented you."

"But I would do it, if you wanted me to," she said.

"Oh, for me, for ME!" he protested. "I will try to tell you what I mean, and why you must not, for that very reason." But he had to speak of himself, of the miracle of finding her again by the means which should have lost her to him forever; and of the significance of this. Then it appeared to him that he could not reject such a leading without error, without sin. "Such a thing could not have merely happened."

It seemed so to Clementina, too; she eagerly consented that this was something they must think of, as well. But the light waned, the dark thickened in the room before he left her to do so. Then he said fervently, "We must not doubt that everything will come right," and his words seemed an effect of inspiration to them both.

XXVII.

After Gregory was gone a misgiving began in Clementina's mind, which grew more distinct, through all the difficulties of accounting to Mrs. Lander for his long stay, The girl could see that it was with an obscure jealousy that she pushed her questions, and said at last, "That Mr. Hinkle is about the best of the lot. He's the only one that's eva had the mannas to ask after me, except that lo'd. He did."

Clementina could not pretend that Gregory had asked, but she could not blame him for a forgetfulness of Mrs. Lander which she had shared with him. This helped somehow to deepen the misgiving which followed her from Mrs. Lander's bed to her own, and haunted her far into the night. She could escape from it only by promising herself to deal with it the first thing in the morning. She did this in terms much briefer than she thought she could have commanded. She supposed she would have to write a very long letter, but she came to the end of all she need say, in a very few lines.

DEAR MR. GREGORY:

"I have been thinking about what you said yesterday, and I have to tell you something. Then you can do what is right for both of us; you will know better than I can. But I want you to understand that if I go with you in your missionary life, I shall do it for you, and not for anything else. I would go anywhere and live anyhow for you,

but it would be for you; I do not believe that I am religious, and I know that I should not do it for religion.

"That is all; but I could not get any peace till I let you know just how I felt.

"CLEMENTINA CLAXON."

The letter went early in the morning, though not so early but it was put in Gregory's hand as he was leaving his hotel to go to Mrs. Lander's. He tore it open, and read it on the way, and for the first moment it seemed as if it were Providence leading him that he might lighten Clementina's heart of its doubts with the least delay. He had reasoned that if she would share for his sake the life that he should live for righteousness' sake they would be equally blest in it, and it would be equally consecrated in both. But this luminous conclusion faded in his thought as he hurried on, and he found himself in her presence with something like a hope that she would be inspired to help him.

His soul lifted at the sound of the gay voice in which she asked, "Did you get my letta?" and it seemed for the instant as if there could be no trouble that their love could not overcome.

"Yes," he said, and he put his arms around her, but with a provisionality in his embrace which she subtly perceived.

"And what did you think of it?" she asked. "Did you think I was silly?"

He was aware that she had trusted him to do away her misgiving. "No, no," he answered, guiltily. "Wiser than I am, always. I--I want to talk with you about it, Clementina. I want you to advise me."

He felt her shrink from him, and with a pang he opened his arms to free her. But it was right; he must. She had been expecting him to say that there was nothing in her misgiving, and he could not say it.

"Clementina," he entreated, "why do you think you are not religious?"

"Why, I have never belonged to chu'ch," she answered simply. He looked so daunted, that she tried to soften the blow after she had dealt it.

"Of course, I always went to chu'ch, though father and motha didn't. I went to the Episcopal--to Mr. Richling's. But I neva was confirmed."

"But-you believe in God?"

"Why, certainly!"

"And in the Bible?"

"Why, of cou'se!"

"And that it is our duty to bear the truth to those who have never heard of it?"

"I know that is the way you feel about it; but I am not certain that I should feel so myself if you didn't want me to. That's what I got to thinking about last night." She added hopefully, "But perhaps it isn't so great a thing as I"--

"It's a very great thing," he said, and from standing in front of her, he now sat down beyond a little table before her sofa. "How can I ask you to share my life if you don't share my faith?"

"Why, I should try to believe everything that you do, of cou'se."

"Because I do?"

"Well-yes."

"You wring my heart! Are you willing to study--to look into these questions--to--to"--It all seemed very hopeless, very absurd, but she answered seriously:

"Yes, but I believe it would all come back to just where it is, now."

"What you say, Clementina, makes me so happy; but it ought to make me--miserable! And you would do all this, be all this for me, a wretched and erring creature of the dust, and yet not do it for--God?"

Clementina could only say, "Perhaps if He meant me to do it for Him, He would have made me want to. He made you."

"Yes," said Gregory, and for a long time he could not say any more. He sat with his elbow on the table, and his head against his lifted hand.

"You see," she began, gently, "I got to thinking that even if I eva came to believe what you wanted me to, I should be doing it after all, because you wanted me to"--

"Yes, yes," he answered, desolately. "There is no way out of it. If you only hated me, Clementina, despised me--I don't mean that. But if you were not so good, I could have a more hope for you--for myself. It's because you are so good that I can't make myself wish to change you, and yet I know--I am afraid that if you told me my life and objects were wrong, I should turn from them, and be whatever you said. Do you tell me that?"

"No, indeed!" cried Clementina, with abhorrence. "Then I should despise you."

He seemed not to heed her. He moved his lips as if he were talking to himself, and he pleaded, "What shall we do?"

"We must try to think it out, and if we can't--if you can't let me give up to you unless I do it for the same reason that you do; and if I can't let you give up for me, and I know I could neva do that; then--

we mustn't!"

"Do you mean, we must part? Not see each other again?"

"What use would it be?"

"None," he owned. She had risen, and he stood up perforce. "May I--may I come back to tell you?"

"Tell me what?" she asked.

"You are right! If I can't make it right, I won't come. But I won't say good bye. I--can't."

She let him go, and Maddalena came in at the door. "Signorina," she said, "the signora is not well. Shall I send for the doctor?"

"Yes, yes, Maddalena. Run!" cried Clementina, distractedly. She hurried to Mrs. Lander's room, where she found her too sick for reproaches, for anything but appeals for help and pity. The girl had not to wait for Doctor Welwright's coming to understand that the attack was severer than any before.

It lasted through the day, and she could see that he was troubled. It had not followed upon any imprudence, as Mrs. Lander pathetically called Clementina to witness when her pain had been so far quelled that she could talk of her seizure.

He found her greatly weakened by it the next day, and he sat looking thoughtfully at her before he said that she needed toning up. She caught at the notion. "Yes, yes! That's what I need, docta! Toning up! That's what I need."

He suggested, "How would you like to try the sea air, and the baths--at Venice?"

"Oh, anything, anywhere, to get out of this dreadful hole! I ha'n't had a well minute since I came. And Clementina," the sick woman whimpered, "is so taken up all the time, he'a, that I can't get the right attention."

The doctor looked compassionately away from the girl, and said, "Well, we must arrange about getting you off, then."

"But I want you should go with me, doctor, and see me settled all right. You can, can't you? I sha'n't ca'e how much it costs?"

The doctor said gravely he thought he could manage it and he ignored the long unconscious sigh of relief that Clementina drew.

In all her confusing anxieties for Mrs. Lander, Gregory remained at the bottom of her heart a dumb ache. When the pressure of her fears was taken from her she began to suffer for him consciously; then a letter

came from him:

"I cannot make it right. It is where it was, and I feel that I must not see you again. I am trying to do right, but with the fear that I am wrong. Send some word to help me before I go away to-morrow. F. G."

It was what she had expected, she knew now, but it was none the less to be borne because of her expectation. She wrote back:

"I believe you are doing the best you can, and I shall always believe that."

Her note brought back a long letter from him. He said that whatever he did, or wherever he went, he should try to be true to her ideal of him. If they renounced their love now for the sake of what seemed higher than their love, they might suffer, but they could not choose but do as they were doing.

Clementina was trying to make what she could of this when Miss Milray's name came up, and Miss Milray followed it.

"I wanted to ask after Mrs. Lander, and I want you to tell her I did. Will you? Dr. Welwright says he's going to take her to Venice. Well, I'm sorry--sorry for your going, Clementina, and I'm truly sorry for the cause of it. I shall miss you, my dear, I shall indeed. You know I always wanted to steal you, but you'll do me the justice to say I never did, and I won't try, now."

"Perhaps I wasn't worth stealing," Clementina suggested, with a ruefulness in her smile that went to Miss Milray's heart.

She put her arms round her and kissed her. "I wasn't very kind to you, the other day, Clementina, was I?"

"I don't know," Clementina faltered, with half-averted face.

"Yes, you do! I was trying to make-believe that I didn't want to meddle with your affairs; but I was really vexed that you hadn't told me your story before. It hasn't taken me all this time to reflect that you couldn't, but it has to make myself come and confess that I had been dry and cold with you." She hesitated. "It's come out all right, hasn't it, Clementina?" she asked, tenderly. "You see I want to meddle, now."

"We ah' trying to think so," sighed the girl.

"Tell me about it!" Miss Milray pulled her down on the sofa with her, and modified her embrace to a clasp of Clementina's bands.

"Why, there isn't much to tell," she began, but she told what there was, and Miss Milray kept her countenance concerning the scruple that had parted Clementina and her lover. "Perhaps he wouldn't have thought of it," she said, in a final self-reproach, if I hadn't put it into his

head."

"Well, then, I'm not sorry you put it into his head," cried Miss Milray.

"Clementina, may I say what I think of Mr. Gregory's performance?"

"Why, certainly, Miss Milray!"

I think he's not merely a gloomy little bigot, but a very hard-hearted little wretch, and I'm glad you're rid of him. No, stop! Let me go on! You said I might! she persisted, at a protest which imparted itself from Clementina's restive hands. "It was selfish and cruel of him to let you believe that he had forgotten you. It doesn't make it right now, when an accident has forced him to tell you that he cared for you all along."

"Why, do you look at it that way, Miss Milray? If he was doing it on my account?"

"He may think he was doing it on your account, but I think he was doing it on his own. In such a thing as that, a man is bound by his mistakes, if he has made any. He can't go back of them by simply ignoring them. It didn't make it the same for you when he decided for your sake that he would act as if he had never spoken to you."

"I presume he thought that it would come right, sometime," Clementina urged. "I did."

"Yes, that was very well for you, but it wasn't at all well for him. He behaved cruelly; there's no other word for it."

"I don't believe he meant to be cruel, Miss Milray," said Clementina.

"You're not sorry you've broken with him?" demanded Miss Milray, severely, and she let go of Clementina's hands.

"I shouldn't want him to think I hadn't been fair."

"I don't understand what you mean by not being fair," said Miss Milray, after a study of the girl's eyes.

"I mean," Clementina explained, "that if I let him think the religion was all the'e was, it wouldn't have been fair."

"Why, weren't you sincere about that?"

"Of cou'se I was!" returned the girl, almost indignantly. "But if the'e was anything else, I ought to have told him that, too; and I couldn't."

"Then you can't tell me, of course?" Miss Milray rose in a little pique.

"Perhaps some day I will," the girl entreated. "And perhaps that was all."

Miss Milray laughed. "Well, if that was enough to end it, I'm satisfied,

and I'll let you keep your mystery--if it is one--till we meet in Venice;
I shall be there early in June. Good bye, dear, and say good bye to Mrs.
Lander for me."

XXVIII.

Dr. Welwright got his patient a lodging on the Grand Canal in Venice, and decided to stay long enough to note the first effect of the air and the baths, and to look up a doctor to leave her with.

This took something more than a week, which could not all be spent in Mrs. Lander's company, much as she wished it. There were hours which he gave to going about in a gondola with Clementina, whom he forbade to be always at the invalid's side. He tried to reassure her as to Mrs. Lander's health, when he found her rather mute and absent, while they drifted in the silvery sun of the late April weather, just beginning to be warm, but not warm enough yet for the tent of the open gondola. He asked her about Mrs. Lander's family, and Clementina could only tell him that she had always said she had none. She told him the story of her own relation to her, and he said, "Yes, I heard something of that from Miss Milray." After a moment of silence, during which he looked curiously into the girl's eyes, "Do you think you can bear a little more care, Miss Claxon?"

"I think I can," said Clementina, not very courageously, but patiently.

"It's only this, and I wouldn't tell you if I hadn't thought you equal to it. Mrs. Lander's case puzzles me: But I shall leave Dr. Tradonico watching it, and if it takes the turn that there's a chance it may take, he will tell you, and you'd better find out about her friends, and--let them know. That's all."

"Yes," said Clementina, as if it were not quite enough. Perhaps she did not fully realize all that the doctor had intended; life alone is credible to the young; life and the expectation of it.

The night before he was to return to Florence there was a full moon; and when he had got Mrs. Lander to sleep he asked Clementina if she would not go out on the lagoon with him. He assigned no peculiar virtue to the moonlight, and he had no new charge to give her concerning his patient when they were embarked. He seemed to wish her to talk about herself, and when she strayed from the topic, he prompted her return. Then he wished to know how she liked Florence, as compared with Venice, and all the other cities she had seen, and when she said she had not seen any but Boston and New York, and London for one night, he wished to know whether she liked Florence as well. She said she liked it best of all, and he told her he was very glad, for he liked it himself better than any place he had ever seen. He spoke of his family in America, which was formed of grownup brothers and sisters, so that he had none of the closest and tenderest ties obliging him to return; there was no reason why he should

not spend all his days in Florence, except for some brief visits home. It would be another thing with such a place as Venice; he could never have the same settled feeling there: it was beautiful, but it was unreal; it would be like spending one's life at the opera. Did not she think so?

She thought so, oh, yes; she never could have the home-feeling at Venice that she had at Florence.

"Exactly; that's what I meant--a home-feeling; I'm glad you had it." He let the gondola dip and slide forward almost a minute before he added, with an effect of pulling a voice up out of his throat somewhere, "How would you like to live there--with me--as my wife?"

"Why, what do you mean, Dr. Welwright?" asked Clementina, with a vague laugh.

Dr. Welwright laughed, too; but not vaguely; there was a mounting cheerfulness in his laugh. "What I say. I hope it isn't very surprising."

"No; but I never thought of such a thing."

"Perhaps you will think of it now."

"But you're not in earnest!"

"I'm thoroughly in earnest," said the doctor, and he seemed very much amused at her incredulity.

"Then; I'm sorry," she answered. "I couldn't."

"No?" he said, still with amusement, or with a courage that took that form. "Why not?"

"Because I am--not free."

For an interval they were so silent that they could hear each other breathe: Then, after he had quietly bidden the gondolier go back to their hotel, he asked, "If you had been free you might have answered me differently?"

"I don't know," said Clementina, candidly. "I never thought of it."

"It isn't because you disliked me?"

"Oh, no!"

"Then I must get what comfort I can out of that. I hope, with all my heart, that you may be happy."

"Why, Dr. Welwright!" said Clementina. "Don't you suppose that I should be glad to do it, if I could? Any one would!"

"It doesn't seem very probable, just now," he answered, humbly.

"But I'll believe it if you say so."

"I do say so, and I always shall."

"Thank you."

Dr. Welwright professed himself ready for his departure, at breakfast next morning and he must have made his preparations very late or very early. He was explicit in his charges to Clementina concerning Mrs. Lander, and at the end of them, he said, "She will not know when she is asking too much of you, but you will, and you must act upon your knowledge. And remember, if you are in need of help, of any kind, you're to let me know. Will you?"

"Yes, I will, Dr. Welwright."

"People will be going away soon, and I shall not be so busy. I can come back if Dr. Tradonico thinks it necessary."

He left Mrs. Lander full of resolutions to look after her own welfare in every way, and she went out in her gondola the same morning. She was not only to take the air as much as possible, but she was to amuse herself, and she decided that she would have her second breakfast at the Caffè Florian. Venice was beginning to fill up with arrivals from the south, and it need not have been so surprising to find Mr. Hinkle there over a cup of coffee. He said he had just that moment been thinking of her, and meaning to look her up at the hotel. He said that he had stopped at Venice because it was such a splendid place to introduce his gleaner; he invited Mrs. Lander to become a partner in the enterprise; he promised her a return of fifty per cent. on her investment. If he could once introduce his gleaner in Venice, he should be a made man. He asked Mrs. Lander, with real feeling, how she was; as for Miss Clementina, he need not ask.

"Oh, indeed, the docta thinks she wants a little lookin' after, too," said Mrs. Lander.

"Well, about as much as you do, Mrs. Lander," Hinkle allowed, tolerantly.

"I don't know how it affects you, ma'am, such a meeting of friends in these strange waters, but it's building me right up. It's made another man of me, already, and I've got the other man's appetite, too. Mind my letting him have his breakfast here with me at your table?" He bade the waiter just fetch his plate. He attached himself to them; he spent the day with them. Mrs. Lander asked him to dinner at her lodgings, and left him to Clementina over the coffee.

"She's looking fine, doesn't the doctor think? This air will do everything for her."

"Oh, yes; she's a great deal betta than she was befo'e we came."

"That's right. Well, now, you've got me here, you must let me make

myself useful any way I can. I've got a spare month that I can put in here in Venice, just as well as not; I sha'n't want to push north till the frost's out of the ground. They wouldn't have a chance to try my gleaner, on the other side of the Alps much before September, anyway. Now, in Ohio, the part I come from, we cut our wheat in June. When is your wheat harvest at Middlemount?"

Clementina laughed. "I don't believe we've got any. I guess it's all grass."

"I wish you could see our country out there, once."

"Is it nice?"

"Nice? We're right in the centre of the state, measuring from north to south, on the old National Road." Clementina had never heard of this road, but she did not say so. "About five miles back from the Ohio River, where the coal comes up out of the ground, because there's so much of it there's no room for it below. Our farm's in a valley, along a creek bottom, what you Yankees call an intervals; we've got three hundred acres. My grandfather took up the land, and then he went back to Pennsylvania to get the girl he'd left there--we were Pennsylvania Dutch; that's where I got my romantic name--they drove all the way out to Ohio again in his buggy, and when he came in sight of our valley with his bride, he stood up in his buggy and pointed with his whip. 'There! As far as the sky is blue, it's all ours!'"

Clementina owned the charm of his story as he seemed to expect, but when he said, "Yes, I want you to see that country, some day," she answered cautiously.

"It must be lovely. But I don't expect to go West, eva."

"I like your Eastern way of saying everr," said Hinkle, and he said it in his Western way. "I like New England folks."

Clementina smiled discreetly. "They have their faults like everybody else, I presume."

"Ah, that's a regular Yankee word: presume," said Hinkle. "Our teacher, my first one, always said presume. She was from your State, too."

XXIX.

In the time of provisional quiet that followed for Clementina, she was held from the remorse and misgivings that had troubled her before Hinkle came. She still thought that she had let Dr. Welwright go away believing that she had not cared enough for the offer which had surprised her so much, and she blamed herself for not telling him how doubly bound she was to Gregory; though when she tried to put her sense of this in words to

herself she could not make out that she was any more bound to him than she had been before they met in Florence, unless she wished to be so. Yet somehow in this time of respite, neither the regret for Dr. Welwright nor the question of Gregory persisted very strongly, and there were whole days when she realized before she slept that she had not thought of either.

She was in full favor again with Mrs. Lander, whom there was no one to embitter in her jealous affection. Hinkle formed their whole social world, and Mrs. Lander made the most of him. She was always having him to the dinners which her landlord served her from a restaurant in her apartment, and taking him out with Clementina in her gondola. He came into a kind of authority with them both which was as involuntary with him as with them, and was like an effect of his constant wish to be doing something for them.

One morning when they were all going out in Mrs. Lander's gondola, she sent Clementina back three times to their rooms for outer garments of differing density. When she brought the last Mrs. Lander frowned.

"This won't do. I've got to have something else--something lighter and warmer."

"I can't go back any more, Mrs. Lander," cried the girl, from the exasperation of her own nerves.

"Then I will go back myself," said Mrs. Lander with dignity, "and we sha'n't need the gondolier any more this morning," she added, "unless you and Mr. Hinkle wants to ride."

She got ponderously out of the boat with the help of the gondolier's elbow, and marched into the house again, while Clementina followed her. She did not offer to help her up the stairs; Hinkle had to do it, and he met the girl slowly coming up as he returned from delivering Mrs. Lander over to Maddalena.

"She's all right, now," he ventured to say, tentatively.

"Is she?" Clementina coldly answered.

In spite of her repellent air, he persisted, "She's a pretty sick woman, isn't she?"

"The doctor doesn't say."

"Well, I think it would be safe to act on that supposition. Miss Clementina--I think she wants to see you."

"I'm going to her directly."

Hinkle paused, rather daunted. "She wants me to go for the doctor."

"She's always wanting the doctor." Clementina lifted her eyes and looked

very coldly at him.

"If I were you I'd go up right away," he said, boldly.

She felt that she ought to resent his interference, but the mild entreaty of his pale blue eyes, or the elder-brotherly injunction of his smile, forbade her. "Did she ask for me?"

"No."

"I'll go to her," she said, and she kept herself from smiling at the long sigh of relief he gave as she passed him on the stairs.

Mrs. Lander began as soon as she entered her room, "Well, I was just wonderin' if you was goin' to leave me here all day alone, while you staid down the'e, carryin' on with that simpleton. I don't know what's got into the men."

"Mr. Hinkle has gone for the docta," said Clementina, trying to get into her voice the kindness she was trying to feel.

"Well, if I have one of my attacks, now, you'll have yourself to thank for it."

By the time Dr. Tradonico appeared Mrs. Lander was so much better that in her revulsion of feeling she was all day rather tryingly affectionate in her indirect appeals for Clementina's sympathy.

"I don't want you should mind what I say, when I a'n't feelin' just right," she began that evening, after she had gone to bed, and Clementina sat looking out of the open window, on the moonlit lagoon.

"Oh, no," the girl answered, wearily.

Mrs. Lander humbled herself farther. "I'm real sorry I plagued you so, to-day, and I know Mr. Hinkle thought I was dreadful, but I couldn't help it. I should like to talk with you, Clementina, about something that's worryin' me, if you a'n't busy."

"I'm not busy, now, Mrs. Lander," said Clementina, a little coldly, and relaxing the clasp of her hands; to knit her fingers together had been her sole business, and she put even this away,

She did not come nearer the bed, and Mrs. Lander was obliged to speak without the advantage of noting the effect of her words upon her in her face. "It's like this: What am I agoin' to do for them relations of Mr. Landa's out in Michigan?"

"I don't know. What relations?"

"I told you about 'em: the only ones he's got: his half-sista's children. He neva saw 'em, and he neva wanted to; but they're his kin, and it was his money. It don't seem right to pass 'em ova. Do you think it would

yourself, Clementina?"

"Why, of cou'se not, Mrs. Lander. It wouldn't be right at all."

Mrs. Lander looked relieved, and she said, as if a little surprised, "I'm glad you feel that way; I should feel just so, myself. I mean to do by you just what I always said I should. I sha'n't forget you, but whe'e the'e's so much I got to thinkin' the'e'd ought to some of it go to his folks, whetha he ca'ed for 'em or not. It's worried me some, and I guess if anything it's that that's made me wo'se lately."

"Why by Mrs. Landa," said the girl, "Why don't you give it all to them?"

"You don't know what you'a talkin' about," said Mrs. Lander, severely." I guess if I give 'em five thousand or so amongst'em, it's full moa than they eve thought of havin', and it's moa than they got any right to. Well, that's all right, then; and we don't need to talk about it any moa. Yes," she resumed, after a moment, "that's what I shall do. I hu'n't eva felt just satisfied with that last will I got made, and I guess I shall tear it up, and get the fust American lawyer that comes along to make me a new one. The prop'ty's all goin' to you, but I guess I shall leave five thousand apiece to the two families out the'e. You won't miss it, any, and I presume it's what Mr. Landa would expect I should do; though why he didn't do it himself, I can't undastand, unless it was to show his confidence in me."

She began to ask Clementina how she felt about staying in Venice all summer; she said she had got so much better there already that she believed she should be well by fall if she stayed on. She was certain that it would put her all back if she were to travel now, and in Europe, where it was so hard to know how to get to places, she did not see how they could pick out any that would suit them as well as Venice did.

Clementina agreed to it all, more or less absentmindedly, as she sat looking into the moonlight, and the day that had begun so stormily ended in kindness between them.

The next morning Mrs. Lander did not wish to go out, and she sent Clementina and Hinkle together as a proof that they were all on good terms again. She did not spare the girl this explanation in his presence, and when they were in the gondola he felt that he had to say, "I was afraid you might think I was rather meddlesome yesterday."

"Oh, no," she answered. "I was glad you did."

"Yes," he returned, "I thought you would be afterwards." He looked at her wistfully with his slanted eyes and his odd twisted smile and they both gave way in the same conscious laugh. "What I like," he explained further, "is to be understood when I've said something that doesn't mean anything, don't you? You know anybody can understand you if you really mean something; but most of the time you don't, and that's when a friend is useful. I wish you'd call on me if you're ever in that fix."

"Oh, I will, Mr. Hinkle," Clementina promised, gayly.

"Thank you," he said, and her gayety seemed to turn him graver. "Miss Clementina, might I go a little further in this direction, without danger?"

"What direction?" she added, with a flush of sudden alarm.

"Mrs. Lander."

"Why, certainly!" she answered, in quick relief.

"I wish you'd let me do some of the worrying about her for you, while I'm here. You know I haven't got anything else to do!"

"Why, I don't believe I worry much. I'm afraid I fo'get about her when I'm not with her. That's the wo'st of it."

"No, no," he entreated, "that's the best of it. But I want to do the worrying for you even when you're with her. Will you let me?"

"Why, if you want to so very much."

"Then it's settled," he said, dismissing the subject.

But she recurred to it with a lingering compunction.

"I presume that I don't remember how sick she is because I've neva been sick at all, myself."

"Well," he returned, "You needn't be sorry for that altogether. There are worse things than being well, though sick people don't always think so. I've wasted a good deal of time the other way, though I've reformed, now."

They went on to talk about themselves; sometimes they talked about others, in excursions which were more or less perfunctory, and were merely in the way of illustration or instance. She got so far in one of these as to speak of her family, and he seemed to understand them. He asked about them all, and he said he believed in her father's unworldly theory of life. He asked her if they thought at home that she was like her father, and he added, as if it followed, "I'm the worldling of my family. I was the youngest child, and the only boy in a flock of girls. That always spoils a boy."

"Are you spoiled?" she asked.

"Well, I'm afraid they'd be surprised if I didn't come to grief somehow--all but--mother; she expects I'll be kept from harm."

"Is she religious?"

"Yes, she's a Moravian. Did you ever hear of them?" Clementina shook

her head. "They're something, like the Quakers, and something like the Methodists. They don't believe in war; but they have bishops."

"And do you belong to her church?"

"No," said the young man. "I wish I did, for her sake. I don't belong to any. Do you?"

"No, I go to the Episcopal, at home. Perhaps I shall belong sometime. But I think that is something everyone must do for themselves." He looked a little alarmed at the note of severity in her voice, and she explained. "I mean that if you try to be religious for anything besides religion, it isn't being religious;--and no one else has any right to ask you to be."

"Oh, that's what I believe, too," he said, with comic relief. "I didn't know but I'd been trying to convert you without knowing it." They both laughed, and were then rather seriously silent.

He asked, after a moment, in a fresh beginning, "Have you heard from Miss Milray since you left Florence?"

"Oh, yes, didn't I tell you? She's coming here in June."

"Well, she won't have the pleasure of seeing me, then. I'm going the last of May."

"I thought you were going to stay a month!" she protested.

"That will be a month; and more, too."

"So it will," she owned.

"I'm glad it doesn't seem any longer--say a year--Miss Clementina!"

"Oh, not at all," she returned. "Miss Milray's brother and his wife are coming with her. They've been in Egypt."

"I never saw them," said Hinkle. He paused, before he added, "Well, it would seem rather crowded after they get here, I suppose," and he laughed, while Clementina said nothing.

XXX.

Hinkle came every morning now, to smoothe out the doubts and difficulties that had accumulated in Mrs. Lander's mind over night, and incidentally to propose some pleasure for Clementina, who could feel that he was pitying her in her slavery to the sick woman's whims, and yet somehow entreating her to bear them. He saw them together in what Mrs. Lander called her well days; but there were other days when he saw Clementina

alone, and then she brought him word from Mrs. Lander, and reported his talk to her after he went away. On one of these she sent him a cheerfuller message than usual, and charged the girl to explain that she was ever so much better, but had not got up because she felt that every minute in bed was doing her good. Clementina carried back his regrets and congratulation, and then told Mrs. Lander that he had asked her to go out with him to see a church, which he was sorry Mrs. Lander could not see too. He professed to be very particular about his churches, for he said he had noticed that they neither of them had any great gift for sights, and he had it on his conscience to get the best for them. He told Clementina that the church he had for them now could not be better if it had been built expressly for them, instead of having been used as a place of worship for eight or ten generations of Venetians before they came. She gave his invitation to Mrs. Lander, who could not always be trusted with his jokes, and she received it in the best part.

"Well, you go!" she said. "Maddalena can look after me, I guess. He's the only one of the fellas, except that lo'd, that I'd give a cent for." She added, with a sudden lapse from her pleasure in Hinkle to her severity with Clementina, "But you want to be ca'eful what you' doin'."

"Ca'eful?"

"Yes!--About Mr. Hinkle. I a'n't agoin' to have you lead him on, and then say you didn't know where he was goin'. I can't keep runnin' away everywhe'e, fo' you, the way I done at Woodlake."

Clementina's heart gave a leap, whether joyful or woeful; but she answered indignantly, "How can you say such a thing to me, Mrs. Lander. I'm not leading him on!"

"I don't know what you call it. You're round with him in the gondoler, night and day, and when he's he'e, you'a settin' with him half the time on the balcony, and it's talk, talk, the whole while." Clementina took in the fact with silent recognition, and Mrs. Lander went on. "I ain't sayin' anything against it. He's the only one I don't believe is afta the money he thinks you'a goin' to have; but if you don't want him, you want to look what you're about."

The girl returned to Hinkle in the embarrassment which she was helpless to hide, and without the excuse which she could not invent for refusing to go with him. "Is Mrs. Lander worse--or anything?" he asked.

"Oh, no. She's quite well," said Clementina; but she left it for him to break the constraint in which they set out. He tried to do so at different points, but it seemed to close upon them--the more inflexibly. At last he asked, as they were drawing near the church, "Have you ever seen anything of Mr. Belsky since you left Florence?"

"No," she said, with a nervous start. "What makes you ask?"

"I don't know. But you see nearly everybody again that you meet in your travels. That friend of his--that Mr. Gregory--he seems to have dropped

out, too. I believe you told me you used to know him in America."

"Yes," she answered, briefly; she could not say more; and Hinkle went on. "It seemed to me, that as far as I could make him out, he was about as much of a crank in his way as the Russian. It's curious, but when you were talking about religion, the other day, you made me think of him!" The blood went to Clementina's heart. "I don't suppose you had him in mind, but what you said fitted him more than anyone I know of. I could have almost believed that he had been trying to convert you!" She stared at him, and he laughed. "He tackled me one day there in Florence all of a sudden, and I didn't know what to say, exactly. Of course, I respected his earnestness; but I couldn't accept his view of things and I tried to tell him so. I had to say just where I stood, and why, and I mentioned some books that helped to get me there. He said he never read anything that went counter to his faith; and I saw that he didn't want to save me, so much as he wanted to convince me. He didn't know it, and I didn't tell him that I knew it, but I got him to let me drop the subject. He seems to have been left over from a time when people didn't reason about their beliefs, but only argued. I didn't think there was a man like that to be found so late in the century, especially a young man. But that was just where I was mistaken. If there was to be a man of that kind at all, it would have to be a young one. He'll be a good deal opener-minded when he's older. He was conscientious; I could see that; and he did take the Russian's death to heart as long as he was dead. But I'd like to talk with him ten years from now; he wouldn't be where he is."

Clementina was still silent, and she walked up the church steps from the gondola without the power to speak. She made no show of interest in the pictures and statues; she never had really cared much for such things, and now his attempts to make her look at them failed miserably. When they got back again into the boat he began, "Miss Clementina, I'm afraid I oughtn't to have spoken as I did of that Mr. Gregory. If he is a friend of yours"--

"He is," she made herself answer.

"I didn't mean anything against him. I hope you don't think I wanted to be unfair?"

"You were not unfair. But I oughtn't to have let you say it, Mr. Hinkle. I want to tell you something--I mean, I must"--She found herself panting and breathless. "You ought to know it--Mr. Gregory is--I mean we are"--

She stopped and she saw that she need not say more.

In the days that followed before the time that Hinkle had \$xed to leave Venice, he tried to come as he had been coming, to see Mrs. Lander, but he evaded her when she wished to send him out with Clementina. His quaintness had a heartache in it for her; and he was boyishly simple in his failure to hide his suffering. He had no explicit right to suffer, for he had asked nothing and been denied nothing, but perhaps for this reason she suffered the more keenly for him.

A senseless resentment against Gregory for spoiling their happiness crept into her heart; and she wished to show Hinkle how much she valued his friendship at any risk and any cost. When this led her too far she took herself to task with a severity which hurt him too. In the midst of the impulses on which she acted, there were times when she had a confused longing to appeal to him for counsel as to how she ought to behave toward him.

There was no one else whom she could appeal to. Mrs. Lander, after her first warning, had not spoken of him again, though Clementina could feel in the grimness with which she regarded her variable treatment of him that she was silently hoarding up a sum of inculpation which would crush her under its weight when it should fall upon her. She seemed to be growing constantly better, now, and as the interval since her last attack widened behind her, she began to indulge her appetite with a recklessness which Clementina, in a sense of her own unworthiness, was helpless to deal with. When she ventured to ask her once whether she ought to eat of something that was very unwholesome for her, Mrs. Lander answered that she had taken her case into her own hands, now, for she knew more about it than all the doctors. She would thank Clementina not to bother about her; she added that she was at least not hurting anybody but herself, and she hoped Clementina would always be able to say as much.

Clementina wished that Hinkle would go away, but not before she had righted herself with him, and he lingered his month out, and seemed as little able to go as she to let him. She had often to be cheerful for both, when she found it too much to be cheerful for herself. In his absence she feigned free and open talks with him, and explained everything, and experienced a kind of ghostly comfort in his imagined approval and forgiveness, but in his presence, nothing really happened except the alternation of her kindness and unkindness, in which she was too kind and then too unkind.

The morning of the day he was at last to leave Venice, he came to say good bye. He did not ask for Mrs. Lander, when the girl received him, and he did not give himself time to lose courage before he began, "Miss Clementina, I don't know whether I ought to speak to you after what I understood you to mean about Mr. Gregory." He looked steadfastly at her but she did not answer, and he went on. "There's just one chance in a million, though, that I didn't understand you rightly, and I've made up my mind that I want to take that chance. May I?" She tried to speak, but she could not. "If I was wrong--if there was nothing between you and him--could there ever be anything between you and me?"

His pleading looks entreated her even more than his words.

"There was something," she answered, "with him."

"And I mustn't know what," the young man said patiently.

"Yes--yes!" she returned eagerly. "Oh, yes! I want you to know--I want to tell you. I was only sixteen yea's old, and he said that he oughtn't to have spoken; we were both too young. But last winta he spoke again.

He said that he had always felt bound"--She stopped, and he got infirmly to his feet. "I wanted to tell you from the fust, but"--

"How could you? You couldn't. I haven't anything more to say, if you are bound to him."

"He is going to be a missionary and he wanted me to say that I would believe just as he did; and I couldn't. But I thought that it would come right; and--yes, I felt bound to him, too. That is all--I can't explain it!"

"Oh, I understand!" he returned, listlessly.

"And do you blame me for not telling before?" She made an involuntary movement toward him, a pathetic gesture which both entreated and compassionated.

"There's nobody to blame. You have tried to do just right by me, as well as him. Well, I've got my answer. Mrs. Lander--can I"--

"Why, she isn't up yet, Mr. Hinkle." Clementina put all her pain for him into the expression of their regret.

"Then I'll have to leave my good-bye for her with you. I don't believe I can come back again." He looked round as if he were dizzy. "Good-bye," he said, and offered his hand. It was cold as clay.

When he was gone, Clementina went into Mrs. Lander's room, and gave her his message.

"Couldn't he have come back this aftanoon to see me, if he ain't goin' till five?" she demanded jealously.

"He said he couldn't come back," Clementina answered sadly.

The woman turned her head on her pillow and looked at the girl's face. "Oh!" she said for all comment.

XXXI.

The Milrays came a month later, to seek a milder sun than they had left burning in Florence. The husband and wife had been sojourning there since their arrival from Egypt, but they had not been his sister's guests, and she did not now pretend to be of their party, though the same train, even the same carriage, had brought her to Venice with them. They went to a hotel, and Miss Milray took lodgings where she always spent her Junes, before going to the Tyrol for the summer.

"You are wonderfully improved, every way," Mrs. Milray said to Clementina when they met. "I knew you would be, if Miss Milray took you in hand;

and I can see she has. What she doesn't know about the world isn't worth knowing! I hope she hasn't made you too worldly? But if she has, she's taught you how to keep from showing it; you're just as innocent-looking as ever, and that's the main thing; you oughtn't to lose that. You wouldn't dance a skirt dance now before a ship's company, but if you did, no one would suspect that you knew any better. Have you forgiven me, yet? Well, I didn't use you very well, Clementina, and I never pretended I did. I've eaten a lot of humble pie for that, my dear. Did Miss Milray tell you that I wrote to her about it? Of course you won't say how she told you; but she ought to have done me the justice to say that I tried to be a friend at court with her for you. If she didn't, she wasn't fair."

"She neva said anything against you, Mrs. Milray," Clementina answered.

"Discreet as ever, my dear! I understand! And I hope you understand about that old affair, too, by this time. It was a complication. I had to get back at Lioncourt somehow; and I don't honestly think now that his admiration for a young girl was a very wholesome thing for her. But never mind. You had that Boston goose in Florence, too, last winter, and I suppose he gobbled up what little Miss Milray had left of me. But she's charming. I could go down on my knees to her art when she really tries to finish any one."

Clementina noticed that Mrs. Milray had got a new way of talking. She had a chirpiness, and a lift in her inflections, which if it was not exactly English was no longer Western American. Clementina herself in her association with Hinkle had worn off her English rhythm, and in her long confinement to the conversation of Mrs. Lander, she had reverted to her clipped Yankee accent. Mrs. Milray professed to like it, and said it brought back so delightfully those pleasant days at Middlemount, when Clementina really was a child. "I met somebody at Cairo, who seemed very glad to hear about you, though he tried to seem not. Can you guess who it was? I see that you never could, in the world! We got quite chummy one day, when we were going out to the pyramids together, and he gave himself away, finely. He's a simple soul! But when they're in love they're all so! It was a little queer, colloquing with the ex-headwaiter on society terms; but the head-waitership was merely an episode, and the main thing is that he is very talented, and is going to be a minister. It's a pity he's so devoted to his crazy missionary scheme. Some one ought to get hold of him, and point him in the direction of a rich New York congregation. He'd find heathen enough among them, and he could do the greatest amount of good with their money; I tried to talk it into him. I suppose you saw him in Florence, this spring?" she suddenly asked.

"Yes," Clementina answered briefly.

"And you didn't make it up together. I got that much out of Miss Milray. Well, if he were here, I should find out why. But I don't suppose you would tell me." She waited a moment to see if Clementina would, and then she said, "It's a pity, for I've a notion I could help you, and I think I owe you a good turn, for the way I behaved about your dance. But if you

don't want my help, you don't."

"I would say so if I did, Mrs. Milray," said Clementina. "I was hu't, at the time; but I don't care anything for it, now. I hope you won't think about it any more!"

"Thank you," said Mrs. Milray, "I'll try not to," and she laughed. "But I should like to do something to prove my repentance."

Clementina perceived that for some reason she would rather have more than less cause for regret; and that she was mocking her; but she was without the wish or the power to retaliate, and she did not try to fathom Mrs. Milray's motives. Most motives in life, even bad motives, lie nearer the surface than most people commonly pretend, and she might not have had to dig deeper into Mrs. Milray's nature for hers than that layer of her consciousness where she was aware that Clementina was a pet of her sister-in-law. For no better reason she herself made a pet of Mrs. Lander, whose dislike of Miss Milray was not hard to divine, and whose willingness to punish her through Clementina was akin to her own. The sick woman was easily flattered back into her first belief in Mrs. Milray and accepted her large civilities and small services as proof of her virtues. She began to talk them into Clementina, and to contrast them with the wicked principles and actions of Miss Milray.

The girl had forgiven Mrs. Milray, but she could not go back to any trust in her; and she could only passively assent to her praise. When Mrs. Lander pressed her for anything more explicit she said what she thought, and then Mrs. Lander accused her of hating Mrs. Milray, who was more her friend than some that flattered her up for everything, and tried to make a fool of her.

"I undastand now," she said one day, "what that recta meant by wantin' me to make life ba'd for you; he saw how easy you was to spoil. Miss Milray is one to praise you to your face, and disgrace you be hind your back, and so I tell you. When Mrs. Milray thought you done wrong she come and said so; and you can't forgive her."

Clementina did not answer. She had mastered the art of reticence in her relations with Mrs. Lander, and even when Miss Milray tempted her one day to give way, she still had strength to resist. But she could not deny that Mrs. Lander did things at times to worry her, though she ended compassionately with the reflection: "She's sick."

"I don't think she's very sick, now," retorted her friend.

"No; that's the reason she's so worrying. When she's really sick, she's betta."

"Because she's frightened, I suppose. And how long do you propose to stand it?"

"I don't know," Clementina listlessly answered.

"She couldn't get along without me. I guess I can stand it till we go home; she says she is going home in the fall."

Miss Milray sat looking at the girl a moment.

"Shall you be glad to go home?"

"Oh yes, indeed!"

"To that place in the woods?"

"Why, yes! What makes you ask?"

"Nothing. But Clementina, sometimes I think you don't quite understand yourself. Don't you know that you are very pretty and very charming? I've told you that often enough! But shouldn't you like to be a great success in the world? Haven't you ever thought of that? Don't you care for society?"

The girl sighed. "Yes, I think that's all very nice I did ca'e, one while, there in Florence, last winter!"

"My dear, you don't know how much you were admired. I used to tell you, because I saw there was no spoiling you; but I never told you half. If you had only had the time for it you could have been the greatest sort of success; you were formed for it. It wasn't your beauty alone; lots of pretty girls don't make anything of their beauty; it was your temperament. You took things easily and naturally, and that's what the world likes. It doesn't like your being afraid of it, and you were not afraid, and you were not bold; you were just right." Miss Milray grew more and more exhaustive in her analysis, and enjoyed refining upon it. "All that you needed was a little hard-heartedness, and that would have come in time; you would have learned how to hold your own, but the chance was snatched from you by that old cat! I could weep over you when I think how you have been wasted on her, and now you're actually willing to go back and lose yourself in the woods!"

"I shouldn't call it being lost, Miss Milray."

"I don't mean that, and you must excuse me, my dear. But surely your people--your father and mother--would want to have you get on in the world--to make a brilliant match"--

Clementina smiled to think how far such a thing was from their imaginations. "I don't believe they would ca'e. You don't undastand about them, and I couldn't make you. Fatha neva liked the notion of my being with such a rich woman as Mrs. Lander, because it would look as if we wanted her money."

"I never could have imagined that of you, Clementina!"

"I didn't think you could," said the girl gratefully. "But now, if I left her when she was sick and depended on me, it would look wohse, yet--"

as if I did it because she was going to give her money to Mr. Landa's family. She wants to do that, and I told her to; I think that would be right; don't you?"

"It would be right for you, Clementina, if you preferred it--and--I should prefer it. But it wouldn't be right for her. She has given you hopes--she has made promises--she has talked to everybody."

"I don't care for that. I shouldn't like to feel beholden to any one, and I think it really belongs to his relations; it was HIS."

Miss Milray did not say anything to this. She asked, "And if you went back, what would you do there? Labor in the fields, as poor little Belsky advised?"

Clementina laughed. "No; but I expect you'll think it's almost as crazy. You know how much I like dancing? Well, I think I could give dancing lessons at the Middlemount. There are always a good many children, and girls that have not grown up, and I guess I could get pupils enough, as long as the summa lasted; and come winter, I'm not afraid but what I could get them among the young folks at the Center. I used to teach them before I left home."

Miss Milray sat looking at her. "I don't know about such things; but it sounds sensible--like everything about you, my dear. It sounds queer, perhaps because you're talking of such a White Mountain scheme here in Venice."

"Yes, don't it?" said Clementina, sympathetically. "I was thinking of that, myself. But I know I could do it. I could go round to different hotels, different days. Yes, I should like to go home, and they would be glad to have me. You can't think how pleasantly we live; and we're company enough for each other. I presume I should miss the things I've got used to ova here, at fust; but I don't believe I should care a great while. I don't deny but what the wo'ld is nice; but you have to pay for it; I don't mean that you would make me"--

"No, no! We understand each other. Go on!"

Miss Milray leaned towards her and pressed the girl's arm reassuringly.

As often happens with people when they are told to go on, Clementina found that she had not much more to say. "I think I could get along in the wo'ld, well enough. Yes, I believe I could do it. But I wasn't bohn to it, and it would be a great deal of trouble--a great deal moa than if I had been bohn to it. I think it would be too much trouble. I would rather give it up and go home, when Mrs. Landa wants to go back."

Miss Milray did not speak for a time. "I know that you are serious, Clementina; and you're wise always, and good"--

"It isn't that, exactly," said Clementina. "But is it--I don't know how to express it very well--is it wo'th while?"

Miss Milray looked at her as if she doubted the girl's sincerity. Even when the world, in return for our making it our whole life, disappoints and defeats us with its prizes, we still question the truth of those who question the value of these prizes; we think they must be hopeless of them, or must be governed by some interest momentarily superior.

Clementina pursued, "I know that you have had all you wanted of the wo'ld"--

"Oh, no!" the woman broke out, almost in anguish. "Not what I wanted! What I tried for. It never gave me what I wanted. It--couldn't!"

"Well?"

"It isn't worth while in that sense. But if you can't have what you want,--if there's been a hollow left in your life--why the world goes a great way towards filling up the aching void." The tone of the last words was lighter than their meaning, but Clementina weighed them aright.

"Miss Milray," she said, pinching the edge of the table by which she sat, a little nervously, and banging her head a little, "I think I can have what I want." Then, give the whole world for it, child!"

"There is something I should like to tell you."

"Yes!"

"For you to advise me about."

"I will, my dear, gladly and truly!"

"He was here before you came. He asked me"--

Miss Milray gave a start of alarm. She said, to gain time: "How did he get here? I supposed he was in Germany with his"--

"No; he was here the whole of May."

"Mr. Gregory!"

"Mr. Gregory?" Clementina's face flushed and drooped still lower.

"I meant Mr. Hinkle. But if you think I oughtn't"--

"I don't think anything; I'm so glad! I supposed from what you said about the world, that it must be--But if it isn't, all the better. If it's Mr. Hinkle that you can have"--

"I'm not sure I can. I should like to tell you just how it is, and then you will know." It needed fewer words for this than she expected, and then Clementina took a letter from her pocket, and gave it to Miss Milray. "He wrote it on the train, going away, and it's not very plain; but I guess you can make it out."

Miss Milray received the penciled leaves, which seemed to be pages torn out of a note-book. They were dated the day Hinkle left Venice, and the envelope bore the postmark of Verona. They were not addressed, but began abruptly: "I believe I have made a mistake; I ought not to have given you up till I knew something that no one but you can tell me. You are not bound to any body unless you wish to be so. That is what I see now, and I will not give you up if I can help it. Even if you had made a promise, and then changed your mind, you would not be bound in such a thing as this. I say this, and I know you will not believe I say it because I want you. I do want you, but I would not urge you to break your faith. I only ask you to realize that if you kept your word when your heart had gone out of it, you would be breaking your faith; and if you broke your word you would be keeping your faith. But if your heart is still in your word, I have no more to say. Nobody knows but you. I would get out and take the first train back to Venice if it were not for two things. I know it would be hard on me; and I am afraid it might be hard on you. But if you will write me a line at Milan, when you get this, or if you will write to me at London before July; or at New York at any time--for I expect to wait as long as I live"--

The letter ended here in the local addresses which the writer gave.

Miss Milray handed the leaves back to Clementina, who put them into her pocket, and apparently waited for her questions.

"And have you written?"

"No," said the girl, slowly and thoughtfully, "I haven't. I wanted to, at fust; and then, I thought that if he truly meant what he said he would be willing to wait."

"And why did you want to wait?"

Clementina replied with a question of her own. "Miss Milray, what do you think about Mr. Gregory?"

"Oh, you mustn't ask me that, my dear! I was afraid I had told you too plainly, the last time."

"I don't mean about his letting me think he didn't ca'e for me, so long. But don't you think he wants to do what is right! Mr. Gregory, I mean."

"Well, if you put me on my honor, I'm afraid I do."

"You see," Clementina resumed. "He was the fust one, and I did ca'e for him a great deal; and I might have gone on caring for him, if--When I found out that I didn't care any longer, or so much, it seemed to me as if it must be wrong. Do you think it was?"

"No-no."

"When I got to thinking about some one else at fust it was only not

thinking about him--I was ashamed. Then I tried to make out that I was too young in the first place, to know whether I really cared for any one in the right way; but after I made out that I was, I couldn't feel exactly easy--and I've been wanting to ask you, Miss Milray"--

"Ask me anything you like, my dear!"

"Why, it's only whether a person ought ever to change."

"We change whether we ought, or not. It isn't a matter of duty, one way or another."

"Yes, but ought we to stop caring for somebody, when perhaps we shouldn't if somebody else hadn't come between? That is the question."

"No," Miss Milray retorted, "that isn't at all the question. The question is which you want and whether you could get him. Whichever you want most it is right for you to have."

"Do you truly think so?"

"I do, indeed. This is the one thing in life where one may choose safest what one likes best; I mean if there is nothing bad in the man himself."

"I was afraid it would be wrong! That was what I meant by wanting to be fair with Mr. Gregory when I told you about him there in Florence. I don't believe but what it had begun then."

"What had begun?"

"About Mr. Hinkle."

Miss Milray burst into a laugh. "Clementina, you're delicious!" The girl looked hurt, and Miss Milray asked seriously, "Why do you like Mr. Hinkle best--if you do?"

Clementina sighed. "Oh, I don't know. He's so resting."

"Then that settles it. From first to last, what we poor women want is rest. It would be a wicked thing for you to throw your life away on some one who would worry you out of it. I don't wish to say any thing against Mr. Gregory. I dare say he is good--and conscientious; but life is a struggle, at the best, and it's your duty to take the best chance for resting."

Clementina did not look altogether convinced, whether it was Miss Milray's logic or her morality that failed to convince her. She said, after a moment, "I should like to see Mr. Gregory again."

"What good would that do?"

"Why, then I should know."

"Know what?"

"Whether I didn't really care for him any more--or so much."

"Clementina," said Miss Milray, "you mustn't make me lose patience with you"--

"No. But I thought you said that it was my duty to do what I wished."

"Well, yes. That is what I said," Miss Milray consented. "But I supposed that you knew already."

"No," said Clementina, candidly, "I don't believe I do."

"And what if you don't see him?"

"I guess I shall have to wait till I do. There will be time enough."

Miss Milray sighed, and then she laughed. "You ARE young!"

XXXII.

Miss Milray went from Clementina to call upon her sister-in-law, and found her brother, which was perhaps what she hoped might happen.

"Do you know," she said, "that that old wretch is going to defraud that poor thing, after all, and leave her money to her husband's half-sister's children?"

"You wish me to infer the Mrs. Lander--Clementina situation?" Milray returned.

"Yes!"

"I'm glad you put it in terms that are not actionable, then; for your words are decidedly libellous."

"What do you mean?"

"I've just been writing Mrs. Lander's will for her, and she's left all her property to Clementina, except five thousand apiece to the half-sister's three children."

"I can't believe it!"

"Well," said Milray, with his gentle smile, "I think that's safe ground for you. Mrs. Lander will probably have time enough to change her will as well as her mind several times yet before she dies. The half-sister's children may get their rights yet."

"I wish they might!" said Miss Milray, with an impassioned sigh. "Then perhaps I should get Clementina--for a while."

Her brother laughed. "Isn't there somebody else wants Clementina?"

"Oh, plenty. But she's not sure she wants anybody else."

"Does she want you?"

"No, I can't say she does. She wants to go home."

"That's not a bad scheme. I should like to go home myself if I had one. What would you have done with Clementina if you had got her, Jenny?"

"What would any one have done with her? Married her brilliantly, of course."

"But you say she isn't sure she wishes to be married at all?"

Miss Milray stated the case of Clementina's divided mind, and her belief that she would take Hinkle in the end, together with the fear that she might take Gregory. "She's very odd," Miss Milray concluded. "She puzzles me. Why did you ever send her to me?"

Milray laughed. "I don't know. I thought she would amuse you, and I thought it would be a pleasure to her."

They began to talk of some affairs of their own, from which Miss Milray returned to Clementina with the ache of an imperfectly satisfied intention. If she had meant to urge her brother to seek justice for the girl from Mrs. Lander, she was not so well pleased to have found justice done already. But the will had been duly signed and witnessed before the American vice-consul, and she must get what good she could out of an accomplished fact. It was at least a consolation to know that it put an end to her sister-in-law's patronage of the girl, and it would be interesting to see Mrs. Milray adapt her behavior to Clementina's fortunes. She did not really dislike her sister-in-law enough to do her a wrong; she was only willing that she should do herself a wrong. But one of the most disappointing things in all hostile operations is that you never can know what the enemy would be at; and Mrs. Milray's manoeuvres were sometimes dictated by such impulses that her strategy was peculiarly baffling. The thought of her past unkindness to Clementina may still have rankled in her, or she may simply have felt the need of outdoing Miss Milray by an unapproachable benefaction. It is certain that when Baron Belsky came to Venice a few weeks after her own arrival, they began to pose at each other with reference to Clementina; she with a measure of consciousness, he with the singleness of a nature that was all pose. In his forbearance to win Clementina from Gregory he had enjoyed the distinction of an unique suffering; and in allowing the fact to impart itself to Mrs. Milray, he bathed in the warmth of her flattering sympathy. Before she withdrew this, as she must when she got tired of him, she learned from him where Gregory was; for it seemed that Gregory had so far forgiven the past that they had again written to each

other.

During the fortnight of Belsky's stay in Venice Mrs. Lander was much worse, and Clementina met him only once, very briefly--She felt that he had behaved like a very silly person, but that was all over now, and she had no wish to punish him for it. At the end of his fortnight he went northward into the Austrian Tyrol, and a few days later Gregory came down from the Dolomites to Venice.

It was in his favor with Clementina that he yielded to the impulse he had to come directly to her; and that he let her know with the first words that he had acted upon hopes given him through Belsky from Mrs. Milray. He owned that he doubted the authority of either to give him these hopes, but he said he could not abandon them without a last effort to see her, and learn from her whether they were true or false.

If she recognized the design of a magnificent reparation in what Mrs. Milray had done, she did not give it much thought. Her mind was upon distant things as she followed Gregory's explanation of his presence, and in the muse in which she listened she seemed hardly to know when he ceased speaking.

"I know it must seem to take something for granted which I've no right to take for granted. I don't believe you could think that I cared for anything but you, or at all for what Mrs. Lander has done for you."

"Do you mean her leaving me her money?" asked Clementina, with that boldness her sex enjoys concerning matters of finance and affection.

"Yes," said Gregory, blushing for her. "As far as I should ever have a right to care, I could wish there were no money. It could bring no blessing to our life. We could do no good with it; nothing but the sacrifice of ourselves in poverty could be blessed to us."

"That is what I thought, too," Clementina replied.

"Oh, then you did think"--

"But afterwards, I changed my Mind. If she wants to give me her money I shall take it."

Gregory was blankly silent again.

"I shouldn't know how to refuse, and I don't know as I should have any right to. Gregory shrank a little from her reyankeefied English, as well as from the apparent cynicism of her speech; but he shrank in silence still. She startled him by asking with a kindness that was almost tenderness, "Mr. Gregory, how do you think anything has changed?"

"Changed?"

"You know how it was when you went away from Florence. Do you think differently now? I don't. I don't think I ought to do something for

you, and pretend that I was doing it for religion. I don't believe the way you do; and I know I neva shall. Do you want me in spite of my saying that I can neva help you in your work because I believe in it?"

"But if you believe in me"--

She shook her head compassionately. "You know we argued that out before. We are just where we were. I am sorry. Nobody had any right to tell you to come here. But I am glad you came--" She saw the hope that lighted up his face, but she went on unrelentingly--"I think we had better be free."

"Free?"

"Yes, from each other. I don't know how you have felt, but I have not felt free. It has seemed to me that I promised you something. If I did, I want to take my promise back and be free."

Her frankness appealed to his own. "You are free. I never held you bound to me in my fondest hopes. You have always done right."

"I have tried to. And I am not going to let you go away thinking that the reason I said is the only reason. It isn't. I wish to be free because--there is some one else, now." It was hard to tell him this, but she knew that she must not do less; and the train that carried him from Venice that night bore a letter from her to Hinkle.

XXXIII.

Clementina told Miss Milray what had happened, but with Mrs. Milray the girl left the sudden departure of Gregory to account for itself.

They all went a week later, and Mrs. Milray having now done her whole duty to Clementina had the easiest mind concerning her. Miss Milray felt that she was leaving her to greater trials than ever with Mrs. Lander; but since there was nothing else, she submitted, as people always do with the trials of others, and when she was once away she began to forget her.

By this time, however, it was really better for her. With no one to suspect of tampering with her allegiance, Mrs. Lander returned to her former fondness for the girl, and they were more peaceful if not happier together again. They had long talks, such as they used to have, and in the first of these Clementina told her how and why she had written to Mr. Hinkle. Mrs. Lander said that it suited her exactly.

"There ha'n't but just two men in Europe behaved like gentlemen to me, and one is Mr. Hinkle, and the other is that lo'd; and between the two I ratha you'd have Mr. Hinkle; I don't know as I believe much in American guls marryin' lo'ds, the best of 'em."

Clementina laughed. "Why, Mrs. Landa, Lo'd Lioncou't never thought of me

in the wo'ld!"

"You can't eva know. Mrs. Milray was tellin' that he's what they call a pooa lo'd, and that he was carryin' on with the American girls like everything down there in Egypt last winta. I guess if it comes to money you'd have enough to buy him and sell him again."

The mention of money cast a chill upon their talk; and Mrs. Lander said gloomily, "I don't know as I ca'e so much for that will Mr. Milray made for me, after all. I did want to say ten thousand apiece for Mr. Landa's relations; but I hated to befo'e him; I'd told the whole kit of 'em so much about you, and I knew what they would think."

She looked at Clementina with recurring grudge, and the girl could not bear it.

"Then why don't you tear it up, and make another? I don't want anything, unless you want me to have it; and I'd ratha not have anything."

"Yes, and what would folks say, afta youa taken' care of me?"

"Do you think I do it fo' that?"

"What do you do it fo'?"

"What did you want me to come with you fo'?"

"That's true." Mrs. Lander brightened and warmed again. "I guess it's all right. I guess I done right, and I got to be satisfied. I presume I could get the consul to make me a will any time."

Clementina did not relent so easily. "Mrs. Landa, whateva you do I don't ca'e to know it; and if you talk to me again about this I shall go home. I would stay with you as long as you needed me, but I can't if you keep bringing this up."

"I suppose you think you don't need me any moa! Betta not be too su'a."

The girl jumped to her feet, and Mrs. Lander interposed. "Well, the'a! I didn't mean anything, and I won't pesta you about it any moa. But I think it's pretty ha'd. Who am I going to talk it ova with, then?"

"You can talk it ova with the vice-consul," paid Clementina, at random.

"Well, that's so." Mrs. Lander let Clementina get her ready for the night, in sign of returning amity; when she was angry with her she always refused her help, and made her send Maddalena.

The summer heat increased, and the sick woman suffered from it, but she could not be persuaded that she had strength to get away, though the vice-consul, whom she advised with, used all his logic with her. He was a gaunt and weary widower, who described himself as being officially between hay and grass; the consul who appointed him had resigned after

going home, and a new consul had not yet been sent out to remove him. On what she called her well days Mrs. Lander went to visit him, and she did not mind his being in his shirt-sleeves, in the bit of garden where she commonly found him, with his collar and cravat off, and clouded in his own smoke; when she was sick she sent for him, to visit her. He made excuses as often as she could, and if he saw Mrs. Lander's gondola coming down the Grand Canal to his house he hurried on his cast clothing, and escaped to the Piazza, at whatever discomfort and risk from the heat.

"I don't know how you stand it, Miss Claxon," he complained to Clementina, as soon as he learned that she was not a blood relation of Mrs. Lander's, and divined that she had her own reservations concerning her. "But that woman will be the death of me if she keeps this up. What does she think I'm here for? If this goes on much longer I'll resign. The salary won't begin to pay for it. What am I going to do? I don't want to hurt her feelings, or not to help her; but I know ten times as much about Mrs. Lander's liver as I do about my own, now."

He treated Clementina as a person of mature judgment and a sage discretion, and he accepted what comfort she could offer him when she explained that it was everything for Mrs. Lander to have him to talk with. "She gets tired of talking to me," she urged, "and there's nobody else, now."

"Why don't she hire a valet de place, and talk to him? I'd hire one myself for her. It would be a good deal cheaper for me. It's as much as I can do to stand this weather as it is."

The vice-consul laughed forlornly in his exasperation, but he agreed with Clementina when she said, in further excuse, that Mrs. Lander was really very sick. He pushed back his hat, and scratched his head with a grimace.

"Of course, we've got to remember she's sick, and I shall need a little sympathy myself if she keeps on at me this way. I believe I'll tell her about my liver next time, and see how she likes it. Look here, Miss Claxon! Couldn't we get her off to some of those German watering places that are good for her complaints? I believe it would be the best thing for her--not to mention me."

Mrs. Lander was moved by the suggestion which he made in person afterwards; it appealed to her old nomadic instinct; but when the consul was gone she gave it up. "We couldn't git the'e, Clementina. I got to stay he'e till I git up my stren'th. I suppose you'd be glad enough to have me sta't, now the'e's nobody he'e but me," she added, suspiciously. "You git this scheme up, or him?"

Clementina did not defend herself, and Mrs. Lander presently came to her defence. "I don't believe but what he meant it fo' the best--or you, whichever it was, and I appreciate it; but all is I couldn't git off. I guess this aia will do me as much good as anything, come to have it a little coola."

They went every afternoon to the Lido, where a wheeled chair met them, and Mrs. Lander was trundled across the narrow island to the beach. In the evenings they went to the Piazza, where their faces and figures had become known, and the Venetians gossiped them down to the last fact of their relation with an accuracy creditable to their ingenuity in the affairs of others. To them Mrs. Lander was the sick American, very rich, and Clementina was her adoptive daughter, who would have her millions after her. Neither knew the character they bore to the amiable and inquisitive public of the Piazza, or cared for the fine eyes that aimed their steadfast gaze at them along the tubes of straw-barreled Virginia cigars, or across little cups of coffee. Mrs. Lander merely remarked that the Venetians seemed great for gaping, and Clementina was for the most part innocent of their stare.

She rested in the choice she had made in a content which was qualified by no misgiving. She was sorry for Gregory, when she remembered him; but her thought was filled with some one else, and she waited in faith and patience for the answer which should come to the letter she had written. She did not know where her letter would find him, or when she should hear from him; she believed that she should hear, and that was enough. She said to herself that she would not lose hope if no answer came for months; but in her heart she fixed a date for the answer by letter, and an earlier date for some word by cable; but she feigned that she did not depend upon this; and when no word came she convinced herself that she had not expected any.

It was nearing the end of the term which she had tacitly given her lover to make the first sign by letter, when one morning Mrs. Lander woke her. She wished to say that she had got the strength to leave Venice at last, and she was going as soon as their trunks could be packed. She had dressed herself, and she moved about restless and excited. Clementina tried to reason her out of her haste; but she irritated her, and fixed her in her determination. "I want to get away, I tell you; I want to get away," she answered all persuasion, and there seemed something in her like the wish to escape from more than the oppressive environment, though she spoke of nothing but the heat and the smell of the canal. "I believe it's that, moa than any one thing, that's kept me sick he'e," she said. "I tell you it's the malariar, and you'll be down, too, if you stay."

She made Clementina go to the banker's, and get money to pay their landlord's bill, and she gave him notice that they were going that afternoon. Clementina wished to delay till they had seen the vice-consul and the doctor; but Mrs. Lander broke out, "I don't want to see 'em, either of 'em. The docta wants to keep me he'e and make money out of me; I undastand him; and I don't believe that consul's a bit too good to take a pussentage. Now, don't you say a wo'd to either of 'em. If you don't do exactly what I tell you I'll go away and leave you he'e. Now, will you?"

Clementina promised, and broke her word. She went to the vice-consul and told him she had broken it, and she agreed with him that he had better not come unless Mrs. Lander sent for him. The doctor promptly imagined the situation and said he would come in casually during the morning, so

as not to alarm the invalid's suspicions. He owned that Mrs. Lander was getting no good from remaining in Venice, and if it were possible for her to go, he said she had better go somewhere into cooler and higher air.

His opinion restored him to Mrs. Lander's esteem, when it was expressed to her, and as she was left to fix the sum of her debt to him, she made it handsomer than anything he had dreamed of. She held out against seeing the vice-consul till the landlord sent in his account. This was for the whole month which she had just entered upon, and it included fantastic charges for things hitherto included in the rent, not only for the current month, but for the months past when, the landlord explained, he had forgotten to note them. Mrs. Lander refused to pay these demands, for they touched her in some of those economies which the gross rich practice amidst their profusion. The landlord replied that she could not leave his house, either with or without her effects, until she had paid. He declared Clementina his prisoner, too, and he would not send for the vice-consul at Mrs. Lander's bidding. How far he was within his rights in all this they could not know, but he was perhaps himself doubtful, and he consented to let them send for the doctor, who, when he came, behaved like anything but the steadfast friend that Mrs. Lander supposed she had bought in him. He advised paying the account without regard to its justice, as the shortest and simplest way out of the trouble; but Mrs. Lander, who saw him talking amicably and even respectfully with the landlord, when he ought to have treated him as an extortionate scamp, returned to her former ill opinion of him; and the vice-consul now appeared the friend that Doctor Tradonico had falsely seemed. The doctor consented, in leaving her to her contempt of him, to carry a message to the vice-consul, though he came back, with his finger at the side of his nose, to charge her by no means to betray his bold championship to the landlord.

The vice-consul made none of those shows of authority which Mrs. Lander had expected of him. She saw him even exchanging the common decencies with the landlord, when they met; but in fact it was not hard to treat the smiling and courteous rogue well. In all their disagreement he had looked as constantly to the comfort of his captives as if they had been his chosen guests. He sent Mrs. Lander a much needed refreshment at the stormiest moment of her indignation, and he deprecated without retort the denunciations aimed at him in Italian which did not perhaps carry so far as his conscience. The consul talked with him in a calm scarcely less shameful than that of Dr. Tradonico; and at the end of their parley which she had insisted upon witnessing, he said:

"Well, Mrs. Lander, you've got to stand this gouge or you've got to stand a law suit. I think the gouge would be cheaper in the end. You see, he's got a right to his month's rent."

"It ain't the rent I ca'e for: it's the candles, and the suvvice, and the things he says we broke. It was undastood that everything was to be in the rent, and his two old chais went to pieces of themselves when we tried to pull 'em out from the wall; and I'll neva pay for 'em in the wo'ld."

Why," the vice-consul pleaded, "it's only about forty francs for the whole thing"--

"I don't care if it's only fotty cents. And I must say, Mr. Bennam, you're about the strangest vice-consul, to want me to do it, that I eva saw."

The vice-consul laughed unresentfully. "Well, shall I send you a lawyer?"

"No!" Mrs. Lander retorted; and after a moment's reflection she added, "I'm goin' to stay my month, and so you may tell him, and then I'll see whetha he can make me pay for that breakage and the candles and suvvice. I'm all wore out, as it is, and I ain't fit to travel, now, and I don't know when I shall be. Clementina, you can go and tell Maddalena to stop packin'. Or, no! I'll do it."

She left the room without further notice of the consul, who said ruefully to Clementina, "Well, I've missed my chance, Miss Claxon, but I guess she's done the wisest thing for herself."

"Oh, yes, she's not fit to go. She must stay, now, till it's coola. Will you tell the landlo'd, or shall"--

"I'll tell him," said the vice-consul, and he had in the landlord. He received her message with the pleasure of a host whose cherished guests have consented to remain a while longer, and in the rush of his good feeling he offered, if the charge for breakage seemed unjust to the vice-consul, to abate it; and since the signora had not understood that she was to pay extra for the other things, he would allow the vice-consul to adjust the differences between them; it was a trifle, and he wished above all things to content the signora, for whom he professed a cordial esteem both on his own part and the part of all his family.

"Then that lets me out for the present," said the vice-consul, when Clementina repeated Mrs. Lander's acquiescence in the landlord's proposals, and he took his straw hat, and called a gondola from the nearest 'traghetto', and bargained at an expense consistent with his salary, to have himself rowed back to his own garden-gate.

The rest of the day was an era of better feeling between Mrs. Lander and her host than they had ever known, and at dinner he brought in with his own hand a dish which he said he had caused to be specially made for her. It was so tempting in odor and complexion that Mrs. Lander declared she must taste it, though as she justly said, she had eaten too much already; when it had once tasted it she ate it all, against Clementina's protestations; she announced at the end that every bite had done her good, and that she never felt better in her life. She passed a happy evening, with renewed faith in the air of the lagoon; her sole regret now was that Mr. Lander had not lived to try it with her, for if he had she was sure he would have been alive at that moment.

She allowed herself to be got to bed rather earlier than usual; before

Clementina dropped asleep she heard her breathing with long, easy, quiet respirations, and she lost the fear of the landlord's dish which had haunted her through the evening. She was awakened in the morning by a touch on her shoulder. Maddalena hung over her with a frightened face, and implored her to come and look at the signora, who seemed not at all well. Clementina ran into her room, and found her dead. She must have died some hours before without a struggle, for the face was that of sleep, and it had a dignity and beauty which it had not worn in her life of self-indulgent wilfulness for so many years that the girl had never seen it look so before.

XXXIV.

The vice-consul was not sure how far his powers went in the situation with which Mrs. Lander had finally embarrassed him. But he met the new difficulties with patience, and he agreed with Clementina that they ought to see if Mrs. Lander had left any written expression of her wishes concerning the event. She had never spoken of such a chance, but had always looked forward to getting well and going home, so far as the girl knew, and the most careful search now brought to light nothing that bore upon it. In the absence of instructions to the contrary, they did what they must, and the body, emptied of its life of senseless worry and greedy care, was laid to rest in the island cemetery of Venice.

When all was over, the vice-consul ventured an observation which he had hitherto delicately withheld. The question of Mrs. Lander's kindred had already been discussed between him and Clementina, and he now felt that another question had duly presented itself. "You didn't notice," he suggested, "anything like a will when we went over the papers?" He had looked carefully for it, expecting that there might have been some expression of Mrs. Lander's wishes in it. "Because," he added, "I happen to know that Mr. Milray drew one up for her; I witnessed it."

"No," said Clementina, "I didn't see anything of it. She told me she had made a will; but she didn't quite like it, and sometimes she thought she would change it. She spoke of getting you to do it; I didn't know but she had."

The vice-consul shook his head. "No. And these relations of her husband's up in Michigan; you don't know where they live, exactly?"

"No. She neva told me; she wouldn't; she didn't like to talk about them; I don't even know their names."

The vice-consul thoughtfully scratched a corner of his chin through his beard. "If there isn't any will, they're the heirs. I used to be a sort of wild-cat lawyer, and I know that much law."

"Yes," said Clementina. "She left them five thousand dollas apiece. She said she wished she had made it ten."

"I guess she's made it a good deal more, if she's made it anything. Miss Claxon, don't you understand that if no will turns up, they come in for all her money.

"Well, that's what I thought they ought to do," said Clementina.

"And do you understand that if that's so, you don't come in for anything? You must excuse me for mentioning it; but she has told everybody that you were to have it, and if there is no will"--

He stopped and bent an eye of lack-lustre compassion on the girl, who replied, "Oh, yes. I know that; it's what I always told her to do. I didn't want it."

"You didn't want it?"

"No."

"Well!" The vice-consul stared at her, but he forbore the comment that her indifference inspired. He said after a pause, "Then what we've got to do is to advertise for the Michigan relations, and let 'em take any action they want to."

"That's the only thing we could do, I presume."

This gave the vice-consul another pause. At the end of it he got to his feet. "Is there anything I can do for you, Miss Claxon?"

She went to her portfolio and produced Mrs. Lander's letter of credit. It had been made out for three thousand pounds, in Clementina's name as well as her own; but she had lived wastefully since she had come abroad, and little money remained to be taken up. With the letter Clementina handed the vice-consul the roll of Italian and Austrian bank-notes which she had drawn when Mrs. Lander decided to leave Venice; they were to the amount of several thousand lire and golden. She offered them with the insensibility to the quality of money which so many women have, and which is always so astonishing to men. "What must I do with these?" she asked.

"Why, keep them! returned the vice-consul on the spur of his surprise.

"I don't know as I should have any right to," said Clementina. "They were hers."

"Why, but"--The vice-consul began his protest, but he could not end it logically, and he did not end it at all. He insisted with Clementina that she had a right to some money which Mrs. Lander had given her during her life; he took charge of the bank-notes in the interest of the possible heirs, and gave her his receipt for them. In the meantime he felt that he ought to ask her what she expected to do.

"I think," she said, "I will stay in Venice awhile."

The vice-consul suppressed any surprise he might have felt at a decision given with mystifying cheerfulness. He answered, Well, that was right; and for the second time he asked her if there was anything he could do for her.

"Why, yes," she returned. "I should like to stay on in the house here, if you could speak for me to the padrone."

"I don't see why you shouldn't, if we can make the padrone understand it's different."

"You mean about the price?" The vice-consul nodded. "That's what I want you should speak to him about, Mr. Bennam, if you would. Tell him that I haven't got but a little money now, and he would have to make it very reasonable. That is, if you think it would be right for me to stay, after the way he tried to treat Mrs. Lander."

The vice-consul gave the point some thought, and decided that the attempted extortion need not make any difference with Clementina, if she could get the right terms. He said he did not believe the padrone was a bad fellow, but he liked to take advantage of a stranger when he could; we all did. When he came to talk with him he found him a man of heart if not of conscience. He entered into the case with the prompt intelligence and vivid sympathy of his race, and he made it easy for Clementina to stay till she had heard from her friends in America. For himself and for his wife, he professed that she could not stay too long, and they proposed that if it would content the signorina still further they would employ Maddalena as chambermaid till she wished to return to Florence; she had offered to remain if the signorina stayed.

"Then that is settled," said Clementina with a sigh of relief; and she thanked the vice-consul for his offer to write to the Milrays for her, and said that she would rather write herself.

She meant to write as soon as she heard from Mr. Hinkle, which could not be long now, for then she could be independent of the offers of help which she dreaded from Miss Milray, even more than from Mrs. Milray; it would be harder to refuse them; and she entered upon a passage of her life which a nature less simple would have found much more trying. But she had the power of taking everything as if it were as much to be expected as anything else. If nothing at all happened she accepted the situation with implicit resignation, and with a gayety of heart which availed her long, and never wholly left her.

While the suspense lasted she could not write home as frankly as before, and she sent off letters to Middlemount which treated of her delay in Venice with helpless reticence. They would have set another sort of household intolerably wondering and suspecting, but she had the comfort of knowing that her father would probably settle the whole matter by saying that she would tell what she meant when she got round to it; and apart from this she had mainly the comfort of the vice-consul's society. He had little to do besides looking after her, and he employed himself about this in daily visits which the padrone and his wife regarded as

official, and promoted with a serious respect for the vice-consular dignity. If the visits ended, as they often did, in a turn on the Grand Canal, and an ice in the Piazza, they appealed to the imagination of more sophisticated witnesses, who decided that the young American girl had inherited the millions of the sick lady, and become the betrothed of the vice-consul, and that they were thus passing the days of their engagement in conformity to the American custom, however much at variance with that of other civilizations.

This view of the affair was known to Maddalena, but not to Clementina, who in those days went back in many things to the tradition of her life at Middlemount. The vice-consul was of a tradition almost as simple, and his longer experience set no very wide interval between them. It quickly came to his telling her all about his dead wife and his married daughters, and how, after his home was broken up, he thought he would travel a little and see what that would do for him. He confessed that it had not done much; he was always homesick, and he was ready to go as soon as the President sent out a consul to take his job off his hands. He said that he had not enjoyed himself so much since he came to Venice as he was doing now, and that he did not know what he should do if Clementina first got her call home. He betrayed no curiosity as to the peculiar circumstances of her stay, but affected to regard it as something quite normal, and he watched over her in every way with a fatherly as well as an official vigilance which never degenerated into the semblance of any other feeling. Clementina rested in his care in entire security. The world had quite fallen from her, or so much of it as she had seen at Florence, and in her indifference she lapsed into life as it was in the time before that with a tender renewal of her allegiance to it. There was nothing in the conversation of the vice-consul to distract her from this; and she said and did the things at Venice that she used to do at Middlemount, as nearly as she could; to make the days of waiting pass more quickly, she tried to serve herself in ways that scandalized the proud affection of Maddalena. It was not fit for the signorina to make her bed or sweep her room; she might sew and knit if she would; but these other things were for servants like herself. She continued in the faith of Clementina's gentility, and saw her always as she had seen her first in the brief hour of her social splendor in Florence. Clementina tried to make her understand how she lived at Middlemount, but she only brought before Maddalena the humiliating image of a contadina, which she rejected not only in Clementina's behalf, but that of Miss Milray. She told her that she was laughing at her, and she was fixed in her belief when the girl laughed at that notion. Her poverty she easily conceived of; plenty of signorine in Italy were poor; and she protected her in it with the duty she did not divide quite evenly between her and the padrone.

The date which Clementina had fixed for hearing from Hinkle by cable had long passed, and the time when she first hoped to hear from him by letter had come and gone. Her address was with the vice-consul as Mrs. Lander's had been, and he could not be ignorant of her disappointment when he brought her letters which she said were from home. On the surface of things it could only be from home that she wished to hear, but beneath the surface he read an anxiety which mounted with each gratification of

this wish. He had not seen much of the girl while Hinkle was in Venice; Mrs. Lander had not begun to make such constant use of him until Hinkle had gone; Mrs. Milray had told him of Clementina's earlier romance, and it was to Gregory that the vice-consul related the anxiety which he knew as little in its nature as in its object.

Clementina never doubted the good faith or constancy of her lover; but her heart misgave her as to his well-being when it sank at each failure of the vice-consul to bring her a letter from him. Something must have happened to him, and it must have been something very serious to keep him from writing; or there was some mistake of the post-office. The vice-consul indulged himself in personal inquiries to make sure that the mistake was not in the Venetian post-office; but he saw that he brought her greater distress in ascertaining the fact. He got to dreading a look of resolute cheerfulness that came into her face, when he shook his head in sign that there were no letters, and he suffered from the covert eagerness with which she glanced at the superscriptions of those he brought and failed to find the hoped-for letter among them. Ordeal for ordeal, he was beginning to regret his trials under Mrs. Lander. In them he could at least demand Clementina's sympathy, but against herself this was impossible. Once she noted his mute distress at hers, and broke into a little laugh that he found very harrowing.

"I guess you hate it almost as much as I do, Mr. Bennam."

"I guess I do. I've half a mind to write the letter you want, myself."

"I've half a mind to let you--or the letter I'd like to write."

It had come to her thinking she would write again to Hinkle; but she could not bring herself to do it. She often imagined doing it; she had every word of such a letter in her mind; and she dramatized every fact concerning it from the time she should put pen to paper, to the time when she should get back the answer that cleared the mystery of his silence away. The fond reveries helped her to bear her suspense; they helped to make the days go by, to ease the doubt with which she lay down at night, and the heartsick hope with which she rose up in the morning.

One day, at the hour of his wonted visit, she saw the vice-consul from her balcony coming, as it seemed to her, with another figure in his gondola, and a thousand conjectures whirled through her mind, and then centred upon one idea. After the first glance she kept her eyes down, and would not look again while she told herself incessantly that it could not be, and that she was a fool and a goose and a perfect coot, to think of such a thing for a single moment. When she allowed herself, or forced herself, to look a second time; as the boat drew near, she had to cling to the balcony parapet for support, in her disappointment.

The person whom the vice-consul helped out of the gondola was an elderly man like himself, and she took a last refuge in the chance that he might be Hinkle's father, sent to bring her to him because he could not come to her; or to soften some terrible news to her. Then her fancy fluttered and fell, and she waited patiently for the fact to reveal itself. There

was something countrified in the figure of the man, and something clerical in his face, though there was nothing in his uncouth best clothes that confirmed this impression. In both face and figure there was a vague resemblance to some one she had seen before, when the vice-consul said:

"Miss Claxon, I want to introduce the Rev. Mr. James B. Orson, of Michigan." Mr. Orson took Clementina's hand into a dry, rough grasp, while he peered into her face with small, shy eyes. The vice-consul added with a kind of official formality, "Mr. Orson is the half-nephew of Mr. Lander," and then Clementina now knew whom it was that he resembled. "He has come to Venice," continued the vice-consul, "at the request of Mrs. Lander; and he did not know of her death until I informed him of the fact. I should have said that Mr. Orson is the son of Mr. Lander's half-sister. He can tell you the balance himself." The vice-consul pronounced the concluding word with a certain distaste, and the effect of gladly retiring into the background.

"Won't you sit down?" said Clementina, and she added with one of the remnants of her Middlemount breeding, "Won't you let me take your hat?"

Mr. Orson in trying to comply with both her invitations, knocked his well worn silk hat from the hand that held it, and sent it rolling across the room, where Clementina pursued it and put it on the table.

"I may as well say at once," he began in a flat irrissonant voice, "that I am the representative of Mrs. Lander's heirs, and that I have a letter from her enclosing her last will and testament, which I have shown to the consul here"--

"Vice-consul," the dignitary interrupted with an effect of rejecting any part in the affair.

"Vice-consul, I should say,--and I wish to lay them both before you, in order that"--

"Oh, that is all right," said Clementina sweetly. "I'm glad there is a will. I was afraid there wasn't any at all. Mr. Bennam and I looked for it everywh'e." She smiled upon the Rev. Mr. Orson, who silently handed her a paper. It was the will which Milray had written for Mrs. Lander, and which, with whatever crazy motive, she had sent to her husband's kindred. It provided that each of them should be given five thousand dollars out of the estate, and that then all should go to Clementina. It was the will Mrs. Lander told her she had made, but she had never seen the paper before, and the legal forms hid the meaning from her so that she was glad to have the vice-consul make it clear. Then she said tranquilly, "Yes, that is the way I supposed it was."

Mr. Orson by no means shared her calm. He did not lift his voice, but on the level it had taken it became agitated. "Mrs. Lander gave me the address of her lawyer in Boston when she sent me the will, and I made a point of calling on him when I went East, to sail. I don't know why she wished me to come out to her, but being sick, I presume she naturally

wished to see some of her own family."

He looked at Clementina as if he thought she might dispute this, but she consented at her sweetest, "Oh, yes, indeed," and he went on:

"I found her affairs in a very different condition from what she seemed to think. The estate was mostly in securities which had not been properly looked after, and they had depreciated until they were some of them not worth the paper they were printed on. The house in Boston is mortgaged up to its full value, I should say; and I should say that Mrs. Lander did not know where she stood. She seemed to think that she was a very rich woman, but she lived high, and her lawyer said he never could make her understand how the money was going. Mr. Lander seemed to lose his grip, the year he died, and engaged in some very unfortunate speculations; I don't know whether he told her. I might enter into details"--

"Oh, that is not necessary," said Clementina, politely, witless of the disastrous quality of the facts which Mr. Orson was imparting.

"But the sum and substance of it all is that there will not be more than enough to pay the bequests to her own family, if there is that."

Clementina looked with smiling innocence at the vice-consul.

"That is to say," he explained, "there won't be anything at all for you, Miss Claxon."

"Well, that's what I always told Mrs. Lander I ratha, when she brought it up. I told her she ought to give it to his family," said Clementina, with a satisfaction in the event which the vice-consul seemed unable to share, for he remained gloomily silent. "There is that last money I drew on the letter of credit, you can give that to Mr. Orson."

"I have told him about that money," said the vice-consul, dryly. "It will be handed over to him when the estate is settled, if there isn't enough to pay the bequests without it."

"And the money which Mrs. Landa gave me before that," she pursued, eagerly. Mr. Orson had the effect of pricking up his ears, though it was in fact merely a gleam of light that came into his eyes.

"That's yours," said the vice-consul, sourly, almost savagely. "She didn't give it to you without she wanted you to have it, and she didn't expect you to pay her bequests with it. In my opinion," he burst out, in a wrathful recollection of his own sufferings from Mrs. Lander, "she didn't give you a millionth part of your due for all the trouble she made you; and I want Mr. Orson to understand that, right here."

Clementina turned her impartial gaze upon Mr. Orson as if to verify the impression of this extreme opinion upon him; he looked as if he neither accepted nor rejected it, and she concluded the sentence which the vice-consul had interrupted. "Because I ratha not keep it, if there isn't

enough without it."

The vice-consul gave way to violence. "It's none of your business whether there's enough or not. What you've got to do is to keep what belongs to you, and I'm going to see that you do. That's what I'm here for." If this assumption of official authority did not awe Clementina, at least it put a check upon her headlong self-sacrifice. The vice-consul strengthened his hold upon her by asking, "What would you do. I should like to know, if you gave that up?"

"Oh, I should get along," she returned, light-heartedly, but upon questioning herself whether she should turn to Miss Milray for help, or appeal to the vice-consul himself, she was daunted a little, and she added, "But just as you say, Mr. Bennam."

"I say, keep what fairly belongs to you. It's only two or three hundred dollars at the outside," he explained to Mr. Orson's hungry eyes; but perhaps the sum did not affect the country minister's imagination as trifling; his yearly salary must sometimes have been little more.

The whole interview left the vice-consul out of humor with both parties to the affair; and as to Clementina, between the ideals of a perfect little saint, and a perfect little simpleton he remained for the present unable to class her.

XXXV.

Clementina and the Vice-Consul afterwards agreed that Mrs. Lander must have sent the will to Mr. Orson in one of those moments of suspicion when she distrusted everyone about her, or in that trouble concerning her husband's kindred which had grown upon her more and more, as a means of assuring them that they were provided for.

"But even then," the vice-consul concluded, "I don't see why she wanted this man to come out here. The only explanation is that she was a little off her base towards the last. That's the charitable supposition."

"I don't think she was herself, some of the time," Clementina assented in acceptance of the kindly construction.

The vice-consul modified his good will toward Mrs. Lander's memory so far as to say, "Well, if she'd been somebody else most of the time, it would have been an improvement."

The talk turned upon Mr. Orson, and what he would probably do. The vice-consul had found him a cheap lodging, at his request, and he seemed to have settled down at Venice either without the will or without the power to go home, but the vice-consul did not know where he ate, or what he did with himself except at the times when he came for letters. Once or twice when he looked him up he found him writing, and then the minister

explained that he had promised to "correspond" for an organ of his sect in the Northwest; but he owned that there was no money in it. He was otherwise reticent and even furtive in his manner. He did not seem to go much about the city, but kept to his own room; and if he was writing of Venice it must have been chiefly from his acquaintance with the little court into which his windows looked. He affected the vice-consul as forlorn and helpless, and he pitied him and rather liked him as a fellow-victim of Mrs. Lander.

One morning Mr. Orson came to see Clementina, and after a brief passage of opinion upon the weather, he fell into an embarrassed silence from which he pulled himself at last with a visible effort. "I hardly know how to lay before you what I have to say, Miss Claxon," he began, "and I must ask you to put the best construction upon it. I have never been reduced to a similar distress before. You would naturally think that I would turn to the vice-consul, on such an occasion; but I feel, through our relation to the--to Mrs. Lander--ah--somewhat more at home with you."

He stopped, as if he wished to be asked his business, and she entreated him, "Why, what is it, Mr. Orson? Is there something I can do? There isn't anything I wouldn't!"

A gleam, watery and faint, which still could not be quite winked away, came into his small eyes. "Why, the fact is, could you--ah--advance me about five dollars?"

"Why, Mr. Orson!" she began, and he seemed to think she wished to withdraw her offer of help, for he interposed.

"I will repay it as soon as I get an expected remittance from home. I came out on the invitation of Mrs. Lander, and as her guest, and I supposed"--

"Oh, don't say a wo'd!" cried Clementina, but now that he had begun he was powerless to stop.

"I would not ask, but my landlady has pressed me for her rent--I suppose she needs it--and I have been reduced to the last copper"--

The girl whose eyes the tears of self pity so rarely visited, broke into a sob that seemed to surprise her visitor. But she checked herself as with a quick inspiration: "Have you been to breakfast?"

"Well--ah--not this morning," Mr. Orson admitted, as if to imply that having breakfasted some other morning might be supposed to serve the purpose.

She left him and ran to the door. "Maddalena, Maddalena!" she called; and Maddalena responded with a frightened voice from the direction of the kitchen:

"Vengo subito!"

She hurried out with the coffee-pot in her hand, as if she had just taken it up when Clementina called; and she halted for the whispered colloquy between them which took place before she set it down on the table already laid for breakfast; then she hurried out of the room again. She came back with a cantaloupe and grapes, and cold ham, and put them before Clementina and her guest, who both ignored the hunger with which he swept everything before him. When his famine had left nothing, he said, in decorous compliment:

"That is very good coffee, I should think the genuine berry, though I am told that they adulterate coffee a great deal in Europe."

"Do they?" asked Clementina. "I didn't know it."

She left him still sitting before the table, and came back with some bank-notes in her hand. "Are you sure you hadn't better take more?" she asked.

"I think that five dollars will be all that I shall require," he answered, with dignity. "I should be unwilling to accept more. I shall undoubtedly receive some remittances soon."

"Oh, I know you will," Clementina returned, and she added, "I am waiting for letters myself; I don't think any one ought to give up."

The preacher ignored the appeal which was in her tone rather than her words, and went on to explain at length the circumstances of his having come to Europe so unprovided against chances. When he wished to excuse his imprudence, she cried out, "Oh, don't say a word! It's just like my own father," and she told him some things of her home which apparently did not interest him very much. He had a kind of dull, cold self-absorption in which he was indeed so little like her father that only her kindness for the lonely man could have justified her in thinking there was any resemblance.

She did not see him again for a week, and meantime she did not tell the vice-consul of what had happened. But an anxiety for the minister began to mingle with her anxieties for herself; she constantly wondered why she did not hear from her lover, and she occasionally wondered whether Mr. Orson were not falling into want again. She had decided to betray his condition to the vice-consul, when he came, bringing the money she had lent him. He had received a remittance from an unexpected source; and he hoped she would excuse his delay in repaying her loan. She wished not to take the money, at least till he was quite sure he should not want it, but he insisted.

"I have enough to keep me, now, till I hear from other sources, with the means for returning home. I see no object in continuing here, under the circumstances."

In the relief which she felt for him Clementina's heart throbbed with a pain which was all for herself. Why should she wait any longer either? For that instant she abandoned the hope which had kept her up so long; a

wave of homesickness overwhelmed her.

"I should like to go back, too," she said. "I don't see why I'm staying."

Mr. Osson, why can't you let me"--she was going to say--"go home with you? "But she really said what was also in her heart, "Why can't you let me give you the money to go home? It is all Mrs. Landa's money, anyway."

"There is certainly that view of the matter," he assented with a promptness that might have suggested a lurking grudge for the vice-consul's decision that she ought to keep the money Mrs. Lander had given her.

But Clementina urged unsuspectingly: "Oh, yes, indeed! And I shall feel better if you take it. I only wish I could go home, too!"

The minister was silent while he was revolving, with whatever scruple or reluctance, a compromise suitable to the occasion. Then he said, "Why should we not return together?"

"Would you take me?" she entreated.

"That should be as you wished. I am not much acquainted with the usages in such matters, but I presume that it would be entirely practicable. We could ask the vice-consul."

"Yes"--

"He must have had considerable experience in cases of the kind. Would your friends meet you in New York, or"--

"I don't know," said Clementina with a pang for the thought of a meeting she had sometimes fancied there, when her lover had come out for her, and her father had been told to come and receive them. "No," she sighed, "there wouldn't be time to let them know. But it wouldn't make any difference. I could get home from New York alone," she added, listlessly. Her spirits had fallen again. She saw that she could not leave Venice till she had heard in some sort from the letter she had written. "Perhaps it couldn't be done, after all. But I will see Mr. Bennam about it, Mr. Osson; and I know he will want you to have that much of the money. He will be coming here, soon."

He rose upon what he must have thought her hint, and said, "I should not wish to have him sway against his judgment."

The vice-consul came not long after the minister had left her, and she began upon what she wished to do for him.

The vice-consul was against it. "I would rather lend him the money out of my own pocket. How are you going to get along yourself, if you let him have so much?"

She did not answer at once. Then she said, hopelessly, "I've a great

mind to go home with him. I don't believe there's any use waiting here any longer." The vice-consul could not say anything to this. She added, "Yes, I believe I will go home. We we're talking about it, the other day, and he is willing to let me go with him."

"I should think he would be," the vice-consul retorted in his indignation for her. "Did you offer to pay for his passage?"

"Yes," she owned, "I did," and again the vice-consul could say nothing. "If I went, it wouldn't make any difference whether it took it all or not. I should have plenty to get home from New York with."

"Well," the vice-consul assented, dryly, "it's for you to say."

"I know you don't want me to do it!"

"Well, I shall miss you," he answered, evasively.

"And I shall miss you, too, Mr. Bennam. Don't you believe it? But if I don't take this chance to get home, I don't know when I shall ever have another. And there isn't any use waiting--no, there isn't!"

The vice-consul laughed at the sort of imperative despair in her tone.

"How are you going? Which way, I mean."

They counted up Clementina's debts and assets, and they found that if she took the next steamer from Genoa, which was to sail in four days, she would have enough to pay her own way and Mr. Orson's to New York, and still have some thirty dollars over, for her expenses home to Middlemount. They allowed for a second cabin-passage, which the vice-consul said was perfectly good on the Genoa steamers. He rather urged the gentility and comfort of the second cabin-passage, but his reasons in favor of it were wasted upon Clementina's indifference; she wished to get home, now, and she did not care how. She asked the vice-consul to see the minister for her, and if he were ready and willing, to telegraph for their tickets. He transacted the business so promptly that he was able to tell her when he came in the evening that everything was in train. He excused his coming; he said that now she was going so soon, he wanted to see all he could of her. He offered no excuse when he came the next morning; but he said he had got a letter for her and thought she might want to have it at once.

He took it out of his hat and gave it to her. It was addressed in Hinkle's writing; her answer had come at last; she stood trembling with it in her hand.

The vice-consul smiled. "Is that the one?"

"Yes," she whispered back.

"All right." He took his hat, and set it on the back of his head before he left her without other salutation.

Then Clementina opened her letter. It was in a woman's hand, and the writer made haste to explain at the beginning that she was George W. Hinkle's sister, and that she was writing for him; for though he was now out of danger, he was still very weak, and they had all been anxious about him. A month before, he had been hurt in a railroad collision, and had come home from the West, where the accident happened, suffering mainly from shock, as his doctor thought; he had taken to his bed at once, and had not risen from it since. He had been out of his head a great part of the time, and had been forbidden everything that could distress or excite him. His sister said that she was writing for him now as soon as he had seen Clementina's letter; it had been forwarded from one address to another, and had at last found him there at his home in Ohio. He wished to say that he would come out for Clementina as soon as he was allowed to undertake the journey, and in the meantime she must let him know constantly where she was. The letter closed with a few words of love in his own handwriting.

Clementina rose from reading it, and put on her hat in a bewildered impulse to go to him at once; she knew, in spite of all the cautions and reserves of the letter that he must still be very sick. When she came out of her daze she found that she could only go to the vice-consul. She put the letter in his hands to let it explain itself. "You'll undastand, now," she said. "What shall I do?"

When he had read it, he smiled and answered, "I guess I understood pretty well before, though I wasn't posted on names. Well, I suppose you'll want to layout most of your capital on cables, now?"

"Yes," she laughed, and then she suddenly lamented, "Why didn't they telegraph?"

"Well, I guess he hadn't the head for it," said the vice-consul, "and the rest wouldn't think of it. They wouldn't, in the country."

Clementina laughed again; in joyous recognition of the fact, "No, my fatha wouldn't, eitha!"

The vice-consul reached for his hat, and he led the way to Clementina's gondola at his garden gate, in greater haste than she. At the telegraph office he framed a dispatch which for expansive fullness and precision was apparently unexampled in the experience of the clerk who took it and spelt over its English with them. It asked an answer in the vice-consul's care, and, "I'll tell you what, Miss Claxon," he said with a husky weakness in his voice, "I wish you'd let this be my treat."

She understood. "Do you really, Mr. Bennam?"

"I do indeed."

"Well, then, I will," she said, but when he wished to include in his treat the dispatch she sent home to her father announcing her coming, she would not let him.

He looked at his watch, as they rowed away. "It's eight o'clock here, now, and it will reach Ohio about six hours earlier; but you can't expect an answer tonight, you know."

"No"--She had expected it though, he could see that.

"But whenever it comes, I'll bring it right round to you. Now it's all going to be straight, don't you be afraid, and you're going home the quickest way you can get there. I've been looking up the sailings, and this Genoa boat will get you to New York about as soon as any could from Liverpool. Besides there's always a chance of missing connections and losing time between here and England. I should stick to the Genoa boat."

"Oh I shall," said Clementina, far less fidgetted than he. She was, in fact, resting securely again in the faith which had never really deserted her, and had only seemed for a little time to waver from her when her hope went. Now that she had telegraphed, her heart was at peace, and she even laughed as she answered the anxious vice-consul.

XXXVI.

The next morning Clementina watched for the vice-consul from her balcony. She knew he would not send; she knew he would come; but it, was nearly noon before she saw him coming. They caught sight of each other almost at the same moment, and he stood up in his boat, and waved something white in his hand, which must be a dispatch for her.

It acknowledged her telegram and reported George still improving; his father would meet her steamer in New York. It was very reassuring, it was every thing hopeful; but when she had read it she gave it to the vice-consul for encouragement.

"It's all right, Miss Claxon," he said, stoutly. "Don't you be troubled about Mr. Hinkle's not coming to meet you himself. He can't keep too quiet for a while yet."

"Oh, yes," said Clementina, patiently.

"If you really want somebody to worry about, you can help Mr. Orson to worry about himself!" the vice-consul went on, with the grimness he had formerly used in speaking of Mrs. Lander. "He's sick, or he thinks he's going to be. He sent round for me this morning, and I found him in bed. You may have to go home alone. But I guess he's more scared than hurt."

Her heart sank, and then rose in revolt against the mere idea of delay.

"I wonder if I ought to go and see him," she said.

"Well, it would be a kindness," returned the vice-consul, with a promptness that unmasked the apprehension he felt for the sick man.

He did not offer to go with her, and she took Maddalena. She found the minister seated in his chair beside his bed. A three days' beard heightened the gauntness of his face; he did not move when his padrona announced her.

"I am not any better," he answered when she said that she was glad to see him up. "I am merely resting; the bed is hard. I regret to say," he added, with a sort of formal impersonality, "that I shall be unable to accompany you home, Miss Claxon. That is, if you still think of taking the steamer this week."

Her whole being had set homeward in a tide that already seemed to drift the vessel from its moorings. "What--what do you mean?" she gasped.

"I didn't know," he returned, "but that in view of the circumstances--all the circumstances--you might be intending to defer your departure to some later steamer."

"No, no, no! I must go, now. I couldn't wait a day, an hour, a minute after the first chance of going. You don't know what you are saying! He might die if I told him I was not coming; and then what should I do?" This was what Clementina said to herself; but what she said to Mr. Orson, with an inspiration from her terror at his suggestion was, "Don't you think a little chicken broth would do you good, Mr. Orson? I don't believe but what it would."

A wistful gleam came into the preacher's eyes. "It might," he admitted, and then she knew what must be his malady. She sent Maddalena to a trattoria for the soup, and she did not leave him, even after she had seen its effect upon him. It was not hard to persuade him that he had better come home with her; and she had him there, tucked away with his few poor belongings, in the most comfortable room the padrone could imagine, when the vice-consul came in the evening.

"He says he thinks he can go, now," she ended, when she had told the vice-consul. "And I know he can. It wasn't anything but poor living."

"It looks more like no living," said the vice-consul. "Why didn't the old fool let some one know that he was short of money? "He went on with a partial transfer of his contempt of the preacher to her, "I suppose if he'd been sick instead of hungry, you'd have waited over till the next steamer for him."

She cast down her eyes. "I don't know what you'll think of me. I should have been sorry for him, and I should have wanted to stay." She lifted her eyes and looked the vice-consul defiantly in the face. "But he hadn't the fust claim on me, and I should have gone--I couldn't, have helped it!--I should have gone, if he had been dying!"

"Well, you've got more horse-sense," said the vice-consul, "than any ten men I ever saw," and he testified his admiration of her by putting his arms round her, where she stood before him, and kissing her. "Don't you mind," he explained. "If my youngest girl had lived, she would have been

about your age."

"Oh, it's all right, Mr. Bennam," said Clementina.

When the time came for them to leave Venice, Mr. Orson was even eager to go. The vice-consul would have gone with them in contempt of the official responsibilities which he felt to be such a thankless burden, but there was really no need of his going, and he and Clementina treated the question with the matter-of-fact impartiality which they liked in each other. He saw her off at the station where Maddalena had come to take the train for Florence in token of her devotion to the signorina, whom she would not outstay in Venice. She wept long and loud upon Clementina's neck, so that even Clementina was once moved to put her handkerchief to her tearless eyes.

At the last moment she had a question which she referred to the vice consul. "Should you tell him?" she asked.

"Tell who what?" he retorted.

"Mr. Osson-that I wouldn't have stayed for him."

"Do you think it would make you feel any better?" asked the consul, upon reflection.

"I believe he ought to know."

"Well, then, I guess I should do it."

The time did not come for her confession till they had nearly reached the end of their voyage. It followed upon something like a confession from the minister himself, which he made the day he struggled on deck with her help, after spending a week in his berth.

"Here is something," he said, "which appears to be for you, Miss Claxon. I found it among some letters for Mrs. Lander which Mr. Bennam gave me after my arrival, and I only observed the address in looking over the papers in my valise this morning." He handed her a telegram. "I trust that it is nothing requiring immediate attention."

Clementina read it at a glance. "No," she answered, and for a while she could not say anything more; it was a cable message which Hinkle's sister must have sent her after writing. No evil had come of its failure to reach her, and she recalled without bitterness the suffering which would have been spared her if she had got it before. It was when she thought of the suffering of her lover from the silence which must have made him doubt her, that she could not speak. As soon as she governed herself against her first resentment she said, with a little sigh, "It is all right, now, Mr. Osson," and her stress upon the word seemed to trouble him with no misgiving. "Besides, if you're to blame for not noticing, so is Mr. Bennam, and I don't want to blame any one." She hesitated a moment before she added: "I have got to tell you something, now, because I think you ought to know it. I am going home to be married, Mr. Osson,

and this message is from the gentleman I am going to be married to. He has been very sick, and I don't know yet as he'll be able to meet me in New Yo'k; but his fatha will."

Mr. Orson showed no interest in these facts beyond a silent attention to her words, which might have passed for an open indifference. At his time of life all such questions, which are of permanent importance to women, affect men hardly more than the angels who neither marry nor are given in marriage. Besides, as a minister he must have had a surfeit of all possible qualities in the love affairs of people intending matrimony. As a casuist he was more reasonably concerned in the next fact which Clementina laid before him.

"And the otha day, there in Venice when you we'e sick, and you seemed to think that I might put off stahing home till the next steamer, I don't know but I let you believe I would."

"I supposed that the delay of a week or two could make no material difference to you."

"But now you see that it would. And I feel as if I ought to tell you-- I spoke to Mr. Bennam about it, and he didn't tell me not to--that I shouldn't have staid, no not for anything in the wo'ld. I had to do what I did at the time, but eva since it has seemed as if I had deceived you, and I don't want to have it seem so any longer. It isn't because I don't hate to tell you; I do; but I guess if it was to happen over again I couldn't feel any different. Do you want I should tell the deck-stewahd to bring you some beef-tea?"

"I think I could relish a small portion," said Mr. Orson, cautiously, and he said nothing more.

Clementina left him with her nerves in a flutter, and she did not come back to him until she decided that it was time to help him down to his cabin. He suffered her to do this in silence, but at the door he cleared his throat and began:

"I have reflected upon what you told me, and I have tried to regard the case from all points. I believe that I have done so, without personal feeling, and I think it my duty to say, fully and freely, that I believe you would have done perfectly right not to remain."

"Yes," said Clementina, "I thought you would think so."

They parted emotionlessly to all outward effect, and when they met again it was without a sign of having passed through a crisis of sentiment. Neither referred to the matter again, but from that time the minister treated Clementina with a deference not without some shadows of tenderness such as her helplessness in Venice had apparently never inspired. She had cast out of her mind all lingering hardness toward him in telling him the hard truth, and she met his faint relentings with a grateful gladness which showed itself in her constant care of him.

This helped her a little to forget the strain of the anxiety that increased upon her as the time shortened between the last news of her lover and the next; and there was perhaps no more exaggeration in the import than in the terms of the formal acknowledgment which Mr. Orson made her as their steamer sighted Fire Island Light, and they both knew that their voyage had ended: "I may not be able to say to you in the hurry of our arrival in New York that I am obliged to you for a good many little attentions, which I should be pleased to reciprocate if opportunity offered. I do not think I am going too far in saying that they are such as a daughter might offer a parent."

"Oh, don't speak of it, Mr. Orson!" she protested. "I haven't done anything that any one wouldn't have done."

"I presume," said the minister, thoughtfully, as if retiring from an extreme position, "that they are such as others similarly circumstanced, might have done, but it will always be a source of satisfaction for you to reflect that you have not neglected them."

XXXVII.

In the crowd which thronged the steamer's dock at Hoboken, Clementina strained her eyes to make out some one who looked enough like her lover to be his father, and she began to be afraid that they might miss each other when she failed. She walked slowly down the gangway, with the people that thronged it, glad to be hidden by them from her failure, but at the last step she was caught aside by a small blackeyed, black-haired woman, who called out "Isn't this Miss Claxon? I'm George's sisterr. Oh, you'rre just like what he said! I knew it! I knew it!" and then hugged her and kissed her, and passed her to the little lean dark old man next her. "This is fatherr. I knew you couldn't tell us, because I take afterr him, and George is exactly like motherr."

George's father took her hand timidly, but found courage to say to his daughter, "Hadn't you betterr let her own fatherr have a chance at herr?" and amidst a tempest of apologies and self blame from the sister, Claxon showed himself over the shoulders of the little man.

"Why, there wa'n't no hurry, as long as she's he'a," he said, in prompt enjoyment of the joke, and he and Clementina sparely kissed each other.

"Why, fatha!" she said. "I didn't expect you to come to New Yo'k to meet me."

"Well, I didn't ha'dly expect it myself; but I'd neva been to Yo'k, and I thought I might as well come. Things ah' ratha slack at home, just now, anyway."

She did not heed his explanation. "We'e you sca'ed when you got my dispatch?"

"No, we kind of expected you'd come any time, the way you wrote afta Mrs. Landa died. We thought something must be up."

"Yes," she said, absently. Then, "Whe'e's motha?" she asked.

"Well, I guess she thought she couldn't get round to it, exactly," said the father. "She's all right. Needn't ask you!"

"No, I'm fust-rate," Clementina returned, with a silent joy in her father's face and voice. She went back in it to the girl of a year ago, and the world which had come between them since their parting rolled away as if it had never been there.

Neither of them said anything about that. She named over her brothers and sisters, and he answered, "Yes, yes," in assurance of their well-being, and then he explained, as if that were the only point of real interest, "I see your folks waitin' he'e fo' somebody, and I thought I'd see if it wa'n't the same one, and we kind of struck up an acquaintance on your account befo'e you got he'e, Clem."

"Your folks!" she silently repeated to herself. "Yes, they ah' mine!" and she stood trying to realize the strange fact, while George's sister poured out a voluminous comment upon Claxon's spare statement, and George's father admired her volubility with the shut smile of toothless age. She spoke with the burr which the Scotch-Irish settlers have imparted to the whole middle West, but it was music to Clementina, who heard now and then a tone of her lover in his sister's voice. In the midst of it all she caught sight of a mute unfriended figure just without their circle, his traveling shawl hanging loose upon his shoulders, and the valise which had formed his sole baggage in the voyage to and from Europe pulling his long hand out of his coat sleeve.

"Oh, yes," she said, "here is Mr. Osson that came ova with me, fatha; he's a relation of Mr. Landa's," and she presented him to them all.

He shifted his valise to the left hand, and shook hands with each, asking, "What name?" and then fell motionless again.

"Well," said her father, "I guess this is the end of this paht of the ceremony, and I'm goin' to see your baggage through the custom-house, Clementina; I've read about it, and I want to know how it's done. I want to see what you ah' tryin' to smuggle in."

"I guess you won't find much," she said. "But you'll want the keys, won't you?" She called to him, as he was stalking away.

"Well, I guess that would be a good idea. Want to help, Miss Hinkle?"

"I guess we might as well all help," said Clementina, and Mr. Orson included himself in the invitation. He seemed unable to separate himself from them, though the passage of Clementina's baggage through the

customs, and its delivery to an expressman for the hotel where the Hinkles said they were staying might well have severed the last tie between them.

"Ah' you going straight home, Mr. Osson?" she asked, to rescue him from the forgetfulness into which they were all letting him fall.

"I think I will remain over a day," he answered. "I may go on to Boston before starting West."

"Well, that's right," said Clementina's father with the wish to approve everything native to him, and an instinctive sense of Clementina's wish to befriend the minister. "Betta come to oua hotel. We're all goin' to the same one."

"I presume it is a good one?" Mr. Orson assented.

"Well," said Claxon, "you must make Miss Hinkle, he'a, stand it if it ain't. She's got me to go to it."

Mr. Orson apparently could not enter into the joke; but he accompanied the party, which again began to forget him, across the ferry and up the elevated road to the street car that formed the last stage of their progress to the hotel. At this point George's sister fell silent, and Clementina's father burst out, "Look he'a! I guess we betty not keep this up any Tonga; I don't believe much in surprises, and I guess she betta know it now!"

He looked at George's sister as if for authority to speak further, and Clementina looked at her, too, while George's father nervously moistened his smiling lips with the tip of his tongue, and let his twinkling eyes rest upon Clementina's face.

"Is he at the hotel?" she asked.

"Yes," said his sister, monosyllabic for once.

"I knew it," said Clementina, and she was only half aware of the fullness with which his sister now explained how he wanted to come so much that the doctor thought he had better, but that they had made him promise he would not try to meet her at the steamer, lest it should be too great a trial of his strength.

"Yes," Clementina assented, when the story came to an end and was beginning over again.

She had an inexplicable moment when she stood before her lover in the room where they left her to meet him alone. She faltered and he waited constrained by her constraint.

"Is it all a mistake, Clementina?" he asked, with a piteous smile.

"No, no!"

"Am I so much changed?"

"No; you are looking better than I expected."

"And you are not sorry-for anything?"

"No, I am--Perhaps I have thought of you too much! It seems so strange."

"I understand," he answered. "We have been like spirits to each other, and now we find that we are alive and on the earth like other people; and we are not used to it."

"It must be something like that."

"But if it's something else--if you have the least regret,--if you would rather "--He stopped, and they remained looking at each other a moment. Then she turned her head, and glanced out of the window, as if something there had caught her sight.

"It's a very pleasant view, isn't it?" she said; and she lifted her hands to her head, and took off her hat, with an effect of having got home after absence, to stay.

XXXVIII.

It was possibly through some sense finer than any cognition that Clementina felt in meeting her lover that she had taken up a new burden rather than laid down an old one. Afterwards, when they once recurred to that meeting, and she tried to explain for him the hesitation which she had not been able to hide, she could only say, "I presume I didn't want to begin unless I was sure I could carry out. It would have been silly."

Her confession, if it was a confession, was made when one of his returns to health, or rather one of the arrests of his unhealth, flushed them with hope and courage; but before that first meeting was ended she knew that he had overtasked his strength, in coming to New York, and he must not try it further. "Fatha," she said to Claxon, with the authority of a woman doing her duty, "I'm not going to let Geo'ge go up to Middlemount, with all the excitement. It will be as much as he can do to get home. You can tell mother about it; and the rest. I did suppose it would be Mr. Richling that would marry us, and I always wanted him to, but I guess somebody else can do it as well."

"Just as you say, Clem," her father assented. "Why not Brother Osson, he'a?" he suggested with a pleasure in the joke, whatever it was, that the minister's relation to Clementina involved. "I guess he can put off his visit to Boston long enough."

"Well, I was thinking of him," said Clementina. "Will you ask him?"

"Yes. I'll get round to it, in the mornning."

"No-now; right away. I've been talking with Geo'ge about it; and the'e's no sense in putting it off. I ought to begin taking care of him at once."

"Well, I guess when I tell your motha how you're layin' hold, she won't think it's the same pusson," said her father, proudly.

"But it is; I haven't changed a bit."

"You ha'n't changed for the wohse, anyway."

"Didn't I always try to do what I had to?"

"I guess you did, Clem."

"Well, then!"

Mr. Orson, after a decent hesitation, consented to perform the ceremony. It took place in a parlor of the hotel, according to the law of New York, which facilitates marriage so greatly in all respects that it is strange any one in the State should remain single. He had then a luxury of choice between attaching himself to the bridal couple as far as Ohio on his journey home to Michigan, or to Claxon who was going to take the boat for Boston the next day on his way to Middlemount. He decided for Claxon, since he could then see Mrs. Lander's lawyer at once, and arrange with him for getting out of the vice-consul's hands the money which he was holding for an authoritative demand. He accepted without open reproach the handsome fee which the elder Hinkle gave him for his services, and even went so far as to say, "If your son should ever be blest with a return to health, he has got a helpmeet such as there are very few of." He then admonished the young couple, in whatever trials life should have in store for them, to be resigned, and always to be prepared for the worst. When he came later to take leave of them, he was apparently not equal to the task of fitly acknowledging the return which Hinkle made him of all the money remaining to Clementina out of the sum last given her by Mrs. Lander, but he hid any disappointment he might have suffered, and with a brief, "Thank you," put it in his pocket.

Hinkle told Clementina of the apathetic behavior of Mr. Orson; he added with a laugh like his old self, "It's the best that he doesn't seem prepared for."

"Yes," she assented. "He wasn't very chee'ful. But I presume that he meant well. It must be a trial for him to find out that Mrs. Landa wasn't rich, after all."

It was apparently never a trial to her. She went to Ohio with her husband and took up her life on the farm, where it was wisely judged that he had the best chance of working out of the wreck of his health and

strength. There was often the promise and always the hope of this, and their love knew no doubt of the future. Her sisters-in-law delighted in all her strangeness and difference, while they petted her as something not to be separated from him in their petting of their brother; to his mother she was the darling which her youngest had never ceased to be; Clementina once went so far as to say to him that if she was ever anything she would like to be a Moravian.

The question of religion was always related in their minds to the question of Gregory, to whom they did justice in their trust of each other. It was Hinkle himself who reasoned out that if Gregory was narrow, his narrowness was of his conscience and not of his heart or his mind. She respected the memory of her first lover; but it was as if he were dead, now, as well as her young dream of him, and she read with a curious sense of remoteness, a paragraph which her husband found in the religious intelligence of his Sunday paper, announcing the marriage of the Rev. Frank Gregory to a lady described as having been a frequent and bountiful contributor to the foreign missions. She was apparently a widow, and they conjectured that she was older than he. His departure for his chosen field of missionary labor in China formed part of the news communicated by the rather exulting paragraph.

"Well, that is all right," said Clementina's husband. "He is a good man, and he is where he can do nothing but good. I am glad I needn't feel sorry for him, any more."

Clementina's father must have given such a report of Hinkle and his family, that they felt easy at home in leaving her to the lot she had chosen. When Claxon parted from her, he talked of coming out with her mother to see her that fall; but it was more than a year before they got round to it. They did not come till after the birth of her little girl, and her father then humorously allowed that perhaps they would not have got round to it at all if something of the kind had not happened. The Hinkles and her father and mother liked one another, so much that in the first glow of his enthusiasm Claxon talked of settling down in Ohio, and the older Hinkle drove him about to look at some places that were for sale. But it ended in his saying one day that he missed the hills, and he did not believe that he would know enough to come in when it rained if he did not see old Middlemount with his nightcap on first. His wife and he started home with the impatience of their years, rather earlier than they had meant to go, and they were silent for a little while after they left the flag-station where Hinkle and Clementina had put them aboard their train.

"Well?" said Claxon, at last.

"Well?" echoed his wife, and then she did not speak for a little while longer. At last she asked,

"D'he look that way when you fust see him in New Yo'k?"

Claxon gave his honesty time to get the better of his optimism. Even then he answered evasively, "He doos look pootty slim."

"The way I cypher it out," said his wife, "he no business to let her marry him, if he wa'n't goin' to get well. It was throwin' of herself away, as you may say."

"I don't know about that," said Claxon, as if the point had occurred to him, too, and had been already argued in his mind. "I guess they must 'a' had it out, there in New York before they got married--or she had. I don't believe but what he expected to get well, right away. It's the kind of a thing that lingas along, and lingas along. As fah fo'th as Clem went, I guess there wa'n't any let about it. I guess she'd made up her mind from the staht, and she was goin' to have him if she had to hold him on his feet to do it. Look he'a! W hat would you done?"

"Oh, I presume we're all fools!" said Mrs. Claxon, impatient of a sex not always so frank with itself. "But that don't excuse him."

"I don't say it doos," her husband admitted. "But I presume he was expectin' to get well right away, then. And I don't believe," he added, energetically, "but what he will, yet. As I undastand, there ain't anything ogganic about him. It's just this he'e nuvvous prostration, resultin' from shock, his docta tells me; and he'll wo'k out of that all right."

They said no more, and Mrs. Claxon did not recur to any phase of the situation till she undid the lunch which the Hinkles had put up for them, and laid out on the napkin in her lap the portions of cold ham and cold chicken, the buttered biscuit, and the little pot of apple-butter, with the large bottle of cold coffee. Then she sighed, "They live well."

"Yes," said her husband, glad of any concession, "and they ah' good folks. And Clem's as happy as a bud with 'em, you can see that."

"Oh, she was always happy enough, if that's all you want. I presume she was happy with that hectorin' old thing that fooled her out of her money."

"I ha'n't ever regretted that money, Rebecca," said Claxon, stiffly, almost sternly, "and I guess you a'n't, eitha."

"I don't say I have," retorted Mrs. Claxon. "But I don't like to be made a fool of. I presume," she added, remotely, but not so irrelevantly, "Clem could ha' got 'most anybody, ova the'a."

"Well," said Claxon, taking refuge in the joke, "I shouldn't want her to marry a crowned head, myself."

It was Clementina who drove the clay-bank colt away from the station after the train had passed out of sight. Her husband sat beside her, and let her take the reins from his nerveless grasp; and when they got into the shelter of the piece of woods that the road passed through he put up his hands to his face, and broke into sobs. She allowed him to weep on, though she kept saying, "Geo'ge, Geo'ge," softly, and stroking his knee

with the hand next him. When his sobbing stopped, she said, "I guess they've had a pleasant visit; but I'm glad we'a together again." He took up her hand and kissed the back of it, and then clutched it hard, but did not speak. "It's strange," she went on, "how I used to be home-sick for father and motha"--she had sometimes lost her Yankee accent in her association with his people, and spoke with their Western burr, but she found it in moments of deeper feeling--" when I was there in Europe, and now I'm glad to have them go. I don't want anybody to be between us; and I want to go back to just the way we we'e befo'e they came. It's been a strain on you, and now you must throw it all off and rest, and get up your strength. One thing, I could see that fatha noticed the gain you had made since he saw you in New Yo'k. He spoke about it to me the fust thing, and he feels just the way I do about it. He don't want you to hurry and get well, but take it slowly, and not excite yourself. He believes in your gleaner, and he knows all about machinery. He says the patent makes it puffectly safe, and you can take your own time about pushing it; it's su'a to go. And motha liked you. She's not one to talk a great deal--she always leaves that to father and me--but she's got deep feelings, and she just worshipped the baby! I neva saw her take a child in her ahms before; but she seemed to want to hold the baby all the time." She stopped, and then added, tenderly, "Now, I know what you ah' thinking about, Geo'ge, and I don't want you to think about it any more. If you do, I shall give up."

They had come to a bad piece of road where a Slough of thick mud forced the wagon-way over the stumps of a turnout in the woods. "You had better let me have the reins, Clementina," he said. He drove home over the yellow leaves of the hickories and the crimson leaves of the maples, that heavy with the morning dew, fell slanting through the still air; and on the way he began to sing; his singing made her heart ache. His father came out to put up the colt for him; and Hinkle would not have his help.

He unhitched the colt himself, while his father trembled by with bent knees; he clapped the colt on the haunch and started him through the pasture-bars with a gay shout, and then put his arm round Clementina's waist, and walked her into the kitchen amidst the grins of his mother and sisters, who said he ought to be ashamed.

The winter passed, and in the spring he was not so well as he had been in the fall. It was the out-door life which was best for him, and he picked up again in the summer. When another autumn came, it was thought best for him not to risk the confinement of another winter in the North. The prolongation of the summer in the South would complete his cure, and Clementina took her baby and went with him to Florida. He was very well, there, and courageous letters came to Middlemount and Ohio, boasting of the gains he had made. One day toward spring he came in languid from the damp, unnatural heat, and the next day he had a fever, which the doctor would not, in a resort absolutely free from malaria, pronounce malarial. After it had once declared itself, in compliance with this reluctance, a simple fever, Hinkle was delirious, and he never knew Clementina again for the mother of his child. They were once more at Venice in his ravings, and he was reasoning with her that Belsky was not drowned.

The mystery of his malady deepened into the mystery of his death. With that his look of health and youth came back, and as she gazed upon his gentle face, it wore to her the smile of quaint sweetness that she had seen it wear the first night it won her fancy at Miss Milray's horse in Florence.

Six years after Miss Milray parted with Clementina in Venice she found herself, towards the close of the summer, at Middlemount. She had definitely ceased to live in Florence, where she had meant to die, and had come home to close her eyes. She was in no haste to do this, and in the meantime she was now at Middlemount with her brother, who had expressed a wish to revisit the place in memory of Mrs. Milray. It was the second anniversary of her divorce, which had remained, after a married life of many vicissitudes, almost the only experience untried in that relation, and which had been happily accomplished in the courts of Dacotah, upon grounds that satisfied the facile justice of that State. Milray had dealt handsomely with his widow, as he unresentfully called her, and the money he assigned her was of a destiny perhaps as honored as its origin. She employed it in the negotiation of a second marriage, in which she redressed the balance of her first by taking a husband somewhat younger than herself.

Both Milray and his sister had a wish which was much more than a curiosity to know what had become of Clementina; they had heard that her husband was dead, and that she had come back to Middlemount; and Miss Milray was going to the office, the afternoon following their arrival, to ask the landlord about her, when she was arrested at the door of the ball-room by a sight that she thought very pretty. At the bottom of the room, clearly defined against the long windows behind her, stood the figure of a lady in the middle of the floor. In rows on either side sat little girls and little boys who left their places one after another, and turned at the door to make their manners to her. In response to each obeisance the lady dropped a curtsey, now to this side, now to that, taking her skirt between her finger tips on either hand and spreading it delicately, with a certain elegance of movement, and a grace that was full of poetry, and to Miss Milray, somehow, full of pathos. There remained to the end a small mite of a girl, who was the last to leave her place and bow to the lady. She did not quit the room then, like the others, but advanced toward the lady who came to meet her, and lifted her and clasped her to her breast with a kind of passion. She walked down toward the door where Miss Milray stood, gently drifting over the polished floor, as if still moved by the music that had ceased, and as she drew near, Miss Milray gave a cry of joy, and ran upon her. "Why, Clementina!" she screamed, and caught her and the child both in her arms.

She began to weep, but Clementina smiled instead of weeping, as she always used to do. She returned Miss Milray's affectionate greeting with a tenderness as great as her own, but with a sort of authority, such as sometimes comes to those who have suffered. She quieted the older woman with her own serenity, and met the torrent of her questions with as many answers as their rush permitted, when they were both presently in Miss Milray's room talking in their old way. From time to time Miss Milray broke from the talk to kiss the little girl, whom she declared to be

Clementina all over again, and then returned to her better behavior with an effect of shame for her want of self-control, as if Clementina's mood had abashed her. Sometimes this was almost severe in its quiet; that was her mother coming to her share in her; but again she was like her father, full of the sunny gayety of self-forgetfulness, and then Miss Milray said, "Now you are the old Clementina!"

Upon the whole she listened with few interruptions to the story which she exacted. It was mainly what we know. After her husband's death Clementina had gone back to his family for a time, and each year since she had spent part of the winter with them; but it was very lonesome for her, and she began to be home-sick for Middlemount. They saw it and considered it. "They ah' the best people, Miss Milray!" she said, and her voice, which was firm when she spoke of her husband, broke in the words of minor feeling. Besides being a little homesick, she ended, she was not willing to live on there, doing nothing for herself, and so she had come back.

"And you are here, doing just what you planned when you talked your life over with me in Venice!"

"Yes, but life isn't eva just what we plan it to be, Miss Milray."

"Ah, don't I know it!"

Clementina surprised Miss Milray by adding, "In a great many things-- I don't know but in most--it's better. I don't complain of mine"--

"You poor child! You never complained of anything--not even of Mrs. Lander!"

"But it's different from what I expected; and it's--strange."

"Yes; life is very strange."

"I don't mean-losing him. That had to be. I can see, now, that it had to be almost from the beginning. It seems to me that I knew it had to be from the fust minute I saw him in New Yo'k; but he didn't, and I am glad of that. Except when he was getting wohse, he always believed he should get well; and he was getting well, when he"--

Miss Milray did not violate the pause she made with any question, though it was apparent that Clementina had something on her mind that she wished to say, and could hardly say of herself.

She began again, "I was glad through everything that I could live with him so long. If there is nothing moa, here or anywhe'a, that was something. But it is strange. Sometimes it doesn't seem as if it had happened."

"I think I can understand, Clementina."

"I feel sometimes as if I hadn't happened myself." She stopped, with a

patient little sigh, and passed her hand across the child's forehead, in a mother's fashion, and smoothed her hair from it, bending over to look down into her face. "We think she has her fatha's eyes," she said.

"Yes, she has," Miss Milray assented, noting the upward slant of the child's eyes, which gave his quaintness to her beauty. "He had fascinating eyes."

After a moment Clementina asked, "Do you believe that the looks are all that ah' left?"

Miss Milray reflected. "I know what you mean. I should say character was left, and personality--somewhere."

"I used to feel as if it we'e left here, at fust--as if he must come back. But that had to go."

"Yes."

"Everything seems to go. After a while even the loss of him seemed to go."

"Yes, losses go with the rest."

"That's what I mean by its seeming as if it never any of it happened. Some things before it are a great deal more real."

"Little things?"

"Not exactly. But things when I was very young." Miss Milray did not know quite what she intended, but she knew that Clementina was feeling her way to something she wanted to say, and she let her alone. "When it was all over, and I knew that as long as I lived he would be somewhere else, I tried to be paht of the wo'ld I was left in. Do you think that was right?"

"It was wise; and, yes, it was best," said Miss Milray, and for relief from the tension which was beginning to tell upon her own nerves, she asked, "I suppose you know about my poor brother? I'd better tell you to keep you from asking for Mrs. Milray, though I don't know that it's so very painful with him. There isn't any Mrs. Milray now," she added, and she explained why.

Neither of them cared for Mrs. Milray, and they did not pretend to be concerned about her, but Clementina said, vaguely, as if in recognition of Mrs. Milray's latest experiment, "Do you believe in second marriages?"

Miss Milray laughed, "Well, not that kind exactly."

"No," Clementina assented, and she colored a little.

Miss Milray was moved to add, "But if you mean another kind, I don't see why not. My own mother was married twice."

"Was she?" Clementina looked relieved and encouraged, but she did not say any more at once. Then she asked, "Do you know what ever became of Mr. Belsky?"

"Yes. He's taken his title again, and gone back to live in Russia; he's made peace with the Czar; I believe."

"That's nice," said Clementina; and Miss Milray made bold to ask:

"And what has become of Mr. Gregory?"

Clementina answered, as Miss Milray thought, tentatively and obliquely: "You know his wife died."

"No, I never knew that she lived."

"Yes. They went out to China, and she died the'a."

"And is he there yet? But of course! He could never have given up being a missionary."

"Well," said Clementina, "he isn't in China. His health gave out, and he had to come home. He's in Middlemount Centa."

Miss Milray suppressed the "Oh!" that all but broke from her lips. "Preaching to the heathen, there?" she temporized.

"To the summa folks," Clementina explained, innocent of satire. "They have got a Union Chapel the'a, now, and Mr. Gregory has been preaching all summa." There seemed nothing more that Miss Milray could prompt her to say, but it was not quite with surprise that she heard Clementina continue, as if it were part of the explanation, and followed from the fact she had stated, "He wants me to marry him."

Miss Milray tried to emulate her calm in asking, "And shall you?"

"I don't know. I told him I would see; he only asked me last night. It would be kind of natural. He was the fust. You may think it is strange"--

Miss Milray, in the superstition of her old-maidenhood concerning love, really thought it cold-blooded and shocking; but she said, "Oh, no."

Clementina resumed: "And he says that if it was right for me to stop caring for him when I did, it is right now for me to ca'e for him again, where the'e's no one to be hu't by it. Do you think it is?"

"Yes; why not?" Miss Milray was forced to the admission against what she believed the finer feelings 'of her nature.

Clementina sighed, "I suppose he's right. I always thought he was good. Women don't seem to belong very much to themselves in this wo'ld, do

they?"

"No, they seem to belong to the men, either because they want the men, or the men want them; it comes to the same thing. I suppose you don't wish me to advise you, my dear?"

"No. I presume it's something I've got to think out for myself."

"But I think he's good, too. I ought to say that much, for I didn't always stand his friend with you. If Mr. Gregory has any fault it's being too scrupulous."

"You mean, about that old trouble--our not believing just the same?"
Miss Milray meant something much more temperamental than that, but she allowed Clementina to limit her meaning, and Clementina went on.
"He's changed all round now. He thinks it's all in the life. He says that in China they couldn't understand what he believed, but they could what he lived. And he knows I neva could be very religious."

It was in Miss Milray's heart to protest, "Clementina, I think you are one of the most religious persons I ever knew," but she forebore, because the praise seemed to her an invasion of Clementina's dignity. She merely said, "Well, I am glad he is one of those who grow more liberal as they grow older. That is a good sign for your happiness. But I dare say it's more of his happiness you think."

"Oh, I should like to be happy, too. There would be no sense in it if I wasn't."

"No, certainly not."

"Miss Milray," said Clementina, with a kind of abruptness, "do you eva hear anything from Dr. Welwright?"

"No! Why?" Miss Milray fastened her gaze vividly upon her.

"Oh, nothing. He wanted me to promise him, there in Venice, too."

"I didn't know it."

"Yes. But--I couldn't, then. And now--he's written to me. He wants me to let him come ova, and see me."

"And--and will you?" asked Miss Milray, rather breathlessly.

"I don't know. I don't know as I'd ought. I should like to see him, so as to be puffedly su'a. But if I let him come, and then didn't--It wouldn't be right! I always felt as if I'd ought to have seen then that he ca'ed for me, and stopped him; but I didn't. No, I didn't," she repeated, nervously. "I respected him, and I liked him; but I neva"--
She stopped, and then she asked, "What do you think I'd ought to do, Miss Milray?"

Miss Milray hesitated. She was thinking superficially that she had never heard Clementina say had ought, so much, if ever before. Interiorly she was recurring to a sense of something like all this before, and to the feeling which she had then that Clementina was really cold-blooded and self-seeking. But she remembered that in her former decision, Clementina had finally acted from her heart and her conscience, and she rose from her suspicion with a rebound. She dismissed as unworthy of Clementina any theory which did not account for an ideal of scrupulous and unselfish justice in her.

"That is something that nobody can say but yourself, Clementina," she answered, gravely.

"Yes," sighed Clementina, "I presume that is so."

She rose, and took her little girl from Miss Milray's knee. "Say good-bye," she bade, looking tenderly down at her.

Miss Milray expected the child to put up her lips to be kissed. But she let go her mother's hand, took her tiny skirts between her finger-tips, and dropped a curtsy.

"You little witch!" cried Miss Milray. "I want a hug," and she crushed her to her breast, while the child twisted her face round and anxiously questioned her mother's for her approval. "Tell her it's all right, Clementina!" cried Miss Milray. "When she's as old as you were in Florence, I'm going to make you give her to me."

"Ah' you going back to Florence?" asked Clementina, provisionally.

"Oh, no! You can't go back to anything. That's what makes New York so impossible. I think we shall go to Los Angeles."

XL.

On her way home Clementina met a man walking swiftly forward. A sort of impassioned abstraction expressed itself in his gait and bearing. They had both entered the shadow of the deep pine woods that flanked the way on either side, and the fallen needles helped with the velvety summer dust of the roadway to hush their steps from each other. She saw him far off, but he was not aware of her till she was quite near him.

"Oh!" he said, with a start. "You filled my mind so full that I couldn't have believed you were anywhere outside of it. I was coming to get you-- I was coming to get my answer."

Gregory had grown distinctly older. Sickness and hardship had left traces in his wasted face, but the full beard he wore helped to give him an undue look of age.

"I don't know," said Clementina, slowly, "as I've got an answer for you, Mr. Gregory--yet."

"No answer is better than the one I am afraid of!"

"Oh, I'm not so sure of that," she said, with gentle perplexity, as she stood, holding the hand of her little girl, who stared shyly at the intense face of the man before her.

"I am," he retorted. "I have been thinking it all ever, Clementina. I've tried not to think selfishly about it, but I can't pretend that my wish isn't selfish. It is! I want you for myself, and because I've always wanted you, and not for any other reason. I never cared for any one but you in the way I cared for you, and"--

"Oh!" she grieved. "I never cared at all for you after I saw him."

"I know it must be shocking to you; I haven't told you with any wretched hope that it would commend me to you!"

"I don't say it was so very bad," said Clementina, reflectively, "if it was something you couldn't help."

"It was something I couldn't help. Perhaps I didn't try."

"Did she know it?"

"She knew it from the first; I told her before we were married."

Clementina drew back a little, insensibly pulling her child with her.
"I don't believe I exactly like it."

"I knew you wouldn't! If I could have thought you would, I hope I shouldn't have wished--and feared--so much to tell you."

"Oh, I know you always wanted to do what you believed was right, Mr. Gregory," she answered. "But I haven't quite thought it out yet. You mustn't hurry me."

"No, no! Heaven forbid." He stood aside to let her pass.

"I was just going home," she added.

"May I go with you?"

"Yes, if you want to. I don't know but you better; we might as well; I want to talk with you. Don't you think it's something we ought to talk about--sensibly?"

"Why, of course! And I shall try to be guided by you; I should always submit to be ruled by you, if"--

"That's not what I mean, exactly. I don't want to do the ruling. You

don't understand me."

"I'm afraid I don't," he assented, humbly.

"If you did, you wouldn't say that--so." He did not venture to make any answer, and they walked on without speaking, till she asked, "Did you know that Miss Milray was at the Middlemount?"

"Miss Milray! Of Florence?"

"With her brother. I didn't see him; Mrs. Milray is not here; they are divorced. Miss Milray used to be very nice to me in Florence. She isn't going back there any more. She says you can't go back to anything. Do you think we can?"

She had left moments between her incoherent sentences where he might interrupt her if he would, but he waited for her question. "I hoped we might; but perhaps"--

"No, no. We couldn't. We couldn't go back to that night when you threw the slippers into the river, nor to that time in Florence when we gave up, nor to that day in Venice when I had to tell you that I cared more for some one else. Don't you see?"

"Yes, I see," he said, in quick revulsion from the hope he had expressed. "The past is full of the pain and shame of my errors!"

"I don't want to go back to what's past, either," she reasoned, without gainsaying him.

She stopped again, as if that were all, and he asked, "Then is that my answer?"

"I don't believe that even in the other world we shall want to go back to the past, much, do you?" she pursued, thoughtfully.

Once Gregory would have answered confidently; he even now checked an impulse to do so. "I don't know," he owned, meekly.

"I do like you, Mr. Gregory!" she relented, as if touched by his meekness, to the confession. "You know I do--more than I ever expected to like anybody again. But it's not because I used to like you, or because I think you always acted nicely. I think it was cruel of you, if you cared for me, to let me believe you didn't, after that first time. I can't even think it wasn't, no matter why you did it."

"It was atrocious. I can see that now."

"I say it, because I shouldn't even wish to say it again. I know that all the time you were better than what you did, and I blame myself a good deal more for not knowing when you came to Florence that I had begun to care for some one else. But I did wait till I could see you again, so as to be sure which I cared for the most. I tried to be fair, before I told

you that I wanted to be free. That is all," she said, gently, and Gregory perceived that the word was left definitely to him.

He could not take it till he had disciplined himself to accept unmurmuringly his sentence as he understood it. "At any rate," he began, "I can thank you for rating my motive above my conduct."

"Oh," she said. "I don't think either of us acted very well. I didn't know till aftawa'ds that I was glad to have you give up, the way you did in Florence. I was--bewild'ed. But I ought to have known, and I want you to undastand everything, now. I don't ca'e for you because I used to when I was almost a child, and I shouldn't want you to ca'e for me eitha, because you did then. That's why I wish you had neva felt that you had always ca'ed fo' me."

"Yes," said Gregory. He let fall his head in despair.

"That is what I mean," said Clementina. "If we ah' going to begin togetha, now, it's got to be as if we had neva begun before. And you mustn't think, or say, or look as if the'e had been anything in oua lives but ouaselves. Will you? Do you promise?" She stopped, and put her hand on his breast, and pushed against it with a nervous vehemence.

"No!" he said. "I don't promise, for I couldn't keep my promise. What you ask is impossible. The past is part of us; it can't be ignored any more than it can be destroyed. If we take each other, it must be for all that we have been as well as all that we are. If we haven't the courage for that we must part."

He dropped the little one's hand which he had been holding, and moved a few steps aside. "Don't!" she said. "They'll think I've made you," and he took the child's hand again.

They had emerged from the shadow of the woods, and come in sight of her father's house. Claxon was standing coatless before the door in full enjoyment of the late afternoon air; his wife beside him, at sight of Gregory, quelled a natural impulse to run round the corner of the house from the presence of strangers.

"I wonda what they'a sayin'," she fretted.

"It looks some as if she was sayin' yes," said Claxon, with an impersonal enjoyment of his conjecture. "I guess she saw he was bound not to take no for an answa."

"I don't know as I should like it very much," his wife relucted.

"Clem's doin' very well, as it is. She no need to marry again."

"Oh, I guess it a'n't that altogetha. He's a good man." Claxon mused a moment upon the figures which had begun to advance again, with the little one between them, and then gave way in a burst of paternal pride, "And I don't know as I should blame him so very much for wantin' Clem. She always did want to be of moa use--But I guess she likes him too."

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Didn't reason about their beliefs, but only argued
Dull, cold self-absorption
Everything seems to go
Gift of waiting for things to happen
He's so resting
It's the best that he doesn't seem prepared for
Life alone is credible to the young
Morbid egotism
Motives lie nearer the surface than most people commonly pretend
One time where one may choose safest what one likes best
Only man I ever saw who would know how to break the fall
Real aristocracy is above social prejudice
Singleness of a nature that was all pose
Submitted, as people always do with the trials of others
Sunny gayety of self-forgetfulness
Understood when I've said something that doesn't mean anything
We change whether we ought, or not
When she's really sick, she's better
Willing that she should do herself a wrong
Women don't seem to belong very much to themselves
You can't go back to anything
You were not afraid, and you were not bold; you were just right

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by William Dean Howells

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS FOR THE ENTIRE RAGGED LADY:

All in all to each other
Chained to the restless pursuit of an ideal not his own
Composed her features and her ideas to receive her visitor
Didn't reason about their beliefs, but only argued
Dull, cold self-absorption
Everything seems to go
Gift of waiting for things to happen
Going on of things had long ceased to bring pleasure
He a'n't a do-nothin'; he's a do-everything
He's so resting
Hopeful apathy in his face

I'm moa used to havin' the things brought to me
Inexhaustible flow of statement, conjecture and misgiving
It's the best that he doesn't seem prepared for
Kept her talking vacuities when her heart was full
Led a life of public seclusion
Life alone is credible to the young
Luxury of helplessness
Morbid egotism
Motives lie nearer the surface than most people commonly pretend
New England necessity of blaming some one
No object in life except to deprive it of all object
One time where one may choose safest what one likes best
Only man I ever saw who would know how to break the fall
Perverse reluctance to find out where they were
Provisional reprehension of possible shiftlessness
Real aristocracy is above social prejudice
Scant sleep of an elderly man
Seldom talked, but there came times when he would'nt even listen
Singleness of a nature that was all pose
Submitted, as people always do with the trials of others
Sunny gayety of self-forgetfulness
Thrown mainly upon the compassion of the chambermaids
Tone was a snuffle expressive of deep-seated affliction
Unaware that she was a selfish or foolish person
Under a fire of conjecture and asseveration
Understood when I've said something that doesn't mean anything
We change whether we ought, or not
Weak in his double letters
When she's really sick, she's better
Willing that she should do herself a wrong
Wishes of a mistress who did not know what she wanted
Women don't seem to belong very much to themselves
You can't go back to anything
You were not afraid, and you were not bold; you were just right
You've got a light-haired voice

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by William Dean Howells

APRIL HOPES

1887

by William Dean Howells

From his place on the floor of the Hemenway Gymnasium Mr. Elbridge G. Mavering looked on at the Class Day gaiety with the advantage which his stature, gave him over most people there. Hundreds of these were pretty girls, in a great variety of charming costumes, such as the eclecticism of modern fashion permits, and all sorts of ingenious compromises between walking dress and ball dress. It struck him that the young men on whose arms they hung, in promenading around the long oval within the crowd of stationary spectators, were very much younger than students used to be, whether they wore the dress-coats of the Seniors or the cut-away of the Juniors and Sophomores; and the young girls themselves did not look so old as he remembered them in his day. There was a band playing somewhere, and the galleries were well filled with spectators seated at their ease, and intent on the party-coloured turmoil of the floor, where from time to time the younger promenaders broke away from the ranks into a waltz, and after some turns drifted back, smiling and controlling their quick breath, and resumed their promenade. The place was intensely light, in the candour of a summer day which had no reserves; and the brilliancy was not broken by the simple decorations. Ropes of wild laurel twisted up the pine posts of the aisles, and swung in festoons overhead; masses of tropical plants in pots were set along between the posts on one side of the room; and on the other were the lunch tables, where a great many people were standing about, eating chicken and salmon salads, or strawberries and ice-cream, and drinking claret-cup. From the whole rose that blended odour of viands, of flowers, of stuff's, of toilet perfumes, which is the characteristic expression of, all social festivities, and which exhilarates or depresses--according as one is new or old to it.

Elbridge Mavering kept looking at the faces of the young men as if he expected to see a certain one; then he turned his eyes patiently upon the faces around him. He had been introduced to a good many persons, but he had come to that time of life when an introduction; unless charged with some special interest, only adds the pain of doubt to the wearisome encounter of unfamiliar people; and he had unconsciously put on the severity of a man who finds himself without acquaintance where others are meeting friends, when a small man, with a neatly trimmed reddish-grey beard and prominent eyes, stepped in front of him, and saluted him with the "Hello, Mavering!" of a contemporary.

His face, after a moment of question, relaxed into joyful recognition. "Why, John Munt! is that you?" he said, and he took into his large moist palm the dry little hand of his friend, while they both broke out into the incoherencies of people meeting after a long time. Mr. Mavering spoke in it voice soft yet firm, and with a certain thickness of tongue; which gave a boyish charm to his slow, utterance, and Mr. Munt used the sort of bronchial snuffle sometimes cultivated among us as a chest tone. But they were cut short in their intersecting questions and exclamations by the presence of the lady who detached herself from Mr. Munt's arm as if to leave him the freer for his hand-shaking.

"Oh!" he said, suddenly recurring to her; "let me introduce you to Mrs. Pasmer, Mr. Mavering," and the latter made a bow that creased his

waistcoat at about the height of Mrs. Pasmer's pretty little nose.

His waistcoat had the curve which waistcoats often describe at his age; and his heavy shoulders were thrown well back to balance this curve. His coat hung carelessly open; the Panama hat in his hand suggested a certain habitual informality of dress, but his smoothly shaven large handsome face, with its jaws slowly ruminant upon nothing, intimated the consequence of a man accustomed to supremacy in a subordinate place.

Mrs. Pasmer looked up to acknowledge the introduction with a sort of pseudo-respectfulness which it would be hard otherwise to describe. Whether she divined or not that she was in the presence of a magnate of some sort, she was rather superfluously demure in the first two or three things she said, and was all sympathy and interest in the meeting of these old friends. They declared that they had not seen each other for twenty years, or, at any rate, not since '59. She listened while they disputed about the exact date, and looked from time to time at Mr. Munt, as if for some explanation of Mr. Mavering; but Munt himself, when she saw him last, had only just begun to commend himself to society, which had since so fully accepted him, and she had so suddenly, the moment before, found her self hand in glove with him that she might well have appealed to a third person for some explanation of Munt. But she was not a woman to be troubled much by this momentary mystification, and she was not embarrassed at all when Munt said, as if it had all been pre-arranged, "Well, now, Mrs. Pasmer, if you'll let me leave you with Mr. Mavering a moment, I'll go off and bring that unnatural child to you; no use dragging you round through this crowd longer."

He made a gesture intended, in the American manner, to be at once polite and jocose, and was gone, leaving Mrs. Pasmer a little surprised, and Mr. Mavering in some misgiving, which he tried to overcome pressing his jaws together two or three times without speaking. She had no trouble in getting in the first remark. "Isn't all this charming, Mr. Mavering?" She spoke in a deep low voice, with a caressing manner, and stood looking up, at Mr. Mavering with one shoulder shrugged and the other drooped, and a tasteful composition of her fan and hands and handkerchief at her waist.

"Yes, ma'am, it is," said Mr. Mavering. He seemed to say ma'am to her with a public or official accent, which sent Mrs. Primer's mind fluttering forth to poise briefly at such conjectures as, "Congressman from a country district? judge of the Common Pleas? bank president? railroad superintendent? leading physician in a large town?-- no, Mr. Munt said Mister," and then to return to her pretty blue eyes, and to centre there in that pseudo-respectful attention under the arch of her neat brows and her soberly crinkled grey-threaded brown hair and her very appropriate bonnet. A bonnet, she said, was much more than half the battle after forty, and it was now quite after forty with Mrs. Pasmer; but she was very well dressed otherwise. Mr. Mavering went on to say, with a deliberation that seemed an element of his unknown dignity, whatever it might be, "A number of the young fellows together can give a much finer spread, and make more of the day, in a place like this, than we used to do in our rooms."

"Ah, then you're a Harvard man too!" said Mrs. Primer to herself, with surprise, which she kept to herself, and she said to Maverick: "Oh yes, indeed! It's altogether better. Aren't they nice looking fellows?" she said, putting up her glass to look at the promenaders.

"Yes," Mr. Maverick assented. "I suppose," he added, out of the consciousness of his own relation to the affair--"I suppose you've a son somewhere here?"

"Oh dear, no!" cried Mrs. Primer, with a mingling, superhuman, but for her of ironical deprecation and derision. "Only a daughter, Mr. Maverick."

At this feat of Mrs. Pasher's, Mr. Maverick looked at her with question as to her precise intention, and ended by repeating, hopelessly, "Only a daughter?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Pasher, with a sigh of the same irony, "only a poor, despised young girl, Mr. Maverick."

"You speak," said Mr. Maverick, beginning to catch on a little, "as if it were a misfortune," and his dignity broke up into a smile that had its queer fascination.

"Why, isn't it?" asked Mrs. Pasher.

"Well, I shouldn't have thought so."

"Then you don't believe that all that old-fashioned chivalry and devotion have gone out? You don't think the young men are all spoiled nowadays, and expect the young ladies to offer them attentions?"

"No," said Mr. Maverick slowly, as if recovering from the shock of the novel ideas. "Do you?"

"Oh, I'm such a stranger in Boston--I've lived abroad so long--that I don't know. One hears all kinds of things. But I'm so glad you're not one of those--pessimists!"

"Well," said Mr. Maverick, still thoughtfully, "I don't know that I can speak by the card exactly. I can't say how it is now. I haven't been at a Class Day spread since my own Class Day; I haven't even been at Commencement more than once or twice. But in my time here we didn't expect the young ladies to show us attentions; at any rate, we didn't wait for them to do it. We were very glad, to be asked to meet them, and we thought it an honour if the young ladies would let us talk or dance with them, or take them to picnics. I don't think that any of them could complain of want of attention."

"Yes," said Mrs. Pasher, "that's what I preached, that's what I prophesied, when I brought my daughter home from Europe. I told her that a girl's life in America was one long triumph; but they say now that

girls have more attention in London even than in Cambridge. One hears such dreadful things!"

"Like what?" asked Mr. Mavering, with the unserious interest which Mrs. Primer made most people feel in her talk.

"Oh; it's too vast a subject. But they tell you about charming girls moping the whole evening through at Boston parties, with no young men to talk with, and sitting from the beginning to the end of an assembly and not going on the floor once. They say that unless a girl fairly throws herself at the young men's heads she isn't noticed. It's this terrible disproportion of the sexes that's at the root of it, I suppose; it reverses everything. There aren't enough young men to go half round, and they know it, and take advantage of it. I suppose it began in the war."

He laughed, and, "I should think," he said, laying hold of a single idea out of several which she had presented, "that there would always be enough young men in Cambridge to go round."

Mrs. Pasmer gave a little cry. "In Cambridge!"

"Yes; when I was in college our superiority was entirely numerical."

"But that's all passed long ago, from what I hear," retorted Mrs. Pasmer. "I know very well that it used to be thought a great advantage for a girl to be brought up in Cambridge, because it gave her independence and ease of manner to have so many young men attentive to her. But they say the students all go into Boston now, and if the Cambridge girls want to meet them, they have to go there too. Oh, I assure you that, from what I hear, they've changed all that since our time, Mr. Mavering."

Mrs. Pasmer was certainly letting herself go a little more than she would have approved of in another. The result was apparent in the jocosity of this heavy Mr. Mavering's reply.

"Well, then, I'm glad that I was of our time, and not of this wicked generation. But I presume that unnatural supremacy of the young men is brought low, so to speak, after marriage?"

Mrs. Primer let herself go a little further. "Oh, give us an equal chance," she laughed, "and we can always take care of ourselves, and something more. They say," she added, "that the young married women now have all the attention that girls could wish."

"H'm!" said Mr. Mavering, frowning. "I think I should be tempted to box my boy's ears if I saw him paying another man's wife attention."

"What a Roman father!" cried Mrs. Pasmer, greatly amused, and letting herself go a little further yet. She said to herself that she really must find out who this remarkable Mr. Mavering was, and she cast her eye over the hall for some glimpse of the absent Munt, whose arm she meant to take, and whose ear she meant to fill with questions. But she did not see him, and something else suggested itself. "He probably wouldn't let

you see him, or if he did, you wouldn't know it."

"How not know it?"

Mrs. Primer did not answer. "One hears such dreadful things. What do you say--or you'll think I'm a terrible gossip--"

"Oh no;" said Mr. Mavinger, impatient for the dreadful thing, whatever it was.

Mrs. Primer resumed: "--to the young married women meeting last winter just after a lot of pretty girls had come out, and magnanimously resolving to give the Buds a chance in society?"

"The Buds?"

"Yes, the Rose-buds--the debutantes; it's an odious little word, but everybody uses it. Don't you think that's a strange state of things for America? But I can't believe all those things," said Mrs. Pasmer, flinging off the shadow of this lurid social condition. "Isn't this a pretty scene?"

"Yes, it is," Mr. Mavinger admitted, withdrawing his mind gradually from a consideration of Mrs. Pasmer's awful instances. "Yes!" he added, in final self-possession. "The young fellows certainly do things in a great deal better style nowadays than we used to."

"Oh yes, indeed! And all those pretty girls do seem to be having such a good time!"

"Yes; they don't have the despised and rejected appearance that you'd like to have one believe."

"Not in the least!" Mrs. Pasmer readily consented. "They look radiantly happy. It shows that you can't trust anything that people say to you." She abandoned the ground she had just been taking without apparent shame for her inconsistency. "I fancy it's pretty much as it's always been: if a girl is attractive, the young men find it out."

"Perhaps," said Mr. Mavinger, unbending with dignity, "the young married women have held another meeting, and resolved to give the Buds one more chance."

"Oh, there are some pretty mature Roses here," said Mrs. Pasmer, laughing evasively. "But I suppose Class Day can never be taken from the young girls."

"I hope not," said Mr. Mavinger. His wandering eye fell upon some young men bringing refreshments across the nave toward them, and he was reminded to ask Mrs. Pasmer, "Will you have something to eat?" He had himself had a good deal to eat, before he took up his position at the advantageous point where John Munt had found him.

"Why, yes, thank you," said Mrs. Pasmer. "I ought to say, 'An ice, please,' but I'm really hungry, and--"

"I'll get you some of the salad," said Mr. Mavering, with the increased liking a man feels for a woman when she owns to an appetite. "Sit down here," he added, and he caught a vacant chair toward her. When he turned about from doing so, he confronted a young gentleman coming up to Mrs. Pasmer with a young lady on his arm, and making a very low bow of relinquishment.

II.

The men looked smilingly at each other without saying anything; and the younger took in due form the introduction which the young lady gave him.

"My mother, Mr. Mavering."

"Mr. Mavering!" cried Mrs. Pasmer, in a pure astonishment, before she had time to colour it with a polite variety of more conventional emotions. She glanced at the two men, and gave a little "Oh?" of inquiry and resignation, and then said, demurely, "Let me introduce you to Mr. Mavering, Alice," while the young fellow laughed nervously, and pulled out his handkerchief, partly to hide the play of his laughter, and partly to wipe away the perspiration which a great deal more laughing had already gathered on his forehead. He had a vein that showed prominently down its centre, and large, mobile, girlish blue eyes under good brows, an arched nose, and rather a long face and narrow chin. He had beautiful white teeth; as he laughed these were seen set in a jaw that contracted very much toward the front. He was tall and slim, and he wore with elegance the evening dress which Class Day custom prescribes for the Seniors; in his button-hole he had a club button.

"I shall not have to ask an introduction to Mr. Mavering; and you've robbed me of the pleasure of giving him one to you, Mrs. Pasmer," he said.

She heard the young man in the course of a swift review of what she had said to his father, and with a formless resentment of the father's not having told her he had a son there; but she answered with the flattering sympathy she had the use of, "Oh, but you won't miss one pleasure out of so many to-day, Mr. Mavering; and think of the little dramatic surprise!"

"Oh, perfect," he said, with another laugh. "I told Miss Pasmer as we came up."

"Oh, then you were in the surprise, Alice!" said Mrs. Pasmer, searching her daughter's eyes for confession or denial of this little community of interest. The girl smiled slightly upon the young man, but not disapprovingly, and made no other answer to her mother, who went on: "Where in the world have you been? Did Mr. Munt find you? Who told you

where I was? Did you see me? How did you know I was here? Was there ever anything so droll?" She did not mean her questions to be answered, or at least not then; for, while her daughter continued to smile rather more absently, and young Maverick broke out continuously in his nervous laugh, and his father stood regarding him with visible satisfaction, she hummed on, turning to the young man: "But I'm quite appalled at Alice's having monopolised even for a few minutes a whole Senior--and probably an official Senior at that," she said, with a glance at the pink and white club button in his coat lapel, "and I can't let you stay another instant, Mr. Maverick. I know very well how many demands you have upon you and you must go back directly to your sisters and your cousins and your aunts, and all the rest of them; you must indeed."

"Oh no! Don't drive me away, Mrs. Pasmer," pleaded the young man, laughing violently, and then wiping his face. "I assure you that I've no encumbrances of any kind here except my father, and he seems to have been taking very good care of himself." They all laughed at this, and the young fellow hurried on: "Don't be alarmed at my button; it only means a love of personal decoration, if that's where you got the notion of my being an official Senior. This isn't my spread; I shall hope to welcome you at Beck Hall after the Tree; and I wish you'd let me be of use to you. Wouldn't you like to go round to some of the smaller spreads? I think it would amuse you. And have you got tickets to the Tree, to see us make fools of ourselves? It's worth seeing, Mrs. Pasmer, I assure you."

He rattled on very rapidly but with such a frankness in his urgency, such amiable kindness, that Mrs. Pasmer could not feel that it was pushing. She looked at her daughter, but she stood as passive in the transaction as the elder Maverick. She was taller than her mother, and as she waited, her supple figure described that fine lateral curve which one sees in some Louis Quinze portraits; this effect was enhanced by the fashion of her dress of pale sage green, with a wide stripe or sash of white dropping down the front, from her delicate waist. The same simple combination of colours was carried up into her hat, which surmounted darker hair than Mrs. Pasmer's, and a complexion of wholesome pallor; her eyes were grey and grave, with black brows, and her face, which was rather narrow, had a pleasing irregularity in the sharp jut of the nose; in profile the parting of the red lips showed well back into the cheek,

"I don't know," said Mrs. Pasmer, in her own behalf; and she added in his, "about letting you take so much trouble," so smoothly that it would have been quite impossible to detect the point of union in the two utterances.

"Well, don't call it names, anyway, Mrs. Pasmer," pleaded the young man. "I thought it was nothing but a pleasure and a privilege--"

"The fact is," she explained, neither consenting nor refusing, "that we were expecting to meet some friends who had tickets for us"--young Maverick's face fell--"and I can't imagine what's happened."

"Oh, let's hope something dreadful," he cried.

Perhaps you know them," she delayed further. "Professor Saintsbury!"

"Well, rather! Why, they were here about an hour ago--both of them. They must have been looking for you."

"Yes; we were to meet them here. We waited to come out with other friends, and I was afraid we were late." Mrs. Pasmer's face expressed a tempered disappointment, and she looked at her daughter for indications of her wishes in the circumstances; seeing in her eye a willingness to accept young Maverig's invitation, she hesitated more decidedly than she had yet done, for she was, other things being equal, quite willing to accept it herself. But other things were not equal, and the whole situation was very odd. All that she knew of Mr. Maverig the elder was that he was the old friend of John Munt, and she knew far too little of John Munt, except that he seemed to go everywhere, and to be welcome, not to feel that his introduction was hardly a warrant for what looked like an impending intimacy. She did not dislike Mr. Maverig; he was evidently a country person of great self-respect, and no doubt of entire respectability. He seemed very intelligent, too. He was a Harvard man; he had rather a cultivated manner, or else naturally a clever way of saying things. But all that was really nothing, if she knew no more about him, and she certainly did not. If she could only have asked her daughter who it was that presented young Maverig to her, that might have formed some clew, but there was no earthly chance of asking this, and, besides, it was probably one of those haphazard introductions that people give on such occasions. Young Maverig's behaviour gave her still greater question: his self-possession, his entire absence of anxiety; or any expectation of rebuff or snub, might be the ease of unimpeachable social acceptance, or it might be merely adventurous effrontery; only something ingenuous and good in the young fellow's handsome face forbade this conclusion. That his face was so handsome was another of the complications. She recalled, in the dreamlike swiftness with which all these things passed through her mind, what her friends had said to Alice about her being sure to meet her fate on Class Day, and she looked at her again to see if she had met it.

"Well, mamma?" said the girl, smiling at her mother's look.

Mrs. Pasmer thought she must have been keeping young Maverig waiting a long time for his answer. "Why, of course, Alice. But I really don't know what to do about the Saintsburys." This was not in the least true, but it instantly seemed so to Mrs. Pasmer, as a plausible excuse will when we make it.

"Why, I'll tell you what, Mrs. Pasmer," said young Maverig, with a cordial unsuspecting that both won and reassured her, "we'll be sure to find them at some of the spreads. Let me be of that much use, anyway; you must."

"We really oughtn't to let you," said Mrs. Pasmer, making a last effort to cling to her reluctance, but feeling it fail, with a sensation that was not disagreeable. She could not help being pleased with the pleasure

that she saw in her daughter's face.

Young Mavering's was radiant. "I'll be back in just half a minute," he said, and he took a gay leave of them in running to speak to another student at the opposite end of the hall.

III.

"You must allow me to get you something to eat first, Mrs. Pasmer," said the elder Mavering.

"Oh no, thank you," Mrs. Pasmer began. But she changed her mind and said, "Or, yes; I will, Mr. Mavering: a very little salad, please." She had really forgotten her hunger, as a woman will in the presence of any social interest; but she suddenly thought his going would give her a chance for two words with her daughter, and so she sent him. As he creaked heavily across the smooth floor of the nave; "Alice," she whispered, "I don't know exactly what I've done: Who introduced this young Mr. Mavering to you?"

"Mr. Munt."

"Mr. Munt!"

"Yes; he came for me; he said you sent him. He introduced Mr. Mavering, and he was very polite. Mr. Mavering said we ought to go up into the gallery and see how it looked; and Mr. Munt said he'd been up, and Mr. Mavering promised to bring me back to him, but he was not there when we got back. Mr. Mavering got me some ice cream first, and then he found you for me."

"Really," said Mrs. Pasmer to herself, "the combat thickens!" To her daughter she said, "He's very handsome."

"He laughs too much," said the daughter. Her mother recognised her uncandour with a glance. "But he waltzes well," added the girl.

"Waltzes?" echoed the mother. "Did you waltz with him, Alice?"

"Everybody else was dancing. He asked me for a turn or two, and of course I did it. What difference?"

"Oh, none--none. Only--I didn't see you."

"Perhaps you weren't looking."

"Yes, I was looking all the time."

"What do you mean, mamma?"

"Well," said Mrs. Pasmmer, in a final despair, "we don't know anything about them."

"We're the only people here who don't, then," said her daughter. "The ladies were bowing right left to him all the time, and he kept asking if I knew this one and that one, and all I could say was that some of them were distant cousins, but I wasn't acquainted with them. I would think he'd wonder who we were."

"Yes," said the mother thoughtfully.

"There! he's laughing with that other student. But don't look!"

Mrs. Pasmmer saw well enough out of the corner of her eye the joking that went on between Mavering and his friend, and it did not displease her to think that it probably referred to Alice. While the young man came hurrying back to them she glanced at the girl standing near her with a keenly critical inspection, from which she was able to exclude all maternal partiality, and justly decided that she was one of the most effective girls in the place. That costume of hers was perfect. Mrs. Pasmmer wished now that she could have compared it more carefully with other costumes; she had noticed some very pretty ones; and a feeling of vexation that Alice should have prevented this by being away so long just when the crowd was densest qualified her satisfaction. The people were going very fast now. The line of the oval in the nave was broken into groups of lingering talkers, who were conspicuous to each other, and Mrs. Pasmmer felt that she and her daughter were conspicuous to all the rest where they stood apart, with the two Mavingers converging upon them from different points, the son nodding and laughing to friends of both sexes as he came, the father wholly absorbed in not spilling the glass of claret punch which he carried in one hand, and not falling down on the slippery floor with the plate of salad which he bore in the other. She had thoughts of feigning unconsciousness; she would have had no scruple in practising this or any other social stratagem, for though she kept a conscience in regard to certain matters--what she considered essentials--she lived a thousand little lies every day, and taught her daughter by precept and example to do the same. You must seem to be looking one way when you were really looking another; you must say this when you meant that; you must act as if you were thinking one thing when you were thinking something quite different; and all to no end, for, as she constantly said, people always know perfectly well what you were about, whichever way you looked or whatever you said, or no matter how well you acted the part of thinking what you did not think. Now, although she seemed not to look, she saw all that has been described at a glance, and at another she saw young Mavinger slide easily up to his father and relieve him of the plate and glass, with a laugh as pleasant and a show of teeth as dazzling as he bestowed upon any of the ladies he had passed. She owned to her reconidite heart that she liked this in young Mavinger, though at the same time she asked herself what motive he really had in being so polite to his father before people. But she had no time to decide; she had only time to pack the question hurriedly away for future consideration, when young Mavinger arrived at her elbow, and she turned with a little "Oh!" of surprise so perfectly acted that it gave her the

greatest pleasure.

IV.

"I don't think my father would have got here alive with these things," said young Mavering. "Did you see how I came to his rescue?"

Mrs. Pasmer instantly threw away all pretext of not having seen. "Oh yes! my heart was in my mouth when you bore down upon him, Mr. Mavering. It was a beautiful instance of filial devotion."

"Well, do sit down now, Mrs. Pasmer, and take it comfortably," said the young fellow; and he got her one of the many empty chairs, and would not give her the things, which he put in another, till she sat down and let him spread a napkin over her lap.

"Really," she said, "I feel as if I were stopping all the wheels of Class Day. Am I keeping them from closing the Gymnasium, Mr. Mavering?"

"Not quite," said the young man, with one of his laughs. "I don't believe they will turn us out, and I'll see that they don't lock us in. Don't hurry, Mrs. Pasmer. I'm only sorry you hadn't something sooner."

"Oh, your father proposed getting me something a good while ago."

"Did he? Then I wonder you haven't had it. He's usually on time."

"You're both very energetic, I think," said Mrs. Pasmer.

"He's the father of his son," said the young fellow, assuming the merit with a bow of burlesque modesty.

It went to Mrs. Pasmer's heart. "Let's hope he'll never forget that," she said, in an enjoyment of the excitement and the salad that was beginning to leave her question of these Mavericks a light, diaphanous cloud on the verge of the horizon.

The elder Mavering had been trying, without success, to think of something to say to Miss Pasmer, he had twice cleared his throat for that purpose. But this comedy between his son and the young lady's mother seemed so much lighter and brighter than anything he could have said, that he said nothing, and looked on with his mouth set in its queer smile, while the girl listened with the gravity of a daughter who sees that her mother is losing her head. Mrs. Pasmer buzzed on in her badinage with the young man, and allowed him to go for a cup of coffee before she rose from her chair, and shook out her skirts with an air of pleasant expectation of whatever should come next.

He came back without it. "The coffee urn has dried up here, Mrs. Pasmer. But you can get some at the other spreads; they'd be inconsolable if you

didn't take something everywhere."

They all started toward the door, but the elder Maverick said, holding back a little, "Dan, I think I'll go and see--"

"Oh no, you mustn't, father," cried the young man, laying his hand with caressing entreaty on his father's coat sleeve. "I don't want you to go anywhere till you've seen Professor Saintsbury. We shall be sure to meet him at some of the spreads. I want you to have that talk with him--" He corrected himself for the instant's deflection from the interests of his guest, and added, "I want you to help me hunt him up for Mrs. Pasmer. Now, Mrs. Pasmer, you're not to think it's the least trouble, or anything but a boon, much less say it," he cried, turning to the deprecation in Mrs. Pasmer's face. He turned away from it to acknowledge the smiles and bows of people going out of the place, and he returned their salutations with charming heartiness.

In the vestibule they met the friends they were going in search of.

V.

"With Mr. Maverick, of course!" exclaimed Mrs. Saintsbury: "I might have known it." Mrs. Pasmer would have given anything she could think of to be able to ask why her friend might have known it; but for the present they could only fall upon each other with flashes of self-accusal and explanation, and rejoicing for their deferred and now accomplished meeting. The Professor stood by with the satirical smile with which men witness the effusion of women. Young Maverick, after sharing the ladies' excitement fully with them, rewarded himself by an exclusive moment with Miss Pasmer.

"You must get Mrs. Pasmer to let me show you all of Class Day that a Senior can. I didn't know what a perfect serpent's tooth it was to be one before. Mrs. Saintsbury," he broke off, "have you got tickets for the Tree? Ah, she doesn't hear me!"

Mrs. Saintsbury was just then saying to the elder Maverick, "I'm so glad you decided to come today. It would have been a shame if none of you were here." She made a feint of dropping her voice, with a glance at Dan Maverick. "He's such a nice boy," which made him laugh, and cry out--

"Oh, now? Don't poison my father's mind, Mrs. Saintsbury."

"Oh, some one would be sure to tell him," retorted the Professor's wife, "and he'd better hear it from a friend."

The young fellow laughed again, and then he shook hands with some ladies going out, and asked were they going so soon, from an abstract hospitality, apparently, for he was not one of the hosts; and so turned once more to Miss Pasmer. "We must get away from here, or the afternoon

will get away from us, and leave us nothing to show for it. Suppose we make a start, Miss Pasmer?"

He led the way with her out of the vestibule, banked round with pots of palm and fern, and down the steps into the glare of the Cambridge sunshine, blown full, as is the case on Class Day, of fine Cambridge dust, which had drawn a delicate grey veil over the grass of the Gymnasium lawn, and mounted in light clouds from the wheels powdering it finer and finer in the street. Along the sidewalks dusty hacks and carriages were ranged, and others were driving up to let people dismount at the entrances to the college yard. Within the temporary picket-fences, secluding a part of the grounds for the students and their friends, were seen stretching from dormitory to dormitory long lines of Chinese lanterns, to be lit after nightfall, swung between the elms. Groups of ladies came and went, nearly always under the escort of some student; the caterers' carts, disburdened of their ice-creams and salads, were withdrawn under the shade in the street, and their drivers lounged or drowsed upon the seats; now and then a black waiter, brilliant as a bobolink in his white jacket and apron, appeared on some errand; the large, mild Cambridge policemen kept the entrances to the yard with a benevolent vigilance which was not harsh with the little Irish children coming up from the Marsh in their best to enjoy the sight of other people's pleasure.

"Isn't it a perfect Class Day?" cried young Maverick, as he crossed Kirkland Street with Miss Pasmer, and glanced down its vaulted perspective of elms, through which the sunlight broke, and lay in the road in pools and washes as far as the eye reached. "Did you ever see anything bluer than the sky to-day? I feel as if we'd ordered the weather, with the rest of the things, and I had some credit for it as host. Do make it a little compliment, Miss Pasmer; I assure you I'll be very modest about it."

"Ah, I think it's fully up to the occasion," said the girl, catching the spirit of his amiable satisfaction. "Is it the usual Class Day weather?"

"You spoil everything by asking that," cried the young man; "it obliges me to make a confession--it's always good weather on Class Day. There haven't been more than a dozen bad Class Days in the century. But you'll admit that there can't have been a better Class Day than this?"

"Oh yes; it's certainly the pleasantest Class Day I've seen;" said the girl; and now when Maverick laughed she laughed too.

"Thank you so much for saying that! I hope it will pass off in unclouded brilliancy; it will, if I can make it. Why, hallo! They're on the other side of the street yet, and looking about as if they were lost."

He pulled his handkerchief from his pocket, and waved it at the others of their party.

They caught sight of it, and came hurrying over through the dust.

Mrs. Saintsbury said, apparently as the sum of her consultations with Mrs. Pasmer: "The Tree is to be at half-past five; and after we've seen a few spreads, I'm going to take the ladies home for a little rest."

"Oh no; don't do that," pleaded the young man. After making this protest he seemed not to have anything to say immediately in support of it. He merely added: "This is Miss Pasmer's first Class Day, and I want her to see it all."

"But you'll have to leave us very soon to get yourself ready for the Tree" suggested the Professor's lady, with a motherly prevision.

"I shall want just fifteen minutes for that."

"I know, better, Mr. Maverick," said Mrs. Saintsbury, with finality.

"You will want a good three-quarters of an hour to make yourself as disreputable as you'll look at the Tree; and you'll have to take time for counsel and meditation. You may stay with us just half an hour, and then we shall part inexorably. I've seen a great many more Class Days than you have, and I know what they are in their demands upon the Seniors."

"Oh; well! Then we won't think about the time," said the young man, starting on with Miss Pasmer.

"Well, don't undertake too much," said the lady. She came last in the little procession, with the elder Maverick, and her husband and Mrs. Pasmer preceded her.

"What?" young Maverick called back, with his smiling face over his shoulder.

"She says not to bite off more than you can chew," the professor answered for her.

Maverick broke into a conscious laugh, but full of delight, and with his handkerchief to his face had almost missed the greeting of some ladies who bowed to him. He had to turn round to acknowledge it, and he was saluting and returning salutations pretty well all along the line of their progress.

"I'm afraid you'll think I'm everybody's friend but my own, Miss Pasmer, but I assure you all this is purely accidental. I don't know so many people, after all; only all that I do know seem to be here this morning."

"I don't think it's a thing to be sorry for," said the girl. "I wish we knew more people. It's rather forlorn--"

"Oh, will you let me introduce some of the fellows to you? They'll be so glad."

"If you'll tell them how forlorn I said I was," said the girl, with a smile.

"Oh, no, no, no! I understand that. And I assure you that I didn't suppose--But of course!" he arrested himself in the superfluous reassurance he was offering, "All that goes without saying. Only there are some of the fellows coming back to the law school, and if you'll allow me--"

"We shall be very happy indeed, Mr. Mavering," said Mrs. Pasmer, behind him.

"Oh, thank you ever so much, Mrs. Pasmer." This was occasion for another burst of laughter with him. He seemed filled with the intoxication of youth, whose spirit was in the bright air of the day and radiant in the young faces everywhere. The paths intersecting one another between the different dormitories under the drooping elms were thronged with people coming and going in pairs and groups; and the academic fete, the prettiest flower of our tough old Puritan stem, had that charm, at once sylvan and elegant, which enraptures in the pictured fables of the Renaissance. It falls at that moment of the year when the old university town, often so commonplace and sometimes so ugly, becomes briefly and almost pathetically beautiful under the leafage of her hovering elms and in, the perfume of her syringas, and bathed in this joyful tide of youth that overflows her heart. She seems fit then to be the home of the poets who have loved her and sung her, and the regret of any friend of the humanities who has left her.

"Alice," said Mrs. Pasmer, leaning forward a little to speak to her daughter, and ignoring a remark of the Professor's, "did you ever see so many pretty costumes?"

"Never," said the girl, with equal intensity.

"Well, it makes you feel that you have got a country, after all," sighed Mrs. Pasmer, in a sort of apostrophe to her European self. "You see splendid dressing abroad, but it's mostly upon old people who ought to be sick and ashamed of their pomps and vanities. But here it's the young girls who dress; and how lovely they are! I thought they were charming in the Gymnasium, but I see you must get them out-of-doors to have the full effect. Mr. Mavering, are they always so prettily dressed on Class Day?"

"Well, I'm beginning to feel as if it wouldn't be exactly modest for me to say so, whatever I think. You'd better ask Mrs. Saintsbury; she pretends to know all about it."

"No, I'm bound to say they're not," said the Professor's wife candidly. "Your daughter," she added, in a low tone for all to hear, "decides that question."

"I'm so glad you said that, Mrs. Saintsbury," said the young man. He looked at the girl; who blushed with a pleasure that seemed to thrill to the last fibre of her pretty costume.

She could not say anything, but her mother asked, with an effort at self-denial: "Do you think so really? It's one of those London things. They have so much taste there now," she added yielding to her own pride in the dress.

"Yes; I supposed it must be," said Mrs. Saintsbury, "We used to come in muslins and tremendous hoops--don't you remember?"

"Did you look like your photographs?" asked young Mavering, over his shoulder.

"Yes; but we didn't know it then," said the Professor's wife.

"Neither did we," said the Professor. "We supposed that there had never been anything equal to those hoops and white muslins."

"Thank you, my dear," said his wife, tapping him between the shoulders with her fan. "Now don't go any further."

"Do you mean about our first meeting here on Class Day?" asked her husband.

"They'll think so now," said Mrs. Saintsbury patiently, with a playful threat of consequences in her tone.

"When I first saw the present Mrs. Saintsbury," pursued the Professor--it was his joking way, of describing her, as if there had been several other Mrs. Saintsburys--"she was dancing on the green here."

"Ah, they don't dance on the green any more, I hear," sighed Mrs. Pasmer.

"No, they don't," said the other lady; "and I think it's just as well. It was always a ridiculous affectation of simplicity."

"It must have been rather public," said young Mavering, in a low voice, to Miss Pasmer.

"It doesn't seem as if it could ever have been in character quite," she answered.

"We're a thoroughly indoors people," said the Professor. "And it seems as if we hadn't really begun to get well as a race till we had come in out of the weather."

"How can you say that on a day like this?" cried Mrs. Pasmer. "I didn't suppose any one could be so unromantic."

"Don't flatter him," cried his wife.

"Does he consider that a compliment?"

"Not personally," he answered: "But it's the first duty of a Professor of Comparative Literature to be unromantic."

"I don't understand," faltered Mrs. Pasmer.

"He will be happy to explain, at the greatest possible length," said Mrs. Saintsbury. "But you shan't spoil our pleasure now, John."

They all laughed, and the Professor looked proud of the wit at his expense; the American husband is so, and the public attitude of the American husband and wife toward each other is apt to be amiably satirical; their relation seems never to have lost its novelty, or to lack droll and surprising contrasts for them.

Besides these passages with her husband, Mrs. Saintsbury kept up a full flow of talk with the elder Maverick, which Mrs. Pasmer did her best to overhear, for it related largely to his son, whom, it seemed, from the father's expressions, the Saintsburys had been especially kind to.

No, I assure you, "Mrs. Pasmer heard her protest, "Mr. Saintsbury has, been very much interested in him. I hope he has not put any troublesome ideas into his head. Of course he's very much interested in literature, from his point of view, and he's glad to find any of the young men interested in it, and that's apt to make him overdo matters a little."

"Dan wished me to talk with him, and I shall certainly be glad to do so," said the father, but in a tone which conveyed to Mrs. Pasmer the impression that though he was always open to conviction, his mind was made up on this point, whatever it was.

VI.

The party went to half a dozen spreads, some of which were on a scale of public grandeur approaching that of the Gymnasium, and others of a subdued elegance befitting the more private hospitalities in the students' rooms. Mrs. Pasmer was very much interested in these rooms, whose luxurious appointments testified to the advance of riches and of the taste to apply them since she used to visit students' rooms in far-off Class Days. The deep window nooks and easy-chairs upholstered in the leather that seems sacred alike to the seats and the shelves of libraries; the aesthetic bookcases, low and topped with bric-a-brac; the etchings and prints on the walls, which the elder Maverick went up to look at with a mystifying air of understanding such things; the foils crossed over the chimney, and the mantel with its pipes, and its photographs of theatrical celebrities tilted about over it--spoke of conditions mostly foreign to Mrs. Pasmer's memories of Harvard. The photographed celebrities seemed to be chosen chiefly for their beauty, and for as much of their beauty as possible, Mrs. Pasmer perceived, with an obscure misgiving of the sort which an older generation always likes to feel concerning the younger, but with a tolerance, too, which was personal to herself; it was to be considered that the massive thought and honest amiability of Salvini's face, and the deep and spiritualized power

of Booth's, varied the effect of these companies of posturing nymphs.

At many places she either met old friends with whom she clamoured over the wonder of their encounter there, or was made acquainted with new people by the Saintsburys. She kept a mother's eye on her daughter, to whom young Mavering presented everybody within hail or reach, and whom she could see, whenever she looked at her, a radiant centre of admiration. She could hear her talk sometimes, and she said to herself that really Alice was coming out; she had never heard her say so many good things before; she did not know it was in her. She was very glad then that she had let her wear that dress; it was certainly distinguished, and the girl carried it off, to her mother's amusement, with the air of a superb lady of the period from which it dated. She thought what a simple child Alice really was, all the time those other children, the Seniors, were stealing their glances of bold or timid worship at her, and doubtless thinking her a brilliant woman of the world. But there could be no mistake that she was a success.

Part of her triumph was of course due to Mrs. Saintsbury; whose chaperonage; Mrs. Pasmer could see, was everywhere of effect. But it was also largely due to the vigilant politeness of young Mavering, who seemed bent on making her have good time, and who let no chance slip him. Mrs. Pasmer felt his kindness truly; and she did not feel it the less because she knew that there was but one thing that could, at his frankly selfish age, make a young fellow wish to make a girl have a good time; except for that reason he must be bending the whole soul of egotistic youth to making some other girl have a good time. But all the same, it gave her pause when some one to whom she was introduced spoke to her of her friends the Mavericks, as if they were friends of the oldest standing instead of acquaintances of very recent accident. She did not think of disclaiming the intimacy, but "Really I shall die of these Mavericks," she said to herself, "unless I find out something about them pretty soon."

"I'm not going to take you to the Omicron spread, Mrs. Pasmer," said young Mavering, coming up to her with such an effect of sympathetic devotion that she had to ask herself, "Are they my friends, the Mavericks?" "The Saintsburys have been there already, and it is a little too common." The tone of superiority gave Mrs. Pasmer courage. "They're good fellows; and all that, but I want you to see the best. I suppose it will get back to giving the spreads all in the fellows' rooms again. It's a good deal pleasanter, don't you think?"

"Oh yes, indeed," assented Mrs. Pasmer, though she had really been thinking the private spreads were not nearly so amusing as the large spread she had seen at the Gymnasium. She had also wondered where all Mr. Mavering's relations and friends were, and the people who had social claims on him, that he could be giving up his Class Day in this reckless fashion to strangers. Alice would account for a good deal, but she would not account for everything. Mrs. Pasmer would have been willing to take him from others, but if he were so anomalous as to have no one to be taken from, of course it lessened his value as a trophy. These things went in and out of her mind, with a final resolution to get a full

explanation from Mrs. Saintsbury, while she stood and smiled her winning assent up into the young man's handsome face.

Mrs. Saintsbury, caught sight of them, and as if suddenly reminded of a forgotten duty, rushed vividly upon him.

"Mr. Maverick, I shall not let you stay with us another minute. You must go to your room now and get ready. You ought to have a little rest."

He broke out in his laugh. "Do you think I want to go and lie down awhile, like a lady before a party?"

"I'm sure you'd be the stronger for it," said Mrs. Saintsbury. "But go, upon any theory. Don't you see there isn't a Senior left?"

He would not look round. "They've gone to other spreads," he said. "But now I'll tell you: it is pretty, near time, and if you'll take me to my room, I'll go."

"You're a spoiled boy," said Mrs. Saintsbury.

"But I want Mrs. Pasher to see the room of a real student--a reading man, and all that--and we'll come, to humour you."

"Well, come upon any theory," said young Maverick.

His father, and Professor Saintsbury, who had been instructed by his wife not to lose sight of her, were at hand, and they crossed to that old hall which keeps its favour with the students in spite of the rivalry of the newer dormitories--it would be hard to say why.

Mrs. Pasher willingly assented to its being much better, out of pure complaisance, though the ceilings were low and the windows small, and it did not seem to her that the Franklin stove and the aesthetic papering and painting of young Maverick's room brought it up to the level of those others that she had seen. But with her habit of saying some friendly lying thing, no matter what her impressions were, she exclaimed; "Oh, how cosy!" and glad of the word, she went about from one to another, asking, "Isn't this cosy?"

Mrs. Saintsbury said: "It's supposed to be the cell of a recluse; but it is cosy--yes."

"It looks as if some hermit had been using it as a store-room," said her husband; for there were odds and ends of furniture and clothes and boxes and handbags scattered about the floor.

"I forgot all about them when I asked you," cried Maverick, laughing out his delight. "They belong to some fellows that are giving spreads in their rooms, and I let them put them in here."

"Do you commonly let people put things in your room that they want to get rid off?" asked Mrs. Pasher.

"Well, not when I'm expecting company."

"He couldn't refuse even then, if they pressed the matter," said Mrs. Saintsbury, lecturing upon him to her friend.

"I'm afraid you're too amiable altogether, Mr. Mavering. I'm sure you let people impose upon you," said the other lady. "You have been letting us impose upon you."

"Ah! now that proves you're all wrong, Mrs. Pasmer."

"It proves that you know how to say things very prettily."

"Oh, thank you. I know when I'm having a good time, and I do my best to enjoy it." He ended with the nervous laugh which seemed habitual with him.

"He, does laugh a good deal;" thought Mrs. Pasmer, surveying him with smiling steadiness. "I suppose it tires Alice. Some of his teeth are filled at the sides. That vein in his forehead--they say that means genius." She said to him: "I hope you know when others are having a good time too, Mr. Mavering? You ought to have that reward."

They both looked at Alice. "Oh, I should be so happy to think you hadn't been bored with it all, Mrs. Pasmer," he returned;--with-deep feeling.

Alice was looking at one of the sketches which were pretty plentifully pinned about the wall, and apparently seeing it and apparently listening to what Professor Saintsbury was saying; but her mother believed from a tremor of the ribbons on her hat that she was conscious of nothing but young Mavering's gaze and the sound of his voice.

"We've been delighted, simply enchanted," said Mrs. Pasmer. And she thought; "Now if Alice were to turn round just as she stands, he could see all the best points of her face. I wonder what she really thinks of him? What is it you have there; Alice?" she asked aloud.

The girl turned her face over her shoulder so exactly in the way her mother wished that Mrs. Pasmer could scarcely repress a cry of joy. "A sketch of Mr. Mavering's."

"Oh, how very interesting!" said Mrs. Pasmer. "Do you sketch, Mr. Mavering? But of course." She pressed forward, and studied the sketch inattentively. "How very, very good!" she buzzed deep in her throat, while, with a glance at her daughter, she thought, "How impassive Alice is! But she behaves with great dignity. Yes. Perhaps that's best. And are you going to be an artist?" she asked of Mavering.

"Not if it can be prevented," he answered, laughing again.

"But his laugh is very pleasant," reflected Mrs. Pasmer. "Does Alice dislike it so much?" She repeated aloud, "If it can be prevented?"

"They think I might spoil a great lawyer in the attempt."

"Oh, I see. And are you going to be a lawyer? But to be a great painter! And America has so few of them." She knew quite well that she was talking nonsense, but she was aware, through her own indifference to the topic that he was not minding what she said, but was trying to bring himself into talk with Alice again. The girl persistently listened to Professor Saintsbury.

"Is she punishing him for something?" her mother asked herself. "What can it be for. Does she think he's a little too pushing? Perhaps, he is a little pushing." She reflected, with an inward sigh, that she would know whether he was if she only knew more about him.

He did the honours of his room very simply and nicely, and he said it was pretty rough to think this was the last of it. After which he faltered, and something occurred to Mrs Saintsbury.

"Why, we're keeping you! It's time for you to dress for the Tree. John"--she reproached her husband--"how could you let us do it?"

"Far be it from me to hurry ladies out of other people's houses--especially ladies who have put themselves in charge of other people."

"No, don't hurry," pleaded Maverick; "there's plenty of time."

"How much time?" asked Mrs. Saintsbury.

He looked at his watch. "Well, a good quarter of an hour."

"And I was to have taken Mrs. Pasher and Alice home for a little rest before the Tree!" cried Mrs Saintsbury. "And now we must go at once, or we shall get no sort of places."

In the civil and satirical parley which followed, no one answered another, but young Maverick bore as full a part as the elder ladies, and only his father and Alice were silent: his guests got themselves out of his room. They met at the threshold a young fellow, short and dark and stout, in an old tennis suit. He fell back at sight of them, and took off his hat to Mrs. Saintsbury.

"Why, Mr. Boardman!"

"Don't be bashful, Boardman?" young Maverick called out. "Come in and show them how I shall look in five minutes."

Mr. Boardman took his introductions with a sort of main-force self-possession, and then said, "You'll have to look it in less than five minutes now, Maverick. You're come for."

"What? Are they ready?"

"We must fly," panted Mrs. Saintsbury, without waiting for the answer, which was lost in the incoherencies of all sorts of *au revours* called after and called back.

VII.

"That is one thing," said Mrs. Saintsbury, looking swiftly round to see that the elder Mavington was not within hearing, as she hurried ahead with Mrs. Pasmer, "that I can't stand in Dan Mavington. Why couldn't he have warned us that it was getting near the time? Why should he have gone on pretending that there was no hurry? It isn't insincerity exactly, but it isn't candour; no, it's uncandid. Oh, I suppose it's the artistic temperament--never coming straight to the point."

"What do you mean?" asked Mrs. Pasmer eagerly.

"I'll tell you sometime." She looked round and halted a little for Alice, who was walking detached and neglected by the preoccupation of the two elderly men. "I'm afraid you're tired," she said to the girl.

"Oh no."

"Of course not, on Class Day. But I hope we shall get seats. What weather!"

The sun had not been oppressive at any time during the day, though the crowded building had been close and warm, and now it lay like a painted light on the grass and paths over which they passed to the entrance of the grounds around the Tree. Holden Chapel, which enclosed the space on the right as they went in, shed back the sun from its brick-red flank, rising unrelieved in its venerable ugliness by any touch of the festive preparations; but to their left and diagonally across from them high stagings supported tiers of seats along the equally unlovely red bulks of Hollis and of Harvard. These seats, and the windows in the stories above them, were densely packed with people, mostly young girls dressed in a thousand enchanting shades and colours, and bonneted and hatted to the last effect of fashion. They were like vast terraces of flowers to the swift glance, and here and there some brilliant parasol, spread to catch the sun on the higher ranks, was like a flaunting poppy, rising to the light and lolling out above the blooms of lower stature. But the parasols were few, for the two halls flung wide curtains of shade over the greater part of the spectators, and across to the foot of the chapel, while a piece of the carpentry whose simplicity seems part of the Class Day tradition shut out the glare and the uninvited public, striving to penetrate the enclosure next the street. In front of this yellow pine wall; with its ranks of benches, stood the Class Day Tree, girded at ten or fifteen feet from the ground with a wide band of flowers.

Mrs. Pasmer and her friends found themselves so late that if some gentlemen who knew Professor Saintsbury had not given up their places

they could have got no seats. But this happened, and the three ladies had harmoniously blended their hues with those of the others in that bank of bloom, and the gentlemen had somehow made away with their obstructiveness in different crouching and stooping postures at their feet, when the Junior Class filed into the green enclosure amidst the 'rahs of their friends; and sank in long ranks on the grass beside the chapel. Then the Sophomores appeared, and were received with cheers by the Juniors, with whom they joined, as soon as they were placed, in heaping ignominy upon the freshmen. The Seniors came last, grotesque in the variety of their old clothes, and a fierce uproar of 'rahs and yells met them from the students squatted upon the grass as they loosely grouped themselves in front of the Tree; the men of the younger classes formed in three rings, and began circling in different directions around them.

Mrs. Pasmer bent across Mrs. Saintsbury to her daughter: "Can you make out Mr. Maverick among them, Alice?"

"No. Hush, mamma!" pleaded the girl.

With the subsidence of the tumult in the other classes, the Seniors had broken from the stoical silence they kept through it, and were now with an equally serious clamour applauding the first of a long list of personages, beginning with the President, and ranging through their favourites in the Faculty down to Billy the Postman. The leader who invited them to this expression of good feeling exacted the full tale of nine cheers for each person he named, and before he reached the last the 'rahs came in gasps from their dry throats.

In the midst of the tumult the marshal flung his hat at the elm; then the rush upon the tree took place, and the scramble for the flowers. The first who swarmed up the trunk were promptly plucked down by the legs and flung upon the ground, as if to form a base there for the operations of the rest; who surged and built themselves up around the elm in an irregular mass. From time to time some one appeared clambering over heads and shoulders to make a desperate lunge and snatch at the flowers, and then fall back into the fluctuant heap again. Yells, cries, and clappings of hands came from the other students, and the spectators in the seats, involuntarily dying away almost to silence as some stronger or wilfuler aspirant held his own on the heads and shoulders of the others, or was stayed there by his friends among them till he could make sure of a handful of the flowers. A rush was made upon him when he reached the ground; if he could keep his flowers from the hands that snatched at them, he staggered away with the fragments. The wreath began to show wide patches of the bark under it; the surging and struggling crowd below grew less dense; here and there one struggled out of it and walked slowly about, panting pitifully.

"Oh, I wonder they don't kill each other!" cried Mrs. Pasmer. "Isn't it terrible?" She would not have missed it on any account; but she liked to get all she could out of her emotions.

"They never get hurt," said Mrs. Saintsbury. "Oh, look! There's Dan

Mavering!"

The crowd at the foot of the tree had closed densely, and a wilder roar went up from all the students. A tall, slim young fellow, lifted on the shoulders of the mass below, and staying himself with one hand against the tree, rapidly stripped away the remnants of the wreath, and flung them into the crowd under him. A single tuft remained; the crowd was melting away under him in a scramble for the fallen flowers; he made a crooked leap, caught the tuft, and tumbled with it headlong.

"Oh!" breathed the ladies on the Benches, with a general suspiration lost in the 'rahs and clappings, as Mavering reappeared with the bunch of flowers in his hand. He looked dizzily about, as if not sure, of his course; then his face, flushed and heated, with the hair pulled over the eyes, brightened with recognition, and he advanced upon Mrs. Saintsbury's party with rapid paces, each of which Mrs. Pasmer commentated with inward conjecture.

"Is he bringing the flowers to Alice? Isn't it altogether too conspicuous? Has he really the right to do it? What will people think? Will he give them to me for her, or will he hand them directly to her? Which should I prefer him to do? I wonder if I know?"

When she looked up with the air of surprise mixed with deprecation and ironical disclaimer which she had prepared while these things were passing through her mind, young Mavering had reached them, and had paused in a moment's hesitation before his father. With a bow of affectionate burlesque, from which he lifted his face to break into laughter at the look in all their eyes, he handed the tattered nosegay to his father.

"Oh, how delightful! how delicate! how perfect!" Mrs. Pasmer confided to herself.

"I think this must be for you, Mrs. Pasmer," said the elder Mavering, offering her the bouquet, with a grave smile at his son's whim.

"Oh no, indeed!" said Mrs. Pasmer. "For Mrs. Saintsbury, of course."

She gave it to her, and Mrs. Saintsbury at once transferred it to Miss Pasmer.

"They wished me to pass this to you, Alice;" and at this consummation Dan Mavering broke into another happy laugh.

"Mrs. Saintsbury, you always do the right thing at once," he cried.

"That's more than I can say of you, Mr. Mavering," she retorted.

"Oh, thank you, Mr. Mavering!" said the girl, receiving the flowers. It was as if she had been too intent upon them and him to have noticed the little comedy that had conveyed them to her.

VIII.

As soon after Class Day as Mrs. Pasmer's complaisant sense of the decencies would let her, she went out from Boston to call on Mrs. Saintsbury in Cambridge, and thank her for her kindness to Alice and herself. "She will know well enough what I come for," she said to herself, and she felt it the more important to ignore Mrs. Saintsbury's penetration by every polite futility; this was due to them both: and she did not go till the second day after.

Mrs. Saintsbury came down into the darkened, syringa-scented library to find her, and give her a fan.

"You still live, Jenny," she said, kissing her gaily.

They called each other by their girl names, as is rather the custom in Boston with ladies who are in the same set, whether they are great friends or not. In the more changeful society of Cambridge, where so many new people are constantly coming and going in connection with the college, it is not so much the custom; but Mrs. Saintsbury was Boston born, as well as Mrs. Pasmer, and was Cantabrigian by marriage--though this is not saying that she was not also thoroughly so by conviction and usage she now rarely went into Boston society.

"Yes, Etta--just. But I wasn't sure of it," said Mrs. Pasmer, "when I woke yesterday. I was a mere aching jelly!"

"And Alice?"

"Oh; I don't think she had any physical consciousness. She was a mere rapturous memory!"

"She did have a good time, didn't she?" said Mrs. Saintsbury, in a generous retrospect. "I think she was on her feet every moment in the evening. It kept me from getting tired, to watch her."

"I was afraid you'd be quite worn out. I'd no idea it was so late. It must have been nearly half past seven before we got away from the Beck Hall spread, and then by the time we had walked round the college grounds--how extremely pretty the lanterns were, and how charming the whole effect was!--it must have been nine before the dancing began. Well, we owe it all to you, Etta."

"I don't know what you mean by owing. I'm always glad of an excuse for Class Day. And it was Dan Mavinger who really managed the affair."

"He was very kind," said Mrs. Pasmer, with a feeling which was chiefly gratitude to her friend for bringing in his name so soon. Now that it had been spoken, she felt it decorous to throw aside the outer integument of pretense, which if it could have been entirely exfoliated would have caused Mrs. Pasmer morally to disappear, like an onion stripped of its

successive laminae.

"What did you mean," she asked, leaning forward, with, her face averted, "about his having the artistic temperament? Is he going to be an artist? I should hope not." She remembered without shame that she had strongly urged him to consider how much better it would be to be a painter than a lawyer, in the dearth of great American painters.

"He could be a painter if he liked--up to a certain point," said Mrs. Saintsbury. "Or he could be any one of half a dozen other things--his last craze was journalism; but you know what I mean by the artistic temperament: it's that inability to be explicit; that habit of leaving things vague and undefined, and hoping they'll somehow come out as you want them of themselves; that way of taking the line of beauty to get at what you wish to do or say, and of being very finicking about little things and lag about essentials. That's what I mean by the artistic temperament."

"Yes; that's terrible," sighed Mrs. Pasmer, with the abstractly severe yet personally pitying perception of one whose every word and act was sincere and direct. "I know just what you mean. But how does it apply to Mr. Maverick?"

"It doesn't, exactly," returned her friend. "And I'm always ashamed when I say, or even think, anything against Dan Maverick. He's sweetness itself. We've known him ever since he came to Harvard, and I must say that a more constant and lovely fellow I never saw. It wasn't merely when he was a Freshman, and he had that home feeling hanging about him still that makes all the Freshmen so appreciative of anything you do for them; but all through the Sophomore and Junior years, when they're so taken up with their athletics and their societies and their college life generally that they haven't a moment for people that have been kind to them, he was just as faithful as ever."

"How nice!" cried Mrs. Pasmer.

Yes, indeed! And all the allurements of Boston society haven't taken him from us altogether. You can't imagine how much this means till you've been at home a while and seen how the students are petted and spoiled nowadays in the young society."

"Oh, I've heard of it," said Mrs. Pasmer. "And is it his versatility and brilliancy, or his amiability, that makes him such a universal favourite?"

"Universal favourite? I don't know that he's that."

"Well, popular, then."

"Oh, he's certainly very much liked. But, Jenny, there are no universal favourites in Harvard now, if there ever were: the classes are altogether too big. And it wouldn't be ability, and it wouldn't be amiability alone, that would give a man any sort of leadership."

"What in the world would it be?"

"That question, more than anything else, shows how long you've been away, Jenny. It would be family--family, with a judicious mixture of the others, and with money."

"Is it possible? But of course--I remember! Only at their age one thinks of students as being all hail-fellow-well-met with each other--"

"Yes; it's hard to realise how conventional they are--how very much worldlier than the world--till one sees it as one does in Cambridge. They pique themselves on it. And Mr. Saintsbury"--she was one of those women whom everything reminds of their husbands "says that it isn't a bad thing altogether. He says that Harvard is just like the world; and even if it's a little more so, these boys have got to live in the world, and they had better know what it is. You may not approve of the Harvard spirit, and Mr. Saintsbury doesn't sympathise with it; he only says it's the world's spirit. Harvard men--the swells--are far more exclusive than Oxford men. A student, 'comme il faut', wouldn't at all like to be supposed to know another student whom we valued for his brilliancy, unless he was popular and well known in college."

"Dear me!" cried Mrs. Pasmer. "But of course! It's perfectly natural, with young people. And it's well enough that they should begin to understand how things really are in the world early; it will save them from a great many disappointments."

"I assure you we have very little to teach Harvard men in those matters. They could give any of us points. Those who are of good family and station know how to protect themselves by reserves that the others wouldn't dare to transgress. But a merely rich man couldn't rise in their set any more than a merely gifted man. He could get on to a certain point by toadying, and some do; but he would never get to be popular, like Dan Maverick."

"And what makes him popular?--to go back to the point we started from," said Mrs. Pasmer.

"Ah, that's hard to say. It's--quality, I suppose. I don't mean social quality, exactly; but personal charm. He never had a mean thought; of course we're all full of mean thoughts, and Dan is too; but his first impulse is always generous and sweet, and at his age people act a great deal from impulse. I don't suppose he ever met a human being without wanting to make him like him, and trying to do it."

"Yes, he certainly makes you like him," sighed Mrs. Pasmer. "But I understand that he can't make people like him without family or money; and I don't understand that he's one of those 'nouveaux riches' who are giving Harvard such a reputation for extravagance nowadays."

There was an inquiring note in Mrs. Pasmer's voice; and in the syringa-scented obscurity, which protected the ladies from the expression of each

other's faces, Mrs. Saintsbury gave a little laugh of intelligence, to which Mrs. Pasmer responded by a murmur of humorous enjoyment at being understood.

"Oh no! He isn't one of those. But the Mavericks have plenty of money," said Mrs. Saintsbury, "and Dan's been very free with it, though not lavish. And he came here with a reputation for popularity from a very good school, and that always goes a very great way in college."

"Yes?" said Mrs. Pasmer, feeling herself getting hopelessly adrift in these unknown waters; but reposing a pious confidence in her pilot.

"Yes; if a sufficient number of his class said he was the best fellow in the world, he would be pretty sure to be chosen one of the First Ten in the 'Dickey'."

"What mysteries!" gasped Mrs. Pasmer, disposed to make fun of them, but a little overawed all the same. "What in the world is the 'Dickey'?"

"It's the society that the Freshmen are the most eager to get into. They're chosen, ten at a time, by the old members, and to be one of the first ten--the only Freshmen chosen--is something quite ineffable."

"I see." Mrs. Pasmer fanned herself, after taking a long breath. "And when he had got into the ----- "

"Then it would depend upon himself, how he spent his money, and all that, and what sort of society success he was in Boston. That has a great deal to do with it from the first. Then another thing is caution--discreetness; not saying anything censorious or critical of other men, no matter what they do. And Dan Maverick is the perfection of prudence, because he's the perfection of good-nature."

Mrs. Pasmer had apparently got all of these facts that she could digest. "And who are the Mavericks?"

"Why, it's an old Boston name--"

"It's too old, isn't it? Like Pasmer. There are no Mavericks in Boston that I ever heard of."

"No; the name's quite died out just here, I believe: but it's old, and it bids fair to be replanted at Ponkwasset Falls."

"At Ponk--"

"That's where they have their mills, or factories, or shops, or whatever institution they make wall-paper in."

"Wall-paper!" cried Mrs. Pasmer, austerely. After a moment she asked: "And is wall-paper the 'thing' now? I mean--" She tried to think of some way of modifying the commonness of her phrase, but did not. After all, it expressed her meaning.

"It isn't the extreme of fashion, of course. But it's manufacturing, and it isn't disgraceful. And the Mavering papers are very pretty, and you can live with them without becoming anaemic, or having your face twitch."

"Face twitch?" echoed Mrs. Pasmer.

"Yes; arsenical poisoning."

"Oh! Conscientious as well as aesthetic. I see. And does Mr. Mavering put his artistic temperament into them?"

"His father does. He's a very interesting man. He has the best taste in certain things--he knows more about etchings, I suppose, than any one else in Boston."

"Is it possible! And does he live at Ponkwasset Falls? It's in Rhode Island, isn't it?"

"New Hampshire. Yes; the whole family live there."

"The whole family? Are there many of them? I'd fancied, somehow, that Mr. Mavering was the only----Do tell me about them, Etta," said Mrs. Pasmer, leaning back in her chair, and fanning herself with an effect of impartial interest, to which the dim light of the room lent itself.

"He's the only son. But there are daughters, of course--very cultivated girls."

"And is he--is the elder Mr. Mavering a--I don't know what made me think so--a widower?"

"Well, no--not exactly."

"Not exactly! He's not a grass-widower, I hope?"

"No, indeed. But his wife's a helpless invalid, and always has been. He's perfectly devoted to her; and he hurried home yesterday, though he wanted very much to stay for Commencement. He's never away from her longer than he can help. She's bedridden; and you can see from the moment you enter it that it's a man's house. Daughters can't change that, you know."

"Have you been there?" asked Mrs. Pasmer, surprised that she was getting so much information, but eager for more. "Why, how long have you known them, Etta?"

"Only since Dan came to Harvard. Mr. Saintsbury took a fancy to him from the start, and the boy was so fond of him that they were always insisting upon a visit; and last summer we stopped there on our way to the mountains."

"And the sisters--do they stay there the whole year round? Are they

countrified?"

"One doesn't live in the country without being countrified," said Mrs. Saintsbury. "They're rather quiet girls, though they've been about a good deal--to Europe with friends, and to New York in the winter. They're older than Dan; they're more like their father. Are you afraid of that draught at the windows?"

"Oh no; it's delicious. And he's like the mother?"

"Yes."

"Then it's the father who has the artistic taste--he gets that from him; and the mother who has the--"

"Temperament--yes."

"How extremely interesting! And so he's going to be a lawyer. Why lawyer, if he's got the talent and the temperament of an artist? Does his father wish him to be a lawyer?"

"His father wishes him to be a wall-paper maker."

"And the young man compromises on the law. I see," said Mrs. Pasmer. "And you say he's been going into Boston a great deal? Where does he go?"

The ladies entered into this social inquiry with a zest which it would be hard to make the reader share, or perhaps to feel the importance of. It is enough that it ended in the social vindication of Dan Maving. It would not have been enough for Mrs Pasmer that he was accepted in the best Cambridge houses; she knew of old how people were accepted in Cambridge for their intellectual brilliancy or solidity, their personal worth, and all sorts of things, without consideration of the mystical something which gives vogue in Boston.

"How superb Alice was!" Mrs. Saintsbury broke off abruptly. "She has such a beautiful manner. Such repose."

"Repose! Yes," said her mother, thoughtfully. "But she's very intense. And I don't see where she gets it. Her father has repose enough, but he has no intensity; and I'm all intensity, and no repose. But I'm no more like my mother than Alice is like me."

"I think she has the Hibbins face," said Mrs. Saintsbury.

"Oh! she's got the Hibbins face," said Mrs Pasmer, with a disdain of tone which she did not at all feel; the tone was mere absent-mindedness.

She was about to revert to the question of Maving's family, when the door-bell rang, and another visitor interrupted her talk with Mrs. Saintsbury.

IX.

Mrs. Pasmer's husband looked a great deal older than herself, and, by operation of a well-known law of compensation, he was lean and silent, while she was plump and voluble. He had thick eyebrows, which remained black after his hair and beard had become white, and which gave him an aspect of fierceness, expressive of nothing in his character. It was from him that their daughter got her height, and, as Mrs. Pasmer freely owned, her distinction.

Soon after their marriage the Pasmers had gone to live in Paris, where they remained faithful to the fortunes of the Second Empire till its fall, with intervals of return to their own country of a year or two years at a time. After the fall of the Empire they made their sojourn in England, where they lived upon the edges and surfaces of things, as Americans must in Europe everywhere, but had more permanency of feeling than they had known in France, and something like a real social status. At one time it seemed as if they might end their days there; but that which makes Americans different from all other peoples, and which finally claims their allegiance for their own land, made them wish to come back to America, and to come back to Boston. After all, their place in England was strictly inferior, and must be. They knew titles, and consorted with them, but they had none themselves, and the English constancy which kept their friends faithful to them after they had become an old story, was correlated with the English honesty which never permitted them to mistake themselves for even the lowest of the nobility. They went out last, and they did not come in first, ever.

The invitations, upon these conditions, might have gone on indefinitely, but they did not imply a future for the young girl in whom the interests of her parents centred. After being so long a little girl, she had become a great girl, and then all at once she had become a young lady. They had to ask themselves, the mother definitely and the father formlessly, whether they wished their daughter to marry an Englishman, and their hearts answered them, like true Republican hearts, Not an untitled Englishman, while they saw no prospect of her getting any other. Mrs. Pasmer philosophised the case with a clearness and a courage which gave her husband a series of twinges analogous to the toothache, for a man naturally shrinks from such bold realisations. She said Alice had the beauty of a beauty, and she had the distinction of a beauty, but she had not the principles of a beauty; there was no use pretending that she had. For this reason the Prince of Wales's set, so accessible to American loveliness with the courage of its convictions, was beyond her; and the question was whether there was money enough for a younger son, or whether, if there was, a younger son was worth it.

However this might be, there was no question but there was now less money than there had been, and a great deal less. The investments had not turned out as they promised; not only had dividends been passed, but there had been permanent shrinkages. What was once an amiable competency

from the pooling of their joint resources had dwindled to a sum that needed a careful eye both to the income and the outgo. Alice's becoming a young lady had increased their expenses by the suddenly mounting cost of her dresses, and of the dresses which her mother must now buy for the different role she had to sustain in society. They began to ask themselves what it was for, and to question whether, if she could not marry a noble Englishman, Alice had not better marry a good American.

Even with Mrs. Pasmer this question was tacit, and it need not be explained to any one who knows our life that in her most worldly dreams she intended at the bottom of her heart that her daughter should marry for love. It is the rule that Americans marry for love, and the very rare exception that they marry for anything else; and if our divorce courts are so busy in spite of this fact, it is perhaps because the Americans also unmarry for love, or perhaps because love is not so sufficient in matters of the heart as has been represented in the literature of people who have not been able to give it so fair a trial. But whether it is all in all in marriage, or only a very marked essential, it is certain that Mrs. Pasmer expected her daughter's marriage to involve it. She would have shrunk from intimating anything else to her as from a gross indecency; and she could not possibly, by any finest insinuation, have made her a partner in her design for her happiness. That, so far as Alice was concerned, was a thing which was to fall to her as from heaven; for this also is part of the American plan. We are the children of the poets, the devotees of the romancers, so far as that goes; and however material and practical we are in other things, in this we are a republic of shepherds and shepherdesses, and we live in a golden age; which if it sometimes seems an age of inconvertible paper, is certainly so through no want of faith in us.

Though the Pasmers said that they ought to go home for Alice's sake, they both understood that they were going home experimentally, and not with the intention of laying their bones in their native soil, unless they liked it, or found they could afford it. Mrs. Pasmer had no illusions in regard to it. She had learned from her former visits home that it was frightfully expensive; and, during the fifteen years which they had spent chiefly abroad, she had observed the decay of that distinction which formerly attended returning sojourners from Europe. She had seen them cease gradually from the romantic reverence which once clothed them, and decline through a gathering indifference into something like slight and compassion, as people who have not been able to make their place or hold their own at home; and she had taught herself so well how to pocket the superiority natural to the Europeanised American before arriving at consciousness of this disesteem, that she paid a ready tribute to people who had always stayed at home.

In fact Mrs. Pasmer was a flatterer, and it cannot be claimed for her that she flattered adroitly always. But adroitness in flattery is not necessary for its successful use. There is no morsel of it too gross for the condor gullet and the ostrich stomach of human vanity; there is no society in which it does not give the utterer instant honour and acceptance in greater or less degree. Mrs. Pasmer, who was very good-natured, employed it because she liked it herself, and knowing how

absolutely worthless it was from her own tongue, prized it from others. She could have rested perfectly safe without it in her social position, which she found unchanged by years of absence. She had not been a Hibbins for nothing, and she was not a Pasmer for nothing, though why she should have been either for something it would not be easy to say.

But while confessing the foibles of Mrs. Pasmer, it would not be fair to omit from the tale of her many virtues the final conscientiousness of her openly involuted character. Not to mention other things, she instituted and practised economies as alien to her nature as to her husband's, and in their narrowing affairs she kept him out of debt. She was prudent; she was alert; and while presenting to the world all the outward effect of a butterfly, she possessed some of the best qualities of the bee.

With his senatorial presence, his distinction of person and manner, Mr. Pasmer was inveterately selfish in that province of small personal things where his wife left him unmolested. In what related to his own comfort and convenience he was undisputed lord of himself. It was she who ordered their comings and goings, and decided in which hemisphere they should sojourn from time to time, and in what city, street, and house, but always with the understanding that the kitchen and all the domestic appointments were to her husband's mind. He was sensitive to degrees of heat and cold, and luxurious in the matter of lighting, and he had a fine nose for plumbing. If he had not occupied himself so much with these details, he was the sort of man to have thought Mrs. Pasmer, with her buzz of activities and pretences, rather a tedious little woman. He had some delicate tastes, if not refined interests, and was expensively fond of certain sorts of bric-a-brac: he spent a great deal of time in packing and unpacking it, and he had cases stored in Rome and London and Paris; it had been one of his motives in consenting to come home that he might get them out, and set up the various objects of bronze and porcelain in cabinets. He had no vices, unless absolute idleness ensuing uninterruptedly upon a remotely demonstrated unfitness for business can be called a vice. Like other people who have always been idle, he did not consider his idleness a vice. He rather plumed himself upon it, for the man who has done nothing all his life naturally looks down upon people who have done or are doing something. In Europe he had not all the advantage of this superiority which such a man has here; he was often thrown with other idle people, who had been useless for so many generations that they had almost ceased to have any consciousness of it. In their presence Pasmer felt that his uselessness had not that passive elegance which only ancestral uselessness can give; that it was positive, and to that degree vulgar.

A life like this was not one which would probably involve great passions or affections, and it would be hard to describe exactly the feeling with which he regarded his daughter. He liked her, of course, and he had naturally expected certain things of her, as a ladylike intelligence, behaviour, and appearance; but he had never shown any great tenderness for her, or even pride in her. She had never given him any displeasure, however, and he had not shared his wife's question of mind at a temporary phase of Alice's development when she showed a decided inclination for a religious life. He had apparently not observed that the girl had a

pensive temperament in spite of the effect of worldly splendour which her mother contrived for her, and that this pensiveness occasionally deepened to gloom. He had certainly never seen that in a way of her own she was very romantic. Mrs. Pasmer had seen it, with amusement sometimes, and sometimes with anxiety, but always with the courage to believe that she could cope with it when it was necessary.

Whenever it was necessary she had all the moral courage she wanted; it seemed as if she could have it or not as she liked; and in coming home she had taken a flat instead of a house, though she had not talked with her friends three minutes without perceiving that the moment when flats had promised to assert their social equality with houses in Boston was past for ever. There were, of course, cases in which there could be no question of them; but for the most part they were plainly regarded as makeshifts, the resorts of people of small means, or the defiances or errors of people who had lived too much abroad. They stamped their occupants as of transitory and fluctuant character; good people might live in them, and did, as good people sometimes boarded; but they could not be regarded as forming a social base, except in rare instances. They presented peculiar difficulties in calling, and for any sort of entertainment they were too--not public, perhaps, but--evident.

In spite of these objections Mrs. Pasmer took a flat in the Cavendish, and she took it furnished from people who were going abroad for a year.

X.

Mrs. Pasmer stood at the drawing-room window of this apartment, the morning after her call upon Mrs. Saintsbury, looking out on the passage of an express-wagon load of trunks through Cavendish Square, and commenting the fact with the tacit reflection that it was quite time she should be getting away from Boston too, when her daughter, who was looking out of the other window, started significantly back.

"What is it, Alice?"

"Nothing! Mr. Mavering, I think, and that friend of his----"

"Which friend? But where? Don't look! They will think we were watching them. I can't see them at all. Which way were they going?" Mrs. Pasmer dramatised a careless unconsciousness to the square, while vividly betraying this anxiety to her daughter.

Alice walked away to the furthest part of the room. "They are coming this way," she said indifferently.

Before Mrs. Pasmer had time to prepare a conditional mood, adapted either to their coming that way or going some other, she heard the janitor below in colloquy with her maid in the kitchen, and then the maid came in to ask if she should say the ladies were at home. "Oh, certainly," said

Mrs. Pasmer, with a caressing politeness that anticipated the tone she meant to use with Maverick and his friend. "Were you going, Alice? Better stay. It would be awkward sending out for you. You look well enough."

"Well!"

The young men came in, Maverick with his nervous laugh first, and then Boardman with his twinkling black eyes, and his main-force self-possession.

"We couldn't go away as far as New London without coming to see whether you had really survived Class Day," said the former, addressing his solicitude to Mrs. Pasmer. "I tried to find out from, Mrs. Saintsbury, but she was very noncommittal." He laughed again, and shook hands with Alice, whom he now included in his inquiry.

"I'm glad she was," said Mrs. Pasmer--inwardly wondering what he meant by going to New London--"if it sent you to ask in person." She made them sit down; and she made as little as possible of the young ceremony they threw into the transaction. To be cosy, to be at ease instantly, was Mrs. Pasmer's way. "We've not only survived, we've taken a new lease of life from Class Day. I'd forgotten how charming it always was. Or perhaps it didn't use to be so charming? I don't believe they have anything like it in Europe. Is it always so brilliant?"

"I don't know," said Maverick. "I really believe it was rather a nice one."

"Oh, we were both enraptured," cried Mrs. Pasmer.

Alice added a quiet "Yes, indeed," and her mother went on--

"And we thought the Beck Hall spread was the crowning glory of the whole affair. We owe ever so much to your kindness."

"Oh, not at all," said Maverick.

"But we were talking afterward, Alice and I, about the sudden transformation of all that disheveled crew around the Tree into the imposing swells--may I say howling swells?--"

"Yes, do say 'howling,' Mrs. Pasmer!" implored the young man.

"--whom we met afterward at the spread," she concluded. "How did you manage it all? Mr. Irving in the 'Lyons Mail' was nothing to it. We thought we had walked directly over from the Tree; and there you were, all ready to receive us, in immaculate evening dress."

"It was pretty quick work," modestly admitted the young man. "Could you recognise any one in that hurly-burly round the Tree?"

"We didn't till you rose, like a statue of Victory, and began grabbing

for the spoils from the heads and shoulders of your friends. Who was your pedestal?"

Mavering put his hand on his friend's broad shoulder, and gave him a playful push.

Boardman turned up his little black eyes at him, with a funny gleam in them.

"Poor Mr. Boardman!" said Mrs. Pasmer.

"It didn't hurt him a bit," said Mavering, pushing him. "He liked it."

"Of course he did," said Mrs. Pasmer, implying, in flattery of Mavering, that Boardman might be glad of the distinction; and now Boardman looked as if he were not. She began to get away in adding, "But I wonder you don't kill each other."

"Oh, we're not so easily killed," said Mavering.

"And what a fairy scene it was at the spread!" said Mrs. Pasmer, turning to Boardman. She had already talked its splendours over with Mavering the same evening. "I thought we should never get out of the Hall; but when we did get out of the window upon that tapestried platform, and down on the tennis-ground, with Turkey rugs to hide the bare spots in it--" She stopped as people do when it is better to leave the effect to the listener's imagination.

"Yes, I think it was rather nice," said Boardman.

"Nice?" repeated Mrs. Pasmer; and she looked at Mavering. "Is that the famous Harvard Indifferentism?"

"No, no, Mrs. Pasmer! It's just his personal envy. He wasn't in the spread, and of course he doesn't like to hear any one praise it. Go on!" They all laughed.

"Well, even Mr. Boardman will admit," said Mrs. Pasmer; "that nothing could have been prettier than that pavilion at the bottom of the lawn, and the little tables scattered about over it, and all those charming young creatures under that lovely evening sky."

"Ah! Even Boardman can't deny that. We did have the nicest crowd; didn't we?"

"Well," said Mrs. Pasmer, playfully checking herself in a ready adhesion, "that depends a good deal upon where Mr. Boardman's spread was."

"Thank you," said Boardman.

"He wasn't spreading anywhere," cried his friend. "Except himself--he was spreading himself everywhere."

"Then I think I should prefer to remain neutral," said Mrs. Pasmer, with a mock prudence which pleased the young men. In the midst of the pleasure she was giving and feeling she was all the time aware that her daughter had contributed but one remark to the conversation, and that she must be seeming very stiff and cold. She wondered what that meant, and whether she disliked this little Mr. Boardman, or whether she was again trying to punish Mr. Maverick for something, and, if so, what it was. Had he offended her in some way the other day? At any rate, she had no right to show it. She longed for some chance to scold the girl, and tell her that it would not do, and make her talk. Mr. Maverick was merely a friendly acquaintance, and there could be no question of anything personal. She forgot that between young people the social affair is always trembling to the personal affair.

In the little pause which these reflections gave her mother, the girl struck in, with the coolness that always astonished Mrs. Pasmer, and as if she had been merely waiting till some phase of the talk interested her.

"Are many of the students going to the race?" she asked Boardman.

"Yes; nearly everybody. That is--"

"The race?" queried Mrs. Pasmer.

Yes, at New London," Maverick broke in. "Don't you know? The University race--Harvard and Yale."

"Oh--oh yes," cried Mrs. Pasmer, wondering how her daughter should know about the race, and she not. "Had they talked it over together on Class Day?" she asked herself. She felt herself, in spite of her efforts to keep even with them; left behind and left out, as later age must be distanced and excluded by youth. "Are you gentlemen going to row?" she asked Maverick.

"No; they've ruled the tubs out this time; and we should send anything else to the bottom."

Mrs. Pasmer perceived that he was joking, but also that they were not of the crew; and she said that if that was the case they should not go.

"Oh, don't let that keep you away! Aren't you going? I hoped you were going," continued the young man, speaking with his eyes on Mrs. Pasmer, but with his mind, as she could see by his eyes, on her daughter.

"No, no."

"Oh, do go, Mrs. Pasmer!" he urged: "I wish you'd go along to chaperon us."

Mrs. Pasmer accepted the notion with amusement. "I should think you might look after each other. At any rate, I think I must trust you to Mr. Boardman this time."

"Yes; but he's going on business," persisted Maving, as if for the pleasure he found in fencing with the air, "and he can't look after me."

"On business?" said Mrs. Pasmer, dropping her outspread fan on her lap, incredulously.

"Yes; he's going into journalism--he's gone into it," laughed Maving; "and he's going down to report the race for the 'Events'."

"Really!" asked Mrs. Pasmer, with a glance at Boardman, whose droll embarrassment did not contradict his friend's words. "How splendid!" she cried. "I had, heard that a great many Harvard men were taking up journalism. I'm so glad of it! It will do everything to elevate its tone."

Boardman seemed to suffer under these expectations a little, and he stole a glance of comical menace at his friend.

"Yes," said Maving; "you'll see a very different tone about the fires, and the fights, and the distressing accidents, in the 'Events' after this."

"What does he mean?" she asked Boardman, giving him unavoidably the advantage of the caressing manner which was in her mind for Maving.

"Well, you see," said Boardman, "we have to begin pretty low down."

"Oh, but all departments of our press need reforming, don't they?" she inquired consolingly. "One hears such shocking things about our papers abroad. I'm sure that the more Harvard men go into them the better. And how splendid it is to have them going into politics the way they are! They're going into politics too, aren't they?" She looked from one young man to the other with an idea that she was perhaps shooting rather wild, and an amiable willingness to be laughed at if she were. "Why don't you go into politics, Mr. Maving?"

"Well, the fact is--"

"So many of the young University men do in England," said Mrs. Pasmer, fortifying her position.

"Well, you see, they haven't got such a complete machine in England--"

"Oh yes, that dreadful machine!" sighed Mrs. Pasmer, who had heard of it, but did not know in the least what it was.

"Do you think the Harvard crew will beat this time?" Alice asked of Boardman.

"Well, to tell you the truth--"

"Oh, but you must never believe him when he begins that way!" cried

Maving. "To be sure they will beat. And you ought to be there to see it. Now, why won't you come, Mrs. Pasmer?" he pleaded, turning to her mother.

"Oh, I'm afraid we must be getting away from Boston by that time. It's very tiresome, but there seems to be nobody left; and one can't stay quite alone, even if you're sick of moving about. Have you ever been--we think of going there--to Campobello?"

"No; but I hear that it's charming, there. I had a friend who was there last year, and he said it was charming. The only trouble is it's so far. You're pretty well on the way to Europe when you get there. You know it's all hotel life?"

"Yes. It's quite a new place, isn't it?"

"Well, it's been opened up several years. And they say it isn't like the hotel life anywhere else; it's charming. And there's the very nicest class of people."

"Very nice Philadelphia people, I hear," said Mrs. Pasmer; "and Baltimore. Don't you think it's well;" she asked deferentially, and under correction, if she were hazarding too much, "to see somebody besides Boston people sometimes--if they're nice? That seems to be one of the great advantages of living abroad."

"Oh, I think there are nice people everywhere," said the young man, with the bold expansion of youth.

"Yes," sighed Mrs. Pasmer. "We saw two such delightful young people coming in and out of the hotel in Rome. We were sure they were English. And they were from Chicago! But there are not many Western people at Campobello, are there?"

"I really don't know," said Maving. "How is it, Boardman? Do many of your people go there?"

"You know you do make it so frightfully expensive with your money," said Mrs. Pasmer, explaining with a prompt effect of having known all along that Boardman was from the West, "You drive us poor people all away."

"I don't think my money would do it," said Boardman quietly.

"Oh, you wait till you're a Syndicate Correspondent," said Maving, putting his hand on his friend's shoulder, and rising by aid of it. He left Mrs. Pasmer to fill the chasm that had so suddenly yawned between her and Boardman; and while she tumbled into every sort of flowery friendliness and compliment, telling him she should look out for his account of the race with the greatest interest, and expressing the hope that he would get as far as Campobello during the summer, Maving found some minutes for talk with Alice. He was graver with her--far graver than with her mother--not only because she was a more serious nature, but because they were both young, and youth is not free with youth except by

slow and cautious degrees. In that little space of time they talked of pictures, 'a propos' of some on the wall, and of books, because of those on the table.

"Oh yes," said Mrs. Pasmer when they paused, and she felt that her piece of difficult engineering had been quite successful, "Mrs. Saintsbury was telling me what a wonderful connoisseur of etchings your father is."

"I believe he does know something about them," said the young man modestly.

"And he's gone back already?"

"Oh yes. He never stays long away from my mother. I shall be going home myself as soon as I get back from the race."

"And shall you spend the summer there?"

"Part of it. I always like to do that."

"Perhaps when you get away you'll come as far as Campobello--with Mr. Boardman," she added.

"Has Boardman promised to go?" laughed Maverick. "He will promise anything. Well, I'll come to Campobello if you'll come to New London. Do come, Mrs. Pasmer!"

The mother stood watching the two young men from the window as they made their way across the square together. She had now, for some reason; no apparent scruple in being seen to do so.

"How ridiculous that stout little Mr. Boardman is with him!" said Mrs. Pasmer. "He hardly comes up to his shoulder. Why in the world should he have brought him?"

"I thought he was very pleasant," said the girl.

"Yes, yes, of course. And I suppose he'd have felt that it was rather pointed coming alone."

"Pointed?"

"Young men are so queer! Did you like that kind of collar he had on?"

"I didn't notice it."

"So very, very high."

"I suppose he has rather a long neck."

"Well, what did you think of his urging us to go to the race? Do you think he meant it? Do you think he intended it for an invitation?"

"I don't think he meant anything; or, if he did, I think he didn't know what."

"Yes," said Mrs. Pasmers vaguely; "that must be what Mrs. Saintsbury meant by the artistic temperament."

"I like people to be sincere, and not to say things they don't mean, or don't know whether they mean or not," said Alice.

"Yes, of course, that's the best way," admitted Mrs. Pasmers. "It's the only way," she added, as if it were her own invariable practice. Then she added further, "I wonder what he did mean?"

She began to yawn, for after her simulation of vivid interest in them the visit of the young men had fatigued her. In the midst of her yawn her daughter went out of the room, with an impatient gesture, and she suspended the yawn long enough to smile, and then finished it.

XI.

After first going to the Owen, at Campobello, the Pasmers took rooms at the Ty'n-y-Coed, which is so much gayer, even if it is not so characteristic of the old Welsh Admiral's baronial possession of the island. It is characteristic enough, and perched on its bluff overlooking the bay, or whatever the body of water is, it sees a score of pretty isles and long reaches of mainland coast, with a white marble effect of white-painted wooden Eastport, nestled in the wide lap of the shore, in apparent luxury and apparent innocence of smuggling and the manufacture of herring sardines. The waters that wrap the island in morning and evening fog temper the air of the latitude to a Newport softness in summer, with a sort of inner coolness that is peculiarly delicious, lulling the day with long calms and light breezes, and after nightfall commonly sending a stiff gale to try the stops of the hotel's gables and casements, and to make the cheerful blaze on its public hearths acceptable. Once or twice a day the Eastport ferry-boat arrives, with passengers from the southward, at a floating wharf that sinks or swims half a hundred feet on the mighty tides of the Northeast; but all night long the island is shut up to its own memories and devices. The pretty romance of the old sailor who left England to become a sort of feudal seigneur here, with a holding of the entire island, and its fisher-folk for his villeins, forms a picturesque background for the aesthetic leisure and society in the three hotels remembering him and his language in their names, and housing with a few cottages all the sojourners on the island. By day the broad hotel piazzas shelter such of the guests as prefer to let others make their excursions into the heart of the island, and around its rocky, sea-beaten borders; and at night, when the falling mists have brought the early dark, and from lighthouse to lighthouse the fog-horns moan and low to one another, the piazzas cede to the corridors and the parlours and smoking-rooms. The life does not greatly differ from other seaside hotel life on the surface, and if one were to make distinctions one would perhaps begin by saying that hotel

society there has much of the tone of cottage society elsewhere, with a little more accessibility. As the reader doubtless knows, the great mass of Boston society, thoughtful of its own weight and bulk, transports itself down the North Shore scarcely further than Manchester at the furthest; but there are more courageous or more detachable spirits who venture into more distant regions. These contribute somewhat toward peopling Bar Harbour in the summer, but they scarcely characterise it in any degree; while at Campobello they settle in little daring colonies, whose self-reliance will enlist the admiration of the sympathetic observer. They do not refuse the knowledge of other colonies of other stirps and origins, and they even combine in temporary alliance with them. But, after all, Boston speaks one language, and New York another, and Washington a third, and though the several dialects have only slight differences of inflection, their moral accents render each a little difficult for the others. In fact every society is repellant of strangers in the degree that it is sufficient to itself, and is incurious concerning the rest of the world. If it has not the elements of self-satisfaction in it, if it is uninformed and new and restless, it is more hospitable than an older society which has a sense of merit founded upon historical documents, and need no longer go out of itself for comparisons of any sort, knowing that if it seeks anything better it will probably be disappointed. The natural man, the savage, is as indifferent to others as the exclusive, and those who accuse the coldness of the Bostonians, and their reluctant or repellant behaviour toward unknown people, accuse not only civilisation, but nature itself.

That love of independence which is notable in us even in our most acquiescent phases at home is perhaps what brings these cultivated and agreeable people so far away, where they can achieve a sort of sylvan urbanity without responsibility, and without that measuring of purses which attends the summer display elsewhere. At Campobello one might be poor with almost as little shame as in Cambridge if one were cultivated. Mrs. Pasmer, who seldom failed of doing just the right thing for herself, had promptly divined the advantages of Campobello for her family. She knew, by dint of a little inquiry, and from the volunteer information of enthusiasts who had been there the summer before, just who was likely to be there during the summer with which she now found herself confronted. Campobello being yet a new thing, it was not open to the objection that you were sure to meet such and such people, more or less common or disagreeable, there; whatever happened, it could be lightly handled in the retrospect as the adventure of a partial and fragmentary summer when really she hardly cared where they went.

They did not get away from Boston before the middle of July, and after the solitude they left behind them there, the Owen at first seemed very gay. But when they had once or twice compared it with the Ty'n-y-Coed, riding to and fro in the barge which formed the connecting link with the Saturday evening hops of the latter hotel, Mrs. Pasmer decided that, from Alice's point of view, they had made a mistake, and she repaired it without delay. The young people were, in fact, all at the Ty'n-y-Coed, and though she found the Owen perfectly satisfying for herself and Mr. Pasmer, she was willing to make the sacrifice of going to a new place: it was not a great sacrifice for one who had dwelt so long in tents.

There were scarcely any young girls at the Owen, and no young men, of course. Even at the Ty'n-y-Coed, where young girls abounded, it would not be right to pretend that there were young men enough. Nowhere, perhaps, except at Bar Harbour, is the long-lost balance of the sexes trimmed in New England; and even there the observer, abstractly delighting in the young girls and their dresses at that grand love-exchange of Rodick's, must question whether the adjustment is perfectly accurate.

At Campobello there were not more than half enough young men, and there was not enough flirtation to affect the prevailing social mood of the place: an unfevered, expectationless tranquillity, in which to-day is like yesterday, and to-morrow cannot be different. It is a quiet of light reading, and slowly, brokenly murmured, contented gossip for the ladies, of old newspapers and old stories and luxuriously meditated cigars for the men, with occasional combinations for a steam-launch cruise among the eddies and islands of the nearer waters, or a voyage further off in the Bay of Fundy to the Grand Menan, and a return for the late dinner which marks the high civilisation of Campobello, and then an evening of more reading and gossip and cigars, while the night wind whistles outside, and the brawl and crash of the balls among the tenpins comes softened from the distant alleys. There are pleasant walks, which people seldom take, in many directions, and there are drives and bridle-paths all through the dense, sad, Northern woods which still savagely clothe the greater part of the island to its further shores, where there are shelves and plateaus of rock incomparable for picnicking.

One need ask nothing better, in fact, than to stroll down the sylvan road that leads to the Owen, past the little fishing-village with its sheds for curing herring; and the pale blue smoke and appetising savour escaping from them; and past the little chapel with which the old Admiral attested his love of the Established rite. On this road you may sometimes meet a little English bishop from the Provinces, in his apron and knee-breeches; and there is a certain bridge over a narrow estuary, where in the shallow land-locked pools of the deeply ebbing tide you may throw stones at sculpin, and witness the admirable indifference of those fish to human cruelty and folly. In the middle distance you will see a group of herring weirs, which with their coronals of tufted saplings form the very most picturesque aspect of any fishing industry. You may, now and then find an artist at this point, who, crouched over his easel, or hers, seems to agree with you about the village and the weirs.

But Alice Pasmer cared little more for such things than her mother did, and Mrs. Pasmer regarded Nature in all her aspects simply as an adjunct of society, or an occasional feature of the entourage. The girl had no such worldly feeling about it, but she found slight sympathy in the moods of earth and sky with her peculiar temperament. This temperament, whose recondite origin had almost wholly broken up Mrs. Pasmer's faith in heredity, was like other temperaments, not always in evidence, and Alice was variously regarded as cold, of shy, or proud, or insipid, by the various other temperaments brought in contact with her own. She was apt to be liked because she was as careful of others as she was of herself,

and she never was childishly greedy about such admiration as she won, as girls often are, perhaps because she did not care for it. Up to this time it is doubtful if her heart had been touched even by the fancies that shake the surface of the soul of youth, and perhaps it was for this reason that her seriousness at first fretted Mrs. Pasmer with a vague anxiety for her future.

Mrs. Pasmer herself remained inalienably Unitarian, but she was aware of the prodigious-growth which the Church had been making in society, and when Alice showed her inclination for it, she felt that it was not at all as if she had developed a taste for orthodoxy; when finally it did not seem likely to go too far, it amused Mrs. Pasmer that her daughter should have taken so intensely to the Anglican rite.

In the hotel it attached to her by a common interest several of the ladies who had seen her earnestly responsive at the little Owen chapel--ladies left to that affectional solitude which awaits long widowhood through the death or marriage of children; and other ladies, younger, but yet beginning to grow old with touching courage. Alice was especially a favourite with the three or four who represented their class and condition at the Ty'n-y Coed, and who read the best books read there, and had the gentlest manners. There was a tacit agreement among these ladies, who could not help seeing the difference in the temperaments of the mother and daughter, that Mrs. Pasmer did not understand Alice; but probably there were very few people except herself whom Mrs. Pasmer did not understand quite well. She understood these ladies and their compassion for Alice, and she did not in the least resent it. She was willing that people should like Alice for any reason they chose, if they did not go too far. With her little flutter of futile deceits, her irreverence for every form of human worth and her trust in a providence which had seldom failed her, she smiled at the cult of Alice's friends, as she did at the girl's seriousness, which also she felt herself able to keep from going too far.

While she did not object to the sympathy of these ladies, whatever inspired it, she encouraged another intimacy which grew up contemporaneously with theirs, and which was frankly secular and practical, though the girl who attached herself to Alice with one of those instant passions of girlhood was also in every exterior observance a strict and diligent Churchwoman. The difference was through the difference of Boston and New York in everything: the difference between idealising and the realising tendency. The elderly and middle-aged Boston women who liked Alice had been touched by something high yet sad in the beauty of her face at church; the New York girl promptly owned that she had liked her effect the first Sunday she saw her there, and she knew in a minute she never got those things on this side; her obeisances and genuflections throughout the service, much more profound and punctilious than those of any one else there, had apparently not prevented her from making a thorough study of Alice's costume and a correct conjecture as to its authorship.

Miss Anderson, who claimed a collateral Dutch ancestry by the Van Hook, tucked in between her non-committal family name and the Julia given her

in christening, was of the ordinary slender make of American girlhood, with dull blond hair, and a dull blond complexion, which would have left her face uninteresting if it had not been for the caprice of her nose in suddenly changing from the ordinary American regularity, after getting over its bridge, and turning out distinctly 'retrouse'. This gave her profile animation and character; you could not expect a girl with that nose to be either irresolute or commonplace, and for good or for ill Miss Anderson was decided and original. She carried her figure, which was no great things of a figure as to height, with vigorous erectness; she walked with long strides, knocking her skirts into fine eddies and tangles as she went; and she spoke in a bold, deep voice, with tones like a man in it, all the more amusing and fascinating because of the perfectly feminine eyes with which she looked at you, and the nervous, feminine gestures which she used while she spoke.

She took Mrs. Pasmer into her confidence with regard to Alice at an early stage of their acquaintance, which from the first had a patronising or rather protecting quality in it; if she owned herself less fine, she knew herself shrewder, and more capable of coping with actualities.

"I think she's moybid, Alice is," she said. "She isn't moybid in the usual sense of the word, but she expects more of herself and of the world generally than anybody's going to get out of it. She thinks she's going to get as much as she gives, and that's a great mistake, Mrs. Pasmer," she said, with that peculiar liquefaction of the canine letter which the New-Yorkers alone have the trick of, and which it would be tiresome and futile to try to represent throughout her talk.

"Oh yes, I quite agree with you," said Mrs. Pasmer, deep in her throat, and reserving deeper still her enjoyment of this early wisdom of Miss Anderson's.

"Now, even at church--she carries the same spirit into the church. She doesn't make allowance for human nature, and the church does."

"Oh, certainly!" Mrs. Pasmer agreed.

"She isn't like a person that's been brought up in the church. It's more like the old Puritan spirit.--Excuse me, Mrs. Pasmer!"

"Yes, indeed! Say anything you like about the Puritans!" said Mrs. Pasmer, delighted that, as a Bostonian, she should be thought to care for them.

"I always forget that you're a Bostonian," Miss Anderson apologized.

"Oh, thank you!" cried Mrs. Pasmer.

"I'm going to try to make her like other girls," continued Miss Anderson.

"Do," said Alice's mother, with the effect of wishing her joy of the undertaking.

"If there were a few young men about, a little over seventeen and a little under fifty, it would be easier," said Miss Anderson thoughtfully. "But how are you going to make a girl like other girls when there are no young men?"

"That's very true," said Mrs. Pasmer, with an interest which she of course did her best to make impersonal. "Do you think there will be more, later on?"

"They will have to Huey up if they are comin'," said Miss Anderson. "It's the middle of August now, and the hotel closes the second week in September."

"Yes," said Mrs. Pasmer, vaguely looking at Alice. She had just appeared over the brow of the precipice, along whose face the arrivals and departures by the ferry-boat at Campobello obliquely ascend and descend.

She came walking swiftly toward the hotel, and, for her, so excitedly that Mrs. Pasmer involuntarily rose and went to meet her at the top of the broad hotel steps.

"What is it, Alice?"

"Oh, nothing! I thought I saw Mr. Munt coming off the boat."

"Mr. Munt?"

"Yes." She would not stay for further question.

Her mother looked after her with the edge of her fan over her mouth till she disappeared in the depths of the hotel corridor; then she sat down near the steps, and chatted with some half-grown boys lounging on the balustrade, and waited for Munt to come up over the brink of the precipice. Dan Mavering came with him, running forward with a polite eagerness at sight of Mrs. Pasmer. She distributed a skillful astonishment equally between the two men she had equally expected to see, and was extremely cordial with them, not only because she was pleased with them, but because she was still more pleased with her daughter's being, after all, like other girls, when it came to essentials.

XII.

Alice came down to lunch in a dress which reconciled the seaside and the drawing-room in an effect entirely satisfactory to her mother, and gave her hand to both the gentlemen without the affectation of surprise at seeing either.

"I saw Mr. Munt coning up from the boat," she said in answer to Mavering's demand for some sort of astonishment from her. "I wasn't certain that it was you."

Mrs. Pasher, whose pretences had been all given away by this simple confession, did not resent it, she was so much pleased with her daughter's evident excitement at the young man's having come. Without being conscious of it, perhaps, Alice prettily assumed the part of hostess from the moment of their meeting, and did the honours of the hotel with a tacit implication of knowing that he had come to see her there. They had only met twice, but now, the third time, meeting after a little separation, their manner toward each other was as if their acquaintance had been making progress in the interval. She took him about quite as if he had joined their family party, and introduced him to Miss Anderson and to all her particular friends, for each of whom, within five minutes after his presentation, he contrived to do some winning service. She introduced him to her father, whom he treated with deep respect and said "Sir" to. She showed him the bowling alley, and began to play tennis with him.

Her mother, sitting with John Munt on the piazza, followed these polite attentions to Maverick with humorous satisfaction, which was qualified as they went on.

"Alice," she said to her, at a chance which offered itself during the evening, and then she hesitated for the right word.

"Well; mamma?" said the girl impatiently, stopping on her way to walk up and down the piazza with Maverick; she had run in to get a wrap and a Tam-o'-Shanter cap.

"Don't--overdo--the honours."

"What do you mean, mamma?" asked the girl; dropping her arms before her, and letting the shawl trail on the floor.

"Don't you think he was very kind to us on Class Day?"

Her mother laughed. "But every one mayn't know it's gratitude."

Alice went out, but she came back in a little while, and went up to her room without speaking to any one.

The fits of elation and depression with which this first day passed for her succeeded one another during Maverick's stay. He did not need Alice's chaperonage long. By the next morning he seemed to know and to like everybody in the hotel, where he enjoyed a general favour which at that moment had no exceptions. In the afternoon he began to organise excursions and amusements with the help of Miss Anderson.

The plans all referred to Alice, who accepted and approved with an authority which every one tacitly admitted, just as every one recognised that Maverick had come to Campobello because she was there. Such a phase is perhaps the prettiest in the history of a love affair. All is yet in solution; nothing has been precipitated in word or fact. The parties to it even reserve a final construction of what they themselves say or do;

they will not own to their hearts that they mean exactly this or that. It is this phase which in its perfect freedom is the most American of all; under other conditions it is an instant, perceptible or imperceptible; under ours it is a distinct stage, unhurried by any outside influences.

The nearest approach to a definition of the situation was in a walk between Maverick and Mrs. Pasmer, and this talk, too, light and brief, might have had no such intention as her fancy assigned his part of it.

She recurred to something that had been said on Class Day about his taking up the law immediately, or going abroad first for a year.

"Oh, I've abandoned Europe altogether for the present," he said laughing. "And I don't know but I may go back on the law too."

"Indeed! Then you are going to be an artist?"

"Oh no; not so bad as that. It isn't settled yet, and I'm off here to think it over a while before the law school opens in September. My father wants me to go into his business and turn my powers to account in designing wall-papers."

"Oh, how very interesting!" At the same time Mrs. Pasmer ran over the whole field of her acquaintance without finding another wall-paper maker in it. But she remembered what Mrs. Saintsbury had said: it was manufacturing. This reminded her to ask if he had seen the Saintsburys lately, and he said, No; he believed they were still in Cambridge, though.

"And we shall actually see a young man," she said finally, "in the act of deciding his own destiny!"

He laughed for pleasure in her persiflage. "Yes; only don't give me away. Nobody else knows it."

"Oh no, indeed. Too much flattered, Mr. Maverick. Shall you let me know when you've decided? I shall be dying to know, and I shall be too high-minded to ask."

It was not then too late to adapt 'Pinafore' to any exigency of life, and Maverick said, "You will learn from the expression of my eyes."

XIII.

The witnesses of Maverick's successful efforts to make everybody like him were interested in his differentiation of the attentions he offered every age and sex from those he paid Alice. But while they all agreed that there never was a sweeter fellow, they would have been puzzled to say in just what this difference consisted, and much as they liked him, the

ladies of her cult were not quite satisfied with him till they decided that it was marked by an anxiety, a timidity, which was perfectly fascinating in a man so far from bashfulness as he. That is, he did nice things for others without asking; but with her there was always an explicit pause, and an implicit prayer and permission, first. Upon this condition they consented to the glamour which he had for her, and which was evident to every one probably but him.

Once agreeing that no one was good enough for Alice Pasmer, whose qualities they felt that only women could really appreciate, they were interested to see how near Maverick could come to being good enough; and as the drama played itself before their eyes, they pleased themselves in analysing its hero.

"He is not bashful, certainly," said one of a little group who sat midway of the piazza while Alice and Maverick walked up and down together. "But don't you think he's modest? There's that difference, you know."

The lady addressed waited so long before answering that the young couple came abreast of the group, and then she had to wait till they were out of hearing. "Yes," she said then, with a tender, sighing thoughtfulness, "I've felt that in him. And really think he is a very loveable nature. The only question would be whether he wasn't too loveable."

"Yes," said the first lady, with the same kind of suspiration, "I know what you mean. And I suppose they ought to be something more alike in disposition."

"Or sympathies?" suggested the other.

"Yes, or sympathies."

A third lady laughed a little. "Mr. Maverick has so many sympathies that he ought to be like her in some of them."

"Do you mean that he's too sympathetic--that he isn't sincere?" asked the first--a single lady of forty-nine, a Miss Cotton, who had a little knot of conscience between her pretty eyebrows, tied there by the unremitting effort of half a century to do and say exactly the truth, and to find it out.

Mrs. Brinkley, whom she addressed, was of that obesity which seems often to incline people to sarcasm. "No, I don't think he's insincere. I think he always means what he says and does--Well, do you think a little more concentration of good-will would hurt him for Miss Pasmer's purpose --if she has it?"

"Yes, I see," said Miss Cotton. She waited, with her kind eyes fixed wistfully upon Alice, for the young people to approach and get by. "I wonder what the men think of him?"

"You might ask Miss Anderson," said Mrs. Brinkley.

"Oh, do you think they tell her?"

"Not that exactly," said Mrs. Brinkley, shaking with good-humoured pleasure in her joke.

"Her voice--oh yes. She and Alice are great friends, of course."

"I should think," said Mrs. Stamwell, the second speaker, "that Mr. Mavering would be jealous sometimes--till he looked twice."

"Yes," said Miss Cotton, obliged to admit the force of the remark, but feeling that Mr. Mavering had been carried out of the field of her vision by the turn of the talk. "I suppose," she continued, "that he wouldn't be so well liked by other young men as she is by other girls, do you think?"

"I don't think, as a rule," said Mrs. Brinkley, "that men are half so appreciative of one another as women are. It's most amusing to see the open scorn with which two young fellows treat each other if a pretty girl introduces them."

All the ladies joined in the laugh with which Mrs. Brinkley herself led off. But Miss Cotton stopped laughing first.

"Do you mean," she asked, "that if a gentleman were generally popular with gentlemen it would be--"

"Because he wasn't generally so with women? Something like that--if you'll leave Mr. Mavering out of the question. Oh, how very good of them!" she broke off, and all the ladies glanced at Mavering and Alice where they had stopped at the further end of the piazza, and were looking off. "Now I can probably finish before they get back here again. What I do mean, Miss Cotton, is that neither sex willingly accepts the favourites of the other."

"Yes," said Miss Cotton admissively.

"And all that saves Miss Pasher is that she has not only the qualities that women like in women, but some of the qualities that men, like in them. She's thoroughly human."

A little sensation, almost a murmur, not wholly of assent, went round that circle which had so nearly voted Alice a saint.

"In the first place, she likes to please men."

"Oh!" came from the group.

"And that makes them like her--if it doesn't go too far, as her mother says."

The ladies all laughed, recognising a common turn of phrase in Mrs. Pasher.

"I should think," said Mrs. Stamwell, "that she would believe a little in heredity if she noticed that in her daughter;" and the ladies laughed again.

"Then," Mrs. Brinkley resumed concerning Alice, "she has a very pretty face--an extremely pretty face; she has a tender voice, and she's very, very graceful--in rather an odd way; perhaps it's only a fascinating awkwardness. Then she dresses--or her mother dresses her--exquisitely." The ladies, with another sensation, admitted the perfect accuracy with which these points had been touched.

"That's what men like, what they fall in love with, what Mr. Mavering's in love with this instant. It's no use women's flattering themselves that they don't, for they do. The rest of the virtues and graces and charms are for women. If that serious girl could only know the silly things that that amiable simpleton is taken with in her, she'd--"

"Never speak to him again?" suggested Miss Cotton.

"No, I don't say that. But she would think twice before marrying him."

"And then do it," said Mrs. Stamwell pensively, with eyes that seemed looking far into the past.

"Yes, and quite right to do it," said Mrs. Brinkley. "I don't know that we should be very proud ourselves if we confessed just what caught our fancy in our husbands. For my part I shouldn't like to say how much a light hat that Mr. Brinkley happened to be wearing had to do with the matter."

The ladies broke into another laugh, and then checked themselves, so that Mrs. Pasmer, coming out of the corridor upon them, naturally thought they were laughing at her. She reflected that if she had been in their place she would have shown greater tact by not stopping just at that instant.

But she did not mind. She knew that they talked her over, but having a very good conscience, she simply talked them over in return. "Have you seen my daughter within a few minutes?" she asked.

"She was with Mr. Mavering at the end of the piazza a moment ago," said Mrs. Brinkley. "They must have just gone round the corner of the building."

"Oh," said Mrs. Pasmer. She had a novel, with her finger between its leaves, pressed against her heart, after the manner of ladies coming out on hotel piazzas. She sat down and rested it on her knee, with her hand over the top.

Miss Cotton bent forward, and Mrs. Pasmer lifted her fingers to let her see the name of the book.

"Oh yes," said Miss Cotton. "But he's so terribly pessimistic, don't you

think?"

"What is it?" asked Mrs. Brinkley.

"Fumee," said Mrs. Pasmer, laying the book title upward on her lap for every one to see.

"Oh yes," said Mrs. Brinkley, fanning herself. "Tourguenief. That man gave me the worst quarter of an hour with his 'Lisa' that I ever had."

"That's the same as the 'Nichee des Gentilshommes', isn't it?" asked Mrs. Pasmer, with the involuntary superiority of a woman who reads her Tourguenief in French.

"I don't know. I had it in English. I don't build my ships to cross the sea in, as Emerson says; I take those I find built."

"Ah! I was already on the other side," said Mrs. Pasmer softly. She added: "I must get Lisa. I like a good heart-break; don't you? If that's what gave you the bad moment."

"Heart-break? Heart-crush! Where Lavretsky comes back old to the scene of his love for Lisa, and strikes that chord on the piano--well, I simply wonder that I'm alive to recommend the book to you.

"Do you know," said Miss Cotton, very deferentially, "that your daughter always made me think of Lisa?"

"Indeed!" cried Mrs. Pasmer, not wholly pleased, but gratified that she was able to hide her displeasure. "You make me very curious."

"Oh, I doubt if you'll see more than a mere likeness of temperament," Mrs. Brinkley interfered bluntly. "All the conditions are so different. There couldn't be an American Lisa. That's the charm of these Russian tragedies. You feel that they're so perfectly true there, and so perfectly impossible here. Lavretsky would simply have got himself divorced from Varvara Pavlovna, and no clergyman could have objected to marrying him to Lisa."

"That's what I mean by his pessimism," said Miss Cotton. "He leaves you no hope. And I think that despair should never be used in a novel except for some good purpose; don't you, Mrs. Brinkley?"

"Well," said Mrs. Brinkley, "I was trying to think what good purpose despair could be put to, in a book or out of it."

"I don't think," said Mrs. Pasmer, referring to the book in her lap, "that he leaves you altogether in despair here, unless you'd rather he'd run off with Irene than married Tatiana."

"Oh, I certainly didn't wish that;" said Miss Cotton, in self-defence, as if the shot had been aimed at her.

"The book ends with a marriage; there's no denying that," said Mrs. Brinkley, with a reserve in her tone which caused Mrs. Pasmer to continue for her--

"And marriage means happiness--in a book."

"I'm not sure that it does in this case. The time would come, after Litvinof had told Tatiana everything, when she would have to ask herself, and not once only, what sort of man it really was who was willing to break his engagement and run off with another man's wife, and whether he could ever repent enough for it. She could make excuses for him, and would, but at the bottom of her heart--No, it seems to me that there, almost for the only time, Tourguenief permitted himself an amiable weakness. All that part of the book has the air of begging the question."

"But don't you see," said Miss Cotton, leaning forward in the way she had when very earnest, "that he means to show that her love is strong enough for all that?"

"But he doesn't, because it isn't. Love isn't strong enough to save people from unhappiness through each other's faults. Do you suppose that so many married people are unhappy in each other because they don't love each other? No; it's because they do love each other that their faults are such a mutual torment. If they were indifferent, they wouldn't mind each other's faults. Perhaps that's the reason why there are so many American divorces; if they didn't care, like Europeans, who don't marry for love, they could stand it."

"Then the moral is," said Mrs. Pasmer, at her lightest through the surrounding gravity, "that as all Americans marry for love, only Americans who have been very good ought to get married."

"I'm not sure that the have-been goodness is enough either," said Mrs. Brinkley, willing to push it to the absurd. "You marry a man's future as well as his past."

"Dear me! You are terribly exigeante, Mrs. Brinkley," said Mrs. Pasmer.

"One can afford to be so--in the abstract," answered Mrs. Brinkley.

They all stopped talking and looked at John Munt, who was coming toward them, and each felt a longing to lay the matter before him.

There was probably not a woman among them but had felt more, read more, and thought more than John Munt, but he was a man, and the mind of a man is the court of final appeal for the wisest women. Till some man has pronounced upon their wisdom, they do not know whether it is wisdom or not.

Munt drew up his chair, and addressed himself to the whole group through Mrs. Pasmer: "We are thinking of getting up a little picnic to-morrow."

XIV.

The day of the picnic struggled till ten o'clock to peer through the fog that wrapt it with that remote damp and coolness and that nearer drouth and warmth which some fogs have. The low pine groves hung full of it, and it gave a silvery definition to the gossamer threads running from one grass spear to another in spacious networks over the open levels of the old fields that stretch back from the bluff to the woods. At last it grew thinner, somewhere over the bay; then you could see the smooth water through it; then it drifted off in ragged fringes before a light breeze: when you looked landward again it was all gone there, and seaward it had gathered itself in a low, dun bank along the horizon. It was the kind of fog that people interested in Campobello admitted as apt to be common there, but claimed as a kind of local virtue when it began to break away. They said that it was a very dry fog, not like Newport, and asked you to notice that it did not wet you at all.

Four or five carriages, driven by the gentlemen of the party, held the picnic, which was destined for that beautiful cove on the Bay of Fundy where the red granite ledges, smooth-washed by ages of storm and sun, lend themselves to such festivities as if they had been artificially fashioned into shelves and tables. The whole place is yet so new to men that this haunt has not acquired that air of repulsive custom which the egg shells and broken bottles and sardine boxes of many seasons give. Or perhaps the winter tempests heap the tides of the bay over the ledge, and wash it clean of these vulgar traces of human resort, and enable it to offer as fresh a welcome to the picnics of each successive summer as if there had never been a picnic in that place before.

This was the sense that Maverick professed to have received from it, when he jumped out of the beach wagon in which he had preceded the other carriages through the weird forest lying between the fringe of farm fields and fishing-villages on the western shore of the island and these lonely coasts of the bay. As far as the signs of settled human habitation last, the road is the good hard country road of New England, climbing steep little hills, and presently leading through long tracts of woodland. But at a certain point beyond the furthest cottage you leave it, and plunge deep into the heart of the forest, vaguely traversed by the wheel-path carried through since the island was opened to summer sojourn. Road you can hardly call it, remembering its curious pauses and hesitations when confronted with stretches of marshy ground, and its staggering progress over the thick stubble of saplings through which it is cut. The progress of teams over it is slow, but there is such joy of wildness in the solitudes it penetrates that; if the horses had any gait slower than a walk, one might still wish to stay them. It is a Northern forest, with the air of having sprang quickly up in the fierce heat and haste of the Northern summers. The small firs are set almost as dense as rye in a field, and in their struggle to the light they have choked one another so that there is a strange blight of death and defeat on all that vigour of life. Few of the trees have won any lofty growth; they seem to

have died and fallen when they were about to outstrip the others in size, and from their decay a new sylvan generation riots rankly upward. The surface of the ground is thinly clothed with a deciduous undergrowth, above which are the bare, spare stems of the evergreens, and then their limbs thrusting into one another in a sombre tangle, with locks of long yellowish-white moss, like the grey pendants of the Southern pines, dripping from them and draining their brief life.

In such a place you must surrender yourself to its influences, profoundly yet vaguely melancholy, or you must resist them with whatever gaiety is in you, or may be conjured out of others. It was conceded that Mavering was the life of the party, as the phrase goes. His light-heartedness, as kindly and sympathetic as it was inexhaustible, served to carry them over the worst places in the road of itself. He jumped down and ran back, when he had passed a bad bit, to see if the others were getting through safely; the least interesting of the party had some proof of his impartial friendliness; he promised an early and triumphant emergence from all difficulties; he started singing, and sacrificed himself in several tunes, for he could not sing well; his laugh seemed to be always coming back to Alice, where she rode late in the little procession; several times, with the deference which he delicately qualified for her, he came himself to see if he could not do something for her.

"Miss Pasmers," croaked her friend Miss Anderson, who always began in that ceremonious way with her, and got to calling her Alice further along in the conversation, "if you don't drop something for that poor fellow to run back two or three miles and get, pretty soon, I'll do it myself. It's perfectly disheartening to see his disappointment when you tell him there's nothing to be done."

"He seems to get over it," said Alice evasively. She smiled with pleasure in Miss Anderson's impeachment, however.

"Oh, he keeps coming, if that's what you mean. But do drop an umbrella, or a rubber, or something, next time, just to show a proper appreciation."

But Mavering did not come any more. Just before they got to the cove, Miss Anderson leaned over again to whisper in Alice's ear, "I told you he was huyt. Now you must be very good to him the rest of the time."

Upon theory a girl of Alice Pasmers's reserve ought to have resented this intervention, but it is not probable she did. She flushed a little, but not with offence, apparently; and she was kinder to Mavering, and let him do everything for her that he could invent in transferring the things from the wagons to the rocks.

The party gave a gaiety to the wild place which accented its proper charm, as they scattered themselves over the ledges on the bright shawls spread upon the level spaces. On either hand craggy bluffs hemmed the cove in, but below the ledge it had a pebbly beach strewn with drift-wood, and the Bay of Fundy gloomed before it with small fishing craft tipping and tilting on the swell in the foreground, and dim sail melting

into the dun fog bank at the horizon's edge.

The elder ladies of the party stood up, or stretched themselves on the shawls, as they found this or that posture more restful after their long drive; one, who was skilled in making coffee, had taken possession of the pot, and was demanding fire and water for it. The men scattered themselves over the beach, and brought her drift enough to roast an ox; two of them fetched water from the spring at the back of the ledge, whither they then carried the bottles of ale to cool in its thrilling pool. Each after his or her fashion symbolised a return to nature by some act or word of self-abandon.

"You ought to have brought heavier shoes," said Mrs. Pasmer, with a serious glance at her daughter's feet. "Well, never mind," she added. "It doesn't matter if you do spoil them."

"Really," cried Mrs Brinkley, casting her sandals from her, "I will not be enslaved to rubbers in such a sylvan scene as this, at any rate."

"Look at Mrs. Stamwell!" said Miss Cotton. "She's actually taken her hat off."

Mrs. Stamwell had not only gone to this extreme, but had tied a lightly fluttering handkerchief round her hair. She said she should certainly not put on that heavy thing again till she got in sight of civilisation.

At these words Miss Cotton boldly drew off her gloves, and put them in her pocket.

The young girls, slim in their blues flannel skirts and their broad white canvas belts, went and came over the rocks. There were some children in the party, who were allowed to scream uninterruptedly in the games which they began to play as soon as they found their feet after getting out of the wagons.

Some of the gentlemen drove a stake into the beach, and threw stones at it, to see which could knock off the pebble balanced on its top. Several of the ladies joined them in the sport, and shrieked and laughed when they made wild shots with the missiles the men politely gathered for them.

Alice had remained with Mavington to help the hostess of the picnic lay the tables, but her mother had followed those who went down to the beach. At first Mrs. Pasmer looked on at the practice of the stone-throwers with disapproval; but suddenly she let herself go in this, as she did in other matters that her judgment condemned, and began to throw stones herself; she became excited, and made the wildest shots of any, accepting missiles right and left, and making herself dangerous to everybody within a wide circle. A gentleman who had fallen a victim to her skill said, "Just wait, Mrs. Pasmer, till I get in front of the stake."

The men became seriously interested, and worked themselves red and hot; the ladies soon gave it up, and sat down on the sand and began to talk.

They all owned themselves hungry, and from time to time they looked up anxiously at the preparations for lunch on the ledge, where white napkins were spread, with bottles at the four corners to keep them from blowing away. This use of the bottles was considered very amusing; the ladies tried to make jokes about it, and the desire to be funny spread to certain of the men who had quietly left off throwing at the stake because they had wrenched their shoulders; they succeeded in being merry. They said they thought that coffee took a long time to boil.

A lull of expectation fell upon all; even Maverick sat down on the rocks near the fire, and was at rest a few minutes, by order of Miss Anderson, who said that the sight of his activity tired her to death.

"I wonder why always boiled ham at a picnic!" said the lady who took a final plate of it from a basket. "Under the ordinary conditions, few of us can be persuaded to touch it."

"It seems to be dear to nature, and to nature's children," said Mrs. Brinkley. "Perhaps because their digestions are strong."

"Don't you wish that something could be substituted for it?" asked Miss Cotton.

"There have been efforts to replace it with chicken and tongue in sandwiches;" said Mrs. Brinkley; "but I think they've only measurably succeeded--about as temperance drinks have in place of the real strong waters."

"On the boat coming up," said Maverick, "we had a troupe of genuine darky minstrels. One of them sang a song about ham that rather took me--"

"Ham, good old ham!
Ham is de best ob meat;
It's always good and sweet;
You can bake it, you can boil it,
You can fry it, you can broil it--
Ham, good old ham!"

"Oh, how good!" sighed Mrs. Brinkley. "How sincere! How native! Go on, Mr. Maverick, for ever."

"I haven't the materials," said Maverick, with his laugh. "The rest was da capo. But there was another song, about a coloured lady--"

"Six foot high and eight foot round,
Holler ob her foot made a hole in de ground."

"Ah, that's an old friend," said Mrs. Brinkley. "I remember hearing of that coloured lady when I was a girl. But it's a fine flight of the imagination. What else did they sing?"

"I can't remember. But there was something they danced--to show how a rheumatic old coloured uncle dances."

He jumped nimbly up, and sketched the stiff and limping figure he had seen. It was over in a flash. He dropped down again, laughing.

"Oh, how wonderfully good!" cried Mrs. Brinkley, with frank joy. "Do it again."

"Encore! Oh, encore!" came from the people on the beach.

Mavering jumped to his feet, and burlesqued the profuse bows of an actor who refuses to repeat; he was about to drop down again amidst their wails of protest.

"No, don't sit down, Mr. Mavering," said the lady who had introduced the subject of ham. "Get some of the young ladies, and go and gather some blueberries for the dessert. There are all the necessaries of life here, but none of the luxuries."

"I'm at the service of the young ladies as an escort," said Mavering gallantly, with an infusion of joke. "Will you come and pick blueberries under my watchful eyes, Miss Pasmer?"

"They've gone to pick blueberries," called the lady through her tubed hand to the people on the beach, and the younger among them scrambled up the rocks for cups and bowls to follow them.

Mrs. Pasmer had an impulse to call her daughter back, and to make some excuse to keep her from going. She was in an access of decorum, naturally following upon her late outbreak, and it seemed a very pronounced thing for Alice to be going off into the woods with the young man; but it would have been a pronounced thing to prevent her, and so Mrs. Pasmer submitted.

"Isn't it delightful," asked Mrs. Brinkley, following them with her eyes, "to see the charm that gay young fellow has for that serious girl? She looked at him while he was dancing as if she couldn't take her eyes off him, and she followed him as if he drew her by an invisible spell. Not that spells are ever visible," she added, saving herself. "Though this one seems to be," she added further, again saving herself.

"Do you really think so?" pleaded Miss Cotton.

"Well, I say so, whatever I think. And I'm not going to be caught up on the tenter-hooks of conscience as to all my meanings, Miss Cotton. I don't know them all. But I'm not one of the Aliceolaters, you know."

"No; of course not. But shouldn't you--Don't you think it would be a great pity--She's so superior, so very uncommon in every way, that it hardly seems--Ah, I should so like to see some one really fine--not a coarse fibre in him, don't you know. Not that Mr. Mavering's coarse. But beside her he does seem so light!"

"Perhaps that's the reason she likes him."

"No, no! I can't believe that. She must see more in him than we can."

"I dare say she thinks she does. At any rate, it's a perfectly evident case on both sides; and the frank way he's followed her up here, and devoted himself to her, as if--well, not as if she were the only girl in the world, but incomparably the best--is certainly not common."

"No," sighed Miss Cotton, glad to admit it; "that's beautiful."

XV.

In the edge of the woods and the open spaces among the trees the blueberries grew larger and sweeter in the late Northern summer than a more southern sun seems to make them. They hung dense upon the low bushes, and gave them their tint through the soft grey bloom that veiled their blue. Sweet-fern in patches broke their mass here and there, and exhaled its wild perfume to the foot or skirt brushing through it.

"I don't think there's anything much prettier than these clusters; do you, Miss Pasmer?" asked Maving, as he lifted a bunch pendent from the little tree before he stripped it into the bowl he carried. "And see! it spoils the bloom to gather them." He held out a handful, and then tossed them away. "It ought to be managed more aesthetically for an occasion like this. I'll tell you what, Miss Pasmer: are you used to blueberrying?"

"No," she said; "I don't know that I ever went blueberrying before. Why?" she asked.

"Because, if you haven't, you wouldn't be very efficient perhaps, and so you might resign yourself to sitting on that log and holding the berries in your lap, while I pick them."

"But what about the bowls, then?"

"Oh, never mind them. I've got an idea. See here!" He clipped off a bunch with his knife, and held it up before her, tilting it this way and that. "Could anything be more graceful! My idea is to serve the blueberry on its native stem at this picnic. What do you think? Sugar would profane it, and of course they've only got milk enough for the coffee."

"Delightful!" Alice arranged herself on the log, and made a lap for the bunch. He would not allow that the arrangement was perfect till he had cushioned the seat and carpeted the ground for her feet with sweet-fern.

"Now you're something like a wood-nymph," he laughed. "Only, wouldn't a real wood-nymph have an apron?" he asked, looking down at her dress.

"Oh, it won't hurt the dress. You must begin now, or they'll be calling

us."

He was standing and gazing at her with a distracted enjoyment of her pose. "Oh yes, yes," he answered, coming to himself, and he set about his work.

He might have got on faster if he had not come to her with nearly every bunch he cut at first, and when he began to deny himself this pleasure he stopped to admire an idea of hers.

"Well, that's charming--making them into bouquets."

"Yes, isn't it?" she cried delightedly, holding a bunch of the berries up at arm's-length to get the effect.

"Ah, but you must have some of this fern and this tall grass to go with it. Why, it's sweet-grass--the sweet-grass of the Indian baskets!"

"Is it?" She looked up at him. "And do you think that the mixture would be better than the modest simplicity of the berries, with a few leaves of the same?"

"No; you're right; it wouldn't," he said, throwing away his ferns. "But you'll want something to tie the stems with; you must use the grass." He left that with her, and went back to his bushes. He added, from beyond a little thicket, as if what he said were part of the subject, "I was afraid you wouldn't like my skipping about there on the rocks, doing the coloured uncle."

"Like it?"

"I mean--I--you thought it undignified--trivial--"

She said, after a moment: "It was very funny; and people do all sorts of things at picnics. That's the pleasure of it, isn't it?"

"Yes, it is; but I know you don't always like that kind of thing."

"Do I seem so very severe?" she asked.

"Oh no, not severe. I should be afraid of you if you were. I shouldn't have dared to come to Campobello."

He looked at her across the blueberry bushes. His gay speech meant everything or nothing. She could parry it with a jest, and then it would mean nothing. She let her head droop over her work, and made no answer.

"I wish you could have seen those fellows on the boat," said Mavering.

"Hello, Mavering!" called the voice of John Munt, from another part of the woods.

"Alice!--Miss Pasmer!" came that of Miss Anderson.

He was going to answer, when he looked at Alice. "We'll let them see if they can find us," he said, and smiled.

Alice said nothing at first; she smiled too. "You know more about the woods than I do. I suppose if they keep looking--"

"Oh yes." He came toward her with a mass of clusters which he had clipped. "How fast you do them!" he said, standing and looking down at her. "I wish you'd let me come and make up the withes for you when you need them."

"No, I couldn't allow that on any account," she answered, twisting some stems of the grass together.

"Well, will you let me hold the bunches while you tie them; or tie them when you hold them?"

"No."

"This once, then?"

"This once, perhaps."

"How little you let me do for you!" he sighed.

"That gives you a chance to do more for other people," she answered; and then she dropped her eyes, as if she had been surprised into that answer. She made haste to add: "That's what makes you so popular with--everybody!"

"Ah, but I'd rather be popular with somebody!"

He laughed, and then they both laughed together consciously; and still nothing or everything had been said. A little silly silence followed, and he said, for escape from it, "I never saw such berries before, even in September, on the top of Ponkwasset."

"Why, is it a mountain?" she asked. "I thought it was a--falls."

"It's both," he said.

"I suppose it's very beautiful, isn't it! All America seems so lovely, so large."

"It's pretty in the summer. I don't know that I shall like it there in the winter if I conclude to--Did your--did Mrs. Pasmer tell you what my father wants me to do?"

"About going there to--manufacture?"

Mavinger nodded. "He's given me three weeks to decide whether I would like to do that or go in for law. That's what I came up here for."

There was a little pause. She bent her head down over the clusters she was grouping. "Is the light of Campobello particularly good on such questions?" she asked.

"I don't mean that exactly, but I wish you could help me to some conclusion."

"Yes; why not?"

"It's the first time I've ever had a business question referred to me."

Well, then, you can bring a perfectly fresh mind to it."

"Let me see," she said, affecting to consider. "It's really a very important matter?"

"It is to me."

After a moment she looked up at him. "I should think that you wouldn't mind living there if your business was there. I suppose it's being idle in places that makes them dull. I thought it was dull in London. One ought to be glad--oughtn't he?--to live in any place where there's something to do."

"Well, that isn't the way people usually feel," said Maverick. "That's the kind of a place most of them fight shy of."

Alice laughed with an undercurrent of protest, perhaps because she had seen her parents' whole life, so far as she knew it, passed in this sort of struggle. "I mean that I hate my own life because there seems nothing for me to do with it. I like to have people do something."

"Do you really?" asked Maverick soberly, as if struck by the novelty of the idea.

"Yes!" she said, with exaltation. "If I were a man--"

He burst into a ringing laugh. "Oh no; don't!"

"Why?" she demanded, with provisional indignation.

"Because then there wouldn't be any Miss Pasmer."

It seemed to Alice that this joking was rather an unwarranted liberty. Again she could not help joining in his light-heartedness; but she checked herself so abruptly, and put on a look so austere, that he was quelled by it.

"I mean," he began--"that is to say--I mean that I don't understand why ladies are always saying that. I am sure they can do what they like, as it is."

"Do you mean that everything is open to them now?" she asked,

disentangling a cluster of the berries from those in her lap, and beginning a fresh bunch.

"Yes," said Maverig. "Something like that--yes. They can do anything they like. Lots of them do."

"Oh yes, I know," said the girl. "But people don't like them to."

"Why, what would you like to be?" he asked.

She did not answer, but sorted over the clusters in her lap. "We've got enough now, haven't we?" she said.

"Oh, not half," he said. "But if you're tired you must let me make up some of the bunches."

"No, no! I want to do them all myself," she said, gesturing his offered hands away, with a little nether appeal in her laughing refusal

"So as to feel that you've been of some use in the world?" he said, dropping contentedly on the ground near her, and watching her industry.

"Do you think that would be very wrong?" she asked. "What made that friend of yours--Mr. Boardman--go into journalism?"

"Oh, virtuous poverty. You're not thinking of becoming a newspaper woman, Miss Pasmer!"

"Why not?" She put the final cluster into the bunch in hand, and began to wind a withe of sweet-grass around the stems. He dropped forward on his knees to help her, and together they managed the knot. They were both flushed a little when it was tied, and were serious.

"Why shouldn't one be a newspaper woman, if Harvard graduates are to be journalists?"

"Well, you know, only a certain kind are."

"What kind?"

"Well, not exactly what you'd call the gentlemanly sort."

"I thought Mr. Boardman was a great friend of yours?"

"He is. He is one of the best fellows in the world. But you must have seen that he wasn't a swell."

"I should think he'd be glad he was doing something at once. If I were a--" She stopped, and they laughed together. "I mean that I should hate to be so long getting ready to do something as men are."

"Then you'd rather begin making wall-paper at once than studying law?"

"Oh, I don't say that. I'm not competent to advise. But I should like to feel that I was doing something. I suppose it's hereditary."
Mavering stared a little. "One of my father's sisters has gone into a sisterhood. She's in England."

"Is she a--Catholic?" asked Mavering.

"She isn't a Roman Catholic."

"Oh yes!" He dropped forward on his knees again to help her tie the bunch she had finished. It was not so easy as the first.

"Oh, thank you!" she said, with unnecessary fervour.

"But you shouldn't like to go into a sisterhood, I suppose?" said Mavering, ready to laugh.

"Oh, I don't know. Why not?" She looked at him with a flying glance, and dropped her eyes.

"Oh, no reason, if you have a fancy for that kind of thing."

"That kind of thing?" repeated Alice severely.

"Oh, I don't mean anything disrespectful to it," said Mavering, throwing his anxiety off in the laugh he had been holding back. "And I beg your pardon. But I don't suppose you're in earnest."

"Oh no, I'm not in earnest," said the girl, letting her wrists fall upon her knees, and the clusters drop from her hands. "I'm not in earnest about anything; that's the truth--that's the shame. Wouldn't you like," she broke off, "to be a priest, and go round among these people up here on their frozen islands in the winter?"

"No," shouted Mavering, "I certainly shouldn't. I don't see how anybody stands it. Ponkwasset Falls is bad enough in the winter, and compared to this region Ponkwasset Falls is a metropolis. I believe in getting all the good you can out of the world you were born in--of course without hurting anybody else." He stretched his legs out on the bed of sweet-fern, where he had thrown himself, and rested his head on his hand lifted on his elbow. "I think this is what this place is fit for--a picnic; and I wish every one well out of it for nine months of the year."

"I don't," said the girl, with a passionate regret in her voice. "It would be heavenly here with--But you--no, you're different. You always want to share your happiness."

"I shouldn't call that happiness. But don't you?" asked Mavering.

"No. I'm selfish."

"You don't expect me to believe that, I suppose."

"Yes," she went on, "it must be selfishness. You don't believe I'm so, because you can't imagine it. But it's true. If I were to be happy, I should be very greedy about it; I couldn't endure to let any one else have a part in it. So it's best for me to be wretched, don't you see--to give myself up entirely to doing for others, and not expect any one to do anything for me; then I can be of some use in the world. That's why I should like to go into a sisterhood."

Maving treated it as the best kind of joke, and he was confirmed in this view of it by her laughing with him, after a first glance of what he thought mock piteousness.

XVI.

The clouds sailed across the irregular space of pale blue Northern sky which the break in the woods opened for them overhead. It was so still that they heard, and smiled to hear, the broken voices of the others, who had gone to get berries in another direction--Miss Anderson's hoarse murmur and Munt's artificial bass. Some words came from the party on the rocks.

"Isn't it perfect?" cried the young fellow in utter content.

"Yes, too perfect," answered the girl, rousing herself from the reverie in which they had both lost themselves, she did not know how long.

"Shall you gather any more?"

"No; I guess there's enough. Let's count them." He stooped over on his hands and knees, and made as much of counting the bunches as he could. "There's about one bunch and a half a piece. How shall we carry them? We ought to come into camp as impressively as possible."

"Yes," said Alice, looking into his face with dreamy absence. It was going through her mind, from some romance she had read, What if he were some sylvan creature, with that gaiety, that natural gladness and sweetness of his, so far from any happiness that was possible to her? Ought not she to be afraid of him? She was thinking she was not afraid.

"I'll tell you," he said. "Tie the stems of all the bunches together, and swing them over a pole, like grapes of Eshcol. Don't you know the picture?"

"Oh yes."

"Hold on! I'll get the pole." He cut a white birch sapling, and swept off its twigs and leaves, then he tied the bunches together, and slung them over the middle of the pole.

"Well?" she asked.

"Now we must rest the ends on our shoulders."

"Do you think so?" she asked, with the reluctance that complies.

"Yes, but not right away. I'll carry them out of the woods, and we'll form the procession just before we come in sight."

Every one on the ledge recognised the tableau when it appeared, and saluted it with cheers and hand-clapping. Mrs. Pasmer bent a look on her daughter which she faced impenetrably.

"Where have you been?" "We thought you were lost!" "We were just organising a search expedition!" different ones shouted at them.

The lady with the coffee-pot was kneeling over it with her hand on it.

"Have some coffee, you poor things! You must be almost starved."

"We looked about for you everywhere," said Munt, "and shouted ourselves dumb."

Miss Anderson passed near Alice. "I knew where you were all the time!"

Then the whole party fell to praising the novel conception of the bouquets of blueberries, and the talk began to flow away from Alice and Mavering in various channels.

All that had happened a few minutes ago in the blueberry patch seemed a far-off dream; the reality had died out of the looks and words.

He ran about from one to another, serving every one; in a little while the whole affair was in his hospitable hands, and his laugh interspersed and brightened the talk.

She got a little back of the others, and sat looking wistfully out over the bay, with her hands in her lap.

"Hold on just half a minute, Miss Pasmer! don't move!" exclaimed the amateur photographer, who is now of all excursions; he jumped to his feet, and ran for his apparatus. She sat still, to please him; but when he had developed his picture, in a dark corner of the rocks, roofed with a waterproof, he accused her of having changed her position. "But it's going to be splendid," he said, with another look at it.

He took several pictures of the whole party, for which they fell into various attitudes of consciousness. Then he shouted to a boat-load of sailors who had beached their craft while they gathered some drift for their galley fire. They had flung their arm-loads into the boat, and had bent themselves to shove it into the water.

"Keep still! don't move!" he yelled at them, with the imperiousness of the amateur photographer, and they obeyed with the helplessness of his victims. But they looked round.

"Oh, idiots!" groaned the artist.

"I always wonder what that kind of people think of us kind of people," said Mrs. Brinkley, with her eye on the photographer's subjects.

"Yes, I wonder what they do?" said Miss Cotton, pleased with the speculative turn which the talk might take from this. "I suppose they envy us?" she suggested.

"Well, not all of them; and those that do, not respectfully. They view, us as the possessors of ill-gotten gains, who would be in a very different place if we had our deserts."

"Do you really think so?"

"Yes, I think so; but I don't know that I really think so. That's another matter," said Mrs. Brinkley, with the whimsical resentment which Miss Cotton's conscientious pursuit seemed always to rouse in her.

"I supposed," continued Miss Cotton, "that it was only among the poor in the cities, who have begin misled by agitators, that the-well-to-do classes were regarded with suspicion."

"It seems to have begun a great while ago," said Mrs. Brinkley, "and not exactly with agitators. It was considered very difficult for us to get into the kingdom of heaven, you know."

"Yes, I know," assented Miss Cotton.

"And there certainly are some things against us. Even when the chance was given us to sell all we had and give it to the poor, we couldn't bring our minds to it, and went away exceeding sorrowful."

"I wonder," said Miss Cotton, "whether those things were ever intended to be taken literally?"

"Let's hope not," said John Munt, seeing his chance to make a laugh.

Mrs. Stamwell said, "Well, I shall take another cup of coffee, at any rate," and her hardihood raised another laugh.

"That always seems to me the most pitiful thing in the whole Bible," said Alice, from her place. "To see the right so clearly, and not to be strong enough to do it."

"My dear, it happens every day," said Mrs. Brinkley.

"I always felt sorry for that poor fellow, too," said Maving. "He seemed to be a good fellow, and it was pretty hard lines for him."

Alice looked round at him with deepening gravity.

"Confound those fellows!" said the photographer, glancing at his hastily

developed plate. "They moved."

XVII.

The picnic party gathered itself up after the lunch, and while some of the men, emulous of Mavering's public spirit, helped some of the ladies to pack the dishes and baskets away under the wagon seats, others threw a corked bottle into the water, and threw stones at it. A few of the ladies joined them, but nobody hit the bottle, which was finally left bobbing about on the tide.

Mrs. Brinkley addressed the defeated group, of whom her husband was one, as they came up the beach toward the wagons. "Do you think that display was calculated to inspire the lower middle classes with respectful envy?"

Her husband made himself spokesman for the rest: "No; but you can't tell how they'd have felt if we'd hit it."

They all now climbed to a higher level, grassy and smooth, on the bluff, from which there was a particular view; and Mavering came, carrying the wraps of Mrs. Pasmer and Alice, with which he associated his overcoat. A book fell out of one of the pockets when he threw it down.

Miss Anderson picked the volume up. "Browning! He reads Browning! Superior young man!"

"Oh, don't say that!" pleaded Mavering.

"Oh, read something aloud!" cried another of the young ladies.

"Isn't Browning rather serious for a picnic?" he asked, with a glance at Alice; he still had a doubt of the effect of the rheumatic uncle's dance upon her, and would have been glad to give her some other aesthetic impression of him.

"Oh no!" said Mrs. Brinkley, "nothing is more appropriate to a picnic than conundrums; they always have them. Choose a good tough one."

"I don't know anything tougher than the 'Legend of Pernik'--or lovelier," he said, and he began to read, simply, and with a passionate pleasure in the subtle study, feeling its control over his hearers.

The gentlemen lay smoking about at their ease; at the end a deep sigh went up from the ladies, cut short by the question which they immediately fell into.

They could not agree, but they said, one after another: "But you read beautifully, Mr. Mavering!" "Beautifully!" "Yes, indeed!"

"Well, I'm glad there is one point clear," he said, putting the book

away, and "I'm afraid you'll think I'm rather sentimental," he added, in a low voice to Alice, "carrying poetry around with me."

"Oh no!" she replied intensely; "I thank you."

"I thank you," he retorted, and their eyes met in a deep look.

One of the outer circle of smokers came up with his watch in his hand, and addressed the company, "Do you know what time it's got to be? It's four o'clock."

They all sprang up with a clamour of surprise.

Mrs. Pasmer, under cover of the noise, said, in a low tone, to her daughter, "Alice, I think you'd better keep a little more with me now."

"Yes," said the girl, in a sympathy with her mother in which she did not always find herself.

But when Mavering, whom their tacit treaty concerned, turned toward them, and put himself in charge of Alice, Mrs. Pasmer found herself dispossessed by the charm of his confidence, and relinquished her to him. They were going to walk to the Castle Rocks by the path that now loses and now finds itself among the fastnesses of the forest, stretching to the loftiest outlook on the bay. The savage woodland is penetrated only by this forgetful path, that passes now and then over the bridge of a ravine, and offers to the eye on either hand the mystery deepening into wilder and weirder tracts of solitude. The party resolved itself into twos and threes, and these straggled far apart, out of conversational reach of one another. Mrs. Pasmer found herself walking and talking with John Munt.

"Mr. Pasmer hasn't much interest in these excursions," he suggested.

"No; he never goes," she answered, and, by one of the agile intellectual processes natural to women, she arrived at the question, "You and the Mavericks are old friends, Mr. Munt?"

"I can't say about the son, but I'm his father's friend, and I suppose that I'm his friend too. Everybody seems to be so," suggested Munt.

"Oh Yes," Mrs. Pasmer assented; "he appears to be a universal favourite."

"We used to expect great things of Elbridge Mavering in college. We were rather more romantic than the Harvard men are nowadays, and we believed in one another more than they do. Perhaps we idealised one another. But, anyway, our class thought Mavering could do anything. You know about his taste for etchings?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Pasmer, with a sigh of deep appreciation. "What gifted people!"

"I understand that the son inherits all his father's talent."

"He sketches delightfully."

"And Mavering wrote. Why, he was our class poet!" cried Munt, remembering the fact with surprise and gratification to himself. "He was a tremendous satirist."

"Really? And he seems so amiable now."

"Oh, it was only on paper."

"Perhaps he still keeps it up--on wall-paper?" suggested Mrs. Pasmer.

Munt laughed at the little joke with a good-will that flattered the veteran flatterer. "I should like to ask him that some time. Will you lend it to me?"

"Yes, if such a sayer of good things will deign to borrow--"

"Oh, Mrs. Pasmer!" cried Munt, otherwise speechless.

"And the mother? Do you know Mrs. Mavering?"

"Mrs. Mavering I've never seen."

"Oh!" said Mrs. Pasmer, with a disappointment for which Munt tried to console her.

"I've never even been at their place. He asked me once a great while ago; but you know how those things are. I've heard that she used to be very pretty and very gay. They went about a great deal, to Saratoga and Cape May and such places--rather out of our beat."

"And now?"

"And now she's been an invalid for a great many years. Bedridden, I believe. Paralysis, I think."

Yes; Mrs. Saintsbury said something of the kind."

"Well," said Munt, anxious to add to the store of knowledge which this remark let him understand he had not materially increased, "I think Mrs. Mavering was the origin of the wall-paper--or her money. Mavering was poor; her father had started it, and Mavering turned in his talent."

"How very interesting! And is that the reason--its being ancestral--that Mr. Mavering wishes his son to go into it?"

"Is he going into it?" asked Munt.

"He's come up here to think about it."

"I should suppose it would be a very good thing," said Munt.

"What a very remarkable forest!" said Mrs. Pasmer, examining it on either side, and turning quite round. This gave her, from her place in the van of the straggling procession, a glimpse of Alice and Dan Mavinger far in the rear.

"Don't you know," he was saying to the girl at the same moment, "it's like some of those Dore illustrations to the Inferno, or the Wandering Jew."

"Oh yes. I was trying to think what it was made me think I had seen it before," she answered. "It must be that. But how strange it is!" she exclaimed, "that sensation of having been there before--in some place before where you can't possibly have been."

"And do you feel it here?" he asked, as vividly interested as if they two had been the first to notice the phenomenon which has been a psychical consolation to so many young observers.

"Yes," she cried.

"I hope I was with you," he said, with a sudden turn of levity, which did not displease her, for there seemed to be a tender earnestness lurking in it. "I couldn't bear to think of your being alone in such a howling wilderness."

"Oh, I was with a large picnic," she retorted gaily. "You might have been among the rest. I didn't notice."

"Well, the next time, I wish you'd look closer. I don't like being left out." They were so far behind the rest that he devoted himself entirely to her, and they had grown more and more confidential.

They came to a narrow foot-bridge over a deep gorge. The hand-rail had fallen away. He sprang forward and gave her his hand for the passage.

"Who helped you over here?" he demanded. "Don't say I didn't."

"Perhaps it was you," she murmured, letting him keep the fingers to which he clung a moment after they had crossed the bridge. Then she took them away, and said: "But I can't be sure. There were so many others."

"Other fellows?" he demanded, placing himself before her on the narrow path, so that she could not get by. "Try to remember, Miss Pasmer. This is very important. It would break my heart if it was really some one else." She stole a glance at his face, but it was smiling, though his voice was so earnest. "I want to help you over all the bad places, and I don't want any one else to have a hand in it."

The voice and the face still belied each other, and between them the girl chose to feel herself trifled with by the artistic temperament. "If you'll please step out of the way, Mr. Mavinger," she said severely, "I shall not need anybody's help just here."

He instantly moved aside, and they were both silent, till she said, as she quickened her pace to overtake the others in front, "I don't see how you can help liking nature in such a place as this."

"I can't--human nature," he said. It was mere folly; and an abstract folly at that; but the face that she held down and away from him flushed with sweet consciousness as she laughed.

On the cliff beetling above the bay, where she sat to look out over the sad northern sea, lit with the fishing sail they had seen before, and the surge washed into the rocky coves far beneath them, he threw himself at her feet, and made her alone in the company that came and went and tried this view and that from the different points where the picnic hostess insisted they should enjoy it. She left the young couple to themselves, and Mrs. Pasmer seemed to have forgotten that she had bidden Alice to be a little more with her.

Alice had forgotten it too. She sat listening to Mavering's talk with a certain fascination, but not so much apparently because the meaning of the words pleased her as the sound of his voice, the motion of his lips in speaking, charmed her. At first he was serious, and even melancholy, as if he were afraid he had offended her; but apparently he soon believed that he had been forgiven, and began to burlesque his own mood, but still with a deference and a watchful observance of her changes of feeling which was delicately flattering in its way. Now and then when she answered something it was not always to the purpose; he accused her of not hearing what he said, but she would have it that she did, and then he tried to test her by proofs and questions. It did not matter for anything that was spoken or done; speech and action of whatever sort were mere masks of their young joy in each other, so that when he said, after he had quoted some lines befitting the scene they looked out on; "Now was that from Tennyson or from Tupper?" and she answered, "Neither; it was from Shakespeare," they joined, in the same happy laugh, and they laughed now and then without saying anything. Neither this nor that made them more glad or less; they were in a trance, vulnerable to nothing but the summons which must come to leave their dream behind, and issue into the waking world.

In hope or in experience such a moment has come to all, and it is so pretty to those who recognise it from the outside that no one has the heart to hurry it away while it can be helped. The affair between Alice and Mavering had evidently her mother's sanction, and all the rest were eager to help it on. When the party had started to return, they called to them, and let them come behind together. At the carriages they had what Miss Anderson called a new deal, and Alice and Mavering found themselves together in the rear seat of the last.

The fog began to come in from the sea, and followed them through the woods. When they emerged upon the highway it wrapped them densely round, and formed a little world, cosy, intimate, where they two dwelt alone with these friends of theirs, each of whom they praised for delightful qualities. The horses beat along through the mist, in which there seemed

no progress, and they lived in a blissful arrest of time. Miss Anderson called back from the front seat, "My ear buyns; you're talkin' about me."

"Which ear?" cried Mavering.

"Oh, the left, of couyse."

"Then it's merely habit, Julie. You ought to have heard the nice things we were saying about you," Alice called.

"I'd like to hear all the nice things you've been saying."

This seemed the last effect of subtle wit. Mavering broke out in his laugh, and Alice's laugh rang above it.

Mrs. Pasmer looked involuntarily round from the carriage ahead.

"They seem to be having a good time," said Mrs. Brinkley at her side.

"Yes; I hope Alice isn't overdoing."

"I'm afraid you're dreadfully tired," said Mavering to the girl, in a low voice, as he lifted her from her place when they reached the hotel through the provisional darkness, and found that after all it was only dinner-time.

"Oh no. I feel as if the picnic were just beginning."

"Then you will come to-night?"

"I will see what mamma says."

"Shall I ask her?"

"Oh, perhaps not," said the girl, repressing his ardour, but not severely.

XVIII.

They were going to have some theatricals at one of the cottages, and the lady at whose house they were to be given made haste to invite all the picnic party before it dispersed. Mrs. Pasmer accepted with a mental reservation, meaning to send an excuse later if she chose; and before she decided the point she kept her husband from going after dinner into the reading-room, where he spent nearly all his time over a paper and a cigar, or in sitting absolutely silent and unoccupied, and made him go to their own room with her.

"There is something that I must speak to you about," she said, closing the door, "and you must decide for yourself whether you wish to let it go

any further."

"What go any further?" asked Mr. Pasher, sitting down and putting his hand to the pocket that held his cigar-case with the same series of motions.

"No, don't smoke," she said, staying his hand impatiently. "I want you to think."

"How can I think if I don't smoke?"

"Very well; smoke, then. Do you want this affair with young Maverick to go any farther?"

"Oh!" said Pasher, "I thought you had been looking after that." He had in fact relegated that to the company of the great questions exterior to his personal comfort which she always decided.

"I have been looking after it, but now the time has come when you must, as a father, take some interest in it."

Pasher's noble mask of a face, from the point of his full white beard to his fine forehead, crossed by his impressive black eyebrows, expressed all the dignified concern which a father ought to feel in such an affair; but what he was really feeling was a grave reluctance to have to intervene in any way. "What do you want me to say to him?" he asked.

"Why, I don't know that he's going to ask you anything. I don't know whether he's said anything to Alice yet," said Mrs. Pasher, with some exasperation.

Her husband was silent, but his silence insinuated a degree of wonder that she should approach him prematurely on such a point.

"They have been thrown together all day, and there is no use to conceal from ourselves that they are very much taken with each other?"

"I thought," Pasher said, "that you said that from the beginning. Didn't you want them to be taken with each other?"

"That is what you are to decide."

Pasher silently refused to assume the responsibility.

"Well?" demanded his wife, after waiting for him to speak.

"Well what?"

"What do you decide?"

"What is the use of deciding a thing when it is all over?"

"It isn't over at all. It can be broken off at any moment."

"Well, break it off, then, if you like."

Mrs. Pasmer resumed the responsibility with a sigh. She felt the burden, the penalty, of power, after having so long enjoyed its sweets, and she would willingly have abdicated the sovereignty which she had spent her whole married life in establishing. But there was no one to take it up. "No, I shall not break it off," she said resentfully; "I shall let it go on." Then seeing that her husband was not shaken by her threat from his long-confirmed subjection, she added: "It isn't an ideal affair, but I think it will be a very good thing for Alice. He is not what I expected, but he is thoroughly nice, and I should think his family was nice. I've been talking with Mr. Munt about them to-day, and he confirms all that Etta Saintsbury said. I don't think there can be any doubt of his intentions in coming here. He isn't a particularly artless young man, but he's been sufficiently frank about Alice since he's been here." Her husband smoked on. "His father seems to have taken up the business from the artistic side, and Mr. Maverick won't be expected to enter into the commercial part at once. If it wasn't for Alice, I don't believe he would think of the business for a moment; he would study law. Of course it's a little embarrassing to have her engaged at once before she's seen anything of society here, but perhaps it's all for the best, after all: the main thing is that she should be satisfied, and I can see that she's only too much so. Yes, she's very much taken with him; and I don't wonder. He is charming."

It was not the first time that Mrs. Pasmer had reasoned in this round; but the utterance of her thoughts seemed to throw a new light on them, and she took a courage from them that they did not always impart. She arrived at the final opinion expressed, with a throb of tenderness for the young fellow whom she believed eager to take her daughter from her, and now for the first time she experienced a desolation in the prospect, as if it were an accomplished fact. She was morally a bundle of finesses, but at the bottom of her heart her daughter was all the world to her. She had made the girl her idol, and if, like some other heathen, she had not always used her idol with the greatest deference, if she had often expected the impossible from it, and made it pay for her disappointment, still she had never swerved from her worship of it. She suddenly asked herself, What if this young fellow, so charming and so good, should so wholly monopolise her child that she should no longer have any share in her? What if Alice, who had so long formed her first care and chief object in life, should contentedly lose herself in the love and care of another, and both should ignore her right to her? She answered herself with a pang that this might happen with any one Alice married, and that it would be no worse, at the worst, with Dan Maverick than with another, while her husband remained impartially silent. Always keeping within the lines to which his wife's supremacy had driven him, he felt safe there, and was not to be easily coaxed out of them.

Mrs. Pasmer rose and left him, with his perfect acquiescence, and went into her daughter's room. She found Alice there, with a pretty evening dress laid out on her bed. Mrs. Pasmer was very fond of that dress, and at the thought of Alice in it her spirits rose again.

"Oh, are you going, Alice?"

"Why, yes," answered the girl. "Didn't you accept?"

"Why, yes," Mrs. Pasmer admitted. "But aren't you tired?"

"Oh, not in the least. I feel as fresh as I did this morning. Don't you want me to go?"

"Oh yes, certainly, I want you to go--if you think you'll enjoy it."

"Enjoy it? Why, why shouldn't I enjoy it, mamma!" What are you thinking about? It's going to be the greatest kind of fun."

"But do you think you ought to look at everything simply as fun?" asked the mother, with unwonted didacticism.

"How everything? What are you thinking about, mamma?"

"Oh, nothing! I'm so glad you're going to wear that dress."

"Why, of course! It's my best. But what are you driving at, mamma?"

Mrs. Pasmer was really seeking in her daughter that comfort of a distinct volition which she had failed to find in her husband, and she wished to assure herself of it more and more, that she might share with some one the responsibility which he had refused any part in.

"Nothing. But I'm glad you wish so much to go." The girl dropped her hands and stared. "You must have enjoyed yourself to-day," she added, as if that were an explanation.

"Of course I enjoyed myself! But what has that to do with my wanting to go to-night?"

"Oh, nothing. But I hope, Alice, that there is one thing you have looked fully in the face."

"What thing?" faltered the girl, and now showed herself unable to confront it by dropping her eyes.

"Well, whatever you may have heard or seen, nobody else is in doubt about it. What do you suppose has brought Mr. Maving here!"

"I don't know." The denial not only confessed that she did know, but it informed her mother that all was as yet tacit between the young people.

"Very well, then, I know," said Mrs. Pasmer; "and there is one thing that you must know before long, Alice."

"What?" she asked faintly.

"Your own mind," said her mother. "I don't ask you what it is, and I shall wait till you tell me. Of course I shouldn't have let him stay here if I had objected--"

"O mamma!" murmured the girl, dyed with shame to have the facts so boldly touched, but not, probably, too deeply displeased.

"Yes. And I know that he would never have thought of going into that business if he had not expected--hoped--"

"Mamma!"

"And you ought to consider--"

"Oh, don't! don't! don't!" implored the girl.

"That's all," said her mother, turning from Alice, who had hidden her face in her hands, to inspect the costume on the bed. She lifted one piece of it after another, turned it over, looked at it, and laid it down. "You can never get such a dress in this country."

She went out of the room, as the girl dropped her face in the pillow. An hour later they met equipped for the evening's pleasure. To the keen glance that her mother gave her, the daughter's eyes had the brightness of eyes that have been weeping, but they were also bright with that knowledge of her own mind which Mrs. Pasmer had desired for her. She met her mother's glance fearlessly, even proudly, and she carried her stylish costume with a splendour to which only occasions could stimulate her. They dramatised a perfect unconsciousness to each other, but Mrs. Pasmer was by no means satisfied with the decision which she had read in her daughter's looks. Somehow it did not relieve her of the responsibility, and it did not change the nature of the case. It was gratifying, of course, to see Alice the object of a passion so sincere and so ardent; so far the triumph was complete, and there was really nothing objectionable in the young man and his circumstances, though there was nothing very distinguished. But the affair was altogether different from anything that Mrs. Pasmer had imagined. She had supposed and intended that Alice should meet some one in Boston, and go through a course of society before reaching any decisive step. There was to be a whole season in which to look the ground carefully over, and the ground was to be all within certain well-ascertained and guarded precincts. But this that had happened was outside of these precincts, of at least on their mere outskirts. Class Day, of course, was all right; and she could not say that the summer colony at Campobello was not thoroughly and essentially Boston; and yet she felt that certain influences, certain sanctions, were absent. To tell the truth, she would not have cared for the feelings of Maving's family in regard to the matter, except as they might afterward concern Alice, and the time had not come when she could recognise their existence in regard to the affair; and yet she could have wished that even as it was his family could have seen and approved it from the start. It would have been more regular.

With Alice it was a simpler matter, and of course deeper. For her it was only a question of himself and herself; no one else existed to the sublime egotism of her love. She did not call it by that name; she did not permit it to assert itself by any name; it was a mere formless joy in her soul, a trustful and blissful expectance, which she now no more believed he could disappoint than that she could die within that hour. All the rebellion that she had sometimes felt at the anomalous attitude exacted of her sex in regard to such matters was gone. She no longer thought it strange that a girl should be expected to ignore the admiration of a young man till he explicitly declared it, and should then be fully possessed of all the materials of a decision on the most momentous question in life; for she knew that this state of ignorance could never really exist; she had known from the first moment that he had thought her beautiful. To-night she was radiant for him. Her eyes shone with the look in which they should meet and give themselves to each other before they spoke--the look in which they had met already, in which they had lived that whole day.

XIX.

The evening's entertainment was something that must fail before an audience which was not very kind. They were to present a burlesque of classic fable, and the parts, with their general intention, had been distributed to the different actors; but nothing had been written down, and, beyond the situations and a few points of dialogue, all had to be improvised. The costumes and properties had been invented from such things as came to hand. Sheets sculpturesquely draped the deities who took part; a fox-pelt from the hearth did duty as the leopard skin of Bacchus; a feather duster served Neptune for a trident; the lyre of Apollo was a dust-pan; a gull's breast furnished Jove with his grey beard.

The fable was adapted to modern life, and the scene had been laid in Campobello, the peculiarities of which were to be satirised throughout. The principal situation was to be a passage between Jupiter, represented by Maving, and Juno, whom Miss Anderson personated; it was to be a scene of conjugal reproaches and reprisals, and to end in reconciliation, in which the father of the gods sacrificed himself on the altar of domestic peace by promising to bring his family to Campobello every year.

This was to be followed by a sketch of the Judgment of Paris, in which Juno and Pallas were to be personated by two young men, and Miss Anderson took the part of Venus.

The pretty drawing-room of the Trevors--young people from Albany, and cousins of Miss Anderson--was curtained off at one end for a stage, and beyond the sliding doors which divided it in half were set chairs for the spectators. People had come in whatever dress they liked; the men were mostly in morning coats; the ladies had generally made some attempt at evening toilet, but they joined in admiring Alice Pasmer's costume, and

one of them said that they would let it represent them all, and express what each might have done if she would. There was not much time for their tributes; all the lamps were presently taken away and set along the floor in front of the curtain as foot-lights, leaving the company in a darkness which Mrs. Brinkley pronounced sepulchral. She made her reproaches to the master of the house, who had effected this transposition of the lamps. "I was just thinking some very pretty and valuable things about your charming cottage, Mr. Trevor: a rug on a bare floor, a trim of varnished pine, a wall with half a dozen simple etchings on it, an open fire, and a mantelpiece without bric-a-brac, how entirely satisfying it all is! And how it upbraids us for heaping up upholstery as we do in town!"

"Go on," said the host. "Those are beautiful thoughts."

"But I can't go on in the dark," retorted Mrs. Brinkley. "You can't think in the dark, much less talk! Can you, Mrs. Pasmer?" Mrs. Pasmer, with Alice next to her, sat just in front of Mrs. Brinkley.

"No," she assented; "but if I could--YOU can think anywhere, Mrs. Brinkley--Mrs. Trevor's lovely house would inspire me to it."

"Two birds with one stone--thank you, Mrs. Pasmer, for my part of the compliment. Pick yourself up, Mr. Trevor."

"Oh, thank you, I'm all right," said Trevor, panting after the ladies' meanings, as a man must. "I suppose thinking and talking in the dark is a good deal like smoking in the dark."

"No; thinking and talking are not at all like smoking under any conditions. Why in the world should they be?"

"Oh, I can't get any fun out of a cigar unless I can see the smoke," the host explained.

"Do you follow him, Mrs. Pasmer?"

"Yes, perfectly."

"Thank you, Mrs. Pasmer," said Trevor.

"I'll get you to tell me how you did it some time," said Mrs. Brinkley.

"But your house is a gem, Mr. Trevor."

"Isn't it?" cried Trevor. "I want my wife to live here the year round." It was the Trevors' first summer in their cottage, and the experienced reader will easily recognise his mood. "But she's such a worldly spirit, she won't."

"Oh, I don't know about the year round. Do you, Mrs. Pasmer?"

"I should," said Alice, with the suddenness of youth, breaking into the talk which she had not been supposed to take any interest in.

"Is it proper to kiss a young lady's hand?" said Trevor gratefully, appealing to Mrs. Brinkley.

"It isn't very customary in the nineteenth century," said Mrs. Brinkley. "But you might kiss her fan. He might kiss her fan, mightn't he, Mrs. Pasmer?"

"Certainly. Alice, hold out your fan instantly."

The girl humoured the joke, laughing.

Trevor pressed his lips to the perfumed sticks. "I will tell Mrs. Trevor," he said, "and that will decide her."

"It will decide her not to come here at all next year if you tell her all."

"He never tells me all," said Mrs. Trevor, catching so much of the talk as she came in from some hospitable cares in the dining-room. "They're incapable of it. What has he been doing now?"

"Nothing. Or I will tell you when we are alone, Mrs. Trevor," said Mrs. Brinkley, with burlesque sympathy. "We oughtn't to have a scene on both sides of the foot-lights."

A boyish face, all excitement, was thrust out between the curtains forming the proscenium of the little theatre. "All ready, Mrs. Trevor?"

"Yes, all ready, Jim."

He dashed the curtains apart, and marred the effect of his own disappearance from the scene by tripping over the long legs of Jove, stretched out to the front, where he sat on Mrs. Trevor's richest rug, propped with sofa cushions on either hand.

"So perish all the impious race of titans, enemies of the gods!" said Maverick solemnly, as the boy fell sprawling. "Pick the earth-born giant up, Vulcan, my son."

The boy was very small for his age; every one saw that the accident had not been premeditated, and when Vulcan appeared, with an exaggerated limp, and carried the boy off, a burst of laughter went up from the company.

It did not matter what the play was to have been after that; it all turned upon the accident. Juno came on, and began to reproach Jupiter for his carelessness. "I've sent Mercury upstairs for the aynica; but he says it's no use: that boy won't be able to pass ball for a week. How often have I told you not to sit with your feet out that way! I knew you'd hurt somebody."

"I didn't have my feet out," retorted Jupiter. "Besides," he added, with

dignity, and a burlesque of marital special pleading which every wife and husband recognised, "I always sit with my feet out so, and I always will, so long as I've the spirit of a god."

"Isn't he delicious?" buzzed Mrs. Pasmer, leaning backward to whisper to Mrs. Brinkley; it was not that she thought what Dan had just said was so very fanny, but people are immoderately applausive of amateur dramatics, and she was feeling very fond of the young fellow.

The improvisation went wildly and adventurously on, and the curtains dropped together amidst the facile acclaim of the audience:

"It's very well for Jupiter that he happened to think of the curtain," said Mrs. Brinkley. "They couldn't have kept it up at that level much longer."

"Oh, do you think so?" softly murmured Mrs. Pasmer. "It seemed as if they could have kept it up all night if they liked."

"I doubt it. Mr. Trevor," said Mrs. Brinkley to the host, who had come up for her congratulations, "do you always have such brilliant performances?"

"Well, we have so far," he answered modestly; and Mrs. Brinkley laughed with him. This was the first entertainment at Trevor cottage.

"Sh!" went up all round them, and Mrs. Trevor called across the room, in a reproachful whisper loud enough for every one to hear, "My dear!-- enjoying yourself!" while Maverick stood between the parted curtains waiting for the attention of the company.

"On account of an accident to the call-boy and the mental exhaustion of some of the deities, the next piece will be omitted, and the performance will begin with the one after. While the audience is waiting, Mercury will go round and take up a collection for the victim of the recent accident, who will probably be indisposed for life. The collector will be accompanied by a policeman, and may be safely trusted."

He disappeared behind the curtain with a pas and r swirl of his draperies like the Lord Chancellor in *Iolanthe*, and the audience again abandoned itself to applause.

"How very witty he is!" said Miss Cotton, who sat near John Munt. "Don't you think he's really witty?"

"Yes," Munt assented critically. "But you should have known his father."

"Oh, do you know his father?"

"I was in college with him."

"Oh, do tell me about him, and all Mr. Maverick's family. We're so interested, you know, on account of--Isn't it pretty to have that little

love idyl going on here? I wonder--I've been wondering all the time-- what she thinks of all this. Do you suppose she quite likes it?" His costume is so very remarkable!" Miss Cotton, in the absence of any lady of her intimate circle, was appealing confidentially to John Munt.

"Why, do you think there's anything serious between them?" he asked, dropping his head forward as people do in church when they wish to whisper to some one in the same pew.

"Why, yes, it seems so," murmured Miss Cotton. "His admiration is quite undisguised, isn't it?"

"A man never can tell," said Munt. "We have to leave those things to you ladies."

"Oh, every one's talking of it, I assure you. And you know his family?"

"I knew his father once rather better than anybody else."

"Indeed!"

"Yes." Munt sketched rather a flattered portrait of the elder Maving, his ability, his goodness, his shyness, which he had always had to make such a hard fight with. Munt was sensible of an access of popularity in knowing Dan Maving's people, and he did not spare his colours.

"Then it isn't from his father that he gets everything. He isn't in the least shy," said Miss Cotton.

"That must be the mother."

"And the mother?"

"The mother I don't know."

Miss Cotton sighed. "Sometimes I wish that he did show a little more trepidation. It would seem as if he were more alive to the great difference that there is between Alice Pasmer and other girls."

Munt laughed a man's laugh. "I guess he's pretty well alive to that, if he's in love with her."

"Oh, in a certain way, of course, but not in the highest way. Now, for instance, if he felt all her fineness as--as we do, I don't believe he'd be willing to appear before her just like that." The father of the gods wore a damask tablecloth of a pale golden hue and a classic pattern; his arms were bare, and rather absurdly white; on his feet a pair of lawn-tennis shoes had a very striking effect of sandals.

"It seems to me," Miss Cotton pursued; "that if he really appreciated her in the highest way, he would wish never to do an undignified or trivial thing in her presence."

"Oh, perhaps it's that that pleases her in him. They say we're always taken with opposites."

"Yes--do you think so?" asked Miss Cotton.

The curtains were flung apart, and the Judgment of Paris followed rather tamely upon what had gone before, though the two young fellows who did Juno and Minerva were very amusing, and the dialogue was full of hits. Some of the audience, an appreciative minority, were of opinion that Mavering and Miss Anderson surpassed themselves in it; she promised him the most beautiful and cultured wife in Greece. "That settles it," he answered. They came out arm in arm, and Paris, having put on a striped tennis coat over his short-sleeved Greek tunic, moved round among the company for their congratulations, Venus ostentatiously showing the apple she had won.

"I can hardly keep from eating it," she explained to Alice; before whom she dropped Mavering's arm. "I'm awfully hungry. It's hardly woyk."

Alice stood with her head drawn back, looking at the excited girl with a smile, in which seemed to hover somewhere a latent bitterness.

Mavering, with a flushed face and a flying tongue, was exchanging sallies with her mother, who smothered him in flatteries.

Mrs. Trevor came toward the group, and announced supper. "Mr. Paris, will you take Miss Aphrodite out?"

Miss Anderson swept a low bow of renunciation, and tacitly relinquished Mavering to Alice.

"Oh, no, no!" said Alice, shrinking back from him, with an intensification of her uncertain smile. "A mere mortal?"

"Oh, how very good!" said Mrs. Trevor.

There began to be, without any one's intending it, that sort of tacit misunderstanding which is all the worse because it can only follow upon a tacit understanding like that which had established itself between Alice and Mavering. They laughed and joked together gaily about all that went on; they were perfectly good friends; he saw that she and her mother were promptly served; he brought them salad and ice-cream and coffee himself, only waiting officially upon Miss Anderson first, and Alice thanked him, with the politest deprecation of his devotion; but if their eyes met, it was defensively, and the security between them was gone. Mavering vaguely felt the loss, without knowing how to retrieve it, and it made him go on more desperately with Miss Anderson. He laughed and joked recklessly, and Alice began to mark a more explicit displeasure with her. She made her mother go rather early.

On her part, Miss Anderson seemed to find reason for resentment in Alice's bearing toward her. As if she had said to herself that her frank

loyalty had been thrown away upon a cold and unresponsive nature, and that her harmless follies in the play had been met with unjust suspicions, she began to make reprisals, she began in dead earnest to flirt with Maverig. Before the evening passed she had made him seem taken with her; but how justly she had done this, and with how much fault of his, no one could have said. There were some who did not notice it at all, but these were not people who knew Maverig, or knew Alice very well.

XX.

The next morning Alice was walking slowly along the road toward the fishing village, when she heard rapid, plunging strides down the wooded hillside on her right. She knew them for Maverig's, and she did not affect surprise when he made a final leap into the road, and shortened his pace beside her.

"May I join you, Miss Pasmer?"

"I am only going down to the herring-houses," she began.

"And you'll let me go with you?" said the young fellow. "The fact is--you're always so frank that you make everything else seem silly--I've been waiting up there in the woods for you to come by. Mrs. Pasmer told me you had started this way, and I cut across lots to overtake you, and then, when you came in sight, I had to let you pass before I could screw my courage up to the point of running after you. How is that for open-mindedness?"

"It's a very good beginning, I should think."

"Well, don't you think you ought to say now that you're sorry you were so formidable?"

"Am I so formidable?" she asked, and then recognised that she had been trapped into a leading question.

"You are to me. Because I would like always to be sure that I had pleased you, and for the last twelve hours I've only been able to make sure that I hadn't. That's the consolation I'm going away with. I thought I'd get you to confirm my impression explicitly. That's why I wished to join you."

"Are you--were you going away?"

"I'm going by the next boat. What's the use of staying? I should only make bad worse. Yesterday I hoped. But last night spoiled everything. 'Miss Pasmer,'" he broke out, with a rush of feeling, "you must know why I came up here to Campobello."

His steps took him a little ahead of her, and he could look back into her face as he spoke. But apparently he saw nothing in it to give him courage to go on, for he stopped, and then continued, lightly: "And I'm going away because I feel that I've made a failure of the expedition. I knew that you were supremely disgusted with me last night; but it will be a sort of comfort if you'll tell me so."

"Oh," said Alice, "everybody thought it was very brilliant, I'm sure."

"And you thought it was a piece of buffoonery. Well, it was. I wish you'd say so, Miss Pasmer; though I didn't mean the playing entirely. It would be something to start from, and I want to make a beginning--turn over a new leaf. Can't you help me to inscribe a good resolution of the most iron-clad description on the stainless page? I've lain awake all night composing one. Wouldn't you like to hear it?"

"I can't see what good that would do," she said, with some relenting toward a smile, in which he instantly prepared himself to bask.

"But you will when I've done it. Now listen!"

"Please don't go on." She cut him short with a return to her severity, which he would not recognise.

"Well, perhaps I'd better not," he consented. "It's rather a long resolution, and I don't know that I've committed it perfectly yet. But I do assure you that if you were disgusted last night, you were not the only one. I was immensely disgusted myself; and why I wanted you to tell me so, was because when I have a strong pressure brought to bear I can brace up, and do almost anything," he said, dropping into earnest. Then he rose lightly again, and added, "You have no idea how unpleasant it is to lie awake all night throwing dust in the eyes of an accusing conscience."

"It must have been, if you didn't succeed," said Alice drily.

"Yes, that's it--that's just the point. If I'd succeeded, I should be all right, don't you see. But it was a difficult case." She turned her face away, but he saw the smile on her cheek, and he laughed as if this were what he had been trying to make her do. "I got beaten. I had to give up, and own it. I had to say that I had thrown my chance away, and I had better take myself off." He looked at her with a real anxiety in his gay eyes.

"The boat goes just after lunch, I believe," she said indifferently.

"Oh yes, I shall have time to get lunch before I go," he said, with bitterness. "But lunch isn't the only thing; it isn't even the main thing, Miss Pasmer."

"No?" She hardened her heart.

He waited for her to say something more, and then he went on. "The

question is whether there's time to undo last night, abolish it, erase it from the calendar of recorded time--sponge it out, in short--and get back to yesterday afternoon." She made no reply to this. "Don't you think it was a very pleasant picnic, Miss Pasmer?" he asked, with pensive respectfulness.

"Very," she answered drily.

He cast a glance at the woods that bordered the road on either side.

"That weird forest--I shall never forget it."

"No; it was something to remember," she said.

"And the blueberry patch? We mustn't forget the blueberry patch."

"There were a great many blueberries."

She walked on, and he said, "And that bridge--you don't have that feeling of having been here before?"

"No."

"Am I walking too fast for you, Miss Pasmer?"

"No; I like to walk fast."

"But wouldn't you like to sit down? On this wayside log, for example?" He pointed it out with his stick. "It seems to invite repose, and I know you must be tired."

"I'm not tired."

"Ah, that shows that you didn't lie awake grieving over your follies all night. I hope you rested well, Miss Pasmer." She said nothing. "If I thought--if I could hope that you hadn't, it would be a bond of sympathy, and I would give almost anything for a bond of sympathy just now, Miss Pasmer. Alice!" he said, with sudden seriousness. "I know that I'm not worthy even to think of you, and that you're whole worlds above me in every way. It's that that takes all heart out of me, and leaves me without a word to say when I'd like to say so much. I would like to speak--tell you--"

She interrupted him. "I wish to speak to you, Mr. Maverick, and tell you that--I'm very tired, and I'm going back to the hotel. I must ask you to let me go back alone."

"Alice, I love you."

"I'm sorry you said it--sorry, sorry."

"Why?" he asked, with hopeless futility.

"Because there can be no love between us--not friendship even--not

acquaintance."

"I shouldn't have asked for your acquaintance, your friendship, if--"
His words conveyed a delicate reproach, and they stung her, because they put her in the wrong.

"No matter," she began wildly. "I didn't mean to wound you. But we must part, and we must never see each other again."

He stood confused, as if he could not make it out or believe it. "But yesterday--"

"It's to-day now."

"Ah, no! It's last night. And I can explain."

"No!" she cried. "You shall not make me out so mean and vindictive. I don't care for last night, nor for anything that happened." This was not true, but it seemed so to her at the moment; she thought that she really no longer resented his association with Miss Anderson and his separation from herself in all that had taken place.

"Then what is it?"

"I can't tell you. But everything is over between us--that's all."

"But yesterday--and all these days past--you seemed--"

"It's unfair of you to insist--it's ungenerous, ungentlemanly."

That word, which from a woman's tongue always strikes a man like a blow in the face, silenced Maverick. He set his lips and bowed, and they parted. She turned upon her way, and he kept the path which she had been going.

It was not the hour when the piazzas were very full, and she slipped into the dim hotel corridor undetected, or at least undetained. She flung into her room, and confronted her mother.

Mrs. Pasmer was there looking into a trunk that had overflowed from her own chamber. "What is the matter?" she said to her daughter's excited face.

"Mr. Maverick--"

"Well?"

"And I refused him."

Mrs. Pasmer was one of those ladies who in any finality have a keen retrovision of all the advantages of a different conclusion. She had been thinking, since she told Dan Maverick which way Alice had gone to walk, that if he were to speak to her now, and she were to accept him, it

would involve a great many embarrassing consequences; but she had consoled herself with the probability that he would not speak so soon after the effects of last night, but would only try at the furthest to make his peace with Alice. Since he had spoken, though, and she had refused him, Mrs. Pasmer instantly saw all the pleasant things that would have followed in another event. "Refused him?" she repeated provisionally, while she gathered herself for a full exploration of all the facts.

"Yes, mamma; and I can't talk about it. I wish never to hear his name again, or to see him, or to speak to him."

"Why, of course not," said Mrs. Pasmer, with a fine smile, from the vantage-ground of her superior years, "if you've refused him." She left the trunk which she had been standing over, and sat down, while Alice swept to and fro before her excitedly. "But why did you refuse him, my dear?"

"Why? Because he's detestable--perfectly ignoble."

Her mother probably knew how to translate these exalted expressions into the more accurate language of maturer life. "Do you mean last night?"

"Last night?" cried Alice tragically. "No. Why should I care for last night?"

"Then I don't understand what you mean," retorted Mrs. Pasmer. "What did he say?" she demanded, with authority.

"Mamma, I can't talk about it--I won't."

"But you must, Alice. It's your duty. Of course I must know about it. What did he say?"

Alice walked up and down the room with her lips firmly closed--like Mavering's lips, it occurred to her; and then she opened them, but without speaking.

"What did he say?" persisted her mother, and her persistence had its effect.

"Say?" exclaimed the girl indignantly. "He tried to make me say."

"I see," said Mrs. Pasmer. "Well?"

"But I forced him to speak, and then--I rejected him. That's all."

"Poor fellow!" said Mrs. Pasmer. "He was afraid of you."

"And that's what made it the more odious. Do you think I wished him to be afraid of me? Would that be any pleasure? I should hate myself if I had to quell anybody into being unlike themselves." She sat down for a moment, and then jumped up again, and went to the window, for no reason,

and came back.

"Yes," said her mother impartially, "he's light, and he's roundabout. He couldn't come straight at anything."

"And would you have me accept such a--being?"

Mrs. Pasher smiled a little at the literary word, and continued: "But he's very sweet, and he's as good as the day's long, and he's very fond of you, and--I thought you liked him."

The girl threw up her arms across her eyes. "Oh, how can you say such a thing, mamma?"

She dropped into a chair at the bedside, and let her face fall into her hands, and cried.

Her mother waited for the gust of tears to pass before she said, "But if you feel so about it--"

"Mamma!" Alice sprang to her feet.

"It needn't come from you. I could make some excuse to see him--write him a little note--"

"Never!" exclaimed Alice grandly. "What I've done I've done from my reason, and my feelings have nothing to do with it."

"Oh, very well," said her mother, going out of the room, not wholly disappointed with what she viewed as a respite, and amused by her daughter's tragics. "But if you think that the feelings have nothing to do with such a matter, you're very much mistaken." If she believed that her daughter did not know her real motives in rejecting Dan Maving, or had not been able to give them, she did not say so.

The little group of Aliceolaters on the piazza, who began to canvass the causes of Maving's going before the top of his hat disappeared below the bank on the path leading to the ferry-boat, were of two minds. One faction held that he was going because Alice had refused him, and that his gaiety up to the last moment was only a mask to hide his despair. The other side contended that, if he and Alice were not actually engaged, they understood each other, and he was going away because he wanted to tell his family, or something of that kind. Between the two opinions Miss Cotton wavered with a sentimental attraction to either. "What do you really think?" she asked Mrs. Brinkley, arriving from lunch at the corner of the piazza where the group was seated.

"Oh, what does it matter, at their age?" she demanded.

"But they're just of the age when it does happen to matter," suggested Mrs. Stamwell.

"Yes," said Mrs. Brinkley, "and that's what makes the whole thing so

perfectly ridiculous. Just think of two children, one of twenty and the other of twenty-three, proposing to decide their lifelong destiny in such a vital matter! Should we trust their judgment in regard to the smallest business affair? Of course not. They're babes in arms, morally and mentally speaking. People haven't the data for being wisely in love till they've reached the age when they haven't the least wish to be so. Oh, I suppose I thought that I was a grown woman too when I was twenty; I can look back and see that I did; and, what's more preposterous still, I thought Mr. Brinkley was a man at twenty-four. But we were no more fit to accept or reject each other at that infantile period--"

"Do you really think so?" asked Miss Cotton, only partially credulous of Mrs. Brinkley's irony.

"Yes, it does seem out of all reason," admitted Mrs. Stamwell.

"Of course it is," said Mrs. Brinkley. "If she has rejected him, she's done a very safe thing. Nobody should be allowed to marry before fifty. Then, if people married, it would be because they knew that they loved each other."

Miss Cotton reflected a moment. "It is strange that such an important question should have to be decided at an age when the judgment is so far from mature. I never happened to look at it in that light before."

"Yes," said Mrs. Brinkley--and she made herself comfortable in an arm chair commanding a stretch of the bay over which the ferry-boat must pass--"but it's only part and parcel of the whole affair. I'm sure that no grown person can see the ridiculous young things--inexperienced, ignorant, featherbrained--that nature intrusts with children, their immortal little souls and their extremely perishable little bodies, without rebelling at the whole system. When you see what most young mothers are, how perfectly unfit and incapable, you wonder that the whole race doesn't teeth and die. Yes, there's one thing I feel pretty sure of--that, as matters are arranged now, there oughtn't to be mothers at all, there ought to be only grandmothers."

The group all laughed, even Miss Cotton, but she was the first to become grave. At the bottom of her heart there was a doubt whether so light a way of treating serious things was not a little wicked.

"Perhaps," she said, "we shall have to go back to the idea that engagements and marriages are not intended to be regulated by the judgment, but by the affections."

"I don't know what's intended," said Mrs. Brinkley, "but I know what is. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the affections have it their own way, and I must say I don't think the judgment could make a greater mess of it. In fact," she continued, perhaps provoked to the excess by the deprecation she saw in Miss Cotton's eye, "I consider every broken engagement nowadays a blessing in disguise."

Miss Cotton said nothing. The other ladies said, "Why, Mrs. Brinkley!"

"Yes. The thing has gone altogether too far. The pendulum has swung in that direction out of all measure. We are married too much. And as a natural consequence we are divorced too much. The whole case is in a nutshell: if there were no marriages, there would be no divorces, and that great abuse would be corrected, at any rate."

All the ladies laughed, Miss Cotton more and more sorrowfully. She liked to have people talk as they do in genteel novels. Mrs. Brinkley's bold expressions were a series of violent shocks to her nature, and imparted a terrible vibration to the fabric of her whole little rose-coloured ideal world; if they had not been the expressions of a person whom a great many unquestionable persons accepted, who had such an undoubted standing, she would have thought them very coarse. As it was, they had a great fascination for her. "But in a case like that of"--she looked round and lowered her voice--"our young friends, I'm sure you couldn't rejoice if the engagement were broken off."

"Well, I'm not going to be 'a mush of concession,' as Emerson says, Miss Cotton. And, in the first place, how do you know they're engaged?"

"Ah, I don't; I didn't mean that they were. But wouldn't it be a little pathetic if, after all that we've seen going on, his coming here expressly on her account, and his perfect devotion to her for the past two weeks, it should end in nothing?"

"Two weeks isn't a very long time to settle the business of a lifetime."

"No."

"Perhaps she's proposed delay; a little further acquaintance."

"Oh, of course that would be perfectly right. Do you think she did?"

"Not if she's as wise as the rest of us would have been at her age. But I think she ought."

"Yes?" said Miss Cotton semi-interrogatively.

"Do you think his behaviour last night would naturally impress her with his wisdom and constancy?"

"No, I can't say that it would, but--"

"And this Alice of yours is rather a severe young person. She has her ideas, and I'm afraid they're rather heroic. She'd be just with him, of course. But there's nothing a man dreads so much as justice--some men."

"Yes," pursued Miss Cotton, "but that very disparity--I know they're very unlike--don't you think--"

"Oh yes, I know the theory about that. But if they were exactly alike in temperament, they'd be sufficiently unlike for the purposes of

counterparts. That was arranged once for all when 'male and female created He them.' I've no doubt their fancy was caught by all the kinds of difference they find in each other; that's just as natural as it's silly. But the misunderstanding, the trouble, the quarrelling, the wear and tear of spirit, that they'd have to go through before they assimilated--it makes me tired, as the boys say. No: I hope, for the young man's own sake, he's got his conge."

"But he's so kind, so good--"

"My dear, the world is surfeited with kind, good men. There are half a dozen of them at the other end of the piazza smoking; and there comes another to join them," she added, as a large figure, semicircular in profile, advanced itself from a doorway toward a vacant chair among the smokers. "The very soul of kindness and goodness." She beckoned toward her husband, who caught sight of her gesture. "Now I can tell you all his mental processes. First, surprise at seeing some one beckoning; then astonishment that it's I, though who else should beckon him?--then wonder what I can want; then conjecture that I may want him to come here; then pride in his conjecture; rebellion; compliance."

The ladies were in a scream of laughter as Mr. Brinkley lumbered heavily to their group.

"What is it?" he asked.

"Do you believe in broken engagements? Now quick--off-hand!"

"Who's engaged?"

"No matter."

"Well, you know Punch's advice to those about to marry?"

"I know--chestnuts," said his wife scornfully. They dismissed each other with tender bluntness, and he went in to get a match.

"Ah, Mrs. Brinkley," said one of the ladies, "it would be of no use for you to preach broken engagements to any one who saw you and Mr. Brinkley together." They fell upon her, one after another, and mocked her with the difference between her doctrine and practice; and they were all the more against her because they had been perhaps a little put down by her whimsical sayings.

"Yes," she admitted. "But we've been thirty years coming to the understanding that you all admire so much; and do you think it was worth the time?"

Mavering kept up until he took leave of the party of young people who had come over on the ferry-boat to Eastport for the frolic of seeing him off. It was a tremendous tour de force to accept their company as if he were glad of it, and to respond to all their gay nothings gaily; to maintain a sunny surface on his turbid misery. They had tried to make Alice come with them, but her mother pleaded a bad headache for her; and he had to parry a hundred sallies about her, and from his sick heart humour the popular insinuation that there was an understanding between them, and that they had agreed together she should not come. He had to stand about on the steamboat wharf and listen to amiable innuendoes for nearly an hour before the steamer came in from St. John. The fond adieux of his friends, their offers to take any message back, lasted during the interminable fifteen minutes that she lay at her moorings, and then he showed himself at the stern of the boat, and waved his handkerchief in acknowledgment of the last parting salutations on shore.

When it was all over, he went down into his state-room, and shut himself in, and let his misery rollover him. He felt as if there were a flood of it, and it washed him to and fro, one gall of shame, of self-accusal, of bitterness, from head to foot. But in it all he felt no resentment toward Alice, no wish to wreak any smallest part of his suffering upon her. Even while he had hoped for her love, it seemed to him that he had not seen her in all that perfection which she now had in irreparable loss. His soul bowed itself fondly over the thought of her; and, stung as he was by that last cruel word of hers, he could not upbraid her. That humility which is love casting out selfishness, the most egotistic of the passions triumphing over itself--Mavering experienced it to the full. He took all the blame. He could not see that she had ever encouraged him to hope for her love, which now appeared a treasure heaven--far beyond his scope; he could only call himself fool, and fool, and fool, and wonder that he could have met her in the remoteness of that morning with the belief that but for the follies of last night she might have answered him differently. He believed now that, whatever had gone before, she must still have rejected him. She had treated his presumption very leniently; she had really spared him.

It went on, over and over. Sometimes it varied a little, as when he thought of how, when she should tell her mother, Mrs. Pasmer must laugh. He pictured them both laughing at him; and then Mr. Pasmer--he had scarcely passed a dozen words with him--coming in and asking what they were laughing at, and their saying, and his laughing too.

At other times he figured them as incensed at his temerity, which must seem to them greater and greater, as now it seemed to him. He had never thought meanly of himself, and the world so far had seemed to think well of him; but because Alice Pasmer was impossible to him, he felt that it was an unpardonable boldness in him to have dreamed of her. What must they be saying of his having passed from the ground of society compliments and light flirtation to actually telling Alice that he loved her?

He wondered what Mrs. Pasmer had thought of his telling her that he had come to Campobello to consider the question whether he should study law

or go into business, and what motive she had supposed he had in telling her that. He asked himself what motive he had, and tried to pretend that he had none. He dramatised conversations with Mrs. Pasmer in which he laughed it off.

Ho tried to remember all that had passed the day before at the picnic, and whether Alice had done or said anything to encourage him, and he could not find that she had. All her trust and freedom was because she felt perfectly safe with him from any such disgusting absurdity as he had been guilty of. The ride home through the mist, with its sweet intimacy, that parting which had seemed so full of tender intelligence, were parts of the same illusion. There had been nothing of it on her side from the beginning but a kindness which he had now flung away for ever.

He went back to the beginning, and tried to remember the point where he had started in this fatal labyrinth of error. She had never misled him, but he had misled himself from the first glimpse of her.

Whatever was best in his light nature, whatever was generous and self-denying, came out in this humiliation. From the vision of her derision he passed to a picture of her suffering from pity for him, and wrung with a sense of the pain she had given him. He promised himself to write to her, and beg her not to care for him, because he was not worthy of that. He framed a letter in his mind, in which he posed in some noble attitudes, and brought tears into his eyes by his magnanimous appeal to her not to suffer for the sake of one so unworthy of her serious thought. He pictured her greatly moved by some of the phrases, and he composed for her a reply, which led to another letter from him, and so to a correspondence and a long and tender friendship. In the end he died suddenly, and then she discovered that she had always loved him. He discovered that he was playing the fool again, and he rose from the berth where he had tumbled himself. The state-room had that smell of parboiled paint which state-rooms have, and reminded him of the steamer in which he had gone to Europe when a boy, with the family, just after his mother's health began to fail.

He went down on the deck near the ladies' saloon, where the second-class passengers were gathered listening to the same band of plantation negroes who had amused him so much on the eastward trip. The passengers were mostly pock marked Provincials, and many of them were women; they lounged on the barrels of apples neatly piled up, and listened to the music without smiling. One of the negroes was singing to the banjo, and another began to do the rheumatic uncle's breakdown. Maverick said to himself: "I can't stand that. Oh, what a fool I am! Alice, I love you. O merciful heavens! O infernal jackass! Ow! Gaw!"

At the bow of the boat he found a gang of Italian labourers returning to the States after some job in the Provinces. They smoked their pipes and whined their Neapolitan dialect together. It made Maverick think of Dante, of the Inferno, to which he passed naturally from his self-denunciation for having been an infernal jackass. The inscription on the gate of hell ran through his mind. He thought he would make his life--his desolate, broken life--a perpetual exile, like Dante's. At the same

time he ground his teeth, and muttered: "Oh, what a fool I am! Oh, idiot! beast! Oh! oh!" The pipes reminded him to smoke, and he took out his cigarette case. The Italians looked at him; he gave all the cigarettes among them, without keeping any for himself. He determined to spend the miserable remnant of his life in going about doing good and bestowing alms.

He groaned aloud, so that the Italians noticed it, and doubtless spoke of it among themselves. He could not understand their dialect, but he feigned them saying respectfully compassionate things. Then he gnashed his teeth again, and cursed his folly. When the bell rang for supper he found himself very hungry, and ate heavily. After that he went out in front of the cabin, and walked up and down, thinking, and trying not to think. The turmoil in his mind tired him like a prodigious physical exertion.

Toward ten o'clock the night grew rougher. The sea was so phosphorescent that it broke in sheets and flakes of pale bluish flame from the bows and wheel-houses, and out in the dark the waves revealed themselves in flashes and long gleams of fire. One of the officers of the boat came and hung with Maverick over the guard. The weird light from the water was reflected on their faces, and showed them to each other.

"Well, I never saw anything like this before. Looks like hell; don't it?" said the officer.

"Yes," said Maverick. "Is it uncommon?"

"Well, I should say so. I guess we're going to have a picnic."

Maverick thought of blueberries, but he did not say anything.

"I guess it's going to be a regular circus."

Maverick did not care. He asked incuriously, "How do you find your course in such weather?"

"Well, we guess where we are, and then give her so many turns of the wheel." The officer laughed, and Maverick laughed too. He was struck by the hollow note in his laugh; it seemed to him pathetic; he wondered if he should now always laugh so, and if people would remark it. He tried another laugh; it sounded mechanical.

He went to bed, and was so worn out that he fell asleep and began to dream. A face came up out of the sea, and brooded over the waters, as in that picture of Vedder's which he calls "Memory," but the hair was not blond; it was the colour of those phosphorescent flames, and the eyes were like it. "Horrible! horrible!" he tried to shriek, but he cried, "Alice, I love you." There was a burglar in the room, and he was running after Miss Pasmer. Maverick caught him, and tried to beat him; his fists fell like bolls of cotton; the burglar drew his breath in with a long, washing sound like water.

Mavinger woke deathly sick, and heard the sweep of the waves. The boat was pitching frightfully. He struggled out into the saloon, and saw that it was five o'clock. In five hours more it would be a day since he told Alice that he loved her; it now seemed very improbable. There were a good many half-dressed people in the saloon, and a woman came running out of her state-room straight to Mavinger. She was in her stocking feet, and her hair hung down her back.

"Oh! are we going down?" she implored him. "Have we struck? Oughtn't we to pray--somebody? Shall I wake the children?"

"Mavinger reassured her, and told her there was no danger.

"Well, then," she said, "I'll go back for my shoes."

"Yes, better get your shoes."

The saloon rose round him and sank. He controlled his sickness by planting a chair in the centre and sitting in it with his eyes shut. As he grew more comfortable he reflected how he had calmed that woman, and he resolved again to spend his life in doing good. "Yes, that's the only ticket," he said to himself, with involuntary frivolity. He thought of what the officer had said, and he helplessly added, "Circus ticket--reserved seat." Then he began again, and loaded himself with execration.

The boat got into Portland at nine o'clock, and Mavinger left her, taking his hand-bag with him, and letting his trunk go on to Boston.

The officer who received his ticket at the gangplank noticed the destination on it, and said, "Got enough?"

"Yes, for one while." Mavinger recognised his acquaintance of the night before.

"Don't like picnics very much."

"No," said Mavinger, with abysmal gloom. "They don't agree with me. Never did." He was aware of trying to make his laugh bitter. The officer did not notice.

Mavinger was surprised, after the chill of the storm at sea, to find it rather a warm, close morning in Portland. The restaurant to which the hackman took him as the best in town was full of flies; they bit him awake out of the dreary reveries he fell into while waiting for his breakfast. In a mirror opposite he saw his face. It did not look haggard; it looked very much as it always did. He fancied playing a part through life--hiding a broken heart under a smile. "O you incorrigible ass!" he said to himself, and was afraid he had said it to the young lady who brought him his breakfast, and looked haughtily at him from under her bang. She was very thin, and wore a black jersey.

He tried to find out whether he had spoken aloud by addressing her pleasantly. "It's pretty cold this morning."

"What say?"

"Pretty cool."

"Oh yes. But it's pretty clo-ose," she replied, in her Yankee cantillation. She went away and left him to the bacon and eggs he had ordered at random. There was a fly under one of the slices of bacon, and Maverig confined himself to the coffee.

A man came up in a white cap and jacket from a basement in the front of the restaurant, where confectionery was sold, and threw down a mass of malleable candy on a marble slab, and began to work it. Maverig watched him, thinking fuzzily all the time of Alice, and holding long, fatiguing dialogues with the people at the Ty'n-y-Coed, whose several voices he heard.

He said to himself that it was worse than yesterday. He wondered if it would go on getting worse every day.

He saw a man pass the door of the restaurant who looked exactly like Boardman as he glanced in. The resemblance was explained by the man's coming back, and proving to be really Boardman.

XXII.

Maverig sprang at him with a demand for the reason of his being there.

"I thought it was you as I passed," said Boardman, "but I couldn't make sure--so dark back here."

"And I thought it was you, but I couldn't believe it," said Maverig, with equal force, cutting short an interior conversation with Mr. Pasmers, which had begun to hold itself since his first glimpse of Boardman.

"I came down here to do a sort of one-horse yacht race to-day," Boardman explained.

"Going to be a yacht race? Better have some breakfast. Or better not--here. Flies under your bacon."

"Rough on the flies," said Boardman, snapping the bell which summoned the spectre in the black jersey, and he sat down. "What are you doing in Portland?"

Maverig told him, and then Boardman asked him how he had left the Pasmers. Maverig needed no other hint to speak, and he spoke fully, while Boardman listened with an agreeable silence, letting the hero of the tale break into self-scornful groans and doleful laughs, and ease his heart with grotesque, inarticulate noises, and made little or no

comments.

By the time his breakfast came, Boardman was ready to say, "I didn't suppose it was so much of a mash."

"I didn't either," said Maverick, "when I left Boston. Of course I knew I was going down there to see her, but when I got there it kept going on, just like anything else, up to the last moment. I didn't realise till it came to the worst that I had become a mere pulp."

"Well, you won't stay so," said Boardman, making the first vain attempt at consolation. He lifted the steak he had ordered, and peered beneath it. All right this time, any way."

"I don't know what you mean by staying so," replied Maverick, with gloomy rejection of the comfort offered.

"You'll see that it's all for the best; that you're well out of it. If she could throw you over, after leading you on--"

"But she didn't lead me on!" exclaimed Maverick. "Don't you understand that it was all my mistake from the first? If I hadn't been perfectly besotted I should have seen that she was only tolerating me. Don't you see? Why, hang it, Boardman, I must have had a kind of consciousness of it under my thick-skinned conceit, after all, for when I came to the point--when I did come to the point--I hadn't the sand to stick to it like a man, and I tried to get her to help me. Yes, I can see that I did now. I kept fooling about, and fooling about, and it was because I had that sort of prescience--of whatever you call it--that I was mistaken about it from the very beginning."

He wished to tell Boardman about the events of the night before; but he could not. He said to himself that he did not care about their being hardly to his credit; but he did not choose to let Alice seem to have resented anything in them; it belittled her, and claimed too much for him. So Boardman had to proceed upon a partial knowledge of the facts.

"I don't suppose that boomerang way of yours, if that's what you mean, was of much use," he said.

"Use? It ruined me! But what are you going to do?" How are you going to presuppose that a girl like Miss Pasmer is interested in an idiot like you? I mean me, of course." Maverick broke off with a dolorous laugh. "And if you can't presuppose it, what are you going to do when it comes to the point? You've got to shillyshally, and then you've got to go it blind. I tell you it's a leap in the dark."

"Well, then, if you've got yourself to blame--"

"How am I to blame, I should like to know?" retorted Maverick, rejecting the first offer from another of the censure which he had been heaping upon himself: the irritation of his nerves spoke. "I did speak out at last--when it was too late. Well, let it all go," he groaned aimlessly.

"I don't care. But she isn't to blame. I don't think I could admire anybody very much who admired me. No, sir. She did just right. I was a fool, and she couldn't have treated me differently."

"Oh, I guess it'll come out all right," said Boardman, abandoning himself to mere optimism.

"How come all right?" demanded Maverick, flattered by the hope he refused. "It's come right now. I've got my deserts; that's all."

"Oh no, you haven't. What harm have you done? It's all right for you to think small beer of yourself, and I don't see how you could think anything else just at present. But you wait awhile. When did it happen?"

Maverick took out his watch. "One day, one hour, twenty minutes, and fifteen seconds ago."

"Sure about the seconds? I suppose you didn't hang round a great while afterward?"

"Well, people don't, generally," said Maverick, with scorn.

"Never tried it," said Boardman, looking critically at his fried potatoes before venturing upon them. "If you had stayed, perhaps she might have changed her mind," he added, as if encouraged to this hopeful view by the result of his scrutiny.

"Where did you get your fraudulent reputation for common-sense, Boardman?" retorted Maverick, who had followed his examination of the potatoes with involuntary interest. "She won't change her mind; she isn't one of that kind. But she's the one woman in this world who could have made a man of me, Boardman."

"Is that so?" asked Boardman lightly. "Well, she is a good-looking girl."

"She's divine!"

"What a dress that was she had on Class Day!"

"I never think what she has on. She makes everything perfect, and then makes you forget it."

"She's got style; there's no mistake about that."

"Style!" sighed Maverick; but he attempted no exemplification.

"She's awfully graceful. What a walk she's got!"

"Oh, don't, don't, Boardman! All that's true, and all that's nothing-- nothing to her goodness. She's so good, Boardman! Well, I give it up! She's religious. You wouldn't think that, may be; you can't imagine a

pretty girl religious. And she's all the more intoxicating when she's serious; and when she's forgotten your whole worthless existence she's ten thousand times more fascinating than any other girl when she's going right for you. There's a kind of look comes into her eyes--kind of absence, rapture, don't you know--when she's serious, that brings your heart right into your mouth. She makes you think of some of those pictures--I want to tell you what she said the other day at a picnic when we were off getting blueberries, and you'll understand that she isn't like other girls--that she has a soul full of--of--you know what, Boardman. She has high thoughts about everything. I don't believe she's ever had a mean or ignoble impulse--she couldn't have." In the business of imparting his ideas confidentially, Maverick had drawn himself across the table toward Boardman, without heed to what was on it.

"Look out! You'll be into my steak first thing you know."

"Oh, confound your steak?" cried Maverick, pushing the dish away. "What difference does it make? I've lost her, anyway."

"I don't believe you've lost her," said Boardman.

"What's the reason you don't?" retorted Maverick, with contempt.

"Because, if she's the serious kind of a girl you say she is, she wouldn't let you come up there and dangle round a whole fortnight without letting you know she didn't like it, unless she did like it. Now you just go a little into detail."

Maverick was quite willing. He went so much into detail that he left nothing to Boardman's imagination. He lost the sense of its calamitous close in recounting the facts of his story at Campobello; he smiled and blushed and laughed in telling certain things; he described Miss Anderson and imitated her voice; he drew heads of some of the ladies on the margin of a newspaper, and the tears came into his eyes when he repeated the cruel words which Alice had used at their last meeting.

"Oh, well, you must brace up," said Boardman. "I've got to go now. She didn't mean it, of course."

"Mean what?"

"That you were ungentlemanly. Women don't know half the time how hard they're hitting."

"I guess she meant that she didn't want me, anyway," said Maverick gloomily.

"Ah, I don't know about that. You'd better ask her the next time you see her. Good-bye." He had risen, and he offered his hand to Maverick, who was still seated.

"Why, I've half a mind to go with you."

"All right, come along. But I thought you might be going right on to Boston."

"No; I'll wait and go on with you. How, do you go to the race?"

"In the press boat."

"Any women?"

"No; we don't send them on this sort of duty."

"That settles it. I have got all I want of that particular sex for the time being." Mavering wore a very bitter air as he said this; it seemed to him that he would always be cynical; he rose, and arranged to leave his bag with the restaurateur, who put it under the counter, and then he went out with his friend.

The sun had come out, and the fog was burning away; there was life and lift in the air, which the rejected lover could not refuse to feel, and he said, looking round, and up and down the animated street. "I guess you're going to have a good day for it."

The pavement was pretty well filled with women who had begun shopping. Carriages were standing beside the pavement; a lady crossed the pavement from a shop door toward a coupe just in front of them, with her hand full of light packages; she dropped one of them, and Mavering sprang forward instinctively and picked it up for her.

"Oh, thank you!" she said, with the deep gratitude which society cultivates for the smallest services. Then she lifted her drooped eyelashes, and, with a flash of surprise, exclaimed, "Mr. Mavering!" and dropped all her packages that she might shake hands with him.

Boardman sauntered slowly on, but saw with a backward glance Mavering carrying the lady's packages to the coupe for her; saw him lift his hat there, and shake hands with somebody in the coupe, and then stand talking beside it. He waited at the corner of the block for Mavering to come up, affecting an interest in the neck-wear of a furnisher's window.

In about five minutes Mavering joined him.

"Look here, Boardman! Those ladies have snagged onto me."

"Are there two of them?"

"Yes, one inside. And they want me to go with them to see the race. Their father's got a little steam-yacht. They want you to go too."

Boardman shook his head.

"Well, that's what I told them--told them that you had to go on the press boat. They said they wished they were going on the press boat too. But I don't see how I can refuse. They're ladies that I met Class Day, and I

ought to have shown them a little more attention then; but I got so taken up with--"

"I see," said Boardman, showing his teeth, fine and even as grains of pop-corn, in a slight sarcastic smile. "Sort of poetical justice," he suggested.

"Well, it is--sort of," said Maving, with a shamefaced consciousness. "What train are you going back on?"

"Seven o'clock."

"I'll be there."

He hurried back to rejoin the ladies, and Boardman saw him, after some parley and laughter, get into the coupe, from which he inferred that they had turned down the little seat in front, and made him take it; and he inferred that they must be very jolly, sociable girls.

He did not see Maving again till the train was on its way, when he came in, looking distraughtly about for his friend. He was again very melancholy, and said dejectedly that they had made him stay to dinner, and had then driven him down to the station, bag and all. "The old gentleman came too. I was in hopes I'd find you hanging round somewhere, so that I could introduce you. They're awfully nice. None of that infernal Boston stiffness. The one you saw me talking with is married, though."

Boardman was writing out his report from a little book with shorthand notes in it. There were half a dozen other reporters in the car busy with their work. A man who seemed to be in authority said to one of them, "Try to throw in a little humour."

Maving pulled his hat over his eyes, and leaned his head on the back of his seat, and tried to sleep.

XXIII.

At his father's agency in Boston he found, the next morning, a letter from him saying that he expected to be down that day, and asking Dan to meet him at the Parker House for dinner. The letter intimated the elder Maving's expectation that his son had reached some conclusion in the matter they had talked of before he left for Campobello.

It gave Dan a shiver of self-disgust and a sick feeling of hopelessness. He was quite willing now to do whatever his father wished, but he did not see how he could face him and own his defeat.

When they met, his father did not seem to notice his despondency, and he asked him nothing about the Pasmers, of course. That would not have been

the American way. Nothing had been said between the father and son as to the special advantages of Campobello for the decision of the question pending when they saw each other last; but the son knew that the father guessed why he chose that island for the purpose; and now the elder knew that if the younger had anything to tell him he would tell it, and if he had not he would keep it. It was tacitly understood that there was no objection on the father's part to Miss Pasmer; in fact, there had been a glimmer of humorous intelligence in his eye when the son said he thought he should run down to Bar Harbour, and perhaps to Campobello, but he had said nothing to betray his consciousness.

They met in the reading-room at Parker's, and Dan said, "Hello, father," and his father answered, "Well, Dan;" and they shyly touched the hands dropped at their sides as they pressed together in the crowd. The father gave his boy a keen glance, and then took the lead into the dining-room, where he chose a corner table, and they disposed of their hats on the window-seat.

"All well at home?" asked the young fellow, as he took up the bill of fare to order the dinner. His father hated that, and always made him do it.

"Yes, yes; as usual, I believe. Minnie is off for a week at the mountains; Eunice is at home."

"Oh! How would you like some green goose, with apple-sauce, sweet-potatoes, and succotash?"

"It seems to me that was pretty good, the last time. All right, if you like it."

"I don't know that I care for anything much. I'm a little off my feed. No soup," he said, looking up at the waiter bending over him; and then he gave the order. "I think you may bring me half a dozen Blue Points, if they're good," he called after him.

"Didn't Bar Harbour agree with you--or Campobello?" asked Mr. Maving, taking the opening offered him.

"No, not very well," said Dan; and he said no more about it, leaving his father to make his own inferences as to the kind or degree of the disagreement.

"Well, have you made up your mind?" asked the father, resting his elbows on either side of his plate, and putting his hands together softly, while he looked across them with a cheery kindness at his boy.

"Yes, I have," said Dan slowly.

"Well?"

"I don't believe I care to go into the law."

"Sure?"

"Yes."

"Well, that's all right, then. I wished you to choose freely, and I suppose you've done so."

"Oh Yes."

"I think you've chosen wisely, and I'm very glad. It's a weight off my mind. I think you'll be happier in the business than you would in the law; I think you'll enjoy it. You needn't look forward to a great deal of Ponkwasset Falls, unless you like."

"I shouldn't mind going there," said Dan listlessly.

"It won't be necessary--at first. In fact, it won't be desirable. I want you to look up the business at this end a little."

Dan gave a start. "In Boston?"

"Yes. It isn't in the shape I want to have it. I propose to open a place of our own, and to put you in charge." Something in the young man's face expressed reluctance, and his father asked kindly, "Would that be distasteful to you?"

"Oh no. It isn't the thing I object to, but I don't know that I care to be in Boston." He lifted his face and looked his father full in the eyes, but with a gaze that refused to convey anything definite. Then the father knew that the boy's love affair had gone seriously wrong.

The waiter came with the dinner, and made an interruption in which they could be naturally silent. When he had put the dinner before them, and cumbered them with superfluous service, after the fashion of his kind, he withdrew a little way, and left them to resume their talk.

"Well," said the elder lightly, as if Dan's not caring to be in Boston had no particular significance for him, "I don't know that I care to have you settle down to it immediately. I rather think I'd like to have you look about first a little. Go to New York, go to Philadelphia, and see their processes there. We can't afford to get old-fashioned in our ways. I've always been more interested by the aesthetic side of the business, but you ought to have a taste for the mechanism, from your grandfather; your mother has it."

"Oh yes, sir. I think all that's very interesting," said Dan.

"Well, go to France, and see how those fellows do it. Go to London, and look up William Morris."

"Yes, that would be very nice," admitted the young fellow, beginning to catch on. "But I didn't suppose--I didn't expect to begin life with a picnic." He entered upon his sentence with a jocular buoyancy, but at

the last word, which he fatally drifted upon, his voice fell. He said to himself that he was greatly changed; that, he should never be gay and bright again; there would always be this undercurrent of sadness; he had noticed the undercurrent yesterday when he was laughing and joking with those girls at Portland.

"Oh, I don't want you to buckle down at once," said his father, smiling. "If you'd decided upon the law, I should have felt that you'd better not lose time. But as you're going into the business, I don't mind your taking a year off. It won't be lost time if you keep your eyes open. I think you'd better go down into Italy and Spain. Look up the old tapestries and stamped leathers. You may get some ideas. How would you like it?"

"First-rate. I should like it," said Dan, rising on the waft of his father's suggestion, but gloomily lapsing again. Still, it was pleasing to picture himself going about through Europe with a broken heart, and he did not deny himself the consolation of the vision.

"Well, there's nobody to dislike it," said his father cheerily. He was sure now that Dan had been jilted; otherwise he would have put forth some objection to a scheme which must interrupt his lovemaking. "There's no reason why, with our resources, we shouldn't take the lead in this business."

He went on to speak more fully of his plans, and Dan listened with a nether reference of it all to Alice, but still with a surface intelligence on which nothing was lost.

"Are you going home with me to-morrow?" asked his father as they rose from the table.

"Well, perhaps not to-morrow. I've got some of my things to put together in Cambridge yet, and perhaps I'd better look after them. But I've a notion I'd better spend the winter at home, and get an idea of the manufacture before I go abroad. I might sail in January; they say it's a good month."

"Yes, there's sense in that," said his father.

"And perhaps I won't break up in Cambridge till I've been to New York and Philadelphia. What do you think? It's easier striking them from here."

"I don't know but you're right," said his father easily.

They had come out of the dining-room, and Dan stopped to get some cigarettes in the office. He looked mechanically at the theatre bills over the cigar case. "I see Irving's at the 'Boston.'"

"Oh, you don't say!" said his father. "Let's go and see him."

"If you wish it, sir," said Dan, with pensive acquiescence. All the Mavericks were fond of the theatre, and made any mood the occasion or the

pretext of going to the play. If they were sad, they went; if they were gay, they went. As long as Dan's mother could get out-of-doors she used to have herself carried to a box in the theatre whenever she was in town; now that she no longer left her room, she had a dominant passion for hearing about actors and acting; it was almost a work of piety in her husband and children to see them and report to her.

His father left him the next afternoon, and Dan, who had spent the day with him looking into business for the first time, with a running accompaniment of Alice in all the details, remained to uninterrupted misery. He spent the evening in his room, too wretched even for the theatre. It is true that he tried to find Boardman, but Boardman was again off on some newspaper duty; and after trying at several houses in the hope, which he knew was vain, of finding any one in town yet, he shut himself up with his thoughts. They did not differ from the thoughts of the night before, and the night before that, but they were calmer, and they portended more distinctly a life of self-abnegation and solitude from that time forth. He tested his feelings, and found that it was not hurt vanity that he was suffering from: it was really wounded affection. He did not resent Alice's cruelty; he wished that she might be happy; he could endure to see her happy.

He wrote a letter to the married one of the two ladies he had spent the day with in Portland, and thanked them for making pass pleasantly a day which he would not otherwise have known how to get through. He let a soft, mysterious melancholy pervade his letter; he hinted darkly at trouble and sorrow of which he could not definitely speak. He had the good sense to tear his letter up when he had finished it, and to send a short, sprightly note instead, saying that if Mrs. Frobisher and her sister came to Boston at the end of the month, as they had spoken of doing, they must be sure to let him know. Upon the impulse given him by this letter he went more cheerfully to bed, and fell instantly asleep.

During the next three weeks he bent himself faithfully to the schemes of work his father had outlined for him. He visited New York and Philadelphia, and looked into the business and the processes there; and he returned to Ponkwasset Falls to report and compare his facts intelligently with those which he now examined in his father's manufactory for the first time. He began to understand how his father, who was a man of intellectual and artistic interests, should be fond of the work.

He spent a good deal of time with his mother, and read to her, and got upon better terms with her than they usually were. They were very much alike, and she objected to him that he was too light and frivolous. He sat with his sisters, and took an interest in their pursuits. He drove them about with his father's sorrels, and resumed something of the old relations with them which the selfish years of his college life had broken off. As yet he could not speak of Campobello or of what had happened there; and his mother and sisters, whatever they thought, made no more allusion to it than his father had done.

They mercifully took it for granted that matters must have gone wrong

there, or else he would speak about them, for there had been some gay banter among them concerning the objects of his expedition before he left home. They had heard of the heroine of his Class Day, and they had their doubts of her, such as girls have of their brothers' heroines. They were not inconsolably sorry to have her prove unkind; and their mother found in the probable event another proof of their father's total want of discernment where women were concerned, for the elder Maverick had come home from Class Day about as much smitten with this mysterious Miss Pasher as Dan was. She talked it over indignantly with her daughters; they were glad of Dan's escape, but they were incensed with the girl who could let him escape, and they inculpated her in a high degree of heartless flirtation. They knew how sweet Dan was, and they believed him most sincere and good. He had been brilliantly popular in college, and he was as bright as he could be. What was it she chose not to like in him? They vexed themselves with asking how or in what way she thought herself better. They would not have had her love Dan, but they were hot against her for not loving him.

They did not question him, but they tried in every way to find out how much he was hurt, and they watched him in every word and look for signs of change to better or worse, with a growing belief that he was not very much hurt.

It could not be said that in three weeks he forgot Alice, or had begun to forget her; but he had begun to reconcile himself to his fate, as people do in their bereavements by death. His consciousness habituated itself to the facts as something irretrievable. He no longer framed in his mind situations in which the past was restored. He knew that he should never love again, but he had moments, and more and more of them, in which he experienced that life had objects besides love. There were times when he tingled with all the anguish of the first moment of his rejection, when he stopped in whatever he was doing, or stood stock-still, as a man does when arrested by a physical pang, breathless, waiting. There were other times when he went about steeped in gloom so black that all the world darkened with it, and some mornings when he woke he wished that the night had lasted for ever, and felt as if the daylight had uncovered his misery and his shame to every one. He never knew when he should have these moods, and he thought he should have them as long as he lived. He thought this would be something rather fine. He had still other moods, in which he saw an old man with a grey moustache, like Colonel Newcome, meeting a beautiful white-haired lady; the man had never married, and he had not seen this lady for fifty years. He bent over, and kissed her hand.

"You idiot!" said Maverick to himself. Throughout he kept a good appetite. In fact, after that first morning in Portland, he had been hungry three times a day with perfect regularity. He lost the idea of being sick; he had not even a furred tongue. He fell asleep pretty early, and he slept through the night without a break. He had to laugh a great deal with his mother and sisters, since he could not very well mope without expecting them to ask why, and he did not wish to say why. But there were some laughs which he really enjoyed with the Yankee foreman of the works, who was a droll, after a common American pattern, and said

things that were killingly funny, especially about women, of whom his opinions were sarcastic.

Dan Maverick suffered, but not solidly. His suffering was short, and crossed with many gleams of respite and even joy. His disappointment made him really unhappy, but not wholly so; it was a genuine sorrow, but a sorrow to which he began to resign himself even in the monotony of Ponkwasset Falls, and which admitted the thought of Mrs. Frobisher's sister by the time business called him to Boston.

XXIV.

Before the end of the first week after Dan came back to town, that which was likely to happen whenever chance brought him and Alice together had taken place.

It was one of the soft days that fall in late October, when the impending winter seems stayed, and the warm breath of the land draws seaward and over a thousand miles of Indian summer. The bloom came and went in quick pulses over the girl's temples as she sat with her head thrown back in the corner of the car, and from moment to moment she stirred slightly as if some stress of rapture made it hard for her to get her breath; a little gleam of light fell from under her fallen eyelids into the eyes of the young man beside her, who leaned forward slightly and slanted his face upward to meet her glances. They said some words, now and then, indistinguishable to the others; in speaking they smiled slightly. Sometimes her hand wavered across her lap; in both their faces there was something beyond happiness--a transport, a passion, the brief splendour of a supreme moment.

They left the car at the Arlington Street corner of the Public Garden, and followed the winding paths diagonally to the further corner on Charles Street.

"How stupid we were to get into that ridiculous horse-car!" she said.

"What in the world possessed us to do it?"

"I can't imagine," he answered. "What a waste of time it was! If we had walked, we might have been twice as long coming. And now you're going to send me off so soon!"

"I don't send you," she murmured.

"But you want me to go."

"Oh no! But you'd better."

"I can't do anything against your wish."

"I wish it--for your own good."

"Ah, do let me go home with you, Alice?"

"Don't ask it, or I must say yes."

"Part of the way, then?"

"No; not a step! You must take the first car for Cambridge. What time is it now?"

"You can see by the clock on the Providence Depot."

"But I wish you to go by your watch, now. Look!"

"Alice!" he cried, in pure rapture.

"Look!"

"It's a quarter of one."

"And we've been three hours together already! Now you must simply fly. If you came home with me I should be sure to let you come in, and if I don't see mamma alone first, I shall die. Can't you understand?"

"No; but I can do the next best thing: I can misunderstand. You want to be rid of me."

"Shall you be rid of me when we've parted?" she asked, with an inner thrill of earnestness in her gay tone.

"Alice!"

"You know I didn't mean it, Dan."

"Say it again."

"What?"

"Dan."

"Dan, love! Dan, dearest!"

"Will that car of yours never come? I've promised myself not to leave you till it does, and if I stay here any longer I shall go wild. I can't believe it's happened. Say it again!"

"Say what?"

"That--"

"That I love you? That we're engaged?"

"I don't believe it. I can't." She looked impatiently up the street.

"Oh, there comes your car! Run! Stop it!"

"I don't run to stop cars." He made a sign, which the conductor obeyed, and the car halted at the further crossing.

She seemed to have forgotten it, and made no movement to dismiss him.

"Oh, doesn't it seem too good to be standing here talking in this way, and people think it's about the weather, or society?" She set her head a little on one side, and twirled the open parasol on her shoulder.

"Yes, it does. Tell me it's true, love!"

"It's true. How splendid you are!" She said it with an effect for the world outside of saying it was a lovely day.

He retorted, with the same apparent nonchalance, "How beautiful you are! How good! How divine!"

The conductor, seeing himself apparently forgotten, gave his bell a vicious snap, and his car jolted away.

She started nervously. "There! you've lost your car, Dan."

"Have I?" asked Maving, without troubling himself to look after it.

She laughed now, with a faint suggestion of unwillingness in her laugh.

"What are you going to do?"

"Walk home with you."

"No, indeed; you know I can't let you."

"And are you going to leave me here alone on the street corner, to be run over by the first bicycle that comes along?"

"You can sit down in the Garden, and wait for the next car."

"No; I would rather go back to the Art Museum, and make a fresh start."

"To the Art Museum?" she murmured, tenderly.

"Yes. Wouldn't you like to see it again?"

"Again? I should like to pass my whole life in it!"

"Well, walk back with me a little way. There's no hurry about the car."

"Dan!" she said, in a helpless compliance, and they paced very, very slowly along the Beacon Street path in the Garden. "This is ridiculous."

"Yes, but it's delightful."

"Yes, that's what I meant. Do you suppose any one ever--ever--"

"Made love there before?"

"How can you say such things? Yes. I always supposed it would be--
somewhere else."

It was somewhere else--once."

"Oh, I meant--the second time."

"Then you did think there was going to be a second time?"

"How do I know? I wished it. Do you like me to say that?"

"I wish you would never say anything else."

"Yes; there can't be any harm in it now. I thought that if you had ever-
-liked me, you would still--"

"So did I; but I couldn't believe that you--"

"Oh, I could."

"Alice!"

"Don't you like my confessing it! You asked me to."

"Like it!"

"How silly we are!"

"Not half so silly as we've been for the last two months. I think we've
just come to our senses. At least I have."

"Two months!" she sighed. "Has it really been so long as that?"

"Two years! Two centuries! It was back in the Dark Ages when you
refused me."

"Dark Ages! I should think so! But don't say refused. It wasn't
refusing, exactly."

"What was it, then?"

"Oh, I don't know. Don't speak of it now."

"But, Alice, why did you refuse me?"

"Oh, I don't know. You mustn't ask me now. I'll tell you some time."

"Well, come to think of it," said Maverick, laughing it all lightly away,
"there's no hurry. Tell me why you accepted me to-day."

"I--I couldn't help it. When I saw you I wanted to fall at your feet."

"What an idea! I didn't want to fall at yours. I was awfully mad. I shouldn't have spoken to you if you hadn't stopped me and held out your hand."

"Really? Did you really hate me, Dan?"

"Well, I haven't exactly doted on you since we last met."

She did not seem offended at this. "Yes, I suppose so. And I've gone on being fonder and fonder of you every minute since that day. I wanted to call you back when you had got half-way to Eastport."

"I wouldn't have come. It's bad luck to turn back."

She laughed at his drolling. "How funny you are! Now I'm of rather a gloomy temperament. Did, you know it?"

"You don't look it."

"Oh, but I am. Just now I'm rather excited and--happy."

"So glad!"

"Go on! go on! I like you to make fun of me."

The benches on either side were filled with nursemaids in charge of baby-carriages, and of young children who were digging in the sand with their little beach shovels, and playing their games back and forth across the walk unrebuked by the indulgent policemen. A number of them had enclosed a square in the middle of the path with four of the benches, which they made believe was a fort. The lovers had to walk round it; and the children, chasing one another, dashed into them headlong, or, backing off from pursuit, bumped up against them. They did not seem to know it, but walked slowly on without noticing: they were not aware of an occasional benchful of rather shabby young fellows who stared hard at the stylish girl and well-dressed young man talking together in such intense low tones, with rapid interchange of radiant glances.

"Oh, as to making fun of you, I was going to say--" Mavering began, and after a pause he broke off with a laugh. "I forget what I was going to say."

"Try to remember."

"I can't."

How strange that we should have both happened to go to the Museum this morning!" she sighed. Then, "Dan," she broke in, "do you suppose that heaven is any different from this?"

"I hope not--if I'm to go there."

"Hush, dear; you mustn't talk so."

"Why, you provoked me to it."

"Did I? Did I really? Do you think I tempted you to do it? Then I must be wicked, whether I knew I was doing it or not. Yes."

The break in her voice made him look more keenly at her, and he saw the tears glimmer in her eyes. "Alice!"

"No; I'm not good enough for you. I always said that."

"Then don't say it any more. That's the only thing I won't let you say."

"Do you forbid it, really? Won't you let me even think it?"

"No, not even think it."

"How lovely you are! Oh! I like to be commanded by you."

"Do you? You'll have lots of fun, then. I'm an awfully commanding spirit."

"I didn't suppose you were so humorous--always. I'm afraid you won't like me. I've no sense of fun."

"And I'm a little too funny sometimes, I'm afraid."

"No, you never are. When?"

"That night at the Trevors'. You didn't like it."

"I thought Miss Anderson was rather ridiculous," said Alice. "I don't like buffoonery in women."

"Nor I in men," said Mavinger, smiling. "I've dropped it."

"Well, now we must part. I must go home at once," said Alice. "It's perfectly insane."

"Oh no, not yet; not till we've said something else; not till we've changed the subject."

"What subject?"

"Miss Anderson."

Alice laughed and blushed, but she was not vexed. She liked to have him understand her. "Well, now," she said, as if that were the next thing, "I'm going to cross here at once and walk up the other pavement, and you must go back through the Garden; or else I shall never get away from you."

"May I look over at you?"

"You may glance, but you needn't expect me to return your glance."

"Oh no."

"And I want you to take the very first Cambridge car that comes along. I command you to."

"I thought you wanted me to do the commanding."

"So I do--in essentials. If you command me not to cry when I get home, I won't."

She looked at him with an ecstasy of self-sacrifice in her eyes.

"Ah, I sha'n't do that. I can't tell what would open. But--Alice!"

"Well, what?" She drifted closely to him, and looked fondly up into his face. In walking they had insensibly drawn nearer together, and she had been obliged constantly to put space between them. Now, standing at the corner of Arlington Street, and looking tentatively across Beacon, she abandoned all precautions.

"What! I forget. Oh yes! I love you!"

"But you said that before, dearest!"

"Yes; but just now it struck me as a very novel idea. What if your mother shouldn't like the idea?"

"Nonsense! you know she perfectly idolises you. She did from the first. And doesn't she know how I've begin behaving about you ever since I--lost you?"

"How have you behaved? Do tell me, Alice?"

"Some time; not now," she said; and with something that was like a gasp, and threatened to be a sob, she suddenly whipped across the road. He walked back to Charles Street by the Garden path, keeping abreast of her, and not losing sight of her for a moment, except when the bulk of a string team watering at the trough beside the pavement intervened. He hurried by, and when he had passed it he found himself exactly abreast of her again. Her face was turned toward him; they exchanged a smile, lost in space. At the corner of Charles Street he deliberately crossed over to her.

"O dearest love! why did you come?" she implored.

"Because you signed to me."

"I hoped you wouldn't see it. If we're both to be so weak as this, what are we going to do?" But I'm glad you came. Yes: I was frightened.

They must have overheard us there when we were talking."

"Well, I didn't say anything I'm ashamed of. Besides, I shouldn't care much for the opinion of those nurses and babies."

"Of course not. But people must have seen us. Don't stand here talking, Dan! Do come on!" She hurried him across the street, and walked him swiftly up the incline of Beacon Street. There, in her new fall suit, with him, glossy-hatted, faultlessly gloved, at a fit distance from her side, she felt more in keeping with the social frame of things than in the Garden path, which was really only a shade better than the Beacon Street Mall of the Common. "Do you suppose anybody saw us that knew us?"

"I hope so! Don't you want people to know it?"

"Yes, of course. They will have to know it--in the right way. Can you believe that it's only half a year since we met? It won't be a year till Class Day."

"I don't believe it, Alice. I can't recollect anything before I knew you."

"Well, now, as time is so confused, we must try to live for eternity. We must try to help each other to be good. Oh, when I think what a happy girl I am, I feel that I should be the most ungrateful person under the sun not to be good. Let's try to make our lives perfect--perfect! They can be. And we mustn't live for each other alone. We must try to do good as well as be good. We must be kind and forbearing with every one."

He answered, with tender seriousness, "My life's in your hands, Alice. It shall be whatever you wish."

They were both silent in their deep belief of this. When they spoke again, she began gaily: "I shall never get over the wonder of it. How strange that we should meet at the Museum!" They had both said this already, but that did not matter; they had said nearly everything two or three times. "How did you happen to be there?" she asked, and the question was so novel that she added, "I haven't asked you before."

He stopped, with a look of dismay that broke up in a hopeless laugh. "Why, I went there to meet some people--some ladies. And when I saw you I forgot all about them."

Alice laughed to; this was a part of their joy, their triumph.

"Who are they?" she asked indifferently, and only to heighten the absurdity by realising the persons.

"You don't know them," he said. "Mrs. Frobisher and her sister, of Portland. I promised to meet them there and go out to Cambridge with them."

"What will they think?" asked Alice. "It's too amusing."

"They'll think I didn't come," said Maverick, with the easy conscience of youth and love; and again they laughed at the ridiculous position together. "I remember now I was to be at the door, and they were to take me up in their carriage. I wonder how long they waited? You put everything else out of my head."

"Do you think I'll keep it out?" she asked archly.

"Oh yes; there is nothing else but you now."

The eyes that she dropped, after a glance at him, glistened with tears.

A lump came into his throat. "Do you suppose," he asked huskily, "that we can ever misunderstand each other again?"

"Never. I see everything clearly now. We shall trust each other implicitly, and at the least thing that isn't clear we can speak. Promise me that you'll speak."

"I will, Alice. But after this all will be clear. We shall deal with each other as we do with ourselves."

"Yes; that will be the way."

"And we mustn't wait for question from each other. We shall know--we shall feel--when there's any misgiving, and then the one that's caused it will speak."

"Yes," she sighed emphatically. "How perfectly you say it? But that's because you feel it, because you are good."

They walked on, treading the air in a transport of fondness for each other. Suddenly he stopped.

"Miss Pasmor, I feel it my duty to warn you that you're letting me go home with you."

"Am I? How noble of you to tell me, Dan; for I know you don't want to tell. Well, I might as well. But I sha'n't let you come in. You won't try, will you? Promise me you won't try."

"I shall only want to come in the first door."

"What for?"

"What for? Oh, for half a second."

She turned away her face.

He went on. "This engagement has been such a very public affair, so far, that I think I'd like to see my fiancee alone for a moment."

"I don't know what in the world you can have to say more."

He went into the first door with her, and then he went with her upstairs to the door of Mrs. Pasher's apartment. The passages of the Cavendish were not well lighted; the little lane or alley that led down to this door from the stairs landing was very dim.

"So dark here!" murmured Alice, in a low voice, somewhat tremulous.

"But not too dark."

XXV.

She burst into the room where her mother sat looking over some housekeeping accounts. His kiss and his name were upon her lips; her soul was full of him.

"Mamma!" she panted.

Her mother did not look round. She could have had no premonition of the vital news that her daughter was bringing, and she went on comparing the first autumn month's provision bill with that of the last spring month, and trying to account for the difference.

The silence, broken by the rattling of the two bills in her mother's hands as she glanced from one to the other through her glasses, seemed suddenly impenetrable, and the prismatic world of the girl's rapture burst like a bubble against it. There is no explanation of the effect outside of temperament and overwrought sensibilities. She stared across the room at her mother, who had not heard her, and then she broke into a storm of tears.

"Alice!" cried her mother, with that sanative anger which comes to rescue women from the terror of any sudden shock. "What is the matter with you?--what do you mean?" She dropped both of the provision bills to the floor, and started toward her daughter.

"Nothing--nothing! Let me go. I want to go to my room." She tried to reach the door beyond her mother.

"Indeed you shall not!" cried Mrs. Pasher. "I will not have you behaving so! What has happened to you? Tell me. You have frightened me half out of my senses."

The girl gave up her efforts to escape, and flung herself on the sofa, with her face in the pillow, where she continued to sob. Her mother began to relent at the sight of her passion. As a woman and as a mother she knew her daughter, and she knew that this passion, whatever it was, must have vent before there could be anything intelligible between them. She did not press her with further question, but set about making her a

little more comfortable on the sofa; she pulled the pillow straight, and dropped a light shawl over the girl's shoulders, so that she should not take cold.

Then Mrs. Pasma had made up her mind that Alice had met Mavering somewhere, and that this outburst was the retarded effect of seeing him. During the last six weeks she had assisted at many phases of feeling in regard to him, and knew more clearly than Alice herself the meaning of them all. She had been patient and kind, with the resources that every woman finds in herself when it is the question of a daughter's ordeal in an affair of the heart which she has favoured.

The storm passed as quickly as it came, and Alice sat upright casting off the wraps. But once checked with the fact on her tongue, she found it hard to utter it.

"What is it, Alice?--what is it?" urged her mother.

"Nothing. I--Mr. Mavering--we met--I met him at the Museum, and--we're engaged! It's really so. It seems like raving, but it's true. He came with me to the door; I wouldn't let him come in. Don't you believe it? Oh, we are! indeed we are! Are you glad, mamma? You know I couldn't have lived without him."

She trembled on the verge of another outbreak.

Mrs. Pasma sacrificed her astonishment in the interest of sanity, and returned quietly: "Glad, Alice! You know that I think he's the sweetest and best fellow in the world."

"O mamma!"

"But are you sure--"

"Yes, Yes. I'm not crazy; it isn't a dream. he was there--and I met him--I couldn't run away--I put out my hand; I couldn't help it--I thought I should give way; and he took it; and then--then we were engaged. I don't know what we said: I went in to look at the 'Joan of Arc' again, and there was no one else there. He seemed to feel just as I did. I don't know whether either of us spoke. But we, knew we were engaged, and we began to talk."

Mrs. Pasma began to laugh. To her irreverent soul only the droll side of the statement appeared.

"Don't, mamma!" pleaded Alice piteously.

"No, no; I won't. But I hope Dan Mavering will be a little more definite about it when I'm allowed to see him. Why couldn't he have come in with you?"

"It would have killed me. I couldn't let him see me cry, and I knew I should break down."

"He'll have to see you cry a great many times, Alice," said her mother, with almost unexampled seriousness.

"Yes, but not yet--not so soon. He must think I'm very gloomy, and I want to be always bright and cheerful with him. He knows why I wouldn't let him come in; he knew I was going to have a cry."

Mrs. Pasmer continued to laugh.

Don't, mamma!" pleaded Alice.

"No, I won't," replied her mother, as before. "I suppose he was mystified. But now, if it's really settled between you, he'll be coming here soon to see your papa and me."

"Yes--to-night."

"Well, it's very sudden," said Mrs. Pasmer. "Though I suppose these things always seem so."

"Is it too sudden?" asked Alice, with misgiving. "It seemed so to me when it was going on, but I couldn't stop it."

Her mother laughed at her simplicity. "No, when it begins once, nothing can stop it. But you've really known each other a good while, and for the last six weeks at least you've known your own mind about him pretty clearly. It's a pity you couldn't have known it before."

"Yes, that's what he says. He says it was such a waste of time. Oh, everything he says is perfectly fascinating!"

Her mother laughed and laughed again.

"What is it, mamma? Are you laughing at me?"

"Oh no. What an idea!"

"He couldn't seem to understand why I didn't say Yes the first time, if I meant it." She looked down dreamily at her hands in her lap, and then she said, with a blush and a start, "They're very queer, don't you think?"

"Who?"

"Young men."

"Oh, very."

"Yes," Alice went on musingly. "Their minds are so different. Everything they say and do is so unexpected, and yet it seems to be just right."

Mrs. Pasmer asked herself if this single-mindedness was to go on for ever, but she had not the heart to treat it with her natural levity. Probably

it was what charmed Maving with the child. Mrs. Pasmer had the firm belief that Maving was not single-minded, and she respected him for it. She would not spoil her daughter's perfect trust and hope by any of the cynical suggestions of her own dark wisdom, but entered into her mood, as such women are able to do, and flattered out of her every detail of the morning's history. This was a feat which Mrs. Pasmer enjoyed for its own sake, and it fully satisfied the curiosity which she naturally felt to know all. She did not comment upon many of the particulars; she opened her eyes a little at the notion of her daughter sitting for two or three hours and talking with a young man in the galleries of the Museum, and she asked if anybody they knew had come in. When she heard that there were only strangers, and very few of them, she said nothing; and she had the same consolation in regard to the walking back and forth in the Garden. She was so full of potential escapades herself, so apt to let herself go at times, that the fact of Alice's innocent self-forgetfulness rather satisfied a need of her mother's nature; she exulted in it when she learned that there were only nurses and children in the Garden.

"And so you think you won't take up art this winter?" she said, when, in the process of her cross-examination, Alice had left the sofa and got as far as the door, with her hat in her hand and her sacque on her arm.

"No."

"And the Sisters of St. James--you won't join them either?"

The girl escaped from the room.

"Alice! Alice!" her mother called after her; she came back. You haven't told me how he happened to be there."

"Oh, that was the most amusing part of it. He had gone there to keep an appointment with two ladies from Portland. They were to take him up in their carriage and drive out to Cambridge, and when he saw me he forgot all about them."

"And what became of them?"

"We don't know. Isn't it ridiculous?"

If it appeared other or more than this to Mrs. Pasmer, she did not say. She merely said, after a moment, "Well, it was certainly devoted, Alice," and let her go.

XXVI.

Maving came in the evening, rather excessively well dressed, and with a hot face and cold hands. While he waited, nominally alone, in the little drawing room for Mr. Pasmer, Alice flew in upon him for a swift embrace, which prolonged itself till the father's step was heard outside the door,

and then she still had time to vanish by another: the affair was so nicely adjusted that if Maverick had been in his usual mind he might have fancied the connivance of Mrs. Pasmer.

He did not say what he had meant to say to Alice's father, but it seemed to serve the purpose, for he emerged presently from the sound of his own voice, unnaturally clamorous, and found Mr. Pasmer saying some very civil things to him about his character and disposition, so far as they had been able to observe it, and their belief and trust in him. There seemed to be something provisional or probational intended, but Dan could not make out what it was, and finally it proved of no practical effect. He merely inferred that the approval of his family was respectfully expected, and he hastened to say, "Oh, that's all right, sir." Mr. Pasmer went on with more civilities, and lost himself in dumb conjecture as to whether Maverick's father had been in the class before him or the class after him in Harvard. He used his black eyebrows a good deal during the interview, and Maverick conceived an awe of him greater than he had felt at Campobello, yet not unmixed with the affection in which the newly accepted lover embraces even the relations of his betrothed. From time to time Mr. Pasmer looked about with the vague glance of a man unused to being so long left to his own guidance; and one of these appeals seemed at last to bring Mrs. Pasmer through the door, to the relief of both the men, for they had improvidently despatched their business, and were getting out of talk. Mr. Pasmer had, in fact, already asked Dan about the weather outside when his wife appeared.

Dan did not know whether he ought to kiss her or not, but Mrs. Pasmer did not in the abstract seem like a very kissing kind of person, and he let himself be guided by this impression, in the absence of any fixed principle applying to the case. She made some neat remark concerning the probable settlement of the affair with her husband, and began to laugh and joke about it in a manner that was very welcome to Dan; it did not seem to him that it ought to be treated so solemnly.

But though Mrs. Pasmer laughed and joked; he was aware of her meaning business--business in the nicest sort of a way, but business after all, and he liked her for it. He was glad to be explicit about his hopes and plans, and told what his circumstances were so fully that Mrs. Pasmer, whom his frankness gratified and amused, felt obliged to say that she had not meant to ask so much about his affairs, and he must excuse her if she had seemed to do so. She had her own belief that Maverick would understand, but she did not mind that. She said that, of course, till his own family had been consulted, it must not be considered seriously--that Mr. Pasmer insisted upon that point; and when Dan vehemently asserted the acquiescence of his family beforehand, and urged his father's admiration for Alice in proof, she reminded him that his mother was to be considered, and put Mr. Pasmer's scruples forward as her own reason for obduracy. In her husband's presence she attributed to him, with his silent assent, all sorts of reluctances and delicate compunctions; she gave him the importance which would have been naturally a husband's due in such an affair, and ingratiated herself more and more with the young man. She ignored Mr. Pasmer's withdrawal when it took place, after a certain lapse of time, and as the moment had come for that, she began to let herself go.

She especially approved of the idea of going abroad and confessed her disappointment with her present experiment of America, where it appeared there was no leisure class of men sufficiently large to satisfy the social needs of Mr. Pasmer's nature, and she told Dan that he might expect them in Europe before long. Perhaps they might all three meet him there. At this he betrayed so clearly that he now intended his going to Europe merely as a sequel to his marrying Alice, while he affected to fall in with all Mrs. Pasmer said, that she grew fonder than ever of him for his ardour and his futile duplicity. If it had been in Dan's mind to take part in the rite, Mrs. Pasmer was quite ready at this point to embrace him with motherly tenderness. Her tough little heart was really in her throat with sympathy when she made an errand for the photograph of an English vicarage, which they had hired the summer of the year before, and she sent Alice back with it alone.

It seemed so long since they had met that the change in Alice did not strike him as strange or as too rapidly operated. They met with the fervour natural after such a separation, and she did not so much assume as resume possession of him. It was charming to have her do it, to have her act as if they had always been engaged, to have her try to press down the cowlick that started capriciously across his crown, and to straighten his necktie, and then to drop beside him on the sofa; it thrilled and awed him; and he silently worshipped the superior composure which her sex has in such matters. Whatever was the provisional interpretation which her father and mother pretended to put upon the affair, she apparently had no reservations, and they talked of their future as a thing assured. The Dark Ages, as they agreed to call the period of despair for ever closed that morning, had matured their love till now it was a rapture of pure trust. They talked as if nothing could prevent its fulfilment, and they did not even affect to consider the question of his family's liking it or not liking it. She said that she thought his father was delightful, and he told her that his father had taken the greatest fancy to her at the beginning, and knew that Dan was in love with her. She asked him about his mother, and she said just what he could have wished her to say about his mother's sufferings, and the way she bore them. They talked about Alice's going to see her.

"Of course your father will bring your sisters to see me first."

"Is that the way?" he asked: "You may depend upon his doing the right thing, whatever it is."

"Well, that's the right thing," she said. "I've thought it out; and that reminds me of a duty of ours, Dan!"

"A duty?" he repeated, with a note of reluctance for its untimeliness.

"Yes. Can't you think what?"

"No; I didn't know there was a duty left in the world."

"It's full of them."

"Oh, don't say that, Alice!" He did not like this mood so well as that of the morning, but his dislike was only a vague discomfort--nothing formulated or distinct.

"Yes," she persisted; "and we must do them. You must go to those ladies you disappointed so this morning, and apologise--explain."

Dan laughed. "Why, it wasn't such a very ironclad engagement as all that, Alice. They said they were going to drive out to Cambridge over the Milldam, and I said I was going out there to get some of my traps together, and they could pick me up at the Art Museum if they liked. Besides, how could I explain?"

She laughed consciously with him. "Of course. But," she added ruefully, "I wish you hadn't disappointed them."

"Oh, they'll get over it. If I hadn't disappointed them, I shouldn't be here, and I shouldn't like that. Should you?"

"No; but I wish it hadn't happened. It's a blot, and I didn't want a blot on this day."

"Oh, well, it isn't very much of a blot, and I can easily wipe it off. I'll tell you what, Alice! I can write to Mrs. Frobisher, when our engagement comes out, and tell her how it was. She'll enjoy the joke, and so will Miss Wrayne. They're jolly and easygoing; they won't mind."

"How long have you known them?"

"I met them on Class Day, and then I saw them--the day after I left Campobello." Dan laughed a little.

"How, saw them?"

"Well, I went to a yacht race with them. I happened to meet them in the street, and they wanted me to go; and I was all broken up, and--I went."

"Oh!" said Alice. "The day after I--you left Campobello?"

"Well--yes."

"And I was thinking of you all that day as--And I couldn't bear to look at anybody that day, or speak!"

"Well, the fact is, I--I was distracted, and I didn't know what I was doing. I was desperate; I didn't care."

"How did you find out about the yacht race?"

"Boardman told me. Boardman was there."

"Did he know the ladies? Did he go too?"

"No. He was there to report the race for the Events. He went on the press boat."

"Oh!" said Alice. "Was there a large party?"

"No, no. Not very. Just ourselves, in fact. They were awfully kind. And they made me go home to dinner with them."

"They must have been rather peculiar people," said Alice. "And I don't see how--so soon--" She could not realise that Maving was then a rejected man, on whom she had voluntarily renounced all claim. A retroactive resentment which she could not control possessed her with the wish to punish those bold women for being agreeable to one who had since become everything to her, though then he was ostensibly nothing.

In a vague way, Dan felt her displeasure with that passage of his history, but no man could have fully imagined it.

"I couldn't tell half the time what I was saying or eating. I talked at random and ate at random. I guess they thought something was wrong; they asked me who was at Campobello."

"Indeed!"

"But you may be sure I didn't give myself away. I was awfully broken up," he concluded inconsequently.

She liked his being broken up, but she did not like the rest. She would not press the question further now. She only said rather gravely, "If it's such a short acquaintance, can you write to them in that familiar way?"

"Oh yes! Mrs. Frobisher is one of that kind."

Alice was silent a moment before she said, "I think you'd better not write. Let it go," she sighed.

"Yes, that's what I think," said Dan. "Better let it go. I guess it will explain itself in the course of time. But I don't want any blots around." He leaned over and looked her smilingly in the face.

"Oh no," she murmured; and then suddenly she caught him round the neck, crying and sobbing. "It's only--because I wanted it to be--perfect. Oh, I wonder if I've done right? Perhaps I oughtn't to have taken you, after all; but I do love you--dearly, dearly! And I was so unhappy when I'd lost you. And now I'm afraid I shall be a trial to you--nothing but a trial."

The first tears that a young man sees a woman shed for love of him are inexpressibly sweeter than her smiles. Dan choked with tender pride and pity. When he found his voice, he raved out with incoherent endearments that she only made him more and more happy by her wish to have the affair perfect, and that he wished her always to be exacting with him, for that

would give him a chance to do something for her, and all that he desired, as long as he lived, was to do just what she wished.

At the end of his vows and entreaties, she lifted her face radiantly, and bent a smile upon him as sunny as that with which the sky after a summer storm denies that there has ever been rain in the world.

"Ah! you--" He could say no more. He could not be more enraptured than he was. He could only pass from surprise to surprise, from delight to delight. It was her love of him which wrought these miracles. It was all a miracle, and no part more wonderful than another. That she, who had seemed as distant as a star, and divinely sacred from human touch, should be there in his arms, with her head on his shoulder, where his kiss could reach her lips, not only unforbidden, but eagerly welcome, was impossible, and yet it was true.. But it was no more impossible and no truer, than that a being so poised, so perfectly self-centred as she, should already be so helplessly dependent upon him for her happiness. In the depths of his soul he invoked awful penalties upon himself if ever he should betray her trust, if ever he should grieve that tender heart in the slightest thing, if from that moment he did not make his whole life a sacrifice and an expiation.

He uttered some of these exalted thoughts, and they did not seem to appear crazy to her. She said yes, they must make their separate lives offerings to each other, and their joint lives an offering to God. The tears came into his eyes at these words of hers: they were so beautiful and holy and wise. He agreed that one ought always to go to church, and that now he should never miss a service. He owned that he had been culpable in the past. He drew her closer to him--if that were possible--and sealed his words with a kiss.

But he could not realise his happiness then, or afterward, when he walked the streets under the thinly misted moon of that Indian summer night.

He went down to the Events office when he left Alice, and found Boardman, and told him that he was engaged, and tried to work Boardman up to some sense of the greatness of the fact. Boardman shoved his fine white teeth under his spare moustache, and made acceptable jokes, but he did not ask indiscreet questions, and Dan's statement of the fact did not seem to give it any more verity than it had before. He tried to get Boardman to come and walk with him and talk it over; but Boardman said he had just been detailed to go and work up the case of a Chinaman who had suicided a little earlier in the evening.

"Very well, then; I'll go with you," said Maverick. "How can you live in such a den as this?" he asked, looking about the little room before Boardman turned down his incandescent electric. "There isn't anything big enough to hold me but all outdoors."

In the street he linked his arm through his friend's, and said he felt that he had a right to know all about the happy ending of the affair, since he had been told of that miserable phase of it at Portland. But when he came to the facts he found himself unable to give them with the

fulness he had promised. He only imparted a succinct statement as to the where and when of the whole matter, leaving the how of it untold.

The sketch was apparently enough for Boardman. For all comment, he reminded Maverick that he had told him at Portland it would come out all right.

"Yes, you did, Boardman; that's a fact," said Dan; and he conceived a higher respect for the penetration of Boardman than he had before.

They stopped at a door in a poor court which they had somehow reached without Maverick's privity. "Will you come in?" asked Boardman.

"What for?"

"Chinaman."

"Chinaman?" Then Maverick remembered. "Good heavens! no. What have I got to do with him?"

"Both mortal," suggested the reporter.

The absurdity of this idea, though a little grisly, struck Dan as a good joke. He hit the companionable Boardman on the shoulder, and then gave him a little hug, and remounted his path of air, and walked off in it.

XXVII.

Maverick first woke in the morning with the mechanical recurrence of that shame and grief which each day had brought him since Alice refused him. Then with a leap of the heart came the recollection of all that had happened yesterday. Yet lurking within his rapture was a mystery of regret: a reasonless sense of loss, as if the old feeling had been something he would have kept. Then this faded, and he had only the longing to see her, to realise in her presence and with her help the fact that she was his. An unspeakable pride filled him, and a joy in her love. He tried to see some outward vision of his bliss in the glass; but, like the mirror which had refused to interpret his tragedy in the Portland restaurant, it gave back no image of his transport: his face looked as it always did, and he and the reflection laughed at each other:

He asked himself how soon he could go and see her. It was now seven o'clock: eight would be too early, of course--it would be ridiculous; and nine--he wondered if he might go to see her at nine. Would they have done breakfast? Had he any right to call before ten? He was miserable at the thought of waiting till ten: it would be three hours. He thought of pretexts--of inviting her to go somewhere, but that was absurd, for he could see her at home all day if he liked; of carrying her a book, but there could be no such haste about a book; of going to ask if he had left his cane, but why should he be in such a hurry for his cane? All at once

he thought he could take her some flowers--a bouquet to lay beside her plate at breakfast. He dramatised himself charging the servant who should take it from him at the door not to say who left it; but Alice would know, of course, and they would all know; it would be very pretty. He made Mrs. Pasmer say some flattering things of him; and he made Alice blush deliciously to hear them. He could not manage Mr. Pasmer very well, and he left him out of the scene: he imagined him shaving in another room; then he remembered his wearing a full beard.

He dressed himself as quickly as he could, and went down into the hotel vestibule, where he had noticed people selling flowers the evening before, but there was no one there with them now, and none of the florists' shops on the street were open yet. He could not find anything till he went to the Providence Depot, and the man there had to take some of his yesterday's flowers out of the refrigerator where he kept them; he was not sure they would be very fresh; but the heavy rosebuds had fallen open, and they were superb. Dan took all there were, and when they had been sprinkled with water, and wrapped in cotton batting, and tied round with paper, it was still only quarter of eight, and he left them with the man till he could get his breakfast at the Depot restaurant. There it had a consoling effect of not being so early; many people were already breakfasting, and when Dan said, with his order, "Hurry it up, please," he knew that he was taken for a passenger just arrived or departing. By a fantastic impulse he ordered eggs and bacon again; he felt, it a fine derision of the past and a seal of triumph upon the present to have the same breakfast after his acceptance as he had ordered after his rejection; he would tell Alice about it, and it would amuse her. He imagined how he would say it, and she would laugh; but she would be full of a ravishing compassion for his past suffering. They were long bringing the breakfast; when it came he despatched it so quickly that it was only half after eight when he paid his check at the counter. He tried to be five minutes more getting his flowers, but the man had them all ready for him, and it did not take him ten seconds. He had said he would carry them at half-past nine; but thinking it over on a bench in the Garden, he decided that he had better go sooner; they might breakfast earlier, and there would be no fun if Alice did not find the roses beside her plate: that was the whole idea. It was not till he stood at the door of the Pasmer apartment that he reflected that he was not accomplishing his wish to see Alice by leaving her those flowers; he was a fool, for now he would have to postpone coming a little, because he had already come.

The girl who answered the bell did not understand the charge he gave her about the roses, and he repeated his words. Some one passing through the room beyond seemed to hesitate and pause at the sound of his voice. Could it be Alice? Then he should see her, after all! The girl looked over her shoulder, and said, "Mrs. Pasmer."

Mrs. Pasmer came forward, and he fell into a complicated explanation and apology. At the end she said, "You had better give them yourself. She will be here directly." They were in the room now, and Mrs. Pasmer made the time pass in rapid talk; but Dan felt that he ought to apologise from time to time. "No!" she said, letting herself go. "Stay and breakfast with us, Mr. Maverick. We shall be so glad to have you."

At last Alice came in, and they decorously shook hands. Mrs. Pasmer turned away a smile at their decorum. "I will see that there's a place for you," she said, leaving them.

They were instantly in each other's arms. It seemed to him that all this had happened because he had so strongly wished it.

"What is it, Dan?" What did you come for?" she asked.

"To see if it was really true, Alice. I couldn't believe it."

"Well--let me go--you mustn't--it's too silly. Of course it's true." She pulled herself free. "Is my hair tumbled? You oughtn't to have come; it's ridiculous; but I'm glad you came. I've been thinking it all over, and I've got a great many things to say to you. But come to breakfast now."

She had a business-like way of treating the situation that was more intoxicating than sentiment would have been, and gave it more actuality.

Mrs. Pasmer was alone at the table, and explained that Alice's father never breakfasted with them, or very seldom. "Where are your flowers?" she asked Alice.

"Flowers? What flowers?"

"That Mr. Mavinger brought."

They all looked at one another. Dan ran out and brought in his roses.

"They were trying to get away in the excitement, I guess, Mrs. Pasmer; I found them behind the door." He had flung them there, without knowing it, when Mrs. Pasmer left him with Alice.

He expected her to join him and her mother in being amused at this, but he was as well pleased to have her touched at his having brought them, and to turn their gaiety off in praise of the roses. She got a vase for them, and set it on the table. He noticed for the first time the pretty house-dress she had on, with its barred corsage and under-skirt, and the heavy silken rope knotted round it at the waist, and dropping in heavy tufts or balls in front.

The breakfast was Continental in its simplicity, and Mrs. Pasmer said that they had always kept up their Paris habit of a light breakfast, even in London, where it was not so easy to follow foreign customs as it was in America. She was afraid he might find it too light. Then he told all about his morning's adventure, ending with his breakfast at the Providence Depot. Mrs. Pasmer entered into the fun of it, but she said it was for only once in a way, and he must not expect to be let in if he came at that hour another morning. He said no; he understood what an extraordinary piece of luck it was for him to be there; and he was there to be bidden to do whatever they wished. He said so much in recognition of their

goodness, that he became abashed by it. Mrs. Pasmer sat at the head of the table, and Alice across it from him, so far off that she seemed parted from him by an insuperable moral distance. A warm flush seemed to rise from his heart into his throat and stifle him. He wished to shed tears. His eyes were wet with grateful happiness in answering Mrs. Pasmer that he would not have any more coffee. "Then," she said, "we will go into the drawing-room;" but she allowed him and Alice to go alone.

He was still in that illusion of awe and of distance, and he submitted to the interposition of another table between their chairs.

"I wish to talk with you," she said, so seriously that he was frightened, and said to himself: "Now she is going to break it off. She has thought it over, and she finds she can't endure me."

"Well?" he said huskily.

You oughtn't to have come here, you know, this morning."

"I know it," he vaguely conceded. "But I didn't expect to get in."

"Well, now you're here, we may as well talk. You must tell your family at once."

"Yes; I'm going to write to them as soon as I get back to my room. I couldn't last night."

"But you mustn't write; you must go--and prepare their minds."

"Go?" he echoed. "Oh, that isn't necessary! My father knew about it from the beginning, and I guess they've all talked it over. Their minds are prepared." The sense of his immeasurable superiority to any one's opposition began to dissipate Dan's unnatural awe; at the pleading face which Alice put on, resting one cheek against the back of one of her clasped hands, and leaning on the table with her elbows, he began to be teased by that silken rope round her waist.

"But you don't understand, dear," she said; and she said "dear" as if they were old married people. "You must go to see them, and tell them; and then some of them must come to see me--your father and sisters."

"Why, of course." His eye now became fastened to one of the fluffy silken balls.

"And then mamma and I must go to see your mother, mustn't we?"

"It'll be very nice of you--yes. You know she can't come to you."

"Yes, that's what I thought, and--What are you looking at?" she drew herself back from the table and followed the direction of his eye with a woman's instinctive apprehension of disarray.

He was ashamed to tell. "Oh, nothing. I was just thinking."

"What?"

"Well, I don't know. That it seems so strange any one else should have any to do with it--my family and yours. But I suppose they must. Yes, it's all right."

"Why, of course. If your family didn't like it--"

"It wouldn't make any difference to me," said Dan resolutely.

"It would to me," she retorted, with tender reproach. "Do you suppose it would be pleasant to go into a family that didn't like you? Suppose papa and mamma didn't like you?"

"But I thought they did," said Mavinger, with his mind still partly on the rope and the fluffy ball, but keeping his eyes away.

"Yes, they do," said Alice. "But your family don't know me at all; and your father's only seen me once. Can't you understand? I'm afraid we don't look at it seriously enough--earnestly--and oh, I do wish to have everything done as it should be! Sometimes, when I think of it, it makes me tremble. I've been thinking about it all the morning, and--and--praying."

Dan wanted to fall on his knees to her. The idea of Alice in prayer was fascinating

"I wish our life to begin with others, and not with ourselves. If we're intrusted with so much happiness, doesn't it mean that we're to do good with it--to give it to others as if it were money?"

The nobleness of this thought stirred Dan greatly; his eyes wandered back to the silken rope; but now it seemed to him an emblem of voluntary suffering and self-sacrifice, like a devotee's hempen girdle. He perceived that the love of this angelic girl would elevate him and hallow his whole life if he would let it. He answered her, fervently, that he would be guided by her in this as in everything; that he knew he was selfish, and he was afraid he was not very good; but it was not because he had not wished to be so; it was because he had not had any incentive. He thought how much nobler and better this was than the talk he had usually had with girls. He said that of course he would go home and tell his people; he saw now that it would make them happier if they could hear it directly from him. He had only thought of writing because he could not bear to think of letting a day pass without seeing her; but if he took the early morning train he could get back the same night, and still have three hours at Ponkwasset Falls, and he would go the next day, if she said so.

"Go to-day, Dan," she said, and she stretched out her hand impressively across the table toward him. He seized it with a gush of tenderness, and they drew together in their resolution to live for others. He said he would go at once. But the next train did not leave till two o'clock, and there was plenty of time. In the meanwhile it was in the accomplishment

of their high aims that they sat down on the sofa together and talked of their future; Alice conditioned it wholly upon his people's approval of her, which seemed wildly unnecessary to Maverig, and amused him immensely.

"Yes," she said, "I know you will think me strange in a great many things; but I shall never keep anything from you, and I'm going to tell you that I went to matins this morning."

"To matins?" echoed Dan. He would not quite have liked her a Catholic; he remembered with relief that she had said she was not a Roman Catholic; though when he came to think, he would not have cared a great deal. Nothing could have changed her from being Alice.

"Yes, I wished to consecrate the first morning of our engagement; and I'm always going. I determined that I would go before breakfast--that was what made breakfast so late. Don't you like it?" she asked timidly.

"Like it!" he said. "I'm going with you:"

"Oh no!" she turned upon him. "That wouldn't do." She became grave again. "I'm glad you approve of it, for I should feel that there was something wanting to our happiness. If marriage is a sacrament, why shouldn't an engagement be?"

"It is," said Dan, and he felt that it was holy; till then he had never realised that marriage was a sacrament, though he had often heard the phrase.

At the end of an hour they took a tender leave of each other, hastened by the sound of Mrs. Pasmer's voice without. Alice escaped from one door before her mother entered by the other. Dan remained, trying to look unconcerned, but he was sensible of succeeding so poorly that he thought he had better offer his hand to Mrs. Pasmer at once. He told her that he was going up to Ponkwasset Falls at two o'clock, and asked her to please remember him to Mr. Pasmer.

She said she would, and asked him if he were to be gone long.

"Oh no; just overnight--till I can tell them what's happened." He felt it a comfort to be trivial with Mrs. Pasmer, after bracing up to Alice's ideals. "I suppose they'll have to know."

"What an exemplary son!" said Mrs. Pasmer. "Yes, I suppose they will."

"I supposed it would be enough if I wrote, but Alice thinks I'd better report in person."

"I think you had, indeed! And it will be a good thing for you both to have the time for clarifying your ideas. Did she tell you she had been at matins this morning?" A light of laughter trembled in Mrs. Pasmer's eyes, and Maverig could not keep a responsive gleam out of his own. In an instant the dedication of his engagement by morning prayer ceased to be a

high and solemn thought, and became deliciously amusing; and this laughing Alice over with her mother did more to realise the fact that she was his than anything else had yet done.

In that dark passage outside he felt two arms go tenderly round his neck; and a soft shape strain itself to his heart. "I know you have been laughing about me. But you may. I'm yours now, even to laugh at, if you want."

"You are mine to fall down and worship," he vowed, with an instant revulsion of feeling.

Alice didn't say anything; he felt her hand fumbling about his coat lapel. "Where is your breast pocket?" she asked; and he took hold of her hand, which left a carte-de-visite-shaped something in his.

"It isn't very good," she murmured, as well as she could, with her lips against his cheek, "but I thought you'd like to show them some proof of my existence. I shall have none of yours while you're gone."

"O Alice! you think of everything!"

His heart was pierced by the soft reproach implied in her words; he had not thought to ask her for her photograph, but she had thought to give it; she must have felt it strange that he had not asked for it, and she had meant to slip it in his pocket and let him find it there. But even his pang of self-upbraiding was a part of his transport. He seemed to float down the stairs; his mind was in a delirious whirl. "I shall go mad," he said to himself in the excess of his joy--"I shall die!"

XXVIII.

The parting scene with Alice persisted in Maving's thought far on the way to Ponkwasset Falls. He now succeeded in saying everything to her: how deeply he felt her giving him her photograph to cheer him in his separation from her; how much he appreciated her forethought in providing him with some answer when his mother and sisters should ask him about her looks. He took out the picture, and pretended to the other passengers to be looking very closely at it, and so managed to kiss it. He told her that now he understood what love really was; how powerful; how it did conquer everything; that it had changed him and made him already a better man. He made her refuse all merit in the work.

When he began to formulate the facts for communication to his family, love did not seem so potent; he found himself ashamed of his passion, or at least unwilling to let it be its own excuse even; he had a wish to give it almost any other appearance. Until he came in sight of the station and the Works, it had not seemed possible for any one to object to Alice. He had been going home as a matter of form to receive the adhesion of his family. But now he was forced to see that she might be considered

critically, even reluctantly. This would only be because his family did not understand how perfect Alice was; but they might not understand.

With his father there would be no difficulty. His father had seen Alice and admired her; he would be all right. Dan found himself hoping this rather anxiously, as if from the instinctive need of his father's support with his mother and sisters. He stopped at the Works when he left the train, and found his father in his private office beyond the book-keeper's picket-fence, which he penetrated, with a nod to the accountant.

"Hello, Dan!" said his father, looking up; and "Hello, father!" said Dan. Being alone, the father and son not only shook hands, but kissed each other, as they used to do in meeting after an absence when Dan was younger.

He had closed his father's door with his left hand in giving his right, and now he said at once, "Father, I've come home to tell you that I'm engaged to be married."

Dan had prearranged his father's behaviour at this announcement, but he now perceived that he would have to modify the scene if it were to represent the facts. His father did not brighten all over and demand, "Miss Pasmmer, of course?" he contrived to hide whatever start the news had given him, and was some time in asking, with his soft lisp, "Isn't that rather sudden, Dan?"

"Well, not for me," said Dan, laughing uneasily. It's--you know her, father--Miss Pasmmer."

"Oh yes," said his father, certainly not with displeasure, and yet not with enthusiasm.

"I've had ever since Class Day to think it over, and it--came to a climax yesterday."

"And then you stopped thinking," said his father--to gain time, it appeared to Dan.

"Yes, sir," said Dan. "I haven't thought since."

"Well," said his father, with an amusement which was not unfriendly. He added, after a moment, "But I thought that had been broken off," and Dan's instinct penetrated to the lurking fact that his father must have talked the rupture over with his mother, and not wholly regretted it.

"There was a kind of--hitch at one time," he admitted; "but it's all right now."

"Well, well," said his father, "this is great news--great news," and he seemed to be shaping himself to the new posture of affairs, while giving it a conditional recognition. "She's a beautiful creature."

"Isn't she?" cried Dan, with a little break in his voice, for he had found

his father's manner rather trying. "And she's good too. I assure you that she is--she is simply perfect every way."

"Well," said the elder Maverick, rising and pulling down the rolling top of his desk, "I'm glad to hear it, for your sake, Dan. Have you been up at the house yet?"

"No; I'm just off the train."

"How is her mother--how is Mrs. Pasmer? All well?"

"Yes, sir," said Dan; "they're all very well. You don't know Mr. Pasmer, I believe, sir, do you?"

"Not since college. What sort of person is he?"

"He's very refined and quiet. Very handsome. Very courteous. Very nice indeed."

"Ah! that's good," said Elbridge Maverick, with the effect of not having been very attentive to his son's answer.

They walked up the long slope of the hillside on which the house stood, overlooking the valley where the Works were, and fronting the plateau across the river where the village of operatives' houses was scattered. The paling light of what had been a very red sunset flushed them, and brought out the picturesqueness which the architect, who designed them for a particular effect in the view from the owner's mansion, had intended.

A good carriage road followed the easiest line of ascent towards this edifice, and reached a gateway. Within it began to describe a curve bordered with asphalted footways to the broad verandah of the house, and then descended again to the gate. The grounds enclosed were planted with deciduous shrubs, which had now mostly dropped their leaves, and clumps of firs darkening in the evening light with the gleam of some garden statues shivering about the lawn next the house. The breeze grew colder and stiffer as the father and son mounted toward the mansion which Dan used to believe was like a chateau, with its Mansard-roof and dormer windows and chimneys. It now blocked its space sharply out of the thin pink of the western sky, and its lights sparkled with a wintry keenness which had often thrilled Dan when he climbed the hill from the station in former homecomings. Their brilliancy gave him a strange sinking of the heart for no reason. He and his father had kept up a sort of desultory talk about Alice, and he could not have said that his father had seemed indifferent; he had touched the affair only too acquiescently; it was painfully like everything else. When they came in full sight of the house, Dan left the subject, as he realised presently, from a reasonless fear of being overheard.

"It seems much later here, sir, than it does in Boston," he said, glancing round at the maples, which stood ragged, with half their leaves blown from them.

"Yes; we're in the hills, and we're further north," answered his father.

"There's Minnie."

Dan had seen his sister on the verandah, pausing at sight of him, and puzzled to make out who was with her father. He had an impulse to hail her with a shout, but he could not. In his last walk with her he had told her that he should never marry, and they had planned to live together. It was a joke; but now he felt as if he had come to rob her of something, and he walked soberly on with his father.

"Why, Dan, you good-for-nothing fellow!" she called out when he came near enough to be unmistakable, and ran down the steps to kiss him. "What in the world are you doing here? When did you come? Why didn't you hollo, instead of letting me stand here guessing? You're not sick, are you?"

The father got himself indoors unnoticed in the excitement of the brother's arrival. This would have been the best moment for Dan to tell his sister of his engagement; he knew it, but he parried her curiosity about his coming; and then his sister Eunice came out, and he could not speak. They all went together into the house flaming with naphtha gas, and with the steam heat already on, and Dan said he would take his bag to his room, and then come down again. He knew that he had left them to think that there was something very mysterious in his coming, and while he washed away the grime of his journey he was planning how to appear perfectly natural when he should get back to his sisters. He recollected that he had not asked either them or his father how his mother was, but it was certainly not because his mind was not full of her. Alice now seemed very remote from him, further even than his gun, or his boyish collection of moths and butterflies, on which his eye fell in roving about his room. For a bitter instant it seemed to him as if they were all alike toys, and in a sudden despair he asked himself what had become of his happiness. It was scarcely half a day since he had parted in transport from Alice.

He made pretexts to keep from returning at once to his sisters, and it was nearly half an hour before he went down to them. By that time his father was with them in the library, and they were waiting tea for him.

XXIX.

A family of rich people in the country, apart from intellectual interests, is apt to gormandise; and the Mavericks always sat down to a luxurious table, which was most abundant and tempting at the meal they called tea, when the invention of the Portuguese man-cook was taxed to supply the demands of appetites at once eager and fastidious. They prolonged the meal as much as possible in winter, and Dan used to like to get home just in time for tea when he came up from Harvard; it was always very jolly, and he brought a boy's hunger to its abundance. The dining-room, full of shining light, and treated from the low-down grate, was a pleasant place. But now his spirits failed to rise with the physical cheer; he was almost bashfully silent; he sat cowed in the presence of his sisters, and

careworn in the place where he used to be so gay and bold. They were waiting to have him begin about himself, as he always did when he had been away, and were ready to sympathise with his egotism, whatever new turn it took. He mystified them by asking about them and their affairs, and by dealing in futile generalities, instead of launching out with any business that he happened at the time to be full of. But he did not attend to their answers to his questions; he was absent-minded, and only knew that his face was flushed, and that he was obviously ill at ease.

His younger sister turned from him impatiently at last. "Father, what is the matter with Dan?"

Her bold recognition of their common constraint broke it down. Dan looked at his father with helpless consent, and his father said quietly, "He tells me he's engaged."

"What nonsense!" said his sister Eunice.

"Why, Dan!" cried Minnie; and he felt a reproach in her words which the words did not express. A silence followed, in which the father along went on with his supper. The girls sat staring at Dan with incredulous eyes. He became suddenly angry.

"I don't know what's so very extraordinary about it, or why there should be such a pother," he began; and he knew that he was insolently ignoring abundant reasons for pother, if there had been any pother. "Yes, I'm engaged."

He expected now that they would believe him, and ask whom he was engaged to; but apparently they were still unable to realise it. He was obliged to go on. "I'm engaged to Miss Pasmer."

"To Miss Pasmer!" repeated Eunice.

"But I thought--" Minnie began, and then stopped.

Dan commanded his temper by a strong effort, and condescended to explain. "There was a misunderstanding, but it's all right now; I only met her yesterday, and--it's all right." He had to keep on ignoring what had passed between him and his sisters during the month he spent at home after his return from Campobello. He did not wish to do so; he would have been glad to laugh over that epoch of ill-concealed heart-break with them; but the way they had taken the fact of his engagement made it impossible. He was forced to keep them at a distance; they forced him. "I'm glad," he added bitterly, "that the news seems to be so agreeable to my family. Thank you for your cordial congratulations." He swallowed a large cup of tea, and kept looking down.

"How silly!" said Eunice, who was much the oldest of the three. "Did you expect us to fall upon your neck before we could believe it wasn't a hoax of father's?"

"A hoax!" Dan burst out.

"I suppose," said Minnie, with mock meekness, "that if we're to be devoured, it's no use saying we didn't roil the brook. I'm sure I congratulate you, Dan, with all my heart," she added, with a trembling voice.

"I congratulate Miss Pasmer," said Eunice, "on securing such a very reasonable husband."

When Eunice first became a young lady she was so much older than Dan that in his mother's absence she sometimes authorised herself to box his ears, till she was finally overthrown in battle by the growing boy. She still felt herself so much his tutelary genius that she could not let the idea of his engagement awe her, or keep her from giving him a needed lesson. Dan jumped to his feet, and passionately threw his napkin on his chair.

"There, that will do, Eunice!" interposed the father. "Sit down, Dan, and don't be an ass, if you are engaged. Do you expect to come up here with a bombshell in your pocket, and explode it among us without causing any commotion? We all desire your happiness, and we are glad if you think you've found it, but we want to have time to realise it. We had only adjusted our minds to the apparent fact that you hadn't found it when you were here before." His father began very severely, but when he ended with this recognition of what they had all blinked till then, they laughed together.

"My pillow isn't dry yet, with the tears I shed for you, Dan," said Minnie demurely.

"I shall have to countermand my mourning," said Eunice, "and wear louder colours than ever. Unless," she added, "Miss Pasmer changes her mind again."

This divination of the past gave them all a chance for another laugh, and Dan's sisters began to reconcile themselves to the fact of his engagement, if not to Miss Pasmer. In what was abstractly so disagreeable there was the comfort that they could joke about his happiness; they had not felt free to make light of his misery when he was at home before. They began to ask all the questions they could think of as to how and when, and they assimilated the fact more and more in acquiring these particulars and making a mock of them and him.

"Of course you haven't got her photograph," suggested Eunice. "You know we've never had the pleasure of meeting the young lady yet."

"Yes," Dan owned, blushing, "I have. She thought I might like to show it to mother: But it isn't--"

"A very good one--they never are," said Minnie.

"And it was taken several years ago--they always are," said Eunice.

"And she doesn't photograph well, anyway."

"And this one was just after a long fit of sickness."

Dan drew it out of his pocket, after some fumbling for it, while he tolerated their gibes.

Eunice put her nose to it. "I hope it's your cigarettes it smells of," she said.

"Yes; she doesn't use the weed," answered Dan.

"Oh, I didn't mean that, exactly," returned his sister, holding the picture off at arm's length, and viewing it critically with contracted eyes.

Dan could not help laughing. "I don't think it's been near any other cigar-case," he answered tranquilly.

Minnie looked at it very near to, covering all but the face with her hand. "Dan, she's lovely!" she cried, and Dan's heart leaped into his throat As he gratefully met his sister's eyes.

"You'll like her, Min."

Eunice took the photograph from her for a second scrutiny. "She's certainly very stylish. Rather a beak of a nose, and a little too bird-like on the whole. But she isn't so bad. Is it like her?" she asked with a glance at her father.

"I might say--after looking," he replied.

"True! I didn't know but Dan had shown it to you as soon as you met. He seemed to be in such a hurry to let us all know."

The father said, "I don't think it flatters her," and he looked at it more carefully. "Not much of her mother there?" he suggested to Dan.

"No, sir; she's more like her father."

"Well, after all this excitement, I believe I'll have another cup of tea, and take something to eat, if Miss Pasmers's photograph doesn't object," said Eunice, and she replenished her cup and plate.

"What coloured hair and eyes has she, Dan?" asked Minnie.

He had to think so as to be exact. "Well, you might say they were black, her eyebrows are so dark. But I believe they're a sort of greyish-blue."

"Not an uncommon colour for eyes," said Eunice, "but rather peculiar for hair."

They got to making fun of the picture, and Dan told them about Alice and her family; the father left them at the table, and then came back with

word from Dan's mother that she was ready to see him.

XXX.

By eight o'clock in the evening the pain with which every day began for Mrs. Maverig was lulled, and her jarred nerves were stayed by the opiates till she fell asleep about midnight. In this interval the family gathered into her room, and brought her their news and the cheer of their health. The girls chattered on one side of her bed, and their father sat with his newspaper on the other, and read aloud the passages which he thought would interest her, while she lay propped among her pillows, brilliantly eager for the world opening this glimpse of itself to her shining eyes. That was on her good nights, when the drugs did their work, but there were times when they failed, and the day's agony prolonged itself through the evening, and the sleep won at last was a heavy stupor. Then the sufferer's temper gave way under the stress; she became the torment she suffered, and tore the hearts she loved. Most of all, she afflicted the man who had been so faithful to her misery, and maddened him to reprisals, of which he afterward abjectly repented. Her tongue was sharpened by pain, and pitilessly skilled to inculcate and to punish; it pierced and burned like fire but when a good day came again she made it up to the victims by the angelic sweetness and sanity which they felt was her real self; the cruelty was only the mask of her suffering.

When she was better they brought to her room anybody who was staying with them, and she liked them to be jolly in the spacious chamber. The pleasantest things of the house were assembled, and all its comforts concentrated, in the place which she and they knew she should quit but once. It was made gay with flowers and pictures; it was the salon for those fortunate hours when she became the lightest and blithest of the company in it, and made the youngest guest forget that there was sickness or pain in the world by the spirit with which she ignored her own. Her laugh became young again; she joked; she entered into what they were doing and reading and thinking, and sent them away full of the sympathy which in this mood of hers she had for every mood in others. Girls sighed out their wonder and envy to her daughters when they left her; the young men whom she captivated with her divination of their passions or ambitions went away celebrating her supernatural knowledge of human nature. The next evening after some night of rare and happy excitement, the family saw her nurse carrying the pictures and flowers and vases out of her room, in sign of her renunciation of them all, and assembled silently, shrinkingly, in her chamber, to take each their portion of her anguish, of the blame and the penalty. The household adjusted itself to her humours, for she was supreme in it.

When Dan used to come home from Harvard she put on a pretty cap for him, and distinguished him as company by certain laces hiding her wasted frame, and giving their pathetic coquetry to her transparent wrists. He was her favourite, and the girls acknowledged him so, and made their fun of her for spoiling him. He found out as he grew up that her broken health dated

from his birth, and at first this deeply affected him; but his young life soon lost the keenness of the impression, and he loved his mother because she loved him, and not because she had been dying for him so many years.

As he now came into her room, and the waiting-woman went out of it with her usual, "Well, Mr. Dan!" the tenderness which filled him at sight of his mother was mixed with that sense of guilt which had tormented him at times ever since he met his sisters. He was going to take himself from her; he realised that.

"Well, Dan!" she called, so gaily that he said to himself, "No, father hasn't told her anything about it," and was instantly able to answer her as cheerfully, "Well, mother!"

He bent over her to kiss her, and the odour of the clean linen mingling with that of the opium, and the cologne with which she had tried to banish its scent, opened to him one of those vast reaches of associations which perfumes can unlock, and he saw her lying there through those years of pain, as many as half his life, and suddenly the tears gushed into his eyes, and he fell on his knees, and hid his face in the bed-clothes and sobbed.

She kept smoothing his head, which shook under her thin hand, and saying, "Poor Dan! poor Dan!" but did not question him. He knew that she knew what he had come to tell her, and that his tears, which had not been meant for that, had made interest with her for him and his cause, and that she was already on his side.

He tried boyishly to dignify the situation when he lifted his face, and he said, "I didn't mean to come boohooing to you in this way, and I'm ashamed of myself."

"I know, Dan; but you've been wrought up, and I don't wonder. You mustn't mind your father and your sisters. Of course, they're rather surprised, and they don't like your taking yourself from them--we, none of us do."

At these honest words Dan tried to become honest too. At least he dropped his pretence of dignity, and became as a little child in his simple greed for sympathy. "But it isn't necessarily that; is it, mother?"

"Yes, it's all that, Dan; and it's all right, because it's that. We don't like it, but our not liking it has nothing to do with its being right or wrong."

"I supposed that father would have been pleased, anyway; for he has seen her, and--and. Of course the girls haven't, but I think they might have trusted my judgment a little. I'm not quite a fool."

His mother smiled. "Oh, it isn't a question of the wisdom of your choice; it's the unexpectedness. We all saw that you were very unhappy when you were here before, and we supposed it had gone wrong."

"It had, mother," said Dan. "She refused me at Campobello. But it was a misunderstanding, and as soon as we met--"

"I knew you had met again, and what you had come home for, and I told your father so, when he came to say you were here."

"Did you, mother?" he asked, charmed at her having guessed that.

"Yes. She must be a good girl to send you straight home to tell us."

"You knew I wouldn't have thought of that myself," said Dan joyously. "I wanted to write; I thought that would do just as well. I hated to leave her, but she made me come. She is the best, and the wisest, and the most unselfish--O mother, I can't tell you about her! You must see her. You can't realise her till you see her, mother. You'll like each other, I'm sure of that. You're just alike." It seemed to Dan that they were exactly alike.

"Then perhaps we sha'n't," suggested his mother. "Let me see her picture."

"How did you know I had it? If it hadn't been for her, I shouldn't have brought any. She put it into my pocket just as I was leaving. She said you would all want to see what she looked like."

He had taken it out of his pocket, and he held it, smiling fondly upon it. Alice seemed to smile back at him. He had lost her in the reluctance of his father and sisters; and now his mother--it was his mother who had given her to him again. He thought how tenderly he loved his mother.

When he could yield her the photograph, she looked long and silently at it. "She has a great deal of character, Dan."

"There you've hit it, mother! I'd rather you would have said that than anything else. But don't you think she's beautiful? She's the gentlest creature, when you come to know her! I was awfully afraid of her at first. I thought she was very haughty. But she isn't at all. She's really very self-depreciatory; she thinks she isn't good enough for me. You ought to hear her talk, mother, as I have. She's full of the noblest ideals--of being of some use in the world, of being self-devoted, and--all that kind of thing. And you can see that she's capable of it. Her aunt's in a Protestant sisterhood," he said, with a solemnity which did not seem to communicate itself to his mother, for Mrs. Maverick smiled. Dan smiled too, and said: "But I can't tell you about Alice, mother. She's perfect." His heart overflowed with proud delight in her, and he was fool enough to add, "She's so affectionate!"

His mother kept herself from laughing. "I dare say she is, Dan--with you." Then she hid all but her eyes with the photograph, and gave way.

"What a donkey!" said Dan, meaning himself. "If I go on, I shall disgust you with her. What I mean is that she isn't at all proud, as I used to think she was."

"No girl is, under the circumstances. She has all she can do to be proud of you."

"Do you think so, mother?" he said, enraptured with the notion. "I've done my best--or my worst--not to give her any reason to be so."

"She doesn't 'want any--the less the better. You silly boy! Don't you suppose she wants to make you out of whole cloth just as you do with her? She doesn't want any facts to start with; they'd be in the way. Well, now, I can make out, with your help, what the young lady is; but what are the father and mother? They're rather important in these cases."

"Oh, they're the nicest kind of people," said Dan, in optimistic generalisation. "You'd like Mrs. Pasmer. She's awfully nice."

"Do you say that because you think I wouldn't?" asked his mother. "Isn't she rather sly and hum-bugging?"

"Well, yes, she is, to a certain extent," Dan admitted, with a laugh. "But she doesn't mean any harm by it. She's extremely kind-hearted."

"To you? I dare say. And Mr. Pasmer is rather under her thumb?"

"Well, yes, you might say thumb," Dan consented, feeling it useless to defend the Pasmers against this analysis.

"We won't say heel," returned his mother; "we're too polite. And your father says he had the reputation in college of being one of the most selfish fellows in the world. He's never done anything since but lose most of his money. He's been absolutely idle and useless all his days." She turned her vivid blue eyes suddenly upon her son's.

Dan winced. "You know how hard father is upon people who haven't done anything. It's a mania of his. Of course Mr. Pasmer doesn't show to advantage where there's no--no leisure class."

"Poor man!"

Dan was going to say, "He's very amiable, though," but he was afraid of his mother's retorting, "To you?" and he held his peace, looking chafallen.

Whether his mother took pity on him or not, her next sally was consoling. "But your Alice may not take after either of them. Her father is the worst of his breed, it seems; the rest are useful people, from what your father knows, and there's a great deal to be hoped for collaterally. She had an uncle in college at the same time who was everything that her father was not."

"One of her aunts is in one of those Protestant religious houses in England," repeated Dan.

"Oh!" said his mother shortly, "I don't know that I like that particularly. But probably she isn't useless there. Is Alice very religious?"

"Well, I suppose," said Dan, with a smile for the devotions that came into his thought, "she's what would be called 'Piscopal pious."

Mrs. Mavering referred to the photograph, which she still held in her hand. "Well, she's pure and good, at any rate. I suppose you look forward to a long engagement?"

Dan was somewhat taken aback at a supposition so very contrary to what was in his mind. "Well, I don't know. Why?"

"It might be said that you are very young. How old is Agnes--Alice, I mean?"

"Twenty-one. But now, look here, mother! It's no use considering such a thing in the abstract, is it?"

"No," said his mother, with a smile for what might be coming.

"This is the way I've been viewing it; I may say it's the way Alice has been viewing it--or Mrs. Pasmer, rather."

"Decidedly Mrs. Pasmer, rather. Better be honest, Dan."

"I'll do my best. I was thinking, hoping, that is, that as I'm going right into the business--have gone into it already, in fact--and could begin life at once, that perhaps there wouldn't be much sense in waiting a great while."

"Yes?"

"That's all. That is, if you and father are agreed." He reflected upon this provision, and added, with a laugh of confusion and pleasure: "It seems to be so very much more of a family affair than I used to think it was."

"You thought it concerned just you and her?" said his mother, with arch sympathy.

"Well, yes."

"Poor fellow! She knew better than that, you may be sure. At any rate, her mother did."

"What Mrs. Pasmer doesn't know isn't probably worth knowing," said Dan, with an amused sense of her omniscience.

"I thought so," sighed his mother, smiling too. "And now you begin to find out that it concerns the families in all their branches on both sides."

"Oh, if it stopped at the families and their ramifications! But it seems to take in society and the general public."

"So it does--more than you can realise. You can't get married to yourself alone, as young people think; and if you don't marry happily, you sin against the peace and comfort of the whole community."

"Yes, that's what I'm chiefly looking out for now. I don't want any of those people in Central Africa to suffer. That's the reason I want to marry Alice at the earliest opportunity. But I suppose there'll have to be a Mavering embassy to the high contracting powers of the other part now?"

"Your father and one of the girls had better go down."

"Yes?"

"And invite Mr. and Mrs. Pasmer and their daughter to come up here."

"All on probation?"

"Oh no. If you're pleased, Dan--"

I am, mother--measurably." They both laughed at this mild way of putting it.

"Why, then it's to be supposed that we're all pleased. You needn't bring the whole Pasmer family home to live with you, if you do marry them all."

"No," said Dan, and suddenly he became very distraught. It flashed through him that his mother was expecting him to come home with Alice to live, and that she would not be at all pleased with his scheme of a European sojourn, which Mrs. Pasmer had so cordially adopted. He was amazed that he had not thought of that, but he refused to see any difficulty which his happiness could not cope with.

"No, there's that view of it," he said jollily; and he buried his momentary anxiety out of sight, and, as it were, danced upon its grave. Nevertheless, he had a desire to get quickly away from the spot. "I hope the Mavering embassy won't be a great while getting ready to go," he said. "Of course it's all right; but I shouldn't want an appearance of reluctance exactly, you know, mother; and if there should be much of an interval between my getting back and their coming on, don't you know, why, the cat might let herself out of the bag."

"What cat?" asked his mother demurely.

"Well, you know, you haven't received my engagement with unmingled enthusiasm, and--and I suppose they would find it out from me--from my manner; and--and I wish they'd come along pretty soon, mother."

"Poor boy! I'm afraid the cat got out of the bag when Mrs. Pasmer came to

the years of discretion. But you sha'n't be left a prey to her. They shall go back with you. Ring the bell, and let's talk it over with them now."

Dan joyfully obeyed. He could see that his mother was all on fire with interest in his affair, and that the idea of somehow circumventing Mrs. Pasmers by prompt action was fascinating her.

His sisters came up at once, and his father followed a moment later. They all took their cue from the mother's gaiety, and began talking and laughing, except the father, who sat looking on with a smile at their lively spirits and the jokes of which Dan became the victim. Each family has its own fantastic medium, in which it gets affairs to relieve them of their concrete seriousness, and the Mavericks now did this with Dan's engagement, and played with it as an airy abstraction. They debated the character of the embassy which was to be sent down to Boston on their behalf, and it was decided that Eunice had better go with her father, as representing more fully the age and respectability of the family: at first glance the Pasmers would take her for Dan's mother, and this would be a tremendous advantage.

"And if I like the ridiculous little chit," said Eunice, "I think I shall let Dan marry her at once. I see no reason why he shouldn't and I couldn't stand a long engagement; I should break it off."

"I guess there are others who will have something to say about that," retorted the younger sister. "I've always wanted a long engagement in this family, and as there seems to be no chance for it with the ladies, I wish to make the most of Dan's. I always like it where the hero gets sick and the heroine nurses him. I want Dan to get sick, and have Alice come here and take care of him."

"No; this marriage must take place at once. What do you say, father?" asked Eunice.

Her father sat, enjoying the talk, at the foot of the bed, with a tendency to doze. "You might ask Dan," he said, with a lazy cast of his eye toward his son.

"Dan has nothing to do with it."

"Dan shall not be consulted."

The two girls stormed upon their father with their different reasons.

"Now I will tell you Girls, be still!" their mother broke in. "Listen to me: I have an idea."

"Listen to her: she has an idea!" echoed Eunice, in recitative.

"Will you be quiet?" demanded the mother.

"We will be du-u-mb!"

When they became so, at the verge of their mother's patience, of which they knew the limits, she went on: "I think Dan had better get married at once."

"There, Minnie!"

"But what does Dan say?"

"I will--make the sacrifice," said Dan meekly.

"Noble boy! That's exactly what Washington said to his mother when she asked him not to go to sea," said Minnie.

"And then he went into the militia, and made it all right with himself that way," said Eunice. "Dan can't play his filial piety on this family. Go on, mother."

"I want him to bring his wife home, and live with us," continued his mother.

"In the L part!" cried Minnie, clasping her hands in rapture. "I've always said what a perfect little apartment it was by itself."

"Well, don't say it again, then," returned her sister. "Always is often enough. Well, in the L part Go on, mother! Don't ask where you were, when it's so exciting."

"I don't care whether it's in the L part or not. There's plenty of room in the great barn of a place everywhere."

"But what about his taking care of the business in Boston?" suggested Eunice, looking at her father.

"There's no hurry about that."

"And about the excursion to aesthetic centres abroad?" Minnie added.

"That could be managed," said her father, with the same ironical smile.

The mother and the girls went on wildly planning Dan's future for him. It was all in a strain of extravagant burlesque. But he could not take his part in it with his usual zest. He laughed and joked too, but at the bottom of his heart was an uneasy remembrance of the different future he had talked over with Mrs. Pasmer so confidently. But he said to himself buoyantly at last that it would come out all right. His mother would give in, or else Alice could reconcile her mother to whatever seemed really best.

He parted from his mother with fond gaiety. His sisters came out of the room with him.

"I'm perfectly sore with laughing," said Minnie. "It seems like old

times--doesn't it, Dan?--such a gale with mother."

XXXI.

An engagement must always be a little incredible at first to the families of the betrothed, and especially to the family of the young man; in the girl's, the mother, at least, will have a more realising sense of the situation. If there are elder sisters who have been accustomed to regard their brother as very young, he will seem all the younger because in such a matter he has treated himself as if he were a man; and Eunice Mavering said, after seeing the Pasmers, "Well, Dan, it's all well enough, I suppose, but it seems too ridiculous."

"What's ridiculous about it, I should like to know?" he demanded.

"Oh, I don't know. Who'll look after you when you're married? Oh, I forgot Ma'am Pasmer!"

"I guess we shall be able to look after ourselves," said Dan; a little sulkily.

"Yes, if you'll be allowed to," insinuated his sister.

They spoke at the end of a talk in which he had fretted at the reticence of both his sister and his father concerning the Pasmers, whom they had just been to see. He was vexed with his father, because he felt that he had been influenced by Eunice, and had somehow gone back on him. He was vexed and he was grieved because his father had left them at the door of the hotel without saying anything in praise of Alice, beyond the generalities that would not carry favour with Eunice; and he was depressed with a certain sense of Alice's father and mother, which seemed to have imparted itself to him from the others, and to be the Mavering opinion of them. He could no longer see Mrs. Pasmer harmless if trivial, and good-hearted if inveterately scheming; he could not see the dignity and refinement which he had believed in Mr. Pasmer; they had both suffered a sort of shrinkage or collapse, from which he could not rehabilitate them. But this would have been nothing if his sister's and his father's eyes, through which he seemed to have been looking, had not shown him Alice in a light in which she appeared strange and queer almost to eccentricity. He was hurt at this effect from their want of sympathy, his pride was touched, and he said to himself that he should not fish for Eunice's praise; but he found himself saying, without surprise, "I suppose you will do what you can to prejudice mother and Min."

"Isn't that a little previous?" asked Eunice. "Have I said anything against Miss Pasmer?"

"You haven't because you couldn't," said Dan, with foolish bitterness.

"Oh, I don't know about that. She's a human being, I suppose--at least

that was the impression I got from her parentage."

"What have you got to say against her parents?" demanded Dan savagely.

"Oh, nothing. I didn't come down to Boston to denounce the Pasmer family."

"I suppose you didn't like their being in a flat; you'd have liked to find them in a house on Commonwealth Avenue or Beacon Street."

"I'll own I'm a snob," said Eunice, with maddening meekness. "So's father."

"They are connected with the best families in the city, and they are in the best society. They do what they please, and they live where they like. They have been so long in Europe that they don't care for those silly distinctions. But what you say doesn't harm them. It's simply disgraceful to you; that's all," said Dan furiously.

"I'm glad it's no worse, Dan," said his sister, with a tranquil smile.

"And if you'll stop prancing up and down the room, and take a seat, and behave yourself in a Christian manner, I'll talk with you; and if you don't, I won't. Do you suppose I'm going to be bullied into liking them?"

"You can like them or not, as you please," said Dan sullenly; but he sat down, and waited decently for his sister to speak. "But you can't abuse them--at least in my presence."

"I didn't know men lost their heads as well as their hearts," said Eunice. "Perhaps it's only an exchange, though, and it's Miss Pasmer's head." Dan started, but did not say anything, and Eunice smoothly continued: "No, I don't believe it is. She looked like a sensible girl, and she talked sensibly. I should think she had a very good head. She has good manners, and she's extremely pretty, and very graceful. I'm surprised she should be in love with such a simpleton."

"Oh, go on! Abuse me as much as you like," said Dan. He was at once soothed by her praise of Alice.

"No, it isn't necessary to go on; the case is a little too obvious. But I think she will do very well. I hope you're not marrying the whole family, though. I suppose that it's always a question of which shall be scooped up. They will want to scoop you up, and we shall want to scoop her up. I dare say Ma'am Pasmer has her little plan; what is it?"

Dan started at this touch on the quick, but he controlled himself, and said, with dignity, "I have my own plans."

"Well, you know what mother's are," returned Eunice easily. "You seem so cheerful that I suppose yours are quite the same, and you're just keeping them for a surprise." She laughed provokingly, and Dan burst forth again--

"You seem to live to give people pain. You take a fiendish delight in

torturing others. But if you think you can influence me in the slightest degree, you're very much mistaken."

"Well, well, there! It sha'n't be teased any more, so it sha'n't! It shall have its own way, it shall, and nobody shall say a word against its little girly's mother." Eunice rose from her chair, and patted Dan on the head as she passed to the adjoining room. He caught her hand, and flung it violently away; she shrieked with delight in his childish resentment, and left him sulking. She was gone two or three minutes, and when she came back it was in quite a different mood, as often happens with women in a little lapse of time.

"Dan, I think Miss Pasmer is a beautiful girl, and I know we shall all like her, if you don't set us against her by your arrogance. Of course we don't know anything about her yet, and you don't, really; but she seems a very lovable little thing, and if she's rather silent and undemonstrative, why, she'll be all the better for you: you've got demonstration enough for twenty. And I think the family are well enough. Mrs. Pasmer is thoroughly harmless; and Mr. Pasmer is a most dignified personage; his eyebrows alone are worth the price of admission." Dan could not help smiling. "All that there is about it is, you mustn't expect to drive people into raptures about them, and expect them to go grovelling round on their knees because you do."

"Oh, I know I'm an infernal idiot," said Dan, yielding to the mingled sarcasm and flattery. "It's because I'm so anxious; and you all seem so confoundedly provisional about it. Eunice, what do you suppose father really thinks?"

Eunice seemed tempted to a relapse into her teasing, but she did not yield. "Oh, father's all right--from your point of view. He's been ridiculous from the first; perhaps that's the reason he doesn't feel obliged to expatiate and expand a great deal at present."

"Do you think so?" cried Dan, instantly adopting her as an ally.

"Well, if I said so, oughtn't it to be enough?"

"It depends upon what else you say. Look here, now, Eunice!" Dan said, with a laughing mixture of fun and earnest, "what are you going to say to mother? It's no use, being disagreeable, is it? Of course, I don't contend for ideal perfection anywhere, and I don't expect it. But there isn't anything experimental about this thing, and don't you think we had better all make the best of it?"

"That sounds very impartial."

"It is impartial. I'm a purely disinterested spectator."

"Oh, quite."

"And don't you suppose I understand Mr. and Mrs. Pasmer quite as well as you do? All I say is that Alice is simply the noblest girl that ever

breathed, and--"

"Now you're talking sense, Dan!"

"Well, what are you going to say when you get home, Eunice? Come!"

"That we had better make the best of it."

"And what else?"

"That you're hopelessly infatuated; and that she will twist you round her finger."

"Well?"

"But that you've had your own way so much, it will do you good to have somebody else's a while."

"I guess you're pretty solid," said Dan, after thinking it over for a moment. "I don't believe you're going to make it hard for me, and I know you can make it just what you please. But I want you to be frank with mother. Of course I wish you felt about the whole affair just as I do, but if you're right on the main question, I don't care for the rest. I'd rather mother would know just how you feel about it," said Dan, with a sigh for the honesty which he felt to be not immediately attainable in his own case.

"Well, I'll see what can be done," Eunice finally assented.

Whatever her feelings were in regard to the matter, she must have satisfied herself that the situation was not to be changed by her disliking it, and she began to talk so sympathetically with Dan that she soon had the whole story of his love out of him. They laughed a good deal together at it, but it convinced her that he had not been hoodwinked into the engagement. It is always the belief of a young man's family, especially his mother and sisters, that unfair means have been used to win him, if the family of his betrothed are unknown to them; and it was a relief, if not exactly a comfort, for Eunice Maverig to find that Alice was as great a simpleton as Dan, and perhaps a sincerer simpleton.

XXXII.

A week later, in fulfilment of the arrangement made by Mrs. Pasmer and Eunice Maverig, Alice and her mother returned the formal visit of Dan's people.

While Alice stood before the mirror in one of the sumptuously furnished rooms assigned them, arranging a ribbon for the effect upon Dan's mother after dinner, and regarding its relation to her serious beauty, Mrs. Pasmer came out of her chamber adjoining, and began to inspect the formal

splendour of the place.

"What a perfect man's house!" she said, peering about. "You can see that everything has been done to order. They have their own taste; they're artistic enough for that--or the father is--and they've given orders to have things done so and so, and the New York upholsterer has come up and taken the measure of the rooms and done it. But it isn't like New York, and it isn't individual. The whole house is just like those girls' tailor-made costumes in character. They were made in New York, but they don't wear them with the New York style; there's no more atmosphere about them than if they were young men dressed up. There isn't a thing lacking in the house here; there's an awful completeness; but even the ornaments seem laid on, like the hot and cold water. I never saw a handsomer, more uninviting room than that drawing room. I suppose the etching will come some time after supper. What do you think of it all, Alice?"

"Oh, I don't know. They must be very rich," said the girl indifferently.

"You can't tell. Country people of a certain kind are apt to put everything on their backs and their walls and floors. Of course such a house here doesn't mean what it would in town." She examined the texture of the carpet more critically, and the curtains; she had no shame about a curiosity that made her daughter shrink.

"Don't, mamma!" pleaded the girl. "What if they should come?"

"They won't come," said Mrs. Pasmers; and her notice being called to Alice, she made her take off the ribbon. "You're better without it."

"I'm so nervous I don't know what I'm doing," said Alice, removing it, with a whimper.

"Well, I can't have you breaking down!" cried her mother warningly: she really wished to shake her, as a culmination of her own conflicting emotions. "Alice, stop this instant! Stop it, I say!"

"But if I don't like her?" whimpered Alice.

"You're not going to marry her. Now stop! Here, bathe your eyes; they're all red. Though I don't know that it matters. Yes, they'll expect you to have been crying," said Mrs. Pasmers, seeing the situation more and more clearly. "It's perfectly natural." But she took some cologne on a handkerchief, and recomposed Alice's countenance for her. "There, the colour becomes you, and I never saw your eyes look so bright."

There was a pathos in their brilliancy which of course betrayed her to the Maverick girls. It softened Eunice, and encouraged Minnie, who had been a little afraid of the Pasmers. They both kissed Alice with sisterly affection. Their father merely saw how handsome she looked, and Dan's heart seemed to melt in his breast with tenderness.

In recognition of the different habits of their guests, they had dinner instead of tea. The Portuguese cook had outdone himself, and course

followed course in triumphal succession. Mrs. Pasmer praised it all with a sincerity that took away a little of the zest she felt in making flattering speeches.

Everything about the table was perfect, but in a man's fashion, like the rest of the house. It lacked the atmospheric charm, the otherwise indefinable grace, which a woman's taste gives. It was in fact Elbridge Mavering's taste which had characterised the whole; the daughters simply accepted and approved.

"Yes," said Eunice, "we haven't much else to do; so we eat. And Joe does his best to spoil us."

"Joe?"

"Joe's the cook. All Portuguese cooks are Joe."

"How very amusing!" said Mrs. Pasmer. "You must let me speak of your grapes. I never saw anything so--well!--except your roses."

"There you touched father in two tender spots. He cultivates both."

"Really? Alice, did you ever see anything like these roses?"

Alice looked away from Dan a moment, and blushed to find that she had been looking so long at him.

"Ah, I have," said Mavering gallantly.

"Does he often do it?" asked Mrs. Pasmer, in an obvious aside to Eunice.

Dan answered for him. "He never had such a chance before."

Between coffee, which they drank at table, and tea, which they were to take in Mrs. Mavering's room, they acted upon a suggestion from Eunice that her father should show Mrs. Pasmer his rose-house. At one end of the dining-room was a little apse of glass full of flowering plants growing out of the ground, and with a delicate fountain tinkling in their midst. Dan ran before the rest, and opened two glass doors in the further side of this half-bubble, and at the same time with a touch flashed up a succession of brilliant lights in some space beyond, from which there gushed in a wave of hothouse fragrance, warm, heavy, humid. It was a pretty little effect for guests new to the house, and was part of Elbridge Mavering's pleasure in this feature of his place. Mrs. Pasmer responded with generous sympathy, for if she really liked anything with her whole heart, it was an effect, and she traversed the half-bubble by its pebbled path, showering praises right and left with a fulness and accuracy that missed no detail, while Alice followed silently, her hand in Minnie Mavering's, and cold with suppressed excitement. The rose-house was divided by a wall, pierced with frequent doorways, over which the trees were trained and the roses hung; and on either side were ranks of rare and costly kinds, weighed down with bud and bloom. The air was thick with their breath and the pungent odours of the rich soil from which they grew,

and the glass roof was misted with the mingled exhalations.

Mr. Mavering walked beside Alice, modestly explaining the difficulties of rose culture, and his method of dealing with the red spider. He had a stout knife in his hand, and he cropped long, heavy-laden stems of roses from the walls and the beds, casually giving her their different names, and laying them along his arm in a massive sheaf.

Mrs. Pasmer and Eunice had gone forward with Dan, and were waiting for them at the thither end of the rose-house.

"Alice! just imagine: the grapery is beyond this," cried the girl's mother.

"It's a cold grapery," said Mr. Mavering. "I hope you'll see it to-morrow."

"Oh, why not to-night?" shouted Dan.

"Because it's a cold grapery," said Eunice; "and after this rose-house, it's an Arctic grapery. You're crazy, Dan."

"Well, I want Alice to see it anyway," he persisted wilfully. "There's nothing like a cold grapery by starlight. I'll get some wraps." They all knew that he wished to be alone with her a moment, and the three women, consenting with their hearts, protested with their tongues, following him in his flight with their chorus, and greeting his return. He muffled her to the chin in a fur-lined overcoat, which he had laid hands on the first thing; and her mother, still protesting, helped to tie a scarf over her hair so as not to disarrange it. "Here," he pointed, "we can run through it, and it's worth seeing. Better come," he said to the others as he opened the door, and hurried Alice down the path under the keen sparkle of the crystal roof, blotched with the leaves and bunches of the vines. Coming out of the dense, sensuous, vaporous air of the rose-house into this clear, thin atmosphere, delicately penetrated with the fragrance, pure and cold, of the fruit, it was as if they had entered another world. His arm crept round her in the odorous obscurity.

"Look up! See the stars through the vines! But when she lifted her face he bent his upon it for a wild kiss.

"Don't! don't!" she murmured. "I want to think; I don't know what I'm doing."

"Neither do I. I feel as if I were a blessed ghost."

Perhaps it is only in these ecstasies of the senses that the soul ever reaches self-consciousness on earth; and it seems to be only the man-soul which finds itself even in this abandon. The woman-soul has always something else to think of.

"What shall we do," said the girl, "if we--Oh, I dread to meet your mother! Is she like either of your sisters?"

"No," he cried joyously; "she's like me. If you're not afraid of me, and you don't seem to be--"

"You're all I have--you're all I have in the world. Do you think she'll like me? Oh, do you love me, Dan?"

"You darling! you divine--" The rest was a mad embrace. "If you're not afraid of me, you won't mind mother. I wanted you here alone for just a last word, to tell you you needn't be afraid; to tell you to--But I needn't tell you how to act. You mustn't treat her as an invalid--you must treat her like any one else; that's what she likes. But you'll know what's best, Alice. Be yourself, and she'll like you well enough. I'm not afraid."

XXXIII:

When she entered Mrs. Maverig's room Alice first saw the pictures, the bric-a-brac, the flowers, the dazzle of lights, and then the invalid propped among her pillows, and vividly expectant of her. She seemed all eager eyes to the girl, aware next of the strong resemblance to Dan in her features, and of the careful toilet the sick woman had made for her. To youth all forms of suffering are abhorrent, and Alice had to hide a repugnance at sight of this spectre of what had once been a pretty woman. Through the egotism with which so many years of flattering subjection in her little world had armed her, Mrs. Maverig probably did not feel the girl's shrinking, or, if she did, took it for the natural embarrassment which she would feel. She had satisfied herself that she was looking her best, and that her cap and the lace jacket she wore were very becoming, and softened her worst points; the hangings of her bed and the richly embroidered crimson silk coverlet were part of the coquetry of her costume, from which habit had taken all sense of ghastliness; she was proud of them, and she was not aware of the scent of drugs that insisted through the odour of the flowers.

She lifted herself on her elbow as Dan approached with Alice, and the girl felt as if an intense light had been thrown upon her from head to foot in the moment of searching scrutiny that followed. The invalid's set look broke into a smile, and she put out her hand, neither hot nor cold, but of a dry neutral, spiritual temperature, and pulled Alice down and kissed her.

"Why, child, your hand's like ice!" she exclaimed without preamble. "We used to say that came from a warm heart."

"I guess it comes from a cold grapery in this case, mother," said Dan, with his laugh. "I've just been running Alice through it. And perhaps a little excitement--"

"Excitement?" echoed his mother. "Cold grapery, I dare say, and very

silly of you, Dan; but there's no occasion for excitement, as if we were strangers. Sit down in that chair, my dear. And, Dan, you go round to the other side of the bed; I want Alice all to myself. I saw your photograph a week ago, and I've thought about you for ages since, and wondered whether you would approve of your old friend."

"Oh yes," whispered the girl, suppressing a tremor; and Dan's eyes were suffused with grateful tears at his mother's graciousness.

Alice's reticence seemed to please the invalid. "I hope you'll like all your old friends here; you've begun with the worst among us, but perhaps you like him the best because he is the worst; I do."

"You may believe just half of that, Alice," cried Dan.

"Then believe the best half, or the half you like best," said Mrs. Maverick. "There must be something good in him if you like him. Have they welcomed you home, my dear?"

"We've all made a stagger at it," said Dan, while Alice was faltering over the words which were so slow to come.

"Don't try to answer my formal stupidities. You are welcome, and that's enough, and more than enough of speeches. Did you have a comfortable journey up?"

"Oh, very."

"Was it cold?"

"Not at all. The cars were very hot."

"Have you had any snow yet at Boston?"

"No, none at all yet."

"Now I feel that we're talking sense. I hope you found everything in your room?" I can't look after things as I would like, and so I inquire."

"There's everything," said Alice. "We're very comfortable."

"I'm very glad. I had Dan look, he's my housekeeper; he understands me better than my girls; he's like me, more. That's what makes us so fond of each other; it's a kind of personal vanity. But he has his good points, Dan has. He's very amiable, and I was too, at his age--and till I came here. But I'm not going to tell you of his good points; I dare say you've found them out. I'll tell you about his bad ones. He says you're very serious. Are you?" She pressed the girl's hand, which she had kept in hers, and regarded her keenly.

Alice dropped her eyes at the odd question. "I don't know," she faltered. "Sometimes."

"Well, that's good. Dan's frivolous."

"Oh, sometimes--only sometimes!" he interposed.

"He's frivolous, and he's very light-minded; but he's none the worse for that."

"Oh, thank you," said Dan; and Alice, still puzzled, laughed provisionally.

"No; I want you to understand that. He's light-hearted too, and that's a great thing in this world. If you're serious you'll be apt to be heavyhearted, and then you'll find Dan of use. And I hope he'll know how, to turn your seriousness to account too. he needs something to keep him down--to keep him from blowing away. "Yes, it's very well for people to be opposites. Only they must understand each other, If they do that, then they get along. Light-heartedness or heavy-heartedness comes to the same thing if they know how to use it for each other. You see, I've got to be a great philosopher lying here; nobody dares contradict me or interrupt me when I'm constructing my theories, and so I get them perfect."

"I wish I could hear them all," said Alice, with sincerity that made Mrs. Maverick laugh as light-heartedly as Dan himself, and that seemed to suggest the next thing to her.

"You can for the asking, almost any time. Are you a very truthful person, my dear? Don't take the trouble to deny it if you are," she added, at Alice's stare. "You see, I'm not at all conventional and you needn't be. Come! tell the truth for once, at any rate. Are you habitually truthful?"

"Yes, I think I am," said Alice, still staring.

"Dan's not," said his mother quietly.

"Oh, see here, now, mother! Don't give me away!"

"He'll tell the truth in extremity, of course, and he'll tell it if it's pleasant, always; but if you don't expect much more of him you won't be disappointed; and you can make him of great use."

"You see where I got it, anyway, Alice," said Dan, laughing across the bed at her.

"Yes, you got it from me: I own it. A great part of my life was made up of making life pleasant to others by fibbing. I stopped it when I came here."

"Oh, not altogether, mother!" urged her son. "You mustn't be too hard on yourself."

She ignored his interruption: "You'll find Dan a great convenience with that agreeable habit of his. You can get him to make all your verbal excuses for you (he'll, do it beautifully), and dictate all the thousand

and one little lying notes you'll have to write; he won't mind it in the least, and it will save you a great wear-and-tear of conscience."

"Go on, mother, go on," said Dan, with delighted eyes, that asked of Alice if it were not all perfectly charming.

"And you can come in with your habitual truthfulness where Dan wouldn't know what to do, poor fellow. You'll have the moral courage to come right to the point when he would like to shillyshally, and you can be frank while he's trying to think how to make y-e-s spell no."

"Any other little compliments, mother?" suggested Dan.

"No," said Mrs. Maving; "that's all. I thought I'd better have it off my mind; I knew you'd never get it off yours, and Alice had better know the worst. It is the worst, my dear, and if I talked of him till doomsday I couldn't say any more harm of him. I needn't tell you how sweet he is; you know that, I'm sure; but you can't know yet how gentle and forbearing he is, how patient, how full of kindness to every living soul, how unselfish, how--"

She lost her voice. "Oh, come now, mother," Dan protested huskily.

Alice did not say anything; she bent over, without repugnance, and gathered the shadowy shape into her strong young arms, and kissed the wasted face whose unearthly coolness was like the leaf of a flower against her lips. "He never gave me a moment's trouble," said the mother, "and I'm sure he'll make you happy. How kind of you not to be afraid of me--"

"Afraid!" cried the girl, with passionate solemnity. "I shall never feel safe away from you!"

The door opened upon the sound of voices, and the others came in.

Mrs. Pasmer did not wait for an introduction, but with an affectation of impulse which she felt Mrs. Maving would penetrate and respect, she went up to the bed and presented herself. Dan's mother smiled hospitably upon her, and they had some playful words about their children. Mrs. Pasmer neatly conveyed the regrets of her husband, who had hoped up to the last moment that the heavy cold he had taken would let him come with her; and the invalid made her guest sit down on the right hand of her bed, which seemed to be the place of honour, while her husband took Dan's place on the left, and admired his wife's skill in fence. At the end of her encounter with Mrs. Pasmer she called out with her strong voice, "Why don't you get your banjo, Molly, and play something?"

"A banjo? Oh, do!" cried Mrs. Pasmer. "It's so picturesque and interesting! I heard that young ladies had taken it up, and I should so like to hear it!" She had turned to Mrs. Maving again, and she now beamed winningly upon her.

Alice regarded the girl with a puzzled frown as she brought her banjo in from another room and sat down with it. She relaxed the severity of her

stare a little as Molly played one wild air after another, singing some of them with an evidence of training in her naive effectiveness. There were some Mexican songs which she had learned in a late visit to their country, and some Creole melodies caught up in a winter's sojourn to Louisiana. The elder sister accompanied her on the piano, not with the hard, resolute proficiency which one might have expected of Eunice Mavering, but with a sympathy which was perhaps the expression of her share of the family kindness.

"Your children seem to have been everywhere," said Mrs. Pasmer, with a sigh of flattering envy. "Oh, you're not going to stop!" she pleaded, turning from Mrs. Mavering to Molly.

"I think Dan had better do the rheumatic uncle now," said Eunice, from the piano.

"Oh yes! the rheumatic uncle--do," said Mrs. Pasmer. "We know the rheumatic uncle," she added, with a glance at Alice. Dan looked at her too, as if doubtful of her approval; and then he told in character a Yankee story which he had worked up from the talk of his friend the foreman. It made them all laugh.

Mrs. Pasmer was the gayest; she let herself go, and throughout the evening she flattered right and left, and said, in her good-night to Mrs. Mavering, that she had never imagined so delightful a time. "O Mrs. Mavering, I don't wonder your children love their home. It's a revelation."

XXXIV.

"She's a cat, Dan," said his mother quietly, and not without liking, when he looked in for his goodnight kiss after the rest were gone; "a perfect tabby. But your Alice is sublime."

"O mother--"

"She's a little too sublime for me. But you're young, and you can stand it."

Dan laughed with delight. "Yes, I think I can, mother. All I ask is the chance."

"Oh, you're very much in love, both of you; there's no doubt about that. What I mean is that she's very high strung, very intense. She has ideals--any one can see that."

Dan took it all for praise. "Yes," he said eagerly, "that's what I told you. And that will be the best thing about it for me. I have no ideals."

"Well, you must find out what hers are, and live up to them."

"Oh, there won't be any trouble about that," said Dan buoyantly.

"You must help her to find them out too." He looked puzzled. "You mustn't expect the child to be too definite at first, nor to be always right, even when she's full of ideals. You must be very patient with her, Dan."

"Oh, I will, mother! You know that. How could I ever be impatient with Alice?"

"Very forbearing, and very kind, and indefatigably forgiving. Ask your father how to behave."

Dan promised to do so, with a laugh at the joke. It had never occurred to him that his father was particularly exemplary in these things, or that his mother idolised him for what seemed to Dan simply a matter-of-course endurance of her sick whims and freaks and moods. He broke forth into a vehement protest of his good intentions, to which his mother did not seem very attentive. After a while she asked--

"Is she always so silent, Dan?"

"Well, not with me, mother. Of course she was a little embarrassed; she didn't know exactly what to say, I suppose--"

"Oh, I rather liked that. At least she isn't a rattle-pate. And we shall get acquainted; we shall like each other. She will understand me when you bring her home here to live with us, and--"

"Yes," said Dan, rising rather hastily, and stooping over to his mother. "I'm not going to let you talk any more now, or we shall have to suffer for it to-morrow night."

He got gaily away before his mother could amplify a suggestion which spoiled a little of his pleasure in the praises--he thought they were unqualified and enthusiastic praises--she had been heaping upon Alice. He wished to go to bed with them all sweet and unalloyed in his thought, to sleep, to dream upon his perfect triumph.

Mrs. Pasmer was a long time in undressing, and in calming down after the demands which the different events of the evening had made upon her resources.

"It has certainly been a very mixed evening, Alice," she said, as she took the pins out of her back hair and let it fall; and she continued to talk as she went back and forth between their rooms. "What do you think of banjo-playing for young ladies? Isn't it rather rowdy? Decidedly rowdy, I think. And Dan's Yankee story! I expected to see the old gentleman get up and perform some trick."

"I suppose they do it to amuse Mrs. Maverick," said Alice, with cold displeasure.

"Oh, it's quite right," tittered Mrs. Pasmer. "It would be as much as their lives are worth if they didn't. You can see that she rules them with a rod of iron. What a will! I'm glad you're not going to come under her sway; I really think you couldn't be safe from her in the same hemisphere; it's well you're going abroad at once. They're a very self-concentrated family, don't you think--very self-satisfied? Of course that's the danger of living off by themselves as they do: they get to thinking there's nobody else in the world. You would simply be absorbed by them: it's a hair-breadth escape.

"How splendidly Dan contrasts with the others! Oh, he's delightful; he's a man of the world. Give me the world, after all! And he's so considerate of their rustic conceit! What a house! It's perfectly baronial--and ridiculous. In any other country it would mean something--society, entertainments, troops of guests; but here it doesn't mean anything but money. Not that money isn't a very good thing; I wish we had more of it. But now you see how very little it can do by itself. You looked very well, Alice, and behaved with great dignity; perhaps too much. You ought to enter a little more into the spirit of things, even if you don't respect them. That oldest girl isn't particularly pleased, I fancy, though it doesn't matter really."

Alice replied to her mother from time to time with absent Yeses and Noes; she sat by the window looking out on the hillside lawn before the house; the moon had risen, and poured a flood of snowy light over it, in which the cold statues dimly shone, and the firs, in clumps and singly, blackened with an inky solidity. Beyond wandered the hills, their bare pasturage broken here and there by blotches of woodland.

After her mother had gone to bed she turned her light down and resumed her seat by the window, pressing her hot forehead against the pane, and losing all sense of the scene without in the whirl of her thoughts.

After this, evening of gay welcome in Dan's family, and those moments of tenderness with him, her heart was troubled. She now realised her engagement as something exterior to herself and her own family, and confronted for the first time its responsibilities, its ties, and its claims. It was not enough to be everything to Dan; she could not be that unless she were something to his family. She did not realise this vividly, but with the remoteness which all verities except those of sensation have for youth.

Her uneasiness was full of exultation, of triumph; she knew she had been admired by Dan's family, and she experienced the sweetness of having pleased them for his sake; his happy eyes shone before her; but she was touched in her self-love by what her mother had coarsely characterised in them. They had regarded her liking them as a matter of course; his mother had ignored her even in pretending to decry Dan to her. But again this was very remote, very momentary. It was no nearer, no more lasting on the surface of her happiness, than the flying whiff's of thin cloud that chased across the moon and lost themselves in the vast blue around it.

XXXV.

People came to the first of Mrs. James Bellingham's receptions with the expectation of pleasure which the earlier receptions of the season awaken even in the oldest and wisest. But they tried to dissemble their eagerness in a fashionable tardiness. "We get later and later," said Mrs. Brinkley to John Munt, as she sat watching the slow gathering of the crowd. By half-past eleven it had not yet hidden Mrs. Bellingham, where she stood near the middle of the room, from the pleasant corner they had found after accidentally arriving together. Mr. Brinkley had not come; he said he might not be too old for receptions, but he was too good; in either case he preferred to stay at home. "We used to come at nine o'clock, and now we come at I'm getting into a quotation from Mother Goose, I think."

"I thought it was Browning," said Munt, with his witticism manner. Neither he nor Mrs. Brinkley was particularly glad to be together, but at Mrs. James Bellingham's it was well not to fling any companionship away till you were sure of something else. Besides, Mrs. Brinkley was indolent and good-natured, and Munt was active and good-natured, and they were well fitted to get on for ten or fifteen minutes. While they talked she kept an eye out for other acquaintance, and he stood alert to escape at the first chance. "How is it we are here so early--or rather you are?" she pursued irrelevantly.

"Oh, I don't know," said Munt, accepting the implication of his superior fashion with pleasure. "I never mind being among the first. It's rather interesting to see people come in--don't you think?"

"That depends a good deal on the people. I don't find a great variety in their smirks and smiles to Mrs. Bellingham; I seem to be doing them all myself. And there's a monotony about their apprehension and helplessness when they're turned adrift that's altogether too much like my own. No, Mr. Munt, I can't agree with you that it's interesting to see people come in. It's altogether too autobiographical. What else have you to suggest?"

"I'm afraid I'm at the end of my string," said Munt. "I suppose we shall see the Pasmers and young Maving here to-night."

Mrs. Brinkley turned and looked sharply at him.

"You've heard of the engagement?" he asked.

"No, decidedly, I haven't. And after his flight from Campobello it's the last thing I expected to hear of. When did it come out?"

"Only within a few days. They've been keeping it rather quiet. Mrs. Pasmer told me herself."

Mrs. Brinkley gave herself a moment for reflection. "Well, if he can stand it, I suppose I can."

"That isn't exactly what people are saying to Mrs. Pasmer, Mrs. Brinkley," suggested Munt, with his humorous manner.

"I dare say they're trying to make her believe that her daughter is sacrificed. That's the way. But she knows better."

"There's no doubt but she's informed herself. She put me through my catechism about the Mavericks the day of the picnic down there."

"Do you know them?"

"Bridge Maverick and I were at Harvard together."

"Tell me about them." Mrs. Brinkley listened to Munt's praises of his old friend with an attention superficially divided with the people to whom she bowed and smiled. The room was filling up. "Well," she said at the end, "he's a sweet young fellow. I hope he likes his Pasmers."

"I guess there's no doubt about his liking one of them--the principal one."

"Yes, if she is the principal one." There was an implication in everything she said that Dan Maverick had been hoodwinked by Mrs. Pasmer. Mature ladies always like to imply something of the sort in these cases. They like to ignore the prime agency of youth and love, and pretend that marriage is a game that parents play at with us, as if we were in an old comedy; it is a tradition. "Will he take her home to live?"

"No. I heard that they're all going abroad--for a year, or two at least."

"Ah! I thought so," cried Mrs. Brinkley. She looked up with whimsical pleasure in the uncertainty of an old gentleman who is staring hard at her through his glasses. "Well," she said with a pleasant sharpness, "do you make me out?"

"As nearly as my belief in your wisdom will allow," said the old gentleman, as distinctly as his long white moustache and an apparent absence of teeth behind it would let him. John Munt had eagerly abandoned the seat he was keeping at Mrs. Brinkley's side, and had launched himself into the thickening crowd. The old gentleman, who was lank and tall, folded himself down into it. He continued as tranquilly as if seated quite alone with Mrs. Brinkley, and not minding that his voice, with the senile crow in it, made itself heard by others. "I'm always surprised to find sensible people at these things of Jane's. They're most extraordinary things. Jane's idea of society is to turn a herd of human beings loose in her house, and see what will come of it. She has no more sense of hospitality or responsibility than the Elements or Divine Providence. You may come here and have a good time--if you can get it; she won't object; or you may die of solitude and inanition; she'd never know it. I don't know but it's rather sublime in her. It's like the indifference of fate;

but it's rather rough on those who don't understand it. She likes to see her rooms filled with pretty dresses, but she has no social instincts and no social inspiration whatever. She lights and heats and feeds her guests, and then she leaves them to themselves. She's a kind woman--Jane is a very good-natured woman, and I really think she'd be grieved if she thought any one went away unhappy, but she does nothing to make them at home in her house--absolutely nothing."

"Perhaps she does all they deserve for them. I don't know that any one acquires merit by coming to an evening party; and it's impossible to be personally hospitable to everybody in such a crowd."

Yes, I've sometimes taken that view of it. And yet if you ask a stranger to your house, you establish a tacit understanding with him that you won't forget him after you have him there. I like to go about and note the mystification of strangers who've come here with some notion of a little attention. It's delightfully poignant; I suffer with them; it's a cheap luxury of woe; I follow them through all the turns and windings of their experience. Of course the theory is that, being turned loose here with the rest, they may speak to anybody; but the fact is, they can't. Sometimes I should like to hail some of these unfriended spirits, but I haven't the courage. I'm not individually bashful, but I have a thousand years of Anglo-Saxon civilisation behind me. There ought to be policemen, to show strangers about and be kind to them. I've just seen two pretty women cast away in a corner, and clinging to a small water-colour on the wall with a show of interest that would melt a heart of stone. Why do you come, Mrs. Brinkley? I should like to know. You're not obliged to."

"No," said Mrs. Brinkley, lowering her voice instinctively, as if to bring his down. "I suppose I come from force of habit I've been coming a long time, you know. Why do you come?"

"Because I can't sleep. If I could sleep, I should be at home in bed." A weariness came into his thin face and dim eyes that was pathetic, and passed into a whimsical sarcasm. "I'm not one of the great leisure class, you know, that voluntarily turns night into day. Do you know what I go about saying now?"

"Something amusing, I suppose."

"You'd better not be so sure of that. I've discovered a fact, or rather I've formulated an old one. I've always been troubled how to classify people here, there are so many exceptions; and I've ended by broadly generalising them as women and men."

Mrs. Brinkley was certainly amused at this. "It seems to me that there you've been anticipated by nature--not to mention art."

"Oh, not in my particular view. The women in America represent the aristocracy which exists everywhere else in both sexes. You are born to the patrician leisure; you have the accomplishments and the clothes and manners and ideals; and we men are a natural commonalty, born to business, to newspapers, to cigars, and horses. This natural female aristocracy of

ours establishes the forms, usages, places, and times of society. The epicene aristocracies of other countries turn night into day in their social pleasures, and our noblesse sympathetically follows their example. You ladies, who can lie till noon next day, come to Jane's reception at eleven o'clock, and you drag along with you a herd of us brokers, bankers, merchants, lawyers, and doctors, who must be at our offices and counting-rooms before nine in the morning. The hours of us work-people are regulated by the wholesome industries of the great democracy which we're a part of; and the hours of our wives and daughters by the deleterious pleasures of the Old World aristocracy. That's the reason we're not all at home in bed."

"I thought you were not at home in bed because you couldn't sleep."

"I know it. And you've no idea how horrible a bed is that you can't sleep in." The old man's voice broke in a tremor. "Ah, it's a bed of torture! I spend many a wicked hour in mine, envying St. Lawrence his gridiron. But what do you think of my theory?"

"It's a very pretty theory. My only objection to it is that it's too flattering. You know I rather prefer to abuse my sex; and to be set up as a natural aristocracy--I don't know that I can quite agree to that, even to account satisfactorily for being at your sister-in-law's reception."

"You're too modest, Mrs. Brinkley."

"No, really. There ought to be some men among us--men without morrows. Now, why don't you and my husband set an example to your sex? Why don't you relax your severe sense of duty? Why need you insist upon being at your offices every morning at nine? Why don't you fling off these habits of lifelong industry, and be gracefully indolent in the interest of the higher civilisation?"

Bromfield Corey looked round at her with a smile of relish for her satire. Her husband was a notoriously lazy man, who had chosen to live restrictedly upon an inherited property rather than increase it by the smallest exertion.

"Do you think we could get Andy Pasmers to join us?"

"No, I can't encourage you with that idea. You must get on without Mr. Pasmers; he's going back to Europe with his son-in-law."

"Do you mean that their girls married?"

"No-engaged. It's just out."

"Well, I must say Mrs. Pasmers has made use of her time." He too liked to imply that it was all an effect of her manoeuvring, and that the young people had nothing to do with it; this survival from European fiction dies hard. "Who is the young man?"

Mrs. Brinkley gave him an account of Dan Maving as she had seen him at

Campobello, and of his family as she just heard of them. "Mr. Munt was telling me about them as you came up."

"Why, was that John Munt?"

"Yes; didn't you know him?"

"No," said Corey sadly. "I don't know anybody nowadays. I seem to be going to pieces every way. I don't call sixty-nine such a very great age."

"Not at all!" cried Mrs. Brinkley. "I'm fifty-four myself, and Brinkley's sixty."

"But I feel a thousand years old. I don't see people, and when I do I don't know 'em. My head's in a cloud." He let it hang heavily; then he lifted it, and said: "He's a nice, comfortable fellow, Munt is. Why didn't he stop and talk a bit?"

"Well, Munt's modest, you know; and I suppose he thought he might be the third that makes company a crowd. Besides, nobody stops and talks a bit at these things. They're afraid of boring or being bored."

"Yes, they're all in as unnatural a mood as if they were posing for a photograph. I wonder who invented this sort of thing? Do you know," said the old man, "that I think it's rather worse with us than with any other people? We're a simple, sincere folk, domestic in our instincts, not gregarious or frivolous in any way; and when we're wrenched away from our firesides, and packed in our best clothes into Jane's gilded saloons, we feel vindictive; we feel wicked. When the Boston being abandons himself-- or herself--to fashion, she suffers a depravation into something quite lurid. She has a bad conscience, and she hardens her heart with talk that's tremendously cynical. It's amusing," said Corey, staring round him purblindly at the groups and files of people surging and eddying past the corner where he sat with Mrs. Brinkley.

"No; it's shocking," said his companion. "At any rate, you mustn't say such things, even if you think them. I can't let you go too far, you know. These young people think it heavenly, here."

She took with him the tone that elderly people use with those older than themselves who have begun to break; there were authority and patronage in it. At the bottom of her heart she thought that Bromfield Corey should not have been allowed to come; but she determined to keep him safe and harmless as far as she could.

From time to time the crowd was a stationary mass in front of them; then it dissolved and flowed away, to gather anew; there were moments when the floor near them was quite vacant; then it was inundated again with silken trains. From another part of the house came the sound of music, and most of the young people who passed went two and two, as if they were partners in the dance, and had come out of the ball-room between dances. There was a good deal of nervous talk, politely subdued among them; but it was not

the note of unearthly rapture which Mrs. Brinkley's conventional claim had implied; it was self-interested, eager, anxious; and was probably not different from the voice of good society anywhere.

XXXVI.

"Why, there's Dan Mavering now!" said Mrs. Brinkley, rather to herself than to her companion. "And alone!"

Dan's face showed above most of the heads and shoulders about him; it was flushed, and looked troubled and excited. He caught sight of Mrs. Brinkley, and his eyes brightened joyfully. He slipped quickly through the crowd, and bowed over her hand, while he stammered out, without giving her a chance for reply till the end: "O Mrs. Brinkley, I'm so glad to see you! I'm going--I want to ask a great favour of you, Mrs. Brinkley. I want to bring--I want to introduce some friends of mine to you--some ladies, Mrs. Brinkley; very nice people I met last summer at Portland. Their father--General Wrayne--has been building some railroads down East, and they're very nice people; but they don't know any one--any ladies--and they've been looking at the pictures ever since they came. They're very good pictures; but it isn't an exhibition!" He broke down with a laugh.

"Why, of course, Mr. Mavering; I shall be delighted," said Mrs. Brinkley, with a hospitality rendered reckless by her sympathy with the young fellow. "By all means!"

"Oh; thanks!--thank you ever so much!" said Dan. "I'll bring them to you --they'll understand!" He slipped into the crowd again.

Corey made an offer of going. Mrs. Brinkley stopped him with her fan. "No--stay, Mr. Corey. Unless you wish to go. I fancy it's the people you were talking about, and you must help me through with them."

"I ask nothing better," said the old man, unresentful of Dan's having not even seemed to see him, in his generous preoccupation. "I should like to see how you'll get on, and perhaps I can be of use."

"Of course you can--the greatest."

"But why hasn't he introduced them to his Pasmers? What? Eh? Oh!" Corey made these utterances in response to a sharper pressure of Mrs. Brinkley's fan on his arm.

Dan was opening a way through the crowd before them for two ladies, whom he now introduced. "Mrs. Frobisher, Mrs. Brinkley; and Miss Wrayne."

Mrs. Brinkley cordially gave her hand to the ladies, and said, "May I introduce Mr. Corey? Mr. Mavering, let me introduce you to Mr. Corey." The old man rose and stood with the little group.

Dan's face shone with flattered pride and joyous triumph. He bubbled out some happy incoherencies about the honour and pleasure, while at the same time he beamed with tender gratitude upon Mrs. Brinkley, who was behaving with a gracious, humorous kindness to the aliens cast upon her mercies. Mrs. Frobisher, after a half-hour of Boston society, was not that presence of easy gaiety which crossed Dan's path on the Portland pavement the morning of his arrival from Campobello; but she was still a handsome, effective woman, of whom you would have hesitated to say whether she was showy or distinguished. Perhaps she was a little of both, with an air of command bred of supremacy in frontier garrisons; her sister was like her in the way that a young girl may be like a young matron. They blossomed alike in the genial atmosphere of Mrs. Brinkley and of Mr. Corey. He began at once to make bantering speeches with them both. The friendliness of an old man and a stout elderly woman might not have been their ideal of success at an evening party, used as they were to the unstinted homage of young captains and lieutenants, but a brief experience of Mrs. Bellingham's hospitality must have taught them humility; and when a stout, elderly gentleman, whose baldness was still trying to be blond, joined the group, the spectacle was not without its points of resemblance to a social ovation. Perhaps it was a Boston social ovation.

"Hallo, Corey!" said this stout gentleman, whom Mrs. Brinkley at once introduced as Mr. Bellingham, and whose salutation Corey returned with "Hallo, Charles!" of equal intimacy.

Mr. Bellingham caught at the name of Frobisher. "Mrs. Major Dick Frobisher?"

"Mrs. Colonel now, but Dick always," said the lady, with immediate comradery. "Do you know my husband?"

"I should think so!" said Bellingham; and a talk of common interest and mutual reminiscence sprang up between them. Bellingham graphically depicted his meeting with Colonel Frobisher the last time he was out on the Plains, and Mrs. Frobisher and Miss Wrayne discovered to their great satisfaction that he was the brother of Mrs. Stephen Blake, of Omaba, who had come out to the fort once with her husband, and captured the garrison, as they said. Mrs. Frobisher accounted for her present separation from her husband, and said she had come on for a while to be with her father and sister, who both needed more looking after than the Indians. Her father had left the army, and was building railroads.

Miss Wrayne, when she was not appealed to for confirmation or recollection by her sister, was having a lively talk with Corey and Mrs. Brinkley; she seemed to enter into their humour; and no one paid much attention to Dan Maverick. He hung upon the outskirts of the little group; proffering unrequited sympathy and applause; and at last he murmured something about having to go back to some friends, and took himself off. Mrs. Frobisher and Miss Wrayne let him go with a certain shade--the lightest, and yet evident--of not wholly satisfied pique: women know how to accept a reparation on account, and without giving a receipt in full.

Mrs. Brinkley gave him her hand with an effect of compassionate

intelligence and appreciation of the sacrifice he must have made in leaving Alice. "May I congratulate you?" she murmured.

"Oh yes, indeed; thank you, Mrs. Brinkley," he gushed tremulously; and he pressed her hand hard, and clung to it, as if he would like to take her with him.

Neither of the older men noticed his going. They were both taken in their elderly way with these two handsome young women, and they professed regret--Bellingham that his mother was not there, and Corey that neither his wife nor daughters had come, whom they might otherwise have introduced. They did not offer to share their acquaintance with any one else, but they made the most of it themselves, as if knowing a good thing when they had it. Their devotion to Mrs. Frobisher and her sister heightened the curiosity of such people as noticed it, but it would be wrong to say that it moved any in that self-limited company with a strong wish to know the ladies. The time comes to every man, no matter how great a power he may be in society, when the general social opinion retires him for senility, and this time had come for Bromfield Corey. He could no longer make or mar any success; and Charles Bellingham was so notoriously amiable, so deeply compromised by his inveterate habit of liking nearly every one, that his notice could not distinguish or advantage a newcomer.

He and Corey took the ladies down to supper. Mrs. Brinkley saw them there together, and a little later she saw old Corey wander off; forgetful of Miss Wrayne. She saw Dan Maverig, but not the Pasmers, and then, when Corey forgot Miss Wrayne, she saw Dan, forlorn and bewildered looking, approach the girl, and offer her his arm for the return to the drawing-room; she took it with a bright, cold smile, making white rings of ironical deprecation around the pupils of her eyes.

"What is that poor boy doing, I wonder?" said Mrs. Brinkley to herself.

XXXVII.

The next morning Dan Maverig knocked at Boardman's door before the reporter was up. This might have been any time before one o'clock, but it was really at half-past nine. Boardman wanted to know who was there, and when Maverig had said it was he, Boardman seemed to ponder the fact awhile before Maverig heard him getting out of bed and coming barefooted to the door. He unlocked it, and got back into bed; then he called out, "Come in," and Maverig pushed the door open impatiently. But he stood blank and silent, looking helplessly at his friend. A strong glare of winter light came in through the naked sash--for Boardman apparently not only did not close his window-blinds, but did not pull down his curtains, when he went to bed--and shone upon his gay, shrewd face where he lay, showing his pop-corn teeth in a smile at Maverig.

"Prefer to stand?" he asked by and by, after Maverig had remained standing in silence, with no signs of proposing to sit down or speak.

Mavinger glanced at the only chair in the room: Boardman's clothes dripped and dangled over it. "Throw 'em on the bed," he said, following Mavinger's glance.

"I'll take the bed myself," said Mavinger; and he sat down on the side of it, and was again suggestively silent.

Boardman moved his head on the pillow, as he watched Mavinger's face, with the agreeable sense of personal security which we all feel in viewing trouble from the outside: "You seem balled up about something."

Mavinger sighed heavily. "Balled up? It's no word for it. Boardman, I'm done for. Yesterday I was the happiest fellow in the world, and now--Yes, it's all over with me, and it's my own fault, as usual. Look; at that!" He jerked Boardman a note which he had been holding fast in his band, and got up and went to look himself at the wide range of chimney-pots and slated roofs which Boardman's dormer-window commanded.

"Want me to read it?" Boardman asked; and Mavinger nodded without glancing round. It dispersed through the air of Boardman's room, as he unfolded it, a thin, elect perfume, like a feminine presence, refined and strict; and Boardman involuntarily passed his hand over his rumpled hair, as if to make himself a little more personable before reading the letter.

"DEAR MR. MAVERING,--I enclose the ring you gave me the other day, and I release you from the promise you gave with it. I am convinced that you wronged yourself in offering either without your whole heart, and I care too much for your happiness to let you persist in your sacrifice.

"In begging that you will not uselessly attempt to see me, but that you will consider this note final, I know you will do me the justice not to attribute an ungenerous motive to me. I shall rejoice to hear of any good that may befall you; and I shall try not to envy any one through whom it comes.--Yours sincerely," "ALICE PASMER."

"P.S.--I say nothing of circumstances or of persons; I feel that any comment of mine upon them would be idle."

Mavinger looked up at the sound Boardman made in refolding the letter. Boardman grinned, with sparkling eyes. "Pretty neat," he said.

"Pretty infernally neat," roared Mavinger.

"Do you suppose she means business?"

"Of course she means business. Why shouldn't she?"

"I don't know. Why should she?"

"Well, I'll tell you, Boardman. I suppose I shall have to tell you if I'm going to get any good out of you; but it's a dose." He came away from the window, and swept Boardman's clothes off the chair preparatory to

taking it.

Boardman lifted his head nervously from the pillow.

"Oh; I'll put them on the bed, if you're so punctilious!" cried Mavering.

"I don't mind the clothes," said Boardman. "I thought I heard my watch knock on the floor in my vest pocket. Just take it out, will you, and see if you've stopped it?"

"Oh, confound your old Waterbury! All the world's stopped; why shouldn't your watch stop too?" Mavering tugged it out of the pocket, and then shoved it back disdainfully. "You couldn't stop that thing with anything short of a sledgehammer; it's rattling away like a mowing-machine. You know those Portland women--those ladies I spent the day with when you were down there at the regatta--the day I came from Campobello--Mrs. Frobisher and her sister?" He agglutinated one query to another till he saw a light of intelligence dawn in Boardman's eye. "Well, they're at the bottom of it, I suppose. I was introduced to them on Class Day, and I ought to have shown them some attention there; but the moment I saw Alice--Miss Pasmer--I forgot all about 'em. But they didn't seem to have noticed it much, and I made it all right with 'em that day at Portland; and they came up in the fall, and I made an appointment with them to drive out to Cambridge and show them the place. They were to take me up at the Art Museum; but that was the day I met Miss Pasmer, and I--I forgot about those women again."

Boardman was one of those who seldom laugh; but his grin expressed all the malicious enjoyment he felt. He said nothing in the impressive silence which Mavering let follow at this point.

"Oh, you think it was funny?" cried Mavering. "I thought it was funny too; but Alice herself opened my eyes to what I'd done, and I always intended to make it all right with them when I got the chance. I supposed she wished me too."

Boardman grinned afresh.

"She told me I must; though she seemed to dislike my having been with them the day after she'd thrown me over. But if"--Mavering interrupted himself to say, as the grin widened on Boardman's face--"if you think it was any case of vulgar jealousy, you're very much mistaken, Boardman. She isn't capable of it, and she was so magnanimous about it that I made up my mind to do all I could to retrieve myself. I felt that it was my duty to her. Well, last night at Mrs. Jim Bellingham's reception--"

A look of professional interest replaced the derision in Boardman's eyes. "Any particular occasion for the reception? Given in honour of anybody?"

"I'll contribute to your society notes some other time, Boardman," said Mavering haughtily. "I'm speaking to a friend, not an interviewer. Well, whom should I see after the first waltz--I'd been dancing with Alice, and we were taking a turn through the drawing-room, and she hanging on my arm, and I knew everybody saw how it was, and I was feeling well--whom should I

see but these women. They were in a corner by themselves, looking at a picture, and trying to look as if they were doing it voluntarily. But I could see at a glance that they didn't know anybody; and I knew they had better be in the heart of the Sahara without acquaintances than where they were; and when they bowed forlornly across the room to me, my heart was in my mouth, I felt so sorry for them; and I told Alice who they were; and I supposed she'd want to rush right over to them with me--"

"And did she rush?" asked Boardman, filling up a pause which Maving made in wiping his face.

"How infernally hot you have it in here!" He went to the window and threw it up; and then did not sit down again, but continued to walk back and forth as he talked. "She didn't seem to know who they were at first, and when I made her understand she hung back, and said, 'Those showy things?' and I must say I think she was wrong; they were dressed as quietly as nine-tenths of the people there; only they are rather large, handsome women. I said I thought we ought to go and speak to them, they seemed stranded there; but she didn't seem to see it; and, when I persisted, she said, 'Well, you go if you think best; but take me to mamma.' And I supposed it was all right; and I told Mrs. Pasher I'd be back in a minute, and then I went off to those women. And after I'd talked with them a while I saw Mrs. Brinkley sitting with old Bromfield Corey in another corner, and I got them across and introduced them; after I'd explained to Mrs. Brinkley who they were; and they began to have a good time, and I--didn't."

"Just so," said Boardman.

"I thought I hadn't been gone any while at all from Alice; but the weather had changed by the time I had got back. Alice was pretty serious, and she was engaged two or three dances deep; and I could see her looking over the fellows' shoulders, as she went round and round, pretty pale. I hung about till she was free; but then she couldn't dance with me; she said her head ached, and she made her mother take her home before supper; and I mooned round like my own ghost a while, and then I went home. And as if that wasn't enough, I could see by the looks of those other women--old Corey forgot Miss Wrayne in the supper-room, and I had to take her back--that I hadn't made it right with them, even; they were as hard and smooth as glass. I'd ruined myself, and ruined myself for nothing."

Maving flung Boardman's chair over, and seated himself on its rungs.

"I went to bed, and waited for the next thing to happen. I found my thunderbolt waiting for me when I woke up. I didn't know what it was going to be, but when I felt a ring through the envelope of that note I knew what it was. I mind-read that note before I opened it."

"Give it to the Society for Psychological Research," suggested Boardman.
"Been to breakfast?"

"Breakfast!" echoed Maving. "Well, now, Boardman, what use do you suppose I've got for breakfast under the circumstances?"

"Well, not very much; but your story's made me pretty hungry. Would you mind turning your back, or going out and sitting on the top step of the stairs' landing, or something, while I get up and dress?"

"Oh, I can go, if you want to get rid of me," said Maverick, with unresentful sadness. "But I hoped you might have something to suggest, Boardman."

"Well, I've suggested two things, and you don't like either. Why not go round and ask to see the old lady?"

"Mrs. Pasmer?"

"Yes."

"Well, I thought of that. But I didn't like to mention it, for fear you'd sit on it. When would you go?"

"Well, about as quick as I could get there. It's early for a call, but it's a peculiar occasion, and it'll show your interest in the thing. You can't very well let it cool on your hands, unless you mean to accept the situation."

"What do you mean?" demanded Maverick, getting up and standing over Boardman. "Do you think I could accept the situation, as you call it, and live?"

"You did once," said Boardman. "You couldn't, unless you could fix it up with Mrs. Frobisher's sister."

Maverick blushed. "It was a different thing altogether then. I could have broken off then, but I tell you it would kill me now. I've got in too deep. My whole life's set on that girl. You can't understand, Boardman, because you've never been there; but I couldn't give her up."

"All right. Better go and see the old lady without loss of time; or the old man, if you prefer."

Maverick sat down on the edge of the bed again. "Look here, Boardman, what do you mean?"

"By what?"

"By being so confoundedly heartless. Did you suppose that I wanted to pay those women any attention last night from an interested motive?"

"Seems to have been Miss Pasmer's impression."

"Well, you're mistaken. She had no such impression. She would have too much self-respect, too much pride--magnanimity. She would know that after such a girl as she is I couldn't think of any other woman; the thing is simply impossible."

"That's the theory."

"Theory? It's the practice!"

"Certain exceptions."

"There's no exception in my case. No, sir! I tell you this thing is for all time--for eternity. It makes me or it mars me, once for all. She may listen to me or she may not listen, but as long as she lives there's no other woman alive for me."

"Better go and tell her so. You're wasting your arguments on me."

"Why?"

"Because I'm convinced already. Because people always marry their first and only loves. Because people never marry twice for love. Because I've never seen you hit before, and I know you never could be again. Now go and convince Miss Pasmer. She'll believe you, because she'll know that she can never care for any one but you, and you naturally can't care for anybody but her. It's a perfectly clear case. All you've got to do is to set it before her."

"If I were you, I wouldn't try to work that cynical racket, Boardman," said Mavering. He rose, but he sighed drearily, and regarded Boardman's grin with lack-lustre absence. But he went away without saying anything more; and walked mechanically toward the Cavendish. As he rang at the door of Mrs. Pasmer's apartments he recalled another early visit he had paid there; he thought how joyful and exuberant he was then, and how crushed and desperate now. He was not without youthful satisfaction in the disparity of his different moods; it seemed to stamp him as a man of large and varied experience.

XXXVIII.

Mrs. Pasmer was genuinely surprised to see Mavering, and he pursued his advantage--if it was an advantage--by coming directly to the point. He took it for granted that she knew all about the matter, and he threw himself upon her mercy without delay.

"Mrs. Pasmer, you must help me about this business with Alice," he broke out at once. "I don't know what to make of it; but I know I can explain it. Of course," he added, smiling ruefully, "the two statements don't hang together; but what I mean is that if I can find out what the trouble is, I can make it all right, because there's nothing wrong about it; don't you see?"

Mrs. Pasmer tried to keep the mystification out of her eye; but she could not even succeed in seeming to do so, which she would have liked almost as

well.

"Don't you know what I mean?" asked Dan.

Mrs. Pasmer chanced it. "That Alice was a little out of sorts last night?" she queried leadingly.

"Yes," said Maverig fervently. "And about her--her writing to me."

"Writing to you?" Mrs. Pasmer was going to ask, when Dan gave her the letter.

"I don't know whether I ought to show it, but I must. I must have your help, and I can't, unless you understand the case."

Mrs. Pasmer had begun to read the note. It explained what the girl herself had refused to give any satisfactory reason for--her early retirement from the reception, her mysterious disappearance into her own room on reaching home, and her resolute silence on the way. Mrs. Pasmer had known that there must be some trouble with Dan, and she had suspected that Alice was vexed with him on account of those women; but it was beyond her cheerful imagination that she should go to such lengths in her resentment. She could conceive of her wishing to punish him, to retaliate her suffering on him; but to renounce him for it was another thing; and she did not attribute to her daughter any other motive than she would have felt herself. It was always this way with Mrs. Pasmer: she followed her daughter accurately up to a certain point; beyond that she did not believe the girl knew herself what she meant; and perhaps she was not altogether wrong. Girlhood is often a turmoil of wild impulses, ignorant exaltations, mistaken ideals, which really represent no intelligent purpose, and come from disordered nerves, ill-advised reading, and the erroneous perspective of inexperience. Mrs. Pasmer felt this, and she was tempted to break into a laugh over Alice's heroics; but she preferred to keep a serious countenance, partly because she did not feel the least seriously. She was instantly resolved not to let this letter accomplish anything more than Dan's temporary abasement, and she would have preferred to shorten this to the briefest moment possible. She liked him, and she was convinced that Alice could never do better, if half so well. She would now have preferred to treat him with familiar confidence, to tell him that she had no idea of Alice's writing him that nonsensical letter, and he was not to pay the least attention to it; for of course it meant nothing; but another principle of her complex nature came into play, and she silently folded the note and returned it to Dan, trembling before her.

"Well?" he quavered.

"Well," returned Mrs. Pasmer judicially, while she enjoyed his tremor, whose needlessness inwardly amused her--"well, of course, Alice was--"

"Annoyed, I know. And it was all my fault--or my misfortune. But I assure you, Mrs. Pasmer, that I thought I was doing something that would please her--in the highest and noblest way. Now don't you know I did?"

Mrs. Pasmer again wished to laugh, but in the face of Dan's tragedy she had to forbear. She contented herself with saying: "Of course. But perhaps it wasn't the best time for pleasing her just in that way."

"It was then or never. I can see now--why, I could see all the time--just how it might look; but I supposed Alice wouldn't care for that, and if I hadn't tried to make some reparation then to Mrs. Frobisher and her sister, I never could. Don't you see?"

"Yes, certainly. But--"

"And Alice herself told me to go and look after them," interposed Maverick. He suppressed, a little uncandidly, the fact of her first reluctance.

"But you know it was the first time you had been out together?"

"Yes."

"And naturally she would wish to have you a good deal to herself, or at least not seeming to run after other people."

"Yes, yes; I know that."

"And no one ever likes to be taken at their word in a thing like that."

"I ought to have thought of that, but I didn't. I wish I had gone to you first, Mrs. Pasmer. Somehow it seems to me as if I were very young and inexperienced; I didn't use to feel so. I wish you were always on hand to advise me, Mrs. Pasmer." Dan hung his head, and his face, usually so gay, was blotted with gloom.

"Will you take my advice now?" asked Mrs. Pasmer.

"Indeed I will!" cried the young fellow, lifting his head. "What is it?"

"See Alice about this."

Dan jumped to his feet, and the sunshine broke out over his face again.

"Mrs. Pasmer, I promised to take your advice, and I'll do it. I will see her. But how? Where? Let me have your advice on that point too."

They began to laugh together, and Dan was at once inexpressibly happy. Those two light natures thoroughly comprehended each other.

Mrs. Pasmer had proposed his seeing Alice with due seriousness, but now she had a longing to let herself go; she felt all the pleasure that other people felt in doing Dan Maverick a pleasure, and something more, because he was so perfectly intelligible to her. She let herself go.

"You might stay to breakfast."

"Mrs. Pasmer, I will--I will do that too. I'm awfully hungry, and I put

myself in your hands."

"Let me see," said Mrs. Pasmer thoughtfully, "how it can be contrived."

"Yes;" said Maverig, ready for a panic. "How? She wouldn't stand a surprise?"

"No; I had thought of that."

"No behind-a-screen or next-room business?"

"No," said Mrs. Pasmer, with a light sigh. "Alice is peculiar. I'm afraid she wouldn't like it."

"Isn't there any little ruse she would like?"

"I can't think of any. Perhaps I'd better go and tell her you're here and wish to see her."

"Do you think you'd better?" asked Dan doubtfully. "Perhaps she won't come."

"She will come," said Mrs. Pasmer confidently.

She did not say that she thought Alice would be curious to know why he had come, and that she was too just to condemn him unheard.

But she was right about the main point. Alice came, and Dan could see with his own weary eyes that she had not slept either.

She stopped just inside the portiere, and waited for him to speak. But he could not, though a smile from his sense of the absurdity of their seriousness hovered about his lips. His first impulse was to rush upon her and catch her in his arms, and perhaps this might have been well, but the moment for it passed, and then it became impossible.

"Well?" she said at last, lifting her head, and looking at him with impassioned solemnity. "You wished to see me? I hoped you wouldn't. It would have spared me something. But perhaps I had no right to your forbearance."

"Alice, how can you say such things to me?" asked the young fellow, deeply hurt.

She responded to his tone. "I'm sorry if it wounds you. But I only mean what I say."

"You've a right to my forbearance, and not only that, but to my--my life; to everything that I am," cried Dan, in a quiver of tenderness at the sight of her and the sound of her voice. "Alice, why did you write me that letter?--why did you send me back my ring?"

"Because," she said, looking him seriously in the face--"because I wished

you to be free, to be happy."

"Well, you've gone the wrong way about it. I can never be free from you; I never can be happy without you."

"I did it for your good, then, which ought to be above your happiness. Don't think I acted hastily. I thought it over all night long. I didn't sleep--"

"Neither did I," interposed Dan.

"And I saw that I had no claim to you; that you never could be truly happy with me--"

"I'll take the chances," he interrupted. "Alice, you don't suppose I cared for those women any more than the ground under your feet, do you? I don't suppose I should ever have given them a second thought if you hadn't seemed to feel so badly about my neglecting them; and I thought you'd be pleased to have me try to make it up to them if I could."

"I know your motive was good--the noblest. Don't think that I did you injustice, or that I was vexed because you went away with them."

"You sent me."

"Yes; and now I give you up to them altogether. It was a mistake, a crime, for me to think we could be anything to each other when our love began with a wrong to some one else."

"With a wrong to some one else?"

"You neglected them on Class Day after you saw me."

"Why, of course I did. How could I help it?"

A flush of pleasure came into the girl's pale face; but she banished it, and continued gravely, "Then at Portland you were with them all day."

"You'd given me up--you'd thrown me over, Alice," he pleaded.

"I know that; I don't blame you. But you made them believe that you were very much interested in them."

"I don't know what I did. I was perfectly desperate."

"Yes; it was my fault. And then, when they came to meet you at the Museum, I had made you forget them; I'd made you wound them and insult them again. No. I've thought it all out, and we never could be happy. Don't think that I do it from any resentful motive."

"Alice? how could I think that?--Of you!"

"I have tried--prayed--to be purified from that, and I believe that I have

been."

"You never had a selfish thought."

"And I have come to see that you were perfectly right in what you did last night. At first I was wounded."

"Oh, did I wound you, Alice?" he grieved.

"But afterward I could see that you belonged to them, and not me, and--and I give you up to them. Yes, freely, fully."

Alice stood there, beautiful, pathetic, austere; and Dan had halted in the spot to which he had advanced, when her eye forbade him to approach nearer. He did not mean to joke, and it was in despair that he cried out: "But which, Alice? There are two of them."

"Two?" she repeated vaguely.

"Yes; Mrs. Frobisher and Miss Wrayne. You can't give me up to both of them."

"Both?" she repeated again. She could not condescend to specify; it would be ridiculous, and as it was, she felt her dignity hopelessly shaken. The tears came into her eyes.

"Yes. And neither of them wants me--they haven't got any use for me. Mrs. Frobisher is married already, and Miss Wrayne took the trouble last night to let me feel that, so far as she was concerned, I hadn't made it all right, and couldn't. I thought I had rather a cold parting with you, Alice, but it was quite tropical to what you left me to." A faint smile, mingled with a blush of relenting, stole into her face, and he hurried on. "I don't suppose I tried very hard to thaw her out. I wasn't much interested. If you must give me up, you must give me up to some one else, for they don't want me, and I don't want them." Alice's head dropped lower, and he could come nearer now without her seeming to know it. "But why need you give me up? There's really no occasion for it, I assure you."

"I wished," she explained, "to show you that I loved you for something above yourself and myself--far above either--"

She stopped and dropped the hand which she had raised to fend him off; and he profited by the little pause she made to take her in his arms without seeming to do so. "Well," he said, "I don't believe I was formed to be loved on a very high plane. But I'm not too proud to be loved for my own sake; and I don't think there's anything above you, Alice."

"Oh yes, there is! I don't deserve to be happy, and that's the reason why I'm not allowed to be happy in any noble way. I can't bear to give you up; you know I can't; but you ought to give me up--indeed you ought. I have ideals, but I can't live up to them. You ought to go. You ought to leave me." She accented each little sentence by vividly pressing herself

to his heart, and he had the wisdom or the instinct to treat their reconciliation as nothing settled, but merely provisional in its nature.

"Well, we'll see about that. I don't want to go till after breakfast, anyway; your mother says I may stay, and I'm awfully hungry. If I see anything particularly base in you, perhaps I sha'n't come back to lunch."

Dan would have liked to turn it all off into a joke, now that the worst was apparently over; but Alice freed herself from him, and held him off with her hand set against his breast. "Does mamma know about it?" she demanded sternly.

"Well, she knows there's been some misunderstanding," said Dan, with a laugh that was anxious, in view of the clouds possibly gathering again.

"How much?"

"Well, I can't say exactly." He would not say that he did not know, but he felt that he could truly say that he could not say.

She dropped her hand, and consented to be deceived. Dan caught her again to his breast; but he had an odd, vague sense of doing it carefully, of using a little of the caution with which one seizes the stem of a rose between the thorns.

"I can bear to be ridiculous with you," she whispered, with an implication which he understood.

"You haven't been ridiculous, dearest," he said; and his tension gave way in a convulsive laugh, which partially expressed his feeling of restored security, and partly his amusement in realising how the situation would have pleased Mrs. Pasmer if she could have known it.

Mrs. Pasmer was seated behind her coffee biggin at the breakfast-table when he came into the room with Alice, and she lifted an eye from its glass bulb long enough to catch his flying glance of exultation and admonition. Then, while she regarded the chemical struggle in the bulb, with the rapt eye of a magician reading fate in his crystal ball, she questioned herself how much she should know, and how much she should ignore. It was a great moment for Mrs. Pasmer, full of delicious choice. "Do you understand this process, Mr. Maving?" she said, glancing up at him warily for farther instruction.

"I've seen it done," said Dan, "but I never knew how it was managed. I always thought it was going to blow up; but it seemed to me that if you were good and true and very meek, and had a conscience void of offence, it wouldn't."

"Yes, that's what it seems to depend upon," said Mrs. Pasmer, keeping her eye on the bulb. She dodged suddenly forward, and put out the spirit-lamp. "Now have your coffee!" she cried, with a great air of relief. "You must need it by this time," she said with a low cynical laugh--"both of you!"

"Did you always make coffee with a biggin in France, Mrs. Pasher?" asked Dan; and he laughed out the last burden that lurked in his heart.

Mrs. Pasher joined him. "No, Mr. Maverick. In France you don't need a biggin. I set mine up when we went to England."

Alice looked darkly from one of these light spirits to the other, and then they all shrieked together.

They went on talking volubly from that, and they talked as far away from what they were thinking about as possible. They talked of Europe, and Mrs. Pasher said where they would live and what they would do when they all got back there together. Dan abetted her, and said that they must cross in June. Mrs. Pasher said that she thought June was a good month. He asked if it were not the month of the marriages too, and she answered that he must ask Alice about that. Alice blushed and laughed her sweet reluctant laugh, and said she did not know; she had never been married.

It was silly, but it was delicious; it made them really one family. Deep in his consciousness a compunction pierced and teased Dan. But he said to himself that it was all a joke about their European plans, or else his people would consent to it if he really wished it.

XXXIX.

A period of entire harmony and tenderness followed the episode which seemed to threaten the lovers with the loss of each other. Maverick forbore to make Alice feel that in attempting a sacrifice which consulted only his good and ignored his happiness, and then failing in it so promptly, she had played rather a silly part. After one or two tentative jokes in that direction he found the ground unsafe, and with the instinct which served him in place of more premeditated piety he withdrew, and was able to treat the affair with something like religious awe. He was obliged, in fact, to steady Alice's own faith in it, and to keep her from falling under dangerous self-condemnation in that and other excesses of uninstructed self-devotion. This brought no fatigue to his robust affection, whatever it might have done to a heart more tried in such exercises. Love acquaints youth with many things in character and temperament which are none the less interesting because it never explains them; and Dan was of such a make that its revelations of Alice were charming to him because they were novel. He had thought her a person of such serene and flawless wisdom that it was rather a relief to find her subject to gusts of imprudence, to unexpected passions and resentments, to foibles and errors, like other people. Her power of cold reticence; which she could employ at will, was something that fascinated him almost as much as that habit of impulsive concession which seemed to come neither from her will nor her reason. He was a person himself who was so eager to give other people pleasure that he quivered with impatience to see them happy through his words or acts; he could not bear to think that any one to whom

he was speaking was not perfectly comfortable in regard to him; and it was for this reason perhaps that he admired a girl who could prescribe herself a line of social conduct, and follow it out regardless of individual pangs--who could act from ideals and principles, and not from emotions and sympathies. He knew that she had the emotions and sympathies, for there were times when she lavished them on him; and that she could seem without them was another proof of that depth of nature which he liked to imagine had first attracted him to her. Dan Maving had never been able to snub any one in his life; it gave him a great respect for Alice that it seemed not to cost her an effort or a regret, and it charmed him to think that her severity was part of the unconscious sham which imposed her upon the world for a person of inflexible design and invariable constancy to it. He was not long in seeing that she shared this illusion, if it was an illusion, and that perhaps the only person besides himself who was in the joke was her mother. Mrs. Pasmer and he grew more and more into each other's confidence in talking Alice over, and he admired the intrepidity of this lady, who was not afraid of her daughter even in the girl's most topping moments of self-abasement. For his own part, these moods of hers never failed to cause him confusion and anxiety. They commonly intimated themselves parenthetically in the midst of some blissful talk they were having, and overcast his clear sky with retrospective ideals of conduct or presentimental plans for contingencies that might never occur. He found himself suddenly under condemnation for not having reprov'd her at a given time when she forced him to admit she had seemed unkind or cold to others; she made him promise that even at the risk of alienating her affections he would make up for her deficiencies of behaviour in such matters whenever he noticed them. She now praised him for what he had done for Mrs. Frobisher and her sister at Mrs. Bellingham's reception; she said it was generous, heroic. But Maving rested satisfied with his achievement in that instance, and did not attempt anything else of the kind. He did not reason from cause to effect in regard to it: a man's love is such that while it lasts he cannot project its object far enough from him to judge it reasonable or unreasonable; but Dan's instincts had been disciplined and his perceptions sharpened by that experience. Besides, in bidding him take this impartial and even admonitory course toward her, she stipulated that they should maintain to the world a perfect harmony of conduct which should be an outward image of the union of their lives. She said that anything less than a continued self-sacrifice of one to the other was not worthy of the name of love, and that she should not be happy unless he required this of her. She said that they ought each to find out what was the most distasteful thing which they could mutually require, and then do it; she asked him to try to think what she most hated, and let her do that for him; as for her, she only asked to ask nothing of him.

Maving could not worship enough this nobility of soul in her, and he celebrated it to Boardman with the passionate need of imparting his rapture which a lover feel. Boardman acquiesced in silence, with a glance of reserved sarcasm, or contented himself with laconic satire of his friend's general condition, and avoided any comment that might specifically apply to the points Dan made. Alice allowed him to have this confidant, and did not demand of him a report of all he said to Boardman. A main fact of their love, she said, must be their utter faith in each other. She had her own confidante, and the disparity of years between her

and Miss Cotton counted for nothing in the friendship which their exchange of trust and sympathy cemented. Miss Cotton, in the freshness of her sympathy and the ideality of her inexperience, was in fact younger than Alice, at whose feet, in the things of soul and character, she loved to sit. She never said to her what she believed: that a girl of her exemplary principles, a nature conscious of such noble ideals, so superior to other girls, who in her place would be given up to the happiness of the moment, and indifferent to the sense of duty to herself and to others, was sacrificed to a person of Maverick's gay, bright nature and trivial conception of life. She did not deny his sweetness; that was perhaps the one saving thing about him; and she confessed that he simply adored Alice; that counted for everything, and it was everything in his favour that he could appreciate such a girl. She hoped, she prayed, that Alice might never realise how little depth he had; that she might go through life and never suspect it. If she did so, then they might be happy together to the end, or at least Alice might never know she was unhappy.

Miss Cotton never said these things in so many words; it is doubtful if she ever said them in any form of words; with her sensitive anxiety not to do injustice to any one, she took Dan's part against those who viewed the engagement as she allowed it to appear only to her secret heart. She defended him the more eagerly because she felt that it was for Alice's sake, and that everything must be done to keep her from knowing how people looked at the affair, even to changing people's minds. She said to all who spoke to her of it that of course Alice was superior to him, but he was devoted to her, and he would grow into an equality with her. He was naturally very refined, she said, and, if he was not a very serious person, he was amiable beyond anything. She alleged many little incidents of their acquaintance at Campobello in proof of her theory that he had an instinctive appreciation of Alice, and she was sure that no one could value her nobleness of character more than he. She had seen them a good deal together since their engagement, and it was beautiful to see his manner with her. They were opposites, but she counted a good deal upon that very difference in their temperaments to draw them to each other.

It was an easy matter to see Dan and Alice together. Their engagement came out in the usual way: it had been announced to a few of their nearest friends, and intelligence of it soon spread from their own set through society generally; it had been published in the Sunday papers while it was still in the tender condition of a rumour, and had been denied by some of their acquaintance and believed by all.

The Pasher cousinship had been just in the performance of the duties of blood toward Alice since the return of her family from Europe, and now did what was proper in the circumstances. All who were connected with her called upon her and congratulated her; they knew Dan, the younger of them, much better than they knew her; and though he had shrunk from the nebulous bulk of social potentiality which every young man is to that much smaller nucleus to which definite betrothal reduces him, they could be perfectly sincere in calling him the sweetest fellow that ever was, and too lovely to live.

In such a matter Mr. Pasher was naturally nothing; he could not be less

than he was at other times, but he was not more; and it was Mrs. Pasmer who shared fully with her daughter the momentary interest which the engagement gave Alice with all her kindred. They believed, of course, that they recognised in it an effect of her skill in managing; they agreed to suppose that she had got Maving for Alice, and to ignore the beauty and passion of youth as factors in the case. The closest of the kindred, with the romantic delicacy of Americans in such things, approached the question of Dan's position and prospects, and heard with satisfaction the good accounts which Mrs. Pasmer was able to give of his father's prosperity. There had always been more or less apprehension among them of a time when a family subscription would be necessary for Bob Pasmer, and in the relief which the new situation gave them some of them tried to remember having known Dan's father in College, but it finally came to their guessing that they must have heard John Munt speak of him.

Mrs. Pasmer had a supreme control in the affair. She believed with the rest--so deeply is this delusion seated--that she had made the match; but knowing herself to have used no dishonest magic in the process, she was able to enjoy it with a clean conscience. She grew fonder of Dan; they understood each other; she was his refuge from Alice's ideals, and helped him laugh off his perplexity with them. They were none the less sincere because they were not in the least frank with each other. She let Dan beat about the bush to his heart's content, and waited for him at the point which she knew he was coming to, with an unconsciousness which he knew was factitious; neither of them got tired of this, or failed freshly to admire the other's strategy.

XL.

It cannot be pretended that Alice was quite pleased with the way her friends took her engagement, or rather the way in which they spoke of Dan. It seemed to her that she alone, or she chiefly, ought to feel that sweetness and loveliness of which every one told her, as if she could not have known it. If he was sweet and lovely to every one, how was he different to her except in degree? Ought he not to be different in kind? She put the case to Miss Cotton, whom it puzzled, while she assured Alice that he was different in kind to her, though he might not seem so; the very fact that he was different in degree proved that he was different in kind. This logic sufficed for the moment of its expression, but it did not prevent Alice from putting the case to Dan himself. At one of those little times when she sat beside him alone and rearranged his necktie, or played with his watch chain, or passed a critical hand over his cowlick, she asked him if he did not think they ought to have an ideal in their engagement. "What ideal?" he asked. He thought it was all solid ideal through and through. "Oh," she said, "be more and more to each other." He said he did not see how that could be; if there was anything more of him, she was welcome to it, but he rather thought she had it all. She explained that she meant being less to others; and he asked her to explain that.

"Well, when we're anywhere together, don't you think we ought to show how different we are to each other from what we are to any one else."

Dan laughed. "I'm afraid we do, Alice; I always supposed one ought to hide that little preference as much as possible. You don't want me to be dangling after you every moment?"

"No-o-o. But not--dangle after others."

Dan sighed a little--a little impatiently. "Do I dangle after others?"

"Of course not. But show that we're thoroughly united in all our tastes and feelings, and--like and dislike the same persons."

"I don't think that will be difficult," said Dan.

She was silent a moment, and then she said; "You don't like to have me bring up such things?"

"Oh yes, I do. I wish to be and do just what you wish."

"But I can see, I can understand, that you would sooner pass the time without talking of them. You like to be perfectly happy, and not to have any cares when--when you're with me this way?"

"Well, yes, I suppose I do," said Dan, laughing again. "I suppose I rather do like to keep pleasure and duty apart. But there's nothing you can wish, Alice, that isn't a pleasure to me."

"I'm very different," said the girl. "I can't be at peace unless I know that I have a right to be so. But now, after this, I'm going to do your way. If it's your way, it'll be the right way--for me." She looked sublimely resolved, with a grand lift of the eyes, and Dan caught her to him in a rapture, breaking into laughter.

"Oh, don't! Mine's a bad way--the worst kind of a way," he cried.

"It makes everybody like you, and mine makes nobody like me."

"It makes me like you, and that's quite enough. I don't want other people to like you!"

"Yes, that's what I mean!" cried Alice; and now she flung herself on his neck, and the tears came. "Do you suppose it can be very pleasant to have everybody talking of you as if everybody loved you as much--as much as I do?" She clutched him tighter and sobbed.

"O Alice! Alice! Alice! Nobody could ever be what you are to me!" He soothed and comforted her with endearing words and touches; but before he could have believed her half consoled she pulled away from him, and asked, with shining eyes, "Do you think Mr. Boardman is a good influence in your life?"

"Boardman!" cried Maverick, in astonishment. "Why, I thought you liked Boardman?"

"I do; and I respect him very much. But that isn't the question. Don't you think we ought to ask ourselves how others influence us?"

"Well, I don't see much of Boardy nowadays; but I like to drop down and touch earth in Boardy once in a while--I'm in the air so much. Board has more common-sense, more solid chunk-wisdom, than anybody I know. He's kept me from making a fool of myself more times--"

"Wasn't he with you that day with--with those women in Portland?"

Dan winced a little, and then laughed. "No, he wasn't. That was the trouble. Boardman was off on the press boat. I thought I told you. But if you object to Boardman--"

"I don't. You mustn't think I object to people when I ask you about them. All that I wished was that you should think yourself what sort of influence he was. I think he's a very good influence."

"He's a splendid fellow, Boardman is, Alice!" cried Dan. "You ought to have seen how he fought his way through college on such a little money, and never skulked or felt mean. He wasn't appreciated for it; the men don't notice these things much; but he didn't want to have it noticed; always acted as if it was neither here nor there; and now I guess he sends out home whatever he has left after keeping soul and body together every week."

He spoke, perhaps, with too great an effect of relief. Alice listened, as it seemed, to his tone rather than his words, and said absently--

"Yes, that's grand. But I don't want you to act as if you were afraid of me in such things."

"Afraid?" Dan echoed.

"I don't mean actually afraid, but as if you thought I couldn't be reasonable; as if you supposed I didn't expect you to make mistakes or to be imperfect."

"Yes, I know you're very reasonable, and you're more patient with me than I deserve; I know all that, and it's only my wish to come up to your standard, I suppose, that gives me that apprehensive appearance."

"That was what vexed me with you there at Campobello, when you--asked me--"

"Yes, I know."

"You ought to have understood me better. You ought to know now that I don't wish you to do anything on my account, but because it's something we owe to others."

"Oh, excuse me! I'd much rather do it for you," cried Dan; but Alice looked so grave, so hurt, that he hastened on: "How in the world does it concern others whether we are devoted or not, whether we're harmonious and two-souls-with-but-a-single-thought, and all that?" He could not help being light about it.

"How?" Alice repeated. "Won't it give them an idea of what--what--of how much--how truly--if we care for each other--how people ought to care? We don't do it for ourselves. That would be selfish and disgusting. We do it because it's something that we owe to the idea of being engaged--of having devoted our lives to each other, and would show--would teach--"

"Oh yes! I know what you mean," said Dan, and he gave way in a sputtering laugh. "But they wouldn't understand. They'd only think we were spoons on each other; and if they noticed that I cooled off toward people I'd liked, and warmed up toward those you liked, they'd say you made me."

"Should you care?" asked Alice sublimely, withdrawing a little from his arm.

"Oh no! only on your account," he answered, checking his laugh.

"You needn't on my account," she returned. "If we sacrifice some little preferences to each other, isn't that right? I shall be glad to sacrifice all of mine to you. Isn't our--marriage to be full of such sacrifices? I expect to give up everything to you." She looked at him with a sad severity.

He began to laugh again. "Oh no, Alice! Don't do that! I couldn't stand it. I want some little chance at the renunciations myself."

She withdrew still further from his side, and said, with a cold anger, "It's that detestable Mrs. Brinkley."

"Mrs. Brinkley!" shouted Dan.

"Yes; with her pessimism. I have heard her talk. She influences you. Nothing is sacred to her. It was she who took up with those army women that night."

"Well, Alice, I must say you can give things as ugly names as the next one. I haven't seen Mrs. Brinkley the whole winter, except in your company. But she has more sense than all the other women I know."

"Oh, thank you!"

"You know I don't mean you," he pushed on. "And she isn't a pessimist. She's very kindhearted, and that night she was very polite and good to those army women, as you call them, when you had refused to say a word or do anything for them."

"I knew it had been rankling in your mind all along," said the girl "I expected it to come out sooner or later. And you talk about renunciation!"

You never forget nor forgive the slightest thing. But I don't ask your forgiveness."

"Alice!"

"No. You are as hard as iron. You have that pleasant outside manner that makes people think you're very gentle and yielding, but all the time you're like adamant. I would rather die than ask your forgiveness for anything, and you'd rather let me than give it."

"Well, then, I ask your forgiveness, Alice, and I'm sure you won't let me die without it."

They regarded each other a moment. Then the tenderness gushed up in their hearts, a passionate tide, and swept them into each other's arms.

"O Dan," she cried, "how sweet you are! how good! how lovely! Oh, how wonderful it is! I wanted to hate you, but I couldn't. I couldn't do anything but love you. Yes, now I understand what love is, and how it can do everything, and last for ever."

XLI.

Maving came to lunch the next day, and had a word with Mrs. Pasmer before Alice came in. Mr. Pasmer usually lunched at the club.

"We don't see much of Mrs. Saintsbury nowadays," he suggested.

"No; it's a great way to Cambridge," said Mrs. Pasmer, stifling, in a little sigh of apparent regret for the separation, the curiosity she felt as to Dan's motive in mentioning Mrs. Saintsbury. She was very patient with him when he went on.

"Yes, it is a great way. And a strange thing about it is that when you're living here it's a good deal further from Boston to Cambridge than it is from Cambridge to Boston."

"Yes," said Mrs. Pasmer; "every one notices that."

Dan sat absently silent for a time before he said, "Yes, I guess I must go out and see Mrs. Saintsbury."

"Yes, you ought. She's very fond of you. You and Alice ought both to go."

"Does Mrs. Saintsbury like me?" asked Dan. "Well, she's awfully nice. Don't you think she's awfully fond of formulating people?"

"Oh, everybody in Cambridge does that. They don't gossip; they merely accumulate materials for the formulation of character."

"And they get there just the same!" cried Dan. "Mrs. Saintsbury used to think she had got me down pretty fine," he suggested.

"Yes!" said Mrs. Pasmer, with an indifference which they both knew she did not feel.

"Yes. She used to accuse me of preferring to tack, even in a fair wind."

He looked inquiringly at Mrs. Pasmer; and she said, "How ridiculous!"

"Yes, it was. Well, I suppose I am rather circuitous about some things."

"Oh, not at all!"

"And I suppose I'm rather a trial to Alice in that way."

He looked at Mrs. Pasmer again, and she said: "I don't believe you are, in the least. You can't tell what is trying to a girl."

"No," said Dan pensively, "I can't." Mrs. Pasmer tried to render the interest in her face less vivid. "I can't tell where she's going to bring up. Talk about tacking!"

"Do you mean the abstract girl; or Alice?"

"Oh, the abstract girl," said Dan, and they laughed together. "You think Alice is very straightforward, don't you?"

"Very," said Mrs. Pasmer, looking down with a smile--"for a girl."

"Yes, that's what I mean. And don't you think the most circuitous kind of fellow would be pretty direct compared with the straight-forwardest kind of girl?"

There was a rueful defeat and bewilderment in Dan's face that made Mrs. Pasmer laugh. "What has she been doing now?" she asked.

"Mrs. Pasmer," said Dan, "you and I are the only frank and open people I know. Well, she began to talk last night about influence--the influence of other people on us; and she killed off nearly all the people I like before I knew what she was up to, and she finished with Mrs. Brinkley. I'm glad she didn't happen to think of you, Mrs. Pasmer, or I shouldn't be associating with you at the present moment." This idea seemed to give Mrs. Pasmer inexpressible pleasure. Dan went on: "Do you quite see the connection between our being entirely devoted to each other and my dropping Mrs. Brinkley?"

"I don't know," said Mrs. Pasmer. "Alice doesn't like satirical people."

"Well, of course not. But Mrs. Brinkley is such an admirer of hers."

"I dare say she tells you so."

"Oh, but she is!"

"I don't deny it," said Mrs. Pasmer. "But if Alice feels something inimical--antipatico--in her atmosphere, it's no use talking."

"Oh no, it's no use talking, and I don't know that I want to talk." After a pause, Maverig asked, "Mrs. Pasmer, don't you think that where two people are going to be entirely devoted to each other, and self-sacrificing to each other, they ought to divide, and one do all the devotion, and the other all the self-sacrifice?"

Mrs. Pasmer was amused by the droll look in Dan's eyes. "I think they ought to be willing to share evenly," she said.

"Yes; that's what I say--share and share alike. I'm not selfish about those little things." He blew off a long sighing breath. "Mrs. Pasmer, don't you think we ought to have an ideal of conduct?"

Mrs. Pasmer abandoned herself to laughter. "O Dan! Dan! You will be the death of me."

"We will die together, then, Mrs. Pasmer. Alice will kill me." He regarded her with a sad sympathy in his eye as she laughed and laughed with delicious intelligence of the case. The intelligence was perfect, from their point of view; but whether it fathomed the girl's whole intention or aspiration is another matter. Perhaps this was not very clear to herself. At any rate, Maverig did not go any more to see Mrs. Brinkley, whose house he had liked to drop into. Alice went several times, to show, she said, that she had no feeling in the matter; and Mrs. Brinkley, when she met Dan, forbore to embarrass him with questions or reproaches; she only praised Alice to him.

There were not many other influences that Alice cut him off from; she even exposed him to some influences that might have been thought deleterious. She made him go and call alone upon certain young ladies whom she specified, and she praised several others to him, though she did not praise them for the same things that he did. One of them was a girl to whom Alice had taken a great fancy, such as often buds into a romantic passion between women; she was very gentle and mild, and she had none of that strength of will which she admired in Alice. One night there was a sleighing party to a hotel in the suburbs, where they had dancing and then supper. After the supper they danced "Little Sally Waters" for a finale, instead of the Virginia Reel, and Alice would not go on the floor with Dan; she said she disliked that dance; but she told him to dance with Miss Langham. It became a gale of fun, and in the height of it Dan slipped and fell with his partner. They laughed it off, with the rest, but after a while the girl began to cry; she had received a painful bruise. All the way home, while the others laughed and sang and chattered, Dan was troubled about this poor girl; his anxiety became a joke with the whole sleighful of people.

When he parted with Alice at her door, he said, "I'm afraid I hurt Miss

Langham; I feel awfully about it."

"Yes; there's no doubt of that. Good night!"

She left him to go off to his lodging, hot and tingling with indignation at her injustice. But kindlier thoughts came to him before he slept, and he fell asleep with a smile of tenderness for her on his lips. He could see how he was wrong to go out with any one else when Alice said she disliked the dance; he ought not to have taken advantage of her generosity in appointing him a partner; it was trying for her to see him make that ludicrous tumble, of course; and perhaps he had overdone the attentive sympathy on the way home. It flattered him that she could not help showing her jealousy--that is flattering, at first; and Dan was able to go and confess all but this to Alice. She received his submission magnanimously, and said that she was glad it had happened, because his saying this showed that now they understood each other perfectly. Then she fixed her eyes on his, and said, "I've just been round to see Lilly, and she's as well as ever; it was only a nervous shock."

Whether Maving was really indifferent to Miss Langham's condition, or whether the education of his perceptions had gone so far that he consciously ignored her, he answered, "That was splendid of you, Alice."

"No," she said; "it's you that are splendid; and you always are. Oh, I wonder if I can ever be worthy of you!"

Their mutual forgiveness was very sweet to them, and they went on praising each other. Alice suddenly broke away from this weakening exchange of worship, and said, with that air of coming to business which he had learned to recognise and dread a little, "Dan, don't you think I ought to write to your mother?"

"Write to my mother?" Why, you have written to her. You wrote as soon as you got back, and she answered you."

"Yes; but write regularly?--Show that I think of her all the time?" When I really think I'm going to take you from her, I seem so cruel and heartless!"

"Oh, I don't look at it in that light, Alice."

"Don't joke! And when I think that we're going away to leave her, for several years, perhaps, as soon as we're married, I can't make it seem right. I know how she depends upon your being near her, and seeing her every now and then; and to go off to Europe for years, perhaps--Of course you can be of use to your father there; but do you think it's right toward your mother? I want you to think."

Dan thought, but his thinking was mainly to the effect that he did not know what she was driving at. Had she got any inkling of that plan of his mother's for them to come and stay a year or two at the Falls after their marriage? He always expected to be able to reconcile that plan with the Pasmer plan of going at once; to his optimism the two were not really

incompatible; but he did not wish them prematurely confronted in Alice's mind. Was this her way of letting him know that she knew what his mother wished, and that she was willing to make the sacrifice? Or was it just some vague longing to please him by a show of affection toward his family, an unmeditated impulse of reparation? He had an impulse himself to be frank with Alice, to take her at her word, and to allow that he did not like the notion of going abroad. This was Dan's notion of being frank; he could still reserve the fact that he had given his mother a tacit promise to bring Alice home to live, but he postponed even this. He said: "Oh, I guess that'll be all right, Alice. At any rate, there's no need to think about it yet awhile. That can be arranged."

"Yes," said Alice; "but don't you think I'd better get into the habit of writing regularly to your mother now, so that there needn't be any break when we go abroad?" He could see now that she had no idea of giving that plan up, and he was glad that he had not said anything. "I think," she continued, "that I shall write to her once a week, and give her a full account of our life from day to day; it'll be more like a diary; and then, when we get over there, I can keep it up without any effort, and she won't feel so much that you've gone."

She seemed to refer the plan to him, and he said it was capital. In fact, he did like the notion of a diary; that sort of historical view would involve less danger of precipitating a discussion of the two schemes of life for the future. "It's awfully kind of you, Alice, to propose such a thing, and you mustn't make it a burden. Any sort of little sketchy record will do; mother can read between the lines, you know."

"It won't be a burden," said the girl tenderly. "I shall seem to be doing it for your mother, but I know I shall be doing it for you. I do everything for you. Do you think it's right?"

"Oh; it must be," said Dan, laughing. "It's so pleasant."

"Oh," said the girl gloomily; "that's what makes me doubt it."

XLII.

Eunice Maving acknowledged Alice's first letter. She said that her mother read it aloud to them all, and had been delighted with the good account she gave of Dan, and fascinated with all the story of their daily doings and sayings. She wished Eunice to tell Alice how fully she appreciated her thoughtfulness of a sick old woman, and that she was going to write herself and thank her. But Eunice added that Alice must not be surprised if her mother was not very prompt in this, and she sent messages from all the family, affectionate for Alice, and polite for her father and mother.

Alice showed Dan the letter, and he seemed to find nothing noticeable in it. "She says your mother will write later," Alice suggested.

"Yes. You ought to feel very much complimented by that. Mother's autographs are pretty uncommon," he said, smiling.

"Why, doesn't she write? Can't she? Does it tire her?" asked Alice.

"Oh yes, she can write, but she hates to. She gets Eunice or Minnie to write usually."

"Dan," cried Alice intensely, "why didn't you tell me?"

"Why, I thought you knew it," he explained easily. "She likes to read, and likes to talk, but it bores her to write. I don't suppose I get more than two or three pencil scratches from her in the course of a year. She makes the girls write. But you needn't mind her not writing. You may be sure she's glad of your letters."

"It makes me seem very presumptuous to be writing to her when there's no chance of her answering," Alice grieved. "It's as if I had passed over your sisters' heads. I ought to have written to them."

"Oh, well, you can do that now," said Dan soothingly.

"No. No, I can't do it now. It would be ridiculous." She was silent, and presently she asked, "Is there anything else about your mother that I ought to know?" She looked at him with a sort of impending discipline in her eyes which he had learned to dread; it meant such a long course of things, such a very great variety of atonement and expiation for him, that he could not bring himself to confront it steadily.

His heart gave a feeble leap; he would have gladly told her all that was in it, and he meant to do so at the right time, but this did not seem the moment. "I can't say that there is," he answered coldly.

In that need of consecrating her happiness which Alice felt, she went a great deal to church in those days. Sometimes she felt the need almost of defence against her happiness, and a vague apprehension mixed with it. Could it be right to let it claim her whole being, as it seemed to do? That was the question which she once asked Dan, and it made him laugh, and catch her to him in a rapture that served for the time, and then left her to more morbid doubts. Evidently he could not follow her in them; he could not even imagine them; and while he was with her they seemed to have no verity or value. But she talked them over very hypothetically and impersonally with Miss Cotton, in whose sympathy they resumed all their import, and gained something more. In the idealisation which the girl underwent in this atmosphere all her thoughts and purposes had a significance which she would not of herself, perhaps, have attached to them. They discussed them and analysed them with a satisfaction in the result which could not be represented without an effect of caricature. They measured Alice's romance together, and evolved from it a sublimation of responsibility, of duty, of devotion, which Alice found it impossible to submit to Dan when he came with his simple-hearted, single-minded purpose of getting Mrs. Pasmer out of the room, and sitting down with his

arm around Alice's waist. When he had accomplished this it seemed sufficient in itself, and she had to think, to struggle to recall things beyond it, above it. He could not be made to see at such times how their lives could be more in unison than they were. When she proposed doing something for him which he knew was disagreeable to her, he would not let her; and when she hinted at anything she wished him to do for her because she knew it was disagreeable to him, he consented so promptly, so joyously, that she perceived he could not have given the least thought to it.

She felt every day that they were alien in their tastes and aims; their pleasures were not the same, and though it was sweet, though it was charming, to have him give up so willingly all his preferences, she felt, without knowing that the time must come when this could not be so, that it was all wrong.

"But these very differences, these antagonisms, if you wish to call them so," suggested Miss Cotton, in talking Alice's misgivings over with her, "aren't they just what will draw you together more and more? Isn't it what attracted you to each other? The very fact that you are such perfect counterparts--"

"Yes," the girl assented, "that's what we're taught to believe." She meant by the novels, to which we all trust our instruction in such matters, and her doubt doubly rankled after she had put it to silence.

She kept on writing to Dan's mother, though more and more perfunctorily; and now Eunice and now Minnie Mavering acknowledged her letters. She knew that they must think she was silly, but having entered by Dan's connivance upon her folly, she was too proud to abandon it.

At last, after she had ceased to expect it, came a letter from his mother, not a brief note, but a letter which the invalid had evidently tasked herself to make long and full, in recognition of Alice's kindness in writing to her so much. The girl opened it, and, after a verifying glance at the signature, began to read it with a thrill of tender triumph, and the fond prevision of the greater pleasure of reading it again with Dan.

But after reading it once through, she did not wait for him before reading it again and again. She did this with bewilderment, intershot with flashes of conviction, and then doubts of this conviction. When she could misunderstand no longer, she rose quietly and folded the letter, and put it carefully back into its envelope and into her writing desk, where she sat down and wrote, in her clearest and firmest hand, this note to Mavering--

"I wish to see you immediately.

"ALICE PASMER."

Dan had learned, with a lover's keenness, to read Alice's moods in the most colourless wording of her notes. She was rather apt to write him notes, taking back or reaffirming the effect of something that had just passed between them. Her notes were tempered to varying degrees of heat and cold, so fine that no one else would have felt the difference, but sensible to him in their subtlest intention.

Perhaps a mere witness of the fact would have been alarmed by a note which began without an address, except that on the envelope, and ended its peremptory brevity with the writer's name signed in full. Dan read calamity in it, and he had all the more trouble to pull himself together to meet it because he had parted with unusual tenderness from Alice the night before, after an evening in which it seemed to him that their ideals had been completely reconciled.

The note came, as her notes were apt to come, while Dan was at breakfast, which he was rather luxurious about for so young a man, and he felt formlessly glad afterward that he had drunk his first cup of coffee before he opened it, for it chilled the second cup, and seemed to take all character out of the omelet.

He obeyed it, wondering what the doom menaced in it might be, but knowing that it was doom, and leaving his breakfast half-finished, with a dull sense of the tragedy of doing so.

He would have liked to ask for Mrs. Pasmer first, and interpose a moment of her cheerful unreality between himself and his interview with Alice, but he decided that he had better not do this, and they met at once, with the width of the room between them. Her look was one that made it impassable to the simple impulse he usually had to take her in his arms and kiss her. But as she stood holding out a letter to him, with the apparent intention that he should come and take it, he traversed the intervening space and took it.

"Why, it's from mother!" he said joyously, with a glance at the handwriting.

"Will you please explain it?" said Alice, and Dan began to read it.

It began with a good many excuses for not having written before, and went on with a pretty expression of interest in Alice's letters and gratitude for them; Mrs. Maverick assured the girl that she could not imagine what a pleasure they had been to her. She promised herself that they should be great friends, and she said that she looked forward eagerly to the time, now drawing near, when Dan should bring her home to them. She said she knew Alice would find it dull at the Falls except for him, but they would all do their best, and she would find the place very different from what she had seen it in the winter. Alice could make believe that she was there just for the summer, and Mrs. Maverick hoped that before the summer was gone she would be so sorry for a sick old woman that she would not even wish to go with it. This part of the letter, which gave Dan away so

hopelessly, as he felt, was phrased so touchingly, that he looked up from it with moist eyes to the hard cold judgment in the eyes of Alice.

"Will you please explain it?" she repeated.

He tried to temporise. "Explain what?"

Alice was prompt to say, "Had you promised your mother to take me home to live?"

Dan did not answer.

"You promised my mother to go abroad. What else have you promised?" He continued silent, and she added, "You are a faithless man." They were the words of Romola, in the romance, to Tito; she had often admired them; and they seemed to her equally the measure of Dan's offence.

"Alice--"

"Here are your letters and remembrances, Mr. Mavington." Dan mechanically received the packet she had been holding behind her; with a perverse freak of intelligence he observed that, though much larger now, it was tied up with the same ribbon which had fastened it when Alice returned his letters and gifts before. "Good-bye. I wish you every happiness consistent with your nature."

She bowed coldly, and was about to leave him, as she had planned; but she had not arranged that he should be standing in front of the door, and he was there, with no apparent intention of moving.

"Will you allow me to pass?" she was forced to ask, however, haughtily.

"No!" he retorted, with a violence that surprised him. "I will not let you pass till you have listened to me--till you tell me why you treat me so. I won't stand it--I've had enough of this kind of thing."

It surprised Alice too a little, and after a moment's hesitation she said, "I will listen to you," so much more gently than she had spoken before that Dan relaxed his imperative tone, and began to laugh. "But," she added, and her face clouded again, "it will be of no use. My mind is made up this time. Why should we talk?"

Why, because mine isn't," said Dan. "What is the matter, Alice? Do you think I would force you, or even ask you, to go home with me to live unless you were entirely willing? It could only be a temporary arrangement anyway."

"That isn't the question," she retorted. "The question is whether you've promised your mother one thing and me another."

"Well, I don't know about promising," said Dan, laughing a little more uneasily, but still laughing. "As nearly as I can remember, I wasn't consulted about the matter. Your mother proposed one thing, and my mother

proposed another."

"And you agreed to both. That is quite enough--quite characteristic!"

Dan flushed, and stopped laughing. "I don't know what you mean by characteristic. The thing didn't have to be decided at once, and I didn't suppose it would be difficult for either side to give way, if it was judged best. I was sure my mother wouldn't insist."

"It seems very easy for your family to make sacrifices that are not likely to be required of them."

"You mustn't criticise my mother!" cried Dan.

"I have not criticised her. You insinuate that we would be too selfish to give up, if it were for the best."

"I do nothing of the kind, and unless you are determined to quarrel with me you wouldn't say so."

"I don't wish a quarrel; none is necessary," said Alice coldly.

"You accuse me of being treacherous--"

"I didn't say treacherous!"

"Faithless, then. It's a mere quibble about words. I want you to take that back."

"I can't take it back; it's the truth. Aren't you faithless, if you let us go on thinking that you're going to Europe, and let your mother think that we're coming home to live after we're married?"

"No! I'm simply leaving the question open!"

"Yes," said the girl--sadly, "you like to leave questions open. That's your way."

"Well, I suppose I do till it's necessary to decide them. It saves the needless effusion of talk," said Dan, with a laugh; and then, as people do in a quarrel, he went back to his angry mood, and said "Besides, I supposed you would be glad of the chance to make some sacrifice for me. You're always asking for it."

"Thank you, Mr. Maverick," said Alice, "for reminding me of it; nothing is sacred to you, it seems. I can't say that you have ever sought any opportunities of self-sacrifice."

"I wasn't allowed time to do so; they were always presented."

"Thank you again, Mr. Maverick. All this is quite a revelation. I'm glad to know how you really felt about things that you seemed so eager for."

"Alice, you know that I would do anything for you!" cried Dan, ruing his precipitate words.

"Yes; that's what you've repeatedly told me. I used to believe it."

"And I always believed what you said. You said at the picnic that day that you thought I would like to live at Ponkwasset Falls if my business was there--"

"That is not the point!"

"And now you quarrel with me because my mother wishes me to do so."

Alice merely said: "I don't know why I stand here allowing you to intimidate me in my father's house. I demand that you shall stand aside and let me pass."

"I'll not oblige you to leave the room," said Dan. "I will go. But if I go, you will understand that I don't come back."

"I hope that," said the girl.

"Very well. Good morning, Miss Pasmer."

She inclined her head slightly in acknowledgment of his bow, and he whirled out of the room and down the dim narrow passageway into the arms of Mrs. Pasmer, who had resisted as long as she could her curiosity to know what the angry voices of himself and Alice meant.

"O Mr. Maverig, is it you?" she buzzed; and she flung aside one pretence for another in adding, "Couldn't Alice make you stay to breakfast?"

Dan felt a rush of tenderness in his heart at the sound of the kind, humbugging little voice. "No, thank you, Mrs. Pasmer, I couldn't stay, thank you. I--I thank you very much. I--good-bye, Mrs. Pasmer." He wrung her hand, and found his way out of the apartment door, leaving her to clear up the mystery of his flight and his broken words as she could.

"Alice," she said, as she entered the room, where the girl had remained, "what have you been doing now?"

"Oh, nothing," she said, with a remnant of her scorn for Dan qualifying her tone and manner to her mother. "I've dismissed Mr. Maverig."

"Then you want him to come to lunch?" asked her mother. "I should advise him to refuse."

"I don't think he'd accept," said Alice. Then, as Mrs. Pasmer stood in the door, preventing her egress, as Dan had done before, she asked meekly "Will you let me pass, mamma? My head aches."

Mrs. Pasmer, whose easy triumphs in so many difficult circumstances kept her nearly always in good temper, let herself go, at these words, in

vexation very uncommon with her. "Indeed I shall not!" she retorted.
"And you will please sit down here and tell me what you mean by dismissing Mr. Mavinger. I'm tired of your whims and caprices."

"I can't talk," began the girl stubbornly.

"Yes, I think you can," said her mother. "At any rate, I can. Now what is it all?"

"Perhaps this letter, will explain," said Alice, continuing to dignify her enforced submission with a tone of unabated hauteur; and she gave her mother Mrs. Mavinger's letter, which Dan had mechanically restored to her.

Mrs. Pasmer read it, not only without indignation, but apparently without displeasure. But, she understood perfectly what the trouble was, when she looked up and asked, cheerfully, "Well?"

"Well!" repeated Alice, with a frown of astonishment. "Don't you see that he's promised us one thing and her another, and that he's false to both?"

"I don't know," said Mrs. Pasmer, recovering her good-humour in view of a situation that she felt herself able to cope with. "Of course he has to temporise, to manage a little. She's an invalid, and of course she's very exacting. He has to humour her. How do you know he has promised her? He hasn't promised us."

"Hasn't promised us?" Alice gasped.

"No. He's simply fallen in with what we've said. It's because he's so sweet and yielding, and can't bear to refuse. I can understand it perfectly."

"Then if he hasn't promised us, he's deceived us all the more shamefully, for he's made us think he had."

"He hasn't me," said Mrs. Pasmer, smiling at the stormy virtue in her daughter's face. "And what if you should go home awhile with him--for the summer, say? It couldn't last longer, much; and it wouldn't hurt us to wait. I suppose he hoped for something of that kind."

"Oh, it isn't that," groaned the girl, in a kind of bewilderment. "I could have gone there with him joyfully, and lived all my days, if he'd only been frank with me."

"Oh no, you couldn't," said her mother, with cosy security. "When it comes to it, you don't like giving up any more than other people. It's very hard for you to give up; he sees that--he knows it, and he doesn't really like to ask any sort of sacrifice from you. He's afraid of you."

"Don't I know that?" demanded Alice desolately: "I've known it from the first, and I've felt it all the time. It's all a mistake, and has been. We never could understand each other. We're too different."

"That needn't prevent you understanding him. It needn't prevent you from seeing how really kind and good he is--how faithful and constant he is."

"Oh, you say that--you praise him--because you like him."

"Of course I do. And can't you?"

"No. The least grain of deceit--of temporising, you call it--spoils everything. It's over," said the girl, rising, with a sigh, from the chair she had dropped into. "We're best apart; we could only have been wretched and wicked together."

"What did you say to him, Alice?" asked her mother, unshaken by her rhetoric.

"I told him he was a faithless person."

"Then you were a cruel girl," cried Mrs. Pasmer, with sudden indignation; "and if you were not my daughter I could be glad he had escaped you. I don't know where you got all those silly, romantic notions of yours about these things. You certainly didn't get them from me," she continued, with undeniable truth, "and I don't believe you get them from your Church, It's just as Miss Anderson said: your Church makes allowance for human nature, but you make none."

"I shouldn't go to Julia Anderson for instruction in such matters," said the girl, with cold resentment.

"I wish you would go to her for a little commonsense--or somebody," said Mrs. Pasmer. "Do you know what talk this will make?"

"I don't care for the talk. It would be worse than talk to marry a man whom I couldn't trust--who wanted to please me so much that he had to deceive me, and was too much afraid of me to tell me the truth."

"You headstrong girl!" said her mother impartially, admiring at the same time the girl's haughty beauty.

There was an argument in reserve in Mrs. Pasmer's mind which perhaps none but an American mother would have hesitated to urge; but it is so wholly our tradition to treat the important business of marriage as a romantic episode that even she could not bring herself to insist that her daughter should not throw away a chance so advantageous from every worldly point of view. She could only ask, "If you break this engagement, what do you expect to do?"

"The engagement is broken. I shall go into a sisterhood."

"You will do nothing of the kind, with my consent," said Mrs. Pasmer. "I will have no such nonsense. Don't flatter yourself that I will. Even if I approved of such a thing, I should think it wicked to let you do it. You're always fancying yourself doing something very devoted, but I've never seen you ready to give up your own will, or your own comfort even,

in the slightest degree. And Dan Maverick, if he were twice as temporising and circuitous"--the word came to her from her talk with him-- "would be twice too good for you. I'm going to breakfast."

XLIV.

The difficulty in life is to bring experience to the level of expectation, to match our real emotions in view of any great occasion with the ideal emotions which we have taught ourselves that we ought to feel. This is all the truer when the occasion is tragical: we surprise ourselves in a helplessness to which the great event, death, ruin, lost love, reveals itself slowly, and at first wears the aspect of an unbroken continuance of what has been, or at most of another incident in the habitual sequence.

Dan Maverick came out into the bright winter morning knowing that his engagement was broken, but feeling it so little that he could not believe it. He failed to realise it, to seize it for a fact, and he could not let it remain that dumb and formless wretchedness, without proportion or dimensions, which it now seemed to be, weighing his life down. To verify it, to begin to outlive it, he must instantly impart it, he must tell it, he must see it with others' eyes. This was the necessity of his youth and of his sympathy, which included himself as well as the rest of the race in its activity. He had the usual environment of a young man who has money. He belonged to clubs, and he had a large acquaintance among men of his own age, who lived a life of greater leisure; or were more absorbed in business, but whom he met constantly in society. For one reason or another, or for no other reason than that he was Dan Maverick and liked every one, he liked them all. He thought himself great friends with them; he dined and lunched with them; and they knew the Pasmers, and all about his engagement. But he did not go to any of them now, with the need he felt to impart his calamity, to get the support of some other's credence and opinion of it. He went to a friend whom, in the way of his world, he met very seldom, but whom he always found, as he said, just where he had left him.

Boardman never made any sign of suspecting that he was put on and off, according to Dan's necessity or desire for comfort or congratulation; but it was part of their joke that Dan's coming to him always meant something decisive in his experiences. The reporter was at his late breakfast, which his landlady furnished him in his room, though, as Mrs. Mash said, she never gave meals, but a cup of coffee and an egg or two, yes.

"Well?" he said, without looking up.

"Well, I'm done for!" cried Dan.

"Again?" asked Boardman.

"Again! The other time was nothing, Boardman--I knew it wasn't anything; but this--this is final."

"Go on," said Boardman, looking about for his individual salt-cellar, which he found under the edge of his plate; and Mavering laid the whole case before him. As he made no comment on it for a while, Dan was obliged to ask him what he thought of it. "Well," he said, with the smile that showed the evenness of his pretty teeth, "there's a kind of wild justice in it." He admitted this, with the object of meeting Dan's views in an opinion.

"So you think I'm a faithless man too, do you?" demanded Mavering stormily.

"Not from your point of view," said Boardman, who kept on quietly eating and drinking.

Mavering was too amiable not to feel Boardman's innocence of offence in his unperturbed behaviour. "There was no faithlessness about it, and you know it," he went on, half laughing, half crying, in his excitement, and making Boardman the avenue of an appeal really addressed to Alice. "I was ready to do what either side decided."

"Or both," suggested Boardman.

"Yes, or both," said Dan, boldly accepting the suggestion. "It wouldn't have cost me a pang to give up if I'd been in the place of either."

"I guess that's what she could never understand," Boardman mused aloud.

"And I could never understand how any one could fail to see that that was what I intended--expected: that it would all come out right of itself--naturally." Dan was still addressing Alice in this belated reasoning. "But to be accused of bad faith--of trying to deceive any one--"

"Pretty rough," said Boardman.

"Rough? It's more than I can stand!"

"Well, you don't seem to be asked to stand it," said Boardman, and Mavering laughed forlornly with him at his joke, and then walked away and looked out of Boardman's dormer-window on the roofs below, with their dirty, smoke-stained February snow. He pulled out his handkerchief, and wiped his face with it. When he turned round, Boardman looked keenly at him, and asked, with an air of caution, "And so it's all up?"

"Yes, it's all up," said Dan hoarsely.

"No danger of a relapse?"

"What do you mean?"

"No danger of having my sympathy handed over later to Miss Pasmer for examination?"

"I guess you can speak up freely, Boardman," said Dan, "if that's what you mean. Miss Pasmer and I are quits."

"Well, then, I'm glad of it. She wasn't the one for you. She isn't fit for you."

What's the reason she isn't?" cried Dan. "She's the most beautiful and noble girl in the world, and the most conscientious, and the best--if she is unjust to me."

"No doubt of that. I'm not attacking her, and I'm not defending you."

"What are you doing then?"

"Simply saying that I don't believe you two would ever understand each other. You haven't got the same point of view, and you couldn't make it go. Both out of a scrape."

"I don't know what you mean by a scrape," said Dan, resenting the word more than the idea. Boardman tacitly refused to modify or withdraw it, and Dan said, after a sulky silence, in which he began to dramatise a meeting with his family: "I'm going home; I can't stand it here. What's the reason you can't come with me, Boardman?"

"Do you mean to your rooms?"

"No; to the Falls."

"Thanks. Guess not."

"Why not?"

"Don't care about being a fifth wheel."

"Oh, pshaw, now, Boardman! Look here, you must go. I want you to go. I--I want your support. That's it. I'm all broken up, and I couldn't stand that three hours' pull alone. They'll be glad to see you--all of them. Don't you suppose they'll be glad to see you? They're always glad; and they'll understand."

"I don't believe you want me to go yourself. You just think you do."

"No. I really do want you, Boardman. I want to talk it over with you. I do want you. I'm not fooling."

"Don't think I could get away." Yet he seemed to be pleased with the notion of the Falls; it made him smile.

"Well, see," said Maverick disconsolately. "I'm going round to my rooms now, and I'll be there till two o'clock; train's at 2.30." He went towards the door, where he faced about. "And you don't think it would be of any use?"

"Any use--what?"

"Trying to--to--to make it up."

"How should I know?"

"No, no; of course you couldn't," said Dan, miserably downcast. All the resentment which Alice's injustice had roused in him had died out; he was suffering as helplessly and hopelessly as a child. "Well," he sighed, as he swung out of the door.

Boardman found him seated at his writing-desk in his smoking-jacket when he came to him, rather early, and on the desk were laid out the properties of the little play which had come to a tragic close. There were some small bits of jewellery, among the rest a ring of hers which Alice had been letting him wear; a lock of her hair which he had kept, for the greater convenience of kissing, in the original parcel, tied with crimson ribbon; a succession of flowers which she had worn, more and more dry and brown with age; one of her gloves, which he had found and kept from the day they first met in Cambridge; a bunch of withered bluebells tied with sweet-grass, whose odour filled the room, from the picnic at Campobello; scraps of paper with her writing on them, and cards; several photographs of her, and piles of notes and letters.

"Look here," said Dan, knowing it was Boardman without turning round, "what am I to do about these things?"

Boardman respectfully examined them over his shoulder. "Don't know what the usual ceremony is," he said, he ventured to add, referring to the heaps of letters, "Seems to have been rather epistolary, doesn't she?"

"Oh, don't talk of her as if she were dead!" cried Dan. "I've been feeling as if she were." All at once he dropped his head among these witnesses of his loss, and sobbed.

Boardman appeared shocked, and yet somewhat amused; he made a soft low sibilation between his teeth.

Dan lifted his head. "Boardman, if you ever give me away!"

"Oh, I don't suppose it's very hilarious," said Boardman, with vague kindness. "Packed yet?" he asked, getting away from the subject as something he did not feel himself fitted to deal with consecutively.

"I'm only going to take a bag," said Maving, going to get some clothes down from a closet where his words had a sepulchral reverberation.

"Can't I help?" asked Boardman, keeping away from the sad memorials of Dan's love strewn about on the desk, and yet not able to keep his eyes off them across the room.

"Well, I don't know," said Dan. He came out with his armful of coats and trousers, and threw them on the bed. "Are you going?"

"If I could believe you wanted me to."

"Good!" cried Maverig, and the fact seemed to brighten him immediately.

"If you want to, stuff these things in, while I'm doing up these other things." He nodded his head side-wise toward the desk.

"All right," said Boardman.

His burst of grief must have relieved Dan greatly. He set about gathering up the relics on the desk, and getting a suitable piece of paper to wrap them in. He rejected several pieces as inappropriate.

"I don't know what kind of paper to do these things up in," he said at last.

"Any special kind of paper required?" Boardman asked, pausing in the act of folding a pair of pantaloons so as not to break the fall over the boot.

"I didn't know there was, but there seems to be," said Dan.

"Silver paper seems to be rather more for cake and that sort of thing," suggested Boardman. "Kind of mourning too, isn't it--silver?"

"I don't know," said Dan. "But I haven't got any silver paper."

"Newspaper wouldn't do?"

"Well, hardly, Boardman," said Dan, with sarcasm.

"Well," said Boardman, "I should have supposed that nothing could be simpler than to send back a lot of love-letters; but the question of paper seems insuperable. Manila paper wouldn't do either. And then comes string. What kind of string are you going to tie it up with?"

"Well, we won't start that question till we get to it," answered Dan, looking about. "If I could find some kind of a box--"

"Haven't you got a collar box? Be the very thing!" Boardman had gone back to the coats and trousers, abandoning Dan to the subtler difficulties in which he was involved.

"They've all got labels," said Maverig, getting down one marked "The Tennyson" and another lettered "The Clarion," and looking at them with cold rejection.

"Don't see how you're going to send these things back at all, then. Have to keep them, I guess." Boardman finished his task, and came back to Dan.

"I guess I've got it now," said Maverig, lifting the lid of his desk, and taking out a large stiff envelope, in which a set of photographic views had come.

"Seems to have been made for it," Boardman exulted, watching the envelope, as it filled up, expand into a kind of shapely packet. Dan put the things silently in, and sealed the parcel with his ring. Then he turned it over to address it, but the writing of Alice's name for this purpose seemed too much for him, in spite of Boardman's humorous support throughout.

"Oh, I can't do it," he said, falling back in his chair.

"Let me," said his friend, cheerfully ignoring his despair. He philosophised the whole transaction, as he addressed the package, rang for a messenger, and sent it away, telling him to call a cab for ten minutes past two.

"Mighty good thing in life that we move by steps. Now on the stage, or in a novel, you'd have got those things together and addressed 'em, and despatched 'em, in just the right kind of paper, with just the right kind of string round it, at a dash; and then you'd have had time to go up and lean your head against something and soliloquise, or else think unutterable things. But here you see how a merciful Providence blocks your way all along. You've had to fight through all sort of sordid little details to the grand tragic result of getting off Miss Pasmer's letters, and when you reach it you don't mind it a bit."

"Don't I?" demanded Dan, in as hollow a voice as he could. "You'd joke at a funeral, Boardman."

"I've seen some pretty cheerful funerals," said Boardman. "And it's this principle of steps, of degrees, of having to do this little thing, and that little thing, that keeps funerals from killing the survivors. I suppose this is worse than a funeral--look at it in the right light. You mourn as one without hope, don't you? Live through it too, I suppose."

He made Dan help get the rest of his things into his bag, and with one little artifice and another prevented him from stagnating in despair. He dissented from the idea of waiting over another day to see if Alice would not relent when she got her letters back, and send for Dan to come and see her.

"Relent a good deal more when she finds you've gone out of town, if she sends for you," he argued; and he got Dan into the cab and off to the station, carefully making him an active partner in the whole undertaking, even to checking his own bag.

Before he bought his own ticket he appealed once more to Dan.

"Look here! I feel like a fool going off with you on this expedition. Be honest for once, now, Maverick, and tell me you've thought better of it, and don't want me to go!"

"Yes--yes, I do. Oh yes, you've got to go. I do want you. I--you make me see things in just the right light, don't you know. That idea of yours about little steps--it's braced me all up. Yes--"

"You're such an infernal humbug," said Boardman, "I can't tell whether you want me or not. But I'm in for it now, and I'll go." Then he bought his ticket.

XLV.

Boardman put himself in charge of Maverick, and took him into the smoking car. It was impossible to indulge a poetic gloom there without becoming unpleasantly conspicuous in the smoking and euchre and profanity. Some of the men were silent and dull, but no one was apparently very unhappy, and perhaps if Dan had dealt in absolute sincerity with himself, even he would not have found himself wholly so. He did not feel as he had felt when Alice rejected him. Then he was wounded to the quick through his vanity, and now; in spite of all, in spite of the involuntary tender swaying of his heart toward her through the mere force of habit, in spite of some remote compunctions for his want of candour with her, he was supported by a sense of her injustice, her hardness. Related with this was an obscure sense of escape, of liberation, which, however he might silence and disown it, was still there. He could not help being aware that he had long relinquished tastes customs, purposes, ideals, to gain a peace that seemed more and more fleeting and uncertain, and that he had submitted to others which, now that the moment of giving pleasure by his submission was past, he recognised as disagreeable. He felt a sort of guilt in his enlargement; he knew, by all that he had, ever heard or read of people in his position, that he ought to be altogether miserable; and yet this consciousness of relief persisted. He told himself that a very tragical thing had befallen him; that this broken engagement was the ruin of his life and the end of his youth, and that he must live on an old and joyless man, wise with the knowledge that comes to decrepitude and despair; he imagined a certain look for himself, a gait, a name, that would express this; but all the same he was aware of having got out of something. Was it a bondage, a scrape, as Boardman called it? He thought he must be a very light, shallow, and frivolous nature not to be utterly broken up by his disaster.

"I don't know what I'm going home for," he said hoarsely to Boardman.

"Kind of a rest, I suppose," suggested his friend.

"Yes, I guess that's it," said Dan. "I'm tired."

It seemed to him that this was rather fine; it was a fatigue of the soul that he was to rest from. He remembered the apostrophic close of a novel in which the heroine dies after much emotional suffering. "Quiet, quiet heart!" he repeated to himself. Yes, he too had died to hope, to love, to happiness.

As they drew near their journey's end he said, "I don't know how I'm going to break it to them."

"Oh, probably break itself," said Boardman. "These things usually do."

"Yes, of course," Dan assented.

"Know from your looks that something's up. Or you might let me go ahead a little and prepare them."

Dan laughed. "It was awfully good of you to come, Boardman. I don't know what I should have done without you."

"Nothing I like more than these little trips. Brightens you up to sere the misery of others; makes you feel that you're on peculiarly good terms with Providence. Haven't enjoyed myself so much since that day in Portland." Boardman's eyes twinkled.

"Yes," said Dan, with a deep sigh, "it's a pity it hadn't ended there."

"Oh, I don't know. You won't have to go through with it again. Something that had to come, wasn't it? Never been satisfied if you hadn't tried it. Kind of aching void before, and now you've got enough."

"Yes, I've got enough," said Dan, "if that's all."

When they got out of the train at Ponkwasset Falls, and the conductor and the brakeman, who knew Dan as his father's son, and treated him with the distinction due a representative of an interest valued by the road, had bidden him a respectfully intimate good-night, and he began to climb the hill to his father's house, he recurred to the difficulty before him in breaking the news to his family. "I wish I could have it over in a flash. I wish I'd thought to telegraph it to them."

"Wouldn't have done," said Boardman. "It would have given 'em time to formulate questions and conjectures, and now the astonishment will take their breath away till you can get your second wind, and then--you'll be all right."

"You think so?" asked Dan submissively.

"Know so. You see, if you could have had it over in a flash, it would have knocked you flat. But now you've taken all the little steps, and you've got a lot more to take, and you're all braced up. See? You're like rock, now--adamant." Dan laughed in forlorn perception of Boardman's affectionate irony. "Little steps are the thing. You'll have to go in now and meet your family, and pass the time of day with each one, and talk about the weather, and account for my being along, and ask how they all are; and by the time you've had dinner, and got settled with your legs out in front of the fire, you'll be just in the mood for it. Enjoy telling them all about it."

"Don't, Boardman," pleaded Dan. "Boardy, I believe if I could get in and up to my room without anybody's seeing me, I'd let you tell them. There don't seem to be anybody about, and I think we could manage it."

"It wouldn't work," said Boardman. "Got to do it yourself."

"Well, then, wait a minute," said Dan desperately; and Boardman knew that he was to stay outside while Dan reconnoitred the interior. Dan opened one door after another till he stood within the hot brilliantly lighted hall. Eunice Mavinger was coming down the stairs, hooded and wrapped for a walk on the long verandahs before supper.

"Dan!" she cried.

"It's all up, Eunice," he said at once, as if she had asked him about it.

"My engagement's off."

"Oh, I'm so glad!" She descended upon him with outstretched arms, but stopped herself before she reached him. "It's a hoax. What do you mean? Do you really mean it, Dan?"

"I guess I mean it. But don't--Hold on! Where's Minnie?"

Eunice turned, and ran back upstairs. "Minnie! Min!" she called on her way. "Dan's engagement's off."

"I don't believe it!" answered Minnie's voice joyously, from within some room. It was followed by her presence, with successive inquiries. "How do you know? Did you get a letter? When did it happen? Oh, isn't it too good?"

Minnie was also dressed for the verandah promenade, which they always took when the snow was too deep. She caught sight of her brother as she came down. "Why, Dan's here! Dan, I've been thinking about you all day." She kissed him, which Eunice was now reminded to do too.

"Yes, it's true, Minnie," said Dan gravely. "I came up to tell you. It don't seem to distress you much."

"Dan!" said his sister reproachfully. "You know I didn't mean to say anything I only felt so glad to have you back again."

"I understand, Minnie--I don't dame you. It's all right. How's mother?"
Father up from the works yet? I'm going to my room."

"Indeed you're not!" cried Eunice, with elder sisterly authority. "You shall tell us about it first."

"Oh no! Let him go, Eunice!" pleaded Minnie, "Poor Dan! And I don't think we ought to go to walk when--"

Dan's eyes dimmed, and his voice weakened a little at her sympathy. "Yes, go. I'm tired--that's all. There isn't anything to tell you, hardly.
Miss Pasmer--"

"Why, he's pale!" cried Minnie. "Eunice!"

"Oh, it's just the heat in here." Dan really felt a little sick and faint with it, but he was not sorry to seem affected by the day's strain upon his nerves.

The girls began to take off their wraps. "Don't. I'll go with you. Boardman's out there."

"Boardman! What nonsense!" exclaimed Eunice.

"He'll like to hear your opinion of it," Dan began; but his sister pulled the doors open, and ran out to see if he really meant that too.

Whether Boardman had heard her, or had discreetly withdrawn out of earshot at the first sound of voices, she could not tell, but she found him some distance away from the snow-box on the piazza. "Dan's just managed to tell us you were here," she said, giving him her hand. "I'm glad to see you. Do come in."

"Come along as a sort of Job's comforter," Boardman explained, as he followed her in; and he had the silly look that the man who feels himself superfluous must wear.

"Then you know about it?" said Eunice, while Minnie Maverick and he were shaking hands.

"Yes, Boardman knows; he can tell you about it," said Dan, from the hall chair he had dropped into. He rose and made his way to the stairs, with the effect of leaving the whole thing to them.

His sisters ran after him, and got him upstairs and into his room, with Boardman's semi-satirical connivance, and Eunice put up the window, while Minnie went to get some cologne to wet his forehead. Their efforts were so successful that he revived sufficiently to drive them out of his room, and make them go and show Boardman to his.

"You know the way, Mr. Boardman," said Eunice, going before him, while Minnie followed timorously, but curious for what he should say. She lingered on the threshold, while her sister went in and pulled the electric apparatus which lighted the gas-burners. "I suppose Dan didn't break it?" she said, turning sharply upon him.

"No; and I don't think he was to blame," said Boardman, inferring her reserved anxiety.

"Oh, I'm quite sure of that," said Eunice, rejecting what she had asked for. "You'll find everything, Mr. Boardman. It was kind of you to come with Dan. Supper's at seven."

"How severe you were with him!" murmured Minnie, following her away.

"Severe with Dan?"

"No--with Mr. Boardman."

"What nonsense! I had to be. I couldn't let him defend Dan to me. Couple of silly boys!"

After a moment Minnie said, "I don't think he's silly."

"Who?"

"Mr. Boardman."

"Well, Dan is, then, to bring him at such a time. But I suppose he felt that he couldn't get here without him. What a boy! Think of such a child being engaged! I hope we shan't hear any more of such nonsense for one while again--at least till Dan's got his growth."

They went down into the library, where, in their excitement, they sat down with most of their outdoor things on.

Minnie had the soft contrary-mindedness of gentle natures. "I should like to know how you would have had Dan bear it," she said rebelliously.

"How? Like a man. Or like a woman. How do you suppose Miss Pasmer's bearing it? Do you suppose she's got some friend to help her?"

"If she's broken it, she doesn't need any one," urged Minnie.

"Well," said Eunice, with her high scorn of Dan unabated, "I never could have liked that girl, but I certainly begin to respect her. I think I could have got on with her--now that it's no use. I declare," she broke off, "we're sitting here sweltering to death! What are we keeping our things on for?" She began to tear hers violently off and to fling them on chairs, scolding, and laughing at the same time with Minnie, at their absent-mindedness.

A heavy step sounded on the verandah without.

"There's father!" she cried vividly, jumping to her feet and running to the door, while Minnie, in a nervous bewilderment, ran off upstairs to her room. Eunice flung the door open. "Well, father, we've got Dan back again." And at a look of quiet question in his eye she hurried on: "His engagement's broken, and he's come up here to tell us, and brought Mr. Boardman along to help."

"Where is he?" asked the father, with his ruminant quiet, pulling off first one sleeve of his overcoat, and pausing for Eunice's answer before he pulled off the other.

XLVI.

"He's up in his room, resting from the effort." She laughed nervously,

and her father made no comment. He took off his articles, and then went creaking upstairs to Dan's room. But at the door he paused, with his hand on the knob, and turned away to his own room without entering.

Dan must have heard him; in a few minutes he came to him.

"Well, Dan," said his father, shaking hands.

"I suppose Eunice has told you? Well, I want to tell you why it happened."

There was something in his father that always steadied Dan and kept him to the point. He now put the whole case fairly and squarely, and his candour and openness seemed to him to react and characterise his conduct throughout. He did not realise that this was not so till his father said at the close, with mild justice, "You were to blame for letting the thing run on so at loose ends."

"Yes, of course," said Dan, seeing that he was. "But there was no intention of deceiving any one of bad faith--"

"Of course not."

"I thought it could be easily arranged whenever it came to the point."

"If you'd been older, you wouldn't have thought that. You had women to deal with on both sides. But if it's all over, I'm not sorry. I always admired Miss Pasmer, but I've been more and more afraid you were not suited to each other. Your mother doesn't know you're here?"

"No, sir, I suppose not. Do you think it will distress her?"

"How did your sisters take it?"

Dan gave a rueful laugh. "It seemed to be rather a popular move with them."

"I will see your mother first," said the father.

He left them when they went into the library after supper, and a little later Dan and Eunice left Boardman in charge of Minnie there.

He looked after their unannounced withdrawal in comic consciousness.

"It's no use pretending that I'm not a pretty large plurality here," he said to Minnie.

"Oh, I'm so glad you came!" she cried, with a kindness which was as real as if it had been more sincere.

"Do you think mother will feel it much?" asked Dan anxiously, as he went upstairs with Eunice.

"Well, she'll hate to lose a correspondent--such a regular one," said

Eunice, and the affair being so far beyond any other comment, she laughed the rest of the way to their mother's room.

The whole family had in some degree that foible which affects people who lead isolated lives; they come to think that they are the only people who have their virtues; they exaggerate these, and they conceive a kindness even for the qualities which are not their virtues. Mrs. Maverick's life was secluded again from the family seclusion, and their peculiarities were intensified in her. Besides, she had some very marked peculiarities of her own, and these were also intensified by the solitude to which she was necessarily left so much. She meditated a great deal upon the character of her children, and she liked to analyse and censure it both in her own mind and openly in their presence. She was very trenchant and definite in these estimates of them; she liked to tickle them, and then tickle them anew. She explored their ancestral history on both sides for the origin of their traits, and there were times when she reduced them in formula to mere congeries of inherited characteristics. If Eunice was self-willed and despotic, she was just like her grandmother Maverick; if Minnie was all sentiment and gentle stubbornness, it was because two aunts of hers, one on either side, were exactly so; if Dan loved pleasure and beauty, and was sinuous and uncertain in so many ways, and yet was so kind and faithful and good, as well as shilly-shallying and undecided, it was because her mother, and her mother's father, had these qualities in the same combination.

When she took her children to pieces before their faces, she was sharp and admonitory enough with them. She warned them to what their characters would bring them to if they did not look out; but perhaps because she beheld them so hopelessly the present effect of the accumulated tendencies of the family past, she was tender and forgiving to their actions. The mother came in there, and superseded the student of heredity: she found excuse for them in the perversity of circumstance, in the peculiar hardship of the case, in the malignant misbehaviour of others.

As Dan entered, with the precedence his father and sister yielded him as the principal actor in the scene which must follow, she lifted herself vigorously in bed, and propped herself on the elbow of one arm while she stretched the other towards him.

"I'm glad of it, Dan!" she called, at the moment he opened the door, and as he came toward her she continued, with the amazing velocity of utterance peculiar to nervous sufferers of her sex: "I know all about it, and I don't blame you a bit! And I don't blame her! Poor helpless young things! But it's a perfect mercy it's all over; it's the greatest deliverance I ever heard of! You'd have been eaten up alive. I saw it, and I knew it from the very first moment, and I've lived in fear and trembling for you. You could have got on well enough if you'd been left to yourselves, but that you couldn't have been nor hope to be as long as you breathed, from the meddling and the machinations and the malice of that unscrupulous and unconscionable old Cat!"

By the time Mrs. Maverick had hissed out the last word she had her arm round her boy's neck and was clutching him, safe and sound after his

peril, to her breast; and between her kissing and crying she repeated her accusals and denunciations with violent volubility.

Dan could not have replied to them in that effusion of gratitude and tenderness he felt for his mother's partisanship; and when she went on in almost the very terms of his self-defence, and told him that he had done as he had because it was easy for him to yield, and he could not imagine a Cat who would put her daughter up to entrapping him into a promise that she knew must break his mother's heart, he found her so right on the main point that he could not help some question of Mrs. Pasmer in his soul. Could she really have been at the bottom of it all? She was very sly, and she might be very false, and it was certainly she who had first proposed their going abroad together. It looked as if it might be as his mother said, and at any rate it was no time to dispute her, and he did not say a word in behalf of Mrs. Pasmer, whom she continued to rend in a thousand pieces and scatter to the winds till she had to stop breathless.

"Yes! it's quite as I expected! She did everything she could to trap you into it. She fairly flung that poor girl at you. She laid her plans so that you couldn't say no--she understood your character from the start!--and then, when it came out by accident, and she saw that she had older heads to deal with, and you were not going to be quite at her mercy, she dropped the mask in an instant, and made Alice break with you. Oh, I could see through her from the beginning! And the next time, Dan, I advise you, as you never suspect anybody yourself, to consult with somebody who doesn't take people for what they seem, and not to let yourself be flattered out of your sensor, even if you see your father is."

Mrs. Maverig dropped back on her pillow, and her husband smiled patiently at their daughter.

Dan saw his patient smile and understood it; and the injustice which his father bore made him finally unwilling to let another remain under it. Hard as it was to oppose his mother in anything when she was praising him so sweetly and comforting him in the moment of his need, he pulled himself together to protest: "No, no, mother! I don't think Mrs. Pasmer was to blame; I don't believe she had anything to do with it. She's always stood my friend--"

"Oh, I've no doubt she's made you think so, Dan," said his mother, with unabated fondness for him; "and you think so because you're so simple and good, and never suspect evil of any one. It's this hideous optimism that's killing everything--"

A certain note in the invalid's falling voice seemed to warn her hearers of an impending change that could do no one good. Eunice rose hastily and interrupted: "Mother, Mr. Boardman's here. He came up with Dan. May Minnie come in with him?"

Mrs. Maverig shot a glance of inquiry at Dan, and then let a swift inspection range over all the details of the room, and finally concentrate itself on the silk and lace of her bed, over which she passed a smoothing hand. "Mr. Boardman?" she cried, with instantly recovered amiability. "Of

course she may!"

XLVII.

In Boston the rumour of Dan's broken engagement was followed promptly by a denial of it; both the rumour and the denial were apparently authoritative; but it gives the effect of a little greater sagacity to distrust rumours of all kinds, and most people went to bed, after the teas and dinners and receptions and clubs at which the fact was first debated, in the self-persuasion that it was not so. The next day they found the rumour still persistent; the denial was still in the air too, but it seemed weaker; at the end of the third day it had become a question as to which broke the engagement, and why; by the end of a week it was known that Alice had broken the engagement, but the reason could not be ascertained.

This was not for want of asking, more or less direct. Pasher, of course, went and came at his club with perfect immunity. Men are quite as curious as women, but they set business bounds to their curiosity, and do not dream of passing these. With women who have no business of their own, and can not quell themselves with the reflection that this thing or that is not their affair, there is no question so intimate that they will not put it to some other woman; perhaps it is not so intimate, or perhaps it will not seem so; at any rate, they chance it. Mrs. Pasher was given every opportunity to explain the facts to the ladies whom she met, and if she was much afflicted by Alice's behaviour, she had a measure of consolation in using her skill to baffle the research of her acquaintance. After each encounter of the kind she had the pleasure of reflecting that absolutely nothing more than she meant had become known. The case never became fully known through her; it was the girl herself who told it to Miss Cotton in one of those moments of confidence which are necessary to burdened minds; and it is doubtful if more than two or three people ever clearly understood it; most preferred one or other of several mistaken versions which society finally settled down to.

The paroxysm of self-doubt, almost self-accusal, in which Alice came to Miss Cotton, moved the latter to the deepest sympathy, and left her with misgivings which became an intolerable anguish to her conscience. The child was so afflicted at what she had done, not because she wished to be reconciled with her lover, but because she was afraid she had been unjust, been cruelly impatient and peremptory with him; she seemed to Miss Cotton so absolutely alone and friendless with her great trouble, she was so helpless, so hopeless, she was so anxious to do right, and so fearful she had done wrong, that Miss Cotton would not have been Miss Cotton if she had not taken her in her arms and assured her that in everything she had done she had been sublimely and nobly right, a lesson to all her sex in such matters for ever. She told her that she had always admired her, but that now she idolised her; that she felt like going down on her knees and simply worshipping her.

"Oh, don't say that, Miss Cotton!" pleaded Alice, pulling away from her embrace, but still clinging to her with her tremulous, cold little hands.

"I can't bear it! I'm wicked and hard you don't know how bad I am; and I'm afraid of being weak, of doing more harm yet. Oh, I wronged him cruelly in ever letting him get engaged to me! But now what you've said will support me. If you think I've done right--It must seem strange to you that I should come to you with my trouble instead of my mother; but I've been to her, and--and we think alike on so few subjects, don't you know--"

"Yes, yes; I know, dear!" said Miss Cotton, in the tender folly of her heart, with the satisfaction which every woman feels in being more sufficient to another in trouble than her natural comforters.

"And I wanted to know how you saw it; and now, if you feel as you say, I can never doubt myself again."

She tempested out of Miss Cotton's house, all tearful under the veil she had pulled down, and as she shut the door of her coupe, Miss Cotton's heart jumped into her throat with an impulse to run after her, to recall her, to recant, to modify everything.

From that moment Miss Cotton's trouble began, and it became a torment that mounted and gave her no peace till she imparted it. She said to herself that she should suffer to the utmost in this matter, and if she spoke to any one, it must not be to same one who had agreed with her about Alice, but to some hard, skeptical nature, some one who would look at it from a totally different point of view, and would punish her for her error, if she had committed an error, in supporting and consoling Alice. All the time she was thinking of Mrs. Brinkley; Mrs. Brinkley had come into her mind at once; but it was only after repeated struggles that she could get the strength to go to her.

Mrs. Brinkley, sacredly pledged to secrecy, listened with a sufficiently dismaying air to the story which Miss Cotton told her in the extremity of her fear and doubt.

"Well," she said at the end, "have you written to Mr. Mavering?"

"Written to Mr. Mavering?" gasped Miss Cotton.

"Yes--to tell him she wants him back."

"Wants him back?" Miss Cotton echoed again.

"That's what she came to you for."

"Oh, Mrs. Brinkley!" moaned Miss Cotton, and she stared at her in mute reproach.

Mrs. Brinkley laughed. "I don't say she knew that she came for that; but there's no doubt that she did; and she went away bitterly disappointed with your consolation and support. She didn't want anything of the kind--"

you may comfort yourself with that reflection, Miss Cotton."

"Mrs. Brinkley," said Miss Cotton, with a severity which ought to have been extremely effective from so mild a person, "do you mean to accuse that poor child of dissimulation--of deceit--in such--a--a--"

"No!" shouted Mrs. Brinkley; "she didn't know what she was doing any more than you did; and she went home perfectly heart-broken; and I hope she'll stay so, for the good of all parties concerned."

Miss Cotton was so bewildered by Mrs. Brinkley's interpretation of Alice's latent motives that she let the truculent hostility of her aspiration pass unheeded. She looked helplessly about, and seemed faint, so that Mrs. Brinkley, without appearing to notice her state, interposed the question of a little sherry. When it had been brought, and Miss Cotton had sipped the glass that trembled in one hand while her emotion shattered a biscuit with the other, Mrs. Brinkley went on: "I'm glad the engagement is broken, and I hope it will never be mended. If what you tell me of her reason for breaking it is true--"

"Oh, I feel so guilty for telling you! I'd no right to! Please never speak of it!" pleaded Miss Cotton.

"Then I feel more than ever that it was all a mistake, and that to help it on again would be a--crime."

Miss Cotton gave a small jump at the word, as if she had already committed the crime: she had longed to do it.

"Yes; I mean to say that they are better parted than plighted. If matches are made in heaven, I believe some of them are unmade there too. They're not adapted to each other; there's too great a disparity."

"You mean," began Miss Cotton, from her prepossession of Alice's superiority, "that she's altogether his inferior, intellectually and morally."

"Oh, I can't admit that!" cried Miss Cotton, glad to have Mrs. Brinkley go too far, and plucking up courage from her excess.

"Intellectually and morally," repeated Mrs. Brinkley, with the mounting conviction which ladies seem to get from mere persistence. "I saw that girl at Campobello; I watched her."

"I never felt that you did her justice!" cried Miss Cotton, with the valour of a hen-sparrow. "There was an antipathy."

"There certainly wasn't a sympathy, I'm happy to say," retorted Mrs. Brinkley. "I know her, and I know her family, root and branch. The Pasmers are the dullest and most selfish people in the world."

"Oh, I don't think that's her character," said Miss Cotton, ruffling her feathers defensively.

"Neither do I. She has no fixed character. No girl has. Nobody has. We all have twenty different characters--more characters than gowns--and we put them on and take them off just as often for different occasions. I know you think each person is permanently this or that; but my experience is that half the time they're the other thing."

"Then why," said Miss Cotton, winking hard, as some weak people do when they think they are making a point, "do you say that Alice is dull and selfish?"

"I don't--not always, or not simply so. That's the character of the Pasmer blood, but it's crossed with twenty different currents in her; and from some body that the Pasmer dulness and selfishness must have driven mad she got a crazy streak of piety; and that's got mixed up in her again with a nonsensical ideal of duty; and everything she does she not only thinks is right, but she thinks it's religious, and she thinks it's unselfish."

"If you'd seen her, if you'd heard her, this morning," said Miss Cotton, "you wouldn't say that, Mrs. Brinkley."

Mrs. Brinkley refused this with an impatient gesture. "It isn't what she is now, or seems to be, or thinks she is. It's what she's going to finally harden into--what's going to be her prevailing character. Now Dan Maving has just the faults that will make such a girl think her own defects are virtues, because they're so different. I tell you Alice Pasmer has neither the head nor the heart to appreciate the goodness, the loveliness, of a fellow like Dan Maving."

"I think she feels his sweetness fully," urged Miss Cotton. "But she couldn't endure his uncertainty. With her the truth is first of all things."

"Then she's a little goose. If she had the sense to know it, she would know that he might delay and temporise and beat about the bush, but he would be true when it was necessary. I haven't the least doubt in the world but that poor fellow was going on in perfect security, because he felt that it would be so easy for him to give up, and supposed it would be just as easy for her. I don't suppose he had a misgiving, and it must have come upon him like a thunder-clap."

"Don't you think," timidly suggested Miss Cotton, "that truth is the first essential in marriage?"

"Of course it is. And if this girl was worthy of Dan Maving, if she were capable of loving him or anybody else unselfishly, she would have felt his truth even if she couldn't have seen it. I believe this minute that that manoeuvring, humbugging mother of hers is a better woman, a kinder woman, than she is."

"Alice says her mother took his part," said Miss Cotton, with a sigh. "She took your view of it."

"She's a sensible woman. But I hope she won't be able to get him into her toils again," continued Mrs. Brinkley, recurring to the conventional estimate of Mrs. Pasmer.

"I can't help feeling--believing--that they'll come together somehow still," murmured Miss Cotton. It seemed to her that she had all along wished this; and she tried to remember if what she had said to comfort Alice might be construed as adverse to a reconciliation.

"I hope they won't, then," said Mrs. Brinkley, "for they couldn't help being unhappy together, with their temperaments. There's one thing, Miss Cotton, that's more essential in marriage than Miss Pasmer's instantaneous honesty, and that's patience."

"Patience with wrong?" demanded Miss Cotton.

"Yes, even with wrong; but I meant patience with each other. Marriage is a perpetual pardon, concession, surrender; it's an everlasting giving up; that's the divine thing about it; and that's just what Miss Passer could never conceive of, because she is self-righteous and conceited and unyielding. She would make him miserable."

Miss Cotton rose in a bewilderment which did not permit her to go at once. There was something in her mind which she wished to urge, but she could not make it out, though she fingered in vague generalities. When she got a block away from the house it suddenly came to her. Love! If they loved each other, would not all be well with them? She would have liked to run back and put that question to Mrs. Brinkley; but just then she met Brinkley lumbering heavily homeward; she heard his hard breathing from the exertion of bowing to her as he passed.

His wife met him in the hall, and went up to kiss him. He smelt abominably of tobacco smoke.

"Hullo!" said her husband. "What are you after?"

"Nothing," said his wife, enjoying his joke. "Come in here; I want to tell you how I have just sat upon Miss Cotton."

XLVIII.

The relations between Dan and his father had always been kindly and trustful; they now became, in a degree that touched and flattered the young fellow, confidential. With the rest of the family there soon ceased to be any reference to his engagement; his sisters were glad, each in her way, to have him back again; and, whatever they may have said between themselves, they said nothing to him about Alice. His mother appeared to have finished with the matter the first night; she had her theory, and she did it justice; and when Mrs. Maving had once done a thing justice, she

did not bring it up again unless somebody disputed it. But nobody had defended Mrs. Pasmers after Dan's feeble protest in her behalf; Mrs. Mavinger's theory was accepted with obedience if not conviction; the whole affair dropped, except between Dan and his father.

Dan was certainly not so gay as he used to be; he was glad to find that he was not so gay. There had been a sort of mercy in the suddenness of the shock; it benumbed him, and the real stress and pain came during the long weeks that followed, when nothing occurred to vary the situation in any manner; he did not hear a word about Alice from Boston, nor any rumour of her people.

At first he had intended to go back with Boardman and face it out; but there seemed no use in this, and when it came to the point he found it impossible. Boardman went back alone, and he put Dan's things together in his rooms at Boston and sent them to him, so that Dan remained at home.

He set about helping his father at the business with unaffected docility. He tried not to pose, and he did his best to bear his loss and humiliation with manly fortitude. But his whole life had not set so strongly in one direction that it could be sharply turned aside now, and not in moments of forgetfulness press against the barriers almost to bursting. Now and then, when he came to himself from the wonted tendency, and remembered that Alice and he, who had been all in all to each other, were now nothing, the pain was so sharp, so astonishing, that he could not keep down a groan, which he then tried to turn off with a cough, or a snatch of song, or a whistle, looking wildly round to see if any one had noticed.

Once this happened when his father and he were walking silently home from the works, and his father said, without touching him or showing his sympathy except in his tone of humorously frank recognition, "Does it still hurt a little occasionally, Dan?"

"Yes, sir, it hurts," said the son; and he turned his face aside, and whistled through his teeth.

"Well, it's a trial, I suppose," said his father, with his gentle, soft half-lisp. "But there are greater trials."

"How, greater?" asked Dan, with sad incredulity. "I've lost all that made life worth living; and it's all my own fault, too."

"Yes," said his father; "I think she was a good girl."

"Good!" cried Dan; the word seemed to choke him.

"Still, I doubt if it's all your fault." Dan looked round at him. He added, "And I think it's perhaps for the best as it is."

Dan halted, and then said, "Oh, I suppose so," with dreary resignation, as they walked on.

"Let us go round by the paddock," said his father, "and see if Pat's put

the horses up yet. You can hardly remember your mother, before she became an invalid, I suppose," he added, as Dan mechanically turned aside with him from the path that led to the house into that leading to the barn.

"No; I was such a little fellow," said Dan.

"Women give up a great deal when they marry," said the elder. "It's not strange that they exaggerate the sacrifice, and expect more in return than it's in the nature of men to give them. I should have been sorry to have you marry a woman of an exacting disposition."

"I'm afraid she was exacting," said Dan. "But she never asked more than was right."

"And it's difficult to do all that's right," suggested the elder.

"I'm sure you always have, father," said the son.

The father did not respond. "I wish you could remember your mother when she was well," he said. Presently he added, "I think it isn't best for a woman to be too much in love with her husband."

Dan took this to himself, and he laughed harshly. "She's been able to dissemble her love at last."

His father went on, "Women keep the romantic feeling longer than men; it dies out of us very soon--perhaps too soon."

"You think I couldn't have come to time?" asked Dan. "Well, as it's turned out, I won't have to."

"No man can be all a woman wishes him to be," said his father. "It's better for the disappointment to come before it's too late."

"I was to blame," said Dan stoutly. "She was all right."

"You were to blame in the particular instance," his father answered. "But in general the fault was in her--or her temperament. As long as the romance lasted she might have deluded herself, and believed you were all she imagined you; but romance can't last, even with women. I don't like your faults, and I don't want you to excuse them to yourself. I don't like your chancing things, and leaving them to come out all right of themselves; but I've always tried to make you children see all your qualities in their true proportion and relation."

"Yes; I know that, sir," said Dan.

"Perhaps," continued his father, as they swung easily along, shoulder to shoulder, "I may have gone too far in that direction because I was afraid that you might take your mother too seriously in the other--that you might not understand that she judged you from her nerves and not her convictions. It's part of her malady, of her suffering, that her

inherited Puritanism clouds her judgment, and makes her see all faults as of one size and equally damning. I wish you to know that she was not always so, but was once able to distinguish differences in error, and to realise that evil is of ill-will."

"Yes; I know that," said Dan. "She is now--when she feels well."

"Harm comes from many things, but evil is of the heart. I wouldn't have you condemn yourself too severely for harm that you didn't intend--that's remorse--that's insanity; and I wouldn't have you fall under the condemnation of another's invalid judgment."

"Thank you, father," said Dan.

They had come up to the paddock behind the barn, and they laid their arms on the fence while they looked over at the horses, which were still there. The beasts, in their rough winter coats, some bedaubed with frozen clots of the mud in which they had been rolling earlier in the afternoon, stood motionless in the thin, keen breeze that crept over the hillside from the March sunset, and blew their manes and tails out toward Dan and his father. Dan's pony sent him a gleam of recognition from under his frowsy bangs, but did not stir.

"Bunch looks like a caterpillar," he said, recalling the time when his father had given him the pony; he was a boy then, and the pony was as much to him, it went through his mind, as Alice had ever been. Was it all a jest, an irony? he asked himself.

"He's getting pretty old," said his father. "Let's see: you were only twelve."

"Ten," said Dan. "We've had him thirteen years."

Some of the horses pricked up their ears at the sound of their voices. One of them bit another's neck; the victim threw up his heels and squealed.

Pat called from the stable, "Heigh, you devils!"

"I think he'd better take them in," said Dan's father; and he continued, as if it were all the same subject, "I hope you'll have seen something more of the world before you fall in love the next time."

"Thank you; there won't be any next time. But do you consider the world such a school of morals; then? I supposed it was a very bad place."

"We seem to have been all born into it," said the father. He lifted his arms from the fence, and Dan mechanically followed him into the stable. A warm, homely smell of hay and of horses filled the place; a lantern glimmered, a faint blot, in the loft where Pat was pitching some hay forward to the edge of the boards; the naphtha gas weakly flared from the jets beside the harness-room, whence a smell of leather issued and mingled with the other smell. The simple, earthy wholesomeness of the place

appealed to Dan and comforted him. The hay began to tumble from the loft with a pleasant rustling sound.

His father called up to Pat, "I think you'd better take the horses in now."

"Yes, sir: I've got the box-stalls ready for 'em."

Dan remembered how he and Eunice used to get into the box-stall with his pony, and play at circus with it; he stood up on the pony, and his sister was the ring-master. The picture of his careless childhood reflected a deeper pathos upon his troubled present, and he sighed again.

His father said, as they moved on through the barn: "Some of the best people I've ever known were what were called worldly people. They are apt to be sincere, and they have none of the spiritual pride, the conceit of self-righteousness, which often comes to people who are shut up by conscience or circumstance to the study of their own motives and actions."

"I don't think she was one of that kind," said Dan.

"Oh, I don't know that she was. But the chances of happiness, of goodness, would be greater with a less self-centred person--for you."

"Ah, Yes! For me!" said Dan bitterly. "Because I hadn't it in me to be frank with her. With a man like me, a woman had better be a little scampish, too! Father, I could get over the loss; she might have died, and I could have got over that; but I can't get over being to blame."

"I don't think I'd indulge in any remorse," said his father. "There's nothing so useless, so depraving, as that. If you see you're wrong, it's for your warning, not for your destruction."

Dan was not really feeling very remorseful; he had never felt that he was much to blame; but he had an intellectual perception of the case, and he thought that he ought to feel remorseful; it was this persuasion that he took for an emotion. He continued to look very disconsolate.

"Come," said his father, touching his arm, "I don't want you to brood upon these things. It can do no manner of good. I want you to go to New York next week and look after that Lafflin process. If it's what he thinks--if he can really cast his brass patterns without air-holes--it will revolutionise our business. I want to get hold of him."

The Portuguese cook was standing in the basement door which they passed at the back of the house. He saluted father and son with a glittering smile.

"Hello, Joe!" said Dan.

"Ah, Joe!" said his father; he touched his hat to the cook, who snatched his cap off.

"What a brick you are, father!" thought Dan. His heart leaped at the

notion of getting away from Ponkwasset; he perceived how it had been irking him to stay. "If you think I could manage it with Lafflin--"

"Oh, I think you could. He's another slippery chap."

Dan laughed for pleasure and pain at his father's joke.

XLIX.

In New York Dan found that Lafflin had gone to Washington to look up something in connection with his patent. In his eagerness to get away from home, Dan had supposed that his father meant to make a holiday for him, and he learned with a little surprise that he was quite in earnest about getting hold of the invention. he wrote home of Lafflin's absence; and he got a telegram in reply ordering him to follow on to Washington.

The sun was shining warm on the asphalt when he stepped out of the Pennsylvania Depot with his bag in his hand, and put it into the hansom that drove up for him. The sky overhead was of an intense blue that made him remember the Boston sky as pale and grey; when the hansom tilted out into the Avenue he had a joyous glimpse of the White House; of the Capitol swimming like a balloon in the cloudless air. A keen March breeze swept the dust before him, and through its veil the classic Treasury Building showed like one edifice standing perfect amid ruin represented by the jag-tooth irregularities of the business architecture along the wide street.

He had never been in Washington before, and he had a confused sense of having got back to Rome, which he remembered from his boyish visit. Throughout his stay he seemed to be coming up against the facade of the Temple of Neptune; but it was the Patent Office, or the Treasury Building, or the White House, and under the gay Southern sky this reversion to the sensations of a happier time began at once, and made itself a lasting relief. He felt a lift in his spirits from the first. They gave him a room at Wormley's, where the chairs comported themselves as self-respectfully upon two or three legs as they would have done at Boston upon four; the cooking was excellent, and a mercenary welcome glittered from all the kind black faces around him. After the quiet of Ponkwasset and the rush of New York, the lazy ease of the hotel pleased him; the clack of boots over its pavements, the clouds of tobacco smoke, the Southern and Western accents, the spectacle of people unexpectedly encountering and recognising each other in the office and the dining-room, all helped to restore him to a hopefuller mood. Without asking his heart too curiously why, he found it lighter; he felt that he was still young.

In the weather he had struck a cold wave, and the wind was bitter in the streets, but they were full of sun; he found the grass green in sheltered places, and in one of the Circles he plucked a blossomed spray from an adventurous forceythia. This happened when he was walking from Wormley's to the Arlington by a roundabout way of his own involuntary invention, and he had the flowers in his button-hole when Lafflin was pointed out to him

in the reading room there, and he introduced himself. Lafflin had put his hat far back on his head, and was intensely chewing a toothpick, with an air of rapture from everything about him. He seemed a very simple soul to Dan's inexperience of men, and the young fellow had no difficulty in committing him to a fair conditional arrangement. He was going to stay some days in Washington, and he promised other interviews, so that Dan thought it best to stay too. He used a sheet of the Arlington letter-paper in writing his father of what he had done; and then, as Lafflin had left him, he posted his letter at the clerk's desk, and wandered out through a corridor different from that which he had come in by. It led by the door of the ladies parlour, and at the sound of women's voices Dan halted. For no other reason than that such voices always irresistibly allured him, he went in, putting on an air of having come to look for some one. There were two or three groups of ladies receiving friends in different parts of the room. At the window a girl's figure silhouetted itself against the keen light, and as he advanced into the room, peering about, it turned with a certain vividness that seemed familiar. This young lady, whoever she was, had the advantage of Dan in seeing him with the light on his face, and he was still in the dark about her, when she advanced swiftly upon him, holding out her hand.

"You don't seem to know your old friends, Mr. Maverick," and the manly tones left him no doubt.

He felt a rush of gladness, and he clasped her hand and clung to it as if he were not going to let it go again, bubbling out incoherencies of pleasure at meeting her. "Why, Miss Anderson! You here? What a piece of luck! Of course I couldn't see you against the window--make you out! But something looked familiar--and the way you turned! And when you started toward me! I'm awfully glad! When--where are you--that is--"

Miss Anderson kept laughing with him, and bubbled back that she was very glad too, and she was staying with her aunt in that hotel, and they had been there a month, and didn't he think Washington was charming? But it was too bad he had just got there with that blizzard. The weather had been perfectly divine till the day before yesterday.

He took the spray of forceyphia out of his buttonhole. "I can believe it. I found this in one, of the squares, and I think it belongs to you." He offered it with a bow and a laugh, and she took it in the same humour.

"What is the language of forceyphia?" she asked.

"It has none--only expressive silence, you know."

A middle-aged lady came in, and Miss Anderson said, "My aunt, Mr. Maverick."

"Mr. Maverick will hardly remember me," said the lady, giving him her hand. He protested that he should indeed, but she had really made but a vague impression upon him at Campobello. He knew that she was there with Miss Anderson; he had been polite to her as he was to all women; but he had not noticed her much, and in his heart he had a slight for her, as

compared with the Boston people he was more naturally thrown with; he certainly had not remembered that she was a little hard of hearing.

Miss Van Hook was in a steel-grey effect of dress, and, she had carried this up into her hair, of which she wore two short vertical curls on each temple.

She did not sit down, and Dan perceived that the ladies were going out. In her tailor-made suit of close-fitting serge and her Paris bonnet, carried like a crest on her pretty little head, Miss Anderson was charming. She had a short veil that came across the base of her lively nose, and left her mouth and chin to make the most of themselves, unprejudiced by its irregularity.

Dan felt it a hardship to part with them, but he prepared to take himself off. Miss Anderson asked him how long he was to be in Washington, and said he must come to see them; they meant to stay two weeks yet, and then they were going to Old Point Comfort; they had their rooms engaged.

He walked down to their carriage with the ladies and put them into it, and Miss Anderson still kept him talking there.

Her aunt said: "Why shouldn't you come with us, Mr. Mavington? We're going to Mrs. Secretary Miller's reception."

Dan gave himself a glance. "I don't know--if you want me?"

"We want you," said Miss Anderson. "Very well, then, I'll go."

He got in, and they began rolling over that smooth Washington asphalt which makes talk in a carriage as easy as in a drawing-room. Dan kept saying to himself, "Now she's going to bring up Campobello;" but Miss Anderson never recurred to their former meeting, and except for the sense of old acquaintance which was manifest in her treatment of him he might have thought that they had never met before. She talked of Washington and its informal delights; and of those plans which her aunt had made, like every one who spends a month in Washington, to spend all the remaining winters of her life there.

It seemed to Dan that Miss Anderson was avoiding Campobello on his account; he knew from what Alice had told him that there had been much surmise about their affair after he had left the island, and he suspected that Miss Anderson thought the subject was painful to him. He wished to reassure her. He asked at the first break in the talk about Washington, "How are the Trevors?"

"Oh, quite well," she said, promptly availing herself of the opening.

"Have you seen any of our Campobello friends lately in Boston?"

"No; I've been at home for the last month--in the country." He scanned her face to see if she knew anything of his engagement. But she seemed honestly ignorant of everything since Campobello; she was not just the kind of New York girl who would visit in Boston, or have friends living

there; probably she had never heard of his engagement. Somehow this seemed to simplify matters for Dan. She did not ask specifically after the Pasmers; but that might have been because of the sort of break in her friendship with Alice after that night at the Trevors'; she did not ask specifically after Mrs. Brinkley or any of the others.

At Mrs. Secretary Miller's door there was a rapid arrival and departure of carriages, of coupes, of hansom, and of herdicks, all managed by a man in plain livery, who opened and shut the doors, and sent the drivers off without the intervention of a policeman; it is the genius of Washington, which distinguishes it from every other capital, from every other city, to make no show of formality, of any manner of constraint anywhere. People were swarming in and out; coming and going on foot as well as by carriage. The blandest of coloured uncles received their cards in the hall and put them into a vast tray heaped up with pasteboard, smiling affectionately upon them as if they had done him a favour.

"Don't you like them?" asked Dan of Miss Anderson; he meant the Southern negroes.

"I adoye them," she responded, with equal fervour. "You must study some new types here for next summer," she added.

Dan laughed and winced too. "Yes!" Then he said solemnly, "I am not going to Campobello next summer."

They fell into a stream of people tending toward an archway between the drawing-rooms, where Mrs. Secretary Miller stood with two lady friends who were helping her receive. They smiled wearily but kindly upon the crowd, for whom the Secretary's wife had a look of impartial hospitality. She could not have known more than one in fifty; and she met them all with this look at first, breaking into incredulous recognition when she found a friend. "Don't go away yet," she said cordially, to Miss Van Hook and her niece, and she held their hands for a moment with a gentle look of relief and appeal which included Dan. "Let me introduce you to Mrs. Tolliver and to Miss Dixon."

These ladies said that it was not necessary in regard to Miss Anderson and Miss Van Hook; and as the crowd pushed them on, Dan felt that they had been received with distinction.

The crowd expressed the national variety of rich and poor, plain and fashionable, urbane and rustic; they elbowed and shouldered each other upon a perfect equality in a place where all were as free to come as to the White House, and they jostled quaint groups of almond-eyed legations in the yellows and purples of the East, who looked dreamily on as if puzzled past all surmise by the scene. Certain young gentlemen with the unmistakable air of being European or South American attaches found their way about on their little feet, which the stalwart boots of the republican masses must have imperilled; and smiled with a faint diplomatic superiority, not visibly admitted, but all the same indisputable. Several of these seemed to know Miss Anderson, and took her presentation of Maverling with exaggerated effusion.

"I want to introduce you to my cousin over yonder," she said, getting rid of a minute Brazilian under-secretary, and putting her hand on Dan's arm to direct him: "Mrs. Justice Averill."

Miss Van Hook, keeping her look of severe vigilance, really followed her energetic niece, who took the lead, as a young lady must whenever she and her chaperon meet on equal terms.

Mrs. Justice Averill, who was from the far West somewhere, received Dan with the ease of the far East, and was talking London and Paris to him before the end of the third minute. It gave Dan a sense of liberation, of expansion; he filled his lungs with the cosmopolitan air in a sort of intoxication; without formulating it, he felt, with the astonishment which must always attend the Bostonian's perception of the fact, that there is a great social life in America outside of Boston. At Campobello he had thought Miss Anderson a very jolly girl, bright, and up to all sorts of things; but in the presence of the portable Boston there he could not help regarding her with a sort of tolerance which he now blushed for; he thought he had been a great ass. She seemed to know all sorts of nice people, and she strove with generous hospitality to make him have a good time. She said it was Cabinet Day, and that all the secretaries' wives were receiving, and she told him he had better make the rounds with them. He assented very willingly, and at six o'clock he was already so much in the spirit of this free and simple society, so much opener and therefore so much wiser than any other, that he professed a profound disappointment with the two or three Cabinet ladies whose failure to receive brought his pleasure to a premature close.

"But I suppose you're going to Mrs. Whittington's to-night!" Miss Anderson said to him, as they drove up to Wormley's, where she set him down. Miss Van Hook had long ceased to say anything; Dan thought her a perfect duenna. "You know you can go late there," she added.

"No, I can't go at all," said Dan. "I don't know them."

"They're New England people," urged Miss Anderson; as if to make him try to think that he was asked to Mrs. Whittington's.

"I don't know more than half the population of New England," said Dan, with apparent levity, but real forlornness.

"If you'd like to go--if you're sure you've no other engagement--"

"Oh, I'm certain of that?"

"--we would come for you."

"Do!"

"At half-past ten, then."

Miss Anderson explained to her aunt, who cordially confirmed her

invitation, and they both shook hands with him upon it, and he backed out of the carriage with a grin of happiness on his face; it remained there while he wrote out the order for his dinner, which they require at Wormley's in holograph. The waiter reflected his smile with ethnical warm-heartedness. For a moment Dan tried to think what it was he had forgotten; he thought it was some other dish; then he remembered that it was his broken heart. He tried to subdue himself; but there was something in the air of the place, the climate, perhaps, or a pleasant sense of its facile social life, that kept him buoyant in spite of himself. He went out after dinner, and saw part of a poor play, and returned in time to dress for his appointment with Miss Anderson. Her aunt was with her, of course; she seemed to Dan more indefatigable than she was by day. He could not think her superfluous; and she was very good-natured. She made little remarks full of conventional wisdom, and appealed to his judgment on several points as they drove along. When they came to a street lamp where she could see him, he nodded and said yes, or no, respectfully. Between times he talked with Miss Anderson, who lectured him upon Washington society, and prepared him for the difference he was to find between Mrs. Whittington's evening of invited guests and the Cabinet ladies' afternoon of volunteer guests.

"Volunteer guests is good," he laughed. "Do you mean that anybody can go?"

"Anybody that is able to be about. This is Cabinet Day. There's a Supreme Court Day and a Senators' Day, and a Representatives' Day. Do you mean to say you weren't going to call upon your Senator?"

"I didn't know I had any."

"Neither did I till I came here. But you've got two; everybody's got two. And the President's wife receives three times a week, and the President has two or three days. They say the public days at the White House are great fun. I've been to some of the invited, or semi-invited or official evenings."

He could not see that difference from the great public receptions which Miss Anderson had promised him at Mrs. Whittington's, though he pretended afterward that he had done so. The people were more uniformly well dressed, there were not so many of them, and the hostess was sure of knowing her acquaintances at first glance; but there was the same ease, the same unconstraint, the same absence of provincial anxiety which makes a Washington a lighter and friendlier London. There were rather more sallow attaches; in their low-cut white waistcoats, with small brass buttons, they moved more consciously about, and looked weightier personages than several foreign ministers who were present.

Dan was soon lost from the side of Miss Anderson, who more and more seemed to him important socially. She seemed, in her present leadership; to know more of life, than he; to be maturer. But she did not abuse her superiority; she kept an effect of her last summer's friendliness for him throughout. Several times, finding herself near him; she introduced him to people.

Guests kept arriving till midnight. Among the latest, when Dan had lost himself far from Boston in talk with a young lady from Richmond, who spoke with a slur of her vowels that fascinated him, came Mr. and Mrs. Brinkley. He felt himself grow pale and inattentive to his pretty Virginian. That accent of Mrs. Brinkley's recalled him to his history. He hoped that she would not see him; but in another moment he was greeting her with a warmth which Bostonians seldom show in meeting at Boston.

"When did you come to Washington?" she asked, trying to keep her consciousness out of her eyes, which she let dwell kindly upon him.

"Day before yesterday--no, yesterday. It seems a month, I've seen and done so much," he said, with his laugh. "Miss Anderson's been showing me the whole of Washington society. Have you been here long?"

"Since morning," said Mrs. Brinkley. And she added, "Miss Anderson?"

"Yes--Campobello, don't you know?"

"Oh yes. Is she here to-night?"

"I came with her and her aunt."

"Oh yes."

"How is all Boston?" asked Dan boldly.

"I don't know; I'm just going down to Old Point Comfort to ask. Every other house on the Back Bay has been abandoned for the Hygeia." Mrs. Brinkley stopped, and then she asked. "Are you just up from there?"

"No; but I don't know but I shall go."

"Hello, Mavinger!" said Mr. Brinkley, coming up and taking his hand into his fat grasp. "On your way to Fortress Monroe? Better come with us. Why; Munt!"

He turned to greet this other Bostonian, who had hardly expressed his joy at meeting with his fellow-townsmen when the hostess rustled softly up, and said, with the irony more or less friendly, which everybody uses in speaking of Boston, or recognising the intellectual pre-eminence of its people, "I'm not going to let you keep this feast of reason all to your selves. I want you to leaven the whole lump," and she began to disperse them, and to introduce them about right and left.

Dan tried to find his Virginian again, but she was gone. He found Miss Anderson; she was with her aunt. "Shall we be tearing you away?" she asked.

"Oh no. I'm quite ready to go."

His nerves were in a tremble. Those Boston faces and voices had brought

it all back again; it seemed as if he had met Alice. He was silent and incoherent as they drove home, but Miss Anderson apparently did not want to talk much, and apparently did not notice his reticence.

He fell asleep with the pang in his heart which had been there so often.

When Dan came down to breakfast he found the Brinkleys at a pleasant place by one of the windows, and after they had exchanged a pleased surprise with him that they should all happen to be in the same hotel, they asked him to sit at their table.

There was a bright sun shining, and the ache was gone out of Dan's heart. He began to chatter gaily with Mrs. Brinkley about Washington.

"Oh, better come on to Fortress Monroe," said her husband. "Better come on with us."

"No, I can't just yet," said Dan. "I've got some business here that will keep me for awhile. Perhaps I may run down there a little later."

"Miss Anderson seems to have a good deal of business in Washington too," observed Brinkley, with some hazy notion of saying a pleasant rallying thing to the young man. He wondered at the glare his wife gave him. With those panned oysters before him he had forgotten all about Dan's love affair with Miss Pasmer.

Mrs. Brinkley hastened to make the mention of Miss Anderson as impersonal as possible.

"It was so nice to meet her again. She is such an honest, wholesome creature, and so bright and full of sense. She always made me think of the broad daylight. I always liked that girl."

"Yes; isn't she jolly?" said Dan joyously. "She seems to know everybody here. It's a great piece of luck for me. They're going to take a house in Washington next winter."

"Yes; I know that stage," said Mrs. Brinkley. "Her aunt's an amusingly New-York respectability. I don't think you'd find just such Miss Mitford curls as hers in all Boston."

"Yes, they are like the portraits, aren't they?" said Dan; delighted. "She's very nice, don't you think?"

"Very. But Miss Anderson is more than that. I was disposed to be critical of her at Campobello for a while, but she wore extremely well. All at once you found yourself admiring her uncommon common-sense.

"Yes. That's just it," cried Dan. "She is so sensible!"

"I think she's very pretty," said Mrs. Brinkley."

"Well, her nose," suggested Dan. "It seems a little capricious."

"It's a trifle bizarre, I suppose. But what beautiful eyes! And her figure! I declare that girl's carriage is something superb."

"Yes, she has a magnificent walk."

"Walks with her carriage," mused Brinkley aloud.

His wife did not regard him. "I don't know what Miss Anderson's principles are, but her practices are perfect. I never knew her do an unkind or shabby thing. She seems very good and very wise. And that deep voice of hers has such a charm. It's so restful. You feel as if you could repose upon it for a thousand years. Well! You will get down before we leave?"

"Yes, I will," said Dan. "I'm here after a man who's after a patent, and as soon as I can finish up my business with him I believe I will run down to Fortress Monroe."

"This eleven-o'clock train will get you there at six," said Brinkley. "Better telegraph for your rooms."

"Or, let us know," said Mrs. Brinkley, "and we'll secure them for you."

"Oh, thank you," said Dan.

He went away, feeling that Mrs. Brinkley was the pleasantest woman he ever met. He knew that she had talked Miss Anderson so fully in order to take away the implication of her husband's joke, and he admired her tact. He thought of this as he loitered along the street from Wormley's to the Arlington, where he was going to find Miss Anderson, by an appointment of the night before, and take a walk with her; and thinking of tact made him think of Mrs. Pasmer. Mrs. Pasmer was full of tact; and how kind she had always been to him! She had really been like a mother to him; he was sure she had understood him; he believed she had defended him; with a futility of which he felt the pathos, he made her defend him now to Alice. Alice was very hard and cold, as when he saw her last; her mother's words fell upon her as upon a stone; even Mrs. Pasmer's tears, which Dan made her shed, had no effect upon the haughty girl. Not that he cared now.

The blizzard of the previous days had whirled away; the sunshine lay still, with a warm glisten and sparkle, on the asphalt which seemed to bask in it, and which it softened to the foot. He loitered by the gate of the little park or plantation where the statue of General Jackson is riding a cock-horse to Banbury Cross, and looked over at the French-Italian classicism of the White House architecture with a pensive joy at finding pleasure in it, and then he went on to the Arlington.

Miss Anderson was waiting for him in the parlour, and they went a long walk up the avenues and across half the alphabet in the streets, and through the pretty squares and circles, where the statues were sometimes beautiful and always picturesque; and the sparrows made a vernal chirping

in the naked trees and on the green grass. In two or three they sat down on the iron benches and rested.

They talked and talked--about the people they knew, and of whom they found that they thought surprisingly alike, and about themselves, whom they found surprisingly alike in a great many things, and then surprisingly unlike. Dan brought forward some points of identity which he, and Alice had found in themselves; it was just the same with Miss Anderson. She found herself rather warm with the seal-skin sacque she had put on; she let him carry it on his arm while they walked, and then lay it over her shoulders when they sat down. He felt a pang of self-reproach, as if he had been inconstant to Alice. This was an old habit of feeling, formed during the months of their engagement, when, at her inspiration, he was always bringing himself to book about something. He replied to her bitterly, in the colloquy which began to hold itself in his mind, and told her that she had no claim upon him now; that if his thoughts wandered from her it was her fault, not his; that she herself had set them free. But in fact he was like all young men, with a thousand, potentialities of loving. There was no aspect of beauty that did not tenderly move him; he could not help a soft thrill at the sight of any pretty shape, the sound of any piquant voice; and Alice had merely been the synthesis of all that was most charming to this fancy. This is a truth which it is the convention of the poets and the novelists to deny; but it is also true that she might have remained the sum of all that was loveliest if she would; or if she could.

It was chiefly because she would not or could not that his glance recognised the charm of Miss Anderson's back hair, both in its straying gossamer and in the loose mass in which it was caught up under her hat, when he laid her sacque on her shoulders. They met that afternoon at a Senator's, and in the house of a distinguished citizen, to whose wife Dan had been presented at Mrs. Whittington's, and who had somehow got his address, and sent him a card for her evening. They encountered here with a jocose old friendliness, and a profession of being tired of always meeting Miss Anderson and Mr. Maverick. He brought her salad and ice, and they made an appointment for another walk in the morning, if it was fine.

He carried her some flowers. A succession of fine days followed, and they walked every morning. Sometimes Dan was late, and explained that it was his patent-right man had kept him. She was interested in the patent-right man, whom Dan began to find not quite so simple as at first, but she was not exacting with him about his want of punctuality; she was very easy-going; she was not always ready herself. When he began to beat about the bush, to talk insincerities, and to lose himself in intentionless plausibilities, she waited with serene patience for him to have done, and met him on their habitual ground of frankness and reality as if he had not left it. He got to telling her all his steps with his patent-right man, who seemed to be growing mote and more slippery, and who presently developed a demand for funds. Then she gave him some very shrewd, practical advice, and told him to go right into the hotel office and telegraph to his father while she was putting on her bonnet.

"Yes," he said, "that's what I thought of doing." But he admired her for

advising him; he said to himself that Miss Anderson was the kind of girl his father would admire. She was good, and she was of the world too; that was what his father meant. He imagined himself arriving home and saying, "Well father, you know that despatch I sent you, about Lafflin's wanting money?" and telling him about Miss Anderson. Then he fancied her acquainted with his sisters and visiting them, and his father more and more fond of her, and perhaps in declining health, and eager to see his son settled in life; and he pictured himself telling her that he had done with love for ever, but if she could accept respect, fidelity, gratitude, he was ready to devote his life to her. She refused him, but they always remained good friends and comrades; she married another, perhaps Boardman, while Dan was writing out his telegram, and he broke into whispered maledictions on his folly, which attracted the notice of the operator.

One morning when he sent up his name to Miss Anderson, whom he did not find in the hotel parlour, the servant came back with word that Miss Van Hook would like to have him come up to their rooms. But it was Miss Anderson who met him at the door.

"It seemed rather formal to send you word that Miss Van Hook was indisposed, and Miss Anderson would be unable to walk this morning, and I thought perhaps you'd rather come up and get my regrets in person. And I wanted you to see our view."

She led the way to the window for it, but they did not look at it, though they sat down there apparently for the purpose. Dan put his hat beside his chair, and observed some inattentive civilities in inquiring after Miss Van Hook's health, and in hearing that it was merely a bad headache, one of a sort in which her niece hated to leave her to serve herself with the wet compresses which Miss Van Hook always bore on her forehead for it.

"One thing: it's decided us to be off for Fortress Monroe at last. We shall go by the boat to-morrow, if my aunt's better."

"To-morrow?" said Dan. "What's to become of me when you're gone?"

"Oh, we shall not take the whole population with us," suggested Miss Anderson.

"I wish you would take me. I told Mrs. Brinkley I would come while she was there, but I'm afraid I can't get off. Lafflin is developing into all sorts of strange propositions."

"I think you'd better look out for that man," said Miss Anderson.

"Oh, I do nothing without consulting my father. But I shall miss you."

"Thank you," said the girl gravely.

"I don't mean in a business capacity only."

They both laughed, and Dan looked about the room, which he found was a private hotel parlour, softened to a more domestic effect by the signs of

its prolonged occupation by two refined women. On a table stood a leather photograph envelope with three cabinet pictures in it. Along the top lay a spray of withered forceyphia. Dan's wandering eyes rested on it. Miss Anderson went and softly closed the door opening into the next room.

"I was afraid our talking might disturb my aunt," she said, and on her way back to him she picked up the photograph case and brought it to the light. "These are my father and mother. We live at Yonkers; but I'm with my aunt a good deal of the time in town--even when I'm at home." She laughed at her own contradictory statement, and put the case back without explaining the third figure--a figure in uniform. Dan conjectured a military brother, or from her indifference perhaps a militia brother, and then forgot about him. But the partial Yonkers residence accounted for traits of unconventionality in Miss Anderson which he had not been able to reconcile with the notion of an exclusively New York breeding. He felt the relief, the sympathy, the certainty of intelligence which every person whose life has been partly spent in the country feels at finding that a suspected cockney has also had the outlook into nature and simplicity.

On the Yonkers basis they became more intimate, more personal, and Dan told her about Ponkwasset Falls and his mother and sisters; he told her about his father, and she said she should like to see his father; she thought he must be like her father.

All at once, and for no reason that he could think of afterward, except, perhaps, the desire to see the case with her eyes, he began to tell her of his affair with Alice, and how and why it was broken off; he told the whole truth in regard to that, and did not spare himself.

She listened without once speaking, but without apparent surprise at the confidence, though she may have felt surprised. At times she looked as if her thoughts were away from what he was saying.

He ended with, "I'm sure I don't know why I've told you all this. But I wanted you to know about me. The worst."

Miss Anderson said, looking down, "I always thought she was a very conscientious giyl." Then after a pause, in which she seemed to be overcoming an embarrassment in being obliged to speak of another in such a conviction, "I think she was very moybid. She was like ever so many New England giyls that I've met. They seem to want some excuse for suffering; and they must suffer even if it's through somebody else. I don't know; they're romantic, New England giyls are; they have too many ideals."

Dan felt a balm in this; he too had noticed a superfluity of ideals in Alice, he had borne the burden of realising some of them; they all seemed to relate in objectionable degree to his perfectionation. So he said gloomily, "She was very good. And I was to blame."

"Oh yes!" said Miss Anderson, catching her breath in a queer way; "she seyved you right."

She rose abruptly, as if she heard her aunt speak, and Dan perceived that

he had been making a long call.

He went away dazed and dissatisfied; he knew now that he ought not to have told Miss Anderson about his affair, unless he meant more by his confidence than he really did--unless he meant to follow it up.

He took leave of her, and asked her to make his adieux to her aunt; but the next day he came down to the boat to see them off. It seemed to him that their interview had ended too hastily; he felt sore and restless over it; he hoped that something more conclusive might happen. But at the boat Miss Anderson and her aunt were inseparable. Miss Van Hook said she hoped they should soon see him at the Hygeia, and he replied that he was not sure that he should be able to come after all.

Miss Anderson called something after him as he turned from them to go ashore. He ran back eagerly to know what it was. "Better lookout for that Mr. Lafflin of yours," she repeated.

"Oh! oh yes," he said, indefinitely disappointed. "I shall keep a sharp eye on him." He was disappointed, but he could not have said what he had hoped or expected her to say. He was humbled before himself for having told Miss Anderson about his affair with Alice, and had wished she would say something that he might scramble back to his self-esteem upon. He had told her all that partly from mere weakness, from his longing for the sympathy which he was always so ready to give, and partly from the willingness to pose before her as a broken heart, to dazzle her by the irony and persiflage with which he could treat such a tragical matter; but he could not feel that he had succeeded. The sum of her comment had been that Alice had served him right. He did not know whether she really believed that or merely said it to punish him for some reason; but he could never let it be the last word. He tingled as he turned to wave his handkerchief to her on the boat, with the suspicion that she was laughing at him; and he could not console himself with any hero of a novel who had got himself into just such a box. There were always circumstances, incidents, mitigations, that kept the hero still a hero, and ennobled the box into an unjust prison cell.

L.

On the long sunny piazza of the Hygeia Mrs. Brinkley and Miss Van Hook sat and talked in a community of interest which they had not discovered during the summer before at Campobello, and with an equality of hearing which the sound of the waves washing almost at their feet established between them. In this pleasant noise Miss Van Hook heard as well as any one, and Mrs. Brinkley gradually realised that it was the trouble of having to lift her voice that had kept her from cultivating a very agreeable acquaintance before. The ladies sat in a secluded corner, wearing light wraps that they had often found comfortable at Campobello in August, and from time to time attested to each other their astonishment that they needed no more at Old Point in early April.

They did this not only as a just tribute to the amiable climate, but as a relief from the topic which had been absorbing them, and to which they constantly returned.

"No," said Mrs. Brinkley, with a sort of finality, "I think it is the best thing that could possibly have happened to him. He is bearing it in a very manly way, but I fancy he has felt it deeply, poor fellow. He's never been in Boston since, and I don't believe he'd come here if he'd any idea how many Boston people there were in the hotel--we swarm! It would be very painful to him."

"Yes," said Miss Van Hook, "young people seem to feel those things."

"Of course he's going to get over it. That's what young people do too. At his age he can't help being caught with every pretty face and every pretty figure, even in the midst of his woe, and it's only a question of time till he seizes some pretty hand and gets drawn out of it altogether."

"I think that would be the case with my niece, too," said Miss Van Hook, "if she wasn't kept in it by a sense of loyalty. I don't believe she really dares much for Lieutenant Willing any more; but he sees no society where he's stationed, of course, and his constancy is a--a rebuke and a--a--an incentive to her. They were engaged a long time ago just after he left West Point--and we've always been in hopes that he would be removed to some post where he could meet other ladies and become interested in some one else. But he never has, and so the affair remains. It's most undesirable they should marry, and in the meantime she won't break it off, and it's spoiling her chances in life."

"It is too bad," sighed Mrs. Brinkley, "but of course you can do nothing. I see that."

"No, we can do nothing. We have tried everything. I used to think it was because she was so dull there at Yonkers with her family, and brooded upon the one idea all the time, that she could not get over it; and at first it did seem when she came to me that she would get over it. She is very fond of gaiety--of young men's society, and she's had plenty of little flirtations that didn't mean anything, and never amounted to anything. Every now and then a letter would come from the wilds where he was stationed, and spoil it all. She seemed to feel a sort of chivalrous obligation because he was so far off and helpless and lonely."

"Yes, I understand," said Mrs. Brinkley. "What a pity she couldn't be made to feel that that didn't deepen the obligation at all."

"I've tried to make her," said Miss Van Hook, "and I've been everywhere with her. One winter we were up the Nile, and another in Nice, and last winter we were in Rome. She met young men everywhere, and had offers upon offers; but it was of no use. She remained just the same, and till she met Mr. Maverick in Washington I don't believe--"

Miss Van Hook stopped, and Mrs. Brinkley said, "And yet she always seemed

to me particularly practical and level-headed--as the men say."

"So she is. But she is really very romantic about some things; and when it comes to a matter of that kind, girls are about all alike, don't you think?"

"Oh yes," said Mrs. Brinkley hopelessly, and both ladies looked out over the water, where the waves came rolling in one after another to waste themselves on the shore as futilely as if they had been lives.

In the evening Miss Anderson got two letters from the clerk, at the hour when the ladies all flocked to his desk with the eagerness for letters which is so engaging in them. One she pulled open and glanced at with a sort of impassioned indifference; the other she read in one intense moment, and then ran it into her pocket, and with her hand still on it hurried vividly flushing to her room, and read and read it again with constantly mounting emotion.

"WORMLEY'S HOTEL, Washington, April 7, 188-

"DEAR MISS ANDERSON,--I have been acting on your parting advice to look out for that Mr. Laffin of mine, and I have discovered that he is an unmitigated scamp. Consequently there is nothing more to keep me in Washington, and I should now like your advice about coming to Fortress Monroe. Do you find it malarial? On the boat your aunt asked me to come, but you said nothing about it, and I was left to suppose that you did not think it would agree with me. Do you still think so? or what do you think? I know you think it was uncalled for and in extremely bad taste for me to tell you what I did the other day; and I have thought so too. There is only one thing that could justify it--that is, I think it might justify it--if you thought so. But I do not feel sure that you would like to know it, or, if you knew it, would like it. I've been rather slow coming to the conclusion myself, and perhaps it's only the beginning of the end; and not the conclusion--if there is such a difference. But the question now is whether I may come and tell you what I think it is--justify myself, or make things worse than they are now. I don't know that they can be worse, but I think I should like to try. I think your presence would inspire me.

"Washington is a wilderness since Miss--Van Hook left. It is not a howling wilderness simply because it has not enough left in it to howl; but it has all the other merits of a wilderness.

"Yours sincerely,

"D. F. MAVERING."

After a second perusal of this note, Miss Anderson recurred to the other letter which she had neglected for it, and read it with eyes from which the tears slowly fell upon it. Then she sat a long time at her table with both letters before her, and did not move, except to take her handkerchief out of her pocket and dry her eyes, from which the tears began at once to

drip again. At last she started forward, and caught pen and paper toward her, biting her lip and frowning as if to keep herself firm, and she said to the central figure in the photograph case which stood at the back of the table, "I will, I will! You are a man, anyway."

She sat down, and by a series of impulses she wrote a letter, with which she gave herself no pause till she put it in the clerk's hands, to whom she ran downstairs with it, kicking her skirt into wild whirls as she ran, and catching her foot in it and stumbling.

"Will it go--go to-night?" she demanded tragically.

"Just in time," said the clerk, without looking up, and apparently not thinking that her tone betrayed any unusual amount of emotion in a lady posting a letter; he was used to intensity on such occasions.

The letter ran--

"DEAR MR. MAVERING,--We shall now be here so short a time that I do not think it advisable for you to come.

"Your letter was rather enigmatical, and I do not know whether I understood it exactly. I suppose you told me what you did for good reasons of your own, and I did not think much about it. I believe the question of taste did not come up in my mind.

"My aunt joins me in kindest regards.

"Yours very sincerely,

"JULIA V. H. ANDERSON."

"P.S.--I think that I ought to return your letter. I know that you would not object to my keeping it, but it does not seem right. I wish to ask your congratulations. I have been engaged for several years to Lieutenant Willing, of the Army. He has been transferred from his post in Montana to Fort Hamilton at New York, and we are to be married in June."

The next morning Mrs. Brinkley came up from breakfast in a sort of duplex excitement, which she tried to impart to her husband; he stood with his back toward the door, bending forward to the glass for a more accurate view of his face, from which he had scraped half the lather in shaving.

She had two cards in her hand: "Miss Van Hook and Miss Anderson have gone. They went this morning. I found their P. P. C.'s by my plate."

Mr. Brinkley made an inarticulate noise for comment, and assumed the contemptuous sneer which some men find convenient for shaving the lower lip.

"And guess who's come, of all people in the world?"

"I don't know," said Brinkley, seizing his chance to speak.

"The Pasmers!--Alice and her mother! Isn't it awful?"

Mr. Brinkley had entered upon a very difficult spot at the corner of his left jaw. He finished it before he said, "I don't see anything awful about it, so long as Pasmer hasn't come too."

"But Dan Maverig! He's in Washington, and he may come down here any day. Just think how shocking that would be!"

"Isn't that rather a theory?" asked Mr. Brinkley, finding such opportunities for conversation as he could. "I dare say Mrs. Pasmer would be very glad to see him."

"I've no doubt she would," said Mrs. Brinkley. "But it's the worst thing that could happen--for him. And I feel like writing him not to come--telegraphing him."

"You know how the man made a fortune in Chicago," said her husband, drying his razor tenderly on a towel before beginning to strop it. "I advise you to let the whole thing alone. It doesn't concern us in any way whatever."

"Then," said Mrs. Brinkley, "there ought to be a committee to take it in hand and warn him."

"I dare say you could make one up among the ladies. But don't be the first to move in the matter."

"I really believe," said his wife, with her mind taken off the point by the attractiveness of a surmise which had just occurred to her, "that Mrs. Pasmer would be capable of following him down if she knew he was in Washington."

"Yes, if she know. But she probably doesn't."

"Yes," said Mrs. Brinkley disappointedly. "I think the sudden departure of the Van Hooks must have had something to do with Dan Maverig."

"Seems a very influential young man," said her husband. "He attracts and repels people right and left. Did you speak to the Pasmers?"

"No; you'd better, when you go down. They've just come into the dining-room. The girl looks like death."

"Well, I'll talk to her about Maverig. That'll cheer her up."

Mrs. Brinkley looked at him for an instant as if she really thought him capable of it. Then she joined him in his laugh.

Mrs. Brinkley had theorised Alice Pasmer as simply and primitively selfish, like the rest of the Pasmers in whom the family traits prevailed.

When Maverig stopped coming to her house after his engagement she justly suspected that it was because Alice had forbidden him, and she had rejoiced at the broken engagement as an escape for Dan; she had frankly said so, and she had received him back into full favour at the first moment in Washington. She liked Miss Anderson, and she had hoped, with the interest which women feel in every such affair, that her flirtation with him might become serious. But now this had apparently not happened. Julia Anderson was gone with mystifying precipitation, and Alice Pasmer had come with an unexpectedness which had the aspect of fatality.

Mrs. Brinkley felt bound, of course, since there was no open enmity between them, to meet the Pasmers on the neutral ground of the Hygeia with conventional amiability. She was really touched by the absent wanness of the girls look, and by the later-coming recognition which shaped her mouth into a pathetic snide. Alice did not look like death quite, as Mrs. Brinkley had told her husband, with the necessity her sex has for putting its superlatives before its positives; but she was pale and thin, and she moved with a languid step when they all met at night after Mrs. Brinkley had kept out of the Pasmers' way during the day.

"She has been ill all the latter part of the winter," said Mrs. Pasmer to Mrs. Brinkley that night in the corner of the spreading hotel parlours, where they found themselves. Mrs. Pasmer did not look well herself; she spoke with her eyes fixed anxiously on the door Alice had just passed out of. "She is going to bed, but I know I shall find her awake whenever I go."

"Perhaps," suggested Mrs. Brinkley, "this soft, heavy sea air will put her to sleep." She tried to speak drily and indifferently, but she could not; she was, in fact, very much interested by the situation, and she was touched, in spite of her distaste for them both, by the evident unhappiness of mother and daughter. She knew what it came from, and she said to herself that they deserved it; but this did not altogether fortify her against their pathos. "I can hardly keep awake myself," she added gruffly.

"I hope it may help her," said Mrs. Pasmer; "the doctor strongly urged our coming."

Mr. Pasmer isn't with you," said Mrs. Brinkley, feeling that it was decent to say something about him.

"No; he was detained." Mrs. Pasmer did not explain the cause of his detention, and the two ladies slowly waved their fans a moment in silence. "Are there many Boston People in the house?" Mrs. Pasmer asked.

"It's full of them," cried Mrs. Brinkley.

"I had scarcely noticed," sighed Mrs. Pasmer; and Mrs. Brinkley knew that this was not true. "Alice takes up all my thoughts," she added; and this might be true enough. She leaned a little forward and asked, in a low, entreating voice over her fan, "Mrs. Brinkley, have you seen Mr. Maverig lately?"

Mrs. Brinkley considered this a little too bold, a little too brazen. Had they actually come South in pursuit of him? It was shameless, and she let Mrs. Pasmer know something of her feeling in the shortness with which she answered, "I saw him in Washington the other day--for a moment." She shortened the time she had spent in Dan's company so as to cut Mrs. Pasmer off from as much comfort as possible, and she stared at her in open astonishment.

Mrs. Pasmer dropped her eyes and fingered the edge of her fan with a submissiveness that seemed to Mrs. Brinkley the perfection of duplicity; she wanted to shake her. "I knew," sighed Mrs. Pasmer, "that you had always been such a friend of his."

It is the last straw which breaks the camel's back; Mrs. Brinkley felt her moral vertebrae give way; she almost heard them crack; but if there was really a detonation, she drowned the noise with a harsh laugh. "Oh, he had other friends in Washington. I met him everywhere with Miss Anderson." This statement conflicted with the theory of her single instant with Dan, but she felt that in such a cause, in the cause of giving pain to a woman like Mrs. Pasmer, the deflection from exact truth was justifiable. She hurried on: "I rather expected he might run down here, but now that they're gone, I don't suppose he'll come. You remember Miss Anderson's aunt, Miss Van Hook?"

"Oh yes," said Mrs. Pasmer.

"She was here with her."

"Miss Van Hook was such a New York type--of a certain kind," said Mrs. Pasmer. She rose, with a smile at once so conventional, so heroic, and so pitiful that Mrs. Brinkley felt the remorse of a generous victor.

She went to her room, hardening her heart, and she burst in with a flood of voluble exasperation that threatened all the neighbouring rooms with overflow.

"Well, she cried, "they have shown their hands completely. They have come here to hound Dan Maverick down, and get him into their toils again. Why, the woman actually said as much! But I fancy I have given her a fit of insomnia that will enable her to share her daughter's vigils. Really such impudence I never heard of!"

"Do you want everybody in the corridor to hear of it?" asked Brinkley, from behind a newspaper.

"I know one thing," continued Mrs. Brinkley, dropping her voice a couple of octaves. They will never get him here if I can help it. He won't come, anyway, now Miss Anderson is gone; but I'll make assurance doubly sure by writing him not to come; I'll tell him they've gone; and then we are going too."

"You had better remember the man in Chicago," said her husband.

"Well, this is my business--or I'll make it my business!" cried Mrs. Brinkley. She went on talking rapidly, rising with great excitement in her voice at times, and then remembering to speak lower; and her husband apparently read on through most of her talk, though now and then he made some comment that seemed of almost inspired aptness.

"The way they both made up to me was disgusting. But I know the girl is just a tool in her mother's hands. Her mother seemed actually passive in comparison. For skilful wheedling I could fall down and worship that woman; I really admire her. As long as the girl was with us she kept herself in the background and put the girl at me. It was simply a masterpiece."

"How do you know she put her at you?" asked Brinkley.

"How? By the way she seemed not to do it! And because from what I know of that stupid Pasmer pride it would be perfectly impossible for any one who was a Pasmer to take her deprecatory manner toward me of herself. You ought to have seen it! It was simply perfect."

"Perhaps," said Brinkley, with a remote dreaminess, "she was truly sorry."

"Truly stuff! No, indeed; she hates me as much as ever--more!"

"Well, then, may be she's doing it because she hates you--doing it for her soul's good--sort of penance, sort of atonement to Mavington."

Mrs. Brinkley turned round from her dressing-table to see what her husband meant, but the newspaper hid him. We all know that our own natures are mixed and contradictory, but we each attribute to others a logical consistency which we never find in any one out of the novels. Alice Pasmer was cold and reticent, and Mrs. Brinkley, who had lived half a century in a world full of paradoxes, could not imagine her subject to gusts of passionate frankness; she knew the girl to be proud and distant, and she could not conceive of an abject humility and longing for sympathy in her heart. If Alice felt, when she saw Mrs. Brinkley, that she had a providential opportunity to punish herself for her injustice to Dan, the fact could not be established upon Mrs. Brinkley's theory of her. If the ascetic impulse is the most purely selfish impulse in human nature, Mrs. Brinkley might not have been mistaken in suspecting her of an ignoble motive, though it might have had for the girl the last sublimity of self-sacrifice. The woman who disliked her and pitied her knew that she had no arts, and rather than adopt so simple a theory of her behaviour as her husband had advanced she held all the more strenuously to her own theory that Alice was practising her mother's arts. This was inevitable, partly from the sense of Mrs. Pasmer's artfulness which everybody had, and partly from the allegiance which we pay--and women especially like to pay--to the tradition of the playwrights and the novelists, that social results of all kinds are the work of deep, and more or less darkling, design on the part of other women--such other women as Mrs. Pasmer.

Mrs. Brinkley continued to talk, but the god spoke no more from behind the

newspaper; and afterward Mrs. Brinkley lay a long time awake; hardening her heart. But she was haunted to the verge of her dreams by that girl's sick look, by her languid walk, and by the effect which she had seen her own words take upon Mrs. Pasmer--an effect so admirably disowned, so perfectly obvious. Before she could get to sleep she was obliged to make a compromise with her heart, in pursuance of which, when she found Mrs. Pasmer at breakfast alone in the morning, she went up to her, and said, holding her hand a moment, "I hope your daughter slept well last night."

"No," said Mrs. Pasmer, slipping her hand away, "I can't say that she did." There was probably no resentment expressed in the way she withdrew her hand, but the other thought there was.

"I wish I could do something for her," she cried.

"Oh, thank you," said Mrs. Pasmer. "It's very good of you." And Mrs. Brinkley fancied she smiled rather bitterly.

Mrs. Brinkley went out upon the seaward verandah of the hotel with this bitterness of Mrs. Pasmer's smile in her thoughts; and it disposed her to feel more keenly the quality of Miss Pasmer's smile. She found the girl standing there at a remote point of that long stretch of planking, and looking out over the water; she held with both hands across her breast the soft chuddah shawl which the wind caught and fluttered away from her waist. She was alone, said as Mrs. Brinkley's compunctions goaded her nearer, she fancied that she saw Alice master a primary dislike in her face, and put on a look of pathetic propitiation. She did not come forward to meet Mrs. Brinkley, who liked better her waiting to be approached; but she smiled gratefully when Mrs. Brinkley put out her hand, and she took it with a very cold one.

"You must find it chilly here," said the elder woman.

"I had better be out in the air all I could, the doctor said," answered Alice.

"Well, then, come with me round the corner; there's a sort of recess there, and you won't be blown to pierces," said Mrs. Brinkley, with authority. They sat down together in the recess, and she added: "I used to sit here with Miss Van Hook; she could hear better in the noise the waves made. I hope it isn't too much for you."

"Oh no," said Alice. "Mamma said you told her they were here." Mrs. Brinkley reassured herself from this; Miss Van Hook's name had rather slipped out; but of course Mrs. Pasmer had not repeated what she had said about Dan in this connection. "I wish I could have seen Julia," Alice went on. "It would have been quite like Campobello again."

"Oh, quite," said Mrs. Brinkley, with a short breath, and not knowing whither this tended. Alice did not leave her in doubt.

"I should like to have seen her, and begged her for the way I treated her the last part of the time there. I feel as if I could make my whole life

a reparation," she added passionately.

Mrs. Brinkley believed that this was the mere frenzy of sentimentality, the exaltation of a selfish asceticism; but at the break in the girl's voice and the aversion of her face she could not help a thrill of motherly tenderness for her. She wanted to tell her she was an unconscious humbug, bent now as always on her own advantage, and really indifferent to others she also wanted to comfort her, and tell her that she exaggerated, and was not to blame. She did neither, but when Alice turned her face back she seemed encouraged by Mrs. Brinkley's look to go on: "I didn't appreciate her then; she was very generous and high-minded--too high-minded for me to understand, even. But we don't seem to know how good others are till we wrong them."

"Yes, that is very true," said Mrs. Brinkley. She knew that Alice was obviously referring to the breach between herself and Miss Anderson following the night of the Trevor theatricals, and the dislike for her that she had shown with a frankness some of the ladies had thought brutal. Mrs. Brinkley also believed that her words had a tacit meaning, and she would have liked to have the hardness to say she had seen an unnamed victim of Alice doing his best to console the other she had specified. But she merely said drily, "Yes, perhaps that's the reason why we're allowed to injure people."

"It must be," said Alice simply. "Did Miss Anderson ever speak of me?"

"No; I can't remember that she ever did." Mrs. Brinkley did not feel bound to say that she and Miss Van Hook had discussed her at large, and agreed perfectly about her.

"I should like to see her; I should like to write to her."

Mrs. Brinkley felt that she ought not to suffer this intimate tendency in the talk:

"You must find a great many other acquaintances in the hotel, Miss Pasmmer."

"Some of the Frankland girls are here, and the two Bellinghams. I have hardly spoken to them yet. Do you think that where you have even been in the right, if you have been harsh, if you have been hasty, if you haven't made allowances, you ought to offer some atonement?"

"Really, I can't say," said Mrs. Brinkley, with a smile of distaste. "I'm afraid your question isn't quite in my line of thinking; it's more in Miss Cotton's way. You'd better ask her some time."

"No," said Alice sadly; "she would flatter me."

"Ah! I always supposed she was very conscientious."

"She's conscientious, but she likes me too well."

"Oh!" commented Mrs. Brinkley to herself, "then you know I don't like you, and you'll use me in one way, if you can't in another. Very well!" But she found the girl's trust touching somehow, though the sentimentality of her appeal seemed as tawdry as ever.

"I knew you would be just," added Alice wistfully.

"Oh, I don't know about atonements!" said Mrs. Brinkley, with an effect of carelessness. "It seems to me that we usually make them for our own sake."

"I have thought of that," said Alice, with a look of expectation.

"And we usually astonish other people when we offer them."

"Either they don't like it, or else they don't feel so much injured as we had supposed."

"Oh, but there's no question--"

"If Miss Anderson--"

"Miss Anderson? Oh--oh yes!"

"If Miss Anderson for example," pursued Mrs. Brinkley, "felt aggrieved with you. But really I've no right to enter into your affairs, Miss Pasmmer."

"Oh Yes, yes!--do! I asked you to," the girl implored.

"I doubt if it will help matters for her to know that you regret anything; and if she shouldn't happen to have thought that you were unjust to her, it would make her uncomfortable for nothing."

"Do you think so?" asked the girl, with a disappointment that betrayed itself in her voice and eyes.

"I never feel I myself competent to advise," said Mrs. Brinkley. "I can criticise--anybody can--and I do, pretty freely; but advice is a more serious matter. Each of us must act from herself--from what she thinks is right."

"Yes, I see. Thank you so much, Mrs. Brinkley."

"After all, we have a right to do ourselves good, even when we pretend that it's good to others, if we don't do them any harm."

"Yes, I see." Alice looked away, and then seemed about to speak again; but one of Mrs. Brinkley's acquaintance came up, and the girl rose with a frightened air and went away.

"Alice's talk with you this morning did her so much good!" said Mrs. Pasmmer, later. "She has always felt so badly about Miss Anderson!"

Mrs. Brinkley saw that Mrs. Pasmers wished to confine the meaning of their talk to Miss Anderson, and she assented, with a penetration of which she saw that Mrs. Pasmers was gratefully aware.

She grew more tolerant of both the Pasmers as the danger of greater intimacy from them, which seemed to threaten at first seemed to pass away. She had not responded to their advances, but there was no reason why she should not be civil to them; there had never been any open quarrel with them. She often found herself in talk with them, and was amused to note that she was the only Bostonian whom they did not keep aloof from.

It could not be said that she came to like either of them better. She still suspected Mrs. Pasmers of design, though she developed none beyond manoeuvring Alice out of the way of people whom she wished to avoid; and she still found the girl, as she always thought her, as egotist, whose best impulses toward others had a final aim in herself. She thought her very crude in her ideas--cruder than she had seemed at Campobello, where she had perhaps been softened by her affinity with the gentler and kindlier nature of Dan Maving. Mrs. Brinkley was never tired of saying that he had made the most fortunate escape in the world, and though Brinkley owned he was tired of hearing it, she continued to say it with a great variety of speculation. She recognised that in most girls of Alice's age many traits are in solution, waiting their precipitation into character by the chemical contact which time and chances must bring, and that it was not fair to judge her by the present ferment of hereditary tendencies; but she rejoiced all the same that it was not Dan Maving's character which was to give fixity to hers. The more she saw of the girl the more she was convinced that two such people could only make each other unhappy; from day to day, almost from hour to hour, she resolved to write to Maving and tell him not to come.

She was sure that the Pasmers wished to have the affair on again, and part of her fascination with a girl whom she neither liked nor approved was her belief that Alice's health had broken under the strain of her regrets and her despair. She did not get better from the change of air; she grew more listless and languid, and more dependent upon Mrs. Brinkley's chary sympathy. The older woman asked herself again and again what made the girl cling to her? Was she going to ask her finally to intercede with Dan? or was it really a despairing atonement to him, the most disagreeable sacrifice she could offer, as Mr. Brinkley had stupidly suggested? She believed that Alice's selfishness and morbid sentiment were equal to either.

Brinkley generally took the girl's part against his wife, and in a heavy jocose way tried to cheer her up. He did little things for her; fetched and carried chairs and cushions and rugs, and gave his attentions the air of pleasantries. One of his offices was to get the ladies' letters for them in the evening, and one night he came in beaming with a letter for each of them where they sat together in the parlour. He distributed them into their laps.

"Hello! I've made a mistake," he said, putting down his head to take back

the letter he had dropped in Miss Pasmers lap. "I've given you my wife's letter."

The girl glanced at it, gave a moaning kind of cry, and fell back in her chair, hiding her face in her hands.

Mrs. Brinkley, possessed herself of the other letter, and, though past the age when ladies wish to kill their husbands for their stupidity, she gave Brinkley a look of massacre which mystified even more than it murdered his innocence. He had to learn later from his wife's more elicited fury what the women had all known instantly.

He showed his usefulness in gathering Alice up and getting her to her mother's room."

"Oh, Mrs. Brinkley," implored Mrs. Pasmers, following her to the door, "is Mr. Maving coming here?"

"I don't know--I can't say--I haven't read the letter yet."

"Oh, do let me know when you've read it, won't you? I don't know what we shall do."

Mrs. Brinkley read the letter in her own room. "You go down," she said to her husband, with unabated ferocity; "and telegraph Dan Maving at Wormleys not to come. Say we're going away at once."

Then she sent Mrs. Pasmers a slip of paper on which she had written, "Not coming."

It has been the experience of every one to have some alien concern come into his life and torment him with more anxiety than any affair of his own. This is, perhaps, a hint from the infinite sympathy which feels for us all that none of us can hope to free himself from the troubles of others, that we are each bound to each by ties which, for the most part, we cannot perceive, but which, at the moment their stress comes, we cannot break.

Mrs. Brinkley lay awake and raged impotently against her complicity with the unhappiness of that distasteful girl and her more than distasteful mother. In her revolt against it she renounced the interest she had felt in that silly boy, and his ridiculous love business, so really unimportant to her whatever turn it took. She asked herself what it mattered to her whether those children marred their lives one way or another way. There was a lurid moment before she slept when she wished Brinkley to go down and recall her telegram; but he refused to be a fool at so much inconvenience to himself.

Mrs. Brinkley came to breakfast feeling so much more haggard than she found either of the Pasmers looking, that she was able to throw off her lingering remorse for having told Maving not to come. She had the advantage also of doubt as to her precise motive in having done so; she had either done so because she had judged it best for him not to see Miss

Pasmer again, or else she had done so to relieve the girl from the pain of an encounter which her mother evidently dreaded for her. If one motive seemed at moments outrageously meddling and presumptuous, the other was so nobly good and kind that it more than counterbalanced it in Mrs. Brinkley's mind, who knew very well in spite of her doubt that she had, acted from a mixture of both. With this conviction, it was both a comfort and a pang to find by the register of the hotel, which she furtively consulted, that Dan had not arrived by the morning boat, as she groundlessly feared and hoped he might have done.

In any case, however, and at the end of all the ends, she had that girl on her hands more than ever; and believing as she did that Dan and Alice had only to meet in order to be reconciled, she felt that the girl whom she had balked of her prey was her innocent victim. What right had she to interfere? Was he not her natural prey? If he liked being a prey, who was lawfully to forbid him? He was not perfect; he would know how to take care of himself probably; in marriage things equalised themselves. She looked at the girl's thin cheeks and lack-lustre eyes, and pitied and hated her with that strange mixture of feeling which our victims aspire in us.

She walked out on the verandah with the Pasmers after breakfast, and chatted a while about indifferent things; and Alice made an effort to ignore the event of the night before with a pathos which wrung Mrs. Brinkley's heart, and with a gay resolution which ought to have been a great pleasure to such a veteran dissembler as her mother. She said she had never found the air so delicious; she really believed it would begin to do her good now; but it was a little fresh just there, and with her eyes she invited her mother to come with her round the corner into that sheltered recess, and invited Mrs. Brinkley not to come.

It was that effect of resentment which is lighter even than a touch, the waft of the arrow's feather; but it could wound a guilty heart, and Mrs. Brinkley sat down where she was, realising with a pang that the time when she might have been everything to this unhappy girl had just passed for ever, and henceforth she could be nothing. She remained musing sadly upon the contradictions she had felt in the girl's character, the confusion of good and evil, the potentialities of misery and harm, the potentialities of bliss and good; and she felt less and less satisfied with herself. She had really presumed to interfere with Fate; perhaps she had interfered with Providence. She would have given anything to recall her act; and then with a flash she realised that it was quite possible to recall it. She could telegraph Maverick to come; and she rose, humbly and gratefully, as if from an answered prayer, to go and do so.

She was not at all a young woman, and many things had come and gone in her life that ought to have fortified her against surprise; but she wanted to scream like a little frightened girl as Dan Maverick stepped out of the parlour door toward her. The habit of not screaming, however, prevailed, and she made a tolerably successful effort to treat him with decent composure. She gave him a rigid hand. "Where in the world did you come from? Did you get my telegram?"

"No. Did you get my letter?"

"Yes."

"Well, I took a notion to come right on after I wrote, and I started on the same train with it. But they said it was no use trying to get into the Hygeia, and I stopped last night at the little hotel in Hampton. I've just walked over, and Mr. Brinkley told me you were out here somewhere. That's the whole story, I believe." He gave his nervous laugh, but it seemed to Mrs. Brinkley that it had not much joy in it.

"Hush!" she said involuntarily, receding to her chair and sinking back into it again. He looked surprised. "You know the Van Hooks are gone?"

He laughed harshly. "I should think they were dead from your manner, Mrs. Brinkley. But I didn't come to see the Van Hooks. What made you think I did?"

He gave her a look which she found so dishonest, so really insincere, that she resolved to abandon him to Providence as soon as she could. "Oh, I didn't know but there had been some little understanding at Washington."

"Perhaps on their part. They were people who seemed to take a good many things for granted, but they could hardly expect to control other people's movements."

He looked sharply at Mrs. Brinkley, as if to question how much she knew; but she had now measured him, and she said, "Oh! then the visit's to me?"

"Entirely," cried Dan. The old sweetness came into his laughing eyes again, and went to Mrs. Brinkley's heart. She wished him to be happy, somehow; she would have done anything for him; she wished she knew what to do. Ought she to tell him the Pasmers were there? Ought she to make up some excuse and get him away before he met them? She felt herself getting more and more bewildered and helpless. Those women might come round that corner any moment and then she know the first sight of Alice's face would do or undo everything with Dan. Did she wish them reconciled? Did she wish them for ever parted? She no longer knew what she wished; she only knew that she had no right to wish anything. She continued to talk on with Dan, who grew more and more at ease, and did most of the talking, while Mrs. Brinkley's whole being narrowed itself to the question. Would the Pasmers come back that way, or would they go round the further corner, and get into the hotel by another door?

The suspense seemed interminable; they must have already gone that other way. Suddenly she heard the pushing back of chairs in that recess. She could not bear it. She jumped to her feet.

"Just wait a moment, Mr. Maverick! I'll join you again. Mr. Brinkley is expecting--I must--"

.....

One morning of the following June Mrs. Brinkley sat well forward in the beautiful church where Dan and Alice were to be married. The lovely day became a still lovelier day within, enriched by the dyes of the stained windows through which it streamed; the still place was dim yet bright with it; the figures painted on the walls had a soft distinctness; a body of light seemed to irradiate from the depths of the dome like lamp-light.

There was a subdued murmur of voices among the people in the pews: they were in a sacred edifice without being exactly at church, and they might talk; now and then a muffled, nervous laugh escaped. A delicate scent of flowers from the masses in the chancel mixed with the light and the prevailing silence. There was a soft, continuous rustle of drapery as the ladies advanced up the thickly carpeted aisles on the arms of the young ushers and compressed themselves into place in the pews.

Two or three people whom she did not know were put into the pew with Mrs. Brinkley, but she kept her seat next the aisle; presently an usher brought up a lady who sat down beside her, and then for a moment or two seemed to sink and rise, as if on the springs of an intense excitement.

It was Miss Cotton, who, while this process of quiescing lasted, appeared not to know Mrs. Brinkley. When she became aware of her, all was lost again. "Mrs. Brinkley!" she cried, as well as one can cry in whisper. "Is it possible?"

"I have my doubts," Mrs. Brinkley whispered back. "But we'll suppose the case."

"Oh, it's all too good to be true! How I envy you being the means of bringing them together, Mrs. Brinkley!"

"Means?"

"Yes--they owe it all to you; you needn't try to deny it; he's told every one!"

"I was sure she hadn't," said Mrs. Brinkley, remembering how Alice had marked an increasing ignorance of any part she might have had in the affair from the first moment of her reconciliation with Dan; she had the effect of feeling that she had sacrificed enough to Mrs. Brinkley; and Mrs. Brinkley had been restored to all the original strength of her conviction that she was a solemn little unconscious egotist, and Dan was as unselfish and good as he was unequal to her exactions.

"Oh no?" said Miss Cotton. "She couldn't!" implying that Alice would be too delicate to speak of it.

"Do you see any of his family here?" asked Mrs. Brinkley.

"Yes; over there--up front." Miss Cotton motioned, with her eyes toward a pew in which Mrs. Brinkley distinguished an elderly gentleman's down-misted bald head and the back of a young lady's bonnet. "His father and sister; the other's a bridemaid; mother bed-ridden and couldn't come."

"They might have brought her in an-arm-chair," suggested Mrs. Brinkley ironically, "on such an occasion. But perhaps they don't take much interest in such a patched-up affair."

"Oh yes, they do!" exclaimed Miss Cotton. "They idolise Alice."

"And Mrs. Pasmer and Mister, too?"

"I don't suppose that so much matters."

"They know how to acquiesce, I've no doubt."

"Oh yes! You've heard? The young people are going abroad first with her family for a year, and then they come back to live with his--where the Works are."

"Poor fellow!" said Mrs. Brinkley.

"Why, Mrs. Brinkley, do you still feel that way?" asked Miss Cotton, with a certain distress. It seems to me that if ever two young people had the promise of happiness, they have. Just see what their love has done for them already!"

"And you still think that in these cases love can do everything?"

Miss Cotton was about to reply, when she observed that the people about her had stopped talking. The bridegroom, with his best man, in whom his few acquaintances there recognised Boardman with some surprise, came over the chancel from one side.

Miss Cotton bent close to Mrs. Brinkley and whispered rapidly: "Alice found out Mr. Mavinger wished it, and insisted on his having him. It was a great concession, but she's perfectly magnanimous. Poor fellow! how he does look!"

Alice, on her father's arm, with her bridesmaids, of whom the first was Minnie Mavinger, mounted the chancel steps, where Mr. Pasmer remained standing till he advanced to give away the bride. He behaved with great dignity, but seemed deeply affected; the ladies in the front pews said they could see his face twitch; but he never looked handsomer.

The five clergymen came from the back of the chancel in their white surplices. The ceremony proceeded to the end.

The young couple drove at once to the station, where they were to take the train for New York, and wait there a day or two for Mrs. and Mr. Pasmer before they all sailed.

As they drove along, Alice held Dan's wrist in the cold clutch of her trembling little ungloved hand, on which her wedding ring shone. "O dearest! let us be good!" she said. "I will try my best. I will try not to be exacting and unreasonable, and I know I can. I won't even make any

conditions, if you will always be frank and open with me, and tell me everything."

He leaned over and kissed her behind the drawn curtains. "I will, Alice! I will indeed! I won't keep anything from you after this."

He resolved to tell her all about Julia Anderson at the right moment, when Alice was in the mood, and as soon as he thoroughly understood what he had really meant himself.

If he had been different she would not have asked him to be frank and open; if she had been different, he might have been frank and open. This was the beginning of their married life.

End of this Project Gutenberg Etext of April Hopes
by William Dean Howells

PLAYS

THE SLEEPING-CAR -- A FARCE

This etext was prepared by David Price, email ccx074@coventry.ac.uk, from the 1883 James R. Osgood and Company edition.

I.

SCENE: One side of a sleeping-car on the Boston and Albany Road. The curtains are drawn before most of the berths; from the hooks and rods hang hats, bonnets, bags, bandboxes, umbrellas, and other travelling gear; on the floor are boots of both sexes, set out for THE PORTER to black. THE PORTER is making up the beds in the upper and lower berths adjoining the seats on which a young mother, slender and pretty, with a baby asleep on the seat beside her, and a stout old lady, sit confronting each other--MRS. AGNES ROBERTS and her aunt MARY.

MRS. ROBERTS. Do you always take down your back hair, aunty?

AUNT MARY. No, never, child; at least not since I had such a fright

about it once, coming on from New York. It's all well enough to take down your back hair if it IS yours; but if it isn't, your head's the best place for it. Now, as I buy mine of Madame Pierrot -

MRS. ROBERTS. Don't you WISH she wouldn't advertise it as HUMAN hair? It sounds so pokerish--like human flesh, you know.

AUNT MARY. Why, she couldn't call it INhuman hair, my dear.

MRS. ROBERTS (thoughtfully). No--just HAIR.

AUNT MARY. Then people might think it was for mattresses. But, as I was saying, I took it off that night, and tucked it safely away, as I supposed, in my pocket, and I slept sweetly till about midnight, when I happened to open my eyes, and saw something long and black crawl off my bed and slip under the berth. SUCH a shriek as I gave, my dear! "A snake! a snake! oh, a snake!" And everybody began talking at once, and some of the gentlemen swearing, and the porter came running with the poker to kill it; and all the while it was that ridiculous switch of mine, that had worked out of my pocket. And glad enough I was to grab it up before anybody saw it, and say I must have been dreaming.

MRS. ROBERTS. Why, aunty, how funny! How COULD you suppose a serpent could get on board a sleeping-car, of all places in the world!

AUNT MARY. That was the perfect absurdity of it.

THE PORTER. Berths ready now, ladies.

MRS. ROBERTS (to THE PORTER, who walks away to the end of the car, and sits down near the door). Oh, thank you. Aunty, do you feel nervous the least bit?

AUNT MARY. Nervous? No. Why?

MRS. ROBERTS. Well, I don't know. I suppose I've been worked up a little about meeting Willis, and wondering how he'll look, and all. We can't KNOW each other, of course. It doesn't stand to reason that if he's been out there for twelve years, ever since I was a child, though we've corresponded regularly--at least _I_ have--that he could recognize me; not at the first glance, you know. He'll have a full beard; and then I've got married, and here's the baby. Oh, NO! he'll never guess who it is in the world. Photographs really amount to nothing in such a case. I wish we were at home, and it was all over. I wish he had written some particulars, instead of telegraphing from Ogden, "Be with you on the 7 A.M., Wednesday."

AUNT MARY. Californians always telegraph, my dear; they never think of writing. It isn't expensive enough, and it doesn't make your blood run cold enough to get a letter, and so they send you one of those miserable yellow despatches whenever they can--those printed in

a long string, if possible, so that you'll be SURE to die before you get to the end of it. I suppose your brother has fallen into all those ways, and says "reckon" and "ornary" and "which the same," just like one of Mr. Bret Harte's characters.

MRS. ROBERTS. But it isn't exactly our not knowing each other, aunty, that's worrying me; that's something that could be got over in time. What is simply driving me distracted is Willis and Edward meeting there when I'm away from home. Oh, how COULD I be away! and why COULDN'T Willis have given us fair warning? I would have hurried from the ends of the earth to meet him. I don't believe poor Edward ever saw a Californian; and he's so quiet and preoccupied, I'm sure he'd never get on with Willis. And if Willis is the least loud, he wouldn't like Edward. Not that I suppose he IS loud; but I don't believe he knows anything about literary men. But you can see, aunty, can't you, how very anxious I must be? Don't you see that I ought to have been there when Willis and Edward met, so as to--to--well, to BREAK them to each other, don't you know?

AUNT MARY. Oh, you needn't be troubled about that, Agnes. I dare say they've got on perfectly well together. Very likely they're sitting down to the unwholesomest hot supper this instant that the ingenuity of man could invent.

MRS. ROBERTS. Oh, do you THINK they are, aunty? Oh, if I could ONLY believe they were sitting down to a hot supper together now, I should be SO happy! They'd be sure to get on if they were. There's nothing like eating to make men friendly with each other. Don't you know, at receptions, how they never have anything to say to each other till the escalloped oysters and the chicken salad appear; and then how sweet they are as soon as they've helped the ladies to ice? Oh, thank you, THANK you, aunty, for thinking of the hot supper. It's such a relief to my mind! You can understand, can't you, aunty dear, how anxious I must have been to have my only brother and my only--my husband--get on nicely together? My life would be a wreck, simply a wreck, if they didn't. And Willis and I not having seen each other since I was a child makes it all the worse. I do HOPE they're sitting down to a hot supper.

AN ANGRY VOICE from the next berth but one. I wish people in sleeping-cars -

A VOICE from the berth beyond that. You're mistaken in your premises, sir. This is a waking-car. Ladies, go on, and oblige an eager listener.

[Sensation, and smothered laughter from the other berths.]

MRS. ROBERTS (after a space of terrified silence, in a loud whisper to her AUNT.) What horrid things! But now we really must go to bed. It WAS too bad to keep talking. I'd no idea my voice was getting so loud. Which berth will you have, aunty? I'd better take the upper one, because -

AUNT MARY (whispering). No, no; I must take that, so that you can be with the baby below.

MRS. ROBERTS. Oh, how good you are, Aunt Mary! It's too bad; it is really. I can't let you.

AUNT MARY. Well, then, you must; that's all. You know how that child tosses and kicks about in the night. You never can tell where his head's going to be in the morning, but you'll probably find it at the foot of the bed. I couldn't sleep an instant, my dear, if I thought that boy was in the upper berth; for I'd be sure of his tumbling out over you. Here, let me lay him down. [She lays the baby in the lower berth.] There! Now get in, Agnes--do, and leave me to my struggle with the attraction of gravitation.

MRS. ROBERTS. Oh, POOR aunty, how will you ever manage it? I MUST help you up.

AUNT MARY. No, my dear; don't be foolish. But you may go and call the porter, if you like. I dare say he's used to it.

[MRS. ROBERTS goes and speak timidly to THE PORTER, who fails at first to understand, then smiles broadly, accepts a quarter with a duck of his head, and comes forward to AUNT MARY'S side.]

MRS. ROBERTS. Had he better give you his hand to rest your foot in, while you spring up as if you were mounting horseback?

AUNT MARY (with disdain). SPRING! My dear, I haven't sprung for a quarter of a century. I shall require every fibre in the man's body. His hand, indeed! You get in first, Agnes.

MRS. ROBERTS. I will, aunty dear; but -

AUNT MARY (sternly). Agnes, do as I say. [MRS. ROBERTS crouches down on the lower berth.] I don't choose that any member of my family shall witness my contortions. Don't you look.

MRS. ROBERTS. No, no, aunty.

AUNT MARY. Now, porter, are you strong?

PORTER. I used to be porter at a Saratoga hotel, and carried up de ladies' trunks dere.

AUNT MARY. Then you'll do, I think. Now, then, your knee; now your back. There! And very handsomely done. Thanks.

MRS. ROBERTS. Are you really in, Aunt Mary?

AUNT MARY (dryly). Yes. Good-night.

MRS. ROBERTS. Good-night, aunty. [After a pause of some minutes.]
Aunty!

AUNT MARY. Well, what?

MRS. ROBERTS. Do you think it's perfectly safe?

[She rises in her berth, and looks up over the edge of the upper.]

AUNT MARY. I suppose so. It's a well-managed road. They've got the air-brake, I've heard, and the Miller platform, and all those horrid things. What makes you introduce such unpleasant subjects?

MRS. ROBERTS. Oh, I don't mean accidents. But, you know, when you turn, it does creak so awfully. I shouldn't mind myself; but the baby -

AUNT MARY. Why, child, do you think I'm going to break through? I couldn't. I'm one of the LIGHTEST sleepers in the world.

MRS. ROBERTS. Yes, I know you're a light sleeper; but--but it doesn't seem quite the same thing, somehow.

AUNT MARY. But it is; it's quite the same thing, and you can be perfectly easy in your mind, my dear. I should be quite as loth to break through as you would to have me. Good-night.

MRS. ROBERTS. Yes; good-night, Aunty!

AUNT MARY. Well?

MRS. ROBERTS. You ought to just see him, how he's lying. He's a perfect log. COULDN'T you just bend over, and peep down at him a moment?

AUNT MARY. Bend over! It would be the death of me. Good-night.

MRS. ROBERTS. Good-night. Did you put the glass into my bag or yours? I feel so very thirsty, and I want to go and get some water. I'm sure I don't know why I should be thirsty. Are you, Aunt Mary? Ah! here it is. Don't disturb yourself, aunty; I've found it. It was in my bag, just where I'd put it myself. But all this trouble about Willis has made me so fidgety that I don't know where anything is. And now I don't know how to manage about the baby while I go after the water. He's sleeping soundly enough now; but if he should happen to get into one of his rolling moods, he might tumble out on to the floor. Never mind, aunty, I've thought of something. I'll just barricade him with these bags and shawls. Now, old fellow, roll as much as you like. If you should happen to hear him stir, aunty, won't you--aunty! Oh, dear! she's asleep already; and what shall I do? [While MRS. ROBERTS continues talking, various notes of protest, profane and otherwise, make themselves heard from different berths.] I know. I'll make a bold dash for the water, and be back in an

instant, baby. Now, don't you move, you little rogue. [She runs to the water-tank at the end of the car, and then back to her berth.]
Now, baby, here's mamma again. Are you all right, mamma's own?

[A shaggy head and bearded face are thrust from the curtains of the next berth.]

THE STRANGER. Look here, ma'am. I don't want to be disagreeable about this thing, and I hope you won't take any offence; but the fact is, I'm half dead for want of sleep, and if you'll only keep quiet now a little while, I'll promise not to speak above my breath if ever I find you on a sleeping-car after you've come straight through from San Francisco, day and night, and not been able to get more than about a quarter of your usual allowance of rest--I will indeed.

MRS. ROBERTS. I'm very sorry that I've disturbed you, and I'll try to be more quiet. I didn't suppose I was speaking so loud; but the cars keep up such a rattling that you never can tell how loud you ARE speaking. Did I understand you to say that you were from California?

THE CALIFORNIAN. Yes, ma'am.

MRS. ROBERTS. San Francisco?

THE CALIFORNIAN. Yes, ma'am.

MRS. ROBERTS. Thanks. It's a terribly long journey, isn't it? I know quite how to feel for you. I've a brother myself coming on. In fact we expected him before this. [She scans his face as sharply as the lamp-light will allow, and continues, after a brief hesitation.]
It's always such a silly question to ask a person, and I suppose San Francisco is a large place, with a great many people always coming and going, so that it would be only one chance in a thousand if you did.

THE CALIFORNIAN (patiently). Did what, ma'am?

MRS. ROBERTS. Oh, I was just wondering if it was possible--but of course it isn't, and it's very flat to ask--that you'd ever happened to meet my brother there. His name is Willis Campbell.

THE CALIFORNIAN (with more interest). Campbell? Campbell? Yes, I know a man of that name. But I disremember his first name. Little low fellow--pretty chunky?

MRS. ROBERTS. I don't know. Do you mean short and stout?

THE CALIFORNIAN. Yes, ma'am.

MRS. ROBERTS. I'm sure I can't tell. It's a great many years since he went out there, and I've never seen him in all that time. I thought if you DID happen to know him--He's a lawyer.

THE CALIFORNIAN. It's quite likely I know him; and in the morning, ma'am -

MRS. ROBERTS. Oh, excuse me. I'm very sorry to have kept you so long awake with my silly questions.

THE MAN IN THE UPPER BERTH. Don't apologize, madam. I'm not a Californian myself, but I'm an orphan, and away from home, and I thank you, on behalf of all our fellow-passengers, for the mental refreshment that your conversation has afforded us. _I_ could lie here and listen to it all night; but there are invalids in some of these berths, and perhaps on their account it will be as well to defer everything till the morning, as our friend suggests. Allow me to wish you pleasant dreams, madam.

[THE CALIFORNIAN, while MRS. ROBERTS shrinks back under the curtain of her berth in dismay, and stammers some inaudible excuse, slowly emerges full length from his berth.]

THE CALIFORNIAN. Don't you mind me, ma'am; I've got everything but my boots and coat on. Now, then [standing beside the berth, and looking in upon the man in the upper tier], you, do you know that this is a lady you're talking to?

THE UPPER BERTH. By your voice and your shaggy personal appearance I shouldn't have taken you for a lady--no, sir. But the light is very imperfect; you may be a bearded lady.

THE CALIFORNIAN. You never mind about my looks. The question is, Do you want your head rapped up against the side of this car?

THE UPPER BERTH. With all the frankness of your own Pacific slope, no.

MRS. ROBERTS (hastily reappearing). Oh, no, no, don't hurt him. He's not to blame. I was wrong to keep on talking. Oh, please don't hurt him!

THE CALIFORNIAN (to THE UPPER BERTH). You hear? Well, now, don't you speak another word to that lady tonight. Just go on, ma'am, and free your mind on any little matter you like. I don't want any sleep. How long has your brother been in California?

MRS. ROBERTS. Oh, don't let's talk about it now; I don't want to talk about it. I thought--I thought--Good-night. Oh, dear! I didn't suppose I was making so much trouble. I didn't mean to disturb anybody. I -

[MRS. ROBERTS gives way to the excess of her confusion and mortification in a little sob, and then hides her grief behind the curtains of her berth. THE CALIFORNIAN slowly emerges again from his couch, and stands beside it, looking in upon the man in the berth above.]

THE CALIFORNIAN. For half a cent I WOULD rap your head up against that wall. Making the lady cry, and getting me so mad I can't sleep! Now see here, you just apologize. You beg that lady's pardon, or I'll have you out of there before you know yourself. [Cries of "Good!" "That's right!" and "Make him show himself!" hail MRS. ROBERTS'S champion, and heads, more or less dishevelled, are thrust from every berth. MRS. ROBERTS remains invisible and silent, and the loud and somewhat complicated respiration of her AUNT makes itself heard in the general hush of expectancy. A remark to the effect that "The old lady seems to enjoy her rest" achieves a facile applause. THE CALIFORNIAN again addresses the culprit.] Come, now, what do you say? I'll give you just one-half a minute.

MRS. ROBERTS (from her shelter). Oh, please, PLEASE don't make him say anything. It was very trying in me to keep him awake, and I know he didn't mean any offence. Oh, DO let him be!

THE CALIFORNIAN. You hear that? You stay quiet the rest of the time; and if that lady chuses to keep us all awake the whole night, don't YOU say a word, or I'll settle with you in the morning.

[Loud and continued applause, amidst which THE CALIFORNIAN turns from the man in the berth before him, and restores order by marching along the aisle of the car in his stocking feet. The heads vanish behind the curtains. As the laughter subsides, he returns to his berth, and after a stare up and down the tranquillized car, he is about to retire.]

A VOICE. Oh, don't just bow. Speak!

[A fresh burst of laughter greets this sally. THE CALIFORNIAN erects himself again with an air of baited wrath, and then suddenly breaks into a helpless laugh.]

THE CALIFORNIAN. Gentlemen, you're too many for ME.

[He gets into his berth, and after cries of "Good for California!" "You're all right, William Nye!" and "You're several ahead yet!" the occupants of the different berths gradually relapse into silence, and at last, as the car lunges onward through the darkness, nothing is heard but the rhythmical clank of the machinery, with now and then a burst of audible slumber from MRS. ROBERTS'S aunt MARY.]

II.

At Worcester, where the train has made the usual stop, THE PORTER, with his lantern on his arm, enters the car, preceding a gentleman somewhat anxiously smiling; his nervous speech contrasts painfully with the business-like impassiveness of THE PORTER, who refuses, with an air of incredulity, to enter into the confidences which the

gentleman seems reluctant to bestow.

MR. EDWARD ROBERTS. This is the Governor Marcy, isn't it?

THE PORTER. Yes, sah.

MR. ROBERTS. Came on from Albany, and not from New York?

THE PORTER. Yes, sah, it did.

MR. ROBERTS. Ah! it must be all right. I -

THE PORTER. Was your wife expecting you to come on board here?

MR. ROBERTS. Well, no, not exactly. She was expecting me to meet her at Boston. But I--[struggling to give the situation dignity, but failing, and throwing himself, with self-convicted silliness, upon THE PORTER'S mercy.] The fact is, I thought I would surprise her by joining her here.

THE PORTER (refusing to have any mercy). Oh! How did you expect to find her?

MR. ROBERTS. Well--well--I don't know. I didn't consider. [He looks down the aisle in despair at the close-drawn curtains of the berths, and up at the dangling hats and bags and bonnets, and down at the chaos of boots of both sexes on the floor.] I don't know HOW I expected to find her.

[MR. ROBERTS'S countenance falls, and he visibly sinks so low in his own esteem and an imaginary public opinion that THE PORTER begins to have a little compassion.]

THE PORTER. Dey's so many ladies on board _I_ couldn't find her.

MR. ROBERTS. Oh, no, no, of course not. I didn't expect that.

THE PORTER. Don't like to go routing 'em all up, you know. I wouldn't be allowed to.

MR. ROBERTS. I don't ask it; that would be preposterous.

THE PORTER. What sort of looking lady was she?

MR. ROBERTS. Well, I don't know, really. Not very tall, rather slight, blue eyes. I--I don't know what you'd call her nose. And--stop! Oh yes, she had a child with her, a little boy. Yes!

THE PORTER (thoughtfully looking down the aisle). Dey was three ladies had children. I didn't notice whether dey was boys or girls, or WHAT dey was. Didn't have anybody with her?

MR. ROBERTS. No, no. Only the child.

THE PORTER. Well, I don't know what you are going to do, sah. It won't be a great while now till morning, you know. Here comes the conductor. Maybe he'll know what to do.

[MR. ROBERTS makes some futile, inarticulate attempts to prevent The PORTER from laying the case before THE CONDUCTOR, and then stands guiltily smiling, overwhelmed with the hopeless absurdity of his position.]

THE CONDUCTOR (entering the car, and stopping before THE PORTER, and looking at MR. ROBERTS). Gentleman want a berth?

THE PORTER (grinning). Well, no, sah. He's lookin' for his wife.

THE CONDUCTOR (with suspicion). Is she aboard this car?

MR. ROBERTS (striving to propitiate THE CONDUCTOR by a dastardly amiability). Oh, yes, yes. There's no mistake about the car--the Governor Marcy. She telegraphed the name just before you left Albany, so that I could find her at Boston in the morning. Ah!

THE CONDUCTOR. At Boston. [Sternly.] Then what are you trying to find her at Worcester in the middle of the night for?

MR. ROBERTS. Why--I--that is -

THE PORTER (taking compassion on MR. ROBERTS'S inability to continue). Says he wanted to surprise her.

MR. ROBERTS. Ha--yes, exactly. A little caprice, you know.

THE CONDUCTOR. Well, that may all be so. [MR. ROBERTS continues to smile in agonized helplessness against THE CONDUCTOR'S injurious tone, which becomes more and more offensively patronizing.] But _I_ can't do anything for you. Here are all these people asleep in their berths, and I can't go round waking them up because you want to surprise your wife.

MR. ROBERTS. No, no; of course not. I never thought -

THE CONDUCTOR. My advice to YOU is to have a berth made up, and go to bed till we get to Boston, and surprise your wife by telling her what you tried to do.

MR. ROBERTS (unable to resent the patronage of this suggestion). Well, I don't know but I will.

THE CONDUCTOR (going out). The porter will make up the berth for you.

MR. ROBERTS (to THE PORTER, who is about to pull down the upper berth over a vacant seat). Ah! Er--I--I don't think I'll trouble you to

make it up; it's so near morning now. Just bring me a pillow, and I'll try to get a nap without lying down.

[He takes the vacant seat.]

THE PORTER. All right, sah.

[He goes to the end of the car and returns with a pillow.]

MR. ROBERTS. Ah--porter!

THE PORTER. Yes, sah.

MR. ROBERTS. Of course you didn't notice; but you don't think you DID notice who was in that berth yonder?

[He indicates a certain berth.]

THE PORTER. Dat's a gen'leman in dat berth, I think, sah.

MR. ROBERTS (astutely). There's a bonnet hanging from the hook at the top. I'm not sure, but it looks like my wife's bonnet.

THE PORTER (evidently shaken by this reasoning, but recovering his firmness). Yes, sah. But you can't depend upon de ladies to hang deir bonnets on de right hook. Jes' likely as not dat lady's took de hook at de foot of her berth instead o' de head. Sometimes dey takes both.

MR. ROBERTS. Ah! [After a pause.] Porter!

THE PORTER. Yes, sah.

MR. ROBERTS. You wouldn't feel justified in looking?

THE PORTER. I couldn't, sah; I couldn't, indeed.

MR. ROBERTS (reaching his left hand toward THE PORTER'S, and pressing a half dollar into his instantly responsive palm). But there's nothing to prevent MY looking if I feel perfectly sure of the bonnet?

THE PORTER. N-no, sah.

MR. ROBERTS. All right.

[THE PORTER retires to the end of the car, and resumes the work of polishing the passengers' boots. After an interval of quiet, MR. ROBERTS rises, and, looking about him with what he feels to be melodramatic stealth, approaches the suspected berth. He unloops the curtain with a trembling hand, and peers ineffectually in; he advances his head further and further into the darkened recess, and then suddenly dodges back again, with THE CALIFORNIAN hanging to his neckcloth with one hand.]

THE CALIFORNIAN (savagely). What do you want?

MR. ROBERTS (struggling and breathless). I--I--I want my wife.

THE CALIFORNIAN. Want your wife! Have I got your wife?

MR. ROBERTS. No--ah--that is--ah, excuse me--I thought you WERE my wife.

THE CALIFORNIAN (getting out of the berth, but at the same time keeping hold of MR. ROBERTS). Thought I was your WIFE! Do I look like your wife? You can't play that on me, old man. Porter! conductor!

MR. ROBERTS (agonized). Oh, I beseech you, my dear sir, don't--don't! I can explain it--I can indeed. I know it has an ugly look; but if you will allow me two words--only two words -

MRS. ROBERTS (suddenly parting the curtain of her berth, and springing out into the aisle, with her hair wildly dishevelled). Edward!

MR. ROBERTS. Oh, Agnes, explain to this gentleman! [Imploringly.] Don't you know me?

A VOICE. Make him show you the strawberry mark on his left arm.

MRS. ROBERTS. Edward! Edward! [THE CALIFORNIAN mechanically looses his grip, and they fly into each other's embrace.] Where did you come from?

A VOICE. Centre door, left hand, one back.

THE CONDUCTOR (returning with his lantern). Hallo! What's the matter here?

A VOICE. Train robbers! Throw up your hands! Tell the express-messenger to bring his safe.

[The passengers emerge from their berths in various deshabille and bewilderment.]

THE CONDUCTOR (to MR. ROBERTS). Have you been making all this row, waking up my passengers?

THE CALIFORNIAN. No, sir, he hasn't. I've been making this row. This gentleman was peaceably looking for his wife, and I misunderstood him. You want to say anything to me?

THE CONDUCTOR (silently taking THE CALIFORNIAN'S measure with his eye, as he stands six feet in his stockings). If I did, I'd get the biggest brakeman I could find to do it for me. I'VE got nothing to

say except that I think you'd better all go back to bed again.

[He goes out, and the passengers disappear one by one, leaving the ROBERTSES and THE CALIFORNIAN alone.]

THE CALIFORNIAN (to MR. ROBERTS). Stranger, I'm sorry I got you into this scrape.

MR. ROBERTS. Oh, don't speak of it, my dear sir. I'm sure we owe you all sorts of apologies, which I shall be most happy to offer you at my house in Boston, with every needful explanation. [He takes out his card, and gives it to THE CALIFORNIAN, who looks at it, and then looks at MR. ROBERTS curiously.] There's my address, and I'm sure we shall both be glad to have you call.

MRS. ROBERTS. Oh, yes indeed. [THE CALIFORNIAN parts the curtains of his berth to re-enter it.] Good-night, sir, and I assure you WE shall do nothing more to disturb you--shall we, Edward?

MR. ROBERTS. No. And now, dear, I think you'd better go back to your berth.

MRS. ROBERTS. I couldn't sleep, and I shall not go back. Is this your place? I will just rest my head on your shoulder; and we must both be perfectly quiet. You've no idea what a nuisance I have been making of myself. The whole car was perfectly furious at me one time, I kept talking so loud. I don't know how I came to do it, but I suppose it was thinking about you and Willis meeting without knowing each other made me nervous, and I couldn't be still. I woke everybody up with my talking, and some of them were quite outrageous in their remarks; but I didn't blame them the least bit, for I should have been just as bad. That California gentleman was perfectly splendid, though. I can tell you HE made them stop. We struck up quite a friendship. I told him I had a brother coming on from California, and he's going to try to think whether he knows Willis. [Groans and inarticulate protests make themselves heard from different berths.] I declare, I've got to talking again! There, now, I SHALL stop, and they won't hear another squeak from me the rest of the night. [She lifts her head from her husband's shoulder.] I wonder if baby will roll out. He DOES kick so! And I just sprang up and left him when I heard your voice, without putting anything to keep him in. I MUST go and have a look at him, or I never can settle down. No, no, don't you go, Edward; you'll be prying into all the wrong berths in the car, you poor thing! You stay here, and I'll be back in half a second. I wonder which is my berth. Ah! that's it; I know the one now. [She makes a sudden dash at a berth, and pulling open the curtains is confronted by the bearded visage of THE CALIFORNIAN.] Ah! Ow! ow! Edward! Ah! I--I beg your pardon, sir; excuse me; I didn't know it was you. I came for my baby.

THE CALIFORNIAN (solemnly). I haven't got any baby, ma'am.

MRS. ROBERTS. No--no--I thought you were my baby.

THE CALIFORNIAN. Perhaps I am, ma'am; I've lost so much sleep I could cry, anyway. Do I LOOK like your baby?

MRS. ROBERTS. No, no, you don't. [In distress that overcomes her mortification.] Oh, where is my baby? I left him all uncovered, and he'll take his death of cold, even if he doesn't roll out. Oh, Edward, Edward, help me to find baby!

MR. ROBERTS (bustling aimlessly about). Yes, yes; certainly, my dear. But don't be alarmed; we shall find him.

THE CALIFORNIAN (getting out in his stocking feet). We shall find him, ma'am, if we have to search every berth in this car. Don't you take on. That baby's going to be found if he's aboard the train, now, you bet! [He looks about and then tears open the curtains of a berth at random.] That your baby, ma'am?

MRS. ROBERTS (flying upon the infant thus exposed). Oh, BABY, baby, baby!! I thought I had lost you. Um! um! um!

[She clasps him in her arms, and covers his face and neck with kisses.]

THE CALIFORNIAN (as he gets back into his berth, sotto voce). I wish I HAD been her baby.

MRS. ROBERTS (returning with her husband to his seat, and bringing the baby with her). There! Did you ever see such a sleeper, Edward? [In her ecstasy she abandons all control of her voice, and joyfully exclaims.] He has slept all through this excitement, without a wink.

A solemn Voice from one of the berths. I envy him.

[A laugh follows, in which all the passengers join.]

MRS. ROBERTS (in a hoarse whisper, breaking a little with laughter). Oh, my goodness! there I went again. But how funny! I assure you, Edward, that if their remarks had not been about me, I could have really quite enjoyed some of them. I wish there had been somebody here to take them down. And I hope I shall see some of the speakers in the morning before--Edward, I've got an idea!

MR. ROBERTS (endeavoring to teach his wife by example to lower her voice, which has risen again). What--what is it, my dear?

MRS. ROBERTS. Why, don't you see? How perfectly ridiculous it was of me not to think of it before! though I did think of it once, and hadn't the courage to insist upon it. But of course it is; and it accounts for his being so polite and kind to me through all, and it's the only thing that can. Yes, yes, it must be.

MR. ROBERTS (mystified). What?

MRS. ROBERTS. Willis.

MR. ROBERTS. Who?

MRS. ROBERTS. This Californian.

MR. ROBERTS. Oh!

MRS. ROBERTS. No STRANGER could have been so patient and--and--attentive; and I know that he recognized me from the first, and he's just kept it up for a joke, so as to surprise us and have a good laugh at us when we get to Boston. Of COURSE it's Willis.

MR. ROBERTS (doubtfully). Do you think so, my dear?

MRS. ROBERTS. I KNOW it. Didn't you notice how he looked at your card? And I want you to go at once and speak to him, and turn the tables on him.

MR. ROBERTS. I--I'd rather NOT, my dear.

MRS. ROBERTS. Why, Edward, what can you mean?

MR. ROBERTS. He's very violent. Suppose it SHOULDN'T be Willis?

MRS. ROBERTS. Nonsense! It IS Willis. Come, let's both go and just tax him with it. He can't deny it, after all he's done for me. [She pulls her reluctant husband toward THE CALIFORNIAN'S berth, and they each draw a curtain.] Willis!

THE CALIFORNIAN (with plaintive endurance). Well, ma'am?

MRS. ROBERTS (triumphantly). There! I knew it was you all along. How could you play such a joke on me?

THE CALIFORNIAN. I didn't know there'd been any joke; but I suppose there must have been, if you say so. Who am I now, ma'am--your husband, or your baby, or your husband's wife, or -

MRS. ROBERTS. How funny you are! You KNOW you're Willis Campbell, my only brother. Now DON'T try to keep it up any longer, Willis.

[Voices from various berths. "Give us a rest, Willis!" "Joke's too thin, Willis!" "You're played out, Willis!" "Own up, old fellow--own up!"]

THE CALIFORNIAN (issuing from his berth, and walking up and down the aisle, as before, till quiet is restored). I haven't got any sister, and my name ain't Willis, and it ain't Campbell. I'm very sorry, because I'd like to oblige you any way I could.

MRS. ROBERTS (in deep mortification). It's I who ought to apologize,

and I do most humbly. I don't know what to say; but when I got to thinking about it, and how kind you had been to me, and how sweet you had been under all my--interruptions, I felt perfectly sure that you couldn't be a mere stranger, and then the idea struck me that you must be my brother in disguise; and I was so certain of it that I couldn't help just letting you know that we'd found you out, and -

MR. ROBERTS (offering a belated and feeble moral support). Yes.

MRS. ROBERTS (promptly turning upon him). And YOU ought to have kept me from making such a simpleton of myself, Edward.

THE CALIFORNIAN (soothingly). Well, ma'am, that ain't always so easy. A man may mean well, and yet not be able to carry out his intentions. But it's all right. And I reckon we'd better try to quiet down again, and get what rest we can.

MRS. ROBERTS. Why, yes, certainly; and I will try--oh, I will TRY not to disturb you again. And if there's anything we can do in reparation after we reach Boston, we shall be so glad to do it!

[They bow themselves away, and return to their seat, while THE CALIFORNIAN re-enters his berth.]

III.

The train stops at Framingham, and THE PORTER comes in with a passenger whom he shows to the seat opposite MR. and MRS. ROBERTS.

THE PORTER. You can sit here, sah. We'll be in in about an hour now. Hang up your bag for you, sah?

THE PASSENGER. No, leave it on the seat here.

[THE PORTER goes out, and the ROBERTSES maintain a dejected silence. The bottom of the bag, thrown carelessly on the seat, is toward the ROBERTSES, who regard it listlessly.]

MRS. ROBERTS (suddenly clutching her husband's arm, and hissing in his ear). See! [She points to the white lettering on the bag, where the name "Willis Campbell, San Francisco," is distinctly legible.] But it can't be; it must be some other Campbell. I can't risk it.

MR. ROBERTS. But there's the name. It would be very strange if there were two people from San Francisco of exactly the same name. _I_ will speak.

MRS. ROBERTS (as wildly as one can in whisper). No, no, I can't let you. We've made ourselves the laughing-stock of the whole car already with our mistakes, and I can't go on. I would rather perish than ask him. You don't suppose it COULD be? No, it couldn't.

There may be twenty Willis Campbells in San Francisco, and there probably are. Do you think he looks like me! He has a straight nose; but you can't tell anything about the lower part of his face, the beard covers it so; and I can't make out the color of his eyes by this light. But of course it's all nonsense. Still if it SHOULD be! It would be very stupid of us to ride all the way from Framingham to Boston with that name staring one in the eyes. I wish he would turn it away. If it really turned out to BE Willis, he would think we were awfully stiff and cold. But I can't help it; I CAN'T go attacking every stranger I see, and accusing him of being my brother. No, no, I can't, and I WON'T, and that's all about it. [She leans forward and addresses the stranger with sudden sweetness.] Excuse me, sir, but I AM very much interested by the name on your bag. Not that I think you are even acquainted with him, and there are probably a great many of them there; but your coming from the same city and all DOES seem a little queer, and I hope you won't think me intrusive in speaking to you, because if you SHOULD happen, by the thousandth of a chance, to be the right one, I should be SO happy!

CAMPBELL. The right what, madam?

MRS. ROBERTS. The right Willis Campbell.

CAMPBELL. I hope I'm not the wrong one; though after a week's pull on the railroad it's pretty hard for a man to tell which Willis Campbell he is. May I ask if your Willis Campbell had friends in Boston?

MRS. ROBERTS (eagerly). He had a sister and a brother-in-law and a nephew.

CAMPBELL. Name of Roberts?

MRS. ROBERTS. Every one.

CAMPBELL. Then you're -

MRS. ROBERTS (ecstatically). Agnes!

CAMPBELL. And he's -

MRS. ROBERTS. Mr. Roberts!

CAMPBELL. And the baby's -

MRS. ROBERTS. Asleep!

CAMPBELL. Then I am the right one.

MRS. ROBERTS. Oh, Willis! Willis! Willis! To think of our meeting in this way! [She kisses and embraces him, while MR. ROBERTS shakes one of his hands which he finds disengaged.] HOW in the world did it happen?

CAMPBELL. Ah, I found myself a little ahead of time, and I stopped off with an old friend of mine at Framingham; I didn't want to disappoint you when you came to meet this train, or get you up last night at midnight.

MRS. ROBERTS. And I was in Albany, and I've been moving heaven and earth to get home before you arrived; and Edward came aboard at Worcester to surprise me, and--Oh, you've never seen the baby! I'll run right and get him this instant, just as he is, and bring him. Edward, you be explaining to Willis--Oh, my goodness! [Looking wildly about.] I don't remember the berth, and I shall be sure to wake up that poor California gentleman again. WHAT shall I do?

CAMPBELL. What California gentleman?

MRS. ROBERTS. Oh, somebody we've been stirring up the whole blessed night. First I took him for baby, and then Edward took him for me, and then I took him for baby again, and then we both took him for you.

CAMPBELL. Did he look like any of us?

MRS. ROBERTS. Like US? He's eight feet tall, if he's an inch, in his stockings--and he's always in them--and he has a long black beard and mustaches, and he's very lanky, and stoops over a good deal; but he's just as lovely as he can be and live, and he's been as kind and patient as twenty Jobs.

CAMPBELL. Speaks in a sort of soft, slow grind?

MRS. ROBERTS. Yes.

CAMPBELL. Gentle and deferential to ladies?

MRS. ROBERTS. As pie.

CAMPBELL. It's Tom Goodall. I'll have him out of there in half a second. I want you to take him home with you, Agnes. He's the best fellow in the world. WHICH is his berth?

MRS. ROBERTS. Don't ask me, Willis. But if you'd go for baby, you'll be sure to find him.

MR. ROBERTS (timidly indicating a berth). I think that's the one.

CAMPBELL (plunging at it, and pulling the curtains open). You old Tom Goodall!

THE CALIFORNIAN (appearing). I ain't any Tom Goodall. My name's Abram Sawyer.

CAMPBELL (falling back). Well, sir, you're right. I'm awfully sorry

to disturb you; but, from my sister's description here, I felt certain you must be my old friend Tom Goodall.

THE CALIFORNIAN. I ain't surprised at it. I'm only surprised I AIN'T Tom Goodall. I've been a baby twice, and I've been a man's wife once, and once I've been a long-lost brother.

CAMPBELL (laughing). Oh, they've found HIM. I'M the long-lost brother.

THE CALIFORNIAN (sleepily). Has she found the other one?

CAMPBELL. Yes; all right, I believe.

THE CALIFORNIAN. Has HE found what HE wanted?

CAMPBELL. Yes; we're all together here. [THE CALIFORNIAN makes a movement to get into bed again.] Oh, don't! You'd better make a night of it now. It's almost morning anyway. We want you to go home with us, and Mrs. Roberts will give you a bed at her house, and let you sleep a week.

THE CALIFORNIAN. Well, I reckon you're right, stranger. I seem to be in the hands of Providence to-night anyhow. [He pulls on his boots and coat, and takes his seat beside CAMPBELL.] I reckon there ain't any use in fighting against Providence.

MRS. ROBERTS (briskly, as if she had often tried it and failed). Oh, not the least in the world. I'm sure it was all intended; and if you had turned out to be Willis at last, I should be CERTAIN of it. What surprises me is that you shouldn't turn out to be anybody, after all.

THE CALIFORNIAN. Yes, it is kind of curious. But I couldn't help it. I did my best.

MRS. ROBERTS. Oh, don't speak of it. WE are the ones who ought to apologize. But if you only had been somebody, it would have been such a good joke! We could always have had such a laugh over it, don't you see?

THE CALIFORNIAN. Yes, ma'am, it would have been funny. But I hope you've enjoyed it as it is.

MRS. ROBERTS. Oh, very much, thanks to you. Only I can't seem to get reconciled to your not being anybody, after all. You MUST at least be some one we've heard about, don't you think? It's so strange that you and Willis never even met. Don't you think you have some acquaintances in common?

CAMPBELL. Look here, Agnes, do you always shout at the top of your voice in this way when you converse in a sleeping-car?

MRS. ROBERTS. Was I talking loud again? Well, you can't help it if

you want to make people hear you.

CAMPBELL. But there must be a lot of them who don't want to hear you. I wonder that the passengers who are not blood-relations don't throw things at you--boots and hand-bags and language.

MRS. ROBERTS. Why, that's what they've BEEN doing--language, at least--and I'm only surprised they're not doing it now.

THE CALIFORNIAN (rising). They'd better not, ma'am.

[He patrols the car from end to end, and quells some rising murmurs, halting at the rebellious berths as he passes.]

MRS. ROBERTS (enraptured by his companionship). Oh, he MUST be some connection. [She glances through the window.] I do believe that was Newton, or Newtonville, or West Newton, or Newton Centre. I must run and wake up baby, and get him dressed. I shan't want to wait an instant after we get in. Why, we're slowing up! Why, I do believe we're there! Edward, we're there! Only fancy being there already!

MR. ROBERTS. Yes, my dear. Only we're not quite there yet. Hadn't we better call your aunt Mary?

MRS. ROBERTS. I'd forgotten her.

CAMPBELL. Is Aunt Mary with you?

MRS. ROBERTS. To be sure she is. Didn't I tell you? She came on expressly to meet you.

CAMPBELL (starting up impetuously). Which berth is she in?

MRS. ROBERTS. Right over baby.

CAMPBELL. And which berth is baby in?

MRS. ROBERTS (distractedly). Why, that's just what I can't TELL. It was bad enough when they were all filled up, but now since the people have begun to come out of them, and some of them are made into seats I can't tell.

THE CALIFORNIAN. I'll look for you, ma'am. I should like to wake up all the wrong passengers on this car. I'd take a pleasure in it. If you could make sure of any berth that AIN'T the one, I'll begin on that.

MRS. ROBERTS. I can't even be sure of the wrong one. No, no; you mustn't--[THE CALIFORNIAN moves away, and pauses in front of one of the berths, looking back inquiringly at MRS. ROBERTS.] Oh, don't ask ME! _I_ can't tell. [To CAMPBELL.] ISN'T he amusing? So like all those Californians that one reads of--so chivalrous and SO humorous!

AUNT MARY (thrusting her head from the curtains of the berth before which THE CALIFORNIAN is standing). Go along with you! What do you want?

THE CALIFORNIAN. Aunt Mary.

AUNT MARY. Go away. Aunt Mary, indeed!

MRS. ROBERTS (running toward her, followed by CAMPBELL and MR. ROBERTS). Why, Aunt Mary, it IS you! And here's Willis, and here's Edward.

AUNT MARY. Nonsense! How did they get aboard?

MRS. ROBERTS. Edward came on at Worcester and Willis at Framingham, to surprise me.

AUNT MARY. And a very silly performance. Let them wait till I'm dressed, and then I'll talk to them. Send for the porter. [She withdraws her head behind the curtain, and then thrusts it out again.] And who, pray, may THIS be?

[She indicates THE CALIFORNIAN.]

MRS. ROBERTS. Oh, a friend of ours from California, who's been so kind to us all night, and who's going home with us.

AUNT MARY. Another ridiculous surprise, I suppose. But he shall not surprise ME. Young man, isn't your name Sawyer?

THE CALIFORNIAN. Yes, ma'am.

AUNT MARY. Abram?

THE CALIFORNIAN. Abram Sawyer. You're right there, ma'am.

MRS. ROBERTS. Oh! oh! I knew it! I knew that he must be somebody belonging to us. Oh, thank you, aunty, for thinking -

AUNT MARY. Don't be absurd, Agnes. Then you're my -

A VOICE from one of the berths. Lost step-son. Found! found at last!

[THE CALIFORNIAN looks vainly round in an endeavor to identify the speaker, and then turns again to AUNT MARY.]

AUNT MARY. Weren't your parents from Bath?

THE CALIFORNIAN (eagerly). Both of 'em, ma'am--both of 'em.

THE VOICE. O my prophetic soul, my uncle!

AUNT MARY. Then you're my old friend Kate Harris's daughter?

THE CALIFORNIAN. I might be her SON, ma'am; but MY mother's name was Susan Wakeman.

AUNT MARY (in sharp disgust). Call the porter, please.

[She withdraws her head and pulls her curtains together; the rest look blankly at one another.]

CAMPBELL. Another failure, and just when we thought we were sure of you. I don't know what we shall do about you, Mr. Sawyer.

THE VOICE. Adopt him.

CAMPBELL. That's a good idea. We will adopt you. You shall be our adoptive -

THE VOICE. Baby boy.

ANOTHER VOICE. Wife.

A THIRD VOICE. Brother.

A FOURTH VOICE. Early friend.

A FIFTH VOICE. Kate Harris's daughter.

CAMPBELL (laying his hand on THE CALIFORNIAN'S shoulder, and breaking into a laugh). Don't mind them. They don't mean anything. It's just their way. You come home with my sister, and spend Christmas, and let us devote the rest of our lives to making your declining years happy.

VOICES. "Good for you, Willis!" "We'll all come!" "No ceremony!" "Small and early!"

CAMPBELL (looking round). We appear to have fallen in with a party of dry-goods drummers. It makes a gentleman feel like an intruder. [The train stops; he looks out of the window.] We've arrived. Come, Agnes; come, Roberts; come, Mr. Sawyer--let's be going.

[They gather up their several wraps and bags, and move with great dignity toward the door.]

AUNT MARY (putting out her head). Agnes! If you must forget your aunt, at least remember your child.

MRS. ROBERTS (running back in an agony of remorse). Oh, BABY, did I forget you?

CAMPBELL. Oh, AUNTY, did she forget you? [He runs back, and extends his arms to his aunt.] Let me help you down, Aunt Mary.

AUNT MARY. Nonsense, Willis. Send the porter.

CAMPBELL (turning round and confronting THE PORTER). He was here upon instinct. Shall he fetch a step-ladder?

AUNT MARY. HE will know what to do. Go away, Willis; go away with that child, Agnes. If I should happen to fall on you--[They retreat; the curtain drops, and her voice is heard behind it addressing THE PORTER.] Give me your hand; now your back; now your knee. So! And very well done. Thanks.

End of the Project Gutenberg eText The Sleeping-Car

THE GAROTTERS

by William D. Howells

This etext was produced from the 1897 David Douglas edition by David Price, email ccx074@coventry.ac.uk

PART FIRST

SCENE I: MRS. ROBERTS; THEN MR. ROBERTS

At the window of her apartment in Hotel Bellingham, Mrs. Roberts stands looking out into the early nightfall. A heavy snow is driving without, and from time to time the rush of the wind and the sweep of the flakes against the panes are heard. At the sound of hurried steps in the anteroom, Mrs. Roberts turns from the window, and runs to the portiere, through which she puts her head.

MRS. ROBERTS: 'Is that you, Edward? So dark here! We ought really to keep the gas turned up all the time.'

MR. ROBERTS, in a muffled voice, from without: 'Yes, it's I.'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'Well, hurry in to the fire, do! Ugh, what a storm! Do you suppose anybody will come? You must be half frozen, you poor thing! Come quick, or you'll certainly perish!' She flies from the portiere to the fire burning on the hearth, pokes it, flings on a log, jumps back, brushes from her dress with a light shriek the sparks driven out upon it, and continues talking incessantly in a voice lifted for her husband to hear in the anteroom. 'If I'd

dreamed it was any such storm as this, I should never have let you go out in it in the world. It wasn't at all necessary to have the flowers. I could have got on perfectly well, and I believe NOW the table would look better without them. The chrysanthemums would have been quite enough; and I know you've taken more cold. I could tell it by your voice as soon as you spoke; and just as quick as they're gone to-night I'm going to have you bathe your feet in mustard and hot water, and take eight of aconite, and go straight to bed. And I don't want you to eat very much at dinner, dear, and you must be sure not to drink any coffee, or the aconite won't be of the least use.' She turns and encounters her husband, who enters through the portiere, his face pale, his eyes wild, his white necktie pulled out of knot, and his shirt front ruffled. 'Why, Edward, what in the world is the matter? What has happened?'

ROBERTS, sinking into a chair: 'Get me a glass of water, Agnes-- wine--whisky--brandy--'

MRS. ROBERTS, bustling wildly about: 'Yes, yes. But what--Bella! Bridget! Maggy!--Oh, I'll go for it myself, and I WON'T stop to listen! Only--only don't die!' While Roberts remains with his eyes shut, and his head sunk on his breast in token of extreme exhaustion, she disappears and reappears through the door leading to her chamber, and then through the portiere cutting off the dining-room. She finally descends upon her husband with a flagon of cologne in one hand, a small decanter of brandy in the other, and a wineglass held in the hollow of her arm against her breast. She contrives to set the glass down on the mantel and fill it from the flagon, then she turns with the decanter in her hand, and while she presses the glass to her husband's lips, begins to pour the brandy on his head. 'Here! this will revive you, and it'll refresh you to have this cologne on your head.'

ROBERTS, rejecting a mouthful of the cologne with a furious sputter, and springing to his feet: 'Why, you've given me the cologne to DRINK, Agnes! What are you about? Do you want to poison me? Isn't it enough to be robbed at six o'clock on the Common, without having your head soaked in brandy, and your whole system scented up like a barber's shop, when you get home?'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'Robbed?' She drops the wineglass, puts the decanter down on the hearth, and carefully bestowing the flagon of cologne in the wood-box, abandons herself to justice: 'Then let them come for me at once, Edward! If I could have the heart to send you out in such a night as this for a few wretched rosebuds, I'm quite equal to poisoning you. Oh, Edward, WHO robbed you?'

ROBERTS: 'That's what I don't know.' He continues to wipe his head with his handkerchief, and to sputter a little from time to time. 'All I know is that when I got--phew!--to that dark spot by the Frog Pond, just by--phew!--that little group of--phew!--evergreens, you know--phew!--'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'Yes, yes; go on! I can bear it, Edward.'

ROBERTS: '--a man brushed heavily against me, and then hurried on in the other direction. I had unbuttoned my coat to look at my watch under the lamp-post, and after he struck against me I clapped my hand to my waistcoat, and--pew!--'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'Waistcoat! Yes!'

ROBERTS: '--found my watch gone.'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'What! Your watch? The watch Willis gave you? Made out of the gold that he mined himself when he first went out to California? Don't ask me to believe it, Edward! But I'm only too glad that you escaped with your life. Let them have the watch and welcome. Oh, nay dear, dear husband!' She approaches him with extended arms, and then suddenly arrests herself. 'But you've got it on!'

ROBERTS, with as much returning dignity as can comport with his dishevelled appearance: 'Yes; I took it from him.' At his wife's speechless astonishment: 'I went after him and took it from him.' He sits down, and continues with resolute calm, while his wife remains standing before him motionless: 'Agnes, I don't know how I came to do it. I wouldn't have believed I could do it. I've never thought that I had much courage--physical courage; but when I felt my watch was gone, a sort of frenzy came over me. I wasn't hurt; and for the first time in my life I realised what an abominable outrage theft was. The thought that at six o'clock in the evening, in the very heart of a great city like Boston, an inoffensive citizen could be assaulted and robbed, made me furious. I didn't call out. I simply buttoned my coat tight round me and turned and ran after the fellow.'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'Edward!'

ROBERTS: 'Yes, I did. He hadn't got half-a-dozen rods away--it all took place in a flash--and I could easily run him down. He was considerably larger than I--'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'Oh!'

ROBERTS: '--and he looked young and very athletic; but these things didn't seem to make any impression on me.'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'Oh, I wonder that you live to tell the tale, Edward!'

ROBERTS: 'Well, I wonder a little at myself. I don't set up for a great deal of--'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'But I always knew you had it! Go on. Oh, when I tell Willis of this! Had the robber any accomplices? Were there

many of them?'

ROBERTS: 'I only saw one. And I saw that my only chance was to take him at a disadvantage. I sprang upon him, and pulled him over on his back. I merely said, "I'll trouble you for that watch of mine, if you please," jerked open his coat, snatched the watch from his pocket--I broke the chain, I see--and then left him and ran again. He didn't make the slightest resistance nor utter a word. Of course it wouldn't do for him to make any noise about it, and I dare say he was glad to get off so easily.' With affected nonchalance: 'I'm pretty badly rumped, I see. He fell against me, and a scuffle like that doesn't improve one's appearance.'

MRS. ROBERTS, very solemnly: 'Edward! I don't know what to say! Of course it makes my blood run cold to realise what you have been through, and to think what might have happened; but I think you behaved splendidly. Why, I never heard of such perfect heroism! You needn't tell ME that he made no resistance. There was a deadly struggle--your necktie and everything about you shows it. And you needn't think there was only one of them--'

ROBERTS, modestly: 'I don't believe there was more.'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'Nonsense! There are ALWAYS two! I've read the accounts of those garottings. And to think you not only got out of their clutches alive, but got your property back--Willis's watch! Oh, what WILL Willis say? But I know how proud of you he'll be. Oh, I wish I could scream it from the house-tops. Why didn't you call the police?'

ROBERTS: 'I didn't think--I hadn't time to think.'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'No matter. I'm glad you have ALL the glory of it. I don't believe you half realise what you've been through now. And perhaps this was the robbers' first attempt, and it will be a lesson to them. Oh yes! I'm glad you let them escape, Edward. They may have families. If every one behaved as you've done, there would soon be an end of garotting. But, oh! I can't bear to think of the danger you've run. And I want you to promise me never, never to undertake such a thing again!'

ROBERTS: 'Well, I don't know--'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'Yes, yes; you must! Suppose you had got killed in that awful struggle with those reckless wretches tugging to get away from you! Think of the children! Why, you might have burst a blood-vessel! Will you promise, Edward? Promise this instant, on your bended knees, just as if you were in a court of justice!' Mrs. Roberts's excitement mounts, and she flings herself at her husband's feet, and pulls his face down to hers with the arm she has thrown about his neck. 'Will you promise?'

SCENE II: MRS. CRASHAW; MR. AND MRS. ROBERTS

MRS. CRASHAW, entering unobserved: 'Promise you what, Agnes? The man doesn't smoke NOW. What more can you ask?' She starts back from the spectacle of Roberts's disordered dress. 'Why, what's happened to you, Edward?'

MRS. ROBERTS, springing to her feet: 'Oh, you may well ask that, Aunt Mary! Happened? You ought to fall down and worship him! And you WILL when you know what he's been through. He's been robbed!'

MRS. CRASHAW: 'Robbed? What nonsense! Who robbed him? WHERE was he robbed?'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'He was attacked by two garotters--'

ROBERTS: 'No, no--'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'Don't speak, Edward! I KNOW there were two. On the Common. Not half an hour ago. As he was going to get me some rosebuds. In the midst of this terrible storm.'

MRS. CRASHAW: 'Is this true, Edward?'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'Don't answer, Edward! One of the band threw his arm round Edward's neck--so.' She illustrates by garotting Mrs. Crashaw, who disengages herself with difficulty.

MRS. CRASHAW: 'Mercy, child! What ARE you doing to my lace?'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'And the other one snatched his watch, and ran as fast as he could.'

MRS. CRASHAW: 'Willis's watch? Why, he's got it on.'

MRS. ROBERTS, with proud delight: 'Exactly what I said when he told me.' Then, very solemnly: 'And do you know WHY he's got it on?--' 'Sh, Edward! I WILL tell! Because he ran after them and took it back again.'

MRS. CRASHAW: 'Why, they might have killed him!'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'Of COURSE they might. But EDWARD didn't care. The idea of being robbed at six o'clock on the Common made him so furious that he scorned to cry out for help, or call the police, or anything; but he just ran after them--'

ROBERTS: 'Agnes! Agnes! There was only ONE.'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'Nonsense, Edward! How could you tell, so excited as

you were?--And caught hold of the largest of the wretches--a perfect young giant--'

ROBERTS: 'No, no; not a GIANT, my dear.'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'Well, he was YOUNG, anyway!--And flung him on the ground.' She advances upon Mrs. Crashaw in her enthusiasm.

MRS. CRASHAW: 'Don't you fling ME on the ground, Agnes! I won't have it.'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'And tore his coat open, while all the rest were tugging at him, and snatched his watch, and then--and then just walked coolly away.'

ROBERTS: 'No, my dear; I ran as fast as I could.'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'Well, RAN. It's quite the same thing, and I'm just as proud of you as if you had walked. Of course you were not going to throw your life away.'

MRS. CRASHAW: 'I think he did a very silly thing in going after them at all.'

ROBERTS: 'Why, of course, if I'd thought twice about it, I shouldn't have done it.'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'Of course you wouldn't, dear! And that's what I want him to promise, Aunt Mary: never to do it again, no matter HOW much he's provoked. I want him to promise it right here in your presence, Aunt Mary!'

MRS. CRASHAW: 'I think it's much more important he should put on another collar and--shirt, if he's going to see company.'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'Yes; go right off at once, Edward. How you DO think of things, Aunt Mary! I really suppose I should have gone on all night and never noticed his looks. Run, Edward, and do it, dear. But--kiss me first! Oh, it DON'T seem as if you could be alive and well after it all! Are you sure you're not hurt?'

ROBERTS, embracing her: 'No; I'm all right.'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'And you're not injured internally? Sometimes they're injured internally--aren't they, Aunt Mary?--and it doesn't show till months afterwards. Are you sure?'

ROBERTS, making a cursory examination of his ribs with his hands: 'Yes, I think so.'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'And you don't feel any bad effects from the cologne NOW? Just think, Aunt Mary, I gave him cologne to drink, and poured the brandy on his head, when he came in! But I was determined to

keep calm, whatever I did. And if I've poisoned him I'm quite willing to die for it--oh, quite! I would gladly take the blame of it before the whole world.'

MRS. CRASHAW: 'Well, for pity's sake, let the man go and make himself decent. There's your bell now.'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'Yes, do go, Edward. But--kiss me--'

MRS. CRASHAW: 'He DID kiss you, Agnes. Don't be a simpleton!'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'Did he? Well, kiss me again, then, Edward. And now do go, dear. M-m-m-m.' The inarticulate endearments represented by these signs terminate in a wild embrace, protracted halfway across the room, in the height of which Mr. Willis Campbell enters.

SCENE III: MR. CAMPBELL, MRS. CRASHAW, MR. AND MRS. ROBERTS

WILLIS, pausing in contemplation: 'Hello! What's the matter? What's she trying to get out of you, Roberts? Don't you do it, anyway, old fellow.'

MRS. ROBERTS, in an ecstasy of satisfaction: 'Willis! Oh, you've come in time to see him just as he is. Look at him, Willis!' In the excess of her emotion she twitches her husband about, and with his arm fast in her clutch, presents him in the disadvantageous effect of having just been taken into custody. Under these circumstances Roberts's attempt at an expression of diffident heroism fails; he looks sneaking, he looks guilty, and his eyes fall under the astonished regard of his brother-in-law.

WILLIS: 'What's the matter with him? What's he been doing?'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'Sh, Edward! What's he been doing? What does he look as if he had been doing?'

MRS. CRASHAW: 'Agnes--'

WILLIS: 'He looks as if he had been signing the pledge. And he--smells like it.'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'For shame, Willis! I should think you'd sink through the floor. Edward, not a word! I AM ashamed of him, if he IS my brother.'

WILLIS: 'Why, what in the world's up, Agnes?'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'Up? He's been ROBBED!--robbed on the Common, not five minutes ago! A whole gang of garotters surrounded him under

the Old Elm--or just where it used to be--and took his watch away! And he ran after them, and knocked the largest of the gang down, and took it back again. He wasn't hurt, but we're afraid he's been injured internally; he may be bleeding internally NOW--Oh, do you think he is, Willis? Don't you think we ought to send for a physician?--That, and the cologne I gave him to drink. It's the brandy I poured on his head makes him smell so. And he all so exhausted he couldn't speak, and I didn't know what I was doing, either; but he's promised--oh yes, he's promised!--never, never to do it again.' She again flings her arms about her husband, and then turns proudly to her brother.

WILLIS: 'Do you know what it means, Aunt Mary?'

MRS. CRASHAW: 'Not in the least! But I've no doubt that Edward can explain, after he's changed his linen--'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'Oh yes, do go, Edward! Not but what I should be proud and happy to have you appear just as you are before the whole world, if it was only to put Willis down with his jokes about your absent-mindedness, and his boasts about those California desperadoes of his.'

ROBERTS: 'Come, come, Agnes! I MUST protest against your--'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'Oh, I know it doesn't become me to praise your courage, darling! But I should like to know what Willis would have done, with all his California experience, if a garotter had taken his watch?'

WILLIS: 'I should have let him keep it, and pay five dollars a quarter himself for getting it cleaned and spoiled. Anybody but a literary man would. How many of them were there, Roberts?'

ROBERTS: 'I only saw one.'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'But of course there were more. How could he tell, in the dark and excitement? And the one he did see was a perfect giant; so you can imagine what the rest must have been like.'

WILLIS: 'Did you really knock him down?'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'Knock him down? Of course he did.'

MRS. CRASHAW: 'Agnes, WILL you hold your tongue, and let the men alone?'

MRS. ROBERTS, whimpering: 'I can't, Aunt Mary. And you couldn't, if it was yours.'

ROBERTS: 'I pulled him over backwards.'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'There, Willis!'

WILLIS: 'And grabbed your watch from him?'

ROBERTS: 'I was in quite a frenzy; I really hardly knew what I was doing--'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'And he didn't call for the police, or anything--'

WILLIS: 'Ah, that showed presence of mind! He knew it wouldn't have been any use.'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'And when he had got his watch away from them, he just let them go, because they had families dependent on them.'

WILLIS: 'I should have let them go in the first place, but you behaved handsomely in the end, Roberts; there's no denying that. And when you came in she gave you cologne to drink, and poured brandy on your head. It must have revived you. I should think it would wake the dead.'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'I was all excitement, Willis--'

WILLIS: 'No, I should think from the fact that you had set the decanter here on the hearth, and put your cologne into the wood-box, you were perfectly calm, Agnes.' He takes them up and hands them to her. 'Quite as calm as usual.' The door-bell rings.

MRS. CRASHAW: 'Willis, WILL you let that ridiculous man go away and make himself presentable before people begin to come?' The bell rings violently, peal upon peal.

MRS. ROBERTS: 'Oh, my goodness, what's that? It's the garotters--I know it is; and we shall all be murdered in our beds!'

MRS. CRASHAW: 'What in the world can it--'

WILLIS: 'Why don't your girl answer the bell, Agnes? Or I'll go myself.' The bell rings violently again.

MRS. ROBERTS: 'NO, Willis, you sha'n't! Don't leave me, Edward! Aunt Mary!--Oh, if we MUST die, let us all die together! Oh, my poor children! Ugh! What's that?' The servant-maid opens the outer door, and uttering a shriek, rushes in through the drawing-room portiere.

BELLA THE MAID: 'Oh, my goodness! Mrs. Roberts, it's Mr. Bemis!'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'Which Mr. Bemis?'

ROBERTS: 'What's the matter with him?'

MRS. CRASHAW: 'Why doesn't she show him in?'

WILLIS: 'Has HE been garotting somebody too?'

SCENE IV: MR. BEMIS, MR. CAMPBELL, MR. AND MRS. ROBERTS

BEMIS, appearing through the portiere: 'I--I beg your pardon, Mrs. Roberts. I oughtn't to present myself in this state--I-- But I thought I'd better stop on my way home and report, so that my son needn't be alarmed at my absence when he comes. I--' He stops, exhausted, and regards the others with a wild stare, while they stand taking note of his disordered coat, his torn vest, and his tumbled hat. 'I've just been robbed--'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'Robbed? Why, EDWARD has been robbed too.'

BEMIS: '--coming through the Common--'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'Yes, EDWARD was coming through the Common.'

BEMIS: '--of my watch--'

MRS. ROBERTS, in rapturous admiration of the coincidence: 'Oh, and it was Edward's WATCH they took!'

WILLIS: 'It's a parallel case, Agnes. Pour him out a glass of cologne to drink, and rub his head with brandy. And you might let him sit down and rest while you're enjoying the excitement.'

MRS. ROBERTS, in hospitable remorse: 'Oh, what am I thinking of! Here, Edward--or no, you're too weak, you mustn't. Willis, YOU help me to help him to the sofa.'

MRS. CRASHAW: 'I think you'd better help him off with his overcoat and his arctics.' To the maid: 'Here, Bella, if you haven't quite taken leave of your wits, undo his shoes.'

ROBERTS: 'I'LL help him off with his coat--'

BEMIS: 'Careful! careful! I may be injured internally.'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'Oh, if you only WERE, Mr. Bemis, perhaps I could persuade Edward that he was too: I KNOW he is. Edward, don't exert yourself! Aunt Mary, will you STOP him, or do you all wish to see me go distracted here before your eyes?'

WILLIS, examining the overcoat which Roberts has removed: 'Well, you won't have much trouble buttoning and unbuttoning this coat for the present.'

BEMIS: 'They tore it open, and tore my watch from my vest pocket--'

WILLIS, looking at the vest: 'I see. Pretty lively work. Were there many of them?'

BEMIS: 'There must have been two at least--'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'There were half a dozen in the gang that attacked Edward.'

BEMIS: 'One of them pulled me violently over on my back--'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'Edward's put HIS arm round his neck and choked him.'

MRS. CRASHAW: 'Agnes!'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'I KNOW he did, Aunt Mary.'

BEMIS: 'And the other tore my watch out of my pocket.'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'EDWARD'S--'

MRS. CRASHAW: 'Agnes, I'm thoroughly ashamed of you. WILL you stop interrupting?'

BEMIS: 'And left me lying in the snow.'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'And then he ran after them, and snatched his watch away again in spite of them all; and he didn't call for the police, or anything, because it was their first offence, and he couldn't bear to think of their suffering families.'

BEMIS, with a stare of profound astonishment: 'Who?'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'Edward. Didn't I SAY Edward, all the time?'

BEMIS: 'I thought you meant me. I didn't think of pursuing them; but you may be very sure that if there had been a policeman within call--of course there wasn't one within cannon-shot--I should have handed the scoundrels over without the slightest remorse.'

ROBERTS: 'Oh!' He sinks into a chair with a slight groan.

WILLIS: 'What is it?'

ROBERTS: 'Sh! Don't say anything. But--stay here. I want to speak with you, Willis.'

BEMIS, with mounting wrath: 'I should not have hesitated an instant to give the rascal in charge, no matter who was dependent upon him--no matter if he were my dearest friend, my own brother.'

ROBERTS, under his breath: 'Gracious powers!'

BEMIS: 'And while I am very sorry to disagree with Mr. Roberts, I can't help feeling that he made a great mistake in allowing the ruffians to escape.'

MRS. CRASHAW, with severity: 'I think you are quite right, Mr. Bemis.'

BEMIS: 'Probably it was the same gang attacked us both. After escaping from Mr. Roberts they fell upon me.'

MRS. CRASHAW: 'I haven't a doubt of it.'

ROBERTS, sotto voce to his brother-in-law: 'I think I'll ask you to go with me to my room, Willis. Don't alarm Agnes, please. I--I feel quite faint.'

MRS. ROBERTS, crestfallen: 'I can't feel that Edward was to blame. Ed--Oh, I suppose he's gone off to make himself presentable. But Willis--Where's Willis, Aunt Mary?'

MRS. CRASHAW: 'Probably gone with him to help him.'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'Oh, he SAW how unstrung poor Edward was! Mr. Bemis, I think you're quite prejudiced. How could Edward help their escaping? I think it was quite enough for him, single-handed, to get his watch back.' A ring at the door, and then a number of voices in the anteroom. 'I do believe they're all there! I'll just run out and prepare your son. He would be dreadfully shocked if he came right in upon you.' She runs into the anteroom, and is heard without: 'Oh, Dr. Lawton! Oh, Lou dear! OH, Mr. Bemis! How can I ever tell you? Your poor father! No, no, I CAN'T tell you! You mustn't ask me! It's too hideous! And you wouldn't believe me if I did.'

Chorus of anguished voices: 'What? what? what?'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'They've been robbed! Garotted on the Common! And, OH, Dr. Lawton, I'm so glad YOU'VE come! They're both injured internally, but I WISH you'd look at Edward first.'

BEMIS: 'Good heavens! Is that Mrs. Roberts's idea of preparing my son? And his poor young wife!' He addresses his demand to Mrs. Crashaw, who lifts the hands of impotent despair.

PART SECOND

SCENE I: MR. ROBERTS; MR. CAMPBELL

In Mr Roberts's dressing-room, that gentleman is discovered tragically confronting Mr. Willis Campbell, with a watch uplifted in either hand.

WILLIS: 'Well?'

ROBERTS, gasping: 'My--my watch!'

WILLIS: 'Yes. How comes there to be two of it?'

ROBERTS: 'Don't you understand? When I went out I--didn't take my watch--with me. I left it here on my bureau.'

WILLIS: 'Well?'

ROBERTS: 'Oh, merciful heavens! don't you see? Then I couldn't have been robbed!'

WILLIS: 'Well, but whose watch did you take from the fellow that didn't rob you, then?'

ROBERTS: 'His own!' He abandons himself powerlessly upon a chair. 'Yes; I left my own watch here, and when that person brushed against me in the Common, I missed it for the first time. I supposed he had robbed me, and ran after him, and--'

WILLIS: 'Robbed HIM!'

ROBERTS: 'Yes.'

WILLIS: 'Ah, ha, ha, ha! I, hi, hi, hi! O, ho, ho, ho!' He yields to a series of these gusts and paroxysms, bowing up and down, and stamping to and fro, and finally sits down exhausted, and wipes the tears from his cheeks. 'Really, this thing will kill me. What are you going to do about it, Roberts?'

ROBERTS, with profound dejection and abysmal solemnity: 'I don't know, Willis. Don't you see that it must have been--that I must have robbed--Mr. Bemis?'

WILLIS: 'Bemis!' After a moment for tasting the fact. 'Why, so it was! Oh, Lord! oh, Lord! And was poor old Bemis that burly ruffian? that bloodthirsty gang of giants? that--that--oh, Lord! oh, Lord!' He bows his head upon his chair-back in complete exhaustion, demanding, feebly, as he gets breath for the successive questions, 'What are you going to d-o-o-o? What shall you s-a-a-a-y? How can you expla-a-ain it?'

ROBERTS: 'I can do nothing. I can say nothing. I can never explain it. I must go to Mr. Bemis and make a clean breast of it;

but think of the absurdity--the ridicule!

WILLIS, after a thoughtful silence: 'Oh, it isn't THAT you've got to think of. You've got to think of the old gentleman's sense of injury and outrage. Didn't you hear what he said--that he would have handed over his dearest friend, his own brother, to the police?'

ROBERTS: 'But that was in the supposition that his dearest friend, his own brother, had intentionally robbed him. You can't imagine, Willis--'

WILLIS: 'Oh, I can imagine a great many things. It's all well enough for you to say that the robbery was a mistake; but it was a genuine case of garotting as far as the assault and taking the watch go. He's a very pudgicky old gentleman.'

ROBERTS: 'He is.'

WILLIS: 'And I don't see how you're going to satisfy him that it was all a joke. Joke? It WASN'T a joke! It was a real assault and a bona fide robbery, and Bemis can prove it.'

ROBERTS: 'But he would never insist--'

WILLIS: 'Oh, I don't know about that. He's pretty queer, Bemis is. You can't say what an old gentleman like that will or won't do. If he should choose to carry it into court--'

ROBERTS: 'Court!'

WILLIS: 'It might be embarrassing. And anyway, it would have a very strange look in the papers.'

ROBERTS: 'The papers! Good gracious!'

WILLIS: 'Ten years from now a man that heard you mentioned would forget all about the acquittal, and say: "Roberts? Oh yes! Wasn't he the one they sent to the House of Correction for garotting an old friend of his on the Common!" You see, it wouldn't do to go and make a clean breast of it to Bemis.'

ROBERTS: 'I see.'

WILLIS: 'What will you do?'

ROBERTS: 'I must never say anything to him about it. Just let it go.'

WILLIS: 'And keep his watch? I don't see how you could manage that. What would you do with the watch? You might sell it, of course--'

ROBERTS: 'Oh no, I COULDN'T do that.'

WILLIS: 'You might give it away to some deserving person; but if it got him into trouble--'

ROBERTS: 'No, no; that wouldn't do, either.'

WILLIS: 'And you can't have it lying around; Agnes would be sure to find it, sooner or later.'

ROBERTS: 'Yes.'

WILLIS: 'Besides, there's your conscience. Your conscience wouldn't LET you keep Bemis's watch away from him. And if it would, what do you suppose Agnes's conscience would do when she came to find it out? Agnes hasn't got much of a head--the want of it seems to grow upon her; but she's got a conscience as big as the side of a house.'

ROBERTS: 'Oh, I see; I see.'

WILLIS, coming up and standing over him, with his hands in his pockets: 'I tell you what, Roberts, you're in a box.'

ROBERTS, abjectly: 'I know it, Willis; I know it. What do you suggest? You MUST know some way out of it.'

WILLIS: 'It isn't a simple matter like telling them to start the elevator down when they couldn't start her up. I've got to think it over.' He walks to and fro, Roberts's eyes helplessly following his movements. 'How would it do to--No, that wouldn't do, either.'

ROBERTS: 'What wouldn't?'

WILLIS: 'Nothing. I was just thinking--I say, you might--Or, no, you couldn't.'

ROBERTS: 'Couldn't what?'

WILLIS: 'Nothing. But if you were to--No; up a stump that way too.'

ROBERTS: 'Which way? For mercy's sake, my dear fellow, don't seem to get a clew if you haven't it. It's more than I can bear.' He rises, and desperately confronts Willis in his promenade. 'If you see any hope at all--'

WILLIS, stopping: 'Why, if you were a different sort of fellow, Roberts, the thing would be perfectly easy.'

ROBERTS: 'Very well, then. What sort of fellow do you want me to be? I'll be any sort of fellow you like.'

WILLIS: 'Oh, but you couldn't! With that face of yours, and that confounded conscience of yours behind it, you would give away the whitest lie that was ever told.'

ROBERTS: 'Do you wish me to lie? Very well, then, I will lie. What is the lie?'

WILLIS: 'Ah, now you're talking like a man! I can soon think up a lie if you're game for it. Suppose it wasn't so very white--say a delicate blonde!'

ROBERTS: 'I shouldn't care if it were as black as the ace of spades.'

WILLIS: 'Roberts, I honour you! It isn't everybody who could steal an old gentleman's watch, and then be so ready to lie out of it. Well, you HAVE got courage--both kinds--moral and physical.'

ROBERTS: 'Thank you, Willis. Of course I don't pretend that I should be willing to lie under ordinary circumstances; but for the sake of Agnes and the children--I don't want any awkwardness about the matter; it would be the death of me. Well, what do you wish me to say? Be quick; I don't believe I could hold out for a great while. I don't suppose but what Mr. Bemis would be reasonable, even if I--'

WILLIS: 'I'm afraid we couldn't trust him. The only way is for you to take the bull by the horns.'

ROBERTS: 'Yes?'

WILLIS: 'You will not only have to lie, Roberts, but you will have to wear an air of innocent candour at the same time.'

ROBERTS: 'I--I'm afraid I couldn't manage that. What is your idea?'

WILLIS: 'Oh, just come into the room with a laugh when we go back, and say, in an offhand way, "By the way, Agnes, Willis and I made a remarkable discovery in my dressing-room; we found my watch there on the bureau. Ha, ha, ha!" Do you think you could do it?'

ROBERTS: 'I--I don't know.'

WILLIS: 'Try the laugh now.'

ROBERTS: 'I'd rather not--now.'

WILLIS: 'Well, try it, anyway.'

ROBERTS: 'Ha, ha, ha!'

WILLIS: 'Once more.'

ROBERTS: 'Ha, ha, ha!'

WILLIS: 'Pretty ghastly; but I guess you can come it.'

ROBERTS: 'I'll try. And then what?'

WILLIS: 'And then you say, "I hadn't put it on when I went out, and when I got after that fellow and took it back, I was simply getting somebody else's watch!" Then you hold out both watches to her, and laugh again. Everybody laughs, and crowds round you to examine the watches, and you make fun and crack jokes at your own expense all the time, and pretty soon old Bemis says, "Why, this is MY watch, NOW!" and you laugh more than ever--'

ROBERTS: 'I'm afraid I couldn't laugh when he said that. I don't believe I could laugh. It would make my blood run cold.'

WILLIS: 'Oh no, it wouldn't. You'd be in the spirit of it by that time.'

ROBERTS: 'Do you think so? Well?'

WILLIS: 'And then you say, "Well, this is the most remarkable coincidence I ever heard of. I didn't get my own watch from the fellow, but I got yours, Mr. Bemis;" and then you hand it over to him and say, "Sorry I had to break the chain in getting it from him," and then everybody laughs again, and--and that ends it.'

ROBERTS, with a profound sigh: 'Do you think that would end it?'

WILLIS: 'Why, certainly. It'll put old Bemis in the wrong, don't you see? It'll show that instead of letting the fellow escape to go and rob HIM, you attacked him and took Bemis's property back from him yourself. Bemis wouldn't have a word to say. All you've got to do is to keep up a light, confident manner.'

ROBERTS: 'But what if it shouldn't put Bemis in the wrong? What if he shouldn't say or do anything that we've counted upon, but something altogether different?'

WILLIS: 'Well, then, you must trust to inspiration, and adapt yourself to circumstances.'

ROBERTS: 'Wouldn't it be rather more of a joke to come out with the facts at once?'

WILLIS: 'On you it would; and a year from now--say next Christmas--you could get the laugh on Bemis that way. But if you were to risk it now, there's no telling how he'd take it. He's so indignant he might insist upon leaving the house. But with this plan of mine--'

ROBERTS, in despair: 'I couldn't, Willis. I don't feel light, and

I don't feel confident, and I couldn't act it. If it were a simple lie--'

WILLIS: 'Oh, lies are never simple; they require the exercise of all your ingenuity. If you want something simple, you must stick to the truth, and throw yourself on Bemis's mercy.'

ROBERTS, walking up and down in great distress: 'I can't do it; I can't do it. It's very kind of you to think it all out for me, but'--struck by a sudden idea--'Willis, why shouldn't YOU do it?'

WILLIS: 'I?'

ROBERTS: 'You are good at those things. You have so much aplomb, you know. YOU could carry it off, you know, first-rate.'

WILLIS, as if finding a certain fascination in the idea: 'Well, I don't know--'

ROBERTS: 'And I could chime in on the laugh. I think I could do that if somebody else was doing the rest.'

WILLIS, after a moment of silent reflection: 'I SHOULD like to do it. I should like to see how old Bemis would look when I played it on him. Roberts, I WILL do it. Not a word! I should LIKE to do it. Now you go on and hurry up your toilet, old fellow; you needn't mind me here. I'll be rehearsing.'

MRS. ROBERTS, knocking at the door, outside: 'Edward, are you NEVER coming?'

ROBERTS: 'Yes, yes; I'll be there in a minute, my dear.'

WILLIS: 'Yes, he'll be there. Run along back, and keep it going till we come. Roberts, I wouldn't take a thousand dollars for this chance.'

ROBERTS: 'I'm glad you like it.'

WILLIS: 'Like it? Of course I do. Or no! Hold on! Wait! It won't do! No; you must take the leading part, and I'll support you, and I'll come in strong if you break down. That's the way we have got to work it. You must make the start.'

ROBERTS: 'Couldn't you make it better, Willis? It's your idea.'

WILLIS: 'No; they'd be sure to suspect me, and they can't suspect you of anything--you're so innocent. The illusion will be complete.'

ROBERTS, very doubtfully: 'Do you think so?'

WILLIS: 'Yes. Hurry up. Let me unbutton that collar for you.'

PART THIRD

SCENE I: MRS. ROBERTS, DR. LAWTON, MRS. CRASHAW, MR. BEMIS, YOUNG MR. AND MRS. BEMIS

MRS. ROBERTS, surrounded by her guests, and confronting from her sofa Mr. Bemis, who still remains sunken in his armchair, has apparently closed an exhaustive recital of the events which have ended in his presence there. She looks round with a mixed air of self-denial and self-satisfaction to read the admiration of her listeners in their sympathetic countenances.

DR. LAWTON, with an ironical sigh of profound impression: 'Well, Mrs. Roberts, you are certainly the most lavishly hospitable of hostesses. Every one knows what delightful dinners you give; but these little dramatic episodes which you offer your guests, by way of appetizer, are certainly unique. Last year an elevator stuck in the shaft with half the company in it, and this year a highway robbery, its daring punishment and its reckless repetition--what the newspapers will call "A Triple Mystery" when it gets to them--and both victims among our commensals! Really, I don't know what more we could ask of you, unless it were the foot-padded footpad himself as a commensal. If this sort of thing should become de rigueur in society generally, I don't know what's to become of people who haven't your invention.'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'Oh, it's all very well to make fun now, Dr. Lawton; but if you had been here when they first came in--'

YOUNG MRS. BEMIS: 'Yes, indeed, I think so too, Mrs. Roberts. If Mr. Bemis--Alfred, I mean--and papa hadn't been with me when you came out there to prepare us, I don't know what I should have done. I should certainly have died, or gone through the floor.' She looks fondly up into the face of her husband for approval, where he stands behind her chair, and furtively gives him her hand for pressure.'

YOUNG MR. BEMIS: 'Somebody ought to write to the Curwens--Mrs. Curwen, that is--about it.'

MRS. BEMIS, taking away her hand: 'Oh yes, papa, DO write!'

LAWTON: 'I will, my dear. Even Mrs. Curwen, dazzling away in another sphere--hemisphere--and surrounded by cardinals and all the other celestial lights there at Rome, will be proud to exploit this

new evidence of American enterprise. I can fancy the effect she will produce with it.'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'And the Millers--what a shame they couldn't come! How excited they would have been!--that is, Mrs. Miller. Is their baby very bad, Doctor?'

LAWTON: 'Well, vaccination is always a very serious thing--with a first child. I should say, from the way Mrs. Miller feels about it, that Miller wouldn't be able to be out for a week to come yet.'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'Oh, how ridiculous you are, Doctor!'

BEMIS, rising feebly from his chair: 'Well, now that it's all explained, Mrs. Roberts, I think I'd better go home; and if you'll kindly have them telephone for a carriage--'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'NO, indeed, Mr. Bemis! We shall not let you go. Why, the IDEA! You must stay and take dinner with us, just the same.'

BEMIS: 'But in this state--'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'Oh, never mind the STATE. You look perfectly well; and if you insist upon going, I shall know that you bear a grudge against Edward for not arresting him. Wait! We can put you in perfect order in just a second.' She flies out of the room, and then comes swooping back with a needle and thread, a fresh white necktie, a handkerchief, and a hair-brush. 'There! I can't let you go to Edward's dressing-room, because he's there himself, and the children are in mine, and we've had to put the new maid in the guest-chamber--you ARE rather cramped in flats, that's true; that's the worst of them--but if you don't mind having your toilet made in public, like the King of France--'

BEMIS, entering into the spirit of it: 'Not the least; but--' He laughs, and drops back into his chair.

MRS. ROBERTS, distributing the brush to young Mr. Bemis, and the tie to his wife, and dropping upon her knees before Mr. Bemis: 'Now, Mrs. Lou, you just whip off that crumpled tie and whip on the fresh one, and, MISTER Lou, you give his hair a touch, and I'll have this torn button-hole mended before you can think.' She seizes it and begins to sew vigorously upon it.

MRS. CRASHAW: 'Agnes, you are the most ridiculously sensible woman in the country.'

LAWTON, standing before the group, with his arms folded and his feet well apart, in an attitude of easy admiration: 'The Wounded Adonis, attended by the Loves and Graces. Familiar Pompeiian fresco.'

MRS. ROBERTS, looking around at him: 'I don't see a great many

Loves.'

LAWTON: 'She ignores us, Mrs. Crashaw. And after what you've just said!'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'Then why don't you do something?'

LAWTON: 'The Loves NEVER do anything--in frescoes. They stand round and sympathise. Besides, we are waiting to administer an anaesthetic. But what I admire in this subject even more than the activity of the Graces is the serene dignity of the Adonis. I have seen my old friend in many trying positions, but I never realised till now all the simpering absurdity, the flattered silliness, the senile coquettishness, of which his benign countenance was capable.'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'Don't mind him a bit, Mr. Bemis; it's nothing but--'

LAWTON: 'Pure envy. I own it.'

BEMIS: 'All right, Lawton. Wait till--'

MRS. ROBERTS, making a final stitch, snapping off the thread, and springing to her feet, all in one: 'There, have you finished, Mr. and Mrs. Lou? Well, then, take this lace handkerchief, and draw it down from his neck and pin it in his waistcoat, and you have--'

LAWTON, as Mr. Bemis rises to his feet: 'A Gentleman of the Old School. Bemis, you look like a miniature of yourself by Malbone. Rather flattered, but--recognisable.'

BEMIS, with perfectly recovered gaiety: 'Go on, go on, Lawton. I can understand your envy. I can pity it.'

LAWTON: 'Could you forgive Roberts for not capturing the garotter?'

BEMIS: 'Yes, I could. I could give the garotter his liberty, and present him with an admission to the Provident Woodyard, where he could earn an honest living for his family.'

LAWTON, compassionately: 'You ARE pretty far gone, Bemis. Really, I think somebody ought to go for Roberts.'

MRS. ROBERTS, innocently: 'Yes, indeed! Why, what in the world can be keeping him?' A nursemaid enters and beckons Mrs. Roberts to the door with a glance. She runs to her; they whisper; and then Mrs. Roberts, over her shoulder: 'That ridiculous great boy of mine says he can't go to sleep unless I come and kiss him good-night.'

LAWTON: 'Which ridiculous great boy, I wonder?--Roberts, or Campbell? But I didn't know they had gone to bed!'

MRS. BEMIS: 'You are too bad, papa! You know it's little Neddy.'

MRS. ROBERTS, vanishing: 'Oh, I don't mind his nonsense, Lou. I'll fetch them both back with me.'

LAWTON, after making a melodramatic search for concealed listeners at the doors: 'Now, friends, I have a revelation to make in Mrs. Roberts's absence. I have found out the garotter--the assassin.'

ALL THE OTHERS: 'What!'

LAWTON: 'He has been secured--'

MRS. CRASHAW, severely: 'Well, I'm very glad of it.'

YOUNG BEMIS: 'By the police?'

MRS. BEMIS, incredulously: 'Papa!'

BEMIS: 'But there were several of them. Have they all been arrested?'

LAWTON: 'There was only one, and none of him has been arrested.'

MRS. CRASHAW: 'Where is he, then?'

LAWTON: 'In this house.'

MRS. CRASHAW: 'Now, Dr. Lawton, you and I are old friends--I shouldn't like to say HOW old--but if you don't instantly be serious, I--I'll carry my rheumatism to somebody else.'

LAWTON: 'My DEAR Mrs. Crashaw, you know how much I prize that rheumatism of yours! I will be serious--I will be only too serious. The garotter is Mr. Roberts himself.'

ALL, horror-struck: 'Oh!'

LAWTON: 'He went out without his watch. He thought he was robbed, but he wasn't. He ran after the supposed thief, our poor friend Bemis here, and took Bemis's watch away, and brought it home for his own.'

YOUNG BEMIS: 'Yes, but--'

MRS. BEMIS: 'But, papa--'

BEMIS: 'How do you know it? I can see how such a thing might happen, but--how do you know it DID?'

LAWTON: 'I divined it.'

MRS. CRASHAW: 'Nonsense!'

LAWTON: 'Very well, then, I read of just such a ease in the

Advertiser a year ago. It occurs annually--in the newspapers. And I'll tell you what, Mrs. Crashaw--Roberts found out his mistake as soon as he went to his dressing-room; and that ingenious nephew of yours, who's closeted with him there, has been trying to put him up to something--to some game.'

MRS. CRASHAW: 'Willis has too much sense. He would know that Edward couldn't carry out any sort of game.'

LAWTON: 'Well, then, he's getting Roberts to let HIM carry out the game.'

MRS. CRASHAW: 'Edward couldn't do that either.'

LAWTON: 'Very well, then, just wait till they come back. Will you leave me to deal with Campbell?'

MRS. CRASHAW: 'What are you going to do?'

YOUNG BEMIS: 'You mustn't forget that he got us out of the elevator, sir.'

MRS. BEMIS: 'We might have been there yet if it hadn't been for him, papa.'

MRS. CRASHAW: 'I shouldn't want Willis mortified.'

BEMIS: 'Nor Mr. Roberts annoyed. We're fellow-sufferers in this business.'

LAWTON: 'Oh, leave it to me, leave it to me! I'll spare their feelings. Don't be afraid. Ah, there they come! Now don't say anything. I'll just step into the anteroom here.'

SCENE II: MR. ROBERTS, MR. CAMPBELL, AND THE OTHERS

ROBERTS, entering the room before Campbell, and shaking hands with his guests: 'Ah, Mr. Bemis; Mrs. Bemis; Aunt Mary! You've heard of our comical little coincidence--our--Mr. Bemis and my--' He halts, confused, and looks around for the moral support of Willis, who follows hilariously.

WILLIS: 'Greatest joke on record! But I won't spoil it for you, Roberts. Go on!' In a low voice to Roberts: 'And don't look so confoundedly down in the mouth. They won't think it's a joke at all.'

ROBERTS, with galvanic lightness: 'Yes, yes--such a joke! Well, you see--you see--'

MRS. CRASHAW: 'See WHAT, Edward? DO get it out!'

WILLIS, jollily: 'Ah, ha, ha!'

ROBERTS, lugubriously: 'Ah, ha, ha!'

MRS. BEMIS: 'How funny! Ha, ha, ha!'

YOUNG MR. BEMIS: 'Capital! capital!'

BEMIS: 'Excellent!'

WILLIS: 'Go on, Roberts, do! or I shall die! Ah, ha, ha!'

ROBERTS, in a low voice of consternation to Willis: 'Where was I?
I can't go on unless I know where I was.'

WILLIS, sotto voce to Roberts: 'You weren't anywhere! For Heaven's
sake, make a start!'

ROBERTS, to the others, convulsively: 'Ha, ha, ha! I supposed all
the time, you know, that I had been robbed, and--and--'

WILLIS: 'Go on! GO on!'

ROBERTS, whispering: 'I can't do it--'

WILLIS, whispering: 'You've GOT to! You're the beaver that clomb
the tree. Laugh naturally, now!'

ROBERTS, with a staccato groan, which he tries to make pass for a
laugh: 'And then I ran after the man--' He stops, and regards Mr.
Bemis with a ghastly stare.

MRS. CRASHAW: 'What is the matter with you, Edward? Are you sick?'

WILLIS: 'Sick? No! Can't you see that he can't get over the joke
of the thing? It's killing him.' To Roberts: 'Brace up, old man!
You're doing it splendidly.'

ROBERTS, hopelessly: 'And then the other man--the man that had
robbed me--the man that I had pursued--ugh!'

WILLIS: 'Well, it is too much for him. I shall have to tell it
myself, I see.'

ROBERTS, making a wild effort to command himself: 'And so--so--this
man--man--ma--'

WILLIS: 'Oh, good Lord--' Dr. Lawton suddenly appears from the
anteroom and confronts him. 'Oh, the devil!'

LAWTON, folding his arms, and fixing his eyes upon him: 'Which means that you forgot I was coming.'

WILLIS: 'Doctor, you read a man's symptoms at a glance.'

LAWTON: 'Yes; and I can see that you are in a bad way, Mr. Campbell.'

WILLIS: 'Why don't you advertise, Doctor? Patients need only enclose a lock of their hair, and the colour of their eyes, with one dollar to pay the cost of materials, which will be sent, with full directions for treatment, by return mail. Seventh son of a seventh son.'

LAWTON: 'Ah, don't try to jest it away, my poor friend. This is one of those obscure diseases of the heart--induration of the pericardium--which, if not taken in time, result in deceitfulness above all things, and desperate wickedness.'

WILLIS: 'Look here, Dr. Lawton, what are you up to?'

LAWTON: 'Look here, Mr. Campbell, what is your little game?'

WILLIS: 'I_ don't know what you're up to.' He shrugs his shoulders and walks up the room.

LAWTON, shrugging his shoulders and walking up the room abreast of Campbell: 'I_ don't know what your little game is.' They return together, and stop, confronting each other.

WILLIS: 'But if you think I'm going to give myself away--'

LAWTON: 'If you suppose I'm going to take you at your own figure--' They walk up the room together, and return as before.

WILLIS: 'Mrs. Bemis, what is this unnatural parent of yours after?'

MRS. BEMIS, tittering: 'Oh, I'm sure I_ can't tell.'

WILLIS: 'Aunt Mary, you used to be a friend of mine. Can't you give me some sort of clue?'

MRS. CRASHAW: 'I should be ashamed of you, Willis, if you accepted anybody's help.'

WILLIS, sighing: 'Well, this is pretty hard on an orphan. Here I come to join a company of friends at the fireside of a burgled brother-in-law, and I find myself in a nest of conspirators.' Suddenly, after a moment: 'Oh, I understand. Why, I ought to have seen at once. But no matter--it's just as well. I'm sure that we shall hear Dr. Lawton leniently, and make allowance for his well-known foible. Roberts is bound by the laws of hospitality, and Mr. Bemis is the father-in-law of his daughter.'

MRS. BEMIS, in serious dismay: 'Why, Mr. Campbell, what do you mean?'

WILLIS: 'Simply that the mystery is solved--the double garotter is discovered. I'm sorry for you, Mrs. Bemis; and no one will wish to deal harshly with your father when he confesses that it was he who robbed Mr. Roberts and Mr. Bemis. All that they ask is to have their watches back. Go on, Doctor! How will that do, Aunt Mary, for a little flyer?'

MRS. CRASHAW: 'Willis, I declare I never saw anybody like you!' She embraces him with joyous pride.

ROBERTS, coming forward anxiously: 'But, my dear Willis--'

WILLIS, clapping his hand over his mouth, and leading him back to his place: 'We can't let you talk now. I've no doubt you'll be considerate, and all that, but Dr. Lawton has the floor. Go on, Doctor! Free your mind! Don't be afraid of telling the whole truth! It will be better for you in the end.' He rubs his hands gleefully, and then thrusting the points of them into his waistcoat pockets, stands beaming triumphantly upon Lawton.

LAWTON: 'Do you think so?' With well-affected trepidation 'Well, friends, if I must confess this--this--'

WILLIS: 'High-handed outrage. Go on.'

LAWTON: 'I suppose I must. I shall not expect mercy for myself; perhaps you'll say that, as an old and hardened offender, I don't deserve it. But I had an accomplice--a young man very respectably connected, and who, whatever his previous life may have been, had managed to keep a good reputation; a young man a little apt to be misled by overweening vanity and the ill-advised flattery of his friends; but I hope that neither of you gentlemen will be hard upon him, but will consider his youth, and perhaps his congenital moral and intellectual deficiencies, even when you find your watches--on Mr. Campbell's person.' He leans forward, rubbing his hands, and smiling upon Campbell, 'How will that do, Mr. Campbell, for a flyer?'

WILLIS, turning to Mrs. Crashaw: 'One ahead, Aunt Mary?'

LAWTON, clasping him by the hand: 'No, generous youth--even!' They shake hands, clapping each other on the back with their lefts, and joining in the general laugh.

BEMIS, coming forward jovially: 'Well, now, I gladly forgive you both--or whoever DID rob me--if you'll only give me back my watch.'

WILLIS: 'I_ haven't got your watch.'

LAWTON: 'Nor I.'

ROBERTS, rather faintly, and coming reluctantly forward: 'I--I have it, Mr. Bemis.' He produces it from one waistcoat pocket and hands it to Bemis. Then, visiting the other: 'And what's worse, I have my own. I don't know how I can ever explain it, or atone to you for my extraordinary behaviour. Willis thought you might finally see it as a joke, and I've done my best to pass it off lightly--'

WILLIS: 'And you succeeded. You had all the lightness of a sick hippopotamus.'

ROBERTS: 'I'm afraid so. I'll have the chain mended, of course. But when I went out this evening I left my watch on my dressing-table, and when you struck against me in the Common I missed it, and supposed I had been robbed, and I ran after you and took yours--'

WILLIS: 'Being a man of the most violent temper and the most desperate courage--'

ROBERTS: 'But I hope, my dear sir, that I didn't hurt you seriously?'

BEMIS: 'Not at all--not the least.' Shaking him cordially by both hands: 'I'm all right. Mrs. Roberts has healed all my wounds with her skilful needle; I've got on one of your best neckties, and this lace handkerchief of your wife's, which I'm going to keep for a souvenir of the most extraordinary adventure of my life--'

LAWTON: 'Oh, it's an old newspaper story, Bemis, I tell you.'

WILLIS: 'Well, Aunt Mary, I wish Agnes were here now to see Roberts in his character of MORAL hero. He 'done' it with his little hatchet, but he waited to make sure that Bushrod was all right before he owned up.'

MRS. ROBERTS, appearing: 'Who, Willis?'

WILLIS: 'A very great and good man--George Washington.'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'I thought you meant Edward.'

WILLIS: 'Well, I don't suppose there IS much difference.'

MRS. CRASHAW: 'The robber has been caught, Agnes.'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'Caught? Nonsense! You don't mean it! How can you trifle with such a subject? I know you are joking! Who is it?'

YOUNG BEMIS: 'You never could guess--'

MRS. BEMIS: 'Never in the world!'

MRS. ROBERTS: 'I don't wish to. But oh, Mr. Bemis, I've just come from my own children, and you must be merciful to his family!'

BEMIS: 'For your sake, dear lady, I will.'

BELLA, between the portieres: 'Dinner is ready, Mrs. Roberts.'

MRS. ROBERTS, passing her hand through Mr. Bemis's arm: 'Oh, then you must go in with me, and tell me all about it.'

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THE ELEVATOR

by William D. Howells

This etext was produced from the 1911 Houghton Mifflin Company edition by David Price, email ccx074@coventry.ac.uk

I.

SCENE: Through the curtained doorway of MRS. EDWARD ROBERTS'S pretty drawing-room, in Hotel Bellingham, shows the snowy and gleaming array of a table set for dinner, under the dim light of gas-burners turned low. An air of expectancy pervades the place, and the uneasiness of MR. ROBERTS, in evening dress, expresses something more as he turns from a glance into the dining-room, and still holding the portiere with one hand, takes out his watch with the other.

MR. ROBERTS to MRS. ROBERTS entering the drawing-room from regions beyond: "My dear, it's six o'clock. What can have become of your aunt?"

MRS. ROBERTS, with a little anxiety: "That was just what I was going to ask. She's never late; and the children are quite heart-broken. They had counted upon seeing her, and talking Christmas a little before they were put to bed."

ROBERTS: "Very singular her not coming! Is she going to begin standing upon ceremony with us, and not come till the hour?"

MRS. ROBERTS: "Nonsense, Edward! She's been detained. Of course she'll be here in a moment. How impatient you are!"

ROBERTS: "You must profit by me as an awful example."

MRS. ROBERTS, going about the room, and bestowing little touches here and there on its ornaments: "If you'd had that new cook to battle with over this dinner, you'd have learned patience by this time without any awful example."

ROBERTS, dropping nervously into the nearest chair: "I hope she isn't behind time."

MRS. ROBERTS, drifting upon the sofa, and disposing her train effectively on the carpet around her: "She's before time. The dinner is in the last moment of ripe perfection now, when we must still give people fifteen minutes' grace." She studies the convolutions of her train absent-mindedly.

ROBERTS, joining in its perusal: "Is that the way you've arranged to be sitting when people come in?"

MRS. ROBERTS: "Of course not. I shall get up to receive them."

ROBERTS: "That's rather a pity. To destroy such a lovely pose."

MRS. ROBERTS: "Do you like it?"

ROBERTS: "It's divine."

MRS. ROBERTS: "You might throw me a kiss."

ROBERTS: "No; if it happened to strike on that train anywhere, it might spoil one of the folds. I can't risk it." A ring is heard at the apartment door. They spring to their feet simultaneously.

MRS. ROBERTS: "There's Aunt Mary now!" She calls into the vestibule, "Aunt Mary!"

DR. LAWTON, putting aside the vestibule portiere, with affected timidity: "Very sorry. Merely a father."

MRS. ROBERTS: "Oh! Dr. Lawton? I am so glad to see you!" She gives him her hand: "I thought it was my aunt. We can't understand why she hasn't come. Why! where's Miss Lawton?"

LAWTON: "That is precisely what I was going to ask you."

MRS. ROBERTS: "Why, she isn't here."

LAWTON: "So it seems. I left her with the carriage at the door when I started to walk here. She called after me down the stairs that she would be ready in three seconds, and begged me to hurry, so that we could come in together, and not let people know I'd saved half a dollar by walking."

MRS. ROBERTS: "SHE'S been detained too!"

ROBERTS, coming forward: "Now you know what it is to have a delinquent Aunt-Mary-in-law."

LAWTON, shaking hands with him: "O Roberts! Is that you? It's astonishing how little one makes of the husband of a lady who gives a dinner. In my time--a long time ago--he used to carve. But nowadays, when everything is served a la Russe, he might as well be abolished. Don't you think, on the whole, Roberts, you'd better not have come

ROBERTS: "Well, you see, I had no excuse. I hated to say an engagement when I hadn't any."

LAWTON: "Oh, I understand. You WANTED to come. We all do, when Mrs. Roberts will let us." He goes and sits down by MRS. ROBERTS, who has taken a more provisional pose on the sofa. "Mrs. Roberts, you're the only woman in Boston who could hope to get people, with a fireside of their own--or a register--out to a Christmas dinner. You know I still wonder at your effrontery a little?"

MRS. ROBERTS, laughing: "I knew I should catch you if I baited my hook with your old friend."

LAWTON: "Yes, nothing would have kept me away when I heard Bemis was coming. But he doesn't seem so inflexible in regard to me. Where is he?"

MRS. ROBERTS: "I'm sure I don't know. I'd no idea I was giving such a formal dinner. But everybody, beginning with my own aunt, seems to think it a ceremonious occasion. There are only to be twelve. Do you know the Millers?"

LAWTON: "No, thank goodness! One meets some people so often that one fancies one's weariness of them reflected in their sympathetic countenances. Who are these acceptably novel Millers?"

MRS. ROBERTS: "Do explain the Millers to the doctor, Edward."

ROBERTS, standing on the hearth-rug, with his thumbs in his waistcoat pockets: "They board."

LAWTON: "Genus. That accounts for their willingness to flutter round your evening lamp when they ought to be singeing their wings at their own. Well, species?"

ROBERTS: "They're very nice young newly married people. He's something or other of some kind of manufactures. And Mrs. Miller is disposed to think that all the other ladies are as fond of him as she is."

MRS. ROBERTS: "Oh! That is not so, Edward."

LAWTON: "You defend your sex, as women always do. But you'll admit that, as your friend, Mrs. Miller may have this foible."

MRS. ROBERTS: "I admit nothing of the kind. And we've invited another young couple who haven't gone to housekeeping yet--the Curwens. And HE has the same foible as Mrs. Miller." MRS. ROBERTS takes out her handkerchief, and laughs into it.

LAWTON: "That is, if Mrs. Miller has it, which we both deny. Let us hope that Mrs. Miller and Mr. Curwen may not get to making eyes at each other."

ROBERTS: "And Mr. Bemis and his son complete the list. Why, Agnes, there are only ten. You said there were twelve."

MRS. ROBERTS: "Well, never mind. I meant ten. I forgot that the Somerses declined." A ring is heard. "Ah! THAT'S Aunt Mary." She runs into the vestibule, and is heard exclaiming without: "Why, Mrs. Miller, is it you? I thought it was my aunt. Where is Mr. Miller?"

MRS. MILLER, entering the drawing-room arm in arm with her hostess: "Oh, he'll be here directly. I had to let him run back for my fan."

MRS. ROBERTS: "Well, we're very glad to have you to begin with. Let me introduce Dr. Lawton."

MRS. MILLER, in a polite murmur: "Dr. Lawton." In a louder tone: "O Mr. Roberts!"

LAWTON: "You see, Roberts? The same aggrieved surprise at meeting you here that I felt."

MRS. MILLER: "What in the world do you mean?"

LAWTON: "Don't you think that when a husband is present at his wife's dinner party he repeats the mortifying superfluity of a bridegroom at a wedding?"

MRS. MILLER: "I'm SURE I don't know what you mean. I should never think of giving a dinner without Mr. Miller."

LAWTON: "No?" A ring is heard. "There's Bemis."

MRS. MILLER: "It's Mr. Miller."

MRS. ROBERTS: "Aunt Mary at last!" As she bustles toward the door: "Edward, there are twelve--Aunt Mary and Willis."

ROBERTS: "Oh, yes. I totally forgot Willis."

LAWTON: "Who's Willis?"

ROBERTS: "Willis? Oh, Willis is my wife's brother. We always have him."

LAWTON: "Oh, yes, Campbell."

MRS. ROBERTS, without: "Mr. Bemis! So kind of you to come on Christmas."

MR. BEMIS, without: "So kind of you to ask us houseless strangers."

MRS. ROBERTS, without: "I ran out here, thinking it was my aunt. She's played us a trick, and hasn't come yet."

BEMIS, entering the drawing-room with Mrs. Roberts: "I hope she won't fail altogether. I haven't met her for twenty years, and I counted so much upon the pleasure--Hello, Lawton!"

LAWTON: "Hullo, old fellow!" They fly at each other, and shake hands. "Glad to see you again."

BEMIS, reaching his left hand to MR. ROBERTS, while MR. LAWTON keeps his right: "Ah! Mr. Roberts."

LAWTON: "Oh, never mind HIM. He's merely the husband of the hostess."

MRS. MILLER, to ROBERTS: "What DOES he mean?"

ROBERTS: "Oh, nothing. Merely a joke he's experimenting with."

LAWTON to BEMIS: "Where's your boy?"

BEMIS: "He'll be here directly. He preferred to walk. Where's your girl?"

LAWTON: "Oh, she'll come by and by. She preferred to drive."

MRS. ROBERTS, introducing them: "Mr. Bemis, have you met Mrs. Miller?" She drifts away again, manifestly too uneasy to resume even a provisional pose on the sofa, and walks detachedly about the room.

BEMIS: "What a lovely apartment Mrs. Roberts has."

MRS. MILLER: "Exquisite! But then she has such perfect taste."

BEMIS, to MRS. ROBERTS, who drifts near them: "We were talking about your apartment, Mrs. Roberts. It's charming."

MRS. ROBERTS: "It IS nice. It's the ideal way of living. All on one floor. No stairs. Nothing."

BEMIS: "Yes, when once you get here! But that little matter of five pair up" -

MRS. ROBERTS: "You don't mean to say you WALKED up! Why in the world didn't you take the elevator?"

BEMIS: "I didn't know you had one."

MRS. ROBERTS: "It's the only thing that makes life worth living in a flat. All these apartment hotels have them."

BEMIS: "Bless me! Well, you see, I've been away from Boston so long, and am back so short a time, that I can't realize your luxuries and conveniences. In Florence we ALWAYS walk up. They have ascenseurs in a few great hotels, and they brag of it in immense signs on the sides of the building."

LAWTON: "What pastoral simplicity! We are elevated here to a degree that you can't conceive of, gentle shepherd. Has yours got an air-cushion, Mrs. Roberts?"

MRS. ROBERTS: "An air-cushion? What's that?"

LAWTON: "The only thing that makes your life worth a moment's purchase in an elevator. You get in with a glass of water, a basket of eggs, and a file of the 'Daily Advertiser.' They cut the elevator loose at the top, and you drop."

BOTH LADIES: "Oh!"

LAWTON: "In three seconds you arrive at the ground-floor, reading your file of the 'Daily Advertiser,' not an egg broken nor a drop spilled. I saw it done in a New York hotel. The air is compressed under the elevator, and acts as a sort of ethereal buffer."

MRS. ROBERTS: "And why don't we always go down in that way?"

LAWTON: "Because sometimes the walls of the elevator shaft give out."

MRS. ROBERTS: "And what then?"

LAWTON: "Then the elevator stops more abruptly. I had a friend who tried it when this happened."

MRS. ROBERTS: "And what did he do?"

LAWTON: "Stepped out of the elevator; laughed; cried; went home; got into bed: and did not get up for six weeks. Nervous shock. He was fortunate."

MRS. MILLER: "I shouldn't think you'd want an air-cushion on YOUR elevator, Mrs. Roberts."

MRS. ROBERTS: "No, indeed! Horrid!" The bell rings. "Edward, YOU

go and see if that's Aunt Mary."

MRS. MILLER: "It's Mr. Miller, I know."

BEMIS: "Or my son."

LAWTON: "My voice is for Mrs. Roberts's brother. I've given up all hopes of my daughter."

ROBERTS, without: "Oh, Curwen! Glad to see you! Thought you were my wife's aunt."

LAWTON, at a suppressed sigh from MRS. ROBERTS: "It's one of his jokes, Mrs. Roberts. Of course it's your aunt."

MRS. ROBERTS, through her set teeth, smilingly: "Oh, if it IS, I'll make him suffer for it."

MR. CURWEN, without: "No, I hated to wait, so I walked up."

LAWTON: "It is Mr. Curwen, after all, Mrs. Roberts. Now let me see how a lady transmutes a frown of threatened vengeance into a smile of society welcome."

MRS. ROBERTS: "Well, look!" To MR. CURWEN, who enters, followed by her husband: "Ah, Mr. Curwen! So glad to see you. You know all our friends here--Mrs. Miller, Dr. Lawton, and Mr. Bemis?"

CURWEN, smiling and bowing, and shaking hands right and left: "Very glad--very happy--pleased to know you."

MRS. ROBERTS, behind her fan to Dr. Lawton: "Didn't I do it beautifully?"

LAWTON, behind his hand: "Wonderfully! And so unconscious of the fact that he hasn't his wife with him."

MRS. ROBERTS, in great astonishment, to Mr. Curwen: "Where in the world is Mrs. Curwen?"

CURWEN: "Oh--oh--she'll be here. I thought she was here. She started from home with two right-hand gloves, and I had to go back for a left, and I--I suppose--Good heavens!" pulling the glove out of his pocket. "I ought to have sent it to her in the ladies' dressing-room." He remains with the glove held up before him, in spectacular stupefaction.

LAWTON: "Only imagine what Mrs. Curwen would be saying of you if she were in the dressing-room."

ROBERTS: "Mr. Curwen felt so sure she was there that he wouldn't wait to take the elevator, and walked up." Another ring is heard. "Shall I go and meet your aunt NOW, my dear?"

MRS. ROBERTS: "No, indeed! She may come in now with all the formality she chooses, and I will receive her excuses in state." She waves her fan softly to and fro, concealing a murmur of trepidation under an indignant air, till the portiere opens, and MR. WILLIS CAMPBELL enters. Then MRS. ROBERTS breaks in nervous agitation "Why, Willis! Where's Aunt Mary?"

MRS. MILLER: "And Mr. Miller?"

CURWEN: "And Mrs. Curwen?"

LAWTON: "And my daughter?"

BEMIS: "And my son?"

MR. CAMPBELL, looking tranquilly round on the faces of his interrogators: "Is it a conundrum?"

MRS. ROBERTS, mingling a real distress with an effort of mock-heroic solemnity: "It is a tragedy! O Willis dear! it's what you see--what you hear; a niece without an aunt, a wife without a husband, a father without a son, and another father without a daughter."

ROBERTS: "And a dinner getting cold, and a cook getting hot."

LAWTON: "And you are expected to account for the whole situation."

CAMPBELL: "Oh, I understand! I don't know what your little game is, Agnes, but I can wait and see. I'M not hungry."

MRS. ROBERTS: "Willis, do you think I would try and play a trick on you, if I could?"

CAMPBELL: "I think you can't. Come, now, Agnes! It's a failure. Own up, and bring the rest of the company out of the next room. I suppose almost anything is allowable at this festive season, but this is pretty feeble."

MRS. ROBERTS: "Indeed, indeed, they are not there."

CAMPBELL: "Where are they, then?"

ALL: "That's what we don't know."

CAMPBELL: "Oh, come, now! that's a little too thin. You don't know where ANY of all these blood-relations and connections by marriage are? Well, search me!"

MRS. ROBERTS, in open distress: "Oh, I'm sure something must have happened to Aunt Mary!"

MRS. MILLER: "I can't understand what Ellery C. Miller means."

LAWTON, with a simulated sternness: "I hope you haven't let that son of yours run away with my daughter, Bemis?"

BEMIS: "I'm afraid he's come to a pass where he wouldn't ask MY leave."

CURWEN, re-assuring himself: "Ah, she's all right, of course. I know that" -

BEMIS: "Miss Lawton?"

CURWEN: "No, no--Mrs. Curwen."

CAMPBELL: "Is it a true bill, Agnes?"

MRS. ROBERTS: "Indeed it is, Willis. We've been expecting her for an hour--of course she always comes early--and I'm afraid she's been taken ill suddenly."

ROBERTS: "Oh, I don't think it's that, my dear."

MRS. ROBERTS: "Oh, of course you never think anything's wrong, Edward. My whole family might die, and"--MRS. ROBERTS restrains herself, and turns to MR. CAMPBELL, with hysterical cheerfulness: "Who came up in the elevator with you?"

CAMPBELL: "Me? _I_ didn't come in the elevator. I had my usual luck. The elevator was up somewhere, and after I'd pressed the annunciator button till my thumb ached, I watched my chance and walked up."

MRS. ROBERTS: "Where was the janitor?"

CAMPBELL: "Where the janitor always is--nowhere."

LAWTON: "Eating his Christmas dinner, probably."

MRS. ROBERTS, partially abandoning and then recovering herself: "Yes, it's perfectly spoiled! Well, friends, I think we'd better go to dinner--that's the only way to bring them. I'll go out and interview the cook." Sotto voce to her husband: "If I don't go somewhere and have a cry, I shall break down here before everybody. Did you ever know anything so strange? It's perfectly--pokerish."

LAWTON: "Yes, there's nothing like serving dinner to bring the belated guest. It's as infallible as going without an umbrella when it won't rain."

CAMPBELL: "No, no! Wait a minute, Roberts. You might sit down without one guest, but you can't sit down without five. It's the old joke about the part of Hamlet. I'll just step round to Aunt Mary's house--why, I'll be back in three minutes."

MRS. ROBERTS, with fervid gratitude: "Oh, how GOOD you are, Willis! You don't know how MUCH you're doing! What presence of mind you have! Why couldn't we have thought of sending for her? O Willis, I can never be grateful enough to you! But you always think of everything."

ROBERTS: "I accept my punishment meekly, Willis, since it's in your honor."

LAWTON: "It's a simple and beautiful solution, Mrs. Roberts, as far as your aunt's concerned; but I don't see how it helps the rest of us."

MRS. MILLER to MR. CAMPBELL: "If you meet Mr. Miller " -

CURWEN: "Or my wife" -

BEMIS: "Or my son" -

LAWTON: "Or my daughter" -

CAMPBELL: "I'll tell them they've just one chance in a hundred to save their lives, and that one is open to them for just five minutes."

LAWTON: "Tell my daughter that I've been here half an hour, and everybody knows I drove here with her."

BEMIS: "Tell my son that the next time I'll walk, and let him drive."

MRS. MILLER: "Tell Mr. Miller I found I had my fan after all."

CURWEN: "And Mrs. Curwen that I've got her glove all right." He holds it up.

MRS. ROBERTS, at a look of mystification and demand from her brother: "Never mind explanations, Willis. They'll understand, and we'll explain when you get back."

LAWTON, examining the glove which CURWEN holds up: "Why, so it IS right!"

CURWEN: "What do you mean?"

LAWTON: "Were you sent back to get a LEFT glove?"

CURWEN: "Yes, yes; of course."

LAWTON: "Well, if you'll notice, this is a right one. The one at home is left."

CURWEN, staring helplessly at it: "Gracious Powers! what shall I do?"

LAWTON: "Pray that Mrs. Curwen may NEVER come."

MR. CURWEN, dashing through the door: "I'll be back by the time Mr. Campbell returns."

MRS. MILLER, with tokens of breaking down visible to MRS. ROBERTS:
"I wonder what could have kept Mr. Miller. It's so very mysterious,
I" -

MRS. ROBERTS, suddenly seizing her by the arm, and hurrying her from the room: "Now, Mrs. Miller, you've just got time to see my baby."

MR. ROBERTS, winking at his remaining guests: "A little cry will do them good. I saw as soon as Willis came in instead of her aunt, that my wife couldn't get through without it. They'll come back as bright as" -

LAWTON: "Bemis, should you mind a bereaved father falling upon your neck?"

BEMIS: "Yes, Lawton, I think I should."

LAWTON: "Well, it IS rather odd about all those people. You can say of one or two that they've been delayed, but five people can't have been delayed. It's too much. It amounts to a coincidence. Hello! What's that?"

ROBERTS: "What's what?"

LAWTON: "I thought I heard a cry."

ROBERTS: "Very likely you did. They profess to deaden these floors so that you can't hear from one apartment to another. But I know pretty well when my neighbor overhead is trying to wheel his baby to sleep in a perambulator at three o'clock in the morning; and I guess our young lady lets the people below understand when she's wakeful. But it's the only way to live, after all. I wouldn't go back to the old up-and-down-stairs, house-in-a-block system on any account. Here we all live on the ground-floor practically. The elevator equalizes everything."

BEMIS: "Yes, when it happens to be where you are. I believe I prefer the good old Florentine fashion of walking upstairs, after all."

LAWTON: "Roberts, I DID hear something. Hark! It sounded like a cry for help. There!"

ROBERTS: "You're nervous, doctor. It's nothing. However, it's easy enough to go out and see." He goes out to the door of the apartment,

and immediately returns. He beckons to DR. LAWTON and MR. BEMIS, with a mysterious whisper: "Come here both of you. Don't alarm the ladies."

II.

In the interior of the elevator are seated MRS. ROBERTS'S AUNT MARY (MRS. CRASHAW), MRS. CURWEN, and MISS LAWTON; MR. MILLER and MR. ALFRED BEMIS are standing with their hats in their hands. They are in dinner costume, with their overcoats on their arms, and the ladies' draperies and ribbons show from under their outer wraps, where they are caught up, and held with that caution which characterizes ladies in sitting attitudes which they have not been able to choose deliberately. As they talk together, the elevator rises very slowly, and they continue talking for some time before they observe that it has stopped.

MRS. CRASHAW: "It's very fortunate that we are all here together. I ought to have been here half an hour ago, but I was kept at home by an accident to my finery, and before I could be put in repair I heard it striking the quarter past. I don't know what my niece will say to me. I hope you good people will all stand by me if she should be violent."

MILLER: "In what a poor man may with his wife's fan, you shall command me, Mrs. Crashaw." He takes the fan out, and unfurls it.

MRS. CRASHAW: "Did she send you back for it?"

MILLER: "I shouldn't have had the pleasure of arriving with you if she hadn't."

MRS. CRASHAW, laughing, to MRS. CURWEN: "What did you send YOURS back for, my dear?"

MRS. CURWEN, thrusting out one hand gloved, and the other ungloved: "I didn't want two rights."

YOUNG MR. BEMIS: "Not even women's rights?"

MRS. CURWEN: "Oh, so young and so depraved! Are all the young men in Florence so bad?" Surveying her extended arms, which she turns over: "I don't know that I need have sent him for the other glove. I could have explained to Mrs. Roberts. Perhaps she would have forgiven my coming in one glove."

MILLER, looking down at the pretty arms: "If she had seen you without."

MRS. CURWEN: "Oh, you were looking!" She rapidly involves her arms in her wrap. Then she suddenly unwraps them, and regards them thoughtfully. "What if he should bring a ten-button instead of an eight! And he's quite capable of doing it."

MILLER: "Are there such things as ten-button gloves?"

MRS. CURWEN: "You would think there were ten-thousand button gloves if you had them to button."

MILLER: "It would depend upon whom I had to button them for."

MRS. CURWEN: "For Mrs. Miller, for example."

MRS. CRASHAW: "We women are too bad, always sending people back for something. It's well the men don't know HOW bad."

MRS. CURWEN: "'Sh! Mr. Miller is listening. And he thought we were perfect. He asks nothing better than to be sent back for his wife's fan. And he doesn't say anything even under his breath when she finds she's forgotten it, and begins, 'Oh, dearest, my fan'--Mr. Curwen does. But he goes all the same. I hope you have your father in good training, Miss Lawton. You must commence with your father, if you expect your husband to be 'good.'"

MISS LAWTON: "Then mine will never behave, for papa is perfectly incorrigible."

MRS. CURWEN: "I'm sorry to hear such a bad report of him. Shouldn't YOU think he would be 'good,' Mr. Bemis?"

YOUNG MR. BEMIS: "I should think he would try."

MRS. CURWEN: "A diplomat, as well as a punster already! I must warn Miss Lawton."

MRS. CRASHAW, interposing to spare the young people: "What an amusing thing elevator etiquette is! Why should the gentlemen take their hats off? Why don't you take your hats off in a horse-car?"

MILLER: "The theory is that the elevator is a room."

YOUNG MR. BEMIS: "We were at a hotel in London where they called it the Ascending Room."

MISS LAWTON: "Oh, how amusing!"

MILLER, looking about: "This is a regular drawing-room for size and luxury. They're usually such cribs in these hotels."

MRS. CRASHAW: "Yes, it's very nice, though I say it that shouldn't of my niece's elevator. The worst about it is, it's so slow."

MILLER: "Let's hope it's sure."

YOUNG MR. BEMIS: "Some of these elevators in America go up like express trains."

MRS. CURWEN, drawing her shawl about her shoulders, as if to be ready to step out: "Well, I never get into one without taking my life in my hand, and my heart in my mouth. I suppose every one really expects an elevator to drop with them, some day, just as everybody really expects to see a ghost some time."

MRS. CRASHAW: "Oh, my dear! what an extremely disagreeable subject of conversation."

MRS. CURWEN: "I can't help it, Mrs. Crashaw. When I reflect that there are two thousand elevators in Boston, and that the inspectors have just pronounced a hundred and seventy of them unsafe, I'm so desperate when I get into one that I could--flirt!"

MILLER, guarding himself with the fan: "Not with me?"

MISS LAWTON, to young MR. BEMIS: "How it DOES creep!"

YOUNG MR. BEMIS, looking down fondly at her: "Oh, does it?"

MRS. CRASHAW: "Why, it doesn't go at all! It's stopped. Let us get out." They all rise.

THE ELEVATOR BOY, pulling at the rope: "We're not there, yet."

MRS. CRASHAW, with mingled trepidation and severity: "Not there? What are you stopping, then, for?"

THE ELEVATOR BOY: "I don't know. It seems to be caught."

MRS. CRASHAW: "Caught?"

MISS LAWTON: "Oh, dear!"

YOUNG MR. BEMIS: "Don't mind."

MILLER: "Caught? Nonsense!"

MRS. CURWEN: "WE'RE caught, I should say." She sinks back on the seat.

THE ELEVATOR BOY: "Seemed to be going kind of funny all day!" He keeps tugging at the rope.

MILLER, arresting the boy's efforts: "Well, hold on--stop! What are you doing?"

THE ELEVATOR BOY: "Trying to make it go."

MILLER: "Well, don't be so--violent about it. You might break something."

THE ELEVATOR BOY: "Break a wire rope like that!"

MILLER: "Well, well, be quiet now. Ladies, I think you'd better sit down--and as gently as possible. I wouldn't move about much."

MRS. CURWEN: "Move! We're stone. And I wish for my part I were a feather."

MILLER, to the boy: "Er--a--er--where do you suppose we are?"

THE ELEVATOR BOY: "We're in the shaft between the fourth and fifth floors." He attempts a fresh demonstration on the rope, but is prevented.

MILLER: "Hold on! Er--er" -

MRS. CRASHAW, as if the boy had to be communicated with through an interpreter: "Ask him if it's ever happened before."

MILLER: "Yes. Were you ever caught before?"

THE ELEVATOR BOY: "No."

MILLER: "He says no."

MRS. CRASHAW: "Ask him if the elevator has a safety device."

MILLER: "Has it got a safety device?"

THE ELEVATOR BOY: "How should I know?"

MILLER: "He says he don't know."

MRS. CURWEN, in a shriek of hysterical laughter: "Why, he understands English!"

MRS. CRASHAW, sternly ignoring the insinuation: "Ask him if there's any means of calling the janitor."

MILLER: "Could you call the janitor?"

THE ELEVATOR BOY, ironically: "Well, there ain't any telephone attachment."

MILLER, solemnly: "No, he says there isn't."

MRS. CRASHAW, sinking back on the seat with resignation: "Well, I don't know what my niece will say."

MISS LAWTON: "Poor papa!"

YOUNG MR. BEMIS, gathering one of her wandering hands into his:
"Don't be frightened. I'm sure there's no danger."

THE ELEVATOR BOY, indignantly: "Why, she can't drop. The cogs in the runs won't let her!"

ALL: "Oh!"

MILLER, with a sigh of relief: "I knew there must be something of the kind. Well, I wish my wife had her fan."

MRS. CURWEN: "And if I had my left glove I should be perfectly happy. Not that I know what the cogs in the runs are!"

MRS. CRASHAW: "Then we're merely caught here?"

MILLER: "That's all."

MRS. CURWEN: "It's quite enough for the purpose. Couldn't you put on a life-preserver, Mr. Miller, and go ashore and get help from the natives?"

MISS LAWTON, putting her handkerchief to her eyes: "Oh, dear!"

MRS. CRASHAW, putting her arm around her: "Don't be frightened, my child. There's no danger."

YOUNG MR. BEMIS, caressing the hand which he holds: "Don't be frightened."

MISS LAWTON: "Don't leave me."

YOUNG MR. BEMIS: "No, no; I won't. Keep fast hold of my hand."

MISS LAWTON: "Oh, yes, I will! I'm ashamed to cry."

YOUNG MR. BEMIS, fervently: "Oh, you needn't be! It is perfectly natural you should."

MRS. CURWEN: "I'm too badly scared for tears. Mr. Miller, you seem to be in charge of this expedition--couldn't you do something? Throw out ballast, or let the boy down in a parachute? Or I've read of a shipwreck where the survivors, in an open boat, joined in a cry, and attracted the notice of a vessel that was going to pass them. We might join in a cry."

MILLER: "Oh, it's all very well joking, Mrs. Curwen" -

MRS. CURWEN: "You call it joking!"

MILLER: "But it's not so amusing, being cooped up here indefinitely."

I don't know how we're to get out. We can't join in a cry, and rouse the whole house. It would be ridiculous."

MRS. CURWEN: "And our present attitude is so eminently dignified! Well, I suppose we shall have to cast lots pretty soon to see which of us shall be sacrificed to nourish the survivors. It's long past dinner-time."

MISS LAWTON, breaking down: "Oh, DON'T say such terrible things."

YOUNG MR. BEMIS, indignantly comforting her: "Don't, don't cry. There's no danger. It's perfectly safe."

MILLER to THE ELEVATOR BOY: "Couldn't you climb up the cable, and get on to the landing, and--ah!--get somebody?"

THE ELEVATOR BOY: "I could, maybe, if there was a hole in the roof."

MILLER, glancing up: "Ah! true."

MRS. CRASHAW, with an old lady's serious kindness: "My boy, can't you think of anything to do for us?"

THE ELEVATOR BOY yielding to the touch of humanity, and bursting into tears: "No, ma'am, I can't. And everybody's blamin' me, as if I done it. What's my poor mother goin' to do?"

MRS. CRASHAW, soothingly: "But you said the runs in the cogs" -

THE ELEVATOR BOY: "How can I tell! That's what they say. They hain't never been tried."

MRS. CURWEN, springing to her feet: "There! I knew I should. Oh"--
She sinks fainting to the floor.

MRS. CRASHAW, abandoning Miss Lawton to the ministrations of young Mr. Bemis, while she kneels beside Mrs. Curwen. and chafes her hand: "Oh, poor thing! I knew she was overwrought by the way she was keeping up. Give her air, Mr. Miller. Open a--Oh, there isn't any window!"

MILLER, dropping on his knees, and fanning Mrs. Curwen: "There! there! Wake up, Mrs. Curwen. I didn't mean to scold you for joking. I didn't, indeed. I--I--I don't know what the deuce I'm up to." He gathers Mrs. Curwen's inanimate form in his arms, and fans her face where it lies on his shoulder. "I don't know what my wife would say if" -

MRS. CRASHAW: "She would say that you were doing your duty."

MILLER, a little consoled: "Oh, do you think so? Well, perhaps."

YOUNG MR. BEMIS: "Do you feel faint at all, Miss Lawton?"

MISS LAWTON: "No, I think not. No, not if you say it's safe."

YOUNG MR. BEMIS: "Oh, I'm sure it is!"

MISS LAWTON, renewing her hold upon his hand: "Well, then! Perhaps I hurt you?"

YOUNG MR. BEMIS: "No, no! You couldn't!"

MISS LAWTON: "How kind you are!"

MRS. CURWEN, opening her eyes: "Where" -

MILLER, rapidly transferring her to Mrs. Crashaw: "Still in the elevator, Mrs. Curwen." Rising to his feet: "Something must be done. Perhaps we HAD better unite in a cry. It's ridiculous, of course. But it's the only thing we can do. Now, then! Hello!"

MISS LAWTON: "Papa!"

MRS. CRASHAW: "Agne-e-e-s!"

MRS. CURWEN, faintly: "Walter!"

THE ELEVATOR BOY: "Say!"

MILLER: "Oh, that won't do. All join in 'Hello!'"

ALL: "Hello!"

MILLER: "Once more!"

ALL: "Hello!"

MILLER: "ONCE more!"

ALL: "Hello!"

MILLER: "Now wait a while." After an interval: "No, nobody coming." He takes out his watch. "We must repeat this cry at intervals of a half-minute. Now, then!" They all join in the cry, repeating it as MR. MILLER makes the signal with his lifted hand.

MISS LAWTON: "Oh, it's no use!"

MRS. CRASHAW: "They don't hear."

MRS. CURWEN: "They WON'T hear."

MILLER: "Now, then, three times!"

ALL: "Hello! hello! hello!"

III.

ROBERTS appears at the outer door of his apartment on the fifth floor. It opens upon a spacious landing, to which a wide staircase ascends at one side. At the other is seen the grated door to the shaft of the elevator. He peers about on all sides, and listens for a moment before he speaks.

ROBERTS: "Hello yourself."

MILLER, invisibly from the shaft: "Is that you, Roberts?"

ROBERTS: "Yes; where in the world are you?"

MILLER: "In the elevator."

MRS. CRASHAW: "We're ALL here, Edward."

ROBERTS: "What! You, Aunt Mary!"

MRS. CRASHAW: "Yes. Didn't I say so?"

ROBERTS: "Why don't you come up?"

MILLER: "We can't. The elevator has got stuck somehow."

ROBERTS: "Got stuck? Bless my soul! How did it happen? How long have you been there?"

MRS. CURWEN: "Since the world began!"

MILLER: "What's the use asking how it happened? We don't know, and we don't care. What we want to do is to get out."

ROBERTS: "Yes, yes! Be careful!" He rises from his frog-like posture at the grating, and walks the landing in agitation. "Just hold on a minute!"

MILLER: "Oh, WE sha'n't stir."

ROBERTS: "I'll see what can be done."

MILLER: "Well, see quick, please. We have plenty of time, but we don't want to lose any. Don't alarm Mrs. Miller, if you can help it."

ROBERTS: "No, no."

MRS. CURWEN: "You MAY alarm Mr. Curwen."

ROBERTS: "What! Are YOU there?"

MRS. CURWEN: "Here? I've been here all my life!"

ROBERTS: "Ha! ha! ha! That's right. We'll soon have you out. Keep up your spirits."

MRS. CURWEN: "But I'm NOT keeping them up."

MISS LAWTON: "Tell papa I'm here too."

ROBERTS: "What! You too, Miss Lawton?"

MRS. CRASHAW: "Yes, and young Mr. Bemis. Didn't I TELL you we were all here?"

ROBERTS: "I couldn't realize it. Well, wait a moment."

MRS. CURWEN: "Oh, you can trust us to wait."

ROBERTS, returning with DR. LAWTON, and MR. BEMIS, who join him in stooping around the grated door of the shaft: "They're just under here in the well of the elevator, midway between the two stories."

LAWTON: "Ha! ha! ha! You don't say so."

BEMIS: "Bless my heart! What are they doing there?"

MILLER: "We're not doing anything."

MRS. CURWEN: "We're waiting for you to do something."

MISS LAWTON: "Oh, papa!"

LAWTON: "Don't be troubled, Lou, we'll soon have you out."

YOUNG MR. BEMIS: "Don't be alarmed, sir, Miss Lawton is all right."

MISS LAWTON: "Yes, I'm not frightened, papa."

LAWTON: "Well, that's a great thing in cases of this kind. How did you happen to get there?"

MILLER, indignantly: "How do you suppose? We came up in the elevator."

LAWTON: "Well, why didn't you come the rest of the way?"

MILLER: "The elevator wouldn't."

LAWTON: "What seems to be the matter?"

MILLER: "We don't know."

LAWTON: "Have you tried to start it?"

MILLER: "Well, I'll leave that to your imagination."

LAWTON: "Well, be careful what you do. You might" -

MILLER, interrupting: "Roberts, who's that talking?"

ROBERTS, coming forward politely: "Oh, excuse me! I forgot that you didn't know each other. Dr. Lawton, Mr. Miller." Introducing them.

LAWTON: "Glad to know you."

MILLER: "Very happy to make your acquaintance, and hope some day to see you. And now, if you have completed your diagnosis"

MRS. CURWEN: "None of us have ever had it before, doctor; nor any of our families, so far as we know."

LAWTON: "Ha! ha! ha! Very good! Well, just keep quiet. We'll have you all out of there presently."

BEMIS: "Yes, remain perfectly still."

ROBERTS: "Yes, we'll have you out. Just wait."

MILLER: "You seem to think we're going to run away. Why shouldn't we keep quiet? Do you suppose we're going to be very boisterous, shut up here like rats in a trap?"

MRS. CURWEN: "Or birds in a cage, if you want a more pleasing image."

MRS. CRASHAW: "How are you going to get us out, Edward?"

ROBERTS: "We don't know yet. But keep quiet" -

MILLER: "Keep quiet! Great heavens! we're afraid to stir a finger. Now don't say 'keep quiet' any more, for we can't stand it."

LAWTON: "He's in open rebellion. What are you going to do, Roberts?"

ROBERTS, rising and scratching his head: "Well, I don't know yet. We might break a hole in the roof."

LAWTON: "Ah, I don't think that would do. Besides you'd have to get a carpenter."

ROBERTS: "That's true. And it would make a racket, and alarm the

house"--staring desperately at the grated doorway of the shaft. "If I could only find an elevator man--an elevator builder! But of course they all live in the suburbs, and they're keeping Christmas, and it would take too long, anyway."

BEMIS: "Hadn't you better send for the police? It seems to me it's a case for the authorities."

LAWTON: "Ah, there speaks the Europeanized mind! They always leave the initiative to the authorities. Go out and sound the fire-alarm, Roberts. It's a case for the Fire Department."

ROBERTS: "Oh, it's all very well to joke, Dr. Lawton. Why don't you prescribe something?"

LAWTON: "Surgical treatment seems to be indicated, and I'm merely a general practitioner."

ROBERTS: "If Willis were only here, he'd find some way out of it. Well, I'll have to go for help somewhere" -

MRS. ROBERTS and MRS. MILLER, bursting upon the scene: "Oh, what is it?"

LAWTON: "Ah, you needn't go for help, my dear fellow. It's come!"

MRS. ROBERTS: "What are you all doing here, Edward?"

MRS. MILLER: "Oh, have you had any bad news of Mr. Miller?"

MRS. ROBERTS: "Or Aunt Mary?"

MILLER, calling up: "Well, are you going to keep us here all night? Why don't you do something?"

MRS. MILLER: "Oh, what's that? Oh, it's Mr. Miller! Oh, where are you, Ellery?"

MILLER: "In the elevator."

MRS. MILLER: "Oh! and where is the elevator? Why don't you get out? Oh" -

MILLER: "It's caught, and we can't."

MRS. MILLER: "Caught? Oh, then you will be killed--killed--killed! And it's all my fault, sending you back after my fan, and I had it all the time in my own pocket; and it comes from my habit of giving it to you to carry in your overcoat pocket, because it's deep, and the fan can't break. And of course I never thought of my own pocket, and I never SHOULD have thought of it at all if Mr. Curwen hadn't been going back to get Mrs. Curwen's glove, for he'd brought another right after she'd sent him for a left, and we were all having such a

laugh about it, and I just happened to put my hand on my pocket, and there I felt the fan. And oh, WHAT shall I do?" Mrs. Miller utters these explanations and self-reproaches in a lamentable voice, while crouching close to the grated door to the elevator shaft, and clinging to its meshes.

MILLER: "Well, well, it's all right. I've got you another fan, here. Don't be frightened."

MRS. ROBERTS, wildly: "Where's Aunt Mary, Edward? Has Willis got back?" At a guilty look from her husband: "Edward! DON'T tell me that SHE'S in that elevator! Don't do it, Edward! For your own sake don't. Don't tell me that your own child's mother's aunt is down there, suspended between heaven and earth like--like" -

LAWTON: "The coffin of the Prophet."

MRS. ROBERTS: "Yes. DON'T tell me, Edward! Spare your child's mother, if you won't spare your wife!"

MRS. CRASHAW: "Agnes! don't be ridiculous. I'm here, and I never was more comfortable in my life."

MRS. ROBERTS, calling down the grating "Oh! Is it you, Aunt Mary?"

MRS. CRASHAW: "Of course it is!"

MRS. ROBERTS: "You recognize my voice?"

MRS. CRASHAW: "I should hope so, indeed! Why shouldn't I?"

MRS. ROBERTS: "And you know me? Agnes? Oh!"

MRS. CRASHAW: "Don't be a goose, Agnes."

MRS. ROBERTS: "Oh, it IS you, aunty. It IS! Oh, I'm SO glad! I'm SO happy! But keep perfectly still, aunty dear, and we'll soon have you out. Think of baby, and don't give way."

MRS. CRASHAW: "I shall not, if the elevator doesn't, you may depend upon that."

MRS. ROBERTS: "Oh, what courage you DO have! But keep up your spirits! Mrs. Miller and I have just come from seeing baby. She's gone to sleep with all her little presents in her arms. The children did want to see you so much before they went to bed. But never mind that now, Aunt Mary. I'm only too thankful to have you at all!"

MRS. CRASHAW: "I wish you did have me! And if you will all stop talking and try some of you to do something, I shall be greatly obliged to you. It's worse than it was in the sleeping car that night."

MRS. ROBERTS: "Oh, do you remember it, Aunt Mary? Oh, how funny you are!" Turning heroically to her husband: "Now, Edward, dear, get them out. If it's necessary, get them out over my dead body. Anything! Only hurry. I will be calm; I will be patient. But you must act instantly. Oh, here comes Mr. Curwen!" MR. CURWEN mounts the stairs to the landing with every sign of exhaustion, as if he had made a very quick run to and from his house. "Oh, HE will help--I know he will! Oh, Mr. Curwen, the elevator is caught just below here with my aunt in it and Mrs. Miller's husband" -

LAWTON: "And my girl."

BEMIS: "And my boy."

MRS. CURWEN, calling up: "And your wife!"

CURWEN, horror-struck: "And my wife! Oh, heavenly powers! what are we going to do? How shall we get them out? Why don't they come up?"

ALL: "They can't."

CURWEN: "Can't? Oh, my goodness!" He flies at the grating, and kicks and beats it.

ROBERTS: "Hold on! What's the use of that?"

LAWTON: "You couldn't get at them if you beat the door down."

BEMIS: "Certainly not." They lay hands upon him and restrain him.

CURWEN, struggling: "Let me speak to my wife! Will you prevent a husband from speaking to his own wife?"

MRS. MILLER, in blind admiration of his frenzy: "Yes, that's just what I said. If some one had beaten the door in at once" -

MRS. ROBERTS: "Oh, Edward, dear, let him speak to his wife."
Tearfully: "Think if I were there!"

ROBERTS, releasing him: "He may speak to his wife all night. But he mustn't knock the house down."

CURWEN, rushing at the grating: "Caroline! Can you hear me? Are you safe?"

MRS. CURWEN: "Perfectly. I had a little faint when we first stuck"
-

CURWEN: "Faint? Oh!"

MRS. CURWEN: "But I am all right now."

CURWEN: "Well, that's right. Don't be frightened! There's no

occasion for excitement. Keep perfectly calm and collected. It's the only way--What's that ringing?" The sound of an electric bell is heard within the elevator. It increases in fury.

MRS. ROBERTS and MRS. MILLER: "Oh, isn't it dreadful?"

THE ELEVATOR BOY: "It's somebody on the ground-floor callin' the elevator!"

CURWEN: "Well, never mind him. Don't pay the slightest attention to him. Let him go to the deuce! And, Caroline!"

MRS. CURWEN: "Yes?"

CURWEN: "I--I--I've got your glove all right."

MRS. CURWEN: "Left, you mean, I hope?"

CURWEN: "Yes, left, dearest! I MEAN left."

MRS. CURWEN: "Eight-button?"

CURWEN: "Yes."

MRS. CURWEN: "Light drab?"

CURWEN, pulling a light yellow glove from his pocket: "Oh!" He staggers away from the grating and stays himself against the wall, the mistaken glove dangling limply from his hand.

ROBERTS, LAWTON, and BEMIS: "Ah! ha! ha! ha!"

MRS. ROBERTS: "Oh, for shame! to laugh at such a time!"

MRS. MILLER: "When it's a question of life and death. There! The ringing's stopped. What's that?" Steps are heard mounting the stairway rapidly, several treads at a time. Mr. Campbell suddenly bursts into the group on the landing with a final bound from the stairway. "Oh!"

CAMPBELL: "I can't find Aunt Mary, Agnes. I can't find anything--not even the elevator. Where's the elevator? I rang for it down there till I was black in the face."

MRS. ROBERTS: "No wonder! It's here."

MRS. MILLER: "Between this floor and the floor below. With my husband in it."

CURWEN: "And my wife!"

LAWTON: "And my daughter!"

BEMIS: "And my son!"

MRS. ROBERTS: "And aunty!"

ALL: "And it's stuck fast."

ROBERTS: "And the long and short of it is, Willis, that we don't know how to get them out, and we wish you would suggest some way."

LAWTON: "There's been a great tacit confidence among us in your executive ability and your inventive genius."

MRS. ROBERTS: "Oh, yes, we know you can do it."

MRS. MILLER: "If you can't, nothing can save them."

CAMPBELL, going to the grating: "Miller!"

MILLER: "Well?"

CAMPBELL: "Start her up!"

MILLER: "Now, look here, Campbell, we are not going to stand that; we've had enough of it. I speak for the whole elevator. Don't you suppose that if it had been possible to start her up we" -

MRS. CURWEN: "We shouldn't have been at the moon by this time."

CAMPBELL: "Well, then, start her DOWN!"

MILLER: "I never thought of that." To the ELEVATOR BOY: "Start her down." To the people on the landing above: "Hurrah! She's off!"

CAMPBELL: "Well, NOW start her up!"

A joint cry from the elevator: "Thank you! we'll walk up this time."

MILLER: "Here! let us out at this landing!" They are heard precipitately emerging, with sighs and groans of relief, on the floor below.

MRS. ROBERTS, devoutly: "O Willis, it seems like an interposition of Providence, your coming just at this moment."

CAMPBELL: "Interposition of common sense! These hydraulic elevators weaken sometimes, and can't go any farther."

ROBERTS, to the shipwrecked guests, who arrive at the top of the stairs, crestfallen, spent, and clinging to one another for support: "Why didn't you think of starting her down, some of you?"

MRS. ROBERTS, welcoming them with kisses and hand-shakes: "I should have thought it would occur to you at once."

MILLER, goaded to exasperation: "Did it occur to any of YOU?"

LAWTON, with sublime impudence: "It occurred to ALL of us. But we naturally supposed you had tried it."

MRS. MILLER, taking possession of her husband: "Oh, what a fright you have given us!"

MILLER: "_I_ given you! Do you suppose I did it out of a joke, or voluntarily?"

MRS. ROBERTS: "Aunty, I don't know what to say to you. YOU ought to have been here long ago, before anything happened."

MRS. CRASHAW: "Oh, I can explain everything in due season. What I wish you to do now is to let me get at Willis, and kiss him." As CAMPBELL submits to her embrace: "You dear, good fellow! If it hadn't been for your presence of mind, I don't know how we should ever have got out of that horrid pen."

MRS. CURWEN, giving him her hand: "As it isn't proper for ME to kiss you"

CAMPBELL: "Well, I don't know. I don't wish to be TOO modest."

MRS. CURWEN: "I think I shall have to vote you a service of plate."

MRS. ROBERTS: "Come and look at the pattern of mine. And, Willis, as you are the true hero of the occasion, you shall take me in to dinner. And I am not going to let anybody go before you." She seizes his arm, and leads the way from the landing into the apartment. ROBERTS, LAWTON, and BEMIS follow stragglingly.

MRS. MILLER, getting her husband to one side: "When she fainted, she fainted AT you, of course! What did you do?"

MILLER: "Who? ! Oh!" After a moment's reflection: "She came to!"

CURWEN, getting his wife aside: "When you fainted, Caroline, who revived you?"

MRS. CURWEN: "Who? ME? Oh! How should I know? I was insensible." They wheel arm in arm, and meet MR. and MRS. MILLER in the middle. MRS. CURWEN yields precedence with an ironical courtesy: "After you, Mrs. Miller!"

MRS. MILLER, in a nervous, inimical twitter: "Oh, before the heroine of the lost elevator?"

MRS. CURWEN, dropping her husband's arm, and taking MRS. MILLER'S: "Let us split the difference."

MRS. MILLER: "Delightful! I shall never forget the honor."

MRS. CURWEN: "Oh, don't speak of honors! Mr. Miller was SO kind through all those terrible scenes in the elevator."

MRS. MILLER: "I've no doubt you showed yourself duly grateful."
They pass in, followed by their husbands.

YOUNG MR. BEMIS, timidly: "Miss Lawton, in the elevator you asked me not to leave you. Did you--ah--mean--I MUST ask you; it may be my only chance; if you meant--never?"

MISS LAWTON, dropping her head: "I--I--don't--know."

YOUNG MR. BEMIS: "But if I WISHED never to leave you, should you send me away?"

MISS LAWTON, with a shy, sly upward glance at him: "Not in the elevator!"

YOUNG MR. BEMIS: "Oh!"

MRS. ROBERTS, re-appearing at the door: "Why, you good-for-nothing young things, why don't you come to--Oh! excuse me!" She re-enters precipitately, followed by her tardy guests, on whom she casts a backward glance of sympathy. "Oh, you NEEDN'T hurry!"

End of The Project Gutenberg Etext of The Elevator, by William D. Howells

THE PARLOR-CAR

by William D. Howells

This etext was produced from the 1911 Houghton Mifflin Company edition by David Price, email ccx074@coventry.ac.uk

SCENE: A Parlor-Car on the New York Central Railroad. It is late afternoon in the early autumn, with a cloudy sunset threatening rain. The car is unoccupied save by a gentleman, who sits fronting one of the windows, with his feet in another chair; a newspaper lies across his lap; his hat is drawn down over his eyes, and he is apparently asleep. The rear door of the car opens, and the conductor enters with a young lady, heavily veiled, the porter coming after with her wraps and travelling-bags. The lady's air is of mingled anxiety and desperation, with a certain fierceness of movement. She casts a

careless glance over the empty chairs.

CONDUCTOR: "Here's your ticket, madam. You can have any of the places you like here,--glancing at the unconscious gentleman, and then at the young lady,--"if you prefer, you can go and take that seat in the forward car."

MISS LUCY GALBRAITH: "Oh, I can't ride backwards. I'll stay here, please. Thank you." The porter places her things in a chair by a window, across the car from the sleeping gentleman, and she throws herself wearily into the next seat, wheels round in it, and lifting her veil gazes absently out at the landscape. Her face, which is very pretty, with a low forehead shadowed by thick blond hair, shows the traces of tears. She makes search in her pocket for her handkerchief, which she presses to her eyes. The conductor, lingering a moment, goes out.

PORTER: "I'll be right here, at de end of de cah, if you should happen to want anything, miss,"--making a feint of arranging the shawls and satchels. "Should you like some dese things hung up? Well, dey'll be jus' as well in de chair. We's pretty late dis afternoon; more'n four hours behin' time. Ought to been into Albany 'fore dis. Freight train off de track jus' dis side o' Rochester, an' had to wait. Was you going to stop at Schenectady, miss?"

MISS GALBRAITH, absently: "At Schenectady?" After a pause, "Yes."

PORTER: "Well, that's de next station, and den de cahs don't stop ag'in till dey git to Albany. Anything else I can do for you now, miss?"

MISS GALBRAITH: "No, no, thank you, nothing." The Porter hesitates, takes off his cap, and scratches his head with a murmur of embarrassment. Miss Galbraith looks up at him inquiringly and then suddenly takes out her porte-monnaie, and fees him.

PORTER: "Thank you, miss, thank you. If you want anything at all, miss, I'm right dere at de end of de cah." He goes out by the narrow passage-way beside the smaller enclosed parlor. Miss Galbraith looks askance at the sleeping gentleman, and then, rising, goes to the large mirror, to pin her veil, which has become loosened from her hat. She gives a little start at sight of the gentleman in the mirror, but arranges her head-gear, and returning to her place looks out of the window again. After a little while she moves about uneasily in her chair, then leans forward, and tries to raise her window; she lifts it partly up, when the catch slips from her fingers, and the window falls shut again with a crash.

MISS GALBRAITH: "Oh, DEAR, how provoking! I suppose I must call the porter." She rises from her seat, but on attempting to move away she finds that the skirt of her polonaise has been caught in the falling window. She pulls at it, and then tries to lift the window again, but the cloth has wedged it in, and she cannot stir it. "Well, I

certainly think this is beyond endurance! Porter! Ah,--Porter! Oh, he'll never hear me in the racket that these wheels are making! I wish they'd stop,--!"--The gentleman stirs in his chair, lifts his head, listens, takes his feet down from the other seat, rises abruptly, and comes to Miss Galbraith's side.

MR. ALLEN RICHARDS: "Will you allow me to open the window for you?" Starting back, "Miss Galbraith!"

MISS GALBRAITH: "Al--Mr. Richards!" There is a silence for some moments, in which they remain looking at each other; then, -

MR. RICHARDS: "Lucy" -

MISS GALBRAITH: "I forbid you to address me in that way, Mr. Richards."

MR. RICHARDS: "Why, you were just going to call me Allen!"

MISS GALBRAITH: "That was an accident, you know very well,--an impulse" -

MR. RICHARDS: "Well, so is this."

MISS GALBRAITH: "Of which you ought to be ashamed to take advantage. I wonder at your presumption in speaking to me at all. It's quite idle, I can assure you. Everything is at an end between us. It seems that I bore with you too long; but I'm thankful that I had the spirit to not at last, and to act in time. And now that chance has thrown us together, I trust that you will not force your conversation upon me. No gentleman would, and I have always given you credit for thinking yourself a gentleman. I request that you will not speak to me."

MR. RICHARDS: "You've spoken ten words to me for every one of mine to you. But I won't annoy you. I can't believe it, Lucy; I can NOT believe it. It seems like some rascally dream, and if I had had any sleep since it happened, I should think I--"

MISS GALBRAITH: "Oh! You were sleeping soundly enough when I got into the car!"

MR. RICHARDS: "I own it; I was perfectly used up, and I HAD dropped off."

MISS GALBRAITH, scornfully: "Then perhaps you HAVE dreamed it."

MR. RICHARDS: "I'll think so till you tell me again that our engagement is broken; that the faithful love of years is to go for nothing; that you dismiss me with cruel insult, without one word of explanation, without a word of intelligible accusation, even. It's too much! I've been thinking it all over and over, and I can't make head or tail of it. I meant to see you again as soon as we got to

town, and implore you to hear me. Come, it's a mighty serious matter, Lucy. I'm not a man to put on heroics and that; but _I_ believe it'll play the very deuce with me, Lucy,--that is to say, Miss Galbraith,--I do indeed. It'll give me a low opinion of woman."

MISS GALBRAITH, averting her face: "Oh, a very high opinion of woman you have had!"

MR. RICHARDS, with sentiment: "Well, there was one woman whom I thought a perfect angel."

MISS GALBRAITH: "Indeed! May I ask her name?"

MR. RICHARDS, with a forlorn smile. "I shall be obliged to describe her somewhat formally as--Miss Galbraith."

MISS GALBRAITH: "Mr. Richards!"

MR. RICHARDS: "Why, you've just forbidden me to say LUCY! You must tell me, dearest, what I have done to offend you. The worst criminals are not condemned unheard, and I've always thought you were merciful if not just. And now I only ask you to be just."

MISS GALBRAITH, looking out of the window: "You know very well what you've done. You can't expect me to humiliate myself by putting your offence into words."

MR. RICHARDS: "Upon my soul, I don't know what you mean! I DON'T know what I've done. When you came at me, last night, with my ring and presents and other little traps, you might have knocked me down with the lightest of the lot. I was perfectly dazed; I couldn't say anything before you were off, and all I could do was to hope that you'd be more like yourself in the morning. And in the morning, when I came round to Mrs. Philips's, I found you were gone, and I came after you by the next train."

MISS GALBRAITH: "Mr. Richards, your personal history for the last twenty-four hours is a matter of perfect indifference to me, as it shall be for the next twenty-four hundred years. I see that you are resolved to annoy me, and since you will not leave the car, I must do so." She rises haughtily from her seat, but the imprisoned skirt of her polonaise twitches her abruptly back into her chair. She bursts into tears. "Oh, what SHALL I do?"

MR. RICHARDS, dryly: "You shall do whatever you like, Miss Galbraith, when I've set you free; for I see your dress is caught in the window. When it's once out, I'll shut the window, and you can call the porter to raise it." He leans forward over her chair, and while she shrinks back the length of her tether, he tugs at the window-fastening. "I can't get at it. Would you be so good as to stand up,--all you can?" Miss Galbraith stands up, droopingly, and Mr. Richards makes a movement towards her, and then falls back. "No, that won't do. Please sit down again." He goes round her chair and

tries to get at the window from that side. "I can't get any purchase on it. Why don't you cut out that piece?" Miss Galbraith stares at him in dumb amazement. "Well, I don't see what we're to do: I'll go and get the porter." He goes to the end of the car, and returns. "I can't find the porter,--he must be in one of the other cars. But"--brightening with the fortunate conception--"I've just thought of something. Will it unbutton?"

MISS GALBRAITH: "Unbutton?"

MR. RICHARDS: "Yes; this garment of yours."

MISS GALBRAITH: "My polonaise?" Inquiringly, "Yes."

MR. RICHARDS: "Well, then, it's a very simple matter. If you will just take it off I can easily" -

MISS GALBRAITH, faintly: "I can't. A polonaise isn't like an overcoat" -

MR. RICHARDS, with dismay: "Oh! Well, then"--He remains thinking a moment in hopeless perplexity.

MISS GALBRAITH, with polite ceremony: "The porter will be back soon. Don't trouble yourself any further about it, please. I shall do very well."

MR. RICHARDS, without heeding her: "If you could kneel on that foot-cushion, and face the window" -

MISS GALBRAITH, kneeling promptly: "So?"

MR. RICHARDS: "Yes, and now"--kneeling beside her--"if you'll allow me to--to get at the window-catch,"--he stretches both arms forward; she shrinks from his right into his left, and then back again,--"and pull while I raise the window" -

MISS GALBRAITH: "Yes, yes; but do hurry, please. If any one saw us, I don't know what they would think. It's perfectly ridiculous!"--pulling. "It's caught in the corner of the window, between the frame and the sash, and it won't come! Is my hair troubling you? Is it in your eyes?"

MR. RICHARDS: "It's in my eyes, but it isn't troubling me. Am I inconveniencing you?"

MISS GALBRAITH: "Oh, not at all."

MR. RICHARDS: "Well, now then, pull hard!" He lifts the window with a great effort; the polonaise comes free with a start, and she strikes violently against him. In supporting the shock he cannot forbear catching her for an instant to his heart. She frees herself, and starts indignantly to her feet.

MISS GALBRAITH: "Oh, what a cowardly--subterfuge!"

MR. RICHARDS: "Cowardly? You've no idea how much courage it took."

Miss Galbraith puts her handkerchief to her face, and sobs. "Oh, don't cry! Bless my heart,--I'm sorry I did it! But you know how dearly I love you, Lucy, though I do think you've been cruelly unjust. I told you I never should love any one else, and I never shall. I couldn't help it; upon my soul, I couldn't. Nobody could. Don't let it vex you, my"--He approaches her.

MISS GALBRAITH: "Please not touch me, sir! You have no longer any right whatever to do so."

MR. RICHARDS: "You misinterpret a very inoffensive gesture. I have no idea of touching you, but I hope I may be allowed, as a special favor, to--pick up my hat, which you are in the act of stepping on."

Miss Galbraith hastily turns, and strikes the hat with her whirling skirts; it rolls to the other side of the parlor, and Mr. Richards, who goes after it, utters an ironical "Thanks!" He brushes it, and puts it on, looking at her where she has again seated herself at the window with her back to him, and continues, "As for any further molestation from me" -

MISS GALBRAITH: "If you WILL talk to me" -

MR. RICHARDS: "Excuse me, I am not talking to you."

MISS GALBRAITH: "What were you doing?"

MR. RICHARDS: "I was beginning to think aloud. I--I was soliloquizing. I suppose I may be allowed to soliloquize?"

MISS GALBRAITH, very coldly: "You can do what you like."

MR. RICHARDS: "Unfortunately that's just what I can't do. If I could do as I liked, I should ask you a single question."

MISS GALBRAITH, after a moment: "Well, sir, you may ask your question." She remains as before, with her chin in her hand, looking tearfully out of the window; her face is turned from Mr. Richards, who hesitates a moment before he speaks.

MR. RICHARDS: "I wish to ask you just this, Miss Galbraith: if you couldn't ride backwards in the other car, why do you ride backwards in this?"

MISS GALBRAITH, burying her face in her handkerchief, and sobbing: "Oh, oh, oh! This is too bad!"

MR. RICHARDS: "Oh, come now, Lucy. It breaks my heart to hear you going on so, and all for nothing. Be a little merciful to both of us, and listen to me. I've no doubt I can explain everything if I

once understand it, but it's pretty hard explaining a thing if you don't understand it yourself. Do turn round. I know it makes you sick to ride in that way, and if you don't want to face me--there!"--wheeling in his chair so as to turn his back upon her--"you needn't. Though it's rather trying to a fellow's politeness, not to mention his other feelings. Now, what in the name" -

PORTER, who at this moment enters with his step-ladder, and begins to light the lamps: "Going pretty slow ag'in, sah."

MR. RICHARDS: "Yes; what's the trouble?"

PORTER: "Well, I don't know exactly, sah. Something de matter with de locomotive. We sha'n't be into Albany much 'fore eight o'clock."

MR. RICHARDS: "What's the next station?"

PORTER: "Schenectady."

MR. RICHARDS: "Is the whole train as empty as this car?"

PORTER, laughing: "Well, no, sah. Fact is, dis cah don't belong on dis train. It's a Pullman that we hitched on when you got in, and we's taking it along for one of de Eastern roads. We let you in 'cause de Drawing-rooms was all full. Same with de lady,"--looking sympathetically at her, as he takes his steps to go out. "Can I do anything for you now, miss?"

MISS GALBRAITH, plaintively: "No, thank you; nothing whatever." She has turned while Mr. Richards and The Porter have been speaking, and now faces the back of the former, but her veil is drawn closely. The Porter goes out.

MR. RICHARDS, wheeling round so as to confront her: "I wish you would speak to me half as kindly as you do to that darky, Lucy."

MISS GALBRAITH: "HE is a GENTLEMAN!"

MR. RICHARDS: "He is an urbane and well-informed nobleman. At any rate, he's a man and a brother. But so am I." Miss Galbraith does not reply, and after a pause Mr. Richards resumes. "Talking of gentlemen, I recollect, once, coming up on the day-boat to Poughkeepsie, there was a poor devil of a tipsy man kept following a young fellow about, and annoying him to death--trying to fight him, as a tipsy man will, and insisting that the young fellow had insulted him. By and by he lost his balance and went overboard, and the other jumped after him and fished him out." Sensation on the part of Miss Galbraith, who stirs uneasily in her chair, looks out of the window, then looks at Mr. Richards, and drops her head. "There was a young lady on board, who had seen the whole thing--a very charming young lady indeed, with pale blond hair growing very thick over her forehead, and dark eyelashes to the sweetest blue eyes in the world. Well, this young lady's papa was amongst those who came up to say

civil things to the young fellow when he got aboard again, and to ask the honor--he said the HONOR--of his acquaintance. And when he came out of his stateroom in dry clothes, this infatuated old gentleman was waiting for him, and took him and introduced him to his wife and daughter; and the daughter said, with tears in her eyes, and a perfectly intoxicating impulsiveness, that it was the grandest and the most heroic and the noblest thing that she had ever seen, and she should always be a better girl for having seen it. Excuse me, Miss Galbraith, for troubling you with these facts of a personal history, which, as you say, is a matter of perfect indifference to you. The young fellow didn't think at the time he had done anything extraordinary; but I don't suppose he DID expect to live to have the same girl tell him he was no gentleman."

MISS GALBRAITH, wildly: "O Allen, Allen! You KNOW I think you are a gentleman, and I always did!"

MR. RICHARDS, languidly: "Oh, I merely had your word for it, just now, that you didn't." Tenderly, "Will you hear me, Lucy?"

MISS GALBRAITH, faintly: "Yes."

MR. RICHARDS: "Well, what is it I've done? Will you tell me if I guess right?"

MISS GALBRAITH, with dignity: "I am in no humor for jesting, Allen. And I can assure you that though I consent to hear what you have to say, or ask, NOTHING will change my determination. All is over between us."

MR. RICHARDS: "Yes, I understand that, perfectly. I am now asking merely for general information. I do not expect you to relent, and, in fact, I should consider it rather frivolous if you did. No. What I have always admired in your character, Lucy, is a firm, logical consistency; a clearness of mental vision that leaves no side of a subject unsearched; and an unwavering constancy of purpose. You may say that these traits are characteristic of ALL women; but they are pre-eminently characteristic of you, Lucy." Miss Galbraith looks askance at him, to make out whether he is in earnest or not; he continues, with a perfectly serious air. "And I know now that if you're offended with me, it's for no trivial cause." She stirs uncomfortably in her chair. What I have done I can't imagine, but it must be something monstrous, since it has made life with me appear so impossible that you are ready to fling away your own happiness--for I know you DID love me, Lucy--and destroy mine. I will begin with the worst thing I can think of. Was it because I danced so much with Fanny Watervliet?"

MISS GALBRAITH, indignantly: "How can you insult me by supposing that I could be jealous of such a perfect little goose as that? No, Allen! Whatever I think of you, I still respect you too much for that."

MR. RICHARDS: "I'm glad to hear that there are yet depths to which you think me incapable of descending, and that Miss Watervliet is one of them. I will now take a little higher ground. Perhaps you think I flirted with Mrs. Dawes. I thought, myself, that the thing might begin to have that appearance, but I give you my word of honor that as soon as the idea occurred to me, I dropped her--rather rudely, too. The trouble was, don't you know, that I felt so perfectly safe with a MARRIED friend of yours. I couldn't be hanging about you all the time, and I was afraid I might vex you if I went with the other girls; and I didn't know what to do."

MISS GALBRAITH: "I think you behaved rather silly, giggling so much with her. But" -

MR. RICHARDS: "I own it, I know it was silly. But" -

MISS GALBRAITH: "It wasn't that; it wasn't that!"

MR. RICHARDS: "Was it my forgetting to bring you those things from your mother?"

MISS GALBRAITH: "No!"

MR. RICHARDS: "Was it because I hadn't given up smoking yet?"

MISS GALBRAITH: "You KNOW I never asked you to give up smoking. It was entirely your own proposition."

MR. RICHARDS: "That's true. That's what made me so easy about it. I knew I could leave it off ANY time. Well, I will not disturb you any longer, Miss Galbraith." He throws his overcoat across his arm, and takes up his travelling-bag. "I have failed to guess your fatal-conundrum; and I have no longer any excuse for remaining. I am going into the smoking-car. Shall I send the porter to you for anything?"

MISS GALBRAITH: "No, thanks." She puts up her handkerchief to her face.

MR. RICHARDS: "Lucy, do you send me away?"

MISS GALBRAITH, behind her handkerchief: "You were going, yourself."

MR. RICHARDS, over his shoulder: "Shall I come back?"

MISS GALBRAITH: "I have no right to drive you from the car."

MR. RICHARDS, coming back, and sitting down in the chair nearest her: "Lucy, dearest, tell me what's the matter."

MISS GALBRAITH: "O Allen! your not KNOWING makes it all the more hopeless and killing. It shows me that we MUST part; that you would go on, breaking my heart, and grinding me into the dust as long as we

lived." She sobs. "It shows me that you never understood me, and you never will. I know you're good and kind and all that, but that only makes your not understanding me so much the worse. I do it quite as much for your sake as my own, Allen."

MR. RICHARDS: "I'd much rather you wouldn't put yourself out on my account."

MISS GALBRAITH, without regarding him: "If you could mortify me before a whole roomful of people, as you did last night, what could I expect after marriage but continual insult?"

MR. RICHARDS, in amazement: "HOW did I mortify you? I thought that I treated you with all the tenderness and affection that a decent regard for the feelings of others would allow. I was ashamed to find I couldn't keep away from you."

MISS GALBRAITH: "Oh, you were ATTENTIVE enough, Allen; nobody denies that. Attentive enough in non-essentials. Oh, yes!"

MR. RICHARDS: "Well, what vital matters did I fail in? I'm sure I can't remember."

MISS GALBRAITH: "I dare say! I dare say they won't appear vital to you, Allen. Nothing does. And if I had told you, I should have been met with ridicule, I suppose. But I knew BETTER than to tell; I respected myself too MUCH."

MR. RICHARDS: "But now you mustn't respect yourself QUITE so much, dearest. And I promise you I won't laugh at the most serious thing. I'm in no humor for it. If it were a matter of life and death, even, I can assure you that it wouldn't bring a smile to my countenance. No, indeed! If you expect me to laugh, now, you must say something particularly funny."

MISS GALBRAITH: "I was not going to say anything funny, as you call it, and I will say nothing at all, if you talk in that way."

MR. RICHARDS: "Well, I won't, then. But do you know what I suspect, Lucy? I wouldn't mention it to everybody, but I will to you--in strict confidence: I suspect that you're rather ashamed of your grievance, if you have any. I suspect it's nothing at all."

MISS GALBRAITH, very sternly at first, with a rising hysterical inflection: "Nothing, Allen! Do you call it NOTHING, to have Mrs. Dawes come out with all that about your accident on your way up the river, and ask me if it didn't frighten me terribly to hear of it, even after it was all over; and I had to say you hadn't told me a word of it? 'Why, Lucy!'--angrily mimicking Mrs. Dawes, 'you must teach him better than that. I make Mr. Dawes tell me everything.' Little simpleton! And then to have them all laugh--Oh, dear, it's too much!"

MR. RICHARDS: "Why, my dear Lucy" -

MISS GALBRAITH, interrupting him: "I saw just how it was going to be, and I'm thankful, THANKFUL that it happened. I saw that you didn't care enough for me to take me into your whole life; that you despised and distrusted me, and that it would get worse and worse to the end of our days; that we should grow farther and farther apart, and I should be left moping at home, while you ran about making confidantes of other women whom you considered WORTHY of your confidence. It all FLASHED upon me in an INSTANT; and I resolved to break with you, then and there; and I did, just as soon as ever I could go to my room for your things, and I'm glad,--yes,--Oh, hu, hu, hu, hu, hu, hu!--SO glad I did it!"

MR. RICHARDS, grimly: "Your joy is obvious. May I ask" -

MISS GALBRAITH: "Oh, it wasn't the FIRST proof you had given me how little you really cared for me, but I was determined it should be the last. I dare say you've forgotten them! I dare say you don't remember telling Mamie Morris that you didn't like embroidered cigar-cases, when you'd just TOLD me that you did, and let me be such a fool as to commence one for you; but I'm thankful to say THAT went into the fire,--oh, yes, INSTANTLY! And I dare say you've forgotten that you didn't tell me your brother's engagement was to be kept, and let me come out with it that night at the Ridges', and then looked perfectly aghast, so that everybody thought I had been blabbing! Time and again, Allen, you have made me suffer agonies, yes, AGONIES; but your power to do so is at an end. I am free and happy at last." She weeps bitterly.

MR. RICHARDS, quietly: "Yes, I HAD forgotten those crimes, and I suppose many similar atrocities. I own it, I AM forgetful and careless. I was wrong about those things. I ought to have told you why I said that to Miss Morris: I was afraid she was going to work me one. As to that accident I told Mrs. Dawes of, it wasn't worth mentioning. Our boat simply walked over a sloop in the night, and nobody was hurt. I shouldn't have thought twice about it, if she hadn't happened to brag of their passing close to an iceberg on their way home from Europe; then I trotted out MY pretty-near disaster as a match for hers,--confound her! I wish the iceberg had sunk them! Only it wouldn't have sunk her,--she's so light; she'd have gone bobbing about all over the Atlantic Ocean, like a cork; she's got a perfect life-preserver in that mind of hers." Miss Galbraith gives a little laugh, and then a little moan. "But since you are happy, I will not repine, Miss Galbraith. I don't pretend to be very happy myself, but then, I don't deserve it. Since you are ready to let an absolutely unconscious offence on my part cancel all the past; since you let my devoted love weigh as nothing against the momentary pique that a malicious little rattle-pate--she was vexed at my leaving her--could make you feel, and choose to gratify a wicked resentment at the cost of any suffering to me, why, I can be glad and happy too." With rising anger, "Yes, Miss Galbraith. All IS over between us. You can go! I renounce you!"

MISS GALBRAITH, springing fiercely to her feet: "Go, indeed! Renounce me! Be so good as to remember that you haven't got me TO renounce!"

MR. RICHARDS: "Well, it's all the same thing. I'd renounce you if I had. Good-evening, Miss Galbraith. I will send back your presents as soon as I get to town; it won't be necessary to acknowledge them. I hope we may never meet again." He goes out of the door towards the front of the car, but returns directly, and glances uneasily at Miss Galbraith, who remains with her handkerchief pressed to her eyes. "Ah--a--that is--I shall be obliged to intrude upon you again. The fact is" -

MISS GALBRAITH, anxiously: "Why, the cars have stopped! Are we at Schenectady?"

MR. RICHARDS: "Well, no; not EXACTLY; not stopped exactly at SCHENECTADY" -

MISS GALBRAITH: "Then what station is this? Have they carried me by?" Observing his embarrassment, "Allen, what is the matter? What has happened? Tell me instantly! Are we off the track? Have we run into another train? Have we broken through a bridge? Shall we be burnt alive? Tell me, Allen, tell me,--I can bear it!--are we telescoped?" She wrings her hands in terror.

MR. RICHARDS, unsympathetically: "Nothing of the kind has happened. This car has simply come uncoupled, and the rest of the train has gone on ahead, and left us standing on the track, nowhere in particular." He leans back in his chair, and wheels it round from her.

MISS GALBRAITH, mortified, yet anxious: "Well?"

MR. RICHARDS: "Well, until they miss us, and run back to pick us up, I shall be obliged to ask your indulgence. I will try not to disturb you; I would go out and stand on the platform, but it's raining."

MISS GALBRAITH, listening to the rain-fall on the roof: "Why, so it is!" Timidly, "Did you notice when the car stopped?"

MR. RICHARDS: "No." He rises and goes out at the rear door, comes back, and sits down again

MISS GALBRAITH, rises, and goes to the large mirror to wipe away her tears. She glances at Mr. Richards, who does not move. She sits down in a seat nearer him than the chair she has left. After some faint murmurs and hesitations, she asks, "Will you please tell me why you went out just now?"

MR. RICHARDS, with indifference: "Yes. I went to see if the rear signal was out."

MISS GALBRAITH, after another hesitation: "Why?"

MR. RICHARDS: "Because, if it wasn't out, some train might run into us from that direction."

MISS GALBRAITH, tremulously: "Oh! And was it?"

MR. RICHARDS, dryly: "Yes."

MISS GALBRAITH returns to her former place, with a wounded air, and for a moment neither speaks. Finally she asks very meekly, "And there's no danger from the front?"

MR. RICHARDS, coldly: "No."

MISS GALBRAITH, after some little noises and movements meant to catch Mr. Richards's attention: "Of course, I never meant to imply that you were intentionally careless or forgetful."

MR. RICHARDS, still very coldly: "Thank you."

MISS GALBRAITH: "I always did justice to your good-heartedness, Allen; you're perfectly lovely that way; and I know that you would be sorry if you knew you had wounded my feelings, however accidentally." She droops her head so as to catch a sidelong glimpse of his face, and sighs, while she nervously pinches the top of her parasol, resting the point on the floor. Mr. Richards makes no answer. "That about the cigar-case might have been a mistake; I saw that myself, and, as you explain it, why, it was certainly very kind and very creditable to--to your thoughtfulness. It WAS thoughtful!"

MR. RICHARDS: "I am grateful for your good opinion."

MISS GALBRAITH: "But do you think it was exactly--it was quite--nice, not to tell me that your brother's engagement was to be kept, when you know, Allen, I can't bear to blunder in such things?" Tenderly, "DO you? You CAN'T say it was?"

MR. RICHARDS: "I never said it was."

MISS GALBRAITH, plaintively: "No, Allen. That's what I always admired in your character. You always owned up. Don't you think it's easier for men to own up than it is for women?"

MR. RICHARDS: "I don't know. I never knew any woman to do it."

MISS GALBRAITH: "Oh, yes, Allen! You know I OFTEN own up."

MR. RICHARDS: "No, I don't."

MISS GALBRAITH: "Oh, how can you bear to say so? When I'm rash, or anything of that kind, you know I acknowledge it."

MR. RICHARDS: "Do you acknowledge it now?"

MISS GALBRAITH: "Why, how can I, when I haven't BEEN rash? WHAT have I been rash" -

MR. RICHARDS: "About the cigar-case, for example."

MISS GALBRAITH: "Oh! THAT! That was a great while ago! I thought you meant something quite recent." A sound as of the approaching tram is heard in the distance. She gives a start, and then leaves her chair again for one a little nearer his. "I thought perhaps you meant about--last night."

MR. RICHARDS: "Well."

MISS GALBRAITH, very judicially: "I don't think it was RASH, exactly. No, not RASH. It might not have been very KIND not to--to--trust you more, when I knew that you didn't mean anything; but--No, I took the only course I could. Nobody could have done differently under the circumstances. But if I caused you any pain, I'm very sorry; oh, yes, very sorry indeed. But I was not precipitate, and I know I did right. At least I TRIED to act for the best. Don't you believe I did?"

MR. RICHARDS: "Why, if you have no doubt upon the subject, my opinion is of no consequence."

MISS GALBRAITH: "Yes. But what do you think? If you think differently, and can make me see it differently, oughtn't you to do so?"

MR. RICHARDS: "I don't see why. As you say, all is over between us."

MISS GALBRAITH: "Yes." After a pause, "I should suppose you would care enough for yourself to wish me to look at the matter from the right point of view."

MR. RICHARDS: "I don't."

MISS GALBRAITH, becoming more and more uneasy as the noise of the approaching train grows louder: "I think you have been very quick with me at times, quite as quick as I could have been with you last night." The noise is more distinctly heard. "I'm sure that if I could once see it as you do, no one would be more willing to do anything in their power to atone for their rashness. Of course I know that everything is over."

MR. RICHARDS: "As to that, I have your word; and, in view of the fact, perhaps this analysis of motive, of character, however interesting on general grounds, is a little" -

MISS GALBRAITH, with sudden violence: "Say it, and take your revenge! I have put myself at your feet, and you do right to trample on me! Oh, this is what women may expect when they trust to men's generosity! Well, it IS over now, and I'm thankful, thankful! Cruel, suspicious, vindictive, you're all alike, and I'm glad that I'm no longer subject to your heartless caprices. And I don't care what happens after this, I shall always--Oh! You're sure it's from the front, Allen? Are you sure the rear signal is out?"

MR. RICHARDS, relenting: "Yes, but if it will ease your mind, I'll go and look again." He rises, and starts towards the rear door.

MISS GALBRAITH, quickly: "Oh, no! Don't go! I can't bear to be left alone!" The sound of the approaching train continually increases in volume. "Oh, isn't it coming very, very, VERY fast?"

MR. RICHARDS: "No, no! Don't be frightened."

MISS GALBRAITH, running towards the rear door. "Oh, I MUST get out! It will kill me, I know it will. Come with me! Do, do!" He runs after her, and her voice is heard at the rear of the car. "Oh, the outside door is locked, and we are trapped, trapped, trapped! Oh, quick! Let's try the door at the other end." They re-enter the parlor, and the roar of the train announces that it is upon them. "No, no! It's too late, it's too late! I'm a wicked, wicked girl, and this is all to punish me! Oh, it's coming, it's coming at full speed!" He remains bewildered, confronting her. She utters a wild cry, and as the train strikes the car with a violent concussion, she flings herself into his arms. "There, there! Forgive me, Allen! Let us die together, my own, own love!" She hangs fainting on his breast. Voices are heard without, and after a little delay The Porter comes in with a lantern.

PORTER: "Rather more of a jah than we meant to give you, sah! We had to run down pretty quick after we missed you, and the rain made the track a little slippery. Lady much frightened?"

MISS GALBRAITH, disengaging herself: "Oh, not at all! Not in the least. We thought it was a train coming from behind, and going to run into us, and so--we--I" -

PORTER: "Not quite so bad as that. We'll be into Schenectady in a few minutes, miss. I'll come for your things." He goes out at the other door.

MISS GALBRAITH, in a fearful whisper: "Allen! What will he ever think of us? I'm sure he saw us!"

MR. RICHARDS: "I don't know what he'll think NOW. He DID think you were frightened; but you told him you were not. However, it isn't important what he thinks. Probably he thinks I'm your long-lost brother. It had a kind of family look."

MISS GALBRAITH: "Ridiculous!"

MR. RICHARDS: "Why, he'd never suppose that I was a jilted lover of yours!"

MISS GALBRAITH, ruefully: "No."

MR. RICHARDS: "Come, Lucy,"--taking her hand,--"you wished to die with me, a moment ago. Don't you think you can make one more effort to live with me? I won't take advantage of words spoken in mortal peril, but I suppose you were in earnest when you called me your own-own"--Her head droops; he folds her in his arms a moment, then she starts away from him, as if something had suddenly occurred to her.

MISS GALBRAITH: "Allen, where are you going?"

MR. RICHARDS: "Going? Upon my soul, I haven't the least idea."

MISS GALBRAITH: "Where WERE you going?"

MR. RICHARDS: "Oh, I WAS going to Albany."

MISS GALBRAITH: "Well, don't! Aunt Mary is expecting me here at Schenectady,--I telegraphed her,--and I want you to stop here, too, and we'll refer the whole matter to her. She's such a wise old head. I'm not sure" -

MR. RICHARDS: "What?"

MISS GALBRAITH, demurely: "That I'm good enough for you."

MR. RICHARDS, starting, in burlesque of her movement, as if a thought had struck HIM: "Lucy! how came you on this train when you left Syracuse on the morning express?"

MISS GALBRAITH, faintly: "I waited over a train at Utica." She sinks into a chair, and averts her face.

MR. RICHARDS: "May I ask why?"

MISS GALBRAITH, more faintly still: "I don't like to tell. I" -

MR. RICHARDS, coming and standing in front of her, with his hands in his pockets: "Look me in the eye, Lucy!" She drops her veil over her face, and looks up at him. "Did you--did you expect to find ME on this train?"

MISS GALBRAITH: "I was afraid it never WOULD get along,--it was so late!"

MR. RICHARDS: "Don't--tergiversate."

MISS GALBRAITH: "Don't WHAT?"

MR. RICHARDS: "Fib."

MISS GALBRAITH: "Not for worlds!"

MR. RICHARDS: "How did you know I was in this car?"

MISS GALBRAITH: "Must I? I thought I saw you through the window; and then I made sure it was you when I went to pin my veil on,--I saw you in the mirror."

MR. RICHARDS, after a little silence: "Miss Galbraith, do you want to know what YOU are?"

MISS GALBRAITH, softly: "Yes, Allen."

MR. RICHARDS: "You're a humbug!"

MISS GALBRAITH, springing from her seat, and confronting him. "So are you! You pretended to be asleep!"

MR. RICHARDS: "I--I--I was taken by surprise. I had to take time to think."

MISS GALBRAITH: "So did I."

MR. RICHARDS: "And you thought it would be a good plan to get your polonaise caught in the window?"

MISS GALBRAITH, hiding her face on his shoulder: "No, no, Allen! That I never WILL admit. NO woman would!"

MR. RICHARDS: "Oh, I dare say!" After a pause: "Well, I am a poor, weak, helpless man, with no one to advise me or counsel me, and I have been cruelly deceived. How could you, Lucy, how could you? I can never get over this." He drops his head upon her shoulder.

MISS GALBRAITH, starting away again, and looking about the car: "Allen, I have an idea! Do you suppose Mr. Pullman could be induced to SELL this car?"

MR. RICHARDS: "Why?"

MISS GALBRAITH: "Why, because I think it's perfectly lovely, and I should like to live in it always. It could be fitted up for a sort of summer-house, don't you know, and we could have it in the garden, and you could smoke in it."

MR. RICHARDS: "Admirable! It would look just like a travelling photographic saloon. No, Lucy, we won't buy it; we will simply keep it as a precious souvenir, a sacred memory, a beautiful dream,--and let it go on fulfilling its destiny all the same."

PORTER, entering, and gathering up Miss Galbraith's things: "Be at Schenectady in half a minute, miss. Won't have much time."

MISS GALBRAITH, rising, and adjusting her dress, and then looking about the car, while she passes her hand through her lover's arm: "Oh, I do HATE to leave it. Farewell, you dear, kind, good, lovely car! May you never have another accident!" She kisses her hand to the car, upon which they both look back as they slowly leave it.

MR. RICHARDS, kissing his hand in the like manner: "Good-by, sweet chariot! May you never carry any but bridal couples!"

MISS GALBRAITH: "Or engaged ones!"

MR. RICHARDS: "Or husbands going home to their wives!"

MISS GALBRAITH: "Or wives hastening to their husbands."

MR. RICHARDS: "Or young ladies who have waited one train over, so as to be with the young men they hate."

MISS GALBRAITH: "Or young men who are so indifferent that they pretend to be asleep when the young ladies come in!" They pause at the door and look back again. "'And must I leave thee, Paradise?'" They both kiss their hands to the car again, and, their faces being very close together, they impulsively kiss each other. Then Miss Galbraith throws back her head, and solemnly confronts him. "Only think, Allen! If this car hadn't broken ITS engagement, we might never have mended ours."

End of Project Gutenberg Etext of The Parlor-Car, by William D. Howells

THE REGISTER

by William D. Howells

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I.

SCENE: In an upper chamber of a boarding-house in Melanchthon Place, Boston, a mature, plain young lady, with every appearance of establishing herself in the room for the first time, moves about,

bestowing little touches of decoration here and there, and talking with another young lady, whose voice comes through the open doorway of an inner room.

MISS ETHEL REED, from within: "What in the world are you doing, Nettie?"

MISS HENRIETTA SPAULDING: "Oh, sticking up a household god or two. What are you doing?"

MISS REED: "Despairing."

MISS SPAULDING: "Still?"

MISS REED, tragically: "Still! How soon did you expect me to stop? I am here on the sofa, where I flung myself two hours ago, and I don't think I shall ever get up. There is no reason WHY I ever should."

MISS SPAULDING, suggestively: "Dinner."

MISS REED: "Oh, dinner! Dinner, to a broken heart!"

MISS SPAULDING: "I don't believe your heart is broken."

MISS REED: "But I tell you it is! I ought to know when my own heart is broken, I should hope. What makes you think it isn't?"

MISS SPAULDING: "Oh, it's happened so often!"

MISS REED: "But this is a real case. You ought to feel my forehead. It's as hot!"

MISS SPAULDING: "You ought to get up and help me put this room to rights, and then you would feel better."

MISS REED: "No; I should feel worse. The idea of household gods makes me sick. Sylvan deities are what I want; the great god Pan among the cat-tails and arrow-heads in the 'ma'sh' at Ponkwasset; the dryads of the birch woods--there are no oaks; the nymphs that haunt the heights and hollows of the dear old mountain; the" -

MISS SPAULDING: "Wha-a-at? I can't hear a word you say."

MISS REED: "That's because you keep fussing about so. Why don't you be quiet, if you want to hear?" She lifts her voice to its highest pitch, with a pause for distinctness between the words: "I'm heart-broken for--Ponkwasset. The dryads--of the--birch woods. The nymphs--and the great--god--Pan--in the reeds--by the river. And all--that--sort of--thing!"

MISS SPAULDING: "You know very well you're not."

MISS REED: "I'm not? What's the reason I'm not? Then, what am I heart-broken for?"

MISS SPAULDING: "You're not heart-broken at all. You know very well that he'll call before we've been here twenty-four hours."

MISS REED: "Who?"

MISS SPAULDING: "The great god Pan."

MISS REED: "Oh, how cruel you are, to mock me so! Come in here, and sympathize a little! Do, Nettie."

MISS SPAULDING: "No; you come out here and utilize a little. I'm acting for your best good, as they say at Ponkwasset."

MISS REED: "When they want to be disagreeable!"

MISS SPAULDING: "If this room isn't in order by the time he calls, you'll be everlastingly disgraced."

MISS REED: "I'm that now. I can't be more so--there's that comfort. What makes you think he'll call?"

MISS SPAULDING: "Because he's a gentleman, and will want to apologize. He behaved very rudely to you."

MISS REED: "No, Nettie; behaved rudely to HIM. Yes! Besides, if he behaved rudely, he was no gentleman. It's a contradiction in terms, don't you see? But I'll tell you what I'm going to do if he comes. I'm going to show a proper spirit for once in my life. I'm going to refuse to see him. You've got to see him."

MISS SPAULDING: "Nonsense!"

MISS REED: "Why nonsense? Oh, why? Expound!"

MISS SPAULDING: "Because he wasn't rude to me, and he doesn't want to see me. Because I'm plain, and you're pretty."

MISS REED: "I'm NOT! You know it perfectly well. I'm hideous."

MISS SPAULDING: "Because I'm poor, and you're a person of independent property."

MISS REED: "DEPENDENT property, I should call it: just enough to be useless on! But that's insulting to HIM. How can you say it's because I have a little money?"

MISS SPAULDING: "Well, then, I won't. I take it back. I'll say it's because you're young, and I'm old."

MISS REED: "You're NOT old. You're as young as anybody, Nettie Spaulding. And you know I'm not young; I'm twenty-seven, if I'm a day. I'm just dropping into the grave. But I can't argue with you, miles off so, any longer." Miss Reed appears at the open door, dragging languidly after her the shawl which she had evidently drawn round her on the sofa; her fair hair is a little disordered, and she presses it into shape with one hand as she comes forward; a lovely flush vies with a heavenly pallor in her cheeks; she looks a little pensive in the arching eyebrows, and a little humorous about the dimpled mouth. "Now I can prove that you are entirely wrong. Where--were you?--This room is rather an improvement over the one we had last winter. There is more of a view"--she goes to the window--"of the houses across the Place; and I always think the swell front gives a pretty shape to a room. I'm sorry they've stopped building them. Your piano goes very nicely into that little alcove. Yes, we're quite palatial. And, on the whole, I'm glad there's no fireplace. It's a pleasure at times; but for the most part it's a vanity and a vexation, getting dust and ashes over everything. Yes; after all, give me the good old-fashioned, clean, convenient register! Ugh! My feet are like ice." She pulls an easy-chair up to the register in the corner of the room, and pushes open its valves with the toe of her slipper. As she settles herself luxuriously in the chair, and poises her feet daintily over the register: "Ah, this is something like! Henrietta Spaulding, ma'am! Did I ever tell you that you were the best friend I have in the world?"

MISS SPAULDING, who continues her work of arranging the room: "Often."

MISS REED: "Did you ever believe it?"

MISS SPAULDING: "Never."

MISS REED: "Why?"

MISS SPAULDING, thoughtfully regarding a vase which she holds in her hand, after several times shifting it from a bracket to the corner of her piano and back: "I wish I could tell where you do look best!"

MISS REED, leaning forward wistfully, with her hands clasped and resting on her knees: "I wish you would tell me WHY you don't believe you're the best friend I have in the world."

MISS SPAULDING, finally placing the vase on the bracket: "Because you've said so too often."

MISS REED: "Oh, that's no reason! I can prove to you that you are. Who else but you would have taken in a homeless and friendless creature like me, and let her stay bothering round in demoralizing idleness, while you were seriously teaching the young idea how to drub the piano?"

MISS SPAULDING: "Anybody who wanted a room-mate as much as I did,

and could have found one willing to pay more than her share of the lodging."

MISS REED, thoughtfully: "Do you think so, Henrietta?"

MISS SPAULDING: "I know so."

MISS REED: "And you're not afraid that you wrong yourself?"

MISS SPAULDING: "Not the least."

MISS REED: "Well, be it so--as they say in novels. I will not contradict you; I will not say you are my BEST friend; I will merely say that you are my ONLY friend. Come here, Henrietta. Draw up your chair, and put your little hand in mine."

MISS SPAULDING, with severe distrust: "What do you want, Ethel Reed?"

MISS REED: "I want--I want--to talk it over with you."

MISS SPAULDING, recoiling: "I knew it! Well, now, we've talked it over enough; we've talked it over till there's nothing left of it."

MISS REED: "Oh, there's everything left! It remains in all its original enormity. Perhaps we shall get some new light upon it." She extends a pleading hand towards Miss Spaulding. "Come, Henrietta, my only friend, shake!--as the 'good Indians' say. Let your Ethel pour her hackneyed sorrows into your bosom. Such an uncomfortable image, it always seems, doesn't it, pouring sorrows into bosoms! Come!"

MISS SPAULDING, decidedly: "No, I won't! And you needn't try wheedling any longer. I won't sympathize with you on that basis at all."

MISS REED: "What shall I try, then, if you won't let me try wheedling?"

MISS SPAULDING, going to the piano and opening it: "Try courage; try self-respect."

MISS REED: "Oh, dear! when I haven't a morsel of either. Are you going to practise, you cruel maid?"

MISS SPAULDING: "Of course I am. It's half-past four, and if I don't do it now I sha'n't be prepared to-morrow for Miss Robins: she takes this piece."

MISS REED: "Well, well, perhaps it's all for the best. If music be the food of--umph-ump!--you know what!--play on." They both laugh, and Miss Spaulding pushes back a little from the piano, and wheels toward her friend, letting one hand rest slightly on the keys.

MISS SPAULDING: "Ethel Reed, you're the most ridiculous girl in the world."

MISS REED: "Correct!"

MISS SPAULDING: "And I don't believe you ever were in love, or ever will be."

MISS REED: "Ah, there you wrong me, Henrietta! I have been, and I shall be--lots of times."

MISS SPAULDING: "Well, what do you want to say now? You must hurry, for I can't lose any more time."

MISS REED: "I will free my mind with neatness and despatch. I simply wish to go over the whole affair, from Alfred to Omaha; and you've got to let me talk as much slang and nonsense as I want. And then I'll skip all the details I can. Will you?"

MISS SPAULDING, with impatient patience: "Oh, I suppose so!"

MISS REED: "That's very sweet of you, though you don't look it. Now, where was I? Oh, yes, do you think it was forth-putting at all, to ask him if he would give me the lessons?"

MISS SPAULDING: "It depends upon why you asked him."

MISS REED: "I asked him from--from--Let me see; I asked him because--from--Yes, I say it boldly; I asked him from an enthusiasm for art, and a sincere wish to learn the use of oil, as he called it. Yes!"

MISS SPAULDING: "Are you sure?"

MISS REED: "Sure? Well, we will say that I am, for the sake of argument. And, having secured this basis, the question is whether I wasn't bound to offer him pay at the end, and whether he wasn't wrong to take my doing so in dudgeon."

MISS SPAULDING: "Yes, I think he was wrong. And the terms of his refusal were very ungentlemanly. He ought to apologize most amply and humbly." At a certain expression in Miss Reed's face, she adds, with severity: "Unless you're keeping back the main point. You usually do. Are you?"

MISS REED: "No, no. I've told you everything--everything!"

MISS SPAULDING: "Then I say, as I said from the beginning, that he behaved very badly. It was very awkward and very painful, but you've really nothing to blame yourself for."

MISS REED, ruefully: "No-o-o!"

MISS SPAULDING: "What do you mean by that sort of 'No'?"

MISS REED: "Nothing."

MISS SPAULDING, sternly: "Yes, you do, Ethel."

MISS REED: "I don't, really. What makes you' think I do?"

MISS SPAULDING: "It sounded very dishonest."

MISS REED: "Did it? I didn't mean it to." Her friend breaks down with a laugh, while Miss Reed preserves a demure countenance.

MISS SPAULDING: "What ARE you keeping back?"

MISS REED: "Nothing at all--less than nothing! I never thought it was worth mentioning."

MISS SPAULDING: "Are you telling me the truth?"

MISS REED: "I'm telling you the truth and something more. You can't ask better than that, can you?"

MISS SPAULDING, turning to her music again: "Certainly not."

MISS REED: in a pathetic wail: "O Henrietta! do you abandon me thus? Well, I will tell you, heartless girl! I've only kept it back till now because it was so extremely mortifying to my pride as an artist--as a student of oil. Will you hear me?"

MISS SPAULDING, beginning to play: "No."

MISS REED, with burlesque wildness: "You shall!" Miss Spaulding involuntarily desists. "There was a moment--a fatal moment--when he said he thought he ought to tell me that if I found oil amusing I could go on; but that he didn't believe I should ever learn to use it, and he couldn't let me take lessons from him with the expectation that I should. There!"

MISS SPAULDING, with awful reproach: "And you call that less than nothing? I've almost a mind never to speak to you again, Ethel. How COULD you deceive me so?"

MISS REED: "Was it really deceiving? I shouldn't call it so. And I needed your sympathy so much, and I knew I shouldn't get it unless you thought I was altogether in the right."

MISS SPAULDING: "You are altogether in the wrong! And it's YOU that ought to apologize to HIM--on your bended knees. How COULD you offer him money after that? I wonder at you, Ethel!"

MISS REED: "Why--don't you see, Nettie?--I did keep on taking the lessons of him. I did find oil amusing--or the oilist--and I kept

on. Of course I had to, off there in a farmhouse full of lady boarders, and he the only gentleman short of Crawford's. Strike, but hear me, Henrietta Spaulding! What was I to do about the half-dozen lessons I had taken before he told me I should never learn to use oil? Was I to offer to pay him for these, and not for the rest; or was I to treat the whole series as gratuitous? I used to lie awake thinking about it. I've got little tact, but I couldn't find any way out of the trouble. It was a box--yes, a box of the deepest dye! And the whole affair having got to be--something else, don't you know?--made it all the worse. And if he'd only--only--But he didn't. Not a syllable, not a breath! And there I was. I HAD to offer him the money. And it's almost killed me--the way he took my offering it, and now the way you take it! And it's all of a piece." Miss Reed suddenly snatches her handkerchief from her pocket, and buries her face in it.--"Oh, dear--oh, dear! Oh!--hu, hu, hu!"

MISS SPAULDING, relenting: "It was awkward."

MISS REED: "Awkward! You seem to think that because I carry things off lightly I have no feeling."

MISS SPAULDING: "You know I don't think that, Ethel."

MISS REED, pursuing her advantage: "I don't know it from you, Nettie. I've tried and TRIED to pass it off as a joke, and to treat it as something funny; but I can tell you it's no joke at all."

MISS SPAULDING, sympathetically: "I see, dear."

MISS REED: "It's not that I care for him" -

MISS SPAULDING: "Why, of course."

MISS REED: "For I don't in the least. He is horrid every way: blunt, and rude, and horrid. I never cared for him. But I care for myself! He has put me in the position of having done an unkind thing--an unladylike thing--when I was only doing what I had to do. Why need he have taken it the way he did? Why couldn't he have said politely that he couldn't accept the money because he hadn't earned it? Even THAT would have been mortifying enough. But he must go and be so violent, and rush off, and--Oh, I never could have treated anybody so!"

MISS SPAULDING: "Not unless you were very fond of them."

MISS REED: "What?"

MISS SPAULDING: "Not unless you were very fond of them."

MISS REED, putting away her handkerchief: "Oh, nonsense, Nettie! He never cared anything for me, or he couldn't have acted so. But no matter for that. He has fixed everything so that it can never be got straight--never in the world. It will just have to remain a hideous

mass of--of--_I_ don't know what; and I have simply got to on withering with despair at the point where I left off. But I don't care! That's one comfort."

MISS SPAULDING: "I don't believe he'll let you wither long, Ethel."

MISS REED: "He's let me wither for twenty-four hours already! But it's nothing to me, now, how long he lets me wither. I'm perfectly satisfied to have the affair remain as it is. I am in the right, and if he comes I shall refuse to see him."

MISS SPAULDING: "Oh, no, you won't, Ethel!"

MISS REED: "Yes, I shall. I shall receive him very coldly. I won't listen to any excuse from him."

MISS SPAULDING: "Oh, yes, you will, Ethel!"

MISS REED: "No, I shall not. If he wishes me to listen he must begin by humbling himself in the dust--yes, the dust, Nettie! I won't take anything short of it. I insist that he shall realize that I have suffered."

MISS SPAULDING: "Perhaps he has suffered too!"

MISS REED: "Oh, HE suffered!"

MISS SPAULDING: "You know that he was perfectly devoted to you."

MISS REED: "He never said so."

MISS SPAULDING: "Perhaps he didn't dare."

MISS REED: "He dared to be very insolent to me."

MISS SPAULDING: "And you know you liked him very much."

MISS REED: "I won't let you say that, Nettie Spaulding. I DIDN'T like him. I respected and admired him; but I didn't LIKE him. He will come near me; but if he does he has to begin by--by--Let me see, what shall I make him begin by doing?" She casts up her eyes for inspiration while she leans forward over the register. "Yes, I will! He has got to begin by taking that money!"

MISS SPAULDING: "Ethel, you wouldn't put that affront upon a sensitive and high-spirited man!"

MISS REED: "Wouldn't I? You wait and SEE, Miss Spaulding! He shall take the money, and he shall sign a receipt for it. I'll draw up the receipt now, so as to have it ready, and I shall ask him to sign it the very moment he enters this door--the very instant!" She takes a portfolio from the table near her, without rising, and writes: "Received from Miss Ethel Reed one hundred and twenty-five dollars,

in full, for twenty-five lessons in oil-painting.' There--when Mr. Oliver Ransom has signed this little document he may begin to talk; not before!" She leans back in her chair with an air of pitiless determination.

MISS SPAULDING: "But, Ethel, you don't mean to make him take money for the lessons he gave you after he told you you couldn't learn anything?"

MISS REED, after a moment's pause: "Yes, I do. This is to punish him. I don't wish for justice now; I wish for vengeance! At first I would have compromised on the six lessons, or on none at all, if he had behaved nicely; but after what's happened I shall insist upon paying him for every lesson, so as to make him feel that the whole thing, from first to last, was a purely business transaction on my part. Yes, a PURELY--BUSINESS--TRANSACTION!"

MISS SPAULDING, turning to her music: "Then I've got nothing more to say to you, Ethel Reed."

MISS REED: "I don't say but what, after he's taken the money and signed the receipt, I'll listen to anything else he's got to say, very willingly." Miss Spaulding makes no answer, but begins to play with a scientific absorption, feeling her way fitfully through the new piece, while Miss Reed, seated by the register, trifles with the book she has taken from the table.

II.

The interior of the room of Miss Spaulding and Miss Reed remains in view, while the scene discloses, on the other side of the partition wall in the same house, the bachelor apartment of Mr. Samuel Grinnidge. Mr. Grinnidge in his dressing-gown and slippers, with his pipe in his mouth, has the effect of having just come in; his friend Mr. Oliver Ransom stands at the window, staring out into the November weather.

GRINNIDGE: "How long have you been waiting here?"

RANSOM: "Ten minutes--ten years. How should I know?"

GRINNIDGE: "Well, I don't know who else should. Get back to-day?"

RANSOM: "Last night."

GRINNIDGE: "Well, take off your coat, and pull up to the register, and warm your poor feet." He puts his hand out over the register. "Confound it! somebody's got the register open in the next room! You

see, one pipe comes up from the furnace and branches into a V just under the floor, and professes to heat both rooms. But it don't. There was a fellow in there last winter who used to get all my heat. Used to go out and leave his register open, and I'd come in here just before dinner and find this place as cold as a barn. We had a running fight of it all winter. The man who got his register open first in the morning got all the heat for the day, for it never turned the other way when it started in one direction. Used to almost suffocate--warm, muggy days--maintaining my rights. Some piano-pounder in there this winter, it seems. Hear? And she hasn't lost any time in learning the trick of the register. What kept you so late in the country?"

RANSOM, after an absent-minded pause: "Grinnidge, I wish you would give me some advice."

GRINNIDGE: "You can have all you want of it at the market price."

RANSOM: "I don't mean your legal advice."

GRINNIDGE: "I'm sorry. What have you been doing?"

RANSOM: "I've been making an ass of myself."

GRINNIDGE: "Wasn't that rather superfluous?"

RANSOM: "If you please, yes. But now, if you're capable of listening to me without any further display of your cross-examination wit, I should like to tell you how it happened."

GRINNIDGE: "I will do my best to veil my brilliancy. Go on."

RANSOM: "I went up to Ponkwasset early in September for the foliage."

GRINNIDGE: "And staid till late in October. There must have been a reason for that. What was her name? Foliage?"

RANSOM, coming up to the corner of the chimney-piece, near which his friend sits, and talking to him directly over the register: "I think you'll have to get along without the name for the present. I'll tell you by and by." As Mr. Ransom pronounces these words, Miss Reed, on her side of the partition, lifts her head with a startled air, and, after a moment of vague circumspection, listens keenly. "But she was beautiful. She was a blonde, and she had the loveliest eyes--eyes, you know, that could be funny or tender, just as she chose--the kind of eyes I always liked." Miss Reed leans forward over the register. "She had one of those faces that always leave you in doubt whether they're laughing at you, and so keep you in wholesome subjection; but you feel certain that they're GOOD, and that if they did hurt you by laughing at you, they'd look sorry for you afterward. When she walked you saw what an exquisite creature she was. It always made me mad to think I couldn't PAINT her walk."

GRINNIDGE: "I suppose you saw a good deal of her walk."

RANSOM: "Yes; we were off in the woods and fields half the time together." He takes a turn towards the window.

MISS REED, suddenly shutting the register on her side: "Oh!"

MISS SPAULDING, looking up from her music: "What is it, Ethel?"

MISS REED: "Nothing, nothing; I--I--thought it was getting too warm. Go on, dear; don't let me interrupt you." After a moment of heroic self-denial she softly presses the register open with her foot.

RANSOM, coming back to the register: "It all began in that way. I had the good fortune one day to rescue her from a--cow."

MISS REED: "Oh, for shame!"

MISS SPAULDING, desisting from her piano: "What IS the matter?"

MISS REED, clapping the register to: "This ridiculous book! But don't--don't mind me, Nettie." Breathlessly: "Go--go--on!" Miss Spaulding resumes, and again Miss Reed softly presses the register open.

RANSOM, after a pause: "The cow was grazing, and had no more thought of hooking Miss--"

MISS REED: "Oh, I didn't suppose he WOULD!--Go on, Nettie, go on! The hero--SUCH a goose!"

RANSOM: "I drove her away with my camp-stool, and Miss--the young lady--was as grateful as if I had rescued her from a menagerie of wild animals. I walked home with her to the farm house, and the trouble began at once." Pantomime of indignant protest and burlesque menace on the part of Miss Reed. "There wasn't another well woman in the house, except her friend Miss Spaulding, who was rather old and rather plain." He takes another turn to the window.

MISS REED: "Oh!" She shuts the register, but instantly opens it again. "Louder, Nettie."

MISS SPAULDING, in astonishment: "What?"

MISS REED: "Did I speak? I didn't know it. I" -

MISS SPAULDING, desisting from practice: "What is that strange, hollow, rumbling, mumbling kind of noise?"

MISS REED, softly closing the register with her foot: "I don't hear any strange, hollow, rumbling, mumbling kind of noise. Do you hear it NOW?"

MISS SPAULDING: "No. It was the Brighton whistle, probably."

MISS REED: "Oh, very likely." As Miss Spaulding turns again to her practice Miss Reed re-opens the register and listens again. A little interval of silence ensues, while Ransom lights a cigarette.

GRINNIDGE: "So you sought opportunities of rescuing her from other cows?"

RANSOM, returning: "That wasn't necessary. The young lady was so impressed by my behavior, that she asked if I would give her some lessons in the use of oil."

GRINNIDGE: "She thought if she knew how to paint pictures like yours she wouldn't need any one to drive the cows away."

RANSOM: "Don't be farcical, Grinnidge. That sort of thing will do with some victim on the witness-stand who can't help himself. Of course I said I would, and we were off half the time together, painting the loveliest and loneliest bits around Ponkwasset. It all went on very well, till one day I felt bound in conscience to tell her that I didn't think she would ever learn to paint, and that--if she was serious about it she'd better drop it at once, for she was wasting her time."

GRINNIDGE, getting up to fill his pipe: "That was a pleasant thing to do."

RANSOM: "I told her that if it amused her, to keep on; I would be only too glad to give her all--the hints I could, but that I oughtn't to encourage her. She seemed a good deal hurt. I fancied at the time that she thought I was tired of having her with me so much."

MISS REED: "Oh, DID you, indeed!" To Miss Spaulding, who bends an astonished glance upon her from the piano: "The man in this book is the most CONCEITED creature, Nettie. Play chords--something very subdued--ah!"

MISS SPAULDING: "What are you talking about, Ethel?"

RANSOM: "That was at night; but the next day she came up smiling, and said that if I didn't mind she would keep on--for amusement; she wasn't a bit discouraged."

MISS REED: "Oh!--Go on, Nettie; don't let my outbursts interrupt you."

RANSOM: "I used to fancy sometimes that she was a little sweet on me."

MISS REED: "You wretch!--Oh, scales, Nettie! Play scales!"

MISS SPAULDING: "Ethel Reed, are you crazy?"

Ransom, after a thoughtful moment: "Well, so it went on for the next seven or eight weeks. When we weren't sketching in the meadows, or on the mountain-side, or in the old punt on the pond, we were walking up and down the farmhouse piazza together. She used to read to me when I was at work. She had a heavenly voice, Grinnidge."

MISS REED: "Oh, you silly, silly thing!--Really this book makes me sick, Nettie."

RANSOM: "Well, the long and the short of it was, I was hit--HARD, and I lost all courage. You know how I am, Grinnidge."

MISS REED, softly: "Oh, poor fellow!"

RANSOM: "So I let the time go by, and at the end I hadn't said anything."

MISS REED: "No, sir! You HADN'T!"

MISS SPAULDING gradually ceases to play, and fixes her attention wholly upon Miss Reed, who bends forward over the register with an intensely excited face.

RANSOM: "Then something happened that made me glad, for twenty-four hours at least, that I hadn't spoken. She sent me the money for twenty-five lessons. Imagine how I felt, Grinnidge! What could I suppose but that she had been quietly biding her time, and storing up her resentment for my having told her she couldn't learn to paint, till she could pay me back with interest in one supreme insult?"

MISS REED, in a low voice: "Oh, how could you think such a cruel, vulgar thing?" Miss Spaulding leaves the piano, and softly approaches her, where she has sunk on her knees beside the register.

RANSOM: "It was tantamount to telling me that she had been amusing herself with me instead of my lessons. It remanded our whole association, which I had got to thinking so romantic, to the relation of teacher and pupil. It was a snub--a heartless, killing snub; and I couldn't see it in any other light." Ransom walks away to the window, and looks out.

MISS REED, flinging herself backward from the register, and hiding her face in her hands: "Oh, it wasn't! it wasn't! it wasn't! How could you think so?"

MISS SPAULDING, rushing forward, and catching her friend in her arms: "What is the matter with you, Ethel Reed? What are you doing here, over the register? Are you trying to suffocate yourself? Have you taken leave of your senses?"

GRINNIDGE: "Our fair friend on the other side of the wall seems to

be on the rampage."

MISS SPAULDING, shutting the register with a violent clash: "Ugh! how hot it is here!"

GRINNIDGE: "Doesn't like your conversation, apparently."

MISS REED, frantically pressing forward to open the register: "Oh, don't shut it, Nettie, dear! If you do I shall die! Do-o-n't shut the register!"

MISS SPAULDING: "Don't shut it? Why, we've got all the heat of the furnace in the room now. Surely you don't want any more?"

MISS REED: "No, no; not any more. But--but--Oh, dear! what shall I do?" She still struggles in the embrace of her friend.

GRINNIDGE, remaining quietly at the register, while Ransom walks away to the window: "Well, what did you do?"

MISS REED: "There, there! They're commencing again! DO open it, Nettie. I WILL have it open!" She wrenches herself free, and dashes the register open.

GRINNIDGE: "Ah, she's opened it again."

Miss Reed, in a stage-whisper: "That's the other one!"

RANSOM, from the window: "Do? I'll tell you what I did."

MISS REED: "That's OI--Mr. Ransom. And, oh, I can't make out what he's saying! He must have gone away to the other side of the room-- and it's at the most important point!"

MISS SPAULDING, in an awful undertone: "Was that the hollow rumbling I heard? And have you been listening at the register to what they've been saying? O ETHEL!"

MISS REED: "I haven't been listening, exactly."

MISS SPAULDING: "You have! You have been eavesdropping!"

MISS REED: "Eavesdropping is listening through a key-hole, or around a corner. This is very different. Besides, it's Oliver, and he's been talking about ME. Hark!" She clutches her friend's hand, where they have crouched upon the floor together, and pulls her forward to the register. "Oh, dear, how hot it is! I wish they would cut off the heat down below."

GRINNIDGE, smoking peacefully through the silence which his friend has absent-mindedly let follow upon his last words: "Well, you seem disposed to take your time about it."

RANSOM: "About what? Oh, yes! Well" -

MISS REED: "Sh! Listen."

MISS SPAULDING: "I won't listen! It's shameful: it's wicked! I don't see how you can do it, Ethel!" She remains, however, kneeling near the register, and she involuntarily inclines a little more toward it.

RANSOM: "--It isn't a thing that I care to shout from the house-tops." He returns from the window to the chimney-piece. "I wrote the rudest kind of note, and sent back her letter and her money in it. She had said that she hoped our acquaintance was not to end with the summer, but that we might sometimes meet in Boston; and I answered that our acquaintance had ended already, and that I should be sorry to meet her anywhere again."

GRINNIDGE: "Well, if you wanted to make an ass of yourself, you did it pretty completely."

MISS REED, whispering: "How witty he is! Those men are always so humorous with each other."

RANSOM: "Yes; I didn't do it by halves."

MISS REED, whispering: "Oh, THAT'S funny, too!"

GRINNIDGE: "It didn't occur to you that she might feel bound to pay you for the first half-dozen, and was embarrassed how to offer to pay for them alone?"

MISS REED: "How he DOES go to the heart of the matter!" She presses Miss Spaulding's hand in an ecstasy of approval.

RANSOM: "Yes, it did--afterward."

MISS REED, in a tender murmur: "Oh, POOR Oliver!"

RANSOM: "And it occurred to me that she was perfectly right in the whole affair."

MISS REED: "Oh, how generous! how noble!"

RANSOM: "I had had a thousand opportunities, and I hadn't been man enough to tell her that I was in love with her."

MISS REED: "How can he say it right out so bluntly? But if it's true" -

RANSOM: "I COULDN'T speak. I was afraid of putting an end to the affair--of frightening her--disgusting her."

MISS REED: "Oh, how little they know us, Nettie!"

RANSOM: "She seemed so much above me in every way--so sensitive, so refined, so gentle, so good, so angelic!"

MISS REED: "There! NOW do you call it eavesdropping? If listeners never hear any good of themselves, what do you say to that? It proves that I haven't been listening."

MISS SPAULDING: "'Sh! They're saying something else."

RANSOM: "But all that's neither here nor there. I can see now that under the circumstances she couldn't as a lady have acted otherwise than she did. She was forced to treat our whole acquaintance as a business matter, and I had forced her to do it."

MISS REED: "You HAD, you poor thing!"

GRINNIDGE: "Well, what do you intend to do about it?"

RANSOM: "Well" -

MISS REED: "'Sh!"

MISS SPAULDING: "'Sh!"

RANSOM: "--that's what I want to submit to you, Grinnidge. I must see her."

GRINNIDGE: "Yes. I'm glad _I_ mustn't."

MISS REED, stifling a laugh on Miss Spaulding's shoulder: "They're actually AFRAID of us, Nettie!"

RANSOM: "See her, and go down in the dust."

MISS REED: "My very words!"

RANSOM: "I have been trying to think what was the very humblest pie I could eat, by way of penance; and it appears to me that I had better begin by saying that I have come to ask her for the money I refused."

MISS REED, enraptured: "Oh! doesn't it seem just like--like--inspiration, Nettie?"

MISS SPAULDING: "'Sh! Be quiet, do! You'll frighten them away!"

GRINNIDGE: "And then what?"

RANSOM: "What then? I don't know what then. But it appears to me that, as a gentleman, I've got nothing to do with the result. All that I've got to do is to submit to my fate, whatever it is."

MISS REED, breathlessly: "What princely courage! What delicate magnanimity! Oh, he needn't have the LEAST fear! If I could only tell him that!"

GRINNIDGE, after an interval of meditative smoking: "Yes, I guess that's the best thing you can do. It will strike her fancy, if she's an imaginative girl, and she'll think you a fine fellow."

MISS REED: "Oh, the horrid thing!"

GRINNIDGE: "If you humble yourself to a woman at all, do it thoroughly. If you go halfway down she'll be tempted to push you the rest of the way. If you flatten out at her feet to begin with, ten to one but she will pick you up."

RANSOM: "Yes, that was my idea."

MISS REED: "Oh, was it, indeed! Well!"

RANSOM: "But I've nothing to do with her picking me up or pushing me down. All that I've got to do is to go and surrender myself."

GRINNIDGE: "Yes. Well; I guess you can't go too soon. I like your company; but I advise you as a friend not to lose time. Where does she live?"

RANSOM: "That's the remarkable part of it: she lives in this house."

MISS REED and Miss Spaulding, in subdued chorus: "Oh!"

GRINNIDGE, taking his pipe out of his mouth in astonishment: "No!"

RANSOM: "I just came in here to give my good resolutions a rest while I was screwing my courage up to ask for her."

MISS REED: "Don't you think he's VERY humorous? Give his good resolutions a rest! That's the way he ALWAYS talks."

MISS SPAULDING: "'Sh!"

GRINNIDGE: "You said you came for my advice."

RANSOM: "So I did. But I didn't promise to act upon it. Well!" He goes toward the door.

GRINNIDGE, without troubling himself to rise: "Well, good luck to you!"

MISS REED: "How droll they are with each other! Don't you LIKE to hear them talk? Oh, I could listen all day."

GRINNIDGE, calling after Ransom: "You haven't told me your duck's

name."

MISS REED: "Is THAT what they call us? Duck! Do you think it's very respectful, Nettie? I don't believe I like it. Or, yes, why not? It's no harm--if I AM his duck!"

RANSOM, coming back: "Well, I don't propose to go shouting it round. Her name is Miss Reed--Ethel Reed."

MISS REED: "How CAN he?"

GRINNIDGE: "Slender, willowy party, with a lot of blond hair that looks as if it might be indigenous? Rather pensive-looking?"

MISS REED: "Indigenous! I should hope so!"

RANSOM: "Yes. But she isn't pensive. She's awfully deep. It makes me shudder to think how deep that girl is. And when I think of my courage in daring to be in love with her--a stupid, straightforward idiot like me--I begin to respect myself in spite of being such an ass. Well, I'm off. If I stay any longer I shall never go." He closes the door after him, and Miss Reed instantly springs to her feet.

MISS REED: "Now he'll have to go down to the parlor and send up his name, and that just gives me time to do the necessary prinking. You stay here and receive him, Nettie."

MISS SPAULDING: "Never! After what's happened I can never look him in the face again. Oh, how low, and mean, and guilty I feel!"

MISS REED, with surprise: "Why, how droll! Now I don't feel the least so."

MISS SPAULDING: "Oh, it's very different with YOU. YOU'RE in love with him."

MISS REED: "For shame, Nettie! I'm NOT in love with him."

MISS SPAULDING: "And you can explain and justify it. But I never can justify it to myself, much less to him. Let me go, Ethel! I shall tell Mrs. McKnight that we must change this room instantly. And just after I'd got it so nearly in order! Go down and receive him in the parlor, Ethel. I CAN'T see him."

MISS REED: "Receive him in the parlor! Why, Nettie, dear, you're crazy! I'm going to ACCEPT him: and how can I accept him--with all the consequences--in a public parlor? No, indeed! If you won't meet him here for a moment, just to oblige me, you can go into the other room. Or, no--you'd be listening to every word through the key-hole, you're so demoralized!"

MISS SPAULDING: "Yes, yes, I deserve your contempt, Ethel."

MISS REED, laughing: "You will have to go out for a walk, you poor thing; and I'm not going to have you coming back in five or ten minutes. You have got to stay out a good hour."

MISS SPAULDING, running to get her things from the next room: "Oh, I'll stay out till midnight!"

MISS REED, responding to a tap at the door: "Ye-e-s! Come in!-- You're caught, Nettie."

A MAID-SERVANT, appearing with a card: "This gentleman is asking for you in the parlor, Miss Reed."

MISS REED: "Oh! Ask him to come up here, please.--Nettie! Nettie!" She calls to her friend in the next room. "He's coming right up, and if you don't run you're trapped."

MISS SPAULDING, re-appearing, cloaked and bonneted: "I don't blame YOU, Ethel, comparatively speaking. You can say that everything is fair in love. He will like it, and laugh at it in you, because he'll like everything you've done. Besides, you've no principles, and I HAVE."

MISS REED: "Oh, I've lots of principles, Nettie, but I've no practice!"

MISS SPAULDING: "No matter. There's no excuse for me. I listened simply because I was a woman, and couldn't help it; and, oh, what will he think of me?"

MISS REED: "I won't give you away; if you really feel so badly" -

MISS SPAULDING: "Oh, DO you think you can keep from telling him, Ethel dear? Try! And I will be your slave forever!" Steps are heard on the stairs outside. "Oh, there he comes!" She dashes out of the door, and closes it after her, a moment before the maid-servant, followed by Mr. Ransom, taps at it.

III.

SCENE: Miss Reed opens the door, and receives Mr. Ransom with well-affected surprise and state, suffering him to stand awkwardly on the threshold for a moment.

SHE, coldly: "Oh!--Mr. Ransom!"

HE, abruptly: "I've come" -

SHE: "Won't you come in?"

HE, advancing a few paces into the room: "I've come" -

SHE, indicating a chair: "Will you sit down?"

HE: "I must stand for the present. I've come to ask you for that money, Miss Reed, which I refused yesterday, in terms that I blush to think of. I was altogether and wholly in the wrong, and I'm ready to offer any imaginable apology or reparation. I'm ready to take the money and to sign a receipt, and then to be dismissed with whatever ignominy you please. I deserve anything--everything!"

SHE: "The money? Excuse me; I don't know--I'm afraid that I'm not prepared to pay you the whole sum to-day."

HE, hastily: "Oh, no matter! no matter! I don't care for the money now. I merely wish to--to assure you that I thought you were perfectly right in offering it, and to--to" -

SHE: "What?"

HE: "Nothing. That is--ah--ah" -

SHE: "It's extremely embarrassing to have people refuse their money when it's offered them, and then come the next day for it, when perhaps it isn't so convenient to pay it--VERY embarrassing."

HE, hotly: "But I tell you I don't want the MONEY! I never wanted it, and wouldn't take it on any account."

SHE: "Oh! I thought you said you came to get it?"

HE: "I said--I didn't say--I meant--that is--ah--I"--He stops, open-mouthed.

SHE, quietly: "I could give you part of the money now."

HE: "Oh, whatever you like; it's indifferent" -

SHE: "Please sit down while I write a receipt." She places herself deliberately at the table, and opens her portfolio. "I will pay you now, Mr. Ransom, for the first six lessons you gave me--the ones before you told me that I could never learn to do anything."

HE, sinking mechanically into the chair she indicates: "Oh, just as you like!" He looks up at the ceiling in hopeless bewilderment, while she writes.

SHE, blotting the paper: "There! And now let me offer you a little piece of advice, Mr. Ransom, which may be useful to you in taking pupils hereafter."

HE, bursting out: "I never take pupils!"

SHE: "Never take pupils! I don't understand. You took ME."

HE, confusedly: "I took you--yes. You seemed to wish--you seemed--the case was peculiar--peculiar circumstances."

SHE, with severity: "May I ask WHY the circumstances were peculiar? I saw nothing peculiar about the circumstances. It seemed to me it was a very simple matter. I told you that I had always had a great curiosity to see whether I could use oil paints, and I asked you a very plain question, whether you would let me study with you. Didn't I?"

HE: "Yes."

SHE: "Was there anything wrong--anything queer about my asking you?"

HE: "No, no! Not at all--not in the least."

SHE: "Didn't you wish me to take the lessons of you? If you didn't, it wasn't kind of you to let me."

HE: "Oh, I was perfectly willing--very glad indeed, very much so--certainly!"

SHE: "If it wasn't your CUSTOM to take pupils, you ought to have told me, and I wouldn't have forced myself upon you."

HE, desperately: "It wasn't forcing yourself upon me. The Lord knows how humbly grateful I was. It was like a hope of heaven!"

SHE: "Really, Mr. Ransom, this is very strange talk. What am I to understand by it? Why should you be grateful to teach me? Why should giving me lessons be like a hope of heaven?"

HE: "Oh, I will tell you!"

SHE: "Well?"

HE, after a moment of agony: "Because to be with you" -

SHE: "Yes?"

HE: "Because I wished to be with you. Because--those days in the woods, when you read, and I" -

SHE: "Painted on my pictures" -

HE: "Were the happiest of my life. Because--I loved you!"

SHE: "Mr. Ransom!"

HE: "Yes, I must tell you so. I loved you; I love you still. I shall always love you, no matter what" -

SHE: "You forget yourself, Mr. Ransom. Has there been anything in my manner--conduct--to justify you in using such language to me?"

HE: "No--no" -

SHE: "Did you suppose that because I first took lessons of you from--from--an enthusiasm for art, and then continued them for--for--amusement, that I wished you to make love to me?"

HE: "No, I never supposed such a thing. I'm incapable of it. I beseech you to believe that no one could have more respect--reverence"--He twirls his hat between his hands, and casts an imploring glance at her.

SHE: "Oh, respect--reverence! I know what they mean in the mouths of men. If you respected, if you revered me, could you dare to tell me, after my unguarded trust of you during the past months, that you had been all the time secretly in love with me?"

HE, plucking up a little courage: "I don't see that the three things are incompatible."

SHE: "Oh, then you acknowledge that you did presume upon something you thought you saw in me to tell me that you loved me, and that you were in love with me all the time?"

HE, contritely: "I have no right to suppose that you encouraged me; and yet--I can't deny it now--I was in love with you all the time."

SHE: "And you never said a word to let me believe that you had any such feeling toward me!"

HE: "I--I" -

SHE: "You would have parted from me without a syllable to suggest it--perhaps parted from me forever?" After a pause of silent humiliation for him: "Do you call that brave or generous? Do you call it manly--supposing, as you hoped, that _I_ had any such feeling?"

HE: "No; it was cowardly, it was mean, it was unmanly. I see it now, but I will spend my life in repairing the wrong, if you will only let me." He impetuously advances some paces toward her, and then stops, arrested by her irresponsible attitude.

SHE, with a light sigh, and looking down at the paper, which she has continued to hold between her hands: "There was a time--a moment--when I might have answered as you wish."

HE: "Oh! then there will be again. If you have changed once, you may change once more. Let me hope that some time--any time, dearest"

-

SHE, quenching him with a look: "Mr. Ransom, I shall NEVER change toward you! You confess that you had your opportunity, and that you despised it."

HE: "Oh! NOT despised it!"

SHE: "Neglected it."

HE: "Not wilfully--no. I confess that I was stupidly, vilely, pusillan--pusillan--illani" -

SHE: "'Monsly" -

HE: "Thanks--'mously unworthy of it; but I didn't despise it; I didn't neglect it; and if you will only let me show by a lifetime of devotion how dearly and truly I have loved you from the first moment I drove that cow away" -

SHE: "Mr. Ransom, I have told you that I should never change toward you. That cow was nothing when weighed in the balance against your being willing to leave a poor girl, whom you supposed interested in you, and to whom you had paid the most marked attention, without a word to show her that you cared for her. What is a cow, or a whole herd of cows, as compared with obliging a young lady to offer you money that you hadn't earned, and then savagely flinging it back in her face? A yoke of oxen would be nothing--or a mad bull."

HE: "Oh, I acknowledge it! I confess it."

SHE: "And you own that I am right in refusing to listen to you now?"

HE, desolately: "Yes, yes."

SHE: "It seems that you gave me lessons in order to be with me, and if possible to interest me in you; and then you were going away without a word."

HE, with a groan: "It was only because I was afraid to speak."

SHE: "Oh, is THAT any excuse?"

HE: "No; none."

SHE: "A man ought always to have courage." After a pause, in which he stands before her with bowed head: "Then there's nothing for me but to give you this money."

HE, with sudden energy: "This is too much! I" -

SHE, offering him the bank-notes: "No; it is the exact sum. I counted it very carefully."

HE: "I won't take it; I can't! I'll never take it!"

SHE, standing with the money in her outstretched hand: "I have your word as a gentleman that you will take it."

HE, gasping: "Oh, well--I will take it--I will"--He clutches the money, and rushes toward the door. "Good-evening; ah--good-by" -

SHE, calling after him: "The receipt, Mr. Ransom! Please sign this receipt!" She waves the paper in the air.

HE: "Oh, yes, certainly! Where is it--what--which"--He rushes back to her, and seizing the receipt, feels blindly about for the pen and ink. "Where shall I sign?"

SHE: "Read it first."

HE: "Oh, it's all--all right" -

SHE: "I insist upon your reading it. It's a business transaction. Read it aloud."

HE, desperately: "Well, well!" He reads. "Received from Miss Ethel Reed, in full, for twenty-five lessons in oil-painting, one hundred and twenty-five dollars, and her hand, heart, and dearest love forever." He looks up at her. "Ethel!"

SHE, smiling: "Sign it, sign it!"

HE, catching her in his arms and kissing her: "Oh, yes--HERE!"

SHE, pulling a little away from him, and laughing: "Oh, oh! I only wanted ONE signature! Twenty autographs are too many, unless you'll let me trade them off, as the collectors do."

HE: "No; keep them all! I couldn't think of letting any one else have them. One more!"

SHE: "No; it's quite enough!"

SHE frees herself, and retires beyond the table. "This unexpected affection" -

HE: "IS it unexpected--seriously?"

SHE: "What do you mean?"

HE: "Oh, nothing!"

SHE: "Yes, tell me!"

HE: "I hoped--I thought--perhaps--that you might have been prepared for some such demonstration on my part."

SHE: "And why did you think--hope--perhaps--THAT, Mr. Ransom, may I ask?"

HE: "If I hadn't, how should I have dared to speak?"

SHE: "Dared? You were obliged to speak! Well, since it's all over, I don't mind saying that I DID have some slight apprehensions that something in the way of a declaration might be extorted from you."

HE: "Extorted? Oh!" He makes an impassioned rush toward her.

SHE, keeping the table between them: "No, no."

HE: "Oh, I merely wished to ask why you chose to make me suffer so, after I had come to the point."

SHE: "Ask it across the table, then." After a moment's reflection, "I made you suffer--I made you suffer--so that you might have a realizing sense of what you had made ME suffer."

HE, enraptured by this confession: "Oh, you angel!"

SHE, with tender magnanimity: "No; only a woman--a poor, trusting, foolish woman!" She permits him to surround the table, with imaginable results. Then, with her head on his shoulder: "You'll NEVER let me regret it, will you, darling? You'll never oblige me to punish you again, dearest, will you? Oh, it hurt ME far worse to SEE your pain than it did you to--to--feel it!" On the other side of the partition, Mr. Grinnidge's pipe falls from his lips, parted in slumber, and shivers to atoms on the register. "Oh!" She flies at the register with a shriek of dismay, and is about to close it. "That wretch has been listening, and has heard every word!"

HE, preventing her: "What wretch? Where?"

SHE: "Don't you hear him, mumbling and grumbling there?"

GRINNIDGE: "Well, I swear! Cash value of twenty-five dollars, and untold toil in coloring it!"

RANSOM, listening with an air of mystification: "Who's that?"

SHE: "Gummidge, Grimmidge--whatever you called him. Oh!" She arrests herself in consternation. "Now I HAVE done it!"

HE: "Done what?"

SHE: "Oh--nothing!"

HE: "I don't understand. Do you mean to say that my friend Grinnidge's room is on the other side of the wall, and that you can hear him talk through the register?"

SHE preserves the silence of abject terror. He stoops over the register, and calls down it. "Grinnidge! Hallo!"

GRINNIDGE: "Hallo, yourself!"

RANSOM, to Miss Reed: "Sounds like the ghostly squeak of the phonograph." To Grinnidge: "What's the trouble?"

GRINNIDGE: "Smashed my pipe. Dozed off and let it drop on this infernal register."

RANSOM, turning from the register with impressive deliberation: "Miss Reed, may I ask HOW you came to know that his name was Gummidge, or Grimmidge, or whatever I called him?"

SHE: Oh, dearest, I CAN'T tell you! Or--yes, I had better." Impulsively: "I will judge you by myself. _I_ could forgive YOU anything!"

HE, doubtfully: "Oh, could you?"

SHE: "Everything! I had--I had better make a clean breast of it. Yes, I had. Though I don't like to. I--I listened!"

HE: "Listened?"

SHE: "Through the register to--to--what--you--were saying before you--came in here." Her head droops.

HE: "Then you heard everything?"

SHE: "Kill me, but don't look SO at me! It was accidental at first--indeed it was; and then I recognized your voice; and then I knew you were talking about me; and I had so much at stake; and I did love you so dearly! You WILL forgive me, darling? It wasn't as if I were listening with any bad motive."

HE, taking her in his arms: "Forgive you? Of course I do. But you must change this room at once, Ethel; you see you hear everything on the other side, too."

SHE: "Oh, not if you whisper on this. You couldn't hear US?" At a dubious expression of his: "You DIDN'T hear us? If you did, I can never forgive you!"

HE: "It was accidental at first--indeed it was; and then I recognized your voice; and then I knew you were talking about me; and I had so much at stake; and I did love you so dearly!"

SHE: "All that has nothing whatever to do with it. How much did you hear?"

HE, with exemplary meekness: "Only what you were saying before Grinnidge came in. You didn't whisper then. I had to wait there for him while" -

SHE: "While you were giving your good resolutions a rest?"

HE: "While I was giving my good resolutions a rest."

SHE: "And that accounts for your determination to humble yourself so?"

HE: "It seemed perfectly providential that I should have known just what conditions you were going to exact of me."

SHE: "Oh, don't make light of it! I can tell you it's a very serious matter."

HE: "It was very serious for me when you didn't meet my self-abasement as you had led me to expect you would."

SHE: "Don't make fun! I'm trying to think whether I can forgive you."

HE, with insinuation: "Don't you believe you could think better if you put your head on my shoulder?"

SHE: "Nonsense! Then I should forgive you without thinking." After a season of reflection: "No, I CAN'T forgive you. I never could forgive eavesdropping. It's TOO low."

HE, in astonishment: "Why, you did it yourself!"

SHE: "But you began it. Besides, it's very different for a man. Women are weak, poor, helpless creatures. They have to use finesse. But a man should be above it."

HE: "You said you could forgive me anything."

SHE: "Ah, but I didn't know what you'd been doing!"

HE, with pensive resignation, and a feint of going: "Then I suppose it's all over between us."

SHE, relenting: "If you could think of any reason WHY I should forgive you" -

HE: "I can't."

SHE, after consideration: "Do you suppose Mr. Grumage, or Grimidge, heard too?"

HE: "No; Grinnidge is a very high-principled fellow, and wouldn't listen; besides, he wasn't there, you know."

SHE: "Well, then, I will forgive you on these grounds." He instantly catches her to his heart. "But these alone, remember."

HE, rapturously: "Oh, on any!"

SHE, tenderly: "And you'll always be devoted? And nice? And not try to provoke me? Or neglect me? Or anything?"

HE: "Always! Never!"

SHE: "Oh, you dear, sweet, simple old thing--how I DO love you!"

GRINNIDGE, who has been listening attentively to every word at the register at his side: "Ransom, if you don't want me to go stark mad, SHUT THE REGISTER!"

RANSOM, about to comply: "Oh, poor old man! I forgot it was open!"

MISS REED, preventing him: "No! If he has been vile enough to listen at a register, let him suffer. Come, sit down here, and I'll tell you just when I began to care for you. It was long before the cow. Do you remember that first morning after you arrived"--She drags him close to the register, so that every word may tell upon the envious Grinnidge, on whose manifestations of acute despair, a rapid curtain descends.

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BOOKMARKS FOR THE ENTIRE PG EDITION OF WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS

Absolutely, so positively, so almost aggressively truthful
Abstract, the airdrawn, afflicted me like physical discomforts
Account of one's reading is an account of one's life
Adroitness in flattery is not necessary for its successful use
Affections will not be bidden
Aim at nothing higher than the amusement of your readers
Air of looking down on the highest
All in all to each other
Always sumptuously providing out of his destitution
Amiable perception, and yet with a sort of remote absence
Amiably satirical
Any man's country could get on without him
Appeal, which he had come to recognize as invasive

Artist has seasons, as trees, when he cannot blossom
Authorities
Authors I must call my masters
Became gratefully strange
Beginning to grow old with touching courage
Begun to fight with want from their cradles
Best talkers are willing that you should talk if you like
Boldest man is commonly a little behind a timid woman
Book that they are content to know at second hand
Browbeat wholesome common-sense into the self-distrust
Business to take advantage of his necessity
But now I remember that he gets twenty dollars a month
Buzz of activities and pretences
Capriciousness of memory: what it will hold and what lose
Chained to the restless pursuit of an ideal not his own
Christianity had done nothing to improve morals and conditions
Church: "Oh yes, I go! It 'most kills me, but I go"
Clemens was sole, incomparable, the Lincoln of our literature
Cold-slaw
Collective opacity
Comfort from the thought that most things cannot be helped
Competition has deformed human nature
Composed her features and her ideas to receive her visitor
Concerning popularity as a test of merit in a book
Conditions of hucksters imposed upon poets
Contemptible he found our pseudo-equality
Could only by chance be caught in earnest about anything
Could make us feel that our faults were other people's
Could not, as the saying is, find a stone to throw at a dog
Could easily believe now that it was some one else who saw it
Couldn't fire your revolver without bringing down a two volumner
Crimson which stained the tops and steeps of snow
Crimson torch of a maple, kindled before its time
Critical vanity and self-righteousness
Criticism still remains behind all the other literary arts
Critics are in no sense the legislators of literature
Dawn upon him through a cloud of other half remembered faces
Death of the joy that ought to come from work
Death's vague conjectures to the broken expectations of life
Despair broke in laughter
Despised the avoidance of repetitions out of fear of tautology
Dickens rescued Christmas from Puritan distrust
Dickens is purely democratic
Did not feel the effect I would so willingly have experienced
Didn't reason about their beliefs, but only argued
Dinner was at the old-fashioned Boston hour of two
Disbeliever in punishments of all sorts
Disposition to use his friends
Do not want to know about such squalid lives
Dollars were of so much farther flight than now
Dull, cold self-absorption
Early self-helpfulness of children is very remarkable
Effort to do and say exactly the truth, and to find it out

Either to deny the substance of things unseen, or to affirm it
Encounter of old friends after the lapse of years
Enjoying whatever was amusing in the disadvantage to himself
Errors of a weak man, which were usually the basest
Escaped at night and got into the boy's dreams
Espoused the theory of Bacon's authorship of Shakespeare
Ethical sense, not the aesthetical sense
Even a day's rest is more than most people can bear
Everlasting rock of human credulity and folly
Exchanging inaudible banalities
Express the appreciation of another's fit word
Eyes fixed steadfastly upon the future
Fact that it is hash many times warmed over that reassures them
Fate of a book is in the hands of the women
Fear of asking too much and the folly of asking too little
Feigned the gratitude which I could see that he expected
Felt that this was my misfortune more than my fault
Few men last over from one reform to another
Fictions subtle effect for good and for evil on the young
Flowers with which we garland our despair in that pitiless hour
For most people choice is a curse
Forbear the excesses of analysis
Forbearance of a wise man content to bide his time
Found life was not all poetry
Gay laugh comes across the abyss of the years
General worsening of things, familiar after middle life
Generous lover of all that was excellent in literature
Gift of waiting for things to happen
Glance of the common eye, is and always was the best light
God of chance leads them into temptation and adversity
Got out of it all the fun there was in it
Government is best which governs least
Greatest classics are sometimes not at all great
Greeting of great impersonal cordiality
Grieving that there could be such ire in heavenly minds
Habit of saying some friendly lying thing
Happy in the indifference which ignorance breeds in us
Hard to think up anything new
Hard of hearing on one side. But it isn't deafness!
Hardly any sort of bloodshed which I would not pardon
Harriet Beecher Stowe and the Autocrat clashed upon homeopathy
Hate of hate, The scorn of scorn, The love of love
He was a youth to the end of his days
He was not bored because he would not be
He had no time to make money
He was not constructive; he was essentially observant
He might walk home with her if he would not seem to do so
He's so resting
He's the same kind of a man that he was a boy
Heart of youth aching for their stoical sorrows
Heighten our suffering by anticipation
Heroic lies
His readers trusted and loved him

His plays were too bad for the stage, or else too good for it
His coming almost killed her, but it was worth it
His remembrance absolutely ceased with an event
Historian, who is a kind of inferior realist
Holiday literature
Hollow hilarities which people use to mask their indifference
Hollowness, the hopelessness, the unworthiness of life
Honest men are few when it comes to themselves
Honesty is difficult
Hopeful apathy in his face
Hospitable gift of making you at home with him
I do not think any man ought to live by an art
I did not know, and I hated to ask
If one were poor, one ought to be deserving
If he was half as bad, he would have been too bad to be
If one must, it ought to be champagne
If he has not enjoyed writing no one will enjoy reading
Imitators of one another than of nature
Impropriety if not indecency promises literary success
In the South there was nothing but a mistaken social ideal
In school there was as little literature then as there is now
Incoherencies of people meeting after a long time
Incredible in their insipidity
Industrial slavery
Inexhaustible flow of statement, conjecture and misgiving
Inexperience takes this effect (literary lewdness) for reality
Insatiable English fancy for the wild America no longer there
Insensate pride that mothers have in their children's faults
Intellectual poseurs
Intent upon some point in the future
It was mighty pretty, as Pepys would say
Joyful shame of children who have escaped punishment
Kept her talking vacuities when her heart was full
Kindness and gentleness are never out of fashion
Kissing goes by favor, in literature as in life
Languages, while they live, are perpetually changing
Led a life of public seclusion
Left him to do what the cat might
Let fiction cease to lie about life
Lewd literature seems to give a sanction to lewdness in the life
Lie, of course, and did to save others from grief or harm
Life alone is credible to the young
Liked to find out good things and great things for himself
Literature beautiful only through the intelligence
Literature is Business as well as Art
Literature has no objective value
Little knot of conscience between her pretty eyebrows
Lived a thousand little lies every day
Livy: Well, if you are to be lost, I want to be lost with you
Livy Clemens: the loveliest person I have ever seen
Long-puerilized fancy will bear an endless repetition
Long breath was not his; he could not write a novel
Look of challenge, of interrogation, almost of reproof

Looked as if Destiny had sat upon it
Love of freedom and the hope of justice
Luxury of helplessness
Made many of my acquaintances very tired of my favorite authors
Made them talk as seldom man and never woman talked
Malevolent agitators
Man is strange to himself as long as he lives
Man who had so much of the boy in him
Man who may any moment be out of work is industrially a slave
Marriages are what the parties to them alone really know
Married Man: after the first start-off he don't try
Meet here to the purpose of a common ostentation
Mellow cordial of a voice that was like no other
Men read the newspapers, but our women read the books
Men's lives ended where they began, in the keeping of women
Met with kindness, if not honor
Mind and soul were with those who do the hard work of the world
Mind of a man is the court of final appeal for the wisest women
Morbid egotism
Most desouthernized Southerner I ever knew
Most journalists would have been literary men if they could
Most serious, the most humane, the most conscientious of men
Motives lie nearer the surface than most people commonly pretend
Mustache, which in those days devoted a man to wickedness
My own youth now seems to me rather more alien
My reading gave me no standing among the boys
Napoleonic height which spiritually overtops the Alps
Nearly nothing as chaos could be
Neatness that brings despair
Never saw a man more regardful of negroes
Never paid in anything but hopes of paying
Never quite sure of life unless I find literature in it
Never appeals to the principle which sniffs, in his reader
Never saw a dead man whom he did not envy
New England necessity of blaming some one
No greatness, no beauty, which does not come from truth
No man more perfectly sensed and more entirely abhorred slavery
No man ever yet told the truth about himself
No rose blooms right along
No two men see the same star
No greatness, no beauty, which does not come from truth
No object in life except to deprive it of all object
Noble uselessness
None of the passions are reasoned
Not quite himself till he had made you aware of his quality
Not possible for Clemens to write like anybody else
Not much patience with the unmanly craving for sympathy
Not a man who cared to transcend; he liked bounds
Nothing in the way of sport, as people commonly understand it
Novels hurt because they are not true
Now little notion what it was about, but I love its memory
Now death has come to join its vague conjectures
NYC, a city where money counts for more and goes for less

Odious hilarity, without meaning and without remission
Offers mortifyingly mean, and others insultingly vague
Old man's disposition to speak of his infirmities
Old man's tendency to revert to the past
One could be openly poor in Cambridge without open shame
Only one concerned who was quite unconcerned
Openly depraved by shows of wealth
Ought not to call coarse without calling one's self prudish
Our huckstering civilization
Outer integument of pretence
Passive elegance which only ancestral uselessness can give
Pathetic hopefulness
Pathos of revolt from the colorless rigidities
People whom we think unequal to their good fortune
People of wealth and fashion always dissemble their joy
People have never had ideals, but only moods and fashions
Picture which, he said to himself, no one would believe in
Plagiarism carries inevitable detection with it
Plain-speaking or Rude Speaking
Plain industry and plodding perseverance are despised
Pointed the moral in all they did
Polite learning hesitated his praise
Praised it enough to satisfy the author
Praised extravagantly, and in the wrong place
Prejudice against certain words that I cannot overcome
Provisional reprehension of possible shiftlessness
Pseudo-realists
Public wish to be amused rather than edified
Public whose taste is so crude that they cannot enjoy the best
Put your finger on the present moment and enjoy it
Quiet but rather dull look of people slightly deaf
Rapture of the new convert could not last
Real aristocracy is above social prejudice
Reformers, who are so often tedious and ridiculous
Refused to see us as we see ourselves
Reparation due from every white to every black man
Responsibility of finding him all we have been told he is
Rogues in every walk of life
Satirical smile with which men witness the effusion of women
Secret of the man who is universally interesting
Secretly admires the splendors he affects to despise
Seen through the wrong end of the telescope
Seldom talked, but there came times when he would'nt even listen
Self-satisfied, intolerant, and hypocritical provinciality
Shackles of belief worn so long
She liked to get all she could out of her emotions
Should probably have wasted the time if I had not read them
Singleness of a nature that was all pose
So long as we have social inequality we shall have snobs
So refined, after the gigantic coarseness of California
So many millionaires and so many tramps
Society interested in a woman's past, not her future
Sometimes they sacrificed the song to the sermon

Somewhat shy of his fellow-men, as the scholar seems always to be.
Somewhat too studied grace
Sought the things that he could agree with you upon
Spare his years the fatigue of recalling your identity
Speaks it is not with words and blood, but with words and ink
Spit some hapless victim: make him suffer and the reader laugh
Standards were their own, and they were satisfied with them
Study in a corner by the porch
Stupefied by a life of unalloyed prosperity and propriety
Stupidly truthful
Style is the man, and he cannot hide himself in any garb
Submitted, as people always do with the trials of others
Sunny gayety of self-forgetfulness
Superiority one likes to feel towards the rich and great
Take our pleasures ungraciously
Teach what they do not know
Tediously analytical
The old and ugly are fastidious as to the looks of others
The ornament of a house is the friends who frequent it
The great trouble is for the man to be honest with her
There is small love of pure literature
They are so many and I am so few
Things common to all, however peculiar in each
Those who work too much and those who rest too much
Those who have sorrowed deepest will understand this best
Times when a man's city was a man's country
Tired themselves out in trying to catch up with him
To break new ground
To be exemplary is as dangerous as to be complimentary
Tone was a snuffle expressive of deep-seated affliction
Trace no discrepancy between reading his plays and seeing them
Tried to like whatever they bade me like
True to an ideal of life rather than to life itself
Truth is beyond invention
Two branches of the novelist's trade: Novelist and Historian
Under a fire of conjecture and asseveration
Understood when I've said something that doesn't mean anything
Unfailing American kindness
Unless we prefer a luxury of grief
Used to ingratitude from those he helped
Vacuous vulgarity
Visitors of the more inquisitive sex
Vulgarity: bad art to lug it in
Walter-Scotticized, pseudo-chivalry of the Southern ideal
Want something hard, don't you know; but I want it to be easy
Wasted face, and his gay eyes had the death-look
We have never ended before, and we do not see how we can end
We change whether we ought, or not
We see nothing whole, neither life nor art
We who have neither youth nor beauty should always expect it
We cannot all be hard-working donkeys
We did not know that we were poor
We're company enough for ourselves

What I had not I could hope for without unreason
What he had done he owned to, good, bad, or indifferent
What makes a better fashion change for a worse
What we thought ruin, but what was really release
Whatever is established is sacred with those who do not think
Whatever choice you make, you are pretty sure to regret it
When to be an agnostic was to be almost an outcast
When she's really sick, she's better
When was love ever reasoned?
Whether every human motive was not selfish
Wide leisure of a country village
Wishes of a mistress who did not know what she wanted
Wit that tries its teeth upon everything
With all her insight, to have very little artistic sense
Women don't seem to belong very much to themselves
Women talked their follies and men acted theirs
Wonder why we hate the past so?--"It's so damned humiliating!"
Wonderful to me how it should remain so unintelligible
Words of learned length and thundering sound
Work gives the impression of an uncommon continuity
Work not truly priced in money cannot be truly paid in money
World made up of two kinds of people
World seems to always come out at the same hole it went in at!
World's memory is equally bad for failure and success
Worldlier than the world
Worst came it was not half so bad as what had gone before
Wrote them first and last in the spirit of Dickens
You can't go back to anything
You cannot be at perfect ease with a friend who does not joke
You may do a great deal(of work), and not get on
You marry a man's future as well as his past
You were not afraid, and you were not bold; you were just right

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William Dean Howells

iam Dean Howells

ES: "Oh!"

LAWTON: "In three seconds you arrive at the ground-floor, reading
your file of the 'Daily Advertiser;' not an egg broken nor a drop
spilled. I saw it done in a New York hotel. The air is compressed

under the elevator, and acts as a sort of ethereal buffer."

MRS. ROBERTS: "And why don't we always go down in that way?"

LAWTON: "Because sometimes the walls of the elevator shaft give out."

MRS. ROBERTS: "And what then?"

LAWTON: "Then the elevator stops more abruptly. I had a friend who tried it when this happened."

MRS. ROBERTS: "And what did he do?"

LAWTON: "Stepped out of the elevator; laughed; cried; went home; got into bed: and did not get up for six weeks. Nervous shock. He was fortunate."

MRS. MILLER: "I shouldn't think you'd want an air-cushion on YOUR elevator, Mrs. Roberts."

MRS. ROBERTS: "No, indeed! Horrid!" The bell rings. "Edward, YOU go and see if that's Aunt Mary."

MRS. MILLER: "It's Mr. Miller, I know."

BEMIS: "Or my son."

LAWTON: "My voice is for Mrs. Roberts's brother. I've given up all hopes of my daughter."

ROBERTS, without: "Oh, Curwen! Glad to see you! Thought you were my wife's aunt."

LAWTON, at a suppressed sigh from MRS. ROBERTS: "It's one of his jokes, Mrs. Roberts. Of course it's your aunt."

MRS. ROBERTS, through her set teeth, smilingly: "Oh, if it IS, I'll make him suffer for it."

MR. CURWEN, without: "No, I hated to wait, so I walked up."

LAWTON: "It is Mr. Curwen, after all, Mrs. Roberts. Now let me see how a lady transmutes a frown of threatened vengeance into a smile of society welcome."

MRS. ROBERTS: "Well, look!" To MR. CURWEN, who enters, followed by her husband: "Ah, Mr. Curwen! So glad to see you. You know all our friends here--Mrs. Miller, Dr. Lawton, and Mr. Bemis?"

CURWEN, smiling and bowing, and shaking hands right and left: "Very glad--very happy--pleased to know you."

MRS. ROBERTS, behind her fan to Dr. Lawton: "Didn't I do it beautifully?"

LAWTON, behind his hand: "Wonderfully! And so unconscious of the fact that he hasn't his wife with him."

MRS. ROBERTS, in great astonishment, to Mr. Curwen: "Where in the world is Mrs. Curwen?"

CURWEN: "Oh--oh--she'll be here. I thought she was here. She started from home with two right-hand gloves, and I had to go back for a left, and I--I suppose--Good heavens!" pulling the glove out of his pocket. "I ought to have sent it to her in the ladies' dressing-room." He remains with the glove held up before him, in spectacular stupefaction.

LAWTON: "Only imagine what Mrs. Curwen would be saying of you if she were in the dressing-room."

ROBERTS: "Mr. Curwen felt so sure she was there that he wouldn't wait to take the elevator, and walked up." Another ring is heard. "Shall I go and meet your aunt NOW, my dear?"

MRS. ROBERTS: "No, indeed! She may come in now with all the formality she chooses, and I will receive her excuses in state." She waves her fan softly to and fro, concealing a murmur of trepidation under an indignant air, till the portiere opens, and MR. WILLIS

CAMPBELL enters. Then MRS. ROBERTS breaks in nervous agitation "Why, Willis! Where's Aunt Mary?"

MRS. MILLER: "And Mr. Miller?"

CURWEN: "And Mrs. Curwen?"

LAWTON: "And my daughter?"

BEMIS: "And my son?"

MR. CAMPBELL, looking tranquilly round on the faces of his interrogators: "Is it a conundrum?"

MRS. ROBERTS, mingling a real distress with an effort of mock-heroic solemnity: "It is a tragedy! O Willis dear! it's what you see--what you hear; a niece without an aunt, a wife without a husband, a father without a son, and another father without a daughter."

ROBERTS: "And a dinner getting cold, and a cook getting hot."

LAWTON: "And you are expected to account for the whole situation."

CAMPBELL: "Oh, I understand! I don't know what your little game is, Agnes, but I can wait and see. I'M not hungry."

MRS. ROBERTS: "Willis, do you think I would try and play a trick on you, if I could?"

CAMPBELL: "I think you can't. Come, now, Agnes! It's a failure. Own up, and bring the rest of the company out of the next room. I suppose almost anything is allowable at this festive season, but this is pretty feeble."

MRS. ROBERTS: "Indeed, indeed, they are not there."

CAMPBELL: "Where are they, then?"

ALL: "That's what we don't know."

CAMPBELL: "Oh, come, now! that's a little too thin. You don't know where ANY of all these blood-relations and connections by marriage are? Well, search me!"

MRS. ROBERTS, in open distress: "Oh, I'm sure something must have happened to Aunt Mary!"

MRS. MILLER: "I can't understand what Ellery C. Miller means."

LAWTON, with a simulated sternness: "I hope you haven't let that son of yours run away with my daughter, Bemis?"

BEMIS: "I'm afraid he's come to a pass where he wouldn't ask MY

leave."

CURWEN, re-assuring himself: "Ah, she's all right, of course. I

know that" -

BEMIS: "Miss Lawton?"

CURWEN: "No, no--Mrs. Curwen."

CAMPBELL: "Is it a true bill, Agnes?"

MRS. ROBERTS: "Indeed it is, Willis. We've been expecting her for an hour--of course she always comes early--and I'm afraid she's been taken ill suddenly."

ROBERTS: "Oh, I don't think it's that, my dear."

MRS. ROBERTS: "Oh, of course you never think anything's wrong, Edward. My whole family might die, and"--MRS. ROBERTS restrains herself, and turns to MR. CAMPBELL, with hysterical cheerfulness: "Who came up in the elevator with you?"

CAMPBELL: "Me? _I_ didn't come in the elevator. I had my usual luck. The elevator was up somewhere, and after I'd pressed the annunciator button till my thumb ached, I watched my chance and walked up."

MRS. ROBERTS: "Where was the janitor?"

CAMPBELL: "Where the janitor always is--nowhere."

LAWTON: "Eating his Christmas dinner, probably."

MRS. ROBERTS, partially abandoning and then recovering herself:

"Yes, it's perfectly spoiled! Well, friends, I think we'd better go to dinner--that's the only way to bring them. I'll go out and interview the cook." Sotto voce to her husband: "If I don't go somewhere and have a cry, I shall break down here before everybody. Did you ever know anything so strange? It's perfectly--pokerish."

LAWTON: "Yes, there's nothing like serving dinner to bring the belated guest. It's as infallible as going without an umbrella when it won't rain."

CAMPBELL: "No, no! Wait a minute, Roberts. You might sit down without one guest, but you can't sit down without five. It's the old joke about the part of Hamlet. I'll just step round to Aunt Mary's house--why, I'll be back in three minutes."

MRS. ROBERTS, with fervid gratitude: "Oh, how GOOD you are, Willis! You don't know how MUCH you're doing! What presence of mind you have! Why couldn't we have thought of sending for her? O Willis, I can never be grateful enough to you! But you always think

of everything."

ROBERTS: "I accept my punishment meekly, Willis, since it's in your honor."

LAWTON: "It's a simple and beautiful solution, Mrs. Roberts, as far as your aunt's concerned; but I don't see how it helps the rest of us."

MRS. MILLER to MR. CAMPBELL: "If you meet Mr. Miller " -

CURWEN: "Or my wife" -

BEMIS: "Or my son" -

LAWTON: "Or my daughter" -

CAMPBELL: "I'll tell them they've just one chance in a hundred to save their lives, and that one is open to them for just five minutes."

LAWTON: "Tell my daughter that I've been here half an hour, and everybody knows I drove here with her."

BEMIS: "Tell my son that the next time I'll walk, and let him drive."

MRS. MILLER: "Tell Mr. Miller I found I had my fan after all."

CURWEN: "And Mrs. Curwen that I've got her glove all right." He holds it up.

MRS. ROBERTS, at a look of mystification and demand from her brother:

"Never mind explanations, Willis. They'll understand, and we'll explain when you get back."

LAWTON, examining the glove which CURWEN holds up: "Why, so it IS right!"

CURWEN: "What do you mean?"

LAWTON: "Were you sent back to get a LEFT glove?"

CURWEN: "Yes, yes; of course."

LAWTON: "Well, if you'll notice, this is a right one. The one at home is left."

CURWEN, staring helplessly at it: "Gracious Powers! what shall I do?"

LAWTON: "Pray that Mrs. Curwen may NEVER come."

MR. CURWEN, dashing through the door: "I'll be back by the time Mr. Campbell returns."

MRS. MILLER, with tokens of breaking down visible to MRS. ROBERTS:
"I wonder what could have kept Mr. Miller. It's so very mysterious,
I" -

MRS. ROBERTS, suddenly seizing her by the arm, and hurrying her from the room: "Now, Mrs. Miller, you've just got time to see my baby."

MR. ROBERTS, winking at his remaining guests: "A little cry will do them good. I saw as soon as Willis came in instead of her aunt, that my wife couldn't get through without it. They'll come back as bright as" -

LAWTON: "Bemis, should you mind a bereaved father falling upon your neck?"

BEMIS: "Yes, Lawton, I think I should."

LAWTON: "Well, it IS rather odd about all those people. You can say of one or two that they've been delayed, but five people can't have been delayed. It's too much. It amounts to a coincidence. Hello! What's that?"

ROBERTS: "What's what?"

LAWTON: "I thought I heard a cry."

ROBERTS: "Very likely you did. They profess to deaden these floors so that you can't hear from one apartment to another. But I know pretty well when my neighbor overhead is trying to wheel his baby to sleep in a perambulator at three o'clock in the morning; and I guess our young lady lets the people below understand when she's wakeful. But it's the only way to live, after all. I wouldn't go back to the old up-and-down-stairs, house-in-a-block system on any account. Here we all live on the ground-floor practically. The elevator equalizes everything."

BEMIS: "Yes, when it happens to be where you are. I believe I prefer the good old Florentine fashion of walking upstairs, after all."

LAWTON: "Roberts, I DID hear something. Hark! It sounded like a cry for help. There!"

ROBERTS: "You're nervous, doctor. It's nothing. However, it's easy enough to go out and see." He goes out to the door of the apartment, and immediately returns. He beckons to DR. LAWTON and MR. BEMIS, with a mysterious whisper: "Come here both of you. Don't alarm the ladies."

II.

In the interior of the elevator are seated MRS. ROBERTS'S AUNT MARY (MRS. CRASHAW), MRS. CURWEN, and MISS LAWTON; MR. MILLER and MR. ALFRED BEMIS are standing with their hats in their hands. They are in dinner costume, with their overcoats on their arms, and the ladies' draperies and ribbons show from under their outer wraps, where they are caught up, and held with that caution which characterizes ladies in sitting attitudes which they have not been able to choose deliberately. As they talk together, the elevator rises very slowly, and they continue talking for some time before they observe that it has stopped.

MRS. CRASHAW: "It's very fortunate that we are all here together. I ought to have been here half an hour ago, but I was kept at home by an accident to my finery, and before I could be put in repair I heard it striking the quarter past. I don't know what my niece will say to me. I hope you good people will all stand by me if she should be violent."

MILLER: "In what a poor man may with his wife's fan, you shall command me, Mrs. Crashaw." He takes the fan out, and unfurls it.

MRS. CRASHAW: "Did she send you back for it?"

MILLER: "I shouldn't have had the pleasure of arriving with you if she hadn't."

MRS. CRASHAW, laughing, to MRS. CURWEN: "What did you send YOURS back for, my dear?"

MRS. CURWEN, thrusting out one hand gloved, and the other ungloved:
"I didn't want two rights."

YOUNG MR. BEMIS: "Not even women's rights?"

MRS. CURWEN: "Oh, so young and so depraved! Are all the young men in Florence so bad?" Surveying her extended arms, which she turns over: "I don't know that I need have sent him for the other glove. I could have explained to Mrs. Roberts. Perhaps she would have forgiven my coming in one glove."

MILLER, looking down at the pretty arms: "If she had seen you without."

MRS. CURWEN: "Oh, you were looking!" She rapidly involves her arms in her wrap. Then she suddenly unwraps them, and regards them thoughtfully. "What if he should bring a ten-button instead of an eight! And he's quite capable of doing it."

MILLER: "Are there such things as ten-button gloves?"

MRS. CURWEN: "You would think there were ten-thousand button gloves if you had them to button."

MILLER: "It would depend upon whom I had to button them for."

MRS. CURWEN: "For Mrs. Miller, for example."

MRS. CRASHAW: "We women are too bad, always sending people back for something. It's well the men don't know HOW bad."

MRS. CURWEN: "'Sh! Mr. Miller is listening. And he thought we were perfect. He asks nothing better than to be sent back for his wife's fan. And he doesn't say anything even under his breath when she finds she's forgotten it, and begins, 'Oh, dearest, my fan'--Mr. Curwen does. But he goes all the same. I hope you have your father in good training, Miss Lawton. You must commence with your father, if you expect your husband to be 'good.'"

MISS LAWTON: "Then mine will never behave, for papa is perfectly incorrigible."

MRS. CURWEN: "I'm sorry to hear such a bad report of him. Shouldn't YOU think he would be 'good,' Mr. Bemis?"

YOUNG MR. BEMIS: "I should think he would try."

MRS. CURWEN: "A diplomat, as well as a punster already! I must warn Miss Lawton."

MRS. CRASHAW, interposing to spare the young people: "What an amusing thing elevator etiquette is! Why should the gentlemen take their hats off? Why don't you take your hats off in a horse-car?"

MILLER: "The theory is that the elevator is a room."

YOUNG MR. BEMIS: "We were at a hotel in London where they called it the Ascending Room."

MISS LAWTON: "Oh, how amusing!"

MILLER, looking about: "This is a regular drawing-room for size and luxury. They're usually such cribs in these hotels."

MRS. CRASHAW: "Yes, it's very nice, though I say it that shouldn't of my niece's elevator. The worst about it is, it's so slow."

MILLER: "Let's hope it's sure."

YOUNG MR. BEMIS: "Some of these elevators in America go up like express trains."

MRS. CURWEN, drawing her shawl about her shoulders, as if to be ready to step out: "Well, I never get into one without taking my life in my hand, and my heart in my mouth. I suppose every one really expects an elevator to drop with them, some day, just as everybody really expects to see a ghost some time."

MRS. CRASHAW: "Oh, my dear! what an extremely disagreeable subject of conversation."

MRS. CURWEN: "I can't help it, Mrs. Crashaw. When I reflect that there are two thousand elevators in Boston, and that the inspectors have just pronounced a hundred and seventy of them unsafe, I'm so desperate when I get into one that I could--flirt!"

MILLER, guarding himself with the fan: "Not with me?"

MISS LAWTON, to young MR. BEMIS: "How it DOES creep!"

YOUNG MR. BEMIS, looking down fondly at her: "Oh, does it?"

MRS. CRASHAW: "Why, it doesn't go at all! It's stopped. Let us get out." They all rise.

THE ELEVATOR BOY, pulling at the rope: "We're not there, yet."

MRS. CRASHAW, with mingled trepidation and severity: "Not there?"

What are you stopping, then, for?"

THE ELEVATOR BOY: "I don't know. It seems to be caught."

MRS. CRASHAW: "Caught?"

MISS LAWTON: "Oh, dear!"

YOUNG MR. BEMIS: "Don't mind."

MILLER: "Caught? Nonsense!"

MRS. CURWEN: "WE'RE caught, I should say." She sinks back on the seat.

THE ELEVATOR BOY: "Seemed to be going kind of funny all day!" He keeps tugging at the rope.

MILLER, arresting the boy's efforts: "Well, hold on--stop! What are you doing?"

THE ELEVATOR BOY: "Trying to make it go."

MILLER: "Well, don't be so--violent about it. You might break something."

THE ELEVATOR BOY: "Break a wire rope like that!"

MILLER: "Well, well, be quiet now. Ladies, I think you'd better sit down--and as gently as possible. I wouldn't move about much."

MRS. CURWEN: "Move! We're stone. And I wish for my part I were a feather."

MILLER, to the boy: "Er--a--er--where do you suppose we are?"

THE ELEVATOR BOY: "We're in the shaft between the fourth and fifth floors." He attempts a fresh demonstration on the rope, but is prevented.

MILLER: "Hold on! Er--er" -

MRS. CRASHAW, as if the boy had to be communicated with through an interpreter: "Ask him if it's ever happened before."

MILLER: "Yes. Were you ever caught before?"

THE ELEVATOR BOY: "No."

MILLER: "He says no."

MRS. CRASHAW: "Ask him if the elevator has a safety device."

MILLER: "Has it got a safety device?"

THE ELEVATOR BOY: "How should I know?"

MILLER: "He says he don't know."

MRS. CURWEN, in a shriek of hysterical laughter: "Why, he understands English!"

MRS. CRASHAW, sternly ignoring the insinuation: "Ask him if there's any means of calling the janitor."

MILLER: "Could you call the janitor?"

THE ELEVATOR BOY, ironically: "Well, there ain't any telephone attachment."

MILLER, solemnly: "No, he says there isn't."

MRS. CRASHAW, sinking back on the seat with resignation: "Well, I don't know what my niece will say."

MISS LAWTON: "Poor papa!"

YOUNG MR. BEMIS, gathering one of her wandering hands into his: "Don't be frightened. I'm sure there's no danger."

THE ELEVATOR BOY, indignantly: "Why, she can't drop. The cogs in the runs won't let her!"

ALL: "Oh!"

MILLER, with a sigh of relief: "I knew there must be something of the kind. Well, I wish my wife had her fan."

MRS. CURWEN: "And if I had my left glove I should be perfectly happy. Not that I know what the cogs in the runs are!"

MRS. CRASHAW: "Then we're merely caught here?"

MILLER: "That's all."

MRS. CURWEN: "It's quite enough for the purpose. Couldn't you put on a life-preserver, Mr. Miller, and go ashore and get help from the natives?"

MISS LAWTON, putting her handkerchief to her eyes: "Oh, dear!"

MRS. CRASHAW, putting her arm around her: "Don't be frightened, my child. There's no danger."

YOUNG MR. BEMIS, caressing the hand which he holds: "Don't be frightened."

MISS LAWTON: "Don't leave me."

YOUNG MR. BEMIS: "No, no; I won't. Keep fast hold of my hand."

MISS LAWTON: "Oh, yes, I will! I'm ashamed to cry."

YOUNG MR. BEMIS, fervently: "Oh, you needn't be! It is perfectly natural you should."

MRS. CURWEN: "I'm too badly scared for tears. Mr. Miller, you seem to be in charge of this expedition--couldn't you do something? Throw out ballast, or let the boy down in a parachute? Or I've read of a shipwreck where the survivors, in an open boat, joined in a cry, and attracted the notice of a vessel that was going to pass them. We might join in a cry."

MILLER: "Oh, it's all very well joking, Mrs. Curwen" -

MRS. CURWEN: "You call it joking!"

MILLER: "But it's not so amusing, being cooped up here indefinitely. I don't know how we're to get out. We can't join in a cry, and rouse the whole house. It would be ridiculous."

MRS. CURWEN: "And our present attitude is so eminently dignified! Well, I suppose we shall have to cast lots pretty soon to see which

of us shall be sacrificed to nourish the survivors. It's long past
dinner-time."

MISS LAWTON, breaking down: "Oh, DON'T say such terrible things."

YOUNG MR. BEMIS, indignantly comforting her: "Don't, don't cry.

There's no danger. It's perfectly safe."

MILLER to THE ELEVATOR BOY: "Couldn't you climb up the cable, and
get on to the landing, and--ah!--get somebody?"

THE ELEVATOR BOY: "I could, maybe, if there was a hole in the roof."

MILLER, glancing up: "Ah! true."

MRS. CRASHAW, with an old lady's serious kindness: "My boy, can't
you think of anything to do for us?"

THE ELEVATOR BOY yielding to the touch of humanity, and bursting into
tears: "No, ma'am, I can't. And everybody's blamin' me, as if I
done it. What's my poor mother goin' to do?"

MRS. CRASHAW, soothingly: "But you said the runs in the cogs" -

THE ELEVATOR BOY: "How can I tell! That's what they say. They
hain't never been tried."

MRS. CURWEN, springing to her feet: "There! I knew I should. Oh"--

She sinks fainting to the floor.

MRS. CRASHAW, abandoning Miss Lawton to the ministrations of young

Mr. Bemis, while she kneels beside Mrs. Curwen. and chafes her hand:

"Oh, poor thing! I knew she was overwrought by the way she was

keeping up. Give her air, Mr. Miller. Open a--Oh, there isn't any

window!"

MILLER, dropping on his knees, and fanning Mrs. Curwen: "There!

there! Wake up, Mrs. Curwen. I didn't mean to scold you for joking.

I didn't, indeed. I--I--I don't know what the deuce I'm up to." He

gathers Mrs. Curwen's inanimate form in his arms, and fans her face

where it lies on his shoulder. "I don't know what my wife would say

if" -

MRS. CRASHAW: "She would say that you were doing your duty."

MILLER, a little consoled: "Oh, do you think so? Well, perhaps."

YOUNG MR. BEMIS: "Do you feel faint at all, Miss Lawton?"

MISS LAWTON: "No, I think not. No, not if you say it's safe."

YOUNG MR. BEMIS: "Oh, I'm sure it is!"

MISS LAWTON, renewing her hold upon his hand: "Well, then! Perhaps I hurt you?"

YOUNG MR. BEMIS: "No, no! You couldn't!"

MISS LAWTON: "How kind you are!"

MRS. CURWEN, opening her eyes: "Where" -

MILLER, rapidly transferring her to Mrs. Crashaw: "Still in the elevator, Mrs. Curwen." Rising to his feet: "Something must be done. Perhaps we HAD better unite in a cry. It's ridiculous, of course. But it's the only thing we can do. Now, then! Hello!"

MISS LAWTON: "Papa!"

MRS. CRASHAW: "Agne-e-e-s!"

MRS. CURWEN, faintly: "Walter!"

THE ELEVATOR BOY: "Say!"

MILLER: "Oh, that won't do. All join in 'Hello!'"

ALL: "Hello!"

MILLER: "Once more!"

ALL: "Hello!"

MILLER: "ONCE more!"

ALL: "Hello!"

MILLER: "Now wait a while." After an interval: "No, nobody coming." He takes out his watch. "We must repeat this cry at intervals of a half-minute. Now, then!" They all join in the cry, repeating it as MR. MILLER makes the signal with his lifted hand.

MISS LAWTON: "Oh, it's no use!"

MRS. CRASHAW: "They don't hear."

MRS. CURWEN: "They WON'T hear."

MILLER: "Now, then, three times!"

ALL: "Hello! hello! hello!"

III.

ROBERTS appears at the outer door of his apartment on the fifth floor. It opens upon a spacious landing, to which a wide staircase ascends at one side. At the other is seen the grated door to the shaft of the elevator. He peers about on all sides, and listens for a moment before he speaks.

ROBERTS: "Hello yourself."

MILLER, invisibly from the shaft: "Is that you, Roberts?"

ROBERTS: "Yes; where in the world are you?"

MILLER: "In the elevator."

MRS. CRASHAW: "We're ALL here, Edward."

ROBERTS: "What! You, Aunt Mary!"

MRS. CRASHAW: "Yes. Didn't I say so?"

ROBERTS: "Why don't you come up?"

MILLER: "We can't. The elevator has got stuck somehow."

ROBERTS: "Got stuck? Bless my soul! How did it happen? How long have you been there?"

MRS. CURWEN: "Since the world began!"

MILLER: "What's the use asking how it happened? We don't know, and we don't care. What we want to do is to get out."

ROBERTS: "Yes, yes! Be careful!" He rises from his frog-like posture at the grating, and walks the landing in agitation. "Just hold on a minute!"

MILLER: "Oh, WE sha'n't stir."

ROBERTS: "I'll see what can be done."

MILLER: "Well, see quick, please. We have plenty of time, but we don't want to lose any. Don't alarm Mrs. Miller, if you can help it."

ROBERTS: "No, no."

MRS. CURWEN: "You MAY alarm Mr. Curwen."

ROBERTS: "What! Are YOU there?"

MRS. CURWEN: "Here? I've been here all my life!"

ROBERTS: "Ha! ha! ha! That's right. We'll soon have you out. Keep up your spirits."

MRS. CURWEN: "But I'm NOT keeping them up."

MISS LAWTON: "Tell papa I'm here too."

ROBERTS: "What! You too, Miss Lawton?"

MRS. CRASHAW: "Yes, and young Mr. Bemis. Didn't I TELL you we were all here?"

ROBERTS: "I couldn't realize it. Well, wait a moment."

MRS. CURWEN: "Oh, you can trust us to wait."

ROBERTS, returning with DR. LAWTON, and MR. BEMIS, who join him in stooping around the grated door of the shaft: "They're just under here in the well of the elevator, midway between the two stories."

LAWTON: "Ha! ha! ha! You don't say so."

BEMIS: "Bless my heart! What are they doing there?"

MILLER: "We're not doing anything."

MRS. CURWEN: "We're waiting for you to do something."

MISS LAWTON: "Oh, papa!"

LAWTON: "Don't be troubled, Lou, we'll soon have you out."

YOUNG MR. BEMIS: "Don't be alarmed, sir, Miss Lawton is all right."

MISS LAWTON: "Yes, I'm not frightened, papa."

LAWTON: "Well, that's a great thing in cases of this kind. How did you happen to get there?"

MILLER, indignantly: "How do you suppose? We came up in the elevator."

LAWTON: "Well, why didn't you come the rest of the way?"

MILLER: "The elevator wouldn't."

LAWTON: "What seems to be the matter?"

MILLER: "We don't know."

LAWTON: "Have you tried to start it?"

MILLER: "Well, I'll leave that to your imagination."

LAWTON: "Well, be careful what you do. You might" -

MILLER, interrupting: "Roberts, who's that talking?"

ROBERTS, coming forward politely: "Oh, excuse me! I forgot that you didn't know each other. Dr. Lawton, Mr. Miller." Introducing them.

LAWTON: "Glad to know you."

MILLER: "Very happy to make your acquaintance, and hope some day to see you. And now, if you have completed your diagnosis"

MRS. CURWEN: "None of us have ever had it before, doctor; nor any of our families, so far as we know."

LAWTON: "Ha! ha! ha! Very good! Well, just keep quiet. We'll have you all out of there presently."

BEMIS: "Yes, remain perfectly still."

ROBERTS: "Yes, we'll have you out. Just wait."

MILLER: "You seem to think we're going to run away. Why shouldn't we keep quiet? Do you suppose we're going to be very boisterous,

shut up here like rats in a trap?"

MRS. CURWEN: "Or birds in a cage, if you want a more pleasing image."

MRS. CRASHAW: "How are you going to get us out, Edward?"

ROBERTS: "We don't know yet. But keep quiet" -

MILLER: "Keep quiet! Great heavens! we're afraid to stir a finger.

Now don't say 'keep quiet' any more, for we can't stand it."

LAWTON: "He's in open rebellion. What are you going to do, Roberts?"

ROBERTS, rising and scratching his head: "Well, I don't know yet.

We might break a hole in the roof."

LAWTON: "Ah, I don't think that would do. Besides you'd have to get a carpenter."

ROBERTS: "That's true. And it would make a racket, and alarm the house"--staring desperately at the grated doorway of the shaft. "If I could only find an elevator man--an elevator builder! But of course they all live in the suburbs, and they're keeping Christmas, and it would take too long, anyway."

BEMIS: "Hadn't you better send for the police? It seems to me it's a case for the authorities."

LAWTON: "Ah, there speaks the Europeanized mind! They always leave the initiative to the authorities. Go out and sound the fire-alarm, Roberts. It's a case for the Fire Department."

ROBERTS: "Oh, it's all very well to joke, Dr. Lawton. Why don't you prescribe something?"

LAWTON: "Surgical treatment seems to be indicated, and I'm merely a general practitioner."

ROBERTS: "If Willis were only here, he'd find some way out of it. Well, I'll have to go for help somewhere" -

MRS. ROBERTS and MRS. MILLER, bursting upon the scene: "Oh, what is it?"

LAWTON: "Ah, you needn't go for help, my dear fellow. It's come!"

MRS. ROBERTS: "What are you all doing here, Edward?"

MRS. MILLER: "Oh, have you had any bad news of Mr. Miller?"

MRS. ROBERTS: "Or Aunt Mary?"

MILLER, calling up: "Well, are you going to keep us here all night?

Why don't you do something?"

MRS. MILLER: "Oh, what's that? Oh, it's Mr. Miller! Oh, where are you, Ellery?"

MILLER: "In the elevator."

MRS. MILLER: "Oh! and where is the elevator? Why don't you get out?

Oh" -

MILLER: "It's caught, and we can't."

MRS. MILLER: "Caught? Oh, then you will be killed--killed--killed!

And it's all my fault, sending you back after my fan, and I had it all the time in my own pocket; and it comes from my habit of giving it to you to carry in your overcoat pocket, because it's deep, and the fan can't break. And of course I never thought of my own pocket, and I never SHOULD have thought of it at all if Mr. Curwen hadn't been going back to get Mrs. Curwen's glove, for he'd brought another right after she'd sent him for a left, and we were all having such a laugh about it, and I just happened to put my hand on my pocket, and there I felt the fan. And oh, WHAT shall I do?" Mrs. Miller utters these explanations and self-reproaches in a lamentable voice, while crouching close to the grated door to the elevator shaft, and clinging to its meshes.

MILLER: "Well, well, it's all right. I've got you another fan,
here. Don't be frightened."

MRS. ROBERTS, wildly: "Where's Aunt Mary, Edward? Has Willis got
back?" At a guilty look from her husband: "Edward! DON'T tell me
that SHE'S in that elevator! Don't do it, Edward! For your own sake
don't. Don't tell me that your own child's mother's aunt is down
there, suspended between heaven and earth like--like" -

LAWTON: "The coffin of the Prophet."

MRS. ROBERTS: "Yes. DON'T tell me, Edward! Spare your child's
mother, if you won't spare your wife!"

MRS. CRASHAW: "Agnes! don't be ridiculous. I'm here, and I never
was more comfortable in my life."

MRS. ROBERTS, calling down the grating "Oh! Is it you, Aunt Mary?"

MRS. CRASHAW: "Of course it is!"

MRS. ROBERTS: "You recognize my voice?"

MRS. CRASHAW: "I should hope so, indeed! Why shouldn't I?"

MRS. ROBERTS: "And you know me? Agnes? Oh!"

MRS. CRASHAW: "Don't be a goose, Agnes."

MRS. ROBERTS: "Oh, it IS you, aunty. It IS! Oh, I'm SO glad! I'm SO happy! But keep perfectly still, aunty dear, and we'll soon have you out. Think of baby, and don't give way."

MRS. CRASHAW: "I shall not, if the elevator doesn't, you may depend upon that."

MRS. ROBERTS: "Oh, what courage you DO have! But keep up your spirits! Mrs. Miller and I have just come from seeing baby. She's gone to sleep with all her little presents in her arms. The children did want to see you so much before they went to bed. But never mind that now, Aunt Mary. I'm only too thankful to have you at all!"

MRS. CRASHAW: "I wish you did have me! And if you will all stop talking and try some of you to do something, I shall be greatly obliged to you. It's worse than it was in the sleeping car that night."

MRS. ROBERTS: "Oh, do you remember it, Aunt Mary? Oh, how funny you are!" Turning heroically to her husband: "Now, Edward, dear, get them out. If it's necessary, get them out over my dead body. Anything! Only hurry. I will be calm; I will be patient. But you must act instantly. Oh, here comes Mr. Curwen!" MR. CURWEN mounts

the stairs to the landing with every sign of exhaustion, as if he had made a very quick run to and from his house. "Oh, HE will help--I know he will! Oh, Mr. Curwen, the elevator is caught just below here with my aunt in it and Mrs. Miller's husband" -

LAWTON: "And my girl."

BEMIS: "And my boy."

MRS. CURWEN, calling up: "And your wife!"

CURWEN, horror-struck: "And my wife! Oh, heavenly powers! what are we going to do? How shall we get them out? Why don't they come up?"

ALL: "They can't."

CURWEN: "Can't? Oh, my goodness!" He flies at the grating, and kicks and beats it.

ROBERTS: "Hold on! What's the use of that?"

LAWTON: "You couldn't get at them if you beat the door down."

BEMIS: "Certainly not." They lay hands upon him and restrain him.

CURWEN, struggling: "Let me speak to my wife! Will you prevent a

husband from speaking to his own wife?"

MRS. MILLER, in blind admiration of his frenzy: "Yes, that's just what I said. If some one had beaten the door in at once" -

MRS. ROBERTS: "Oh, Edward, dear, let him speak to his wife."

Tearfully: "Think if I were there!"

ROBERTS, releasing him: "He may speak to his wife all night. But he mustn't knock the house down."

CURWEN, rushing at the grating: "Caroline! Can you hear me? Are you safe?"

MRS. CURWEN: "Perfectly. I had a little faint when we first stuck"

-

CURWEN: "Faint? Oh!"

MRS. CURWEN: "But I am all right now."

CURWEN: "Well, that's right. Don't be frightened! There's no occasion for excitement. Keep perfectly calm and collected. It's the only way--What's that ringing?" The sound of an electric bell is heard within the elevator. It increases in fury.

MRS. ROBERTS and MRS. MILLER: "Oh, isn't it dreadful?"

THE ELEVATOR BOY: "It's somebody on the ground-floor callin' the elevator!"

CURWEN: "Well, never mind him. Don't pay the slightest attention to him. Let him go to the deuce! And, Caroline!"

MRS. CURWEN: "Yes?"

CURWEN: "I--I--I've got your glove all right."

MRS. CURWEN: "Left, you mean, I hope?"

CURWEN: "Yes, left, dearest! I MEAN left."

MRS. CURWEN: "Eight-button?"

CURWEN: "Yes."

MRS. CURWEN: "Light drab?"

CURWEN, pulling a light yellow glove from his pocket: "Oh!" He staggers away from the grating and stays himself against the wall, the mistaken glove dangling limply from his hand.

ROBERTS, LAWTON, and BEMIS: "Ah! ha! ha! ha!"

MRS. ROBERTS: "Oh, for shame! to laugh at such a time!"

MRS. MILLER: "When it's a question of life and death. There! The ringing's stopped. What's that?" Steps are heard mounting the stairway rapidly, several treads at a time. Mr. Campbell suddenly bursts into the group on the landing with a final bound from the stairway. "Oh!"

CAMPBELL: "I can't find Aunt Mary, Agnes. I can't find anything-- not even the elevator. Where's the elevator? I rang for it down there till I was black in the face."

MRS. ROBERTS: "No wonder! It's here."

MRS. MILLER: "Between this floor and the floor below. With my husband in it."

CURWEN: "And my wife!"

LAWTON: "And my daughter!"

BEMIS: "And my son!"

MRS. ROBERTS: "And aunty!"

ALL: "And it's stuck fast."

ROBERTS: "And the long and short of it is, Willis, that we don't know how to get them out, and we wish you would suggest some way."

LAWTON: "There's been a great tacit confidence among us in your executive ability and your inventive genius."

MRS. ROBERTS: "Oh, yes, we know you can do it."

MRS. MILLER: "If you can't, nothing can save them."

CAMPBELL, going to the grating: "Miller!"

MILLER: "Well?"

CAMPBELL: "Start her up!"

MILLER: "Now, look here, Campbell, we are not going to stand that; we've had enough of it. I speak for the whole elevator. Don't you suppose that if it had been possible to start her up we" -

MRS. CURWEN: "We shouldn't have been at the moon by this time."

CAMPBELL: "Well, then, start her DOWN!"

MILLER: "I never thought of that." To the ELEVATOR BOY: "Start her

down." To the people on the landing above: "Hurrah! She's off!"

CAMPBELL: "Well, NOW start her up!"

A joint cry from the elevator: "Thank you! we'll walk up this time."

MILLER: "Here! let us out at this landing!" They are heard precipitately emerging, with sighs and groans of relief, on the floor below.

MRS. ROBERTS, devoutly: "O Willis, it seems like an interposition of Providence, your coming just at this moment."

CAMPBELL: "Interposition of common sense! These hydraulic elevators weaken sometimes, and can't go any farther."

ROBERTS, to the shipwrecked guests, who arrive at the top of the stairs, crestfallen, spent, and clinging to one another for support:

"Why didn't you think of starting her down, some of you?"

MRS. ROBERTS, welcoming them with kisses and hand-shakes: "I should have thought it would occur to you at once."

MILLER, goaded to exasperation: "Did it occur to any of YOU?"

LAWTON, with sublime impudence: "It occurred to ALL of us. But we naturally supposed you had tried it."

MRS. MILLER, taking possession of her husband: "Oh, what a fright you have given us!"

MILLER: "_I_ given you! Do you suppose I did it out of a joke, or voluntarily?"

MRS. ROBERTS: "Aunty, I don't know what to say to you. YOU ought to have been here long ago, before anything happened."

MRS. CRASHAW: "Oh, I can explain everything in due season. What I wish you to do now is to let me get at Willis, and kiss him." As

CAMPBELL submits to her embrace: "You dear, good fellow! If it hadn't been for your presence of mind, I don't know how we should ever have got out of that horrid pen."

MRS. CURWEN, giving him her hand: "As it isn't proper for ME to kiss you"

CAMPBELL: "Well, I don't know. I don't wish to be TOO modest."

MRS. CURWEN: "I think I shall have to vote you a service of plate."

MRS. ROBERTS: "Come and look at the pattern of mine. And, Willis, as you are the true hero of the occasion, you shall take me in to dinner. And I am not going to let anybody go before you." She

seizes his arm, and leads the way from the landing into the apartment. ROBERTS, LAWTON, and BEMIS follow stragglingly.

MRS. MILLER, getting her husband to one side: "When she fainted, she fainted AT you, of course! What did you do?"

MILLER: "Who? I! Oh!" After a moment's reflection: "She came to!"

CURWEN, getting his wife aside: "When you fainted, Caroline, who revived you?"

MRS. CURWEN: "Who? ME? Oh! How should I know? I was insensible."

They wheel arm in arm, and meet MR. and MRS. MILLER in the middle.

MRS. CURWEN yields precedence with an ironical courtesy: "After you, Mrs. Miller!"

MRS. MILLER, in a nervous, inimical twitter: "Oh, before the heroine of the lost elevator?"

MRS. CURWEN, dropping her husband's arm, and taking MRS. MILLER'S: "Let us split the difference."

MRS. MILLER: "Delightful! I shall never forget the honor."

MRS. CURWEN: "Oh, don't speak of honors! Mr. Miller was SO kind through all those terrible scenes in the elevator."

MRS. MILLER: "I've no doubt you showed yourself duly grateful."

They pass in, followed by their husbands.

YOUNG MR. BEMIS, timidly: "Miss Lawton, in the elevator you asked me not to leave you. Did you--ah--mean--I MUST ask you; it may be my only chance; if you meant--never?"

MISS LAWTON, dropping her head: "I--I--don't--know."

YOUNG MR. BEMIS: "But if I WISHED never to leave you, should you send me away?"

MISS LAWTON, with a shy, sly upward glance at him: "Not in the elevator!"

YOUNG MR. BEMIS: "Oh!"

MRS. ROBERTS, re-appearing at the door: "Why, you good-for-nothing young things, why don't you come to--Oh! excuse me!" She re-enters precipitately, followed by her tardy guests, on whom she casts a backward glance of sympathy. "Oh, you NEEDN'T hurry!"

End of The Project Gutenberg Etext of The Elevator, by William D. Howells

THE PARLOR-CAR

by William D. Howells

This etext was produced from the 1911 Houghton Mifflin Company
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SCENE: A Parlor-Car on the New York Central Railroad. It is late afternoon in the early autumn, with a cloudy sunset threatening rain. The car is unoccupied save by a gentleman, who sits fronting one of the windows, with his feet in another chair; a newspaper lies across his lap; his hat is drawn down over his eyes, and he is apparently asleep. The rear door of the car opens, and the conductor enters with a young lady, heavily veiled, the porter coming after with her wraps and travelling-bags. The lady's air is of mingled anxiety and desperation, with a certain fierceness of movement. She casts a careless glance over the empty chairs.

CONDUCTOR: "Here's your ticket, madam. You can have any of the places you like here,--glancing at the unconscious gentleman, and then at the young lady,--"if you prefer, you can go and take that

seat in the forward car."

MISS LUCY GALBRAITH: "Oh, I can't ride backwards. I'll stay here, please. Thank you." The porter places her things in a chair by a window, across the car from the sleeping gentleman, and she throws herself wearily into the next seat, wheels round in it, and lifting her veil gazes absently out at the landscape. Her face, which is very pretty, with a low forehead shadowed by thick blond hair, shows the traces of tears. She makes search in her pocket for her handkerchief, which she presses to her eyes. The conductor, lingering a moment, goes out.

PORTER: "I'll be right here, at de end of de cah, if you should happen to want anything, miss,"--making a feint of arranging the shawls and satchels. "Should you like some dese things hung up? Well, dey'll be jus' as well in de chair. We's pretty late dis afternoon; more'n four hours behin' time. Ought to been into Albany 'fore dis. Freight train off de track jus' dis side o' Rochester, an' had to wait. Was you going to stop at Schenectady, miss?"

MISS GALBRAITH, absently: "At Schenectady?" After a pause, "Yes."

PORTER: "Well, that's de next station, and den de cahs don't stop ag'in till dey git to Albany. Anything else I can do for you now, miss?"

MISS GALBRAITH: "No, no, thank you, nothing." The Porter hesitates, takes off his cap, and scratches his head with a murmur of embarrassment. Miss Galbraith looks up at him inquiringly and then suddenly takes out her porte-monnaie, and fees him.

PORTER: "Thank you, miss, thank you. If you want anything at all, miss, I'm right dere at de end of de cah." He goes out by the narrow passage-way beside the smaller enclosed parlor. Miss Galbraith looks askance at the sleeping gentleman, and then, rising, goes to the large mirror, to pin her veil, which has become loosened from her hat. She gives a little start at sight of the gentleman in the mirror, but arranges her head-gear, and returning to her place looks out of the window again. After a little while she moves about uneasily in her chair, then leans forward, and tries to raise her window; she lifts it partly up, when the catch slips from her fingers, and the window falls shut again with a crash.

MISS GALBRAITH: "Oh, DEAR, how provoking! I suppose I must call the porter." She rises from her seat, but on attempting to move away she finds that the skirt of her polonaise has been caught in the falling window. She pulls at it, and then tries to lift the window again, but the cloth has wedged it in, and she cannot stir it. "Well, I certainly think this is beyond endurance! Porter! Ah,--Porter! Oh, he'll never hear me in the racket that these wheels are making! I wish they'd stop,--!"--The gentleman stirs in his chair, lifts his head, listens, takes his feet down from the other seat, rises abruptly, and comes to Miss Galbraith's side.

MR. ALLEN RICHARDS: "Will you allow me to open the window for you?"

Starting back, "Miss Galbraith!"

MISS GALBRAITH: "Al--Mr. Richards!" There is a silence for some moments, in which they remain looking at each other; then, -

MR. RICHARDS: "Lucy" -

MISS GALBRAITH: "I forbid you to address me in that way, Mr. Richards."

MR. RICHARDS: "Why, you were just going to call me Allen!"

MISS GALBRAITH: "That was an accident, you know very well,--an impulse" -

MR. RICHARDS: "Well, so is this."

MISS GALBRAITH: "Of which you ought to be ashamed to take advantage.

I wonder at your presumption in speaking to me at all. It's quite idle, I can assure you. Everything is at an end between us. It seems that I bore with you too long; but I'm thankful that I had the spirit to not at last, and to act in time. And now that chance has thrown us together, I trust that you will not force your conversation upon me. No gentleman would, and I have always given you credit for

thinking yourself a gentleman. I request that you will not speak to me."

MR. RICHARDS: "You've spoken ten words to me for every one of mine to you. But I won't annoy you. I can't believe it, Lucy; I can NOT believe it. It seems like some rascally dream, and if I had had any sleep since it happened, I should think I--"

MISS GALBRAITH: "Oh! You were sleeping soundly enough when I got into the car!"

MR. RICHARDS: "I own it; I was perfectly used up, and I HAD dropped off."

MISS GALBRAITH, scornfully: "Then perhaps you HAVE dreamed it."

MR. RICHARDS: "I'll think so till you tell me again that our engagement is broken; that the faithful love of years is to go for nothing; that you dismiss me with cruel insult, without one word of explanation, without a word of intelligible accusation, even. It's too much! I've been thinking it all over and over, and I can't make head or tail of it. I meant to see you again as soon as we got to town, and implore you to hear me. Come, it's a mighty serious matter, Lucy. I'm not a man to put on heroics and that; but _I_ believe it'll play the very deuce with me, Lucy,--that is to say, Miss Galbraith,--I do indeed. It'll give me a low opinion of woman."

MISS GALBRAITH, averting her face: "Oh, a very high opinion of woman you have had!"

MR. RICHARDS, with sentiment: "Well, there was one woman whom I thought a perfect angel."

MISS GALBRAITH: "Indeed! May I ask her name?"

MR. RICHARDS, with a forlorn smile. "I shall be obliged to describe her somewhat formally as--Miss Galbraith."

MISS GALBRAITH: "Mr. Richards!"

MR. RICHARDS: "Why, you've just forbidden me to say LUCY! You must tell me, dearest, what I have done to offend you. The worst criminals are not condemned unheard, and I've always thought you were merciful if not just. And now I only ask you to be just."

MISS GALBRAITH, looking out of the window: "You know very well what you've done. You can't expect me to humiliate myself by putting your offence into words."

MR. RICHARDS: "Upon my soul, I don't know what you mean! I DON'T know what I've done. When you came at me, last night, with my ring and presents and other little traps, you might have knocked me down with the lightest of the lot. I was perfectly dazed; I couldn't say

anything before you were off, and all I could do was to hope that you'd be more like yourself in the morning. And in the morning, when I came round to Mrs. Philips's, I found you were gone, and I came after you by the next train."

MISS GALBRAITH: "Mr. Richards, your personal history for the last twenty-four hours is a matter of perfect indifference to me, as it shall be for the next twenty-four hundred years. I see that you are resolved to annoy me, and since you will not leave the car, I must do so." She rises haughtily from her seat, but the imprisoned skirt of her polonaise twitches her abruptly back into her chair. She bursts into tears. "Oh, what SHALL I do?"

MR. RICHARDS, dryly: "You shall do whatever you like, Miss Galbraith, when I've set you free; for I see your dress is caught in the window. When it's once out, I'll shut the window, and you can call the porter to raise it." He leans forward over her chair, and while she shrinks back the length of her tether, he tugs at the window-fastening. "I can't get at it. Would you be so good as to stand up,--all you can?" Miss Galbraith stands up, droopingly, and Mr. Richards makes a movement towards her, and then falls back. "No, that won't do. Please sit down again." He goes round her chair and tries to get at the window from that side. "I can't get any purchase on it. Why don't you cut out that piece?" Miss Galbraith stares at him in dumb amazement. "Well, I don't see what we're to do: I'll go and get the porter." He goes to the end of the car, and returns. "I can't find the porter,--he must be in one of the other cars. But"--

brightening with the fortunate conception--"I've just thought of something. Will it unbutton?"

MISS GALBRAITH: "Unbutton?"

MR. RICHARDS: "Yes; this garment of yours."

MISS GALBRAITH: "My polonaise?" Inquiringly, "Yes."

MR. RICHARDS: "Well, then, it's a very simple matter. If you will just take it off I can easily" -

MISS GALBRAITH, faintly: "I can't. A polonaise isn't like an overcoat" -

MR. RICHARDS, with dismay: "Oh! Well, then"--He remains thinking a moment in hopeless perplexity.

MISS GALBRAITH, with polite ceremony: "The porter will be back soon. Don't trouble yourself any further about it, please. I shall do very well."

MR. RICHARDS, without heeding her: "If you could kneel on that foot-cushion, and face the window" -

MISS GALBRAITH, kneeling promptly: "So?"

MR. RICHARDS: "Yes, and now"--kneeling beside her--"if you'll allow me to--to get at the window-catch,"--he stretches both arms forward; she shrinks from his right into his left, and then back again,--"and pull while I raise the window" -

MISS GALBRAITH: "Yes, yes; but do hurry, please. If any one saw us, I don't know what they would think. It's perfectly ridiculous!"--pulling. "It's caught in the corner of the window, between the frame and the sash, and it won't come! Is my hair troubling you? Is it in your eyes?"

MR. RICHARDS: "It's in my eyes, but it isn't troubling me. Am I inconveniencing you?"

MISS GALBRAITH: "Oh, not at all."

MR. RICHARDS: "Well, now then, pull hard!" He lifts the window with a great effort; the polonaise comes free with a start, and she strikes violently against him. In supporting the shock he cannot forbear catching her for an instant to his heart. She frees herself, and starts indignantly to her feet.

MISS GALBRAITH: "Oh, what a cowardly--subterfuge!"

MR. RICHARDS: "Cowardly? You've no idea how much courage it took."

Miss Galbraith puts her handkerchief to her face, and sobs. "Oh,

don't cry! Bless my heart,--I'm sorry I did it! But you know how
dearly I love you, Lucy, though I do think you've been cruelly
unjust. I told you I never should love any one else, and I never
shall. I couldn't help it; upon my soul, I couldn't. Nobody could.
Don't let it vex you, my"--He approaches her.

MISS GALBRAITH: "Please not touch me, sir! You have no longer any
right whatever to do so."

MR. RICHARDS: "You misinterpret a very inoffensive gesture. I have
no idea of touching you, but I hope I may be allowed, as a special
favor, to--pick up my hat, which you are in the act of stepping on."

Miss Galbraith hastily turns, and strikes the hat with her whirling
skirts; it rolls to the other side of the parlor, and Mr. Richards,
who goes after it, utters an ironical "Thanks!" He brushes it, and
puts it on, looking at her where she has again seated herself at the
window with her back to him, and continues, "As for any further
molestation from me" -

MISS GALBRAITH: "If you WILL talk to me" -

MR. RICHARDS: "Excuse me, I am not talking to you."

MISS GALBRAITH: "What were you doing?"

MR. RICHARDS: "I was beginning to think aloud. I--I was

soliloquizing. I suppose I may be allowed to soliloquize?"

MISS GALBRAITH, very coldly: "You can do what you like."

MR. RICHARDS: "Unfortunately that's just what I can't do. If I could do as I liked, I should ask you a single question."

MISS GALBRAITH, after a moment: "Well, sir, you may ask your question." She remains as before, with her chin in her hand, looking tearfully out of the window; her face is turned from Mr. Richards, who hesitates a moment before he speaks.

MR. RICHARDS: "I wish to ask you just this, Miss Galbraith: if you couldn't ride backwards in the other car, why do you ride backwards in this?"

MISS GALBRAITH, burying her face in her handkerchief, and sobbing: "Oh, oh, oh! This is too bad!"

MR. RICHARDS: "Oh, come now, Lucy. It breaks my heart to hear you going on so, and all for nothing. Be a little merciful to both of us, and listen to me. I've no doubt I can explain everything if I once understand it, but it's pretty hard explaining a thing if you don't understand it yourself. Do turn round. I know it makes you sick to ride in that way, and if you don't want to face me--there!"-- wheeling in his chair so as to turn his back upon her--"you needn't. Though it's rather trying to a fellow's politeness, not to mention

his other feelings. Now, what in the name" -

PORTER, who at this moment enters with his step-ladder, and begins to light the lamps: "Going pretty slow ag'in, sah."

MR. RICHARDS: "Yes; what's the trouble?"

PORTER: "Well, I don't know exactly, sah. Something de matter with de locomotive. We sha'n't be into Albany much 'fore eight o'clock."

MR. RICHARDS: "What's the next station?"

PORTER: "Schenectady."

MR. RICHARDS: "Is the whole train as empty as this car?"

PORTER, laughing: "Well, no, sah. Fact is, dis cah don't belong on dis train. It's a Pullman that we hitched on when you got in, and we's taking it along for one of de Eastern roads. We let you in 'cause de Drawing-rooms was all full. Same with de lady,"--looking sympathetically at her, as he takes his steps to go out. "Can I do anything for you now, miss?"

MISS GALBRAITH, plaintively: "No, thank you; nothing whatever." She has turned while Mr. Richards and The Porter have been speaking, and now faces the back of the former, but her veil is drawn closely. The

Porter goes out.

MR. RICHARDS, wheeling round so as to confront her: "I wish you would speak to me half as kindly as you do to that darky, Lucy."

MISS GALBRAITH: "HE is a GENTLEMAN!"

MR. RICHARDS: "He is an urbane and well-informed nobleman. At any rate, he's a man and a brother. But so am I." Miss Galbraith does not reply, and after a pause Mr. Richards resumes. "Talking of gentlemen, I recollect, once, coming up on the day-boat to Poughkeepsie, there was a poor devil of a tipsy man kept following a young fellow about, and annoying him to death--trying to fight him, as a tipsy man will, and insisting that the young fellow had insulted him. By and by he lost his balance and went overboard, and the other jumped after him and fished him out." Sensation on the part of Miss Galbraith, who stirs uneasily in her chair, looks out of the window, then looks at Mr. Richards, and drops her head. "There was a young lady on board, who had seen the whole thing--a very charming young lady indeed, with pale blond hair growing very thick over her forehead, and dark eyelashes to the sweetest blue eyes in the world. Well, this young lady's papa was amongst those who came up to say civil things to the young fellow when he got aboard again, and to ask the honor--he said the HONOR--of his acquaintance. And when he came out of his stateroom in dry clothes, this infatuated old gentleman was waiting for him, and took him and introduced him to his wife and daughter; and the daughter said, with tears in her eyes, and a

perfectly intoxicating impulsiveness, that it was the grandest and the most heroic and the noblest thing that she had ever seen, and she should always be a better girl for having seen it. Excuse me, Miss Galbraith, for troubling you with these facts of a personal history, which, as you say, is a matter of perfect indifference to you. The young fellow didn't think at the time he had done anything extraordinary; but I don't suppose he DID expect to live to have the same girl tell him he was no gentleman."

MISS GALBRAITH, wildly: "O Allen, Allen! You KNOW I think you are a gentleman, and I always did!"

MR. RICHARDS, languidly: "Oh, I merely had your word for it, just now, that you didn't." Tenderly, "Will you hear me, Lucy?"

MISS GALBRAITH, faintly: "Yes."

MR. RICHARDS: "Well, what is it I've done? Will you tell me if I guess right?"

MISS GALBRAITH, with dignity: "I am in no humor for jesting, Allen. And I can assure you that though I consent to hear what you have to say, or ask, NOTHING will change my determination. All is over between us."

MR. RICHARDS: "Yes, I understand that, perfectly. I am now asking

merely for general information. I do not expect you to relent, and, in fact, I should consider it rather frivolous if you did. No. What I have always admired in your character, Lucy, is a firm, logical consistency; a clearness of mental vision that leaves no side of a subject unsearched; and an unwavering constancy of purpose. You may say that these traits are characteristic of ALL women; but they are pre-eminently characteristic of you, Lucy." Miss Galbraith looks askance at him, to make out whether he is in earnest or not; he continues, with a perfectly serious air. "And I know now that if you're offended with me, it's for no trivial cause." She stirs uncomfortably in her chair. What I have done I can't imagine, but it must be something monstrous, since it has made life with me appear so impossible that you are ready to fling away your own happiness-- for I know you DID love me, Lucy--and destroy mine. I will begin with the worst thing I can think of. Was it because I danced so much with Fanny Watervliet?"

MISS GALBRAITH, indignantly: "How can you insult me by supposing that I could be jealous of such a perfect little goose as that? No, Allen! Whatever I think of you, I still respect you too much for that."

MR. RICHARDS: "I'm glad to hear that there are yet depths to which you think me incapable of descending, and that Miss Watervliet is one of them. I will now take a little higher ground. Perhaps you think I flirted with Mrs. Dawes. I thought, myself, that the thing might begin to have that appearance, but I give you my word of honor that

as soon as the idea occurred to me, I dropped her--rather rudely,
too. The trouble was, don't you know, that I felt so perfectly safe
with a MARRIED friend of yours. I couldn't be hanging about you all
the time, and I was afraid I might vex you if I went with the other
girls; and I didn't know what to do."

MISS GALBRAITH: "I think you behaved rather silly, giggling so much
with her. But" -

MR. RICHARDS: "I own it, I know it was silly. But" -

MISS GALBRAITH: "It wasn't that; it wasn't that!"

MR. RICHARDS: "Was it my forgetting to bring you those things from
your mother?"

MISS GALBRAITH: "No!"

MR. RICHARDS: "Was it because I hadn't given up smoking yet?"

MISS GALBRAITH: "You KNOW I never asked you to give up smoking. It
was entirely your own proposition."

MR. RICHARDS: "That's true. That's what made me so easy about it.

I knew I could leave it off ANY time. Well, I will not disturb you
any longer, Miss Galbraith." He throws his overcoat across his arm,

and takes up his travelling-bag. "I have failed to guess your fatal-
-conundrum; and I have no longer any excuse for remaining. I am
going into the smoking-car. Shall I send the porter to you for
anything?"

MISS GALBRAITH: "No, thanks." She puts up her handkerchief to her
face.

MR. RICHARDS: "Lucy, do you send me away?"

MISS GALBRAITH, behind her handkerchief: "You were going, yourself."

MR. RICHARDS, over his shoulder: "Shall I come back?"

MISS GALBRAITH: "I have no right to drive you from the car."

MR. RICHARDS, coming back, and sitting down in the chair nearest her:

"Lucy, dearest, tell me what's the matter."

MISS GALBRAITH: "O Allen! your not KNOWING makes it all the more
hopeless and killing. It shows me that we MUST part; that you would
go on, breaking my heart, and grinding me into the dust as long as we
lived." She sobs. "It shows me that you never understood me, and
you never will. I know you're good and kind and all that, but that
only makes your not understanding me so much the worse. I do it
quite as much for your sake as my own, Allen."

MR. RICHARDS: "I'd much rather you wouldn't put yourself out on my account."

MISS GALBRAITH, without regarding him: "If you could mortify me before a whole roomful of people, as you did last night, what could I expect after marriage but continual insult?"

MR. RICHARDS, in amazement: "HOW did I mortify you? I thought that I treated you with all the tenderness and affection that a decent regard for the feelings of others would allow. I was ashamed to find I couldn't keep away from you."

MISS GALBRAITH: "Oh, you were ATTENTIVE enough, Allen; nobody denies that. Attentive enough in non-essentials. Oh, yes!"

MR. RICHARDS: "Well, what vital matters did I fail in? I'm sure I can't remember."

MISS GALBRAITH: "I dare say! I dare say they won't appear vital to you, Allen. Nothing does. And if I had told you, I should have been met with ridicule, I suppose. But I knew BETTER than to tell; I respected myself too MUCH."

MR. RICHARDS: "But now you mustn't respect yourself QUITE so much, dearest. And I promise you I won't laugh at the most serious thing. I'm in no humor for it. If it were a matter of life and death, even,

I can assure you that it wouldn't bring a smile to my countenance.

No, indeed! If you expect me to laugh, now, you must say something particularly funny."

MISS GALBRAITH: "I was not going to say anything funny, as you call it, and I will say nothing at all, if you talk in that way."

MR. RICHARDS: "Well, I won't, then. But do you know what I suspect, Lucy? I wouldn't mention it to everybody, but I will to you--in strict confidence: I suspect that you're rather ashamed of your grievance, if you have any. I suspect it's nothing at all."

MISS GALBRAITH, very sternly at first, with a rising hysterical inflection: "Nothing, Allen! Do you call it NOTHING, to have Mrs. Dawes come out with all that about your accident on your way up the river, and ask me if it didn't frighten me terribly to hear of it, even after it was all over; and I had to say you hadn't told me a word of it? 'Why, Lucy!'"--angrily mimicking Mrs. Dawes, "'you must teach him better than that. I make Mr. Dawes tell me everything.' Little simpleton! And then to have them all laugh--Oh, dear, it's too much!"

MR. RICHARDS: "Why, my dear Lucy" -

MISS GALBRAITH, interrupting him: "I saw just how it was going to be, and I'm thankful, THANKFUL that it happened. I saw that you didn't care enough for me to take me into your whole life; that you

despised and distrusted me, and that it would get worse and worse to the end of our days; that we should grow farther and farther apart, and I should be left moping at home, while you ran about making confidantes of other women whom you considered WORTHY of your confidence. It all FLASHED upon me in an INSTANT; and I resolved to break with you, then and there; and I did, just as soon as ever I could go to my room for your things, and I'm glad,--yes,--Oh, hu, hu, hu, hu, hu!--SO glad I did it!"

MR. RICHARDS, grimly: "Your joy is obvious. May I ask" -

MISS GALBRAITH: "Oh, it wasn't the FIRST proof you had given me how little you really cared for me, but I was determined it should be the last. I dare say you've forgotten them! I dare say you don't remember telling Mamie Morris that you didn't like embroidered cigar-cases, when you'd just TOLD me that you did, and let me be such a fool as to commence one for you; but I'm thankful to say THAT went into the fire,--oh, yes, INSTANTLY! And I dare say you've forgotten that you didn't tell me your brother's engagement was to be kept, and let me come out with it that night at the Rudges', and then looked perfectly aghast, so that everybody thought I had been blabbing! Time and again, Allen, you have made me suffer agonies, yes, AGONIES; but your power to do so is at an end. I am free and happy at last." She weeps bitterly.

MR. RICHARDS, quietly: "Yes, I HAD forgotten those crimes, and I

suppose many similar atrocities. I own it, I AM forgetful and careless. I was wrong about those things. I ought to have told you why I said that to Miss Morris: I was afraid she was going to work me one. As to that accident I told Mrs. Dawes of, it wasn't worth mentioning. Our boat simply walked over a sloop in the night, and nobody was hurt. I shouldn't have thought twice about it, if she hadn't happened to brag of their passing close to an iceberg on their way home from Europe; then I trotted out MY pretty-near disaster as a match for hers,--confound her! I wish the iceberg had sunk them! Only it wouldn't have sunk her,--she's so light; she'd have gone bobbing about all over the Atlantic Ocean, like a cork; she's got a perfect life-preserver in that mind of hers." Miss Galbraith gives a little laugh, and then a little moan. "But since you are happy, I will not repine, Miss Galbraith. I don't pretend to be very happy myself, but then, I don't deserve it. Since you are ready to let an absolutely unconscious offence on my part cancel all the past; since you let my devoted love weigh as nothing against the momentary pique that a malicious little rattle-pate--she was vexed at my leaving her--could make you feel, and choose to gratify a wicked resentment at the cost of any suffering to me, why, I can be glad and happy too."

With rising anger, "Yes, Miss Galbraith. All IS over between us.

You can go! I renounce you!"

MISS GALBRAITH, springing fiercely to her feet: "Go, indeed!

Renounce me! Be so good as to remember that you haven't got me TO renounce!"

MR. RICHARDS: "Well, it's all the same thing. I'd renounce you if I had. Good-evening, Miss Galbraith. I will send back your presents as soon as I get to town; it won't be necessary to acknowledge them. I hope we may never meet again." He goes out of the door towards the front of the car, but returns directly, and glances uneasily at Miss Galbraith, who remains with her handkerchief pressed to her eyes. "Ah--a--that is--I shall be obliged to intrude upon you again. The fact is" -

MISS GALBRAITH, anxiously: "Why, the cars have stopped! Are we at Schenectady?"

MR. RICHARDS: "Well, no; not EXACTLY; not stopped exactly at SCHENECTADY" -

MISS GALBRAITH: "Then what station is this? Have they carried me by?" Observing his embarrassment, "Allen, what is the matter? What has happened? Tell me instantly! Are we off the track? Have we run into another train? Have we broken through a bridge? Shall we be burnt alive? Tell me, Allen, tell me,--I can bear it!--are we telescoped?" She wrings her hands in terror.

MR. RICHARDS, unsympathetically: "Nothing of the kind has happened. This car has simply come uncoupled, and the rest of the train has gone on ahead, and left us standing on the track, nowhere in particular." He leans back in his chair, and wheels it round from

her.

MISS GALBRAITH, mortified, yet anxious: "Well?"

MR. RICHARDS: "Well, until they miss us, and run back to pick us up, I shall be obliged to ask your indulgence. I will try not to disturb you; I would go out and stand on the platform, but it's raining."

MISS GALBRAITH, listening to the rain-fall on the roof: "Why, so it is!" Timidly, "Did you notice when the car stopped?"

MR. RICHARDS: "No." He rises and goes out at the rear door, comes back, and sits down again

MISS GALBRAITH, rises, and goes to the large mirror to wipe away her tears. She glances at Mr. Richards, who does not move. She sits down in a seat nearer him than the chair she has left. After some faint murmurs and hesitations, she asks, "Will you please tell me why you went out just now?"

MR. RICHARDS, with indifference: "Yes. I went to see if the rear signal was out."

MISS GALBRAITH, after another hesitation: "Why?"

MR. RICHARDS: "Because, if it wasn't out, some train might run into us from that direction."

MISS GALBRAITH, tremulously: "Oh! And was it?"

MR. RICHARDS, dryly: "Yes."

MISS GALBRAITH returns to her former place, with a wounded air, and for a moment neither speaks. Finally she asks very meekly, "And there's no danger from the front?"

MR. RICHARDS, coldly: "No."

MISS GALBRAITH, after some little noises and movements meant to catch Mr. Richards's attention: "Of course, I never meant to imply that you were intentionally careless or forgetful."

MR. RICHARDS, still very coldly: "Thank you."

MISS GALBRAITH: "I always did justice to your good-heartedness, Allen; you're perfectly lovely that way; and I know that you would be sorry if you knew you had wounded my feelings, however accidentally." She droops her head so as to catch a sidelong glimpse of his face, and sighs, while she nervously pinches the top of her parasol, resting the point on the floor. Mr. Richards makes no answer. "That about the cigar-case might have been a mistake; I saw that myself, and, as you explain it, why, it was certainly very kind and very creditable to--to your thoughtfulness. It WAS thoughtful!"

MR. RICHARDS: "I am grateful for your good opinion."

MISS GALBRAITH: "But do you think it was exactly--it was quite--
nice, not to tell me that your brother's engagement was to be kept,
when you know, Allen, I can't bear to blunder in such things?"

Tenderly, "DO you? You CAN'T say it was?"

MR. RICHARDS: "I never said it was."

MISS GALBRAITH, plaintively: "No, Allen. That's what I always
admired in your character. You always owned up. Don't you think
it's easier for men to own up than it is for women?"

MR. RICHARDS: "I don't know. I never knew any woman to do it."

MISS GALBRAITH: "Oh, yes, Allen! You know I OFTEN own up."

MR. RICHARDS: "No, I don't."

MISS GALBRAITH: "Oh, how can you bear to say so? When I'm rash, or
anything of that kind, you know I acknowledge it."

MR. RICHARDS: "Do you acknowledge it now?"

MISS GALBRAITH: "Why, how can I, when I haven't BEEN rash? WHAT
have I been rash" -

MR. RICHARDS: "About the cigar-case, for example."

MISS GALBRAITH: "Oh! THAT! That was a great while ago! I thought you meant something quite recent." A sound as of the approaching tram is heard in the distance. She gives a start, and then leaves her chair again for one a little nearer his. "I thought perhaps you meant about--last night."

MR. RICHARDS: "Well."

MISS GALBRAITH, very judicially: "I don't think it was RASH, exactly. No, not RASH. It might not have been very KIND not to--to--trust you more, when I knew that you didn't mean anything; but--No, I took the only course I could. Nobody could have done differently under the circumstances. But if I caused you any pain, I'm very sorry; oh, yes, very sorry indeed. But I was not precipitate, and I know I did right. At least I TRIED to act for the best. Don't you believe I did?"

MR. RICHARDS: "Why, if you have no doubt upon the subject, my opinion is of no consequence."

MISS GALBRAITH: "Yes. But what do you think? If you think differently, and can make me see it differently, oughtn't you to do so?"

MR. RICHARDS: "I don't see why. As you say, all is over between us."

MISS GALBRAITH: "Yes." After a pause, "I should suppose you would care enough for yourself to wish me to look at the matter from the right point of view."

MR. RICHARDS: "I don't."

MISS GALBRAITH, becoming more and more uneasy as the noise of the approaching train grows louder: "I think you have been very quick with me at times, quite as quick as I could have been with you last night." The noise is more distinctly heard. "I'm sure that if I could once see it as you do, no one would be more willing to do anything in their power to atone for their rashness. Of course I know that everything is over."

MR. RICHARDS: "As to that, I have your word; and, in view of the fact, perhaps this analysis of motive, of character, however interesting on general grounds, is a little" -

MISS GALBRAITH, with sudden violence: "Say it, and take your revenge! I have put myself at your feet, and you do right to trample on me! Oh, this is what women may expect when they trust to men's generosity! Well, it IS over now, and I'm thankful, thankful! Cruel, suspicious, vindictive, you're all alike, and I'm glad that

I'm no longer subject to your heartless caprices. And I don't care what happens after this, I shall always--Oh! You're sure it's from the front, Allen? Are you sure the rear signal is out?"

MR. RICHARDS, relenting: "Yes, but if it will ease your mind, I'll go and look again." He rises, and starts towards the rear door.

MISS GALBRAITH, quickly: "Oh, no! Don't go! I can't bear to be left alone!" The sound of the approaching train continually increases in volume. "Oh, isn't it coming very, very, VERY fast?"

MR. RICHARDS: "No, no! Don't be frightened."

MISS GALBRAITH, running towards the rear door. "Oh, I MUST get out!

It will kill me, I know it will. Come with me! Do, do!" He runs after her, and her voice is heard at the rear of the car. "Oh, the outside door is locked, and we are trapped, trapped, trapped! Oh, quick! Let's try the door at the other end." They re-enter the parlor, and the roar of the train announces that it is upon them.

"No, no! It's too late, it's too late! I'm a wicked, wicked girl, and this is all to punish me! Oh, it's coming, it's coming at full speed!" He remains bewildered, confronting her. She utters a wild cry, and as the train strikes the car with a violent concussion, she flings herself into his arms. "There, there! Forgive me, Allen! Let us die together, my own, own love!" She hangs fainting on his breast. Voices are heard without, and after a little delay The

Porter comes in with a lantern.

PORTER: "Rather more of a jah than we meant to give you, sah! We had to run down pretty quick after we missed you, and the rain made the track a little slippery. Lady much frightened?"

MISS GALBRAITH, disengaging herself: "Oh, not at all! Not in the least. We thought it was a train coming from behind, and going to run into us, and so--we--I" -

PORTER: "Not quite so bad as that. We'll be into Schenectady in a few minutes, miss. I'll come for your things." He goes out at the other door.

MISS GALBRAITH, in a fearful whisper: "Allen! What will he ever think of us? I'm sure he saw us!"

MR. RICHARDS: "I don't know what he'll think NOW. He DID think you were frightened; but you told him you were not. However, it isn't important what he thinks. Probably he thinks I'm your long-lost brother. It had a kind of family look."

MISS GALBRAITH: "Ridiculous!"

MR. RICHARDS: "Why, he'd never suppose that I was a jilted lover of yours!"

MISS GALBRAITH, ruefully: "No."

MR. RICHARDS: "Come, Lucy,"--taking her hand,--"you wished to die with me, a moment ago. Don't you think you can make one more effort to live with me? I won't take advantage of words spoken in mortal peril, but I suppose you were in earnest when you called me your own--own"--Her head droops; he folds her in his arms a moment, then she starts away from him, as if something had suddenly occurred to her.

MISS GALBRAITH: "Allen, where are you going?"

MR. RICHARDS: "Going? Upon my soul, I haven't the least idea."

MISS GALBRAITH: "Where WERE you going?"

MR. RICHARDS: "Oh, I WAS going to Albany."

MISS GALBRAITH: "Well, don't! Aunt Mary is expecting me here at Schenectady,--I telegraphed her,--and I want you to stop here, too, and we'll refer the whole matter to her. She's such a wise old head. I'm not sure" -

MR. RICHARDS: "What?"

MISS GALBRAITH, demurely: "That I'm good enough for you."

MR. RICHARDS, starting, in burlesque of her movement, as if a thought had struck HIM: "Lucy! how came you on this train when you left Syracuse on the morning express?"

MISS GALBRAITH, faintly: "I waited over a train at Utica." She sinks into a chair, and averts her face.

MR. RICHARDS: "May I ask why?"

MISS GALBRAITH, more faintly still: "I don't like to tell. I" -

MR. RICHARDS, coming and standing in front of her, with his hands in his pockets: "Look me in the eye, Lucy!" She drops her veil over her face, and looks up at him. "Did you--did you expect to find ME on this train?"

MISS GALBRAITH: "I was afraid it never WOULD get along,--it was so late!"

MR. RICHARDS: "Don't--tergiversate."

MISS GALBRAITH: "Don't WHAT?"

MR. RICHARDS: "Fib."

MISS GALBRAITH: "Not for worlds!"

MR. RICHARDS: "How did you know I was in this car?"

MISS GALBRAITH: "Must I? I thought I saw you through the window;
and then I made sure it was you when I went to pin my veil on,--I saw
you in the mirror."

MR. RICHARDS, after a little silence: "Miss Galbraith, do you want
to know what YOU are?"

MISS GALBRAITH, softly: "Yes, Allen."

MR. RICHARDS: "You're a humbug!"

MISS GALBRAITH, springing from her seat, and confronting him. "So
are you! You pretended to be asleep!"

MR. RICHARDS: "I--I--I was taken by surprise. I had to take time to
think."

MISS GALBRAITH: "So did I."

MR. RICHARDS: "And you thought it would be a good plan to get your
polonaise caught in the window?"

MISS GALBRAITH, hiding her face on his shoulder: "No, no, Allen!
That I never WILL admit. NO woman would!"

MR. RICHARDS: "Oh, I dare say!" After a pause: "Well, I am a poor, weak, helpless man, with no one to advise me or counsel me, and I have been cruelly deceived. How could you, Lucy, how could you? I can never get over this." He drops his head upon her shoulder.

MISS GALBRAITH, starting away again, and looking about the car:
"Allen, I have an idea! Do you suppose Mr. Pullman could be induced to SELL this car?"

MR. RICHARDS: "Why?"

MISS GALBRAITH: "Why, because I think it's perfectly lovely, and I should like to live in it always. It could be fitted up for a sort of summer-house, don't you know, and we could have it in the garden, and you could smoke in it."

MR. RICHARDS: "Admirable! It would look just like a travelling photographic saloon. No, Lucy, we won't buy it; we will simply keep it as a precious souvenir, a sacred memory, a beautiful dream,--and let it go on fulfilling its destiny all the same."

PORTER, entering, and gathering up Miss Galbraith's things: "Be at Schenectady in half a minute, miss. Won't have much time."

MISS GALBRAITH, rising, and adjusting her dress, and then looking about the car, while she passes her hand through her lover's arm:

"Oh, I do HATE to leave it. Farewell, you dear, kind, good, lovely car! May you never have another accident!" She kisses her hand to the car, upon which they both look back as they slowly leave it.

MR. RICHARDS, kissing his hand in the like manner: "Good-by, sweet chariot! May you never carry any but bridal couples!"

MISS GALBRAITH: "Or engaged ones!"

MR. RICHARDS: "Or husbands going home to their wives!"

MISS GALBRAITH: "Or wives hastening to their husbands."

MR. RICHARDS: "Or young ladies who have waited one train over, so as to be with the young men they hate."

MISS GALBRAITH: "Or young men who are so indifferent that they pretend to be asleep when the young ladies come in!" They pause at the door and look back again. "And must I leave thee, Paradise?" They both kiss their hands to the car again, and, their faces being very close together, they impulsively kiss each other. Then Miss Galbraith throws back her head, and solemnly confronts him. "Only think, Allen! If this car hadn't broken ITS engagement, we might never have mended ours."

End of Project Gutenberg Etext of The Parlor-Car, by William D. Howells

THE REGISTER

by William D. Howells

This etext was produced from the 1911 Houghton Mifflin Company

edition by David Price, email ccx074@coventry.ac.uk

I.

SCENE: In an upper chamber of a boarding-house in Melanchthon Place,

Boston, a mature, plain young lady, with every appearance of

establishing herself in the room for the first time, moves about,

bestowing little touches of decoration here and there, and talking

with another young lady, whose voice comes through the open doorway

of an inner room.

MISS ETHEL REED, from within: "What in the world are you doing,
Nettie?"

MISS HENRIETTA SPAULDING: "Oh, sticking up a household god or two.
What are you doing?"

MISS REED: "Despairing."

MISS SPAULDING: "Still?"

MISS REED, tragically: "Still! How soon did you expect me to stop?
I am here on the sofa, where I flung myself two hours ago, and I
don't think I shall ever get up. There is no reason WHY I ever
should."

MISS SPAULDING, suggestively: "Dinner."

MISS REED: "Oh, dinner! Dinner, to a broken heart!"

MISS SPAULDING: "I don't believe your heart is broken."

MISS REED: "But I tell you it is! I ought to know when my own heart
is broken, I should hope. What makes you think it isn't?"

MISS SPAULDING: "Oh, it's happened so often!"

MISS REED: "But this is a real case. You ought to feel my forehead.

It's as hot!"

MISS SPAULDING: "You ought to get up and help me put this room to rights, and then you would feel better."

MISS REED: "No; I should feel worse. The idea of household gods makes me sick. Sylvan deities are what I want; the great god Pan among the cat-tails and arrow-heads in the 'ma'sh' at Ponkwasset; the dryads of the birch woods--there are no oaks; the nymphs that haunt the heights and hollows of the dear old mountain; the" -

MISS SPAULDING: "Wha-a-at? I can't hear a word you say."

MISS REED: "That's because you keep fussing about so. Why don't you be quiet, if you want to hear?" She lifts her voice to its highest pitch, with a pause for distinctness between the words: "I'm heart-broken for--Ponkwasset. The dryads--of the--birch woods. The nymphs--and the great--god--Pan--in the reeds--by the river. And all--that--sort of--thing!"

MISS SPAULDING: "You know very well you're not."

MISS REED: "I'm not? What's the reason I'm not? Then, what am I heart-broken for?"

MISS SPAULDING: "You're not heart-broken at all. You know very well

that he'll call before we've been here twenty-four hours."

MISS REED: "Who?"

MISS SPAULDING: "The great god Pan."

MISS REED: "Oh, how cruel you are, to mock me so! Come in here, and sympathize a little! Do, Nettie."

MISS SPAULDING: "No; you come out here and utilize a little. I'm acting for your best good, as they say at Ponkwasset."

MISS REED: "When they want to be disagreeable!"

MISS SPAULDING: "If this room isn't in order by the time he calls, you'll be everlastingly disgraced."

MISS REED: "I'm that now. I can't be more so--there's that comfort. What makes you think he'll call?"

MISS SPAULDING: "Because he's a gentleman, and will want to apologize. He behaved very rudely to you."

MISS REED: "No, Nettie; behaved rudely to HIM. Yes! Besides, if he behaved rudely, he was no gentleman. It's a contradiction in terms, don't you see? But I'll tell you what I'm going to do if he

comes. I'm going to show a proper spirit for once in my life. I'm going to refuse to see him. You've got to see him."

MISS SPAULDING: "Nonsense!"

MISS REED: "Why nonsense? Oh, why? Expound!"

MISS SPAULDING: "Because he wasn't rude to me, and he doesn't want to see me. Because I'm plain, and you're pretty."

MISS REED: "I'm NOT! You know it perfectly well. I'm hideous."

MISS SPAULDING: "Because I'm poor, and you're a person of independent property."

MISS REED: "DEPENDENT property, I should call it: just enough to be useless on! But that's insulting to HIM. How can you say it's because I have a little money?"

MISS SPAULDING: "Well, then, I won't. I take it back. I'll say it's because you're young, and I'm old."

MISS REED: "You're NOT old. You're as young as anybody, Nettie Spaulding. And you know I'm not young; I'm twenty-seven, if I'm a day. I'm just dropping into the grave. But I can't argue with you, miles off so, any longer." Miss Reed appears at the open door, dragging languidly after her the shawl which she had evidently drawn

round her on the sofa; her fair hair is a little disordered, and she presses it into shape with one hand as she comes forward; a lovely flush vies with a heavenly pallor in her cheeks; she looks a little pensive in the arching eyebrows, and a little humorous about the dimpled mouth. "Now I can prove that you are entirely wrong. Where--were you?--This room is rather an improvement over the one we had last winter. There is more of a view"--she goes to the window--"of the houses across the Place; and I always think the swell front gives a pretty shape to a room. I'm sorry they've stopped building them. Your piano goes very nicely into that little alcove. Yes, we're quite palatial. And, on the whole, I'm glad there's no fireplace. It's a pleasure at times; but for the most part it's a vanity and a vexation, getting dust and ashes over everything. Yes; after all, give me the good old-fashioned, clean, convenient register! Ugh! My feet are like ice." She pulls an easy-chair up to the register in the corner of the room, and pushes open its valves with the toe of her slipper. As she settles herself luxuriously in the chair, and poises her feet daintily over the register: "Ah, this is something like! Henrietta Spaulding, ma'am! Did I ever tell you that you were the best friend I have in the world?"

MISS SPAULDING, who continues her work of arranging the room:

"Often."

MISS REED: "Did you ever believe it?"

MISS SPAULDING: "Never."

MISS REED: "Why?"

MISS SPAULDING, thoughtfully regarding a vase which she holds in her hand, after several times shifting it from a bracket to the corner of her piano and back: "I wish I could tell where you do look best!"

MISS REED, leaning forward wistfully, with her hands clasped and resting on her knees: "I wish you would tell me WHY you don't believe you're the best friend I have in the world."

MISS SPAULDING, finally placing the vase on the bracket: "Because you've said so too often."

MISS REED: "Oh, that's no reason! I can prove to you that you are. Who else but you would have taken in a homeless and friendless creature like me, and let her stay bothering round in demoralizing idleness, while you were seriously teaching the young idea how to drub the piano?"

MISS SPAULDING: "Anybody who wanted a room-mate as much as I did, and could have found one willing to pay more than her share of the lodging."

MISS REED, thoughtfully: "Do you think so, Henrietta?"

MISS SPAULDING: "I know so."

MISS REED: "And you're not afraid that you wrong yourself?"

MISS SPAULDING: "Not the least."

MISS REED: "Well, be it so--as they say in novels. I will not contradict you; I will not say you are my BEST friend; I will merely say that you are my ONLY friend. Come here, Henrietta. Draw up your chair, and put your little hand in mine."

MISS SPAULDING, with severe distrust: "What do you want, Ethel Reed?"

MISS REED: "I want--I want--to talk it over with you."

MISS SPAULDING, recoiling: "I knew it! Well, now, we've talked it over enough; we've talked it over till there's nothing left of it."

MISS REED: "Oh, there's everything left! It remains in all its original enormity. Perhaps we shall get some new light upon it." She extends a pleading hand towards Miss Spaulding. "Come, Henrietta, my only friend, shake!--as the 'good Indians' say. Let your Ethel pour her hackneyed sorrows into your bosom. Such an uncomfortable image, it always seems, doesn't it, pouring sorrows into bosoms! Come!"

MISS SPAULDING, decidedly: "No, I won't! And you needn't try wheedling any longer. I won't sympathize with you on that basis at all."

MISS REED: "What shall I try, then, if you won't let me try wheedling?"

MISS SPAULDING, going to the piano and opening it: "Try courage; try self-respect."

MISS REED: "Oh, dear! when I haven't a morsel of either. Are you going to practise, you cruel maid?"

MISS SPAULDING: "Of course I am. It's half-past four, and if I don't do it now I sha'n't be prepared to-morrow for Miss Robins: she takes this piece."

MISS REED: "Well, well, perhaps it's all for the best. If music be the food of--umph-ump!--you know what!--play on." They both laugh, and Miss Spaulding pushes back a little from the piano, and wheels toward her friend, letting one hand rest slightly on the keys.

MISS SPAULDING: "Ethel Reed, you're the most ridiculous girl in the world."

MISS REED: "Correct!"

MISS SPAULDING: "And I don't believe you ever were in love, or ever will be."

MISS REED: "Ah, there you wrong me, Henrietta! I have been, and I shall be--lots of times."

MISS SPAULDING: "Well, what do you want to say now? You must hurry, for I can't lose any more time."

MISS REED: "I will free my mind with neatness and despatch. I simply wish to go over the whole affair, from Alfred to Omaha; and you've got to let me talk as much slang and nonsense as I want. And then I'll skip all the details I can. Will you?"

MISS SPAULDING, with impatient patience: "Oh, I suppose so!"

MISS REED: "That's very sweet of you, though you don't look it. Now, where was I? Oh, yes, do you think it was forth-putting at all, to ask him if he would give me the lessons?"

MISS SPAULDING: "It depends upon why you asked him."

MISS REED: "I asked him from--from--Let me see; I asked him because--from--Yes, I say it boldly; I asked him from an enthusiasm for art, and a sincere wish to learn the use of oil, as he called it. Yes!"

MISS SPAULDING: "Are you sure?"

MISS REED: "Sure? Well, we will say that I am, for the sake of argument. And, having secured this basis, the question is whether I wasn't bound to offer him pay at the end, and whether he wasn't wrong to take my doing so in dudgeon."

MISS SPAULDING: "Yes, I think he was wrong. And the terms of his refusal were very ungentlemanly. He ought to apologize most amply and humbly." At a certain expression in Miss Reed's face, she adds, with severity: "Unless you're keeping back the main point. You usually do. Are you?"

MISS REED: "No, no. I've told you everything--everything!"

MISS SPAULDING: "Then I say, as I said from the beginning, that he behaved very badly. It was very awkward and very painful, but you've really nothing to blame yourself for."

MISS REED, ruefully: "No-o-o!"

MISS SPAULDING: "What do you mean by that sort of 'No'?"

MISS REED: "Nothing."

MISS SPAULDING, sternly: "Yes, you do, Ethel."

MISS REED: "I don't, really. What makes you' think I do?"

MISS SPAULDING: "It sounded very dishonest."

MISS REED: "Did it? I didn't mean it to." Her friend breaks down with a laugh, while Miss Reed preserves a demure countenance.

MISS SPAULDING: "What ARE you keeping back?"

MISS REED: "Nothing at all--less than nothing! I never thought it was worth mentioning."

MISS SPAULDING: "Are you telling me the truth?"

MISS REED: "I'm telling you the truth and something more. You can't ask better than that, can you?"

MISS SPAULDING, turning to her music again: "Certainly not."

MISS REED: in a pathetic wail: "O Henrietta! do you abandon me thus? Well, I will tell you, heartless girl! I've only kept it back till now because it was so extremely mortifying to my pride as an artist--as a student of oil. Will you hear me?"

MISS SPAULDING, beginning to play: "No."

MISS REED, with burlesque wildness: "You shall!" Miss Spaulding involuntarily desists. "There was a moment--a fatal moment--when he said he thought he ought to tell me that if I found oil amusing I could go on; but that he didn't believe I should ever learn to use it, and he couldn't let me take lessons from him with the expectation that I should. There!"

MISS SPAULDING, with awful reproach: "And you call that less than nothing? I've almost a mind never to speak to you again, Ethel. How COULD you deceive me so?"

MISS REED: "Was it really deceiving? _I_ shouldn't call it so. And I needed your sympathy so much, and I knew I shouldn't get it unless you thought I was altogether in the right."

MISS SPAULDING: "You are altogether in the wrong! And it's YOU that ought to apologize to HIM--on your bended knees. How COULD you offer him money after that? I wonder at you, Ethel!"

MISS REED: "Why--don't you see, Nettie?--I did keep on taking the lessons of him. I did find oil amusing--or the oilist--and I kept on. Of course I had to, off there in a farmhouse full of lady boarders, and he the only gentleman short of Crawford's. Strike, but hear me, Henrietta Spaulding! What was I to do about the half-dozen lessons I had taken before he told me I should never learn to use oil? Was I to offer to pay him for these, and not for the rest; or

was I to treat the whole series as gratuitous? I used to lie awake thinking about it. I've got little tact, but I couldn't find any way out of the trouble. It was a box--yes, a box of the deepest dye! And the whole affair having got to be--something else, don't you know?--made it all the worse. And if he'd only--only--But he didn't. Not a syllable, not a breath! And there I was. I HAD to offer him the money. And it's almost killed me--the way he took my offering it, and now the way you take it! And it's all of a piece." Miss Reed suddenly snatches her handkerchief from her pocket, and buries her face in it.--"Oh, dear--oh, dear! Oh!--hu, hu, hu!"

MISS SPAULDING, relenting: "It was awkward."

MISS REED: "Awkward! You seem to think that because I carry things off lightly I have no feeling."

MISS SPAULDING: "You know I don't think that, Ethel."

MISS REED, pursuing her advantage: "I don't know it from you, Nettie. I've tried and TRIED to pass it off as a joke, and to treat it as something funny; but I can tell you it's no joke at all."

MISS SPAULDING, sympathetically: "I see, dear."

MISS REED: "It's not that I care for him" -

MISS SPAULDING: "Why, of course."

MISS REED: "For I don't in the least. He is horrid every way:

blunt, and rude, and horrid. I never cared for him. But I care for

myself! He has put me in the position of having done an unkind

thing--an unladylike thing--when I was only doing what I had to do.

Why need he have taken it the way he did? Why couldn't he have said

politely that he couldn't accept the money because he hadn't earned

it? Even THAT would have been mortifying enough. But he must go and

be so violent, and rush off, and--Oh, I never could have treated

anybody so!"

MISS SPAULDING: "Not unless you were very fond of them."

MISS REED: "What?"

MISS SPAULDING: "Not unless you were very fond of them."

MISS REED, putting away her handkerchief: "Oh, nonsense, Nettie! He

never cared anything for me, or he couldn't have acted so. But no

matter for that. He has fixed everything so that it can never be got

straight--never in the world. It will just have to remain a hideous

mass of--of--_I_ don't know what; and I have simply got to on

withering with despair at the point where I left off. But I don't

care! That's one comfort."

MISS SPAULDING: "I don't believe he'll let you wither long, Ethel."

MISS REED: "He's let me wither for twenty-four hours already! But it's nothing to me, now, how long he lets me wither. I'm perfectly satisfied to have the affair remain as it is. I am in the right, and if he comes I shall refuse to see him."

MISS SPAULDING: "Oh, no, you won't, Ethel!"

MISS REED: "Yes, I shall. I shall receive him very coldly. I won't listen to any excuse from him."

MISS SPAULDING: "Oh, yes, you will, Ethel!"

MISS REED: "No, I shall not. If he wishes me to listen he must begin by humbling himself in the dust--yes, the dust, Nettie! I won't take anything short of it. I insist that he shall realize that I have suffered."

MISS SPAULDING: "Perhaps he has suffered too!"

MISS REED: "Oh, HE suffered!"

MISS SPAULDING: "You know that he was perfectly devoted to you."

MISS REED: "He never said so."

MISS SPAULDING: "Perhaps he didn't dare."

MISS REED: "He dared to be very insolent to me."

MISS SPAULDING: "And you know you liked him very much."

MISS REED: "I won't let you say that, Nettie Spaulding. I DIDN'T like him. I respected and admired him; but I didn't LIKE him. He will come near me; but if he does he has to begin by--by--Let me see, what shall I make him begin by doing?" She casts up her eyes for inspiration while she leans forward over the register. "Yes, I will! He has got to begin by taking that money!"

MISS SPAULDING: "Ethel, you wouldn't put that affront upon a sensitive and high-spirited man!"

MISS REED: "Wouldn't I? You wait and SEE, Miss Spaulding! He shall take the money, and he shall sign a receipt for it. I'll draw up the receipt now, so as to have it ready, and I shall ask him to sign it the very moment he enters this door--the very instant!" She takes a portfolio from the table near her, without rising, and writes: "Received from Miss Ethel Reed one hundred and twenty-five dollars, in full, for twenty-five lessons in oil-painting.' There--when Mr. Oliver Ransom has signed this little document he may begin to talk; not before!" She leans back in her chair with an air of pitiless determination.

MISS SPAULDING: "But, Ethel, you don't mean to make him take money for the lessons he gave you after he told you you couldn't learn anything?"

MISS REED, after a moment's pause: "Yes, I do. This is to punish him. I don't wish for justice now; I wish for vengeance! At first I would have compromised on the six lessons, or on none at all, if he had behaved nicely; but after what's happened I shall insist upon paying him for every lesson, so as to make him feel that the whole thing, from first to last, was a purely business transaction on my part. Yes, a PURELY--BUSINESS--TRANSACTION!"

MISS SPAULDING, turning to her music: "Then I've got nothing more to say to you, Ethel Reed."

MISS REED: "I don't say but what, after he's taken the money and signed the receipt, I'll listen to anything else he's got to say, very willingly." Miss Spaulding makes no answer, but begins to play with a scientific absorption, feeling her way fitfully through the new piece, while Miss Reed, seated by the register, trifles with the book she has taken from the table.

The interior of the room of Miss Spaulding and Miss Reed remains in view, while the scene discloses, on the other side of the partition wall in the same house, the bachelor apartment of Mr. Samuel Grinnidge. Mr. Grinnidge in his dressing-gown and slippers, with his pipe in his mouth, has the effect of having just come in; his friend Mr. Oliver Ransom stands at the window, staring out into the November weather.

GRINNIDGE: "How long have you been waiting here?"

RANSOM: "Ten minutes--ten years. How should I know?"

GRINNIDGE: "Well, I don't know who else should. Get back to-day?"

RANSOM: "Last night."

GRINNIDGE: "Well, take off your coat, and pull up to the register, and warm your poor feet." He puts his hand out over the register.

"Confound it! somebody's got the register open in the next room! You see, one pipe comes up from the furnace and branches into a V just under the floor, and professes to heat both rooms. But it don't.

There was a fellow in there last winter who used to get all my heat.

Used to go out and leave his register open, and I'd come in here just before dinner and find this place as cold as a barn. We had a

running fight of it all winter. The man who got his register open first in the morning got all the heat for the day, for it never turned the other way when it started in one direction. Used to almost suffocate--warm, muggy days--maintaining my rights. Some piano-pounder in there this winter, it seems. Hear? And she hasn't lost any time in learning the trick of the register. What kept you so late in the country?"

RANSOM, after an absent-minded pause: "Grinnidge, I wish you would give me some advice."

GRINNIDGE: "You can have all you want of it at the market price."

RANSOM: "I don't mean your legal advice."

GRINNIDGE: "I'm sorry. What have you been doing?"

RANSOM: "I've been making an ass of myself."

GRINNIDGE: "Wasn't that rather superfluous?"

RANSOM: "If you please, yes. But now, if you're capable of listening to me without any further display of your cross-examination wit, I should like to tell you how it happened."

GRINNIDGE: "I will do my best to veil my brilliancy. Go on."

RANSOM: "I went up to Ponkwasset early in September for the foliage."

GRINNIDGE: "And staid till late in October. There must have been a reason for that. What was her name? Foliage?"

RANSOM, coming up to the corner of the chimney-piece, near which his friend sits, and talking to him directly over the register: "I think you'll have to get along without the name for the present. I'll tell you by and by." As Mr. Ransom pronounces these words, Miss Reed, on her side of the partition, lifts her head with a startled air, and, after a moment of vague circumspection, listens keenly. "But she was beautiful. She was a blonde, and she had the loveliest eyes--eyes, you know, that could be funny or tender, just as she chose--the kind of eyes I always liked." Miss Reed leans forward over the register. "She had one of those faces that always leave you in doubt whether they're laughing at you, and so keep you in wholesome subjection; but you feel certain that they're GOOD, and that if they did hurt you by laughing at you, they'd look sorry for you afterward. When she walked you saw what an exquisite creature she was. It always made me mad to think I couldn't PAINT her walk."

GRINNIDGE: "I suppose you saw a good deal of her walk."

RANSOM: "Yes; we were off in the woods and fields half the time together." He takes a turn towards the window.

MISS REED, suddenly shutting the register on her side: "Oh!"

MISS SPAULDING, looking up from her music: "What is it, Ethel?"

MISS REED: "Nothing, nothing; I--I--thought it was getting too warm.

Go on, dear; don't let me interrupt you." After a moment of heroic self-denial she softly presses the register open with her foot.

RANSOM, coming back to the register: "It all began in that way. I had the good fortune one day to rescue her from a--cow."

MISS REED: "Oh, for shame!"

MISS SPAULDING, desisting from her piano: "What IS the matter?"

MISS REED, clapping the register to: "This ridiculous book! But don't--don't mind me, Nettie." Breathlessly: "Go--go--on!" Miss Spaulding resumes, and again Miss Reed softly presses the register open.

RANSOM, after a pause: "The cow was grazing, and had no more thought of hooking Miss--"

MISS REED: "Oh, I didn't suppose he WOULD!--Go on, Nettie, go on! The hero--SUCH a goose!"

RANSOM: "I drove her away with my camp-stool, and Miss--the young lady--was as grateful as if I had rescued her from a menagerie of wild animals. I walked home with her to the farm house, and the trouble began at once." Pantomime of indignant protest and burlesque menace on the part of Miss Reed. "There wasn't another well woman in the house, except her friend Miss Spaulding, who was rather old and rather plain." He takes another turn to the window.

MISS REED: "Oh!" She shuts the register, but instantly opens it again. "Louder, Nettie."

MISS SPAULDING, in astonishment: "What?"

MISS REED: "Did I speak? I didn't know it. I" -

MISS SPAULDING, desisting from practice: "What is that strange, hollow, rumbling, mumbling kind of noise?"

MISS REED, softly closing the register with her foot: "I don't hear any strange, hollow, rumbling, mumbling kind of noise. Do you hear it NOW?"

MISS SPAULDING: "No. It was the Brighton whistle, probably."

MISS REED: "Oh, very likely." As Miss Spaulding turns again to her practice Miss Reed re-opens the register and listens again. A little

interval of silence ensues, while Ransom lights a cigarette.

GRINNIDGE: "So you sought opportunities of rescuing her from other cows?"

RANSOM, returning: "That wasn't necessary. The young lady was so impressed by my behavior, that she asked if I would give her some lessons in the use of oil."

GRINNIDGE: "She thought if she knew how to paint pictures like yours she wouldn't need any one to drive the cows away."

RANSOM: "Don't be farcical, Grinnidge. That sort of thing will do with some victim on the witness-stand who can't help himself. Of course I said I would, and we were off half the time together, painting the loveliest and loneliest bits around Ponkwasset. It all went on very well, till one day I felt bound in conscience to tell her that I didn't think she would ever learn to paint, and that--if she was serious about it she'd better drop it at once, for she was wasting her time."

GRINNIDGE, getting up to fill his pipe: "That was a pleasant thing to do."

RANSOM: "I told her that if it amused her, to keep on; I would be only too glad to give her all--the hints I could, but that I oughtn't

to encourage her. She seemed a good deal hurt. I fancied at the time that she thought I was tired of having her with me so much."

MISS REED: "Oh, DID you, indeed!" To Miss Spaulding, who bends an astonished glance upon her from the piano: "The man in this book is the most CONCEITED creature, Nettie. Play chords--something very subdued--ah!"

MISS SPAULDING: "What are you talking about, Ethel?"

RANSOM: "That was at night; but the next day she came up smiling, and said that if I didn't mind she would keep on--for amusement; she wasn't a bit discouraged."

MISS REED: "Oh!--Go on, Nettie; don't let my outbursts interrupt you."

RANSOM: "I used to fancy sometimes that she was a little sweet on me."

MISS REED: "You wretch!--Oh, scales, Nettie! Play scales!"

MISS SPAULDING: "Ethel Reed, are you crazy?"

Ransom, after a thoughtful moment: "Well, so it went on for the next seven or eight weeks. When we weren't sketching in the meadows, or on the mountain-side, or in the old punt on the pond, we were walking

up and down the farmhouse piazza together. She used to read to me when I was at work. She had a heavenly voice, Grinnidge."

MISS REED: "Oh, you silly, silly thing!--Really this book makes me sick, Nettie."

RANSOM: "Well, the long and the short of it was, I was hit--HARD, and I lost all courage. You know how I am, Grinnidge."

MISS REED, softly: "Oh, poor fellow!"

RANSOM: "So I let the time go by, and at the end I hadn't said anything."

MISS REED: "No, sir! You HADN'T!"

MISS SPAULDING gradually ceases to play, and fixes her attention wholly upon Miss Reed, who bends forward over the register with an intensely excited face.

RANSOM: "Then something happened that made me glad, for twenty-four hours at least, that I hadn't spoken. She sent me the money for twenty-five lessons. Imagine how I felt, Grinnidge! What could I suppose but that she had been quietly biding her time, and storing up her resentment for my having told her she couldn't learn to paint, till she could pay me back with interest in one supreme insult?"

MISS REED, in a low voice: "Oh, how could you think such a cruel, vulgar thing?" Miss Spaulding leaves the piano, and softly approaches her, where she has sunk on her knees beside the register.

RANSOM: "It was tantamount to telling me that she had been amusing herself with me instead of my lessons. It remanded our whole association, which I had got to thinking so romantic, to the relation of teacher and pupil. It was a snub--a heartless, killing snub; and I couldn't see it in any other light." Ransom walks away to the window, and looks out.

MISS REED, flinging herself backward from the register, and hiding her face in her hands: "Oh, it wasn't! it wasn't! it wasn't! How could you think so?"

MISS SPAULDING, rushing forward, and catching her friend in her arms: "What is the matter with you, Ethel Reed? What are you doing here, over the register? Are you trying to suffocate yourself? Have you taken leave of your senses?"

GRINNIDGE: "Our fair friend on the other side of the wall seems to be on the rampage."

MISS SPAULDING, shutting the register with a violent clash: "Ugh! how hot it is here!"

GRINNIDGE: "Doesn't like your conversation, apparently."

MISS REED, frantically pressing forward to open the register: "Oh, don't shut it, Nettie, dear! If you do I shall die! Do-o-n't shut the register!"

MISS SPAULDING: "Don't shut it? Why, we've got all the heat of the furnace in the room now. Surely you don't want any more?"

MISS REED: "No, no; not any more. But--but--Oh, dear! what shall I do?" She still struggles in the embrace of her friend.

GRINNIDGE, remaining quietly at the register, while Ransom walks away to the window: "Well, what did you do?"

MISS REED: "There, there! They're commencing again! DO open it, Nettie. I WILL have it open!" She wrenches herself free, and dashes the register open.

GRINNIDGE: "Ah, she's opened it again."

Miss Reed, in a stage-whisper: "That's the other one!"

RANSOM, from the window: "Do? I'll tell you what I did."

MISS REED: "That's OI--Mr. Ransom. And, oh, I can't make out what

he's saying! He must have gone away to the other side of the room--
and it's at the most important point!"

MISS SPAULDING, in an awful undertone: "Was that the hollow rumbling
I heard? And have you been listening at the register to what they've
been saying? O ETHEL!"

MISS REED: "I haven't been listening, exactly."

MISS SPAULDING: "You have! You have been eavesdropping!"

MISS REED: "Eavesdropping is listening through a key-hole, or around
a corner. This is very different. Besides, it's Oliver, and he's
been talking about ME. Hark!" She clutches her friend's hand, where
they have crouched upon the floor together, and pulls her forward to
the register. "Oh, dear, how hot it is! I wish they would cut off
the heat down below."

GRINNIDGE, smoking peacefully through the silence which his friend
has absent-mindedly let follow upon his last words: "Well, you seem
disposed to take your time about it."

RANSOM: "About what? Oh, yes! Well" -

MISS REED: "'Sh! Listen."

MISS SPAULDING: "I won't listen! It's shameful: it's wicked! I

don't see how you can do it, Ethel!" She remains, however, kneeling near the register, and she involuntarily inclines a little more toward it.

RANSOM: "--It isn't a thing that I care to shout from the house-tops." He returns from the window to the chimney-piece. "I wrote the rudest kind of note, and sent back her letter and her money in it. She had said that she hoped our acquaintance was not to end with the summer, but that we might sometimes meet in Boston; and I answered that our acquaintance had ended already, and that I should be sorry to meet her anywhere again."

GRINNIDGE: "Well, if you wanted to make an ass of yourself, you did it pretty completely."

MISS REED, whispering: "How witty he is! Those men are always so humorous with each other."

RANSOM: "Yes; I didn't do it by halves."

MISS REED, whispering: "Oh, THAT'S funny, too!"

GRINNIDGE: "It didn't occur to you that she might feel bound to pay you for the first half-dozen, and was embarrassed how to offer to pay for them alone?"

MISS REED: "How he DOES go to the heart of the matter!" She presses Miss Spaulding's hand in an ecstasy of approval.

RANSOM: "Yes, it did--afterward."

MISS REED, in a tender murmur: "Oh, POOR Oliver!"

RANSOM: "And it occurred to me that she was perfectly right in the whole affair."

MISS REED: "Oh, how generous! how noble!"

RANSOM: "I had had a thousand opportunities, and I hadn't been man enough to tell her that I was in love with her."

MISS REED: "How can he say it right out so bluntly? But if it's true" -

RANSOM: "I COULDN'T speak. I was afraid of putting an end to the affair--of frightening her--disgusting her."

MISS REED: "Oh, how little they know us, Nettie!"

RANSOM: "She seemed so much above me in every way--so sensitive, so refined, so gentle, so good, so angelic!"

MISS REED: "There! NOW do you call it eavesdropping? If listeners

never hear any good of themselves, what do you say to that? It proves that I haven't been listening."

MISS SPAULDING: "'Sh! They're saying something else."

RANSOM: "But all that's neither here nor there. I can see now that under the circumstances she couldn't as a lady have acted otherwise than she did. She was forced to treat our whole acquaintance as a business matter, and I had forced her to do it."

MISS REED: "You HAD, you poor thing!"

GRINNIDGE: "Well, what do you intend to do about it?"

RANSOM: "Well" -

MISS REED: "'Sh!"

MISS SPAULDING: "'Sh!"

RANSOM: "--that's what I want to submit to you, Grinnidge. I must see her."

GRINNIDGE: "Yes. I'm glad _I_ mustn't."

MISS REED, stifling a laugh on Miss Spaulding's shoulder: "They're

actually AFRAID of us, Nettie!"

RANSOM: "See her, and go down in the dust."

MISS REED: "My very words!"

RANSOM: "I have been trying to think what was the very humblest pie I could eat, by way of penance; and it appears to me that I had better begin by saying that I have come to ask her for the money I refused."

MISS REED, enraptured: "Oh! doesn't it seem just like--like-- inspiration, Nettie?"

MISS SPAULDING: "'Sh! Be quiet, do! You'll frighten them away!"

GRINNIDGE: "And then what?"

RANSOM: "What then? I don't know what then. But it appears to me that, as a gentleman, I've got nothing to do with the result. All that I've got to do is to submit to my fate, whatever it is."

MISS REED, breathlessly: "What princely courage! What delicate magnanimity! Oh, he needn't have the LEAST fear! If I could only tell him that!"

GRINNIDGE, after an interval of meditative smoking: "Yes, I guess

that's the best thing you can do. It will strike her fancy, if she's
an imaginative girl, and she'll think you a fine fellow."

MISS REED: "Oh, the horrid thing!"

GRINNIDGE: "If you humble yourself to a woman at all, do it
thoroughly. If you go halfway down she'll be tempted to push you the
rest of the way. If you flatten out at her feet to begin with, ten
to one but she will pick you up."

RANSOM: "Yes, that was my idea."

MISS REED: "Oh, was it, indeed! Well!"

RANSOM: "But I've nothing to do with her picking me up or pushing me
down. All that I've got to do is to go and surrender myself."

GRINNIDGE: "Yes. Well; I guess you can't go too soon. I like your
company; but I advise you as a friend not to lose time. Where does
she live?"

RANSOM: "That's the remarkable part of it: she lives in this
house."

MISS REED and Miss Spaulding, in subdued chorus: "Oh!"

GRINNIDGE, taking his pipe out of his mouth in astonishment: "No!"

RANSOM: "I just came in here to give my good resolutions a rest while I was screwing my courage up to ask for her."

MISS REED: "Don't you think he's VERY humorous? Give his good resolutions a rest! That's the way he ALWAYS talks."

MISS SPAULDING: "Sh!"

GRINNIDGE: "You said you came for my advice."

RANSOM: "So I did. But I didn't promise to act upon it. Well!" He goes toward the door.

GRINNIDGE, without troubling himself to rise: "Well, good luck to you!"

MISS REED: "How droll they are with each other! Don't you LIKE to hear them talk? Oh, I could listen all day."

GRINNIDGE, calling after Ransom: "You haven't told me your duck's name."

MISS REED: "Is THAT what they call us? Duck! Do you think it's very respectful, Nettie? I don't believe I like it. Or, yes, why not? It's no harm--if I AM his duck!"

RANSOM, coming back: "Well, I don't propose to go shouting it round.

Her name is Miss Reed--Ethel Reed."

MISS REED: "How CAN he?"

GRINNIDGE: "Slender, willowy party, with a lot of blond hair that looks as if it might be indigenous? Rather pensive-looking?"

MISS REED: "Indigenous! I should hope so!"

RANSOM: "Yes. But she isn't pensive. She's awfully deep. It makes me shudder to think how deep that girl is. And when I think of my courage in daring to be in love with her--a stupid, straightforward idiot like me--I begin to respect myself in spite of being such an ass. Well, I'm off. If I stay any longer I shall never go." He closes the door after him, and Miss Reed instantly springs to her feet.

MISS REED: "Now he'll have to go down to the parlor and send up his name, and that just gives me time to do the necessary prinking. You stay here and receive him, Nettie."

MISS SPAULDING: "Never! After what's happened I can never look him in the face again. Oh, how low, and mean, and guilty I feel!"

MISS REED, with surprise: "Why, how droll! Now _I_ don't feel the least so."

MISS SPAULDING: "Oh, it's very different with YOU. YOU'RE in love with him."

MISS REED: "For shame, Nettie! I'm NOT in love with him."

MISS SPAULDING: "And you can explain and justify it. But I never can justify it to myself, much less to him. Let me go, Ethel! I shall tell Mrs. McKnight that we must change this room instantly. And just after I'd got it so nearly in order! Go down and receive him in the parlor, Ethel. I CAN'T see him."

MISS REED: "Receive him in the parlor! Why, Nettie, dear, you're crazy! I'm going to ACCEPT him: and how can I accept him--with all the consequences--in a public parlor? No, indeed! If you won't meet him here for a moment, just to oblige me, you can go into the other room. Or, no--you'd be listening to every word through the key-hole, you're so demoralized!"

MISS SPAULDING: "Yes, yes, I deserve your contempt, Ethel."

MISS REED, laughing: "You will have to go out for a walk, you poor thing; and I'm not going to have you coming back in five or ten minutes. You have got to stay out a good hour."

MISS SPAULDING, running to get her things from the next room: "Oh,
I'll stay out till midnight!"

MISS REED, responding to a tap at the door: "Ye-e-s! Come in!--
You're caught, Nettie."

A MAID-SERVANT, appearing with a card: "This gentleman is asking for
you in the parlor, Miss Reed."

MISS REED: "Oh! Ask him to come up here, please.--Nettie! Nettie!"
She calls to her friend in the next room. "He's coming right up, and
if you don't run you're trapped."

MISS SPAULDING, re-appearing, cloaked and bonneted: "I don't blame
YOU, Ethel, comparatively speaking. You can say that everything is
fair in love. He will like it, and laugh at it in you, because he'll
like everything you've done. Besides, you've no principles, and I
HAVE."

MISS REED: "Oh, I've lots of principles, Nettie, but I've no
practice!"

MISS SPAULDING: "No matter. There's no excuse for me. I listened
simply because I was a woman, and couldn't help it; and, oh, what
will he think of me?"

MISS REED: "I won't give you away; if you really feel so badly" -

MISS SPAULDING: "Oh, DO you think you can keep from telling him, Ethel dear? Try! And I will be your slave forever!" Steps are heard on the stairs outside. "Oh, there he comes!" She dashes out of the door, and closes it after her, a moment before the maid-servant, followed by Mr. Ransom, taps at it.

III.

SCENE: Miss Reed opens the door, and receives Mr. Ransom with well-affected surprise and state, suffering him to stand awkwardly on the threshold for a moment.

SHE, coldly: "Oh!--Mr. Ransom!"

HE, abruptly: "I've come" -

SHE: "Won't you come in?"

HE, advancing a few paces into the room: "I've come" -

SHE, indicating a chair: "Will you sit down?"

HE: "I must stand for the present. I've come to ask you for that money, Miss Reed, which I refused yesterday, in terms that I blush to think of. I was altogether and wholly in the wrong, and I'm ready to offer any imaginable apology or reparation. I'm ready to take the money and to sign a receipt, and then to be dismissed with whatever ignominy you please. I deserve anything--everything!"

SHE: "The money? Excuse me; I don't know--I'm afraid that I'm not prepared to pay you the whole sum to-day."

HE, hastily: "Oh, no matter! no matter! I don't care for the money now. I merely wish to--to assure you that I thought you were perfectly right in offering it, and to--to" -

SHE: "What?"

HE: "Nothing. That is--ah--ah" -

SHE: "It's extremely embarrassing to have people refuse their money when it's offered them, and then come the next day for it, when perhaps it isn't so convenient to pay it--VERY embarrassing."

HE, hotly: "But I tell you I don't want the MONEY! I never wanted it, and wouldn't take it on any account."

SHE: "Oh! I thought you said you came to get it?"

HE: "I said--I didn't say--I meant--that is--ah--I"--He stops, open-mouthed.

SHE, quietly: "I could give you part of the money now."

HE: "Oh, whatever you like; it's indifferent" -

SHE: "Please sit down while I write a receipt." She places herself deliberately at the table, and opens her portfolio. "I will pay you now, Mr. Ransom, for the first six lessons you gave me--the ones before you told me that I could never learn to do anything."

HE, sinking mechanically into the chair she indicates: "Oh, just as you like!" He looks up at the ceiling in hopeless bewilderment, while she writes.

SHE, blotting the paper: "There! And now let me offer you a little piece of advice, Mr. Ransom, which may be useful to you in taking pupils hereafter."

HE, bursting out: "I never take pupils!"

SHE: "Never take pupils! I don't understand. You took ME."

HE, confusedly: "I took you--yes. You seemed to wish--you seemed--
the case was peculiar--peculiar circumstances."

SHE, with severity: "May I ask WHY the circumstances were peculiar?
I saw nothing peculiar about the circumstances. It seemed to me it
was a very simple matter. I told you that I had always had a great
curiosity to see whether I could use oil paints, and I asked you a
very plain question, whether you would let me study with you. Didn't
I?"

HE: "Yes."

SHE: "Was there anything wrong--anything queer about my asking you?"

HE: "No, no! Not at all--not in the least."

SHE: "Didn't you wish me to take the lessons of you? If you didn't,
it wasn't kind of you to let me."

HE: "Oh, I was perfectly willing--very glad indeed, very much so--
certainly!"

SHE: "If it wasn't your CUSTOM to take pupils, you ought to have
told me, and I wouldn't have forced myself upon you."

HE, desperately: "It wasn't forcing yourself upon me. The Lord

knows how humbly grateful I was. It was like a hope of heaven!"

SHE: "Really, Mr. Ransom, this is very strange talk. What am I to understand by it? Why should you be grateful to teach me? Why should giving me lessons be like a hope of heaven?"

HE: "Oh, I will tell you!"

SHE: "Well?"

HE, after a moment of agony: "Because to be with you" -

SHE: "Yes?"

HE: "Because I wished to be with you. Because--those days in the woods, when you read, and I" -

SHE: "Painted on my pictures" -

HE: "Were the happiest of my life. Because--I loved you!"

SHE: "Mr. Ransom!"

HE: "Yes, I must tell you so. I loved you; I love you still. I shall always love you, no matter what" -

SHE: "You forget yourself, Mr. Ransom. Has there been anything in

my manner--conduct--to justify you in using such language to me?"

HE: "No--no" -

SHE: "Did you suppose that because I first took lessons of you from--
-from--an enthusiasm for art, and then continued them for--for--
amusement, that I wished you to make love to me?"

HE: "No, I never supposed such a thing. I'm incapable of it. I
beseech you to believe that no one could have more respect--
reverence"--He twirls his hat between his hands, and casts an
imploring glance at her.

SHE: "Oh, respect--reverence! I know what they mean in the mouths
of men. If you respected, if you revered me, could you dare to
tell me, after my unguarded trust of you during the past months, that
you had been all the time secretly in love with me?"

HE, plucking up a little courage: "I don't see that the three things
are incompatible."

SHE: "Oh, then you acknowledge that you did presume upon something
you thought you saw in me to tell me that you loved me, and that you
were in love with me all the time?"

HE, contritely: "I have no right to suppose that you encouraged me;

and yet--I can't deny it now--I was in love with you all the time."

SHE: "And you never said a word to let me believe that you had any such feeling toward me!"

HE: "I--I" -

SHE: "You would have parted from me without a syllable to suggest it--perhaps parted from me forever?" After a pause of silent humiliation for him: "Do you call that brave or generous? Do you call it manly--supposing, as you hoped, that _I_ had any such feeling?"

HE: "No; it was cowardly, it was mean, it was unmanly. I see it now, but I will spend my life in repairing the wrong, if you will only let me." He impetuously advances some paces toward her, and then stops, arrested by her irresponsible attitude.

SHE, with a light sigh, and looking down at the paper, which she has continued to hold between her hands: "There was a time--a moment--when I might have answered as you wish."

HE: "Oh! then there will be again. If you have changed once, you may change once more. Let me hope that some time--any time, dearest"

-

SHE, quenching him with a look: "Mr. Ransom, I shall NEVER change

toward you! You confess that you had your opportunity, and that you despised it."

HE: "Oh! NOT despised it!"

SHE: "Neglected it."

HE: "Not wilfully--no. I confess that I was stupidly, vilely, pusillan--pusillan--illani" -

SHE: "'Monsly" -

HE: "Thanks--'mously unworthy of it; but I didn't despise it; I didn't neglect it; and if you will only let me show by a lifetime of devotion how dearly and truly I have loved you from the first moment I drove that cow away" -

SHE: "Mr. Ransom, I have told you that I should never change toward you. That cow was nothing when weighed in the balance against your being willing to leave a poor girl, whom you supposed interested in you, and to whom you had paid the most marked attention, without a word to show her that you cared for her. What is a cow, or a whole herd of cows, as compared with obliging a young lady to offer you money that you hadn't earned, and then savagely flinging it back in her face? A yoke of oxen would be nothing--or a mad bull."

HE: "Oh, I acknowledge it! I confess it."

SHE: "And you own that I am right in refusing to listen to you now?"

HE, desolately: "Yes, yes."

SHE: "It seems that you gave me lessons in order to be with me, and if possible to interest me in you; and then you were going away without a word."

HE, with a groan: "It was only because I was afraid to speak."

SHE: "Oh, is THAT any excuse?"

HE: "No; none."

SHE: "A man ought always to have courage." After a pause, in which he stands before her with bowed head: "Then there's nothing for me but to give you this money."

HE, with sudden energy: "This is too much! I" -

SHE, offering him the bank-notes: "No; it is the exact sum. I counted it very carefully."

HE: "I won't take it; I can't! I'll never take it!"

SHE, standing with the money in her outstretched hand: "I have your word as a gentleman that you will take it."

HE, gasping: "Oh, well--I will take it--I will"--He clutches the money, and rushes toward the door. "Good-evening; ah--good-by" -

SHE, calling after him: "The receipt, Mr. Ransom! Please sign this receipt!" She waves the paper in the air.

HE: "Oh, yes, certainly! Where is it--what--which"--He rushes back to her, and seizing the receipt, feels blindly about for the pen and ink. "Where shall I sign?"

SHE: "Read it first."

HE: "Oh, it's all--all right" -

SHE: "I insist upon your reading it. It's a business transaction. Read it aloud."

HE, desperately: "Well, well!" He reads. "'Received from Miss Ethel Reed, in full, for twenty-five lessons in oil-painting, one hundred and twenty-five dollars, and her hand, heart, and dearest love forever.'" He looks up at her. "Ethel!"

SHE, smiling: "Sign it, sign it!"

HE, catching her in his arms and kissing her: "Oh, yes--HERE!"

SHE, pulling a little away from him, and laughing: "Oh, oh! I only wanted ONE signature! Twenty autographs are too many, unless you'll let me trade them off, as the collectors do."

HE: "No; keep them all! I couldn't think of letting any one else have them. One more!"

SHE: "No; it's quite enough!"

SHE frees herself, and retires beyond the table. "This unexpected affection" -

HE: "IS it unexpected--seriously?"

SHE: "What do you mean?"

HE: "Oh, nothing!"

SHE: "Yes, tell me!"

HE: "I hoped--I thought--perhaps--that you might have been prepared for some such demonstration on my part."

SHE: "And why did you think--hope--perhaps--THAT, Mr. Ransom, may I

ask?"

HE: "If I hadn't, how should I have dared to speak?"

SHE: "Dared? You were obliged to speak! Well, since it's all over, I don't mind saying that I DID have some slight apprehensions that something in the way of a declaration might be extorted from you."

HE: "Extorted? Oh!" He makes an impassioned rush toward her.

SHE, keeping the table between them: "No, no."

HE: "Oh, I merely wished to ask why you chose to make me suffer so, after I had come to the point."

SHE: "Ask it across the table, then." After a moment's reflection, "I made you suffer--I made you suffer--so that you might have a realizing sense of what you had made ME suffer."

HE, enraptured by this confession: "Oh, you angel!"

SHE, with tender magnanimity: "No; only a woman--a poor, trusting, foolish woman!" She permits him to surround the table, with imaginable results. Then, with her head on his shoulder: "You'll NEVER let me regret it, will you, darling? You'll never oblige me to punish you again, dearest, will you? Oh, it hurt ME far worse to SEE

your pain than it did you to--to--feel it!" On the other side of the partition, Mr. Grinnidge's pipe falls from his lips, parted in slumber, and shivers to atoms on the register. "Oh!" She flies at the register with a shriek of dismay, and is about to close it. "That wretch has been listening, and has heard every word!"

HE, preventing her: "What wretch? Where?"

SHE: "Don't you hear him, mumbling and grumbling there?"

GRINNIDGE: "Well, I swear! Cash value of twenty-five dollars, and untold toil in coloring it!"

RANSOM, listening with an air of mystification: "Who's that?"

SHE: "Gummidge, Grimmidge--whatever you called him. Oh!" She arrests herself in consternation. "Now I HAVE done it!"

HE: "Done what?"

SHE: "Oh--nothing!"

HE: "I don't understand. Do you mean to say that my friend Grinnidge's room is on the other side of the wall, and that you can hear him talk through the register?"

SHE preserves the silence of abject terror. He stoops over the

register, and calls down it. "Grinnidge! Hallo!"

GRINNIDGE: "Hallo, yourself!"

RANSOM, to Miss Reed: "Sounds like the ghostly squeak of the phonograph." To Grinnidge: "What's the trouble?"

GRINNIDGE: "Smashed my pipe. Dozed off and let it drop on this infernal register."

RANSOM, turning from the register with impressive deliberation:

"Miss Reed, may I ask HOW you came to know that his name was Gummidge, or Grimmidge, or whatever I called him?"

SHE: Oh, dearest, I CAN'T tell you! Or--yes, I had better."

Impulsively: "I will judge you by myself. I could forgive YOU anything!"

HE, doubtfully: "Oh, could you?"

SHE: "Everything! I had--I had better make a clean breast of it.

Yes, I had. Though I don't like to. I--I listened!"

HE: "Listened?"

SHE: "Through the register to--to--what--you--were saying before

you--came in here." Her head droops.

HE: "Then you heard everything?"

SHE: "Kill me, but don't look SO at me! It was accidental at first--indeed it was; and then I recognized your voice; and then I knew you were talking about me; and I had so much at stake; and I did love you so dearly! You WILL forgive me, darling? It wasn't as if I were listening with any bad motive."

HE, taking her in his arms: "Forgive you? Of course I do. But you must change this room at once, Ethel; you see you hear everything on the other side, too."

SHE: "Oh, not if you whisper on this. You couldn't hear US?" At a dubious expression of his: "You DIDN'T hear us? If you did, I can never forgive you!"

HE: "It was accidental at first--indeed it was; and then I recognized your voice; and then I knew you were talking about me; and I had so much at stake; and I did love you so dearly!"

SHE: "All that has nothing whatever to do with it. How much did you hear?"

HE, with exemplary meekness: "Only what you were saying before Grinnidge came in. You didn't whisper then. I had to wait there for

him while" -

SHE: "While you were giving your good resolutions a rest?"

HE: "While I was giving my good resolutions a rest."

SHE: "And that accounts for your determination to humble yourself so?"

HE: "It seemed perfectly providential that I should have known just what conditions you were going to exact of me."

SHE: "Oh, don't make light of it! I can tell you it's a very serious matter."

HE: "It was very serious for me when you didn't meet my self-abasement as you had led me to expect you would."

SHE: "Don't make fun! I'm trying to think whether I can forgive you."

HE, with insinuation: "Don't you believe you could think better if you put your head on my shoulder?"

SHE: "Nonsense! Then I should forgive you without thinking." After a season of reflection: "No, I CAN'T forgive you. I never could

forgive eavesdropping. It's TOO low."

HE, in astonishment: "Why, you did it yourself!"

SHE: "But you began it. Besides, it's very different for a man.

Women are weak, poor, helpless creatures. They have to use finesse.

But a man should be above it."

HE: "You said you could forgive me anything."

SHE: "Ah, but I didn't know what you'd been doing!"

HE, with pensive resignation, and a feint of going: "Then I suppose

it's all over between us."

SHE, relenting: "If you could think of any reason WHY I should

forgive you" -

HE: "I can't."

SHE, after consideration: "Do you suppose Mr. Grumage, or Grimidge,

heard too?"

HE: "No; Grinnidge is a very high-principled fellow, and wouldn't

listen; besides, he wasn't there, you know."

SHE: "Well, then, I will forgive you on these grounds." He

instantly catches her to his heart. "But these alone, remember."

HE, rapturously: "Oh, on any!"

SHE, tenderly: "And you'll always be devoted? And nice? And not try to provoke me? Or neglect me? Or anything?"

HE: "Always! Never!"

SHE: "Oh, you dear, sweet, simple old thing--how I DO love you!"

GRINNIDGE, who has been listening attentively to every word at the register at his side: "Ransom, if you don't want me to go stark mad, SHUT THE REGISTER!"

RANSOM, about to comply: "Oh, poor old man! I forgot it was open!"

MISS REED, preventing him: "No! If he has been vile enough to listen at a register, let him suffer. Come, sit down here, and I'll tell you just when I began to care for you. It was long before the cow. Do you remember that first morning after you arrived"--She drags him close to the register, so that every word may tell upon the envious Grinnidge, on whose manifestations of acute despair, a rapid curtain descends.

BOOKMARKS FOR THE ENTIRE PG EDITION OF WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS

Absolutely, so positively, so almost aggressively truthful

Abstract, the airdrawn, afflicted me like physical discomforts

Account of one's reading is an account of one's life

Adroitness in flattery is not necessary for its successful use

Affections will not be bidden

Aim at nothing higher than the amusement of your readers

Air of looking down on the highest

All in all to each other

Always sumptuously providing out of his destitution

Amiable perception, and yet with a sort of remote absence

Amiably satirical

Any man's country could get on without him

Appeal, which he had come to recognize as invasive

Artist has seasons, as trees, when he cannot blossom

Authorities

Authors I must call my masters

Became gratefully strange

Beginning to grow old with touching courage

Begun to fight with want from their cradles

Best talkers are willing that you should talk if you like

Boldest man is commonly a little behind a timid woman

Book that they are content to know at second hand

Browbeat wholesome common-sense into the self-distrust

Business to take advantage of his necessity

But now I remember that he gets twenty dollars a month

Buzz of activities and pretences

Capriciousness of memory: what it will hold and what lose

Chained to the restless pursuit of an ideal not his own

Christianity had done nothing to improve morals and conditions

Church: "Oh yes, I go! It 'most kills me, but I go"

Clemens was sole, incomparable, the Lincoln of our literature

Cold-slaw

Collective opacity

Comfort from the thought that most things cannot be helped

Competition has deformed human nature

Composed her features and her ideas to receive her visitor

Concerning popularity as a test of merit in a book

Conditions of hucksters imposed upon poets

Contemptible he found our pseudo-equality

Could only by chance be caught in earnest about anything

Could make us feel that our faults were other people's

Could not, as the saying is, find a stone to throw at a dog

Could easily believe now that it was some one else who saw it

Couldn't fire your revolver without bringing down a two volumer

Crimson which stained the tops and steeps of snow

Crimson torch of a maple, kindled before its time

Critical vanity and self-righteousness

Criticism still remains behind all the other literary arts

Critics are in no sense the legislators of literature

Dawn upon him through a cloud of other half remembered faces

Death of the joy that ought to come from work

Death's vague conjectures to the broken expectations of life

Despair broke in laughter

Despised the avoidance of repetitions out of fear of tautology

Dickens rescued Christmas from Puritan distrust

Dickens is purely democratic

Did not feel the effect I would so willingly have experienced

Didn't reason about their beliefs, but only argued

Dinner was at the old-fashioned Boston hour of two

Disbeliever in punishments of all sorts

Disposition to use his friends

Do not want to know about such squalid lives

Dollars were of so much farther flight than now

Dull, cold self-absorption

Early self-helpfulness of children is very remarkable

Effort to do and say exactly the truth, and to find it out

Either to deny the substance of things unseen, or to affirm it

Encounter of old friends after the lapse of years

Enjoying whatever was amusing in the disadvantage to himself

Errors of a weak man, which were usually the basest

Escaped at night and got into the boy's dreams

Espoused the theory of Bacon's authorship of Shakespeare

Ethical sense, not the aesthetical sense

Even a day's rest is more than most people can bear

Everlasting rock of human credulity and folly

Exchanging inaudible banalities

Express the appreciation of another's fit word

Eyes fixed steadfastly upon the future

Fact that it is hash many times warmed over that reassures them

Fate of a book is in the hands of the women

Fear of asking too much and the folly of asking too little

Feigned the gratitude which I could see that he expected

Felt that this was my misfortune more than my fault

Few men last over from one reform to another

Fictions subtle effect for good and for evil on the young

Flowers with which we garland our despair in that pitiless hour

For most people choice is a curse

Forbear the excesses of analysis

Forbearance of a wise man content to bide his time

Found life was not all poetry

Gay laugh comes across the abysm of the years

General worsening of things, familiar after middle life

Generous lover of all that was excellent in literature

Gift of waiting for things to happen

Glance of the common eye, is and always was the best light

God of chance leads them into temptation and adversity

Got out of it all the fun there was in it

Government is best which governs least

Greatest classics are sometimes not at all great

Greeting of great impersonal cordiality

Grieving that there could be such ire in heavenly minds

Habit of saying some friendly lying thing

Happy in the indifference which ignorance breeds in us

Hard to think up anything new

Hard of hearing on one side. But it isn't deafness!

Hardly any sort of bloodshed which I would not pardon

Harriet Beecher Stowe and the Autocrat clashed upon homeopathy

Hate of hate, The scorn of scorn, The love of love

He was a youth to the end of his days

He was not bored because he would not be

He had no time to make money

He was not constructive; he was essentially observant

He might walk home with her if he would not seem to do so

He's so resting

He's the same kind of a man that he was a boy

Heart of youth aching for their stoical sorrows

Heighten our suffering by anticipation

Heroic lies

His readers trusted and loved him

His plays were too bad for the stage, or else too good for it

His coming almost killed her, but it was worth it

His remembrance absolutely ceased with an event

Historian, who is a kind of inferior realist

Holiday literature

Hollow hilarities which people use to mask their indifference

Hollowness, the hopelessness, the unworthiness of life

Honest men are few when it comes to themselves

Honesty is difficult

Hopeful apathy in his face

Hospitable gift of making you at home with him

I do not think any man ought to live by an art

I did not know, and I hated to ask

If one were poor, one ought to be deserving

If he was half as bad, he would have been too bad to be

If one must, it ought to be champagne

If he has not enjoyed writing no one will enjoy reading

Imitators of one another than of nature

Impropriety if not indecency promises literary success

In the South there was nothing but a mistaken social ideal

In school there was as little literature then as there is now

Incoherencies of people meeting after a long time

Incredible in their insipidity

Industrial slavery

Inexhaustible flow of statement, conjecture and misgiving

Inexperience takes this effect (literary lewdness) for reality

Insatiable English fancy for the wild America no longer there

Insensate pride that mothers have in their children's faults

Intellectual poseurs

Intent upon some point in the future

It was mighty pretty, as Pepys would say

Joyful shame of children who have escaped punishment

Kept her talking vacuities when her heart was full

Kindness and gentleness are never out of fashion

Kissing goes by favor, in literature as in life

Languages, while they live, are perpetually changing

Led a life of public seclusion

Left him to do what the cat might

Let fiction cease to lie about life

Lewd literature seems to give a sanction to lewdness in the life

Lie, of course, and did to save others from grief or harm

Life alone is credible to the young

Liked to find out good things and great things for himself

Literature beautiful only through the intelligence

Literature is Business as well as Art

Literature has no objective value

Little knot of conscience between her pretty eyebrows

Lived a thousand little lies every day

Livy: Well, if you are to be lost, I want to be lost with you

Livy Clemens: the loveliest person I have ever seen

Long-puerilized fancy will bear an endless repetition

Long breath was not his; he could not write a novel

Look of challenge, of interrogation, almost of reproof

Looked as if Destiny had sat upon it

Love of freedom and the hope of justice

Luxury of helplessness

Made many of my acquaintances very tired of my favorite authors

Made them talk as seldom man and never woman talked

Malevolent agitators

Man is strange to himself as long as he lives

Man who had so much of the boy in him

Man who may any moment be out of work is industrially a slave

Marriages are what the parties to them alone really know

Married Man: after the first start-off he don't try

Meet here to the purpose of a common ostentation

Mellow cordial of a voice that was like no other

Men read the newspapers, but our women read the books

Men's lives ended where they began, in the keeping of women

Met with kindness, if not honor

Mind and soul were with those who do the hard work of the world

Mind of a man is the court of final appeal for the wisest women

Morbid egotism

Most desouthernized Southerner I ever knew

Most journalists would have been literary men if they could

Most serious, the most humane, the most conscientious of men

Motives lie nearer the surface than most people commonly pretend

Mustache, which in those days devoted a man to wickedness

My own youth now seems to me rather more alien

My reading gave me no standing among the boys

Napoleonic height which spiritually overtops the Alps

Nearly nothing as chaos could be

Neatness that brings despair

Never saw a man more regardful of negroes

Never paid in anything but hopes of paying

Never quite sure of life unless I find literature in it

Never appeals to the principle which sniffs, in his reader

Never saw a dead man whom he did not envy

New England necessity of blaming some one

No greatness, no beauty, which does not come from truth

No man more perfectly sensed and more entirely abhorred slavery

No man ever yet told the truth about himself

No rose blooms right along

No two men see the same star

No greatness, no beauty, which does not come from truth

No object in life except to deprive it of all object

Noble uselessness

None of the passions are reasoned

Not quite himself till he had made you aware of his quality

Not possible for Clemens to write like anybody else

Not much patience with the unmanly craving for sympathy

Not a man who cared to transcend; he liked bounds

Nothing in the way of sport, as people commonly understand it

Novels hurt because they are not true

Now little notion what it was about, but I love its memory

Now death has come to join its vague conjectures

NYC, a city where money counts for more and goes for less

Odious hilarity, without meaning and without remission

Offers mortifyingly mean, and others insultingly vague

Old man's disposition to speak of his infirmities

Old man's tendency to revert to the past

One could be openly poor in Cambridge without open shame

Only one concerned who was quite unconcerned

Openly depraved by shows of wealth

Ought not to call coarse without calling one's self prudish

Our huckstering civilization

Outer integument of pretence

Passive elegance which only ancestral uselessness can give

Pathetic hopefulness

Pathos of revolt from the colorless rigidities

People whom we think unequal to their good fortune

People of wealth and fashion always dissemble their joy

People have never had ideals, but only moods and fashions

Picture which, he said to himself, no one would believe in

Plagiarism carries inevitable detection with it

Plain-speaking or Rude Speaking

Plain industry and plodding perseverance are despised

Pointed the moral in all they did

Polite learning hesitated his praise

Praised it enough to satisfy the author

Praised extravagantly, and in the wrong place

Prejudice against certain words that I cannot overcome

Provisional reprehension of possible shiftlessness

Pseudo-realists

Public wish to be amused rather than edified

Public whose taste is so crude that they cannot enjoy the best

Put your finger on the present moment and enjoy it

Quiet but rather dull look of people slightly deaf

Rapture of the new convert could not last

Real aristocracy is above social prejudice

Reformers, who are so often tedious and ridiculous

Refused to see us as we see ourselves

Reparation due from every white to every black man

Responsibility of finding him all we have been told he is

Rogues in every walk of life

Satirical smile with which men witness the effusion of women

Secret of the man who is universally interesting

Secretly admires the splendors he affects to despise

Seen through the wrong end of the telescope

Seldom talked, but there came times when he would'nt even listen

Self-satisfied, intolerant, and hypocritical provinciality

Shackles of belief worn so long

She liked to get all she could out of her emotions

Should probably have wasted the time if I had not read them

Singleness of a nature that was all pose

So long as we have social inequality we shall have snobs

So refined, after the gigantic coarseness of California

So many millionaires and so many tramps

Society interested in a woman's past, not her future

Sometimes they sacrificed the song to the sermon

Somewhat shy of his fellow-men, as the scholar seems always to be.

Somewhat too studied grace

Sought the things that he could agree with you upon

Spare his years the fatigue of recalling your identity

Speaks it is not with words and blood, but with words and ink

Spit some hapless victim: make him suffer and the reader laugh

Standards were their own, and they were satisfied with them

Study in a corner by the porch

Stupefied by a life of unalloyed prosperity and propriety

Stupidly truthful

Style is the man, and he cannot hide himself in any garb

Submitted, as people always do with the trials of others

Sunny gayety of self-forgetfulness

Superiority one likes to feel towards the rich and great

Take our pleasures ungraciously

Teach what they do not know

Tediously analytical

The old and ugly are fastidious as to the looks of others

The ornament of a house is the friends who frequent it

The great trouble is for the man to be honest with her

There is small love of pure literature

They are so many and I am so few

Things common to all, however peculiar in each

Those who work too much and those who rest too much

Those who have sorrowed deepest will understand this best

Times when a man's city was a man's country

Tired themselves out in trying to catch up with him

To break new ground

To be exemplary is as dangerous as to be complimentary

Tone was a snuffle expressive of deep-seated affliction

Trace no discrepancy between reading his plays and seeing them

Tried to like whatever they bade me like

True to an ideal of life rather than to life itself

Truth is beyond invention

Two branches of the novelist's trade: Novelist and Historian

Under a fire of conjecture and asseveration

Understood when I've said something that doesn't mean anything

Unfailing American kindness

Unless we prefer a luxury of grief

Used to ingratitude from those he helped

Vacuous vulgarity

Visitors of the more inquisitive sex

Vulgarity: bad art to lug it in

Walter-Scotticized, pseudo-chivalry of the Southern ideal

Want something hard, don't you know; but I want it to be easy

Wasted face, and his gay eyes had the death-look

We have never ended before, and we do not see how we can end

We change whether we ought, or not

We see nothing whole, neither life nor art

We who have neither youth nor beauty should always expect it

We cannot all be hard-working donkeys

We did not know that we were poor

We're company enough for ourselves

What I had not I could hope for without unreason

What he had done he owned to, good, bad, or indifferent

What makes a better fashion change for a worse

What we thought ruin, but what was really release

Whatever is established is sacred with those who do not think

Whatever choice you make, you are pretty sure to regret it

When to be an agnostic was to be almost an outcast

When she's really sick, she's better

When was love ever reasoned?

Whether every human motive was not selfish

Wide leisure of a country village

Wishes of a mistress who did not know what she wanted

Wit that tries its teeth upon everything

With all her insight, to have very little artistic sense

Women don't seem to belong very much to themselves

Women talked their follies and men acted theirs

Wonder why we hate the past so?--"It's so damned humiliating!"

Wonderful to me how it should remain so unintelligible

Words of learned length and thundering sound

Work gives the impression of